Peace Windows

Create faux stained glass with symbolic images in the style of Marc Chagall.

(art+ social studios; art + literature)

Late in his career, artist Marc Chagall produced a number of paintings using glass as his medium. One of his most popular pieces is entitle "Peace Window," created for the United Nations World Headquarters. The intent was to produce a living memorial to all who had lost their lives in the cause for peace. Chagall's colorful, dream-like images symbolize peace, love, tolerance, and faith.

In reality, Chagall's life was filled with tragic events and the world he lived in was anything but peaceful. In light of this fact, students can recognize an artist's ability to choose to share healing, inspiration, and encouragement.

Using peace as a theme, students create transparent paintings with floating imagery and Chagall-like soothing colors.
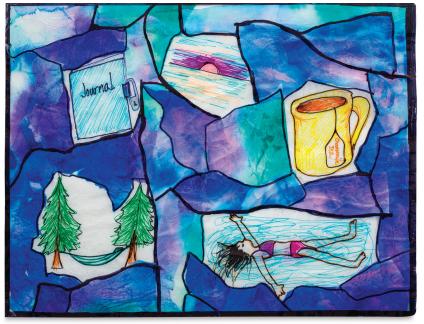
GRADES 3-12 Note: Instructions and materials are based upon a class size of 24 students. Adjust as needed.

Preparation

1. View images of Marc Chagall's paintings and stained glass, and pay close attention to his symbolism and positioning of icons.

2. Cut tissue into approximately 6″ x 6″ squares. Squares do not need to be even or tidy. Plan for 15 to 20 squares per student.

Process

1. To create "stained" background color, stack 10 squares on a coated paper plate and spritz with water.

2. Distribute liquid watercolor in cups anduse droppersto transfer color from the cup to the stack of tissue. Saturate with blue paint, then add one or two drops of green and purple. The paint will soak through the stack to cover each piece.

3. While the watercolor dries, discuss the following prompts to generate ideas:

    -   What are some of the symbols we use to indicate peace? (peace icon, dove, making a "V" with fingers)

    -   What are some things that you would describe as peaceful? (a garden, a starry sky, a beach, etc.)

    -   What are some of the things you can do to feel at peace? (reading, hugging, sleeping, drawing, etc.)

4. Drawing on their responses to these questions, students should use markers to draw five or six images on the remaining tissue squares. Markers will bleed through the tissue and the drawing will be visible on the other side. Cut around the images.

Materials (required)

Blick Pure White Tissue, pkg of 50 sheets, 12″ x 18″ (11308-1497); share one across class

Black and Decker TimeShield Thermal Laminating Pouches, 8-1/2″ x 11″, pkg of 25 (24523-1325); share one across class

Blick Liquid Watercolor, 8 oz, assorted colors including Blue (00369-5005), Violet (00369-6505), and Blue-Green (00369-5105)

Blick Glue Stick, 0.28 oz (23895-1042); one per student

Mr. Sketch Stix Markers, set of 10 (21299-9010); share one set between two students

Droppers, pkg of 5 (04958-0000); share two across class

Holbein Watercolor Atomizer Bottle, 2 oz (02912-1003)

Snippy Scissors, blunt, pkg of 12 (57040-1009); share two across class

Sharpie Chisel Tip, Black (21383-2020); share twelve across class

Iron or Black and Decker Flash Thermal Laminator, 9-1/2″ wide (24522-2509)

Process, continued

5. Open the laminating pouch and roll the top under so that it stays open. Using a glue stick, arrange the images onto the inside of the pouch.

6. Tear the dried, "stained-glass" tissue squares into smaller pieces and tack them in place around the image shapes as closely as possible without covering them. Pieces can be overlapped, creased, or bunched to fit. Cover the entire background.

7. Close the pouch and use a household iron on a nylon or polyester setting to seal.

8. If desired, use a permanent black marker to draw a frame and outline the shapes. Look for lines formed by the background tissue and trace them to make "lead" lines.

Options

- Laminating pouches may be cut in half to make small windows.

- Laminating film may also be used.

National Core Arts Standards - Visual Arts

Creating
Anchor Standard 1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

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

Responding
Anchor Standard 9.1: Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.

Step 1: Using a dropper and liquid watercolor, "stain" a stack of tissue to be used for the background.

Step 2: Create images symbolizing peace and cut them out. Glue images inside pouch and arrange background pieces around them.

Step 3: Seal pouch. Add "lead" lines with permanent black marker.