

# *Abstraction as Interpretation*

## **Unit Template for EDAR 283**

Rachael Wells- AP ART/Advanced ART

### **Unit Overview**

**Enduring Idea:** Through abstracting the world around us, and especially things that are close to us, we can create unique, personal and shared meanings for what we're already familiar with, and therefore be able to accept a life that is due to rapid changes.

**Unit:** Abstraction through photography, drawing and painting or sculpture of the subject of the student's choice.

**Rationale:** As young adults progress through high school and transfer to new lifestyles after grade school, it is imperative for them to keep an open mind to change. The transition from high school into their choice of a lifestyle in the outside world is a challenge for many. It is common for students to feel anxiety due to high levels of uncertainty during this time of their lives. One way to manage this uncertainty is to confront it directly through art.

Students will be observing and visually recording the familiar world around them, taking some time to process what is and has been familiar to them over the course of their lives. Then, just as time will do, they will be challenged to create and accept their world in a different way. Students will do this by creating a photographic representation of their familiar world, and will be challenged to abstract those images by drawing and painting. Through the act of abstracting what they hold dear, students will be able to process the idea that everything has the ability to change and hold new meanings of aspects of their life over time.

### **Unit Objectives:**

- Becoming more comfortable with change.
- Confronting what is familiar and what is unfamiliar.
- Finding new meanings and purposes for early life memories, through observational documentation and abstraction.

**Lesson 1:** Students will photograph their lives, taking pictures of the places, people and things they cherish the most and that they think will influence their choices in the future. The concept of this lesson is to visualize what "home" is to them, through

photography, and to brainstorm how their “home” could eventually morph into new “homes.” Students will create a printed journal of their photographs.

**Lesson 2:** Each student will take the subject of one photograph, and draw or paint it in an abstract style. This lesson will start with the students writing down what they value in the subject and how it has contributed to their life. Then, they will draw the subject from memory as quickly as they can with progressively shorter time intervals, in class. The students will create a drawing or painting using the influence of the feeling that the subject gives them, and the feeling they believe they would have without it. Students will be prompted to use the quick drawings as a reference point for abstracting their paintings through abstracting shape and form.

## Recording the Recognizable

What is “HOME” to you?



**Teacher:** Rachael Wells

**Grade Level or class:** Advanced Art Grade 11

([https://pro.magnumphotos.com/CS.aspx?VP3=CMS3&VF=MAX031\\_3&IID=2K1HRGWN3E6S&PN=8](https://pro.magnumphotos.com/CS.aspx?VP3=CMS3&VF=MAX031_3&IID=2K1HRGWN3E6S&PN=8))

### NCAS Standards:

**Artistic Process: Connecting**

**Anchor standard:** Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.

**Performance indicator:** Synthesize knowledge of personal life with art-making approaches to create meaningful works of art.

**Artistic Process: Presenting**

**Anchor Standard:** Convey meaning through presentation of artistic work.

**Performance Indicators:** Curate a collection of artwork to impact the viewer’s understanding of social, cultural, and/or political experiences.

### Project Summary and Rationale:

The prompt for this lesson is for students to represent their personal values, social, cultural, and/or political experiences when putting together a visual representation of their definition of *home*. Students will photograph their lives by taking pictures of the places, people and things they cherish the most and that they think will influence their choices in the future. Each student will create a printed journal of his or her ten favorite photographs. Once the journals are created, each student will explain why they chose each photograph in relation to the prompt. The students will take a gallery walk around

the classroom to view everyone's journals and statements. Students will choose one photograph of their own or of someone else's that speaks to them in relation to the prompt. These chosen photos will be manipulated in the following lesson through abstraction.

Photography is an avenue that enables students to closely observe and document the objects, places, and design that define, shape, enhance, and empower their lives. Photography therefore allows students to convey their own meaning to the prompt of visualizing *home*. This is an important theme to consider as students develop into young adults and approach their graduation dates. It is common for students to feel anxiety due to high levels of uncertainty during this time of their lives, as their definitions of *home* are likely due to change. For this reason, it is imperative for students to keep an open mind to change. This project aims to help students develop an open style of thinking by first documenting their *home* and in the next lesson, abstracting the students' approach. One way to manage student uncertainty to the world outside grade school is to confront it directly through the complex thinking of the artistic process.

### **Enduring Understandings**

- Objects, artifacts, and artworks collected preserved or presented, either by artists, museums, or other venues communicate meaning and a record of social, cultural, and political experiences resulting in the cultivating of appreciation and understanding.
- People create and interact with objects, places, and design that define, shape, enhance, and empower our lives.

### **Essential Questions**

- How does art preserve aspects of life?
- Why do people value artifacts, artworks and objects and select them for presentation?
- How do objects, places, and design shape our lives and communities?
- How do objects, artifacts, and artworks collected, preserved, or presented, cultivate appreciation and understanding?
- How does the presenting and sharing of objects, artifacts, and artworks influence and shape ideas, beliefs, and experiences?

### **Knowledge Objectives/Learning Targets-**

#### **Students will know:**

- How to use their phone camera (or school camera) to take meaningful photographs, using depth of field, focus and a variety of compositions catered to the subject they choose to photograph.
- Collect specific photographs to create a cohesive body of artwork developed for a specific theme.

### **Skills Objectives/Learning Targets**

**Students will be able to:**

- Create a visual representation of their definition of *home*.
- Develop individual thought and create a collection of art that conveys their thoughts on the theme.

**Materials:**

- Cameras for all students who do not have phone cameras or personal cameras to use, a photo printer, photo paper and colored ink, hole punchers, markers, hard covers and colored yarn for the journals.

**Resources:** Photographers who photograph home examples on this website:

<https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/gallery/2018/may/18/home-through-the-eyes-of-photographers-around-the-world-in-pictures>

**Vocabulary:** Culture, home, depth of field, focus, composition, leading lines, foreground, background.

**Motivation:**

- Freedom to photograph what they want.
- Investigation of examples from photographers and their photographic definition of *home*, across the globe.

**Lesson Sequence:**

**Introduction of the lesson:**

- Each student will receive a sheet of paper outlining the lesson prompt, expectations, and photography techniques/terms.
- The class will look at the website provided above in Resources.
- The class will discuss what home means to them and what it could mean to the artists through visual thinking strategies, while looking at the website.
- A list of key words will be made by the class on the whiteboard for their thoughts on the bullet above.

**Implementation of the lesson-**

- The photography terms will be presented to the class with visuals, as they will be on their lesson sheet as well.
- Students will then be asked to either pull out their phone camera or will be given a camera from the school and practice working with their cameras. The students who are already comfortable with their cameras can work on some of the photography techniques as they take pictures in the classroom and can get started on the project if they choose.
- The class will complete their *home* photographs during the last 20 minutes of class and outside of class.
- Students will send their ten photographs to Ms. Wells' email before or at the start of the next class.

**Closure of the Lesson**

- The next time the class meets, the photographs will be printed and the students can assemble their journals.
- Once all journals are completed, the class will do a gallery walk to see each journal and hear from the artist.
- Each student will choose one photograph of their own or someone else's to abstract in the next lesson.

**Differentiated Strategies:**

- Present instruction/resources verbally and visually.
- Modify tools and materials for use by students with disabilities.
- Adjust timelines to provide additional time for students with disabilities to complete work.
- Provide various means through which students with disabilities can communicate their ideas or questions.
- Encourage students with high ability to modify or interpret outcomes to capture greater levels of complexity or sophistication in interpretations of ideas or topics.
- Provide varying means through which students can express what they have learned.
- Encourage students to explore various subtopics of a larger topic or issue.
- Identify student readiness and learning differences and modify instruction to meet varying needs of students.
- Have student work in group with defined jobs, allowing for writing and verbal abilities to share thoughts/opinions.

**Assessment:**

**Formative:** Student check-ins while they work, and student participation in the individual project and class activities.

**Summative:** The class gallery-walk with artist introductions and presentations of journals.

## Recording the Recognizable **in the Abstract**

What is “HOME” to you?



<https://www.dailypainters.com/paintings/223913/Abstract-painting-shoes-abstract-art-colorful-by-Debra-Hurd/Debra-Hurd/>

**Teacher:** Rachael Wells

**Grade Level or class:** Advanced Art Grade 11

**NCAS Standards:**

**Artistic Process: Responding**

**Anchor standard:** Perceive and analyze artistic work.

**Performance indicator:** Analyze how responses to art develop over time based of knowledge of and experience with art and life.

**Artistic Process: Creating**

**Anchor Standard:** Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

**Performance Indicators:** Demonstrate in works of art or design how visual and material culture defines, shapes, enhances inhibits and or empowers people’s lives.

**Project Summary and Rationale:**

The prompt for this lesson is for students to represent their personal values, social, cultural, and political experiences when putting together a visual representation of their definition of **home**. Each student will work with one of the photographs from their journal they made in the previous lesson that communicates their definition of **home**. This lesson will start with the students writing down what they value in the subject of the photograph they chose and how it has and will contribute to their life. Then, they will draw the subject from memory as quickly as they can with progressively shorter time intervals. Students will then take the subject of that photograph, and draw or paint it in an abstract style using the quick drawings as a reference point for abstracting shape and form and influence from examples by an abstract artist of their choice. They will create this piece of artwork while considering the question, “How can I best represent through (abstracted color, shape and form) what this subject means to me and what it will mean to me in the future?”

Abstraction is an avenue that enables students to closely examine their personal subject in a way that they may not be used to. They can therefore translate their definition of **home**, which is all they have known, to a new possible definition for the future. By abstracting their visual **home**, and considering the questions above while doing so, students are able to prepare themselves for the change that awaits them on graduation day. This is an important theme to consider as students develop into young adults and approach new lifestyles outside of grade school. It is common for students to feel anxiety due to high levels of uncertainty during this time of their lives, as their definitions of **home** are likely due to abrupt change. For this reason, it is imperative for students to keep an open mind to change. One way to manage student anxiety is to confront it directly through the complex thinking of the artistic abstracting process.

### **Enduring Understandings**

- Objects, artifacts, and artworks collected preserved or presented, either by artists, museums, or other venues communicate meaning and a record of social, cultural, and political experiences resulting in the cultivating of appreciation and understanding.
- Artists and designers experiment with forms, structures, materials, concepts, media, and art-making approaches.

### **Essential Questions**

- How do life experiences influence the way we interact with art?
- How do artists and designers determine whether a particular direction in their work is effective?
- Do objects, places and design shape lives and communities?
- How do objects, artifacts and artworks, collected, preserved, or presented, cultivate appreciation and understanding?
- How does refining artwork affect its meaning to the viewer?

## **Knowledge Objectives/Learning Targets-**

### **Students will know:**

- What abstract art is.
- What the term *non-representational* means.

## **Skills Objectives/Learning Targets**

### **Students will be able to:**

- Reimagine a visual that they created, in an abstract manner.
- Create an abstract drawing or painting while considering the question, “How can I best represent through (abstracted color, shape and form) what this subject means to me and what it will mean to me in the future?”
- Consider the styles and techniques of abstract artists for inspiration in their own non-representational artwork.

### **Materials:**

- PowerPoint of abstract artists, their techniques and their artwork, which highlights the style they used. Copies of chosen photographs from the previous lesson, paper, drawing pencils, erasers, large drawing paper for final drawings, large, pre-gesso canvases for final paintings, paint, brushes, containers for water, water, pallets, pallet knives.

**Resources:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3kdzGAjG26s>

**Vocabulary:** Culture, home, abstraction, realism, composition, color, form, shape.

### **Motivation:**

- Abstract artist PowerPoint.
- Abstract art video with examples from historical and contemporary artists.
- Freedom to abstract their subject in whatever way they want.
- Freedom to use inspiration from any abstract artist.

## **Lesson Sequence:**

### **Introduction of the lesson: 1<sup>st</sup> class**

- The class will draw their photographs by studying them for 30 seconds and drawing them for 2 minutes, then one minute, then 30 seconds, then 10 seconds.
- Each student will receive a sheet of paper outlining the lesson prompt, expectations, and vocabulary with definitions.

- The class will go over the expectations of what is expected of them in this lesson.
- The class will watch the video provided above in Resources.
- Class discussion of their understanding of abstract art.
- PowerPoint examples of abstract art styles with corresponding print outs of styles for students to take to guide them in the project (one for each student).

### **Implementation of the lesson- 2<sup>nd</sup> class**

- Each student will get a large piece of drawing paper, or canvas to start their project.
- Students can use inspirations of form, shape, and color from their quick drawings and from the abstract artwork style they chose.

### **Closure of the Lesson**

- Each student will generate a title for their work and the class will have a final critique and sharing time, possibly in the next class.
- Each individual will explain the process they went through to make their piece, during the critique.

### **Differentiated Strategies:**

- Present instruction/resources verbally and visually.
- Modify tools and materials for use by students with disabilities.
- Adjust timelines to provide additional time for students with disabilities to complete work.
- Provide various means through which students with disabilities can communicate their ideas or questions.
- Encourage students with high ability to modify or interpret outcomes to capture greater levels of complexity or sophistication in interpretations of ideas or topics.
- Provide varying means through which students can express what they have learned.
- Encourage students to explore various subtopics of a larger topic or issue.
- Identify student readiness and learning differences and modify instruction to meet varying needs of students.
- Have student work in group with defined jobs, allowing for writing and verbal abilities to share thoughts/opinions.

### **Assessment:**

**Formative:** Student check-ins while they work, and student participation in the individual project and class activities.

**Summative:** The class critique and individual's explanations of their process during the critique. Students will also be asked to evaluate themselves on the unit rubric.

<p><b>Artistic Process</b></p> <p><b>Create</b></p>	<p><b>Anchor standard:</b> Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.</p> <p><b>Performance indicator:</b> Experiment, plan and make works of art that explore a personally meaningful idea or concept of <i>home</i>.</p>				
<p><b>Proficiency-Learning Target</b></p>	<p><b>Exemplary</b></p> <p><b>4</b></p>	<p><b>Proficient</b></p> <p><b>3</b></p>	<p><b>Developing</b></p> <p><b>2</b></p>	<p><b>Beginning</b></p> <p><b>1</b></p>	<p><b>Score</b></p>
<p>I can experiment, plan and make works of art that explore a personally meaningful idea or concept of <i>home</i>.</p>	<p>I can experiment, plan and make works of art that clearly explore a personally meaningful idea or concept of <i>home</i>.</p>	<p>I can experiment, plan and make works of art that somewhat explores a personally meaningful idea or concept of <i>home</i>.</p>	<p>I can experiment, plan and make works of art that vaguely explores a personally meaningful idea or concept of <i>home</i>.</p>	<p>I can experiment, plan and make works of art that doesn't quite explore a personally meaningful idea or concept of <i>home</i>.</p>	
<p>I can reimagine an existing image in the abstract.</p>	<p>I can reimagine an existing image in the abstract to the highest level.</p>	<p>I can reimagine an existing image in the abstract to an acceptable level.</p>	<p>I can reimagine an existing image in the abstract to a minimal level.</p>	<p>I can reimagine an existing image in the abstract to an unacceptable level.</p>	

<b>Artistic Process</b> <b>Connect</b>	<b>Anchor standard:</b> Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art. <b>Performance indicator:</b> Synthesize knowledge of personal life with art-making approaches to create meaningful works of art.				
<b>Proficiency-Learning Target</b>	<b>Exemplary</b> <b>4</b>	<b>Proficient</b> <b>3</b>	<b>Developing</b> <b>2</b>	<b>Beginning</b> <b>1</b>	<b>Score</b>
I can combine my personal values with art-making approaches to create a meaningful work of art.	I can always combine my personal values with art-making approaches to create a meaningful work of art.	I can often combine my personal values with art-making approaches to create a meaningful work of art.	I can sometimes consider my personal values with art-making approaches to create a meaningful work of art.	I can rarely consider my personal values with art-making approaches to create a meaningful work of art.	
I can consider the styles and techniques of abstract artists for inspiration in my own artwork.	I can consider the styles and techniques of abstract artists for maximum inspiration in my own artwork.	I can consider the styles and techniques of abstract artists for satisfactory inspiration in my own artwork.	I can consider the styles and techniques of abstract artists for minimal inspiration in my own artwork.	I can consider the styles and techniques of abstract artists for unsatisfactory inspiration in my own artwork.	

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<b>Artistic Process</b> <b>Present</b>	<b>Anchor standard:</b> Convey meaning through presentation of artistic work. <b>Performance indicator:</b> Curate a collection of artwork to impact the viewer’s understanding of social, cultural, and/or political experiences.				
<b>Proficiency-Learning Target</b>	<b>Exemplary</b> 4	<b>Proficient</b> 3	<b>Developing</b> 2	<b>Beginning</b> 1	<b>Score</b>
I can visually convey my theme of <i>home</i> .	I can visually convey an articulate definition of <i>home</i> .	I can visually convey an understandable definition of <i>home</i> .	I can visually convey a vague definition of <i>home</i> .	I can visually convey a rarely clear definition of <i>home</i> .	

<b>Artistic Process</b> <b>Respond</b>	<b>Anchor standard:</b> Perceive and analyze artistic work. <b>Performance indicator:</b> Analyze how responses to art develop over time based of knowledge of and experience with art and life.				
<b>Proficiency-Learning Target</b>	<b>Exemplary</b> 4	<b>Proficient</b> 3	<b>Developing</b> 2	<b>Beginning</b> 1	<b>Score</b>

<p>I can share my ideas of how responses to art develop over time based of knowledge of and experience with art and life.</p>	<p>I can share intuitive ideas of how responses to art develop over time based of knowledge of and experience with art and life.</p>	<p>I can share somewhat intuitive ideas of how responses to art develop over time based of knowledge of and experience with art and life.</p>	<p>I can share somewhat instinctive ideas of how responses to art develop over time based of knowledge of and experience with art and life.</p>	<p>I can share random ideas of how responses to art develop over time based of knowledge of and experience with art and life.</p>	
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