

Giant Pumpkins and the Art of Mary Pratt

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Objectives

- Draw a pumpkin with correct proportions and perspective.
- Be able to recognize the difference between a symbol for a pumpkin and a drawing of a pumpkin.
- Use repetition and focal point placement to create strong composition.
- Utilize under painting techniques and lighting (reflection) techniques as in the work of Mary Pratt.
- Be able to tell the story of the invention of the Giant Pumpkins created by Howard Dill of Windsor, Nova Scotia.
- Pinpoint on a map of Canada where the first Giant Pumpkin grew.
- Recognize the art of Mary Pratt and know some facts about her life.
- Learn how to mix blue and orange to create a darker orange. Refer to colour wheel and complementary colours for this portion of the lesson.



In this unit of study the students viewed the work of Mary Pratt paying particular attention to her use of light.

Mary Pratt Mary Pratt was born in Fredericton, New Brunswick in 1935. She graduated from Mount Allison University, School of Fine Arts in 1961. Pratt has exhibited extensively across Canada and was the subject of a retrospective organized by the Beaverbrook Art Gallery in 1995. Her work is found in many private and corporate collections across Canada. Public collections include the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa; the Vancouver Art Gallery; and Memorial University Art Gallery in St. John's among others.

The Giant Pumpkin Story By Grade 1

In the 1940's and 1950's the largest pumpkins were 33 kg or 1.5 grade 1's. Howard Dill of Windsor, Nova Scotia, Canada invented a seed that he called Dill's Atlantic Giant. From his seed he grew a pumpkin that was 225 kg or the equivalent of 10 grade 1's. Others have used the same seeds and grown pumpkins that weigh more than 450 kg or the equivalent of 20 grade 1's. That is almost as much as the entire grade 1 class put together.

Resources

The Canadian Inventions Book - Janis Nostbakken and Jack Humphrey

Canada Invents - Susan Hughes

Inventors and Inventions - Lorraine Hopping Egan

Canadian Women Invent - Annie Wood



Steps to drawing an pumpkin (project 1)

To draw and apple the children must first really look at a pumpkin. See that it is not really round but rather has bumps and lumps all over. Really look at the stem. It does rise above the top of the pumpkin as in some colouring book images of pumpkins however it is not square and not flat on the top. Look at the skin see the various shades of orange. Also observe the small green dots and lines that can appear on the skin of the pumpkin.

Steps to drawing a pumpkin

Draw the stem of the pumpkin. Have the children really look at the shape of the stem where it meets the pumpkin.



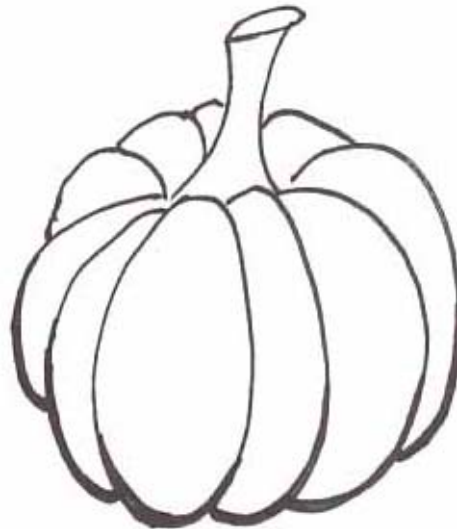
Have them observe how the back rings of the pumpkin are visible. Draw them.



Observe how the rings on the pumpkin are directly related to the shape of the pumpkin. Draw the rings.



Observe and have them draw how the bottom of the pumpkin is not round but rather each ring created a bit of a curve on the bottom.



Painting Apples without a Brush (project 2)

Materials

- Chunks of cardboard (matt board works best) all sizes
- Pizza box lids
- Liquid tempera paint all colours placed in large areas on the lid of a pizza box. (I found its was the best for access to the paint and for clean up)

Large Bristol board sheets

Procedure

Demonstrate the various ways in which to make shapes using a piece of cardboard. See examples below.

Have the children draw a pumpkin on their paper, reminding them about the shape. It is recommended the children have access to pumpkins. Paint the pumpkin first and then the background.

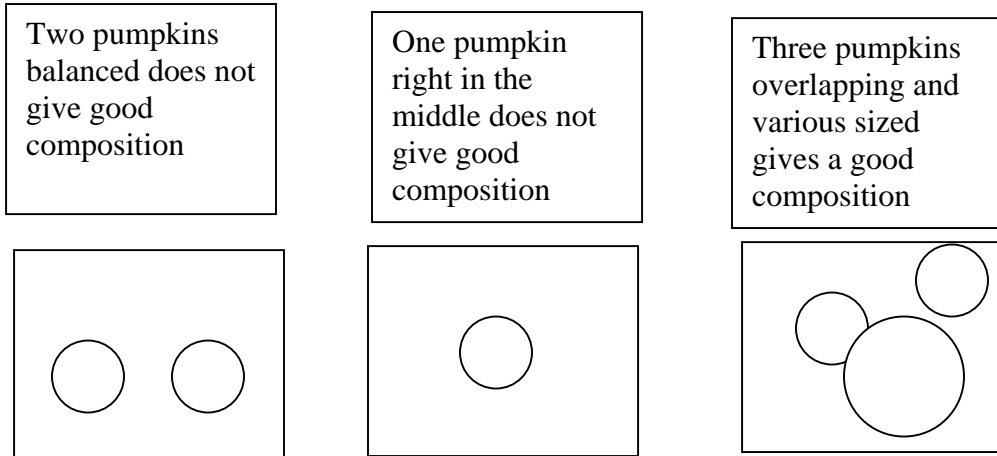
The children use the chunks of cardboard to create their pieces.

Clean up is really easy. Place all pieces of cardboard on the pizza lid and throw it out. (I love it!)



Pumpkins in a field (project 4)

The children are going to draw a pumpkin or several. Discuss how it is best to use odd numbers when placing still life objects in a composition. Two pumpkins would create too balanced of a piece of work and one right in the middle would have the same effect. The pumpkin if only one should be placed off center (see composition lesson). Variation in shape and overlapping makes the composition interesting.



Draw the pumpkins.

Teach them about under painting. A pumpkin appears darker in the creases of the skin. To achieve this, the students mix a little blue with orange and paint the ridges. This is called under painting. When done let it dry. We then added the highlights, yellow spots to the pumpkins using oil paste. I use oil pastel because the children can paint over it and still have the highlight there. We then painted the orange parts.

It would be good for the student to practice the shadowing of the pumpkin on scrap paper.

The method to create dark orange is to add green blue to the orange paint.

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It works such that the colour directly across from another on the colour wheel will make the opposite colour darker. Do not add black to orange to make it darker, rather add blue.

Below is a chart that the children can use to practice making orange. They begin with pure orange on the first square and progressively get darker.



