

Depicting Birds and Animals

Fish

FEATURED ART

[Carp by Shibata Zeshin](#)



Carp by Shibata Zeshin

Objective One

Students will be able to closely examine a work of art to recreate the subject matter in detail.

Objective Two

Students will be able to compare and contrast the ways in which artists represent the same subject matter.

Objective Three

Students will be able to describe how the use of elements such as line, shape, and color along with principles of design such as pattern can enhance a work of art.

LESSON PLAN

Objective One

Students will be able to closely examine a work of art to recreate the subject matter in detail.

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Image [Carp by Shibata Zeshin](#)

Introduce students to Edo-period fish paintings by projecting Zeshin's *Carp* on the board for only thirty seconds. Give students thirty seconds to draw what they saw. Have students flip over their paper before showing Zeshin's *Carp* again for only twenty seconds, telling them to look for details that they might have missed. Give students twenty seconds to flip over their drawing and add those details. Repeat a third time for only ten seconds.

Debrief with a comparison of students examining their work and the painting. Have students hold up their drawing next to the painting, comparing the two works. Point out details that students drew and those they missed. Ask students to explain what might have helped them draw the fish more accurately.

Objective Two

Students will be able to compare and contrast the ways in which artists represent the same subject matter.

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Images	Carp by Shibata Zeshin Carp by Kuroda Toko Carp by Maruyama Ōkyo
Videos	Heron on a Willow Branch and Carp: A Closer Look Swimming Dolphins
Assigned Readings	Introduction to Fish "Fish and Turtles" by Kit Brooks from Catalogue of the Feinberg Collection of Japanese Art by Rachel Saunders and Harvard Art Museums

Explain that artists of the Edo period closely observed their subjects to accurately represent them down to the smallest detail, in this case, watching carp swim underwater. Show the *Heron on a Willow Branch and Carp* video, which includes another carp painted by Maruyama Ōkyo. What details do students notice about the carp swimming in the video or in the scroll painted by Ōkyo that they did not see in the painting by Zeshin?

Share Kuroda Toko's carp painting and the Ōkyo carp screen, asking students to examine and compare these works. Note that each work uses different techniques for depicting fish underwater, adding information from the lesson's Introduction to student responses.

Read excerpts from Kit Brooks's *Fish and Turtles* analysis and show the video *Swimming Dolphins*. Using specific visual evidence from any of these works of art, ask students how artists used materials and techniques to realistically paint fish in their natural environment.

Objective Three

Students will be able to describe how the use of elements such as line, shape, and color along with principles of design such as pattern can enhance a work of art.

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Images

[Carp by Shibata Zeshin](#)

[Carp by Kuroda Toko](#)

[Carp by Maruyama Ōkyo](#)

Ask students to reexamine their drawing and using one of the examples of water depicted in the art, add several lines to their drawing to create the impression their fish is underwater. Where did they choose to add those lines? How would they describe the lines they added? Would they choose a different medium to create these lines, and if so, what would be best?

Examine the details of the format in which Zeshin's carp is presented, noting how the lines used in this border are reflective of the lines and shapes used by the artist in the painting. Discuss how the use of line, shape, color, and pattern in the silk border impacts the overall image. Have students finish their drawing by creating a unique border that also enhances the image they represented.