

Janice Mason Art Museum  
LESSON PLANS FOR WIER EXHIBIT  
Background Information

**ARTIST NAME: Joseph Raffael**  
**ART PIECE(S) ON DISPLAY: “End of Summer”**

**About the Artist**

Joseph Raffael was born Joe Raffaele February 22, 1933, in Brooklyn, New York. He spent a solitary childhood and was often ill, nearly dying from spinal meningitis when he was seven. He developed his own inner world with nature as his biggest solace. By the time he was seven, drawing was his favorite pastime. Movies also became important to him as a young person. He describes movies as being his “first museums”. Raffael’s mother died after a long illness when he was fourteen. In high school he was active in the art club and took life drawing classes at the Brooklyn Museum. He spent much of his leisure time painting scenes of nature.

Raffael attended the School of Art at the Cooper Union for the Advancement of Art and Science in Manhattan. From 1954-1956 he attended Yale University. For his graduate thesis he made a handmade book with his own [calligraphy](#) of Dylan Thomas’s collection of stories with [collages](#) of leaves and colored paper. In 1958 he received a Fullbright Fellowship to study in Florence. While in Europe, he had his first exhibition in Boston, and the following year exhibited in Florence. After moving back to New York, he spent his next two summers in Italy. His first exhibit in New York was in 1963, the same year he almost died of hepatitis. Three years after his father’s death in 1964, he changed his name to Joseph Raffael, and he began painting his large-scale, single-image [oil paintings](#).

In 1969 Raffael moved to California and taught at the University of California, Berkley and California State College at Sacramento. During this time he began a new painting technique that gives his [oil paintings](#) the illusion of being lit from behind. This new method is perfect for the “water paintings,” which he painted over the next several years. In 1980, Raffael’s son was killed in an automobile accident, and this tragic event led the artist into a transitional time when he became interested in Eastern religions and philosophy. In 1986 the artist moved to France, where he presently lives and works. He travels extensively and continues to exhibit in the United States and throughout Europe. Currently, he has works in more than 50 museum collections worldwide.

**About the Art**

Raffael works in a number of [media](#), including [oil](#), [acrylic](#), [watercolor](#), [mixed media](#), [monotype](#), and [prints](#). However, he is considered one of the leading [watercolorists](#). He frequently paints from photographs and uses the techniques of Japanese artisans who wet the paper and then apply the oil-based [watercolors](#). The [watercolors](#) spread when applied to the wet paper, making control very difficult. He usually paints his large [watercolors](#) in one sitting. Lily ponds, gardens and fish are particularly favorite subjects for Raffael, and these subjects are ideal showcases for studies in [color](#), [design](#), and [composition](#). There is beauty and mystery in his work as well as energy and intensity. Nature is his greatest inspiration and influence. Another influence upon

Raffael's work is the movies. His paintings are almost always presented on a very large scale as he seeks to impart something of the impact and story line of movies in a single, startling image.

Raffael's work is not easily categorized, though associations with the [Post Impressionists](#), [Symbolists](#), [Naturalists](#), [Expressionists](#) and even [Photorealists](#) have been suggested. He does use [photographs](#) as an aid, but more for inspiration than to copy the image. For a very long time Raffael painted exclusively in the dark, with only a slide projected onto a small screen located next to the surface he was about to paint.

The Raffael painting in this exhibit is entitled "End of Summer," and the images were inspired by a [photograph](#) he took of goldfish in a pond in Hawaii. The [medium](#) used is [watercolor](#), and the [painting](#) was completed in 1980. Typical of the large-scale [paintings](#) of Raffael, this piece measures h 34" X w 70".

### **Related terms**

- acrylic
- calligraphy
- collages
- color
- composition
- design
- Expressionists
- media
- medium
- mixed media
- monotype
- Naturalists
- oil painting
- painting
- photograph
- Photorealists
- Post Impressionists
- print
- Symbolists
- water color
- watercolorist

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

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.

AH-E-4.2.31 Identify various purposes for creating works of art.

AH-E-4.2.32 Purposes of Art- expressive (express emotions and ideas), narrative (describe and illustrate experiences), functional (decorate objects).

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

AH-E-4.2.36 Styles: realistic, abstract, non-objective

#### Objectives

- To understand that nature was Joseph Raffael's greatest comfort during his solitary, sickly childhood.
- To realize that Raffael was interested in drawing at an early age and at the same time movies were very important to him.
- To understand that tragedy caused Raffael to have a period where he was interested in Eastern religions and philosophy.
- To learn that Raffael has his works in more than 50 museum collections worldwide.
- To know that Raffael works in different media including [oil](#), [acrylic](#), [watercolor](#), [mixed media](#), [monotype](#), and [prints](#).
- To realize that Raffael is a leading [watercolorists](#) who often paints from photographs.
- To learn that his technique of water coloring is difficult and he used to paint in the dark with only the light of a slide projector and usually completes a painting in one sitting.
- To know the inspiration for his painting "End of Summer".

#### Suggested Questions

1. Explain why nature became so important to Raffael.
2. What was/is the subject of many of Raffael's drawings and [paintings](#)?
3. What is one of the indications that Raffael is a leading [watercolorist](#)?
4. What tragic event occurred that changed Raffaels painting for a time?
5. What different [media](#) has Raffael used for his art work? Describe each.
6. Does Raffael most often paint from real life? Pictures?
7. Explain Raffael's method of [water color](#).
8. What was the inspiration for his painting the "End of Summer"?

**Related Activities**

1. Have the students do a water color from a picture, of a scene from nature, using Raffael's method of applying the paint to the paper. Have students critique their own work, then critique the work of a neighbor. What are the strong points? What are the weak points?
2. Have students find pictures of other works Raffael has done on the internet/library. Have students critique one of his works. Refer to the [Four Step Method of Critiquing Art](#) included on this website.

## Grades 6-8

### Kentucky Core Content

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-4.1.36 Media: three-dimensional-clay, paper-mache', found objects (used to produce artwork), wood, glass, metal, and stone (Properties of media need to be known in order to respond to artworks).

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.

AH-M-4.2.31 Describe and compare the characteristics and purposes of works of art representing various cultures, historical periods, artists, and/or styles.

### Objectives

- To understand that nature was Joseph Raffael's greatest comfort during his solitary, sickly childhood.
- To realize that Raffael was interested in drawing at an early age and at the same time movies were very important to him.
- To understand that tragedy caused Raffael to have a period where he was interested in Eastern religions and philosophy.
- To learn that Raffael has his works in more than 50 museum collections worldwide.
- To know that Raffael works in different media including [oil](#), [acrylic](#), [watercolor](#), [mixed media](#), [monotype](#), and [prints](#).
- To realize that Raffael is a leading [watercolorists](#) who often paints from photographs.
- To learn that his technique of [water color](#) is difficult, and he used to paint in the dark with only the light of a slide projector and usually completes a painting in one sitting.
- To know the inspiration for his painting "End of Summer."
- To experience critiquing a [water color](#).

### Suggested Questions

1. Explain how nature could be a comfort to a sickly child.
2. What impact did drawing and movies have on the young Raffael?
3. What tragedy occurred that resulted in Raffael changing to different interest for a period of time? What were the new interests centered around?
4. What indicators do you find that Raffael is very important [watercolorist](#) of our time?
5. Explain the different type of [media](#) and [art forms](#) that Raffael used.
6. How does Raffael use [photographs](#) in his art work.
7. Explain Raffael's early and current methods of [watercolor](#)?
8. What was his inspiration for his painting "End of Summer" and what [medium](#) was used?

**Related Activities**

1. Have the students do a [water color](#) from a picture or a scene from nature, using Raffael's method of applying the paint to the paper. Have students critique their own work, then critique the work of a neighbor. What are the strong points? What are the weak points?
2. Have students find pictures of other works Raffael has done on the internet/library. Have students critique one of his works. Refer to the [Four Step Method of Critiquing Art](#) included on this website.
3. Have students paint a picture using different [media](#) such as [watercolor](#), [oil](#), and [acrylic](#). Have them compare and contrast the methods used and the results in writing.

## 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-4.2.39 Purposes of Art: persuasive (advertising, marketing, propaganda); formalist (abstract, non-objective, arrangement of elements and principles as subject matter).

### Objectives

- To learn that Raffael had formal art education and experiences to prepare him to be an artist.
- To know that in the 1960's Raffael painted large-scale single- image **oil paintings** and developed a new painting technique that gives his **oil paintings** the illusion of being lit from behind. This technique was excellent for his water paintings.
- To know that Raffael works in different **media** including **oil, acrylic, watercolor, mixed media, monotype, and prints**.
- To realize that Raffael is a leading **watercolorists** who often paints from **photographs**.
- To know the inspiration for his painting "End of Summer.
- To have practice in critiquing a **water color** by Raffael.
- To understand that Raffael's artwork is somewhat reflective of several art movements, but is not completely like any of them.
- To realize that Raffael's method of **water color** is difficult to control.
- To have experience in critiquing a **water color**.

### Suggested Questions

1. What formal education and background experiences prepared Raffael to become a leading watercolorist?
2. What technique did Raffael discover that was excellent for his several water paintings?
3. List the different **media** Raffael used and some different types of art he produced. Explain each.
4. Explain the methods Raffael uses to produce his **water colors**.
5. Explain how Raffael's artwork is somewhat reflective of several art movements, but is not completely like any of them.
6. What role do **photographs** play in Raffael's paintings?

### **Related Activities**

1. Have students pretend they are going to become an artist. Have them write down the skills they would need and what formal and informal education they should receive in order to become a successful artist.
2. Have students critique a picture of a painting by Raffael that they find on the internet/or in the library. Have the students write their critique utilizing the [Four Step Model of Art Criticism](#).
3. Have students paint a nature scene utilizing as many of Raffael's techniques as possible. What was most difficult? What was easiest?
4. Have students use their own techniques for completing a nature painting. How was this more difficult or easier than the one using Raffael's techniques and methods? Which of the two paintings looked the best?