

Bob Dylan : Retrospectrum



"Like a Rolling Stone" (1965)

Retrospectrum is the most expansive and in-depth exhibition of Bob Dylan's artwork ever staged in the United States. Spanning six decades, *Retrospectrum* features over 180 paintings, drawings, ironwork, and ephemera, showcasing the development and range of Dylan's visual practice, in tandem with that of his musical and literary canon.

Retrospectrum, organized by Shai Baitel, the artistic director of Modern Art Museum (MAM) Shanghai, positions the Nobel Prize winning multi-faceted artist within his broader body of work, and shines a light on a life-long visual practice that is entirely remarkable in its own right.



An Artist for the Ages

Bob Dylan is a worldwide cultural icon who has been inspiring audiences for over six decades. Since 1961 he has released 38 studio albums and performed to millions of people across the world. His music defies formal definition. Iconic songs such as "Blowing" In The Wind" (1963), "Like a Rolling Stone" (1965), and "Tangled Up in Blue" (1975) have altered the course of cultural history, proving that popular music can be great art.

Having forever changed the relationship between music and language, Dylan was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2016, recognized "for having created new poetic expressions with the great American song tradition." Finding inspiration in social and political injustice, poetry, literature, art, metaphysics, the endless varieties of love and loss, and music of all kinds. Dylan has produced an astonishing catalog of songs that speak to the hearts of people everywhere, whether the songs were composed last week or 50 years ago.

Although Dylan has been producing visual art since the early 1960's the first gallery exhibition of his work was not held until 2007, when Kunstammlungen Chemnitz, Germany, unveiled the Drawn Blank Series. Since then, Dylan has produced an expansive body of work spanning drawing, painting, and sculpture. This exhibition unites six series of Dylan's visual art, along with archival pieces and brand-new paintings that have never before been exhibited. Restrospectrum explores the sheer breadth of Dylan's achievement and his monumental impact on the world as musician, poet, and artist.

"He has made himself a prism through which the music, words, images and experiences that he has found meaningful have refracted in endless variation and become wholly his, and wholly ours – the work of an artist for the ages." Tom Piazza, Mondon Scripto, 2018

What was the Ashcan School

“There is only one reason for art in America,” said Robert Henri, one of the leading figures of the Ashcan School, “and that is that the people of America learn the means of expressing themselves in their own time and their own land.” Taking their painterly cues from seventeenth- to nineteenth-century European realism and their subject matter from immigrant and working-class life in 1900s New York, the Ashcan School set themselves apart from Impressionists, academics, and others within the “Genteel Tradition” that dominated the visual arts.

What are the characteristics of the Ashcan School?

The masterpieces of this movement powerfully evoke the exigency and dynamism of modern urban life with tenebrous tones and gritty, gestural brushwork. Titles like *Men of the Docks*; *Italo-American Celebration*, *Washington Square*; *McSorley's Bar*; *The Butcher Cart*; and *The Wrestlers* are representative of their scope.

Source: [Sotheby's Ashcan School](#)

Early Works



Untitled 14



Untitled 15



Untitled 16

The Drawn Blank Series



Bicycle – Artist's Eye



Bicycle



Vista from Balcony



View from Two Windows

Mondo Scripto



Every Grain of Sand



All Along the Watchtower



Girl from the N. County

Ironworks



Double Gate 41



Spike Chain Rain Wall Hanging

The Beaten Path



Brundage Lane, Burger House



Clam Bar, Surf Avenue



Guthrie's Alley, Bakersfield



Abandoned Drive-In, Yucca Valle

The New Orleans Series



Train Station



Jockey Club

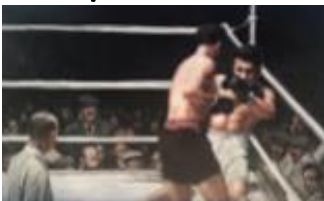


Churchgoers



Peacemaker

Deep Focus



Boxing Action Shot



Luncheonette/Untitled



Untitled



Guy Leaning on Car

Drawing

Contour Line Drawing

Discuss

Compare and contrast the work of Bob Dylan and Pablo Picasso



Love Minus Zero, 2018, Bob Dylan



Portrait of Igor Stravinsky, 1920, Pablo Picasso

Connect

View or visit the Frost Art Museum's Restrospectrum: Bob Dylan exhibition. Discuss and research the artist's artwork and other artists related to this lesson.

Studio Experience

Lesson Objective

Students will compare and contrast the works of Bob Dylan and Pablo Picasso.

Students will use sensitive lines through contour drawing and create a series of works in the style of Bob Dylan.

Activity

Middle and High School – Contour Line Drawing Series

<i>Critical Thinking and Reflection</i> VA.68.C.1.2 VA.68.C.3.3	Standards Middle School Grades 6-8	<i>Historical & Global Connections</i> VA.68.H.1.2 VA.68.H.1.4
<i>Innovation, Technology & The Future</i> VA.68.F.1.1 VA.68.F.1.2	<i>Organizational Skills</i> VA.68.O.1.2 VA.68.O.1.4	<i>Skills Techniques, & Processes</i> VA.68.S.1.3 VA.68.S.1.2
<i>Critical Thinking and Reflection</i> VA.912.C.1.2 VA.912.C.3.2	Standards High School Grades 9-12	<i>Historical & Global Connections</i> VA.912.H.1.1 VA.912.H.1.3
<i>Innovation, Technology & The Future</i> VA.912.F.1.2 VA.912.F.1.3	<i>Organizational Skills</i> VA.912.O.1.1 VA.912.O.2.1	<i>Skills Techniques, & Processes</i> VA.912.S.1.5 VA.912.S.2.2

Assess

- Observation of works in progress
- Display artworks and critique
- Students complete sketchbook drawings

Painting

Ashcan School Inspiration

Discuss

Compare and Contrast Bob Dylan and George Bellows



Both Members of this Club, (1909) George Bellows



Boxing Action Shot, Bob Dylan

Compare and Contrast Bob Dylan and Edward Hopper



Luncheonette/Untitled, Bob Dylan



Nighthawks, 1942, Edward Hopper

Compare and contrast Bob Dylan and Henri Matisse as it relates to perspective, color, and composition.



Interior with a Violin Case, Henri Matisse [Violin Case](#)

Connect

View or visit the Frost Art Museum's Restrospectrum: Bob Dylan exhibition. Visit the Discuss and research the artist's artwork and other artist's related to this lesson.

Studio Experience

Lesson Objective

Students will identify the elements of art in the painting created by Bob Dylan, George Bellows and Edward Hopper. Students will create an action painting related to sports or a Deep Focus painting inspired by Bob Dylan's work.

Activity

MS – Chalk and Pastel Sports Action Painting or Cityscape

HS – Acrylic Paint Sports Action Painting or Cityscape

<i>Critical Thinking and Reflection</i> VA.68.C.1.2 VA.68.C.3.3	Standards Middle School Grades 6-8	<i>Historical & Global Connections</i> VA.68.H.1.2 VA.68.H.1.4
<i>Innovation, Technology & The Future</i> VA.68.F.1.1 VA.68.F.1.2	<i>Organizational Skills</i> VA.68.O.1.2 VA.68.O.1.4	<i>Skills Techniques, & Processes</i> VA.68.S.1.3 VA.68.S.1.2
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<i>Innovation, Technology & The Future</i> VA.912.F.1.2 VA.912.F.1.3	<i>Organizational Skills</i> VA.912.O.1.1 VA.912.O.2.1	<i>Skills Techniques, & Processes</i> VA.912.S.1.5 VA.912.S.2.2

Assess

- Observation of works in progress
- Display artworks and critique
- Students complete Self-Critique Checklist

Sculpture



Iron Wall Hanging, Bob Dylan

Connect

View or visit the Frost Art Museum's Restrospectrum: Bob Dylan exhibition.

Studio Experience

Lesson Objective

Students will identify the elements of art and principles of design in Bob Dylan's iron works. Students will learn about the use of found objects in works of art and create a found object sculpture.

Activity

Middle and High School – Found Object Sculpture

<i>Critical Thinking and Reflection</i> VA.68.C.1.2 VA.68.C.3.3	Standards Middle School Grades 6-8	<i>Historical & Global Connections</i> VA.68.H.1.2 VA.68.H.1.4
<i>Innovation, Technology & The Future</i> VA.68.F.1.1 VA.68.F.1.2	<i>Organizational Skills</i> VA.68.O.1.2 VA.68.O.1.4	<i>Skills Techniques, & Processes</i> VA.68.S.1.3 VA.68.S.1.2
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Assess

Prototype sketches of sculpture design

Observation of works in progress

Display artworks and critique

Musicians as Visual Artist's

Compare and Contrast

When I paint my masterpiece...



John Mellencamp, *Women's Rights*, 2019, Mixed Media Mirror, 80 x 104 inches



City Landscape, J(1992) Joani Mitchell



F. Sinatra '47, Frank Sinatra

[Frank Sinatra Resources](#)



Dhead V, 1995, Acrylic on canvas, [David Bowie](#)

The Artist's Journey

Essential Questions

1. Dylan created landscapes of nostalgic scenes of Americana along Highway 61 in his Blues and Jazz series, what were these illustrations based on?
2. What effects did Bob Dylan try to create with light in his paintings?
3. How do you think the right use of light could make the subject matter look alive in a picture?
4. How can music communicate a cause or message that is important to a group of people?
5. How does art help us understand the lives of people of different times, places, and cultures?
6. What is the importance of Dylan's drawings today?
7. How does creativity spill over to life?
8. How can we bridge the gap between generations?
9. How can we connect you to Dylan's artistic legacy?

References



Both Members of this Club, (1909) George Bellows

[Bob Dylan: Restrospectrum Catalog, FIU Patricia & Phillip Frost Art Museum](#)

[Bob Dylan](#)

[Bob Dylan Twitter](#)

[Bob Dyaln Who's Who](#)

[Khan Academy](#)

[Tate Museum](#)

[The Ashcan School Movement](#)

[The Art Story](#)

Words to Know

Acrylics -quick drying, plastic polymer pigment used with water.

Artistic Sensibility - the sense of self as an artist through the integration of artistic and aesthetic attributes of self and other.

Ashcan School - also called the Ash Can School, was an artistic movement in the United States during the late 19th-early 20th century that is best known for works portraying scenes of daily life in New York, often in the city's poorer neighborhoods.

Contour Line Drawing - defines the outline of a form, as well as interior structure, without the use of shading. A fundamental basis of drawing, contour lines are usually the first technique children adopt to draw people, houses, and trees.

Drawing - a technique in which images are depicted on a surface by making lines, though drawings can also contain tonal areas, washes, and other non-linear marks.

Found Objects - A found object is a **natural or man-made object**, or fragment of an object, that is found (or sometimes bought) by an artist and used to create a work of art.

Graphite - is a metallic grey writing and drawing material most commonly used in pencil form – though graphite powder is also used by artists as a drawing material.

Ironwork - architectural features of buildings, artwork, utensils, and weapons made of iron.

Landscape - the depiction of natural scenery in art. **Landscape paintings may capture mountains, valleys, bodies of water, fields, forests, and coasts and may or may not include man-made structures as well as people.**

Painting - the practice of applying paint or other media to a surface, usually with a brush.

Perspective – A system for representing three-dimensional objects viewed in spatial recession on a two--dimensional surface.

Portfolio of Work - A systematic, organized collection of artworks, usually student artwork.

Sculpture -Three-dimensional) artwork to be seen either in the round (from all sides or as a basrelief (a low relief in which figures protrude slightly from the background).