Title/Description of Lesson
Asian Blossom Painting

Grade Level:
1st – 6th (fun for older students, too!)

(Could be used for integration in any language arts or social studies lessons that pertains to china, japan, chinese/japanese american immigration etc.)

Lesson Links
Objectives/Outcomes
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Objectives/Outcomes (Return to Links)
Students will create paintings of flowers based on Asian brush paintings that embody simple, asymmetrical compositions.

Materials and Resources (Return to Links)
12x18 heavyweight paper (white or light blue) cut into 6x12 inch pieces
Crayola acrylic paint (White, Black, Pink)—black should be thinned with water until it is the consistency of ink. The pink can be made lighter by adding a bit of white paint.
Thin straws
Black construction paper (2x6 inches)
Black yarn (20 inches long)
Glue sticks
Paint brushes (the ones that come with standard watercolor sets are fine)
Styrofoam sheets (cut into 1x1 inch pieces)
Red markers
Copy paper cut into fourths
Examples of Asian brush paintings
Examples of Western still-life painting of flower
Samples of completed Asian Blossom painting

**Vocabulary**  ([Return to Links](#))

**Scroll** – (in Japanese and Chinese art) a painting or text on silk or paper that is either displayed on a wall (hanging scroll) or held by the viewer (hand scroll) and is rolled up when not in use.

**Simple** – easy to understand, not elaborate, ornate or complicated.

**Composition** – the arrangement of the visual elements of art with the goal to form a picture or work of art.

**Balance** - an element of design used to describe whether the shapes, lines, colors etc. are evenly or unevenly placed.

**Symmetry** - When one side of a picture of object balances out the other side. Our face is pretty much symmetrical as is the façade of many buildings.

**Asymmetry** – When an object of work of art lacks symmetry. One side is different from the other. However, it does not mean that the composition lacks balance.

**Chop** - (the stamp with one’s name used in place of a signature in China/Japan)

**Procedures**  ([Return to Links](#))

**DAY 1**

1. Show students examples of Asian brush paintings, especially hanging scrolls. Talk about simplicity and composition of Japanese and Chinese painting. Explain that a composition that looks very simple is not necessarily easy to make. Ask why the painters might have chosen to focus on only a few flowers, rather than an entire tree, for example. Compare to a Western still-life painting of flowers from the same period, and ask what the two have in common and how they differ. Note the differences in the tools/media used to create the works of art.

2. Show completed Asian Blossom painting. Demonstrate method for making tree: use straw to lift black paint from container (by placing your finger over one end of the straw), then, using the straw, sketch a simple tree consisting of branching Ys on the 6x12 paper. Using a straw that has been cut in half, blow on the wet lines of black paint. You will be able to make a variety of branch-like forms by blowing the paint from either side. You have to get your straw very close to the paint, and rotate your paper.

3. After helpers have passed out a straw (cut in half) and a 6x12 paper to each student, the TEACHER quickly paints the basic tree form for each student. The students stay in their seats and blow through the straws to create their trees. As soon as you have finished making trees for students, collect their straws and through them away so that they don’t play with them. Put paintings aside to dry.
4. If there is still time (5-10 minutes needed), point out the chop in one of the example paintings, and explain that in China and Japan, artists sign their names with special stamps rather than with their signature. Show students how to make a design with their initials, using your own initials as an example. Younger students may need to be told what initials are. Tell students the two letters should be touching in their designs. Have students sketch several ideas, then circle their favorite. Have students write their names on these papers (the copy paper cut into fourths), then collect them.

**DAY 2**

1. Demonstrate how to make five-petaled flowers using the “double dip” method: dip the brush first in pink, then halfway in white. Decide where to put the first flower. Hold the brush almost flat against the paper. The side of the brush is used almost like a stamp. After the first petal, rotate the paper and “stamp” until you have 5 petals. Emphasize that Asian paintings are often very simple, so students will only do three flowers and three buds. (a bud is just a single petal). Tell students that the three flowers and three buds should form triangles, rather than be in straight lines, as that looks more natural. Students should also place the flowers asymmetrically rather than symmetrically. Students will come in groups to the flower painting station you have set up. Having about 6 students at a time works well, but fewer is better if you want to control the process more closely. Before having students start at the painting station, however, explain Step 2.

2. Demonstrate how to make the Styrofoam chop. Tells students when you make a stamp or a print, the image will be reversed. Trace over your favorite initial design from Day 1 with a black marker. Turn the paper over, and you will see the design is visible on the other side, but reversed. Center your 1x1 inch Styrofoam piece under the design and trace it in pencil or ballpoint pen. When you remove the paper, the design will be “carved” into the Styrofoam, properly reversed. Ink your chop with the red marker, then stamp it into the small paper with your initial design. It may take some practice to get a nice clear print. Students while make the Styrofoam chops while waiting their turn for the flower painting station.

3. Make borders on the top and bottom edges of your painting by folding the 2x6 black construction paper in half lengthwise and gluing it to the Asian Blossom painting. The black yarn gets tied at the ends and glued in the inner fold of the upper black border so that the finished painting can be hung on the wall. You may want to do this final step after your flowers have dried, depending on timing and on student behavior. The chop should be done at the very end as well, so that the border is taking into account when stamping.

**Criteria for Assessing Student Learning**  
Does the work of art demonstrate the criteria found in Asian brush painting (i.e., simplicity and asymmetry)? Did the student make three flowers and three buds, forming triangles? Were the painting, stamping, and gluing done neatly?
California Standards in Visual & Performing Arts  (Return to Links)
Grade 1:
Component Strand 3.0: Historical and Cultural Context
  3.2 Identify and describe various subject matter in art.
  3.4 Identify art objects from various cultures and describe what they have in common and how they differ.

Grade 3:
Component Strand 1.0: Artistic Perception
  1.4 Compare and contrast two works of art made by the use of different art tools and media.

California Standards for Integrated Subject  (Return to Links)

Other Resources  (Return to Links)