

RAG

RICHMOND ART GALLERY
School Art Program

Teacher Guide

Lyse Lemieux:
A GIRL'S GOTTA DO
WHAT A GIRL'S GOTTA DO

April 23 to July 3, 2016



Lyse Lemieux, *Sketch for Wall Drawing 15 (TDL 88)*, 2016, black ink drawing

Dear Teachers

This guide contains information about the exhibition, the artists, and some classroom activities that will help you to prepare your students for their visit to the Richmond Art Gallery. Please review this package with your students to get the most out of your gallery visit. The suggested activities require a minimum of materials and are adaptable to the needs of different grade levels.

Throughout the guide you will find art vocabulary words in bold that are defined in the vocabulary section, and resource links have been included for further topic explorations.

Program Goals

The goals of the gallery tour and art workshop are to encourage students to:

- Describe and respond to works of art and explore artists' intent
- Observe and share how artists use processes, materials, and techniques to express ideas
- Explore personal experience, community, and culture through art making
- Examine the relationship between art and the wider world
- Create artworks using ideas inspired by imagination, inquiry, experimentation, and purposeful play



About the Exhibition

Lyse Lemieux: A GIRL'S GOTTA DO WHAT A GIRL'S GOTTA DO



Lyse Lemieux, *Dessin Feutrè 13*, 2015, 22" X 30", Ink and felt on Arches paper

For over two decades the work of Vancouver artist, Lyse Lemieux, has maintained a relationship to the human figure while balancing between drawing and sculpture, **representation** and **abstraction**. While primarily focused on drawing, Lemieux challenges the dictates of the **medium**; lines in her drawings may flow out from the picture plane into three-dimensional space, or be drawn with materials and fabrics to create forms of physical substance. Drawing, for Lemieux, is “about the body” and “from the body”. These imperatives are central to her images and to the process of creating them; stroking a line in black ink to suggest a torso or cutting a line in wool felt with scissors, Lemieux deftly draws from these gestures expressions spanning from tender and intimate to robust and irreverent.

This exhibition marks a dramatic departure from Lemieux’s smaller, well-known fabric and ink drawings. *A GIRL'S GOTTA DO WHAT A GIRL'S GOTTA DO* consists of new wall-sized works created specifically for the Gallery’s exhibition space, largely derived from the intimate scale drawings found in Lemieux’s numerous sketchbooks. These large new works optimize the expansive breadth of the exhibition space and in addition to the large wall drawings, a series of felt and ink drawings and some of the artist’s sketchbooks will be shown along with a new sculptural work.

The Artist's Process

Over the last 15 years Lemieux has drawn and collaged in dozens of small format sketchbooks, using these sketches to develop her ideas and her larger artworks. In the wall drawings, Lemieux distills the elements essential to her work: **materiality**, **gesture** and **scale**.

Lemieux explores abstracted **figurative** and **portrait** drawings in a variety of materials, including ink washes and collaged fabric mounted onto paper or directly onto the walls. Her “sculptural drawings” are created by drawing simplified shapes and lines with her paintbrush or scissors as they cut through fabric. For Lemieux, the process of art making (e.g., assembling, lifting, cutting, and gluing) is like a choreography for a dance that features both small, quiet gestures and large, turbulent ones.



Lyse Lemieux, *Dessin Feutrè 4*, 2015, 22" X 30", Ink and felt on Arches paper

*“When I cut lines of felt, I cut as if I was drawing. I have this same gesture when I cut felt as when I’m drawing. It’s a very active way to make line.”**

Her images are not realistic portrayals of a subject, but abstracted, with just a “hint” of things represented. This is one of the defining characteristics of abstract art, that it is open to interpretation; therefore you can explore the artwork and assign your own meaning to it.

*“I don’t set out to make something specific. Often, what I’m working with dictates where I’m going. I consistently go back to the figure and the body no matter how abstracted it is. I realize that not everyone sees the figure the way I do.”**

* Excerpts from *Lyse Lemieux @ Republic Gallery*, November 8, 2015 from PostMedia:
<http://video.lfpress.com/search/all/source/ottawa-sun/lyse-lemieux/4602490426001/page/13>

Exhibition Themes

Notions of the body and the sense of touch underlie Lemieux's use of tactile materials and clothing. The materials used are selected not only for their shape and colour, but also for the sensual or memory associations they may bring. Lemieux refers to her drawings as bodies, sometimes figurative and other times more abstracted. In other words, there are usually hints of things represented in Lemieux's work, but it is up to the viewer to uncover the meanings behind each image.

This is generally how abstract art is experienced, it gives the viewer the freedom to explore the artwork and assign their own meaning to the piece. At its most basic, abstract art is an exploration of the **elements of art and design**, such as line, shape, color, and texture. Using this limited visual language means that the process, structure, and composition of the artwork take on greater importance. Meaning is derived from how these formal elements are used to create a visual (and/or visceral, cerebral, emotional, etc.) experience.

About the Artist

Lyse Lemieux is a Vancouver-based artist whose 30 year art practice has focused primarily on drawing. Lemieux has maintained a studio since graduating from the University of British Columbia in 1976. She has exhibited her work extensively in public galleries, nationally and internationally and is represented by the Republic Gallery, Vancouver.

Find out more on her website:
<http://www.lyselemieux.com/>



Lyse Lemieux, *Dessin Feutrè 15*, 2015, 22" X 30", Ink and felt on Arches paper

Before Your Visit

Background: Abstract Art

In Western art, artists in the early twentieth century started to question the idea that art had to portray something as it appears in the real world. With the formation of abstract art, artists began to focus more on the visual language of shapes, forms, lines and colours to interpret a subject matter or idea. However, abstract art still has a basis in reality, as in something being “abstracted”. The artist is the one in charge of what is being abstracted and to what degree through techniques like manipulation, distortion or simplification. Sometimes the viewer can tell what the subject is, and sometimes they can’t.

Generally, abstract art can be thought of as art that is:

- not concerned with accurate visual representation of the real world,
- concerned with ideas and materials,
- concerned with **formal elements** such as line, colour, shape and texture,
- representing the spiritual, sensual or emotional world.

Activity

Introduce the concept of abstraction and look at some examples. Identify abstraction and the elements of art and design used by the artist.

- What colours and shapes has the artist used?
- How has the artist used line in this artwork?
- Is the image completely abstract? If not, which parts are not?
- What do you recognize?
- How does the artwork make you feel? What element made you feel that?
- Using your imagination, what story do you think the work is telling?

Examples of Abstract Art:

[Three Musicians](#), Pablo Picasso, 1921

[Landscape with Yellow Birds](#), Paul Klee, 1923

[Beginnings](#), Helen Frankenthaler, 2002

[Autumn Rhythm](#), Jackson Pollock, 1950

[Neurocity](#), Landon Mackenzie, 2008

[Untitled](#), Robert Motherwell, 1965-66

After Your Visit

Activity: Process-Oriented Art

Lyse Lemieux's artwork is the result of engaging in the process of art making, it does not spring from having a clear goal or final product in mind, but rather emerges as a result of her exploration of materials and her experimentation with composition, shape, and line.

Process-Oriented art is open-ended. There is no "right" destination in mind, but rather it is exploratory and individual. It allows for the birth of something new, original and unexpected. Some ideas for process-oriented classroom art activities:

Creative Challenge

Give students a creative challenge which is specific enough to inform their choices, but open-ended so that each project will end up completely unique. Assemble a range of materials and supplies for students to choose from, and involve them in collecting potential materials. Some ideas:

- Create something that flies
- Create a sculpture that is exactly one metre tall, without using glue or tape
- Create a musical instrument
- Create a home for an insect

Purposeful Play

This is a great way to introduce a new art medium or material at the start of an art unit. Some ideas:

- Experiment with mark-making. Divide a sheet of paper into many sections by folding, and in each section create a different type of mark or line with the new art material.
- Play 3D "Pictionary" with clay or plastercine
- Everything but a paintbrush. Give students a variety of objects, such as straws, sticks, marshmallows, q-tips, marbles, forks, or anything but a paintbrush. Apply paint to the paper by rolling, blowing, dragging, dabbing, and do a gallery walk to compare results.
- Using paint or play doh, give students only the primary colours and black and white, and have them "invent" new colours through mixing and make a record of their colour "recipes".

Activity Reflection

As a group, discuss what students tried, what they discovered, what worked, and what didn't. Discuss how they can incorporate discoveries into artworks they make in the future. Ask students to propose variations to the activity, such as new materials or questions of inquiry.

Resources

Picture books on Line & Shape

Lines that Wiggle, Candace Whitman, illustrations by Steve Wilson

Straight Is A Line, Sharon Lerner

The Line, Paula Bossio

When a Line Bends ... A Shape Begins, Rhonda Gowler Greene, illustrated by James Kaczman

Shapes, Philip Yenawine

Beautiful Oops, Barney Saltzberg

Books on Process art and Creativity

Drawing Lab for Mixed Media Artists: 52 Creative Exercises to Make Drawing Fun, Carla Sonheim

Scribble Art: Independent Creative Art Experiences for Children, MaryAnn Kohl

Primary Art: It's the Process, Not the Product, MaryAnn Kohl

Drawing With Children: A Creative Method for Adult Beginners, Too, Mona Brooks

Articles about Lyse Lemieux's work

<http://blogs.vancouver.sun.com/2015/11/12/lyse-lemieux-uses-scissors-to-draw-in-black-felt-in-works-at-republic-gallery/>

<http://www.katzmancontemporary.com/lemieux-mcmaster>

<http://leftcoastart.ca/Interviews/lyselemieux.html>

<http://theportefolio.tumblr.com/>

Glossary

Abstract Art	A style of art that shows objects, people, and/or places in simplified elements of shape, line, texture, and/or colour.
Contemporary Art	Artwork that is produced in this current time, generally considered to be artworks made from 1970 to the present. Contemporary art is a very broad term, including artworks made in almost any medium and incorporating many different themes and ideas.
Elements of Art and Design / Formal Elements	The elements of art and design are the parts that make up a work of art, such as line, shape, texture, colour, form, space, and value.
Figurative Art	Artwork that includes recognizable images from the real world, be it persons, places, or things, and in particular, figurative art focusses on the human figure.
Gesture	“Gesture is the permanent imprint (“gesture” or “mark”) of the artist’s hand on a work, providing an insight into the artist’s way of working and emotional intentions.” (<i>Key Art Terms for Beginners</i> , Philip Yenawine, p137)
Materiality	The way in which the materials an artwork is made out of contributes to the meaning of an artwork
Medium	The material or technique used by the artist to make an artwork. For example, paint is the medium used in a painting.
Portrait	A work of art that represents a person, a group of people, or an animal. Portraits usually show what a person looks like as well as revealing something about the subject’s personality. Portraits can be made of any 2-D or 3-D art medium, and can show the face or the entire body.
Representation in Art	A style of art that shows objects, people, or places in such a way that they can be recognized for what they are.
Scale	Refers to a size comparison of two objects (i.e. the shoe is in a smaller scale than the person). Scale relates to a ratio between the size of something and the representation of it (i.e. the scale of the map or the scale of the model boat).

Upcoming Events at the Gallery

FREE EVENTS

Opening Reception

Friday, April 29, 7:00 – 9:00 pm

Opening reception of *Lyse Lemieux: A GIRLS GOTTA DO WHAT A GIRLS GOTTA DO*. Artist in attendance, everyone welcome to attend.

Family Sunday

Free Drop-in, 1:00 – 4:00 pm

Families are invited to participate in various exhibition-related art projects and activities on the 4th Sunday of each month. Stories, music, art...activities vary from month to month! It's free, thanks to the RBC Foundation. Details about each month's project available at

www.richmondartgallery.org

Upcoming Dates: Apr 24 • May 22 • June 26 • July 24 • Aug 28 • Sept 25 • Oct 23 • Nov 27

Lyse Lemieux & Ziyian Kwan: [An Evening of Art and Dance](#)

Friday, May 27, 7:00 – 9:00 pm

Ziyian Kwan of *dumb instrument Dance* premieres new dance works in response to Lyse Lemieux's exhibition. After the performance Ziyian Kwan and Lyse Lemieux will discuss their different disciplines and how their work came together for this event. Moderated by Curator Nan Capogna, this free evening is in part sponsored by Canada Council for the Arts.

Art Workshop: [Mixed Media Collage with Lyse Lemieux](#)

Saturday, June 18 from 1:00 – 4:00 pm

Meet the exhibiting artist and join her for a hands-on art-making afternoon. Explore the art of mixed media collage by creating text and image works using ink and collage for some "cut and paste" fun. All materials provided, all skill levels welcome. Recommended for ages 16+.

REGISTERED CLASSES AND WORKSHOPS

Art At Work: Professional Development Workshops for Visual Artists

Monthly from April – June

In partnership with CARFAC BC and Public Art Richmond, the Art At Work series offers practical tips and resources on developing a professional arts practice. Visit our [website](#) for details.

After School Classes for Children

April 28 – June 16, Thursdays

Explore art concepts and create original works of art using a variety of art mediums. Classes are for ages 6-8 from 3:15 – 4:15pm, or for ages 9-12 from 4:30 – 6:00pm. Registration details are available on our [website](#).

RAG School Program Supporters and Partners



The Richmond Art Gallery School Art Program is one of many gallery programs made possible by the Richmond Art Gallery Association, a non-profit organization dedicated to extending the reach of our gallery exhibitions through community programming.



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