

Postcards from the Valley



*The Fresno Art Museum and
the Fresno County Office of Education
have teamed up once again to create another
fabulous art experience
for all school children in Fresno County!*

**You'll find lesson plan ideas, instructions, and ideas
in this packet to participate
in this fun and educational event.**

Entry Deadline: November 27, 2011, 5 pm (at FAM)
Reception for Exhibition at **Family Day** on December 10, 2011



fresno county
office of education
Larry L. Powell, Superintendent

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Postcards from the Valley



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Your students are invited to create a postcard size landscape.

A landscape, for visual art purposes, shows the topographical and visual features of an area of land. This lesson hopes students will become more aware of our region, including our beautiful San Joaquin River, our foothills, our farmlands and our cityscapes by learning how to create a representational picture of an image they know in the Valley. Of course, thoughtful abstract representations are also acceptable.

On the next pages you will find some suggestions and approaches to the creation of your mini postcard landscapes. Please be sure to carefully review the instructions. Any submissions which do not comply with the criteria set forth in the instructions will NOT be accepted.

Questions? Email susan@fresnoartmuseum.org or call 559-441-4221, x101

Project Goals: (1) To raise student awareness about the beauty, diversity and vastness of our great San Joaquin Valley landscape; (2) to participate in communicating ideas about our region in a postcard format; (3) to share student artistic creations in an exhibition at the Fresno Art Museum, and (4) to provide an opportunity for participating students to attend the Fresno Art Museum with families, without cost, to see and explore artworks of landscapes in a variety of media.

Student Objectives: State visual art content standards are listed below in ()'s.

Students will:

- Expand their knowledge base and creation of landscape pictures, either in a realistic or abstract manner. (Artistic perception, aesthetic valuing, creative expression.)
- Explore the geography, agriculture, communities, of our valley. (Cross-curricular connections.)
- Gain an understanding of how we can help protect our land. (Cross-curricular connections.)
- Potentially, visit the current exhibits at the Fresno Art Museum that focus on regional landscapes. (Historical and cultural context and aesthetic valuing.)
- Acquire background information about mail/postcard art. (Historical and cultural context.)

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INSTRUCTIONS

ELIGIBILITY

Open to all K-12 students in Fresno County. This includes, public, private, and homeschool students. All submitted artworks must be originals (not copies or photos of originals) created by the student.

SUBMISSIONS

All works must be submitted to the Fresno Art Museum via mail or hand delivery. A teacher may submit multiple entries, each with its own entry form. The mailing address for the Fresno Art Museum is: 2233 North First Street, Fresno CA 93703. Hand deliveries can be made to the front desk at the Museum, Thursday to Sunday from 11 am to 5 pm. **NO SUBMISSIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER 5 PM ON SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 2011.** (Museum closed on November 24th and 25th for Thanksgiving.) Please call 559-441-4221 x 101 for more information.

Only one entry per student is allowed. Individual entry forms must accompany each artwork submitted.

Please note that if these rules are not followed exactly, submissions may be eliminated.

RETURN OF SUBMISSIONS

Postcard art may be returned to the student artists after January 9, 2012 by US Mail if it includes postage (44 cents) on the back and is pre-addressed by the student or teacher. Please note that any submissions which cannot be returned as a postcard through the US mail or which do not have proper postage affixed may be picked up at the Museum between January 9 and 29, 2012.

SIZE & DESIGN

All entries must be 5½" x 8½" (size of one half of a sheet of copy paper). **No exceptions.** Paper should be cardstock or heavier. Consider the material used during the creative process if mail return of the artwork is desired. All entries must be two-dimensional designs, with attached objects no thicker than one half inch. The postcard format may be vertical or horizontal. Each student will follow the theme of **"Postcards From The Valley"** and each artwork must include a written artist statement that relates to the theme, written on the back of the card (see sample). Note that spelling and correct grammar count!! Some statements will be selected to be reproduced and will appear in the exhibition.

MEDIA

There are not any 2-D limitations... acrylics, watercolors, tempera, color markers, photos, color pencil, oil pastel, chalk (please use a fixative such as hairspray), collages, photo-montages are all acceptable. One idea is to create a larger landscape composition. Cut out a 5½" x 8½" hole in the middle of a separate piece of paper, like a window. Put that window template over the art piece and move it around until you decide which part looks the best. Mark and carefully cut out the selection for your postcard entry. Lettering may be computer generated or hand done. (You may create on a separate paper and glue to back.) **DO NOT MOUNT OR FRAME ART WORK ON BACKING LARGER THAN 5 ½" x 8 ½"— SUBMITTED WORK MUST BE 5½" x 8½", no larger and no smaller.**

DEADLINE DATES

The postcard submissions are due at the Fresno Art Museum no later than Sunday, November 27 at 5 pm (the Museum is open until 5 pm that day).

A printed set of postcards will be created from selected entries chosen by the Museum's Educational Advisory Committee, taking into consideration creativity, content, and ease of reproduction. The set of printed cards will be available for purchase as a fundraiser for the Fresno Art Museum during and after FAMily Day on Saturday, December 10 (Great idea for Holiday gifts!). A set of printed cards will be given free to each student who has a design selected for inclusion in the printed set.

All entries accepted will be hung in the Museum's ChildSpace Gallery through January 8, 2012.

It is assumed that by entering a card design the student and parents are giving permission for it to be used in the set of prints, if selected, and for display in the Museum.

All students who submit a card will receive recognition and an invitation to attend FAMily Day at the Fresno Art Museum from 11 to 4 on December 10, 2011. Recognition ceremony at 3 pm on December 10.

TO ENTER

On the reverse side of the postcard, follow a regular postcard format (see below). You may copy, complete, cutout, and glue the postcard back sample below or reproduce it exactly on the back of your submission. Be sure to include at least one email address for contacting teacher or parent.

Further Information, please contact:

Susan Yost Filgate
Education Coordinator
Fresno Art Museum
559-441-4221 x 101
susan@fresnoartmuseum.org

44 cents postage stamp here if you want submission mailed back.

Most important - include an email address for teacher or homeschooling parent.

Student name and address here for mail return

Students: Be sure to include your "Artist Statement" here

Artwork must be exactly 8 1/2" x 5 1/2", no larger and no smaller

Must deliver to FAM by Nov. 27, 2011 at 5 pm

On card stock or heavier

You may use template on next page for back of postcard - just cut it out, fill it in, and paste it on the back of the entry.

POSTAGE STAMP HERE

Student name: _____ Grade: _____
School: _____
Class Name/Period No.: _____
School District: _____
Teacher: _____
Teacher eMail: _____
Homeschool parents please list your name and email address for "teacher"
Artist Statement: _____

8 1/2"
5 1/2"

Student name: _____

School: _____ Grade: _____

Class Name/Period No.: _____

School District: _____

Teacher: _____

Teacher eMail: _____

Homeschool parents, please use your name and email address for "teacher".

Artist Statement: _____

Please do not write below or to the right of these lines if mailing through the post office →

POSTAGE
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Student name: _____

School: _____ Grade: _____

Class Name/Period No.: _____

School District: _____

Teacher: _____

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Homeschool parents, please use your name and email address for "teacher".

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Please do not write below or to the right of these lines if mailing through the post office →

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Postcards from the Valley



COMING UP WITH A THEME

You may direct your students in the visualization of the San Joaquin Valley by having them close their eyes while you direct them in visualization of a variety of geographic sites. What images do they see when you mention the Blossom Trail, Millerton Lake, rows of grapevines or cotton, wildflowers on the foothills, canals snaking through a city, the San Joaquin River, Woodward or Roeding Park, Lost Lake, the freeways, fruit and vegetable farmer's markets, sports events, the Fresno Fair, the rolling foothills, majestic mountains, orchards, the fog, sunshine, heat, the Fresno State University campus, flower gardens, the downtown mall, their own backyard—wherever their inner vision takes them. What sentences, phrases and/or words could they use that connect to the imagery? Encourage students to select a place that has meaning for them and to think about how being in that place makes them feel. What makes it special?

LOOKING AT LANDSCAPES

Before creating their own landscapes students need to gain an understanding of how artists have made drawings/paintings of landscapes by following certain structure rules that give their art depth on a flat piece of paper. To explore ways of showing a 3-D appearance, share a variety of landscapes on the internet, calendars, etc., or, if possible, visit the Fresno Art Museum's exhibits to gain inspiration. As the teacher, you can decide the extent of the learning experience.



We know that in the real world there is not one inch of blue sky at the top and another strip of grass at the bottom of a realistic picture. The sky meets the ground. Help students become aware of this through observation of the world outside their windows and by observing other artists' renditions of landscape. The basic vocabulary/rules are:

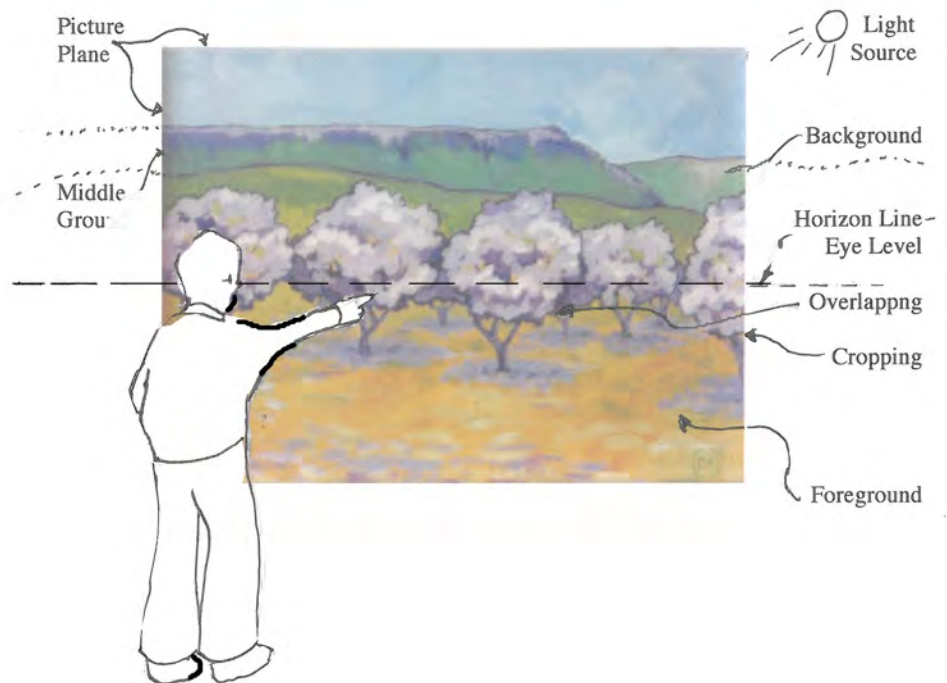
- **Picture Plane**

One can't put on paper everything they see at once. Artists create by choosing what they want to paint by thinking of a view out a window. Students can cut out an 8 1/2" x 5 1/2" inch "window" and hold it up to observe a landscape. A camera may also be used to compose their composition, then translating the image they photograph into a painting, drawing, or collage.

- **Foreground, Middle-ground, Background**

To show depth ("near and far"), students should make objects in the foreground appear much larger in the picture than those in the distance. (A tree close up appears larger than the mountains in the background.) The objects in the foreground show more intense colors as well as more detail, textures, or patterns. Those in background have lighter values (black to white) of color with a "faded", more neutral look. You can

connect this to landscapes and demonstrate this by observing items in an actual landscape or by positioning children of similar size and height in a hallway or on the playground and having the others in the class observe and discuss. You could also use two chairs or other items of similar size and shape.



- **Overlapping**

Objects that are closer to the viewer partially cover objects that are behind them. Remind the students that objects which are closer normally start at a lower position on the paper.

- **Cropping**

Some objects are represented so close-up in the composition that they are actually cut off at the edges of the paper.

Sometimes this creates a more interesting and exciting composition than if you show the whole mountain, tree, lake, etc.

- **Perspective**

Formula for making a flat picture look three-dimensional by giving it depth.

- **Aerial or Atmospheric perspective**

This refers to the air and the effects on objects in the distance

- **Linear perspective**

This concept was developed in the Renaissance and defines how receding lines on buildings, etc., that are parallel appear to come together, recede and converge on the horizon line. (Rows of crops in a field, a road going into the distance.)

- **Horizon Line**

Imagine a flat land. In the far distance, where the earth meets the sky, we refer to this as the horizon. We may not see this in every landscape painting but it is there, even if covered up by mountains or buildings. This line can be imagined by the artist looking straight forward and visualizing this line. It is also referred to as the artist's **eye level**. Most artists start by placing this line on the paper (lightly) to begin their composition.

- **Light Source**

Landscapes depend on the natural light from the sun. By adding shading to a picture one can achieve a real sense of depth. Decide where the sun is located to determine what is in light and what is in shadow. Where the sun is positioned will determine the time of day. Depending upon where the sunlight is coming from, will determine where to put the shadows and shading. Add shadows on the ground. Look at other landscapes and see if the students can determine where the sun is coming from.



“MAIL ART” & POSTCARD ART BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Postcards are miniature works of art. The first picture postcard was sent through our postal system in 1873. Postcards could be made using any media as long as it would go through the mail.

“Mail Art” is a worldwide cultural movement that began in the early 1960s and continued in popularity through the 1980s and early 1990s. Many artists believed that their works would get more exposure in the postal system than in galleries. Often mail art was much larger than postcards, any thing that would be deliverable as created. The idea was for under-represented artists to share their work with other serious artists and a broader audience. Anybody can participate in this postal network and exchange free artworks. When collaborating for thematic shows there was no jury, no entry fee, no censorship, and all works were exhibited, usually in alternative spaces such as store fronts and lobbies.

Mail art has become a global grassroots activity and its purpose is to establish an aesthetic communication between artists and the common people around the world. With the increasing postal rates artists began switching to cheaper forms of digital communication. This has opened a floodgate of techniques and formats available to the mail artist. Photography, collage and photo-montage are hugely popular along with copy art and computer software. Handwritten or printed lettering are integral parts of the art form. Websites, blogs and social networking are now sources for displaying the postcards. It continues to transform itself with the times.



Science Connections: Environmental Concerns for Our Valley

Sometimes artists create images that are controversial or point out things that people may not know about. Art, by bringing awareness, can activate change. If you choose, you can create postcard art that might bring a problem to the attention of a lot of people—just remember that it must be expressed in a landscape.

- Global garbage glut is huge problem. Learn about landfills. Study composting: materials needed, how to, reasons for and beneficial effects of composting.
- Water is a giant Valley problem. Study conservation and recycling. Do you have any ideas how we can be sure we have enough water for homes and agriculture in the future? Conduct a class discussion on how students can change personal and family practices to conserve water.
- Grow a fruit and vegetable garden at school and/or at home. Learn about care, climate concerns, nutrition. Teachers read Alice Waters' *Edible Schoolyard*.
- See chapters on Vital Valleys (p.10) and Glorious Gardens (p.90) in Heather Anderson's *Art Education and Eco Awareness* for art lesson ideas.
- Check out the “Go Green” Art contest on Supervisor Perea’s page at <http://www.co.fresno.ca.us> OR watch for news about the contest in early 2012 on the Fresno Art Museum’s website, www.fresnoartmuseum.org.