

Drawing on Cultural Exchange

Grades – 3-8 (with grade-level modifications)

Time – 2 class periods

Essential Questions

- How do cultures, communities, and artists exchange ideas?
- How do artists use drawing to make observations about the world around them?
- How do artists use the art element of line to create dynamic characters/figures?

Key Concepts/Vocabulary/Art Elements

Line, caricature, influence, cultural exchange, bookbinding

Materials

Drawing paper, pencils, erasers, black markers, heavy decorative paper or cardstock, two-hole punch, jumbo paper clips, twine/ribbon/yarn, tape, beads, scissors

Artwork in Focus

- *Chinese Opera Singer*, 1930s, Miguel Covarrubias
- *Miguel, Rosa, and Bernadette at Dining Table in Train*, 1930s, Miguel Covarrubias
- *Girl Peeking over a Wall*, 1930s, Zhang Guangyu

Talking About Art

Look at the artwork *Miguel, Rosa, and Bernadette at Dining Table in Train*, by Miguel Covarrubias. What is going on in the picture? What are the characters doing? How are their activities similar and how are they different? Notice the kind of utensils both tables are using and the way the people are dressed. Where do you think they might be? What materials do you think the artist used to make this piece?

Now look at *Chinese Opera Singer*, by Miguel Covarrubias and *Girl Peeking over a Wall*, by Zhang Guangyu. What is similar about the two drawings and what is different? How do the two artists use lines to show movement?

In the 1930s Mexican artist Miguel Covarrubias (1895 - 1970) traveled to Shanghai, China, where he was introduced to several young artists and illustrators. At the time, Shanghai was a dynamic city where food, fashion, architecture, and art from all over the world could be experienced by visitors. Referred to as the “Prince of Caricature”, Covarrubias was famous in both Mexico and the U.S. for his illustrations published in the *New Yorker* and *Vanity Fair* magazines, as well as for his anthropological research. During his visit, Covarrubias shared his ideas and techniques for drawing, which inspired Chinese artists Zhang Guangyu (1900 - 1964) and Qianyu Ye (1907 - 1996), among others, to try them in their own work. Ye is quoted saying that after meeting Covarrubias, he “started to carry a carry a sketch book to draw [his] daily observations” rather than relying solely on personal memory.

Guangyu and Covarrubias also saw many similarities in their work, such as bold use of lines and exaggerated figures, known as *caricatures*. Known for his unique style that combined traditional Chinese techniques with modern European ones, Guangyu believed that Chinese artists “should fuse useful elements from the outside while not losing [their] own cultural identity”.

This original meeting between Covarrubias and the artists of Shanghai led to a larger exchange of art and ideas between Mexico and China that spanned several decades. In 1955, Beijing hosted an exhibition of more than 60 Mexican artists, including Diego Rivera, Jose Clemente Orozco, and David Alfaro Siqueiros. The style of these artists was new and modern to the Chinese, who were working in the Social Realism style during the era of the Chinese Cultural Revolution, requiring them to put political ideology before creativity.

This exchange had a lasting influence on Chinese artists, as seen in the Mural Movement that occurred in China after the end of the Cultural Revolution following the death of Mao Zedong. Artists began creating large paintings in public spaces, such as airports, libraries, and theaters, which reflected the idea that art was for everyone.

Artist, cultures, and communities have exchanged ideas, traditions, technologies, etc. for centuries. Think about how other people and/or cultures have influenced you. What tools do you use, food do you eat, clothes do you wear, or music do you listen to that originated in another culture or community? Have your friends ever inspired you to create art in a new way?

Creating Art

Consider how other cultures influence you, your community, and your city. Write down a list of at least five (5) ways. Now, create a ledger style book that will serve as a place to sketch observations of the various cultural influences you experience.

First, to make your book you will choose paper for the covers. Cardstock or heavy decorative paper works best. Cut the sheet in half to make the front and back covers (5 ½” x 8 ½” from a standard sheet of paper).

Next, cut down your drawing paper to the same size and use a paper clip to hold the drawing paper evenly in between the two covers. Then use a two-hole punch to make holes on the short end of the paper.

After, cut two pieces of string and bind the book (see instructions for “Binding a Ledger Book”).

Now you can begin using your book for drawing. Like Miguel Covarrubias and Zhang Guangyu, use lines to show movement, characters, and details. Remember that simplicity can go a long way when making drawings. Consider exaggerating the features of the things you draw to create a caricature. For tips on using lines, refer to the “Art Element - Line” sheet.

Grade Level Modifications

Lower elementary – Create a list of things and ideas you share/exchange with your friends and communities. Create a simple, folded book for drawing the examples you came up with.

Upper elementary – Write complete sentences and/or short essays about the ways in which cultures, communities, and artists influence one another.

Middle/High School – Incorporate essay writing for students to analyze and respond to ways in which artistic and cultural exchanges have influenced politics, societies, fashion, etc.

Reflection

- How have you been influenced by friends and neighbors from another culture?
- What family and cultural traditions have you shared with friends and classmates?
- What are some benefits of cultural exchange?

Curriculum Connections

CCSS.ELA. Writing 3-5; 6-12

3.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly

7.1 Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

CCSS.ELA. Language 3-5

5.1 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking

CCSS.ELA. Speaking and Listening. 6-12

6-12.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions

National Core Arts Standards (Visual Arts)

3rd - VA: Cr3.1.3a - Elaborate visual information by adding details in an artwork to enhance emerging meaning

4th - VA: Re.7.2.4a - Analyze components in visual imagery that convey messages

5th - VA: Cr2.3.5a - Identify, describe, and visually document places and/or objects of personal significance.

6th - VA: Cr1.1.6a - Combine concepts collaboratively to generate innovative ideas for creating art.

Resources

Zhang Guangyu

<http://u.osu.edu/mclc/2015/12/15/remembering-zhang-guangyu/>

Miguel Covarrubias

<http://npg.si.edu/blog/miguel-covarrubias-caricatures-jazz-age-and-harlem-renaissance>

Shengtian Zheng (co-curator of *Winds from Fusang*)

<http://shengproject.com/index.html>

Educator Night@PAM, spring 2018

Lesson prepared by Peggy Hasegawa in collaboration with USC Pacific Asia Museum Education Staff



Miguel Covarrubias (Mexico, 1904–57)
Chinese Opera Singer, early 1930s
Ink on paper
Loaned by ShiXiang Art Space



Miguel Covarrubias (Mexico, 1904–57)

Miguel, Rosa, and Bernadette at Dining Table in Train, 1930s

Ink and pencil on paper

Adriana and Tom Williams Collection of Miguel Covarrubias, Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas, Austin



Zhang Guangyu (China, 1900–64)
Girl Peeking over a Wall, 1930s
Ink on paper
Loaned by ShiXiang Art Space

Art Element

Line

A line is an identifiable path connecting two points in space. It is one-dimensional and can vary in width, direction, and length. Lines often define the edges of a shape or form.

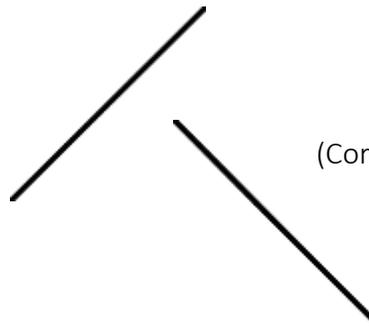
Line Directions



Vertical
(Up and Down)



Horizontal
(Side to Side)

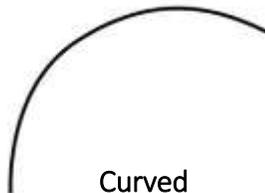


Diagonal
(Corner to Corner/Slanted)

Line Qualities



Wavy



Curved



Spiral



Zigzag



Broken



Thick



Thin

Tips for Using Lines in Drawing:

- Use curved and wavy lines to show movement
- Vary thicknesses of lines for visual interest
- Drawing lines close together creates an illusion of shading
- When drawing complex shapes, look closely at the line directions and qualities that make them up

Binding a “Ledger Book”

Step 1 – Cut two pieces of cord, about 24 inches long each

Step 2 – Working one hole at a time, push cord through the hole, leaving a tail on the front of the book, approx. 10 inches long

Step 3 – Go over the top of the book and through the same hole

Step 4 – Come back over the side and push cord through the same hole one more time

Step 5 – Repeat on the other side

Step 6 – Add beads to the cord and tie both ends together to finish your book

