

GROWING CHAMPION CLASSROOMS: Lesson Plans for Arkansas Educators

These lesson plans and accompanying poster files are based on the 2012-2014 traveling art exhibit *Arkansas Champion Trees: An Artist's Journey, Drawings by Linda Williams Palmer*. The exhibit was organized for travel by the Arkansas Committee of the National Museum of Women in the Arts. "Growing Champion Classrooms" materials fulfill the mission of the Committee: to educate the public about Arkansas women artists and to contribute to the cultural life of our state. The Committee created this outreach material in support of teachers who encourage students to appreciate Arkansas' natural resources.

"Growing Champion Classrooms" includes 2 art lesson plans, visual aids, and activities for K-2, 3-5, and 6-8th grade students. While the lesson plans relate to 6 of the 18 images from the original traveling exhibition, all images are provided online and educators are encouraged to use them as is appropriate to enrich units in a variety of disciplines. However, the "Growing Champion Classrooms" lesson plans are primarily organized to encourage original art making in honor of the artist and the art work that inspired this educational component. The plans are designed for traditional and non-traditional educators in our state, identify applicable State Frameworks, and include options for Common Core guidelines.

COLOR GETS EMOTIONAL

Grade Level: Middle (6-8)

Subjects: Visual Arts, English- Language Arts

Time Required: 3 sessions, 50 minutes per session

Authors: Virmarie DePoyster, Lisa Krannichfeld Walden

The Arkansas Committee of the National Museum of Women in the Arts gratefully acknowledges the generous sponsors of "Growing Champion Classrooms" **Entergy Arkansas** and the **School of Forest Resources, University of Arkansas at Monticello**. "Growing Champion Classrooms" is supported in part by the Arkansas Arts Council, an agency of the Department of Arkansas Heritage, and by the National Endowment for the Arts.



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Lesson Overview:

Students will learn about color pencil artist Linda Williams Palmer and her works of art. Students will analyze her piece **White Oak** and learn how the artist's use of analogous colors creates an illusion of depth and light and helps achieve a certain emotion. Students will discuss the historical background behind this tree as stated by the artist. Students will show their understanding of how analogous or complementary colors can add emotional expression in an artwork and how tonal variation creates a sense of depth and light by drawing a tree with a specific analogous or complementary color scheme. Students will write a six-word story that expresses the emotions of their drawing focusing on powerful but concise writing and creatively incorporate it in their drawing.

Learning Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- Identify how color and value are used in paintings to create depth and space.
- Understand that analogous colors are colors that neighbor each other on the color wheel.
- Understand that complementary colors are colors opposite of each other on the color wheel.
- Understand that colors evoke certain emotions and how artists use color to convey a specific emotion.
- Create a drawing that illustrates their understanding of analogous or complementary color schemes and value.
- Analyze their own art work and develop a six-word story that relates to and enhances the emotional quality achieved in their drawing as determined by their color choices.

Standards utilized in this lesson:

Common Core:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.4- Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience

Visual Arts:

VA.5.8.3- Apply knowledge of specific formal color relationships.

VA.5.5.6- Demonstrate knowledge of value.

VA.6.8.10- Produce artwork that involves problem solving (e.g., reflection, revision, brainstorming, practice, drafts, sketches, models.)

Materials:

- Linda Williams Palmer's *Arkansas Champion Trees: An Artist's Journey* poster, **White Oak**
- Artist biography, artist's process, attached
- Definition of a champion tree, attached
- Historical background information, on poster
- Charcoal pencils or sticks, colored pencils, oil or chalk pastels, writing pencils
- Newsprint or sketching paper

- 12" X 18" or larger, white drawing paper
- Writing paper
- <http://www.sixwordstories.net/> (if needed)

Glossary:

1. Analogous colors: colors that neighbor each other on the color wheel.
2. Neutral colors: black, white, gray, and variations of brown.
3. Value: an element of art that refers to the use of lightness and darkness in a piece of artwork to create an illusion of form and depth.
4. Complementary colors: colors opposite of each other on the color wheel.

Procedure:

Day 1

1. Display Linda Williams Palmer's poster, **White Oak** and allow students to take time to closely look at the work of art.
2. Share with students Linda Williams Palmer's biography and the artist process, attached.
3. Discuss with students what inspired Linda to paint and her journey to documenting Arkansas champion trees. Definition of champion tree, attached.
4. Ask students to share their initial observations about the artworks on poster. Share as many nouns as possible to describe the drawing. (Examples: bark, rock, grass, foliage, shade, branch, trunk, leaf.)
5. Start a discussion about the drawing by discussing the following:
 - Take a moment to look closely. What do you notice about this tree?
 - What kinds of colors do you see both in the leaves and trunk/branches?
 - Are certain colors used in certain areas of the artwork?
 - What do you think the artist found special and different about this tree?
 - What do you think made this tree interesting to draw?
 - What do you see that supports that idea?
6. Share with students the tree's historical background. This tree also known as the "Council Tree" was the location of an historical meeting between Arkansas Territorial Secretary Robert Crittendon and Chief Black Fox and members of his tribal council in 1823. The Cherokee signed a treaty that ceded all their lands south of the Arkansas River to the United States Government.
Circumference: 255 inches
Crown Spread: 85 feet
Height: 91 feet
7. After sharing Linda Williams Palmer's story behind the drawing, ask students if hearing the real story affects what words or phrases they would use to describe the drawing.
8. Handout sketching paper, charcoal pencils or charcoal sticks.

9. Ask students to create several quick drawings of trees from direct observation using charcoal on sketching paper. Advise students not to focus on minute details but try to capture the overall shapes of trees and their branches.
10. Students will create 10 quick drawings. Allow 5-10 minutes for each drawing. Ask students to draw various types, shapes, and sizes of trees from different locations.

Day 2

1. Ask students to evaluate the 10 drawings done from the previous day. Students will choose their 5 favorite drawings and display on their desks.
2. Students will study their drawings and answer the following questions to choose the most visually interesting drawing:
 - a. Which drawing has more interesting lines? Examples: thin, wide, broken
 - b. Are the lines they used expressive and have movement? Examples: curvy, zig-zag, pointy
 - c. Do certain drawings appear more interesting because they are from a different point of view? Examples: drawn looking up, drawn from far away
3. Students will select one drawing to use as reference material for their final work of art.
4. Students will re-draw the sketch on large, white drawing paper using drawing pencils. They can add more detail to the final drawing, if needed, to fill the larger spaces. Encourage students by stating that although re-drawing the sketch might seem repetitive, the more they practice, the easier drawing will become. Allow 15 minutes for re-drawing.
5. Once the drawings are finished, start a dialogue with students about colors and emotion by asking the following:
 - Which colors do you think describe happy times? Answer: Yellow, pink, green
 - Which colors do you think represent mad or angry? Answer: Dark blues, dark red
 - Are there certain colors that can show little emotion? Neutrals like khaki or grey
 - Explain that it has been documented by scientists that certain colors influence or express people's emotions.
6. Display a color wheel showing analogous colors.
 - Explain that analogous colors are neighbors on the color wheel.
 - Examples: red and purple, blue and green, yellow and orange.
 - Analogous colors are harmonious, calming and soothing.
7. Now, display on the color wheel the complementary colors.
 - Complementary colors are opposite of each other on color wheel.
 - Examples: red across from green, yellow across from violet, blue across from orange.
 - These colors contrast each other and are lively, active and exciting.
8. Direct students to choose a color scheme (analogous or complementary) to use in their final artwork. The color scheme that best fits the emotion they want their art to express.

9. Explain to them that neutral colors (black white, gray, brown) are often used to communicate a lack of feeling or can be added to colors to tone down the color. Also, black and white can be added to colors to create darker or lighter areas of that color.
10. Before applying color to their drawings, students need to consider the position of the sun in the sky. Is the sun up high in the sky or setting/rising closer to the horizon? The areas on tree where light is shining will be painted in lighter and more intense colors. The areas where the tree is not lit will consist of darker, duller colors.
11. Using the image from the **White Oak** poster, explain that the viewer can tell the light is shining from above the leaves because the leaves in the upper half of tree are brighter greens and yellows in comparison to the leaves in the lower half of the tree, which are darker blues and greens.
12. For example, if a student chooses a red and violet analogous color scheme:
 - Areas where the tree is lit by sunlight will consist of pinks, lavenders, and bright reds.
 - Areas where the tree is in shadows will consist of burgundies, dark purples, and black.
13. Once student selects color scheme and direction of light, allow students to add in color and value with oil or chalk pastels. Remind them that neutral colors add value and tone down colors. Their choices of color will affect the emotions the artwork will portray.
14. Define any art related vocabulary as needed:
 - Analogous Colors: colors that neighbor each other on the color wheel.
 - Neutral Colors: black, white, gray, and variations of brown.
 - Value: an element of art that refers to the use of lightness and darkness in a piece of artwork to create an illusion of form and depth.
 - Complementary colors: colors opposite of each other on the color wheel.

Day 3

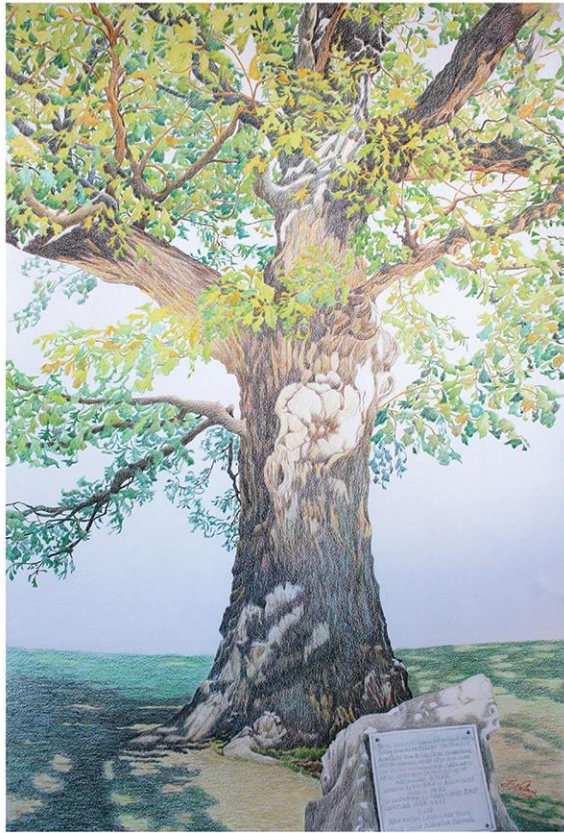
1. Display Linda's **White Oak** poster. Based on previous conversation in class about color and emotions, ask students:
 - What emotion do they feel Linda was trying to portray when making her color choices for this drawing?
 - Did her color choices help her show the majesty of the tree?
 - Did Linda use analogous colors for leaves? Yes. By using analogous colors Linda achieved a harmonious, calming and soothing feeling in her work.
2. Handout a sheet of paper for each student to place next to their artwork.
3. Ask students to walk around the room and view other students work.
4. Students will study each other's artwork and write words that describe the mood of the art work according to the style of the drawing and the use of color. Every student should at least write 1 word.

5. Students will go back to their own artwork and review what their peers wrote down in response to their artworks. Students might be surprised by the words written by their peers.
6. Explain to students that today they will be writing a six-word story. Use Ernest Hemingway's example – "For sale: baby shoes, never worn."
 - Discuss that when words are chosen carefully, few words are needed to tell a powerful story.
 - Students will study their drawing and consider the words written by their peers.
 - Students will analyze their art work and develop a six-word story that relates to and enhances the emotional quality achieved in their drawing as determined by their color choices.
 - The six-word story will express the emotion portrayed in their artwork; (happy, sad, angry.)
 - Students can use words written by their peers or write their own.
 - Examples:
 - a) Tree falls, crushed swing, no sound. (Dark somber colors)
 - b) Irony is drawing trees on paper. (Humor, bright color combinations)
 - c) Tree trouble. Tree logger. Tree somber. (Dark colors with neutrals)
 - d) Bright sky; exchanging giggles, fun day. (Happy, yellow, green, warm colors)
 - For further examples, visit sixwordstories.net.
7. Ask students to incorporate the six-word story into their drawing. Students might write it in cursive, print or collage the words from magazines text into the artwork. Words could be placed along branches, carved into trunk or flow freely in the back ground. Have students discuss options with peers before they decide.
8. Students will share their final product and their process with peers. Have them explain and defend their artistic choices and how it relates to Linda Williams Palmer's artwork **White Oak**.

Assessment:

Students will be assessed on:

- Did the students use an analogous or complementary color scheme and variation in value to create a sense of light and depth?
- Does their color scheme relate to the emotional expression intended by the student?
- Did they write a six-word story that relates to their artwork?
- Did they creatively include the six-word story into the composition of their artwork?



LINDA WILLIAMS PALMER
Arkansas Champion Trees: An Artist's Journey
WHITE OAK

(Quercus alba) or "Council Oak" - Yell County, Dardanelle 2008
 Colored pencil on paper by Linda Williams Palmer - 54"h x 40"w framed
 Detail: *Leaves, White Oak* by Linda Williams Palmer - 14"h x 18 1/2"w framed

CHAMPION STATISTICS

Circumference: 255" Crown Spread: 85' Height: 91' Bigness Index: 367

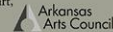
The Council Oak was the location of an historic meeting in 1823 between Arkansas Territorial Secretary Robert Crittendon, and Chief Black Fox and members of his tribal council. Under this oak tree, the Cherokee signed a treaty that ceded all their lands south of the Arkansas River to the United States government. The tree was later designated a Millennium Landmark tree by the White House Millennium Council, and it received an Arkansas Champion Tree cut stone and bronze marker in May 2011. Dardanelle's Council Oak is also known as a popular place for couples to court! - *LWP*



EDUCATIONAL SPONSORS



"Growing Champion Classrooms" materials are based on the 2012-2014 exhibit *Arkansas Champion Trees: An Artist's Journey*, Drawings by Linda W. Palmer, and are provided by Entergy Arkansas and the School for Forest Resources, University of Arkansas at Monticello, with support, in part, by the Arkansas Arts Council, an agency of the Department of Arkansas Heritage and by the national Endowment for the Arts.



Arkansas Champion Trees: An Artist's Journey
Drawings by Linda Williams Palmer
Introduction

Many of us have lived with trees so long that we take them for granted. We climb them as children, and we rest in their shade. We write poems about them, and we harvest them for our fireplaces, our furniture and our paper. We study them in school, and we mark the seasons by their foliage in spring and fall. This exhibit gives us an opportunity to contemplate the trees we sometimes take for granted: to notice their singular beauty and to consider what events have taken place in their presence over time.

Linda Williams Palmer is one of the few artists who have created a series based on individual trees. She is the only artist who has chosen to interpret the largest of each species in Arkansas: the champion trees. This exhibit tells why and how she did it, and shares the results of her artist's journey through excellent colored-pencil drawings of trees that communicate majesty and familiarity at the same time.

Each tree portrait represents a specific place, time of day, and season chosen by the artist — often after multiple visits, copious notes, and interaction with the site. Photographs communicate the scale and size of the actual trees, and hint at the humble locations where they took root. Exhibit writing provides anecdotes and information about the trees and the artist's process. It is our hope that this combination of information will encourage Arkansans to appreciate our state's natural and artistic heritage, and inspire them to celebrate the beauty and history that is sometimes found in their own backyards.

The Arkansas Committee of the National Museum of Women in the Arts

Arkansas Champion Trees: An Artist's Journey
The Artist's Process

Linda Palmer grew up playing in the woods by her family home in eastern Oklahoma. As a first-grader, she played under a large oak tree on the playground. These childhood experiences inspired her interest: many of her drawings included trees. Trees are still a significant part of Linda Palmer's artistic life. She is captivated by how weather and season, light and shadow, and time of day affect the visual impression of a tree. She calls upon her preferred medium, Prismacolor Pencils, to accurately represent her observations while artistically interpreting the majesty of the champions.

Palmer developed her own technique of layering different colored pencils on textured paper. In this series, her mastery enables her to achieve colors found in nature, add implied texture to that of the paper, and suggest the fragility of delicate leaves and blossoms. For example, the trunk of the Shortleaf Pine is composed of 25 different colors. The brilliant autumn leaves of the Cherrybark Oak contrast with the partially-rendered ones to capture the thin dryness that precedes their fall to the ground.

Her technique is time-consuming, and demanding—especially for large work: colored-pencils make slim lines and layering cannot be erased. However, Palmer chose this medium because that's how she pictured the drawings in her mind. She soon realized that the time required by her technique allowed her to interact with her subject, and therefore better translate her feelings and imaginings about each tree onto paper. The largest drawing in this series took her eight weeks to finish, working an average of 5 hours a day 6 days a week, or 240 hours.

Add actual drawing time and preparatory research to understand the investment Palmer has made over the past 5 years to bring this series to the public. Travel (in the thousands of miles), reference photographs, and interviews with landowners and residents combined to create an impression that helped her interpret the special thing she sees in each selected tree. Sometimes it's the trunk that speaks of age and history. Sometimes it's the composition of branches against the sky. Linda Palmer has developed her "artist's eye" through many years of drawing and painting. She knows when a drawing is complete: "...when another stroke would detract from what I want to say." Rather than thinking about the hours put into the work, Linda Palmer measures her success by her pleasure with the result: a drawing that becomes a visual statement honoring nature, memory, and time.

Arkansas Champion Trees: An Artist's Journey
Champion Trees

An Arkansas champion tree is the largest example of its species. Trained foresters make the final assessment, but often the public is the first to notice a specimen and nominate it for the list maintained by the Arkansas Forestry Commission. A champion tree is re-measured every 10 years to confirm its status: younger examples of the species have champion potential, and existing champions can be felled in a storm or fall victim to an uninformed pruning.

Arkansas champions have been nominated by individuals, art museums, cities, churches and cemetery associations, hunting clubs and wildlife refuges, and the Arkansas Department of Veterans Affairs as well as timber and paper companies, national and state parks, and the Arkansas Fish and Wildlife Service. A wealth of information is available through the Arkansas Forestry Commission website to guide those who want to nominate a potential champion. Think of the trees you've seen and consider the three necessary measurements to that process.

- Trunk Circumference (inches): measure at 4.5' above ground level
If the tree forks at or below 4.5', record the smallest trunk circumference below the fork; if the tree is on a slope, measure 4.5' up the trunk on the high and low sides and average the numbers; if the tree is leaning, measure the circumference at 4.5' along the axis of the trunk at a 90 degree angle to the trunk
- Height (feet): measure from the base of the trunk to the topmost twig
Use a clinometer, laser, hypsometer. Or use a straight stick! Hold the stick vertically at arm's length: the length of the stick above your hand must equal the distance from your hand to your eye. Walk backward away from the tree until the stick section above your hand is the same length as the tree in your field of vision. From where you are standing, measure the distance to the tree. This measurement is the approximate height.
- Average Crown Spread (feet): measure at points where water drips from the tree's canopy to the ground
Measure the widest crown spread (greatest distance between any two points along the drip line). Turn the axis of measurement 90 degrees and find the narrow crown spread. Average the two measurements with the formula: (wide spread + narrow spread) divided by 2 = average crown spread.

These measurements combine to calculate the official "Bigness Index (BI)" of a tree with a point system: one point for each inch of circumference, one point for each foot in height, and one point for every 4 feet of crown spread. The "bigness" point system accounts for the differences among species. Tree age calculations are not included in the index: boring into a trunk for a core sample is potentially damaging and not recommended. Bigness defines champions, and was calculated to confirm all 142 of the currently confirmed Arkansas species.

The Arkansas Committee of the National Museum of Women in the Arts gratefully acknowledges generous support for the educational component “Growing Champion Classrooms”, poster sets and art lesson plans based on the content of the 2012-2014 touring exhibit “Arkansas Champion Trees: An Artist’s Journey.” Sponsors Entergy Arkansas and the School of Forest Resources, University of Arkansas at Monticello, have made it possible for traditional and non-traditional educators across the state to use the materials to inspire and enrich learning long after the tour concludes. “Growing Champion Classrooms” is supported in part by the Arkansas Arts Council, an agency of the Department of Arkansas Heritage, and by the National Endowment for the Arts.

