LESSON PLAN: Realistic Art

By Amy Wunsch, June 2009

Learn about art that imitates life and create a 3-D drawing using shading techniques.

Key Idea:

Traditionally, "realism" is associated with an accurate likeness, and an object from life and the representation of it in art could be interchangeable or easily compared. Realistic representation includes a subject's flaws and specific descriptive details, while the opposite (idealism) is often more perfect than real life.

Objectives:

1. Students will be introduced to the concepts associated with realism in the visual arts through an instructor-led discussion.
2. The instructor will lead students on a guided tour of several works of art that have descriptive, representational content (person, object, etc) and several drawings that show shading techniques on paper.
3. Students will create a pastel drawing on black or colored paper. The instructor will give a brief demonstration on how to create values with pastels on the black pastel paper (vary the pressure from light to heavy, use fingers or cotton swabs to mix colors with white or black, blend light colors with dark colors).

 i. Set up a still life arrangement at each table.
 ii. Using a graphite pencil on newsprint paper, have the children develop a quick sketch of two or three objects by outlining basic shapes. Remember to try overlapping objects.
iii. After the sketch is complete, distribute the black pastel paper and the pastel sticks or pencils for their final works.
iv. Use fingers or cotton swabs to blend colors, highlights and shades.

Vocabulary

representational - Art which is based on images which can be found in the real world, or at least in the artist's imagination; images which can be named or recognized consistently by anyone. Representational is a broad, general category for realistic, idealistic, and illusionistic art.

realistic - Representational art which, unlike ideal art, shows forms and images as they really are without idealizing them. Gustave Courbet was one of the first Realists in opposition to the previous Neoclassical art in France; 19th century Realist artists wanted to depict life as it is, "warts and all," and showed manual laborers in dirt-filled settings and other scenes showing people in everyday life situations.

idealistic - Art which aims to be the eternal reality, the theoretical opposite of realism, generalized and perfected idea of what something should look like (example: a mannequin).

illusionistic – Art that has the effect of popping off the surface; 2-dimensional images that look 3-dimensional due to shading, foreshortening, sharp focus, overlapping, etc.

values – Lightness or darkness in an artwork; the relation of light and shade.

chiaroscuro – Italian art term referring to highlights, lights, shadows, reflected light, and cast shadows. A light source shines on an object creating highlights and shadows, and artists imitate the values to create depth on a flat surface making shapes look 3- dimensional.

stippling – Using points or dots in varying proximity to create a range of values.

contour line – Lines are used to define shapes and outlines, and also may suggest mass and volume on a 2-dimensional surface. A contour line may be a continuous mark made on a surface with a pointed tool or implied by the edges of shapes and forms.

pastel – A unique drawing medium in that the colors are mixed directly on the paper by overlaying or blending, rather than combining prior to application; pastels consist of dried paste made of ground pigments and a water-based binder that are manufactured as crayon or pencil.

<u>Assessment:</u> With completed artworks set out on the table in a group, ask:
● What different kinds of lines did you use? How do lines show emotion or energy?
● How are organic or geometric shapes used? Which shapes look 3-dimensional? Which shapes are flattened or cartoon-like (stylized)?
● How did you show what the natural objects might feel like to the touch?
● How might details give us clues as to what the object is?
● How did you show that one object is in front of another?
● Which artworks demonstrate an effort to show deep space? Shallow space?
● What might you learn about each other just by looking at your imaginary objects?

<u>Materials Needed</u>
Newspaper to cover the surface of each table
8" x 11" sheets of newsprint paper (1-2 sheets per child)
Objects from nature (large seashells, silk flowers and leaves, twigs, rocks, nuts, etc)
Art supplies for still life (bottles of paint, tubs of clay, bags and boxes, etc.)
Round objects (ball, oranges, etc)
Graphite drawing pencils, pencil sharpeners, erasers
9" x 12" colored or black pastel drawing paper (1 sheet per child)
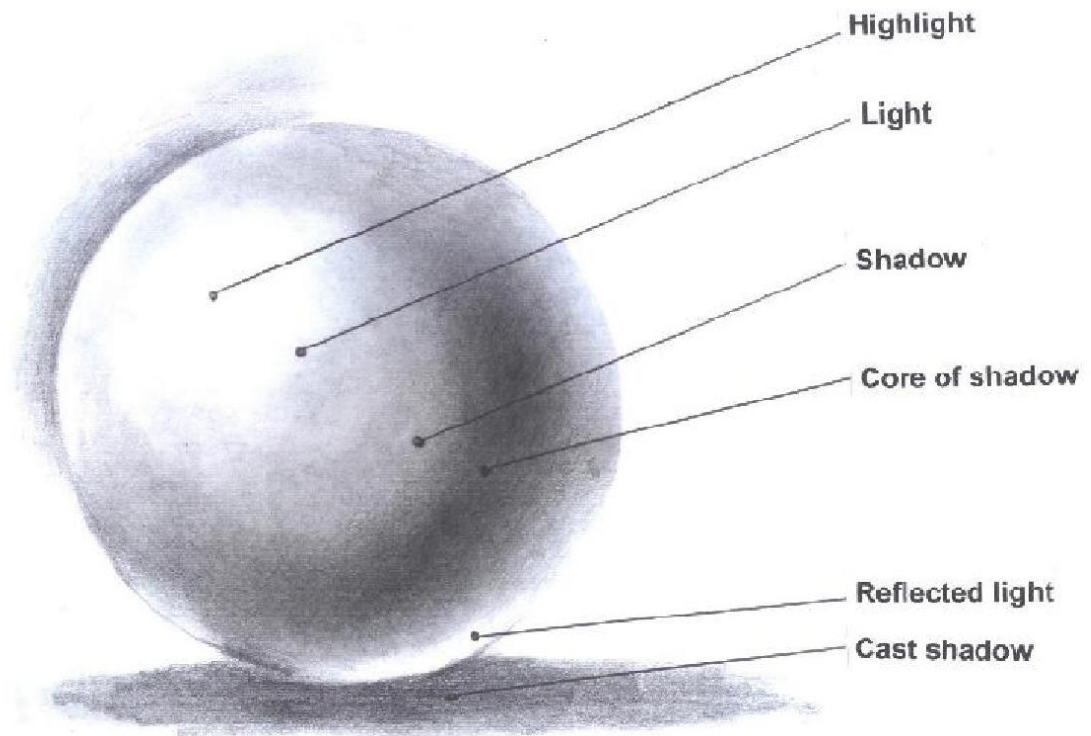Set of soft chalk pastels for each child OR pastel pencils
cotton swabs (at least 5 per child)
OPTIONAL: Desk lamps or flashlights to light still life objects for better contrast.
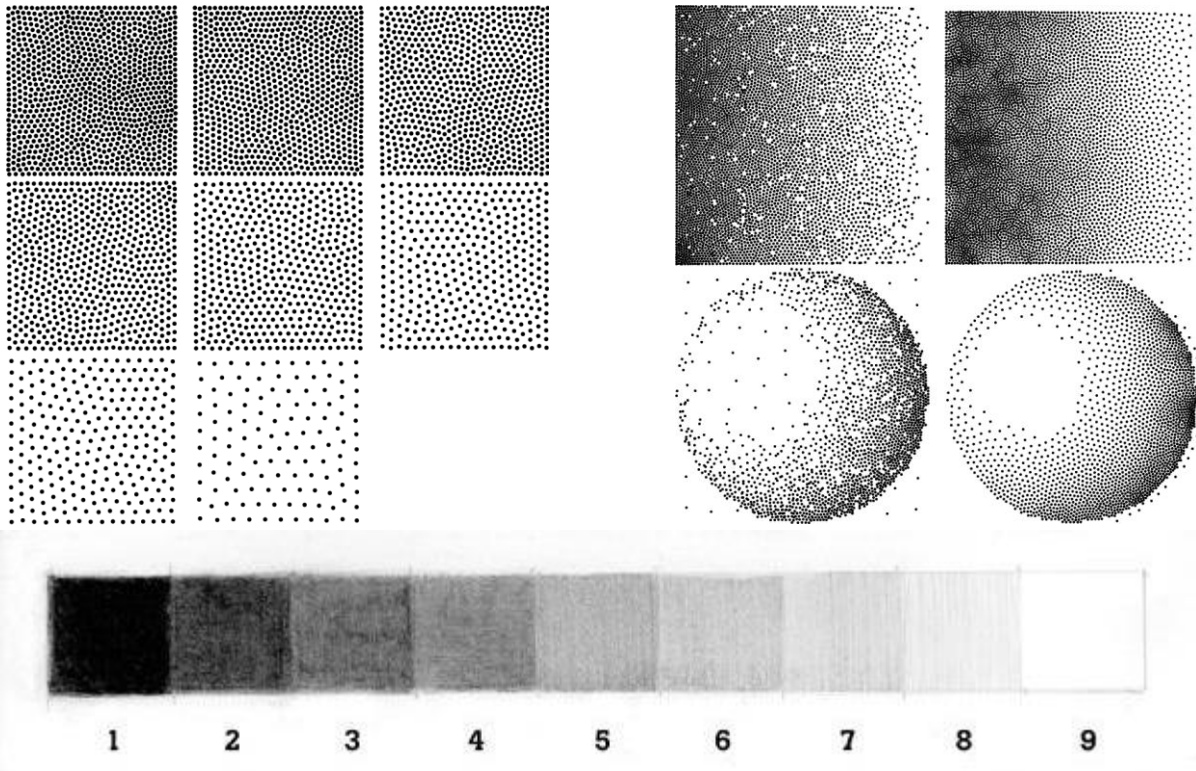
<u>Handout</u>

<u>Tour artwork images</u>

Chiaroscuro "kee-AHR-uh-SKYOO-roh"

Highlight

Light

Shadow

Core of shadow

Reflected light

Cast shadow

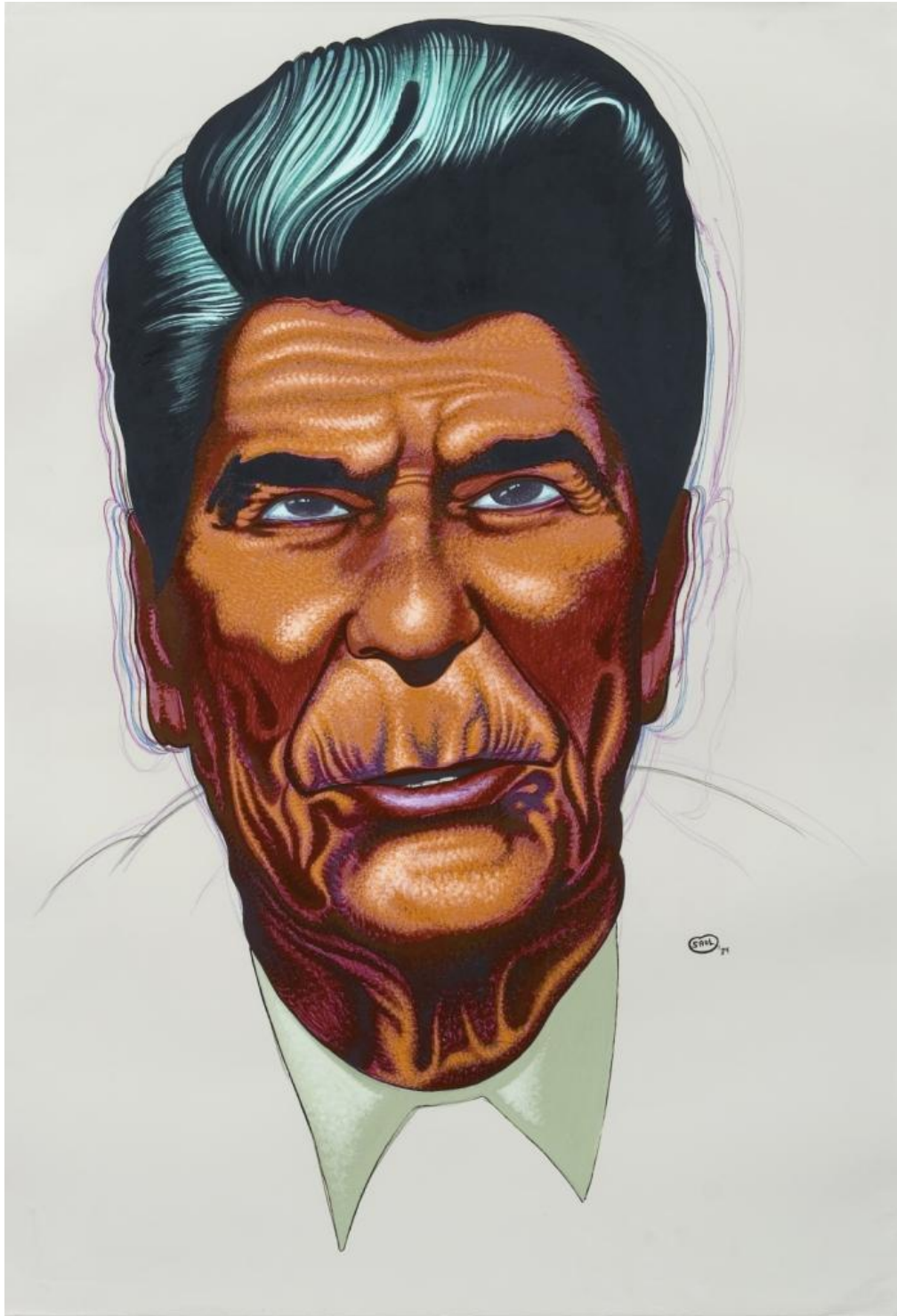# Value scale

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Adolfo Gustavo Martinez (American, b. 1954)
El Soltero, 2006
Acrylic on paper
Collection Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, 2006.03
Gift of Marti and Tony Oppenheimer

Peter Saul (American, b. 1934)
Untitled (Reagan), 1984
Acrylic and colored pencil on paper
Collection Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, 2007.27
Gift of Marti and Tony Oppenheimer and the Oppenheimer Brothers Foundation

Min Kim (Korean, b. 1975)
We lift our hands to protect the only and the most important to us, 2005
Graphite, gouache, acrylic and colored pencil on paper
Collection Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, 2005.33
Gift of Marti and Tony Oppenheimer

Claes Oldenburg (Swedish-American, b. 1929)
Wristwatch, Rising, 1991
Woodcut
Collection Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, 2000.41
Gift of Eileen and Peter Norton, Santa Monica, CA

Jonathan Borofsky (American, b. 1942)
Walking Man (on the Edge), 1995
Fiberglass and steel
Collection Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, 1995.14
Gift of Marti and Tony Oppenheimer and the Jules and Doris Stein Foundation