

Art Mobile of Montana

Grades: K-12

Ledger Art Colored Pencil and Marker on Recycled Materials

This lesson is inspired by the Native American tradition of recording history and culturally relevant stories on recycled ledger paper, obtained from white settlers through trade.

Length: 30 minutes to an hour, depending on age

Objectives:

1. Students will learn about the tradition of Ledger Art by looking at art by Montana artists John Pepion, Lauren Monroe and Gordon Henry.
2. Students will think of a story from their own past, a defining moment or “culturally relevant” story about their family, to draw.
3. Students will employ 2D drawing techniques, colored pencils and Sharpie to obtain the same drawing style as modern Ledger Artists.
4. Students will respond to their own artwork, share with others, and engage with others’ work.

MT Art Standards:

- Content Standard 1—Students create, perform/exhibit, and respond in the Arts.
- Content Standard 2—Students apply and describe the concepts, structures, and processes in the Arts.
- Content Standard 3—Students develop and refine arts skills and techniques to express ideas, pose and solve problems, and discover meaning
- Content Standard 4—Students analyze characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others.

Materials:

- Ledger paper, or recycled homework
- Colored pencils
- Pencil
- Sharpie
- “Fun” markers – silver, shiny blue, any available interesting materials.

Vocabulary:

- Culture

- Ledger Art
- Tribal Art
- Native American
- Tradition
- Oral History

Artist Reference:

- John Pepion, Browning MT
- Lauren Monroe, Browning MT
- Gordon Henry, Harlem MT
- Ledger Art pamphlets from OPI featuring ledger art from the early 1900's

Process

1. Discussion

What is Ledger Art? Why was ledger paper used by early Native Americans? Why do modern Native artists employ the same techniques? Why is it important to record history? What is significant about ledger art itself that might make its use more meaningful?

2. What is something defining from your own history?

Traditionally, Native American ledger art was used to record historical events, such as battles, hunts and ceremonies. What is something from your life that is "historic," or culturally important to your identity? Tell that story with an image drawn with the technique of John Pepion. Use clean lines, bright colors, and Sharpie to achieve his style. Use ledger paper from the Art Mobile, or recycled homework (if suggested beforehand.)

3. Guessing Each Other's Sound

Once students begin to finish their paintings, have them come up to the front of the classroom with their drawings. Have them tell their stories and take questions from their classmates.