



The Equine Artist

Students will demonstrate the foundations of equine illustration using direct observation.



Give each student a clipboard with several sheets of plain white paper attached and a colored marker. Using a large pad of paper and a larger marker, demonstrate free form ovals and free flowing lines. Encourage students to look at horses in a pasture or in stables as bundles of oval shapes, energetic and moving forms. Use ovals and lines to draw horses in fast timed sketches - no erasers or straight lines. Why draw fast? Why is it important to avoid getting things “too perfect?”



Tour the stables and grounds with clipboards, paper, and a selection of drawing tools that students can try. Ask students to create a few pages of journal notes about the tour. Stop at a few interesting places to sketch a scene or an object. Encourage students to make notes as they go. Give historical information about the farm, names of horses, descriptions of buildings and the land.

At the completion of the tour, stop and ask students to make a map of their walk with a birds-eye view of the farm. Diagram the buildings, pastures, paths, and roads. This will give students a strong orientation for your site and what it contains.

Journal sketching is a low-pressure way to familiarize students with field sketching and place-making. Students can unclip their sketches to save and reload their clipboards with new paper.

Explain

Gather students around the large easel or whiteboard. Equine artists have been hard at work since pre-historic times. The famous cave paintings of Europe contain many beautiful renderings of ancient horses. Over thousands of years people and horses have shared a history in farming, trade, and war. Equine artists have recorded this relationship in paint, chalk, sculpture, pastel, and pen. Have several examples of historic equine art to share with students.



Chauvet Cave, France



Leonardo Davinci



War Horse Puppets

Photo Credit: Hershey Theater



Introduce a horse and lead it around for students to observe how it moves. Point out major muscle groups (ovals), skeletal features (angles), and how a change in gait changes the body posture. Demonstrate on a lunge line. Encourage students to look closely at the horse's chest, legs, and head position.

Invite students to choose one part of the horse to draw. Fold a piece of paper into quarters, then unfold so that there are four sections for a series of sketch studies. Ask students to draw the section or feature of the horse as the horse changes position or gait. Encourage students to work fast and not to linger or fuss over their work for too long - this causes frustration. Instead, work quickly and with a light hand. Each session should last for five minutes.

After the study session, allow students to draw the total horse for several five minute sessions using full sheets of paper. To set the tone and help students to focus, play (on low volume) some classical music.

Have students choose a full body sketch and have them develop it fully with shading and contrast. Allow students ample time for this - up to fifteen minutes.

When finished, invite students to clip their finished sketch to a line or tape to a designated "gallery wall." Have a gallery walk and celebrate their efforts!



The equine artists are passionate about their subjects and work hard at what they do. What was the hardest part(s) about the student's work today? How does equine art help describe our relationship to horses?

Have an art contest! Invite students to return to your HDC and spend some time painting, sketching, or sculpting the horses. Have students submit their best work for a school-based or stable-based art show dedicated to horses. Offer prizes (a riding lesson or camp experience) and invite local equine industry leaders to help judge the work.