

Artistic Techniques

Tarashikomi—Wet on Wet Ink

FEATURED ART

[*Dragons and Clouds* by Tawaraya Sōtatsu](#)



Dragons and Clouds by Tawaraya Sōtatsu

Objective One

Students will be able to compare and contrast parts of an artwork for visual and thematic connections.

Objective Two

Students will be able to identify examples of *tarashikomi* in a series of artworks.

Objective Three

Students will be able to write a poem or create an object using *tarashikomi* to enhance a work of art.

Assigned Readings for Teachers

1. [Introduction to *Tarashikomi*](#)
2. [“Formats and Techniques: How did Edo Period Japanese Live with Art?” by Brenda Jordan](#)
3. [Yukio Lippit interview, *Dragons and Clouds*](#)

LESSON PLAN

Objective One

Students will be able to compare and contrast parts of an artwork for visual and thematic connections.

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Image	Dragons and Clouds by Tawaraya Sōtatsu
Video	Tarashikomi: Falling Rain
Worksheet	Project Zero Thinking Routine: Elaboration Game

Introduce students to Sōtatsu’s *Dragons and Clouds* using the Project Zero Elaboration Game in which one person identifies a specific section of the artwork and describes what they see in one sentence. A second person elaborates on the first person’s observations by adding more detail, followed by a third person who elaborates further by adding more detail. After three (or more) people have described one part of the artwork, another student selects a new section of the artwork to begin describing as the process starts over.

After several rounds, ask students to identify any similarities they find between various parts of the artwork. Make sure to point out examples of line and value, explaining how the ink is applied to the wet paper using the technique of *tarashikomi*. Watch the video *Tarashikomi: Falling Rain* to see these details.

Objective Two

Students will be able to identify examples of *tarashikomi* in a series of artworks.

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Images	The Ivy Way through Mt. Utsu by Sakai Hōitsu The Ivy Way through Mt. Utsu Detail #1
Video	Tarashikomi: The Ivy Way through Mt. Utsu Impressions of Nature: Mist #1
Worksheets	Peonies and Butterfly and Moon and Autumn Plants

Show students the video *Mist #1* and ask them to describe the movement of the atmosphere. Follow this with the video exploring *The Ivy Way through Mt. Utsu*. Ask students to identify the ways in which the artist captures a sense of atmosphere in this two-panel screen.

Have students closely examine the screen, paying close attention to the trees and rocks on Mt. Utsu. Ask students to describe how they think the artist used different techniques to create specific features with statements that begin with “This looks like” Refer to this lesson’s Introduction for more details on various painting methods.

Provide students with worksheet copies of either *Peonies and Butterfly* or *Moon and Autumn Plants*, also by Hōitsu, asking them to identify parts of each work that use similar painting techniques. Ask them to describe the ways in which the work is similar to *The Ivy Way through Mt. Utsu* and how it is different.

Objective Three

Students will be able to write a poem or create an object using *tarashikomi* to enhance a work of art.

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Images

[Peonies and Butterfly by Sakai Hōitsu](#)
[Peonies and Butterfly Detail #1](#)

Focus students with a closer exploration of *Peonies and Butterfly Detail #1*, pointing out that this scroll also includes a poem written in Chinese, [translated on the NMAA](#) art page. The three elements of painting, calligraphy, and poetry are often seen together in Japanese art, especially on hanging scrolls like this one.

Ask students how they might want to fill in more of the space at the top of this scroll. Would they write another poem, or make another butterfly? Or would they choose to leave it empty? Provide resources if they want to write their own free-verse poem about this art or create another butterfly using the *tarashikomi* technique. If they choose to leave the space empty, have students write a brief reflection explaining their reasons for this choice.