

AGNES ETHERINGTON ART CENTRE AT QUEEN'S



John Stanley Walsh, *Expo '67 at Night*, 1967, watercolour on paper. Gift of Rita Maloney, 2011 (54-018)

Teachers' Notes: Nocturne

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Introduction

We encourage you to use this document to prepare your students for their virtual visit to Agnes and to extend the experience in your classroom.

Our school programs challenge students to develop critical thinking skills. To support the acquisition of flexible and imaginative thinking skills, we ask questions and set tasks requiring students to:

- Observe
- Interpret
- Compare
- Create

These skills are paramount for student development and are an integral part of the twenty-first-century learning framework.

A recent study by the University of Arkansas found that art gallery field trips are valuable for the development of critical thinking skills, historical empathy and tolerance of other viewpoints.

For more information please see: <https://www.educationnext.org/the-educational-value-of-field-trips/>

Focus Exhibition

Nocturne

5 September 2020–11 April 2020

Curated by Marla Dobson, Assistant Curator, Canadian Art

Night has long been an inspiration for artistic expression. The term “nocturne,” first applied to the visual arts by James Abbott McNeill Whistler in the late nineteenth century, evokes the dark and dreamy atmosphere of those hours when the sun travels below the horizon. Many artists have sought to capture the ever-changing quality of light resulting from the transition between day and night. Some have explored the moment when shadows appear with the setting of the sun; others have captured the rising moon and the way it illuminates the landscape. The darkness that reigns in the dead of night can represent a newfound freedom and anonymity—a time in which to dream and live out fantasies and secret desires. But with the sun’s inevitable return, dawn once again brings clarity and sight.

Crossing genres and decades, this exhibition explores the night in the Canadian artistic imaginary and traces the arc of night from sunset to sunrise. This universal daily transformation, which holds power over us all, has unique expression in the Agnes’s collections.

Program

We invite students in grades 1–6 to reflect on the exhibition *Nocturne*. This program includes a video tour (20 minutes) and an art lesson plan (60–75 minutes).

In the tour, we embrace a sensory exploration of the night while we discuss how artists have captured this time in Historical Canadian Art. We examine sources of artistic inspiration such as real life events, memories, emotions and other works of art while discussing poetry, painting and perspective.

In the art lesson, students will explore the moods and magic of nighttime by creating and illustrating an acrostic poem, inspired by paintings in the exhibition *Nocturne*. A lesson plan is supplied (Appendix A).

Objectives:

- To introduce and/or familiarize participants with Agnes and its exhibitions
- To welcome participants and their teachers/attendants into a nourishing and creative environment
- To bring self-awareness to the visual language, composition and connections of artwork by teaching ways of seeing and looking at art and creating art in a “studio activity”
- To consider sources of inspiration in art
- To encourage critical thinking and self-expression in students
- To develop an understanding of atmospheric perspective and how it is achieved
- To access these learning experiences through inquiry, critical thinking and self-expression

Curriculum Connections:

We align our programs to the current Ontario Ministry of Education’s Curriculum documents, to support teachers in meeting curricular objectives.

Education in the arts is essential to students’ intellectual, social, physical and emotional growth and well-being. Experiences in the arts—in dance, drama, music and visual arts—play a valuable role in helping students to achieve their potential as learners and to participate fully in their community and society as a whole. The arts are a vehicle through which students can explore and express themselves and through which they can discover and interpret the world around them (Ministry of Education, Ontario, revised 2009).

The Ministry of Education has issued a guiding framework for experiences in the arts. The framework includes three goals: **participation, analysis and appreciation** and **integration**. Within the framework, expectations have been grouped under three headings: **Creating and Presenting/Performing (D1)**, **Reflecting, Responding and Analyzing (D2)** and **Exploring Forms and Cultural Contexts (D3)**. Our program strives to meet and exceed the Ministry’s program expectations. Additionally, our program features several cross-curricular links.

Grade 1:

Links to Curriculum

- Language:
 - Oral Communication: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 3.1, 3.2
 - Reading: 1.1, 1.3, 1.5, 1.6, 1.8, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3
 - Writing: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.6, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, 3.8, 4.1, 4.2
 - Media Literacy: 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 3.3, 3.4, 4.1, 4.2
- Math: E1
- Social Studies: A3.1

Grade 2:

Links to Curriculum

- Language:
 - Oral Communication: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 2.3, 2.4, 2.6, 2.7, 3.1, 3.2
 - Reading: 1.1, 1.3, 1.5, 1.6, 1.8, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3
 - Writing: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.6, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, 3.8, 4.1, 4.2
 - Media Literacy: 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 3.3., 3.4, 4.1, 4.2
- Math: E1
- Social Studies: A3.4, A3.7

Grade 3:

Links to Curriculum

- Language
 - Oral Communication: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 2.3, 2.4, 2.6, 2.7, 3.1, 3.2
 - Reading: 1.1, 1.3, 1.5, 1.6, 1.8, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3
 - Writing: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.6, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, 3.8, 4.1, 4.2
 - Media Literacy: 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 3.3, 3.4, 4.1, 4.2
- Math: E1

Grade 4:

Links to Curriculum

- Language:
 - Oral Communication: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 2.3, 2.4, 2.6, 2.7, 3.1, 3.2
 - Reading: 1.1, 1.3, 1.6, 1.8, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3
 - Writing: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.6, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, 3.8, 4.1, 4.2
 - Media Literacy: 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 3.3., 3.4, 4.1, 4.2

Grade 5:

Links to Curriculum

- Language:
 - Oral Communication: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 2.3, 2.4, 2.6, 2.7, 3.1, 3.2
 - Reading: 1.1, 1.3, 1.6, 1.8, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3
 - Writing: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.6, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, 3.8, 4.1, 4.2
 - Media Literacy: 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 3.3., 3.4, 4.1, 4.2

Grade 6:

Links to Curriculum

- Language:
 - Oral Communication: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 2.3, 2.4, 2.6, 2.7, 3.1, 3.2
 - Reading: 1.1, 1.3, 1.6, 1.8, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3
 - Writing: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.6, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, 3.8, 4.1, 4.2
 - Media Literacy: 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 3.3., 3.4, 4.1, 4.2
- Social Studies: A1.2, A3.3, A3.8

Before the Visit

The following are suggested discussion topics and activities to help prepare students for their virtual visit.

Galleries:

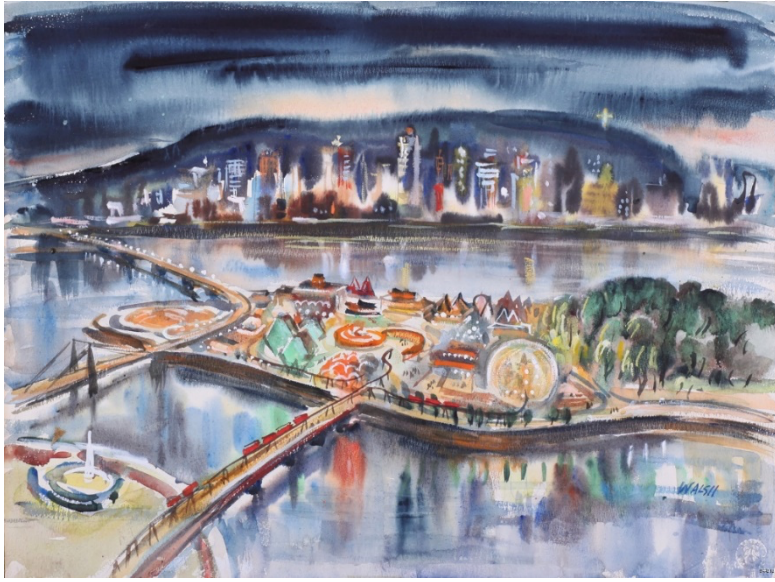
Discuss the nature of a public art gallery with your class:

- Art galleries collect, research, protect, preserve and display original works of art for the benefit of current and future visitors. Art is either purchased by the gallery, or donated (you can find that information on the label beside the work).
- Ask your students if they have been to an art gallery before.
 - What types of art did they see at the art gallery? Such as paintings, prints, sculptures, video, performance art.
- It's important to visit original works of art to fully experience them.
- Unfortunately you cannot currently visit the gallery in large groups such as a class. What are some advantages of seeing art online?
 - You can zoom in and look really close, closer than you're able to in person
 - You can look at a work whenever you want
 - You can look at works of art that are in storage and not available to the public

Themes in the Exhibition/Program:

- The night
- Sources of inspiration
- The link between poetry and visual art
- Different ways you can communicate feeling (through subject, language, colour, artistic expression)
- The use of the senses in understanding art and emotion
- Imagination and creativity in understanding art
- Elements of art: line, shape and form, space, colour, texture, value
- Principles of design: movement, unity and harmony, balance, proportion, emphasis, repetition and rhythm, contrast

Works Discussed



John Stanley Walsh, *Expo '67 at Night*, 1967, watercolour on paper.
Gift of Rita Maloney, 2011 (54-018)



Tudlik, *Bird Dream Forewarning Blizzard*, 1959, stonecut on paper, 21/30. Gift of Mary Robertson, 1985 (28-078)



Cecil Buller, *Skyscrapers* (from the *Song of Solomon* series), 1929, wood engraving on paper, 2/25. Gift of Brian Murphy, 2010 (53-056.13)



William Kurelek, *Milking Cows*, 1964, oil on Masonite.
Collection of The Corporation of the City of Kingston
(KACS14)



Otto Reinhold Jacobi, *Sunrise*, 1877, oil on canvas.
Purchase, Chancellor Richardson Memorial Fund, 2000
(43-004.01)

Extending the Visit

Extend the Agnes experience. Here are a few ideas to support this:

Visual Art:

- Complete the Poets of the Night activity (Appendix A)
- Experiment with watercolour painting. Paint:
 - a recent dream;
 - a sunrise or sunset; or
 - a fair scene.
- Explore printmaking by creating potato or foam stamps on the theme of night.
- Make a moonlit scene using white chalk or pastel on black paper.
- Create a landscape that includes atmospheric and/or diminishing perspective.

Language:

- Compose different styles of poems based on artworks in the exhibitions. Styles include rhyming, ekphrastic and haiku.
- Keep a dream journal.
- Write a spooky nighttime story.
- Read a book:
 - *Imagine a Night* by Sarah L. Thomson
 - *The House in the Night* by Susan Marie Swanson

- *The Darkest Dark* by Chris Hadfield
- *Owl Moon* by Jane Yolen
- *Fireflies* by Julie Brinckloe
- *Junie B. Jones Has a Monster Under her Bed* by Barbara Park
- *The BFG* by Roald Dahl

Resources

Agnes Etherington Art Centre:

The Collections section of our website is a valuable teaching tool. Use the online database to find images and information on works from all of our collections including contemporary and historic art.

<https://agnes.queensu.ca/explore/collections/overview/>

Artful Thinking Program:

http://pzartfulthinking.org/?page_id=2

Visual Thinking Strategies:

<https://vtshome.org>

Accessibility Resources and Information

If you have students in your classroom with sensory needs/considerations or modifications, it might be helpful to review the tour content prior to program delivery. Please contact AEACpa@queensu.ca to discuss this further. Please note, the pre-recorded tour will include visuals, a voice over, music and some sound effects. The video will have closed captioning and a transcript will be available on request.

Appendix A: Poets of the Night: *Nocturne* Art Lesson Plan

Students will explore the moods and magic of nighttime by creating an acrostic poem, inspired by paintings in the exhibition *Nocturne*. Students will practice thoughtful engagement with art and deepen their understanding of concepts introduced in the video and discussion. They will expand their knowledge of art, artistic elements, descriptive writing and poetry.

Materials:

- Lined paper and pencil (for draft poem)
- Thick white art paper 8.5x11 inches or larger (for final artwork)
- Pencil crayons, markers and crayons (for illustration)
- Optional: watercolour paint, brushes, a cup for water, newspaper/paper towel for cleanup

Schedule:

Prior to the activity, teachers can:

- discuss the video and exhibition themes with students (5–10 minutes);
- lead a brainstorming session to develop a list of descriptive words on the theme of “night” (5–10 minutes); and
- introduce the activity and share an example (5–10 minutes).

The teacher can then oversee the following:

- First draft (15 minutes or longer as needed)
- Peer-editing and/or independent proofreading (5-10 minutes)
- Final copy (15 minutes or longer as needed)
- Artmaking (15 minutes or longer as needed)
- Cleanup (5 minutes)
- Optional: present and/or reflect

Brainstorming Session:

As a class, students brainstorm words that describe the night. The teacher can also write out this list for the class. The words should be a minimum of three letters.

Acrostic Poem Activity:

An acrostic poem is a poem where the first letter of each line spells out a word. Students will choose a word on the theme of nighttime. Example words are moon, star, owl, sunset, dream(ing), sleep(ing), etc. The artworks presented in the video tour may be used as inspiration for the poem’s subject. Students write their chosen word vertically on a page. Next to each letter, students will write, horizontally, another word or a sentence beginning with that letter. Each of these additional words or sentences should be connected to the poem’s main word and subject (eg. Majestic for the M in MOON). After transferring their drafted poem onto a sheet of blank paper, students may illustrate their poem by filling the space around the poem with drawings or paintings.

An example of an acrostic poem is Amy E. Slansky's *Moon*:

Marvelous
Opaque
Orb.
Night-light
for the world.

First Draft:

Students choose a main word for their acrostic poem and plan out further descriptive words or sentences for their subject. Each further word should be related to the main word. For example, O in Moon could be “orb” or “opaque”. For an added challenge, students may compose sentences. For example, O in Moon could be “only light in a dark sky”. Students can include words or sentences about experiences, feelings or ideas about their main word. We’re building a word bank for some extra ideas, you can find it [here](#).

Peer-Editing and/or Independent Proofreading:

Students partner and swap poems, looking for any spelling or grammatical errors and offering constructive feedback. Alternatively, students may independently edit and proofread their own works with direction and support from the teacher.

Final Copy:

In pencil, students copy their poems onto white art paper. They may use a pencil and ruler to lightly create lines for their poem. Students can write over their pencil marks in black or colourful markers. To create a finished look, students may choose to erase the pencil lines once the marker has dried.

Artmaking:

Students will create drawings or paintings around their poems to illustrate the poem’s theme. It is important to encourage students to fill all the blank space on the page. Students may choose to use coloured pencils, markers, crayons, paint, or any other art supplies. Specific elements of art theory and elements/principles of design can be added to this section (eg. shape and form, colour, lines, texture, contrast, rhythm, space, etc.).

Present and Reflect:

Students may present their poems to a partner, a small group, or the class and share their process (why they chose the poem’s subject and why they chose to paint or draw the certain pictures).

Additionally, students could write a short reflection including what they liked about the project, what went well, and what they might do differently next time.

Success Criteria:

- ☐ The student understood the format of an acrostic poem and composed a poem
- ☐ The subject of their poem is connected to the theme of “night”
- ☐ The complexity of the selected word matches the student’s grade level (shorter words for younger grades, longer for older)
- ☐ The corresponding words or sentences further describe the subject of the poem
- ☐ The student completed the five phases of the activity:
 - ☐ 1. brainstorming/planning
 - ☐ 2. first draft
 - ☐ 3. editing
 - ☐ 4. final copy
 - ☐ 5. artmaking
- ☐ In the final copy, the poem and accompanying illustrations fill the entire page
- ☐ Illustrations enhance the meaning of the poem and/or illustrate the poem’s content
- ☐ Optional: grade-specific art elements and principles of design are present in the illustrations
- ☐ Optional: the poem was shared, presented and/or reflected upon to practice oral communication, presentation and reflection skills.