FOUNDATIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY SKILLS LESSON 2

Perspective

God's People, Jeremy Davis, 2018

Grade Levels: 9–12
Duration: One 45-minute to one-hour classroom period
MESSAGE TO EDUCATORS

Everyone has the ability to create and interpret images. This lesson-plan series guides students through the foundational elements of photography, outlines the artistic process, and strengthens their visual literacy skills. The lessons build upon one another and are developed to familiarize students with photography and become comfortable operating the camera as a tool for creative self-expression. Once your students develop an understanding of fundamental photography techniques, their photographic explorations can lead them on journeys that capture the world from their point of view.

You do not need to be practiced in the skills of photography and facilitating discussions about art to effectively lead this lesson, but we would encourage you to try some of the photography assignments included in order to share your experience with students. The Getty Museum is committed to supporting meaningful dialogue through art, and therefore this lesson plan was created with educators to carefully walk you through the steps needed to effectively facilitate and guide your students.

We encourage you and your students to use this lesson to spark ideas and conversations about the world around them.

Students create

• A photograph where their camera is facing directly up or down
• A photograph where the subject matter fills the entire frame
• A photograph that uses a vanishing point

ASSOCIATED STANDARDS

Common Core State Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9–10.1: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA–LITERACY.SL.11–12.1: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

National Core Arts Standards

Anchor Standard #2. Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

Anchor Standard #4. Select, analyze and interpret artistic work for presentation.

Anchor Standard #7. Perceive and analyze artistic work.

CA VAPA Standards

Prof.VA:Cr1.1: Use multiple approaches to begin creative endeavors.

Adv.VA:Cr2.1: Experiment, plan, and make multiple works of art and design that explore a personally meaningful theme, idea, or concept.
MATERIALS

- Projector/screen sharing on your monitor
- Photographs from Getty Museum collection (provided)
- Photographs from Getty Unshuttered community (provided)
- Getty Unshuttered Perspective challenge videos (Linked at the end of this lesson)
- A digital camera or smartphone

VOCABULARY

Perspective The sense of depth or spatial relationship between objects in a photograph. This includes their dimensions with respect to what the viewer of the image sees.

Viewpoint The position the photographer takes the photograph from.

Foreground The portion of the image that is closest to the camera.

Background Part of the overall scene, but behind the main subject of the photograph.

Middle ground The space within a composition between the foreground and the background.

(Vocabulary available as Unshuttered Perspective Reference sheet in Resources below)

BEFORE CLASS PREPARATION & ACCOMMODATIONS

- Select which Unshuttered photograph(s) and Getty collection photograph(s) you would like to discuss with your class. Depending on your class size and class period length you may want to discuss two or more of each.
- Consider how students will share the images they take. Using Google classrooms, Dropbox or similar platforms can allow students to upload and share their photographs with their classmates.
- If working with students who may require visual accommodations, the website Teaching the Visually Impaired, provides useful resources for educators.

INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN

Lesson Description

Students explore three compositional techniques that can be used when experimenting with perspective in photography. They will explore photographs that utilize perspective in innovative ways and will then create three photographs where they reimagine ways they can frame an image, including: photographing something facing their camera from above or below, filling the entire frame, and including a vanishing point. At the end of the lesson, students can digitally enhance images of their choosing from weeks 1–2 with the standard editing software found on most phones or free editing platforms. During the next class session, students will share a before and after screenshot comparison of one of the photographs with their classmates and describe the artistic choices made to enhance their photograph.
Student learning objectives

- Students will examine and analyze examples of photography that experiment with perspective.
- Students will compose and photograph three photographs that implement perspective composition techniques discussed in class.

Essential Question: What draws your attention in a photograph?

Classroom Discussion

Tell Students Before we begin taking our photographs and experimenting with new techniques, we will be talking about perspective in photography. First, we will review our Unshuttered Perspective Sheet, then we will take a look at and discuss a few artworks that use perspective in a few different ways.

Ask Students What is perspective in a photograph?

- Students take turns answering the question.
- Teacher displays the definition along with an example.

Unshuttered Perspective Sheet As a large group review the Unshuttered Perspective Reference Sheet vocabulary list. Encourage your students to keep the worksheet handy either printed or saved on their computer or mobile device.

Transition to the conversation and examination of Unshuttered artwork(s) and the Getty collection artwork(s).

- Tell Students: Let’s take a look at a few artwork examples that use perspective to strengthen an image.

Unshuttered Artworks Project one of the three student photographs shown below. Ask students to pause for 30 seconds, to simply observe the image then begin by asking students what they notice about the photograph.

- 30-45 seconds examining the artwork.
- 2-4 minutes discussing the artwork.
- Transition to next artwork.
- Repeat as time allows.

Image 1
Untitled, Violet Stoeker, 2019

Image 2
God’s People, Jeremy Davis, 2018

Image 3
Untitled, Linsey A. Montgomery, 2018
About the Artists
(Image 1) Violet Stoeker started working with film photography at the beginning of high school. In order to work with film, Stoeker used her school’s darkroom, developing machines, and editing programs. Stoeker stated, “After a while, my camera was like my phone or my keys—I couldn’t leave the house without it.” Some constant features of Stoeker’s photographs include black–and–white imagery, high contrast, and capturing details that encourage eye movement. During her participation in the Unshuttered program, Stoeker’s photography aimed to capture images of feminism and women’s rights.

(Image 2) Jeremy Davis began taking photos from a young age and was quickly dubbed the family photographer. Since the development of his early interest he has continued to practice and studied photography more seriously as a junior in high school. In his words, “I began taking photos as a Geometry assignment, noticed patterns, and fell in love”.

About the Artwork
(Image 2) Jeremy Davis explains: “It ties into social justice and is timeless in its representation of how Black people are resilient. Through it all, we are still here. We’ve endured centuries—long suffering that other people were unable to withstand including slavery, social injustice, police brutality, poor educational opportunities, systemic racism, oppression, and housing discrimination, and murder in the broad daylight to name a few. Yet, here we are in all our magnificent glory. We are God’s people, no other way to explain our survival or presence.”

Suggested Questions for Discussion

• What do you notice first about this image?
  Encourage your students to be as descriptive as possible when describing the image. This is not about interpreting the image, necessarily but rather simply describing the details students notice.

• What stands out to you the most about the perspective of this photograph?
  For example:
  · Image 1: The viewer is looking up at the woman. The photograph was taken with a close up of the corn, drawing the main focus towards the woman in the background. The image uses a triangle shape, with the top of the triangle being where the head of the woman is.
  · Image 2: The viewer is facing the torsos of each person, at a low angle. Perhaps the photographer is sitting down.
  · Image 3: The photograph is taken with a close-up of the toys: the Lego character is in the left bottom corner while the Hulk figure appears to be larger and the main focus. The viewer is looking up at the Hulk toy figurine. This image creates a triangle, with the top of the Hulk’s head at the top of the triangle.

• How is the photo framed?
  For example:
  · Image 1: For example, the foreground of the image—the corn—takes up about a third of the frame. The woman in the background is centered.
  · Image 2: The primary focus of the image could be the suits and hands of the men wearing white gloves, it may also be the bright red tie.
· Image 3: Though the toys are the main focus, there is a deeper landscape behind them.
· What is going on in the foreground and background of the image?

For example:
· You may want to discuss how in Image 1, the corn fills in the foreground and the woman stands behind the pile of corn. What could this composition suggest about what the photographer wants the viewer to notice?
· Image 2, the viewer only sees the torso of both men who are wearing matching suits and white gloves. You may want to ask your students what they see behind the men and how that detail impacts the viewing.
· Image 3, the Lego toy is in the foreground, the Hulk figurine in the middle ground, and the trees are in the background. The Hulk, known for his size and strength, is therefore the main point of focus for the viewer and his relative size accentuated.

Explore Further!

 Getty Collection Artwork(s) Project the Getty collection photographs shown below. Ask students to pause for about 30 seconds to simply observe the image then begin by asking students what they notice about the photograph.
· 30–45 seconds examining the artwork.
· 2–4 minutes discussing the artwork.
· Share the artist’s description with your students.
· Repeat as necessary.
· Transition to the next portion of the lesson.


About the Artist William Eggleston is an American photographer. Much of William Eggleston’s work documents “ordinary” subject matters in the Southern United States, highlighting the complexity and beauty in mundane objects.

About the Artwork William Eggleston explains the radical perspective he used in this photograph of a child’s tricycle, which seems to dwarf the homes and car in the background.
“Sometimes I like the idea of making a picture that does not look like a human picture. Humans make pictures which tend to be about five feet above the ground looking out horizontally. I like very fast flying insects moving all over and I wonder what their view is from moment to moment. I have made a few pictures which show that physical viewpoint...The tricycle is similar. It is an insect’s view or it could be a child’s view.”
—William Eggleston

About the Artist David Hockney is an English painter, draftsman, printmaker, stage designer, and photographer. Hockney is noted as an important contributor to the Pop Art movement of the 1960s, and is considered as one of the most influential British artists of the 20th century.

About the Artwork This artwork depicts a view of a California highway, Route 138 in the Antelope Valley. It is a collage compiled from over 700 separate photographs. Hockney describes his work as a drawing as opposed to a photographic piece. He has stated that this is because this work is a layered composition representing many different viewpoints as opposed to a single, flat photograph.

Suggested Questions for Discussion

• What do you notice about this image?
• What artistic choices did the photographer make?
  For example:
  - Image 1: The photograph is taken from a low angle, which makes the children’s bike appear enormous.
  - Image 2: The photograph seems to be made up of different photographs collaged together to create one cohesive image.
• What compositional elements do you notice?
  For example:
  - Image 1: The artist used a forced perspective looking upward from the ground; the child’s bike looks gigantic. The houses create a flat horizon line in the background.
  - Image 2: The artist used linear perspective, with two parallel lines and a vanishing point to create depth and suggest the relative size, shape and position of other objects in the scene.

Transition to the practice portion of the lesson Depending on how much time you have or if you are teaching in a hybrid model, you may want to provide students with additional time to take photographs at home.

PRACTICE

Suggested Time: 35–40 minutes + At Home Practice

Student Learning Objectives

Students will be able to apply their knowledge of perspective and create three photographs that explore three different perspective compositions.
Students create

- A photograph that uses a linear perspective
- A photograph that incorporates one of the other five types of perspectives
- A photograph where the subject fills the entire frame

Let's begin!

1. **Tell Students** It is important to remember that photography is all about the process. Today you'll create three photographs that focus on playing with various perspective techniques.

   You'll create:
   - A photograph where their camera is facing directly up or down
   - A photograph where the subject matter fills the entire frame
   - A photograph that uses a vanishing point

2. **Tell Students** Let's look at a few videos that experiment with perspective in different ways.

3. **Show** your students the following videos: *Bird's Eye View, Eye Level Perspective, High Level Perspective, Low Level Perspective* and *Canted Perspective*. Depending on your class time frame, you may want to provide your students with the links to the videos, so they can watch them prior to the lesson.

4. **Write (Optional)** Artists often sketch or write down their ideas in a sketchbook or journal. This helps you keep track of your ideas and become helpful in the future when developing new ideas.

5. **Begin Creating** Grab your cameras, take photographs with intention and have fun!

6. **Begin Editing** (Tell your Students) Once you have taken your photographs, select which images you would like to digitally enhance. You may do so on your phone's editing software or other photography editing software. As the lessons progress, you may also want to revisit these photographs and edit as you learn more about photography techniques.

   - Students may edit their photographs at home and upload them to a shared Google drive or other platform once they are digitally enhanced.
   - Some apps students can use are: VSCO, Adobe Photoshop Express Editor, Adobe Photoshop Lightroom mobile, Canva, Pixlr or Instasize.

7. **Reflection** Suggested Time: 5 minutes

   We encourage you to take the last five minutes of class to check in with students to learn about what techniques worked, did not work as well, and what can be improved for the next class. Reflection can take place in the group setting or individually, it can be verbal or written. Encourage your students to continue taking photographs and experimenting with various perspective angles. Students should come prepared to discuss one of their photographs.
THANK YOU...

...for your commitment to inspiring young people to create art and tell their stories.

Please adapt and improve upon this lesson plan to meet the needs and age range of your group.

OTHER RESOURCES

Related photography video skills
- Bird’s Eye View
- Eye Level Perspective
- High Level Perspective
- Low Level Perspective
- Canted Perspective

Resources
- Unshuttered Perspective Sheet
- Condensed Instructional Plan
- Practice sheet
FOUNDATIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY SKILLS LESSON 2

UNSHUTTERED PERSPECTIVE SHEET

- **Perspective**: Perspective is the sense of depth or spatial relationship between objects in a photograph. This includes their dimensions with respect to what the viewer of the image sees.
- **Viewpoint**: The viewpoint refers to the position the photographer takes the photograph from.
- **Foreground**: The foreground is the portion of the imageframe that is closest to the camera.
- **Background**: Part of the overall scene, but behind the main subject of the photograph.
- **Middle ground**: The middle ground is the space within a composition between the foreground and the background.
FOUNDATIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY SKILLS LESSON 2

CONDENSED INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN

Student Learning Objectives

• Students will examine and analyze examples of photography that experiment with perspective
• Students will compose and photograph three photographs that implement perspective techniques discussed in class.

Instructions for Educators

Suggested Duration: 15 minutes

Essential Question: What draws your eye’s attention in a photograph?

Set the Stage

Background Information for Educator During this lesson, students will explore perspective and learn to identify various types of perspective techniques in photography. After discussing the artworks, students will create photographs that explore these techniques.

• Classroom discussion
• Tell Students Before we begin taking our photographs and experimenting with new techniques, we will be talking about perspective in photography. First, we will review our Unshuttered perspective sheet, then we will take a look at and discuss a few artworks that use perspective in a few different ways.
• Ask Students What is perspective in a photograph?
  Students take turns answering the question
  Teacher displays the definition along with an example.
• Unshuttered Perspective Sheet As a large group review the Unshuttered Perspective Sheet. Encourage your students to keep the worksheet handy either printed or saved on their computer or mobile device.
• Transition to the examination of Unshuttered artwork(s) and the Getty collection artwork(s).
• Tell Students Let’s take a look at a few artwork examples that use perspective to strengthen an image.
• Examining the Artworks
  Unshuttered Artwork(s): Project one of the three student photographs shown on the next page. Ask students to pause for about 30 seconds, to simply observe the image then begin by asking students what they notice about the photograph.
  • 30–45 seconds examining the artwork.
  • 2–4 minutes discussing the artwork.
  • Transition to next artwork.
  • Repeat as necessary.
Getty Collection Artwork(s): Project one of the two Getty collection photographs shown below. Ask students to pause for about 30 seconds, to simply observe the image then begin by asking students what they notice about the photograph.

**Transition** to the practice portion of the lesson. Depending on how much time you have or if you are teaching in a hybrid model, you may want to provide students with additional time to take photographs at home.
FOUNDATIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY SKILLS LESSON 2

PRACTICE SHEET

Student Learning Objectives

Students will be able to apply their knowledge of perspective and create three photographs that explore three different perspective compositions.

Students Create

• A photograph where their camera is facing directly up or down
• A photograph where the subject matter fills the entire frame
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Let’s begin!

1. Tell Students It is important to remember that photography is all about the process. Today you’ll create three photographs that focus on playing with various perspective techniques.

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5. Write (Optional) Artists often sketch or write down their ideas in a sketchbook or journal. This helps you keep track of your ideas and become helpful in the future when developing new ideas.