

Painting Nature

Shasei and Painting the Subjective Experience

FEATURED ART

[Puppies by Maruyama Ōkyo](#)



Puppies by Maruyama Ōkyo

Objective One

Students will be able to closely look at a work of art and see beyond the main subject matter to find unique features and details.

Objective Two

Students will be able to examine a work of art to break down its composition into basic shapes and identify other elements of art (space, color, value) and principles of design (patterns).

Objective Three

Students will be able to describe the skills necessary for an artist to successfully work from nature and paint animals realistically.

LESSON PLAN

Objective One

Students will be able to closely look at a work of art and see beyond the subject matter to find unique features and details.

On [Google Slides Page 1](#)

Images	Puppies by Maruyama Ōkyo
Worksheet	See, Think, Wonder, Feel

Introduce students to Ōkyo's *Puppies* using the Worksheet, asking students to respond to the following prompts in this close-looking activity:

- In the first box, draw or write what you see in this artwork.
- In the second box, draw or write what you think or what ideas come to mind when you look at this artwork.
- In the third box, draw or write questions about this artwork or artist.
- In the fourth box, draw or write how this artwork makes you feel.

Objective Two

Students will be able to examine a work of art to break down its composition into basic shapes and identify other elements of art (space, color, value) and principles of design (patterns).

On [Google Slides Page 2](#)

Images	Puppies by Maruyama Ōkyo Puppies by Nagasawa Rosetsu
Video	Rosetsu's Puppies: A Closer Look

Using what students discovered in the first activity, ask students to describe the shapes Ōkyo used to paint the main subject matter—the three puppies. Ask students how he used different shapes in each of them. Ask students to describe where he overlapped those shapes. Continue by describing and exploring the ways in which he arranged space, color, and values throughout the composition. Show the video to consider how Ōkyo painted specific shapes to make the puppies look more realistic. What did they learn from the video? Allow students to add new examples, ideas, questions, or feelings to their Worksheets.

Show students the similar work *Puppies* by another artist, Nagasawa Rosetsu. Ask students what they see, think, wonder, and feel about this work of art. Show students the video of this work. Do they notice any patterns in this work or between the two works?

Objective Three

Students will be able to describe the skills necessary for an artist to successfully work from nature and paint animals realistically.

On [Google Slides Page 3](#)

Images	Three Monkeys and Wasps by Mori Sosen A duck diving by Maruyama Ōkyo
Video	Shasei: Yūtei's Flock of Cranes

Using *Yutei's Cranes* video, investigate the technique of *shasei*, painting directly from nature. Show the video *Shasei: Yūtei's Flock of Cranes*. Discuss the challenges of drawing or painting from nature, especially a group of puppies or a flock of birds. Ask students to describe the challenges faced by Edo artists and what artists might do today to overcome those challenges.

Examine the details in Ōkyo's *A duck diving* and Sosen's *Three Monkeys and Wasps*. What would be most challenging to draw or paint these animals? Build on the previous close-looking activity by describing how the artists use shapes, patterns, color, and changes in value to create realism.

CROSS-CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

Language Arts

Ask students to imagine themselves as the artist to complete a writing activity. Have students choose which animal they would choose to draw from real life (the puppies, the cranes, the duck, the monkeys, or the wasps). Challenge students to describe what materials they would need to complete a drawing, where they would need to go to closely observe the animals, how they would begin the drawing, what they would need to do to create an accurate drawing, etc. You could also, either additionally or alternately, ask students to describe why they chose to draw that animal over the others in a quick-writing activity.