

LESSON PLAN: Illusion in Art

By Amy Wunsch and Cynthia Lofquist, 2008

Key Idea:

Since the Renaissance, artists have explored the challenge of creating the illusion of depth on a two-dimensional surface. Contemporary artists use a variety of visual techniques to achieve this illusion.

Objectives:

1. Upon arrival, students will create a single color wash over their entire canvas. This layer will dry during the tour.
2. Students will enjoy an instructor-led tour of several artworks that illustrate techniques artists use to create the illusion of depth:
 - i. Color: warm colors appear to come forward; cool colors appear to recede. Diverse values (in color or grayscale) create the illusion of space.
 - ii. Real or implied foreground, middle ground, and background.
 - iii. Overlapping shapes or lines create a sense of distance.
 - iv. Linear perspective (use of converging lines, vanishing point).
 - v. Atmospheric perspective: objects and places have less detail, softer edges and less intense color in the distance.
 - vi. Larger shapes come forward, smaller shapes recede.

OPTIONAL: students may sketch thumbnail compositions with pencil on paper during the tour.

3. After a brief review of the 6 techniques back in the classroom, students will create their own painting on canvas board, using at least 3 of the 6 ways of creating the illusion of space they discovered through discussion and personal observation.

4. Students will participate in a group critique, where each student will present their own art work, prompted by these questions:

- a. Is your artwork abstract or representational?
- b. What spatial techniques did you utilize in your painting?

A review activity sheet will be provided each student. Students will answer a reflective question (no more than 3 sentences) at the bottom of the page.

Vocabulary:

Illusion: to imitate a visual reality on a flat surface.

Depth: a sense of distance and space within an artwork.

Materials needed:

Canvas panel in a variety of sizes, 1 per student: 16 x 20" 10 x 20" or 11 x 14"

Tempera paint or acrylic paint in a variety of colors

Foam brushes, bristle brushes in a variety of sizes, several of each type at each table

Water in plastic cups

Small plastic buckets with diluted paint in each of several colors for the wash layer

Paper plates or palettes

Paper towels

Pencils for sketching, clipboards and newsprint paper

Tour artwork images:





Amir H. Fallah (Iranian American, b. 1979)

Mother of the West, 2015

Acrylic, collage, colored pencil and spray paint on paper mounted to canvas

Collection Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, 2015.165



Kim Keever (American, b. 1955)

Sunset (44D), 2007

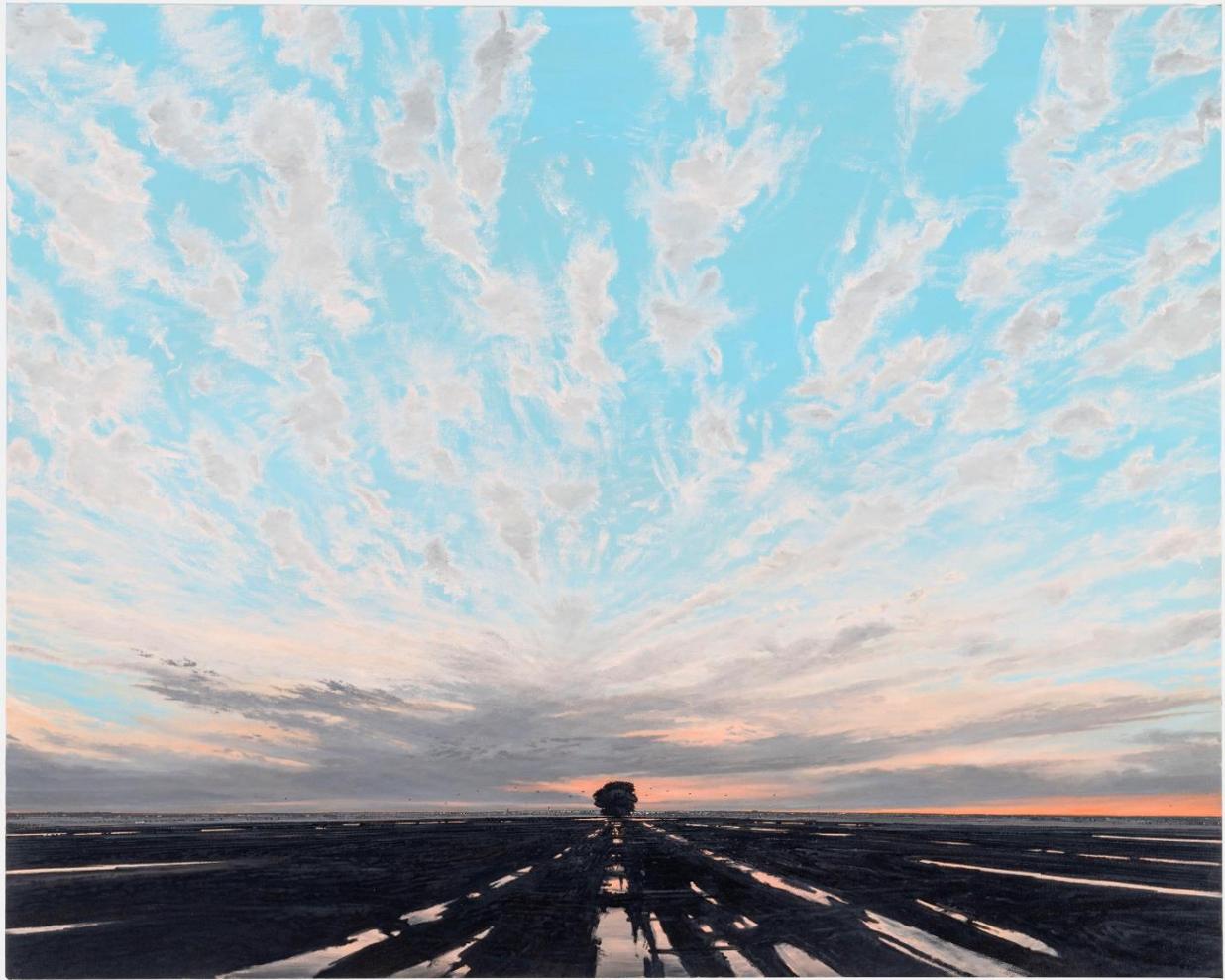
C-print

Collection Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, 2008.24

Gift of Marti and Tony Oppenheimer and the Oppenheimer Brothers Foundation



Henry Dixon (American, b. 1941)
Evening on Woton's Throne, Grand Canyon National Park, 1999
Watercolor
Collection Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, 2007.52

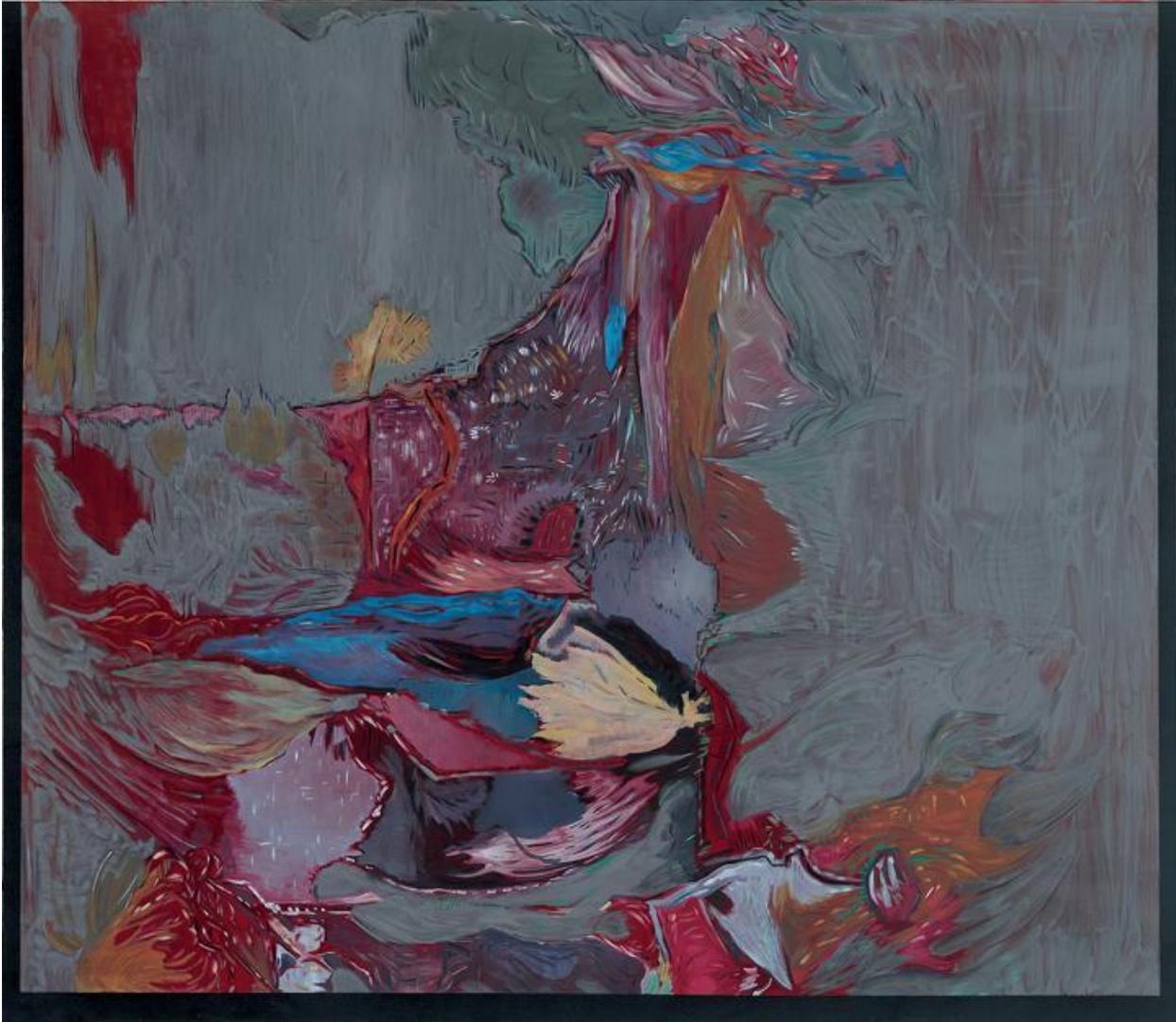


Keith Jacobshagen (American, b. 1941)

Slow Melt with Crows, 2002

Oil on canvas

Collection Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, 2003.04



Brian Fahlstrom (American, b. 1978)

Final Theme, 2005

Oil on canvas

Collection Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, 2005.58

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Anton Henning (German, b. 1964)

Interieur No. 362, 2006

Oil on canvas

Collection Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, 2007.28

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