

Janice Mason Art Museum
LESSON PLANS FOR WIER EXHIBIT
Background Information

ARTIST NAME : George Baselitz

ART PIECE ON DISPLAY: “Linolschnitt Stilleben, 1983” (linoleum cut/linocut)

About The Artist

George Baselitz was born as Hans-Georg Kern on January 23, 1938, in Deutschbaselitz, Germany. Both of his parents were primary school teachers, and while living in the local school house, the young Baselitz first discovered albums of 19th Century pencil drawings. At fourteen he began painting [portraits](#), including those of Beethoven, Goethe, and Stalin. In 1955, Baselitz applied to a school in Dresden but was rejected. The following year, he passed the entrance exam to study forestry at a school in Tartanthe, but he decided not to enroll in that school, but rather to pursue his interest in art. He became a student at a school in East Berlin but was expelled after only two terms for paintings that were described as “socio-politically immature”. In 1957 he received a five-year scholarship to attend a school in West Berlin. While at this academy he saw two traveling exhibitions from America on [Abstract Expressionism](#), and he became interested in the work of Jackson Pollock.

In 1961 he changed his surname of Kern to Baselitz, which is taken from the name of his birthplace. During that same year, he traveled to Paris for the first time and returned home to have a joint exhibition in an abandoned house with a fellow artist. In 1963, his first solo exhibit in Berlin caused a public scandal. Two of Baselitz’s paintings were confiscated for public indecency. In a letter written by Baselitz in August of 1963, he writes, “I’m included... People have started ringing my bell again and rattling my mailbox”. The publicity from this first exhibit launched a career that would see Baselitz become not only the most prolific and well-known artist in Germany, but also an internationally recognized artist. He has had exhibits worldwide in such cities as London, Cologne, Florence, Edinburg, Vienna, Chicago and New York. His latest exhibit in New York was in 1995 at the Guggenheim Museum. In 1985 he was awarded the Medal of Chevalier dan lOrdre des Arts et des Lettres from the French Art Minister. His work is included many major European and American museums.

George Baselitz continues to work in Derneburg, Germany and is recognized as the most important living artist in Europe today. In a recent interview he stated, “If you let it happen, art can open your eyes and show you a part of the world you have never seen before.”

About The Art

George Baselitz’s artistic talents cover a wide range of skills including [printmaking](#), [drafting](#), [sculpting](#) and painting. The artist began his artistic career as a painter and became a leading figure in the [neoexpressionist movement](#). His images are painted with a slashing intensity. Crudely drawn, aggressive, and frequently disturbing, his works incorporate [semi-abstract](#) human figures, animals, and [landscape](#) elements. He also uses the technique of letting gloppy paint drip down the canvas to produce a more masculine image. In 1969, Baselitz literally turned the art world upside down with his first picture in which the entire composition was painted upside down. This unique approach was an effort to overcome the representational, content-driven character of his earlier work. In 1971 he also did a series of [finger paintings](#). As a

printmaker, Baselitz used many different media including [etchings](#) in 1963 through 1974, [woodcuts](#) beginning in 1966, and [linoleum cuts](#) or [linocuts](#) beginning in 1977. Baselitz began his first sculptures in 1979. Wood is his preferred [medium](#) for his sculptures because he said, “wood is a basic material and the most traditional medium for all sculptures”.

The Baselitz art piece in this exhibit is entitled “Linolschnitt Stilleben” and is the image of a table and lamp drawn upside down. It was completed in 1977 and is a [linocut](#), measuring h 33 ¾” X w 24”.

Related Terms

Abstract Expressionism
canvas
colors
contemporary
descriptive
draftsman
etching
finger painting
flat block (lithography)
intaglio
landscape
linoleum cuts of linocuts
media
medium
neo-expressionist movement
portrait
printed
printmaking
relief
relief printing
sculptor
semi-abstract
three-dimensional
two-dimensional
woodcuts

Age Specific Lesson Plans

Grades K-5

Kentucky Core Content

AH-E4.1.34 Describe a variety of media and processes used to produce two-dimensional (2-D) and three-dimensional (3-D) artwork.

AH-E-4.1.35 Media-crayon, pencil, paint, fabric, yarn, clay, paper, paper-mâché (Used to produce artworks).

AH-E-4.2.35 Recognize that artists choose to express themselves in different styles and subject matters.

AH-E-4.2.37 Subject Matters: landscape, portrait, and still life.

AH-E-4.1.42 Use a variety of media and art processes to produce two-dimensional (2-D) and three-dimensional (3-D) artwork.

Objectives

1. To learn that many different materials (**media**) can be used to produce art.
2. To understand that art work may be **printed** on paper.
3. To understand that George Baselitz used a special type of **relief printing** (design stands out) called a **linoleum cut or linocut**.
4. To know that George Baselitz, a German painter, is the most important artist in Europe today.
5. To realize that the paintings of Baselitz often are upside down and very difficult to understand.

Suggested Questions

1. How do you think George Baselitz made this picture?
2. Did he paint it on a **canvas**? Is this picture on a canvas now?
3. What **colors** did he use?
4. What do you think the picture depicts?
5. Bend down and look at the picture upside down. What do you see now?
6. What is a **print** and how is it different from a regular picture?
7. What is a **linoleum cut or linocut print**?
8. Is this work **two or three dimensional**?

Related Activities

1. Have the students draw/paint a picture upside down.
2. Have students draw/paint something to express how they feel.
3. Have students make a relief stencil so they can make their own print. They could use a potato. Your usual purchased stamps are examples of relief print bases.
4. Show copies of other prints you may get off the internet.

Grades 6-8

Kentucky Core Content

AH-M-4.1.31 Principles of Design: repetition, pattern, balance (symmetry/asymmetry), emphasis (focal point), contrast (light and dark), rhythm, proportion, and movement.

AH-M-4.1.34 Identify and describe a variety of art media, art processes, and subject matter to communicate ideas, feelings, experiences, and stories.

AH-M-4.1.35 Media: two dimensional-crayon, pencil, fabric, yarn, paint (tempera, watercolor), ink and pastels.

AH-M-4.1.39 Subject Matter: landscape, portrait, still life, abstract, and non-objective.

AH-M-4.1.42 Effectively use a variety of art media, processes, and subject matter to communicate ideas, feelings, and experiences.

AH-M-4.1.37 Art Processes: two-dimensional-painting, fabric design, printmaking, and mosaics.

Objectives

- To create a [descriptive](#) conversation about a work of art.
- To learn that George Baselitz was a [Neo Expressionist](#) from Germany and is one of Europe's leading [contemporary](#) artists.
- To understand and be able to explain how Baselitz's work is different from most other artists. He did not want people to see regular images so made the art in such a way they would see instead lines, spaces, negative space, and design.
- To learn about [printmaking](#), particularly [linoleum cut/ linocut](#) methods utilized in producing this art work at the museum.

Suggested Questions

1. Based on the background information, would you consider Baselitz a follower in his art form or a rugged individualist.
2. Where was he from and what do we call his art style?
3. How is Baselitz's art different from most artists work?
4. What types of printing did Baselitz use in his art? Explain them?
5. Describe one of Baselitz's prints you can view on the internet by answering the description questions in the [Four Steps of Art Criticism](#).
6. How are original art works produced by printmaking techniques different than prints you and I often see in department stores?

Related Activities

1. Have the students make a print by a [relief](#) method. A regular stamp to make pictures is an example of this print method. You could make your stamp out of a raw potato.
2. Have students do an upside down drawing.
3. Have students investigate the various [printmaking methods](#) in which the artist himself makes the block.
4. Have students try to find other examples of a linoleum cut/linocut print on the internet/library?
5. Have students find other examples of Baselitz's work on the internet/library.

Grades 9-12

Kentucky Core Content

AH-H-4.1.31 Describe works of art using appropriate terminology.

AH-H-4.1.32 Art Elements: color and color theory: primary and secondary hues, values (tints and shades), intensity (brightness and dullness); color relationship: triadic, complementary, and analogous.

AH-H-4.1.33 Principles of Design: Balance (symmetry/asymmetry), emphasis (focal pattern), pattern, repetition, contrast, variety, movement, rhythm, proportion, transition/gradation, and unity.

AH-H-4.1.34 Defend personal interpretations of works of art and architecture by using arguments.

AH-H-4.2.36 Subject Matter: portrait, landscape, still-life, abstract, non-objective.

Objectives

- To discover that George Baselitz used many different techniques, art forms, and materials in his work through studying pictures and information found on the website link at the first of the website.
- To learn that there are different types of printmaking techniques which are truly art forms.
- To be able to enumerate ways that Baselitz's art was different from many of his contemporaries.

Suggested Questions

1. Based on the background information, would you consider Baselitz a follower in his art or a rugged individualist?
2. Where was he from, and what do we call his art style?
3. How is Baselitz's art different from many of his contemporaries' art?
4. What type of printmaking techniques did Baselitz use in his work? Explain about them.
5. Describe one of Baselitz's prints you view on the website and answer the description questions in the [Four Steps of Art Criticism](#).
6. How are original art works produced by [printmaking techniques](#) different than prints you and I often see in department stores?
7. Name and describe some printmaking techniques that require artists to make the original images?

Related Activities

1. Have the students draw/paint a picture upside down.
2. Have students draw/paint something to express how they feel.
3. Have students make a [relief](#), [intaglio](#), or [flat block](#) ([lithography](#)) print. Arrange the experience so that each type of printmaking process is demonstrated. Your usual purchased stamps are examples of relief print bases.
4. Look on the web site listed at the first of this website and look at some of Baselitz's art work. Encourage students to create a piece of art that resembles his technique.