

ALBERTA
FOUNDATION
FOR THE ARTS
TRAVELLING
EXHIBITION
PROGRAM



THIS IS **NOT** A PHOTOGRAPH

Interpretive Guide and hands-on Activities



The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program Presents

THIS IS **NOT** A PHOTOGRAPH

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Catalogue designed and photographed by Steven Teeuwsen

Produced by the Art Gallery of Alberta

Funded by the Alberta Foundation for the Arts

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts, the Travelling Exhibition Program (TREX), and the Art Gallery of Alberta acknowledge that the artistic activity we support takes place on the traditional territories of Treaty 6, 7 and 8. We acknowledge the many First Nations, Métis and Inuit who have lived on and cared for these lands for generations and we are grateful for the traditional Knowledge Keepers, Elders and those who have gone before us. We make this acknowledgement as an act of reconciliation and gratitude to those whose territory we reside on. We reaffirm our commitment to strengthening our relationships with Indigenous communities and growing our shared knowledge and understanding.

Cover image

John Hall

Wham!, 2010

Acrylic on canvas

18 x 23 in

Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts

Image Left

Erin Schwab

Hardened Poplar Colony, 2011

Charcoal on paper

19 x 24 inches

Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts



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About TREX

The AFA Travelling Exhibition Program

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program (TREX) strives to ensure every Albertan is provided with an opportunity to enjoy fully developed exhibitions in schools, libraries, health care centres and smaller rural institutions and galleries throughout the province.

The TREX program assists in making both the AFA's extensive art collection and the work of contemporary Alberta artists available to Albertans. The program also offers educational support material for teachers to encourage visual arts exhibitions into the school curriculum.

Four regional organizations coordinate the program:

TREX NORTHWEST

Produced by The Art Gallery of Grande Prairie,
Grande Prairie

TREX CENTRAL & NORTHEAST

Produced by Art Gallery of Alberta, Edmonton

TREX SOUTHWEST

Produced by Alberta Society of Artists, Calgary

TREX SOUTHEAST

Produced by Esplanade Arts & Heritage Centre,
Medicine Hat

These partners offer a wide range of exhibitions to communities from High Level in the north, to Milk River in the south, and virtually everywhere in between!



Alberta Foundation for the Arts

Beginning in 1972, the Alberta Art Collection was proposed as an opportunity to support and encourage Alberta artists by purchasing original works, as well as creating a legacy collection for the people of Alberta.

The AFA was established as a Crown agency of the Government of Alberta through the Alberta Foundation for the Arts Act in 1991, with a mandate to support the arts in Alberta. This mandate is accomplished by providing persons and organizations with the opportunity to participate in the arts in Alberta; fostering and promoting the enjoyment of works of art by Alberta artists; collecting, preserving, and displaying works of art by Alberta artists; and encouraging artists resident in Alberta to continue their work.

Art Gallery of Alberta

The Art Gallery of Alberta is a centre of excellence for the visual arts in Western Canada, connecting people, art and ideas. The AGA is focused on the development and presentation of original exhibitions of contemporary and historical art from Alberta, Canada and around the world.

The AGA produces TREX Central & Northeast Alberta. Through TREX the AGA ships exhibitions to over 50 venues in over 35 communities each year.

Interpretive Guide

With each TREX exhibition comes an educational Interpretive Guide. The suggested topics for discussion and accompanying activities can act as a guide to increase the viewers' enjoyment and to assist in developing programs to complement the exhibition. Questions and activities have been included at both beginner and advanced levels. This guide also contains images of the artworks in the exhibition which can be used for review and discussion. Be aware that copyright restrictions apply to unauthorized use or reproduction of artists' images.

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THIS IS **NOT** A PHOTOGRAPH

***Have you ever stared at a painting and wondered,
“Is that a photograph?”***

This Is Not a Photograph features nine artists from the Alberta Foundation for the Arts Collection who challenge our perceptions of reality. Each pours obsessive attention into every brushstroke and pencil mark, revealing a love of their craft and a delight in their subject matter. Their precision does more than mirror the world—it uncovers something new about both the subject and the artist.

Rooted in realism yet pushing beyond it, many of these works embrace hyperrealism's “more real than real” ethos. They present details our eyes might otherwise miss, simultaneously capturing the glint of reflection and the texture of shadow. The results are uncanny images that hover between reality and illusion.

The longer you look, the more the artist's hand emerges—the deliberate compositions, heightened contrasts, and carefully measured choices. These crafted visions ask us to pause, to look again, and to find meaning beneath the surface.

“God is in the details”

—Ludwig Mies van der Rohe

Exhibition Inventory

9 artists | 15 artworks | 2 text panels | 2 crates



Derek Besant
Passenger, 1983
Watercolour, ink on paper
33 x 33 in
Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts



Glen Semple
Lawn Ornaments, 2010
Acrylic on canvas
24 x 24 inches
Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts



Marc Villeger
L'Evangile Du Fou, 1989
 Oil on canvas
 29 x 24 inches
 Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts



Keith Harder
Tackle Box, 1990
 Oil on canvas
 24 x 30 in
 Collection of the
 Alberta Foundation
 for the Arts



Dennis Lee
Grip, 2000
 Acrylic on canvas
 16 x 20 inches
 Collection of the
 Alberta Foundation
 for the Arts



Erin Schwab

Buried in the Landscape, 2011

Charcoal on paper

14 x 17 inches

Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts



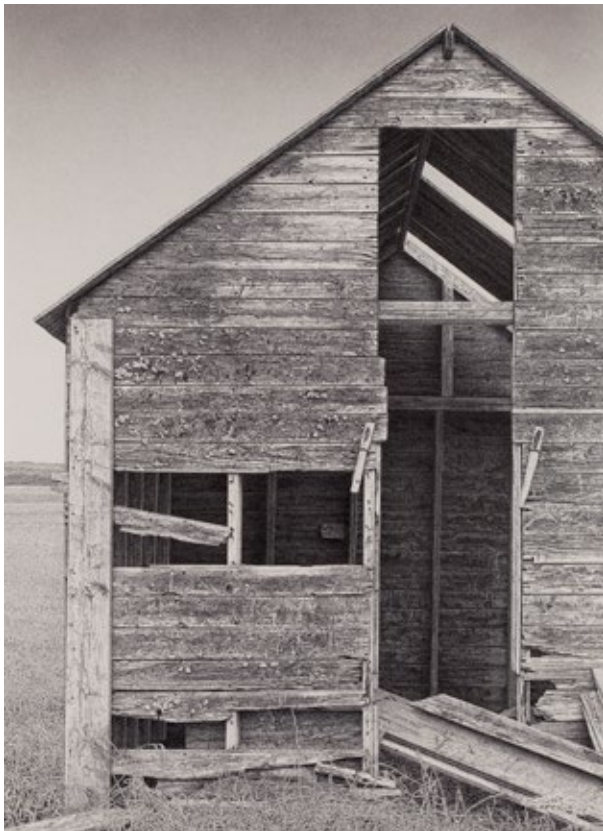
Erin Schwab

Hardened Poplar Colony, 2011

Charcoal on paper

19 x 24 inches

Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts



Dwight Arthur
Old Grainery, 1978
 Ink on illustration board
 18 x 13 inches
 Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts



Dwight Arthur
Bashaw Garage, 1979
 Ink on illustration board
 12 x 18 inches
 Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts



Joice Hall
La Puerta Entrada al Calle De Tenerias #36, 1988
 Oil on paper on foamcore
 25 x 18 inches
 Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts



Joice Hall
Yucca, 1991
 Oil and gold leaf on wood panel
 15 x 14 inches
 Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts



John Hall
Wham!, 2010
 Acrylic on canvas
 18 x 23 in
 Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts



John Hall
Tourist II, 1980
 Acrylic on canvas
 24 x 24 inches
 Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts



John Hall
Tar, 1998
 Acrylic on canvas
 18 x 27 inches
 Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts



John Hall
Artist's Palette II, 1998
 Acrylic on canvas
 18 x 27 inches
 Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts

Education Guide

Themes

- Realism / Photorealism / Hyperrealism
- Alberta Art
- Elements of composition
- Visual Learning / Critical Analysis
- Drawing From Observation
- Understanding Light
- Perspective Drawing

Alberta Curriculum Connections

- Grades 1–12 Visual Arts
- Grades 4–8 Science
- Grades 6–9 Social Studies
- Grades 9–12 Physics

Visual Learning

All art has many sides to it. The artist makes the works for people to experience. They in turn can make discoveries about both the artwork and the artist which contributes to their enjoyment of art. How we look at an object determines what we come to know about it. We remember information about an object far better when we are able to see (and handle) objects rather than by only reading about them. A careful investigation through observation helps us to understand how objects fit into our world and helps us reach a considered response to what we see. The following is a six-step method to looking at, and understanding, a work of art.

INITIAL, INTUITIVE RESPONSE

The first 'gut level' response to a visual presentation. What do you see and what do you think of it?

DESCRIPTION

Naming facts: style, medium, and elements of composition.

ANALYSIS

Exploring how the parts relate to each other.

INTERPRETATION

Exploring what the work might mean or be about

INFORMATION

Looking beyond the work for information that may further understanding.

STEP 6: PERSONALIZATION

Reaching a considered response.

Elements of Composition Tour

The following pages provide definitions and examples of elements and principles of art that are used by artists in the images found in the exhibition.

The elements of composition are components of an artwork that can be isolated and defined. They are the building blocks used to create a work of art.

****Use this tour to better understand the purpose of the artist's choices!***

5 Elements of Composition



LINE

An element of art that is used to define shape, contours and outlines. It is also used to suggest mass and volume.



COLOUR

Colour is light that is reflected off objects. Colour has three main characteristics: Hue, or its name (red, blue, etc.) Value: (how light or dark the colour is) and Intensity (how bright or dull the colour is).



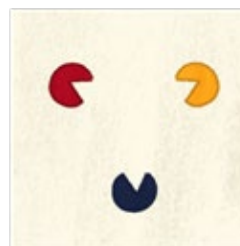
SHAPE

When a line crosses itself or intersects with other lines to enclose a space it creates a shape. A two-dimensional shape is one that is drawn on a flat surface such as paper. A three-dimensional shape is one that takes up real space.



TEXTURE

The surface quality of an object that can be seen or felt. Texture can also be implied on a two-dimensional surface through mark making and media handling.



SPACE

Space is the relative position of one three-dimensional object to another. It is the area between and around objects. It can also refer to the feeling of depth in a two-dimensional work.

Art History and Context: Realism to Hyperrealism

In the 19th century with Realism began as an art movement that rejected idealized depictions and mythological themes in favour of everyday life. Artists such as Gustave Courbet sought to portray the world as it actually was—workers, landscapes, and ordinary settings—rendered with truth rather than romanticism. Realism was radical for its time: it challenged academic hierarchies by declaring that the commonplace was worthy of art.



Gustave Courbet

The Wheat Sifters (Les Cribleuses de Blé), 1854

Oil painting

Musée des Beaux-Arts de Nantes, Nantes

A century later, in the 1960s and 1970s, Photorealism emerged in North America. Using photography as both source material and subject, artists like Chuck Close and Richard Estes translated the mechanical precision of the camera into painting. Their process often involved projecting photographs onto canvas and replicating the image with exacting detail. Photorealists were fascinated by surface appearances—the chrome gleam of a diner, the reflections in a storefront window—creating works that seemed indistinguishable from photographs.



Richard Estes

Bus with Reflection of the Flatiron Building, 1966–67

Oil on canvas

Marlborough Gallery

Beyond the Photograph: Hyperrealism

Hyperrealism, first named by Belgian dealer Isy Brachot in 1973, grew out of photorealism but moved decisively beyond it. While photorealism often sought to reproduce a photograph faithfully, hyperrealism enhances it—heightening textures, deepening contrasts, and infusing the image with emotional and psychological depth. A photograph captures a moment frozen in time; a hyperrealist painting often intensifies that moment, creating an uncanny effect that feels “more real than real.”

Hyperrealist works can simultaneously show details the eye cannot take in at once—the glint of light on glass, the subtle gradation of shadow, the layered surfaces of bark or stone. This “super-vision” allows us to experience the world not only as seen, but as deeply perceived. The results hover between reality and illusion, inviting us to question how perception itself is shaped.

Alberta Artists in Focus

Within this international context, Alberta artists have made significant contributions to realism and hyperrealism, shaping a distinctive regional perspective

John Hall is among Canada’s most celebrated hyperrealist painters. His luminous still lifes—whether depicting candy, marbles, or stacks of CDs—elevate the ordinary into carefully staged dramas of consumer culture. Hall’s influence extended beyond his canvases: as a professor at the University of Calgary, he trained generations of realist painters, spreading hyperrealist methods across the province.

Joice Hall, trained alongside John, has focused on the human presence in landscape. From surreal botanical metaphors in the 1970s to panoramic oil landscapes in later decades, her work demonstrates how realism can be both descriptive and symbolic, bridging the real and the metaphorical.

Keith Harder, a student of John Hall, embodies the generational transmission of realism in Alberta. His faithfulness to observation—whether in still life, portraiture, or landscape—evolved into a broader descriptive methodology, later expanded into digital and installation practices. Harder’s career as an educator at the University of Alberta’s Augustana Campus extended the realist tradition to rural communities.

Erin Schwab brings hyperrealist intensity to drawing. Her charcoal works linger on natural surfaces—knurled bark, fungal ripples, patterns of growth and decay—rendered with such acuity that they border on the meditative. In Schwab’s work, hyperrealism is not just visual but experiential: it reveals the quiet relationships of natural forms.

Glen Sample applies hyperrealist clarity to still lifes charged with dream-like resonance. His images of glass, flowers, and water shimmer with light and reflection, suspending viewers between reality and surreal intensity.



Glen Sample
Lawn Ornaments, 2010
Acrylic on canvas
24 x 24 inches
Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts

Seeing More Than the Camera

What unites these artists is not just technical virtuosity but a commitment to slowing down perception. Their works show us details we might otherwise overlook—the way light refracts through a marble, the roughness of bark, the reflection within a shadow. They do not merely reproduce appearances; they transform them, asking us to look longer, and more carefully, than we ordinarily would.

While Realism sought truth, and Photorealism pursued precision, Hyperrealism asks us to dwell in the uncanny space between reality and illusion. In *This Is Not a Photograph*, Alberta's artists embrace this condition, creating works that invite us not only to marvel at their accuracy but to consider the act of seeing itself.

Activities

An Art-full Scavenger Hunt

In teaching art, game-playing can enhance learning. If students are engaged in learning, through a variety of methods, then it goes beyond game-playing. Through game-playing we are trying to get students to use higher-order thinking skills by getting them to be active participants in learning.

OBJECTIVES

A scavenger hunt based on art works is a fun and engaging way to get students of any age to really look at the art works and begin to discern what the artist(s) is/are doing in the works.

Ages 6 - 12

INSTRUCTIONS

Using the exhibition works provided, give students a list of things they should search for that are in the particular works of art. The students could work with a partner or in teams. Include a blank for the name of the artwork, the name of the artist, and the year the work was created. Following the hunt, gather students together in the exhibition area and check the answers and discuss the particular works in more detail.

Sample List

Scavenger Hunt Item	Title of Artwork	Name of Artist	Year Work Created
a photograph			
a door			
wood			
an inside scene			
an outside scene			
a plant			

Reading Pictures Program

Art can be read in two ways. It can be looked at **intuitively** – what do you see? What do you like or not like? How does it make you feel and why? – or it can be read **formally** by looking at the elements of the composition – the “tools” artists use or consider when creating a piece of work.

***Art is a language like any other
and it can be read!***

OBJECTIVES:

1. Introduce participants to art and what artists do – this includes examinations of art styles; art composition; the possible aims and meaning(s) in an artwork and how to deduce those meanings and aims
2. Introduce visitors to the current exhibition
 - The aim of the exhibition and the kind of artwork found in the exhibition
 - The artist(s) - his/her background(s)
 - His/her place in art history
3. Engage participants in a deeper investigation of artworks

Ages 12 - adult

FACILITATOR INTRODUCTION TO PROGRAM:

Before we can ‘read’ art, however, we should have some understanding of what we’re talking about.

What is art? How would you define it?

Art can be defined as creative expression—and artistic practice is an aspect of expression. It can express a peoples’ culture or the artist’s identity.

How many of you would describe yourselves as artists?

Art is all around us and we are all involved in artistic endeavours to some degree. The photographs we take, the colour and styles of the clothes we wear, the ways we build and decorate our homes, gardens and public buildings, the images we see and are attracted to in advertising or the text or symbols on our bumper stickers – all of these things utilize artistic principles. They say something about our personal selves and reflect upon and influence the economic, political, cultural, historical and geographic concerns of our society.

Art, therefore, is not just something some people in a society do – it is something that affects and informs everyone within a society.

Today we’re going to look at art - paintings, prints, drawings, sculptures – and see what art can tell us about the world we live in – both the past, the present and possibly the future – and what art can tell us about ourselves.

Tour Program

Choose two very different pieces of artwork in the exhibition and work through the following steps. This can be a group discussion or participants can be divided into small groups and given these questions as a worksheet

STEP 1: INITIAL, INTUITIVE RESPONSE

The first 'gut level' response to a visual presentation.

- *What do you see and how does it make you feel? Why do you feel this way?*
- *What do you like? What don't you like? Why?*

STEP 2: DESCRIPTION

Naming facts: style, medium, and composition (see the elements of composition on pg. 20)

- *What is the work made of?*
- *How would you describe the style?*
- *What colours and shapes do you see?*
- *What objects are most apparent?*
- *Describe the lines and textures in the work.*

STEP 3: ANALYSIS

Exploring how the parts relate to each other.

- *What is the focus or of the artwork?*
- *What proportions can you see? Background? Foreground? Land? Sky?*

STEP 4: INTERPRETATION

Exploring what the work might mean or be about

- *What word would best describe the mood of this work?*
- *What do you think this painting, photograph, or sculpture about?*
- *Is the artist trying to tell a story? What might be the story in this work?*

STEP 5: INFORMATION

Looking beyond the work for information that may further understanding. (See artist bios on pg. 18)

- *What is the artist's name? When did he/she live?*
- *What art was being made at the same time as this artist was working?*
- *What was happening in history at the time this artist was working?*
- *What social/political/economic/cultural issues is this artist interested in?*

STEP 6: PERSONALIZATION

Reaching a considered response.

- *What do you think about this work?*

Observing My World: Drawing From Life

At its heart, drawing is an exercise in looking. For generations, art students have learned the basics by observing objects, people, and scenes around them.

In this activity, students will hone their skills in looking by studying the artworks in this exhibition made using different formal techniques, then creating their own pencil drawings from objects observed in the classroom.



Annie Pootoogook

Coleman Stove with Robin Hood Flour and Tenderflake, 2003–4

44 x 30 in

Coloured pencil and ink on paper

Collection of Reid Shier and Zoe Lasham

Ages 10 - adult

OBJECTIVES

- Use critical thinking and creative skills to analyze an artwork.
- Identify formal elements in a drawing, including colour, line, shape, space, and texture.
- Create a drawing from carefully observing your surroundings.

MATERIALS

- Images from this exhibition
- Shading pencils
- Sketchbooks or loose paper
- Still-life props of choice

PROCESS

1. Begin by introducing the concept of realism in art (see Talking Art on pg. 15). Ask students their opinions on realism in art.

- *Is realism or abstract painting more creative? Why?*
- *Is realism just making art that looks like a photograph or something more?*
- *How does realism reveal the artists perspective on the world?*
- *What are the difference between realism, photorealism, and hyperrealism?*

Record student responses on a whiteboard.

2. Take a tour of the exhibition or share the visual inventory in this guide. Engage students in a comparative discussion about these works, noting differences in style, technique, and form. Prime students with a refresher on the five elements of composition (see the Elements of Composition Tour pg. 19). Questions to prompt discussion might include:

- *What is the subject matter of this drawing?*
- *What materials has the artist used to make the drawing?*
- *How does the artist's use of line contribute to the drawing's overall look and feel? Describe the types of lines used in each (e.g., thick, thin, straight, curved, broken).*
- *What textures do you see in the drawing (e.g., smooth, rough, bumpy)? How does texture contribute to the drawing's visual impact?*
- *Has the artist used any shading techniques (e.g., hatching, cross-hatching, blending, or stippling)? How might these techniques affect the overall look and feel of the drawing?*
- *How does the artist use space to create a sense of depth or perspective?*
- *How has the artist arranged the elements in the drawing? Is the composition balanced or unbalanced? What is the focal point, and how does the artist lead the viewer's eye to it?*

3. Once students have had a chance to discuss a few examples, they can begin making their own drawings. Set up a series of drawing stations with different kinds of props—books, fruit, jars, jugs, or any other object already in the classroom. Encourage students in advance to bring their own objects from home and set them up at the different drawing stations around the room. Have as many different objects as possible with interesting physical attributes (e.g., textures, materials, reflective surfaces) so students can hone their skills in observation and build their technique.
4. Encourage students to rotate through the stations, selecting a new object to draw at each one. Students can determine on their own when they would like to move on and select a new object.
5. As an optional step, prompt students to try out different shading or line techniques with each rotation, to get them thinking creatively about their subject matter.
6. At the end of the activity, ask students to select their favourite drawing from their sketchbooks. Display the works and have each student present their selected drawing.

Learn How Light and Objects Interact

At the heart of many of realist artists' works is the play of light on, through, and within objects. This deep observation of light and understanding of optics was critical to creating the beautiful realism of their paintings.

In this investigation, students will look carefully at the interaction of light using objects that are common in still-life paintings.

OBJECTIVES

- Identify how light interacts with objects using scientific terminology.
- Think critically about the use of light and its interactions in various artworks.

MATERIALS

- Images from this exhibition
- Paper
- Pens, pencils
- Small selection of materials from still life paintings (for example: aluminum foil, fruit, glasses of liquid, jelly or other food stuffs, fabric, etc.)
- Strong, single light source (direct sunlight is ideal)

Ages 13 - adult

PROCESS

1. Arrange a series of objects in front of the class so that the objects are lit by sunlight (possible objects include a glass of water, tinfoil or reflective surfaces, dark or coloured cloth). If no direct sunlight is available, arrange to move the class to a location in the school where this is possible or where there is light with a strong, single light source.
2. Have students gather around the objects to observe the arrangement. Direct students to look carefully at the group of objects and to think about how light interacts with each one. Students may make notes of their observations.
3. Once students have looked carefully at the objects, guide a discussion on the ways in which light interacts with the scene. Possible questions include the following:
 - *Where is the scene brightest?*
 - *Where is the scene darkest?*
 - *What objects seem to block the light?*
 - *What objects allow the light to pass through them?*
 - *What happens to the light when it is blocked by an object?*
 - *What happens to the light when it passes through an object? Is this the same for all colours? Different?*

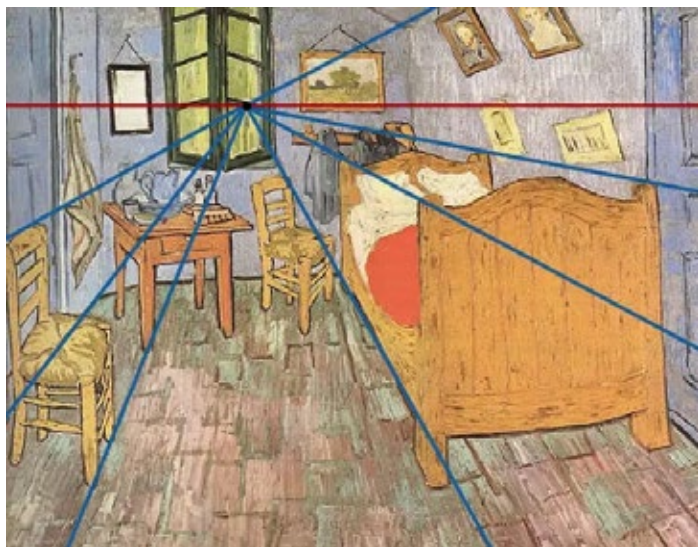


John Hall
Artist's Palette II, 1998
 Acrylic on canvas
 18 x 27 inches
 Collection of the Alberta
 Foundation for the Arts

4. Through this discussion, the main ways in which light interacts with objects should be observed (passing through, bouncing off, stopping, and bending), and these properties can be named using the following scientific terms: transmission, reflection, absorption, and refraction. Students should be encouraged to see the complexity of these interactions (every object will display some mix of all types of interactions).
5. After finishing the discussion and careful observations. Ask students to identify the interactions they observed in person within the paintings from this exhibition, using scientific terms if possible. As a class, consider the following questions: how has a consideration of light made the artworks more beautiful? More realistic? How do these specific objects interact with light? Why are they lit the way they are?

Draw Your Room, One-Point Perspective

In *This is NOT a Photograph*, artists bring paint and draw the reality of the world around them with great accuracy. One of the techniques that artists use to create a realistic scene is perspective drawing. In this activity, students will learn the basics of one-point perspective while reflecting on their own personal spaces.



Vincent van Gogh
Bedroom in Arles, 1888 (First Version)

Ages 12 - adult

OBJECTIVES

- Learn the principles of one-point perspective.
- Use drawing to reflect on personal space and memory.
- Apply line and proportion to create depth in a drawing.
- Develop observation and spatial reasoning skills.

MATERIALS

- Sketch paper or drawing paper
- Pencils
- Rulers
- Erasers

PROCESS

1. Introduce the concept of one-point perspective. Use simple examples (a cube, a hallway, or railroad tracks) to show how parallel lines appear to converge at a vanishing point.

Demonstrate by drawing:

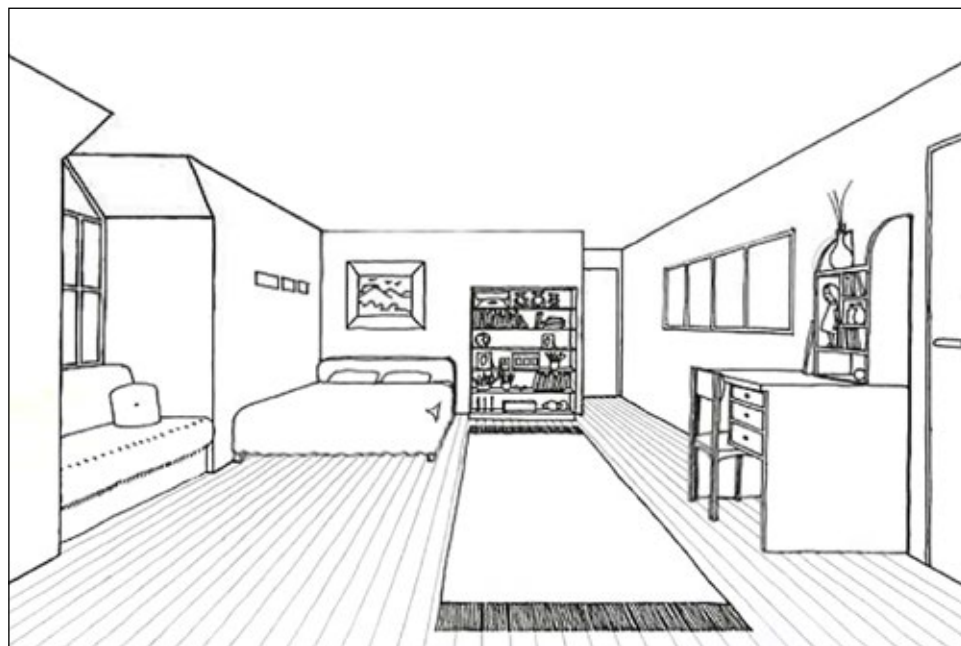
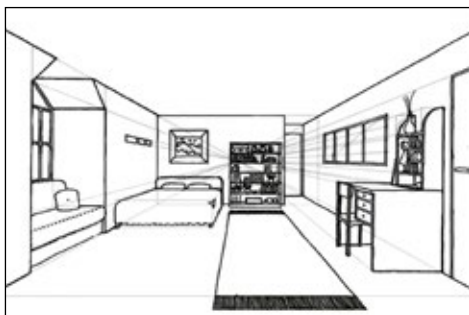
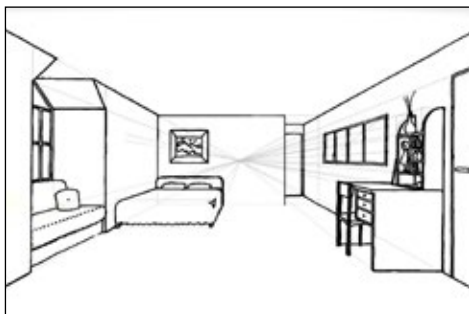
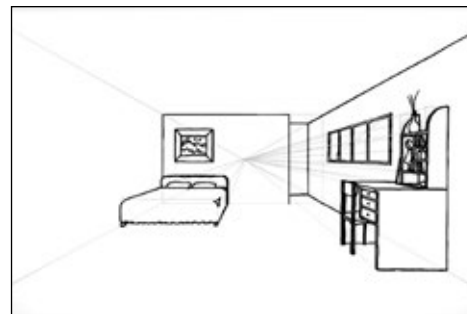
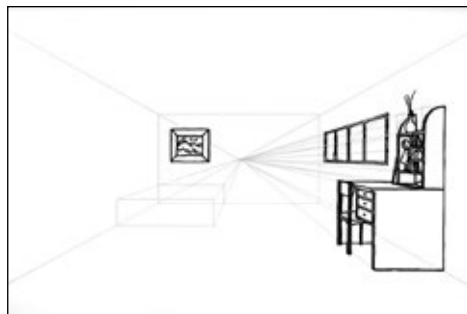
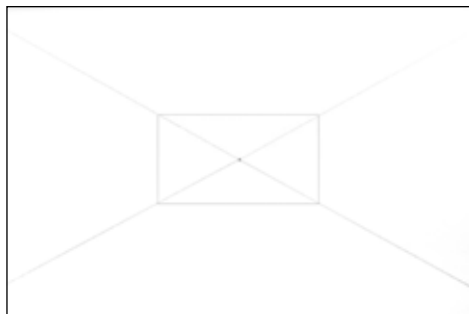
- A horizon line
- A single vanishing point
- A rectangle that becomes the back wall of a room
- Diagonal lines from the corners of the rectangle to the vanishing point to form the sides of the room.

Explain that everything in the room—beds, desks, windows, doors—can be built from rectangles or cubes that follow the same vanishing point.

2. Have students begin their own drawings by:
 - Drawing a rectangle for the back wall.
 - Placing a vanishing point at the center of that wall.
 - Using their ruler to create the walls, ceiling, and floor.
 - Encourage them to picture their own rooms as they draw.
3. Students add furniture and objects from their room:
 - A bed can start as a box shape.
 - A desk or dresser can be built from rectangles.
 - Posters, windows, and doors all follow the same perspective.
 - Encourage them to think about what details make their room their own. Which objects best represent them?
4. As students work, prompt them to reflect:
 - Which objects are most important to include?
 - How does arranging the space on paper make them think differently about their room?
 - Does their drawing feel private, welcoming, organized, chaotic?
5. At the end of class, ask students to share their drawings. They can explain one detail they chose to include that makes their room feel personal.



Derek Besant
Passenger, 1983
Watercolour, ink on paper
33 x 33 in
Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts



Glossary

Art Movements & Styles

Realism – A 19th-century art movement that depicted everyday life and ordinary subjects with truth and accuracy, rejecting idealization.

Photorealism – A style from the 1960s–70s in which artists used photographs as source material, replicating them in paint with exacting detail.

Hyperrealism – An extension of photorealism, emphasizing heightened textures, contrasts, and psychological depth to create images “more real than real.”

Artistic Concepts & Terms

Uncanny – An effect where something feels both familiar and strange at the same time, often producing unease.

Composition – The arrangement of visual elements in an artwork.

Subject matter – The objects, figures, or themes depicted in an artwork.

Still life – A work of art depicting inanimate objects, often arranged for study or symbolism.

Medium – The material(s) used to create an artwork (e.g., oil paint, charcoal, digital media).

Elements of Composition

Line – A mark that defines shape, contour, or outline; can also suggest volume or movement

Colour – Light reflected from objects; includes hue (name), value (lightness/darkness), and intensity (brightness/dullness).

Shape – A two- or three-dimensional enclosed area created when lines meet.

Texture – The surface quality of an object, real or implied.

Space – The area around and between objects; can suggest depth in two-dimensional art.

Techniques

Hatching – Shading using closely spaced parallel lines.

Cross-hatching – Shading with intersecting sets of parallel lines.

Blending – Smoothing marks to create gradations of tone.

Stippling – Shading using many small dots.

Light & Optics

Reflection – Light bouncing off a surface.

Refraction – Light bending as it passes through a material.

Transmission – Light passing through a material.

Absorption – Light being taken in by a material, rather than reflected.

Image Right

Joice Hall

La Puerta Entrada al Calle De Tenerias #36,
1988
Oil on paper on foamcore
25 x 18 inches
Collection of the Alberta Foundation
for the Arts



