

# Line Variation

Grade 3 – Lesson 2

(*Art Connections*, Level 3, pgs. 20-23)

## Big Idea

*Different qualities of lines can suggest the varied textures in our natural world.*

## Learning Targets

**Target 1:** Identify and use various line qualities. (Arts EALR 1.1 *Elements of Art: Line quality*)

**Criteria 1:** Describes and draws at least three qualities of line – e.g. thick, thin, rough, broken, feathery, etc.

**Target 2:** Creates implied texture. (Arts EALR 1.1 *Elements of Art: Implied texture*)

**Criteria 2:** Combines various qualities of line to create the illusion at least three different natural surfaces.

## Local Art Reference



**Bamboos by Garden Stone**, 1280-1325

*Guan Daosheng, Chinese*

33.245

Seattle Art Museum

(NOTE to Teacher: See **Art Background** section at end of lesson for more information about this work of art.)

## Looking at Art Questions

(Note to Teacher: First compare and contrast the Kandinsky and Wang Chou paintings in *Art Connections*, Level 3, pages 20 and 21, then show the ink painting of bamboo by Guan Daosheng above from SAM, while facilitating the following discussion.)

1. The last time we made art, we learned about lots of different directions of line. Another way to describe line is called **line quality**, which means describing the character of a line – thick, thin, soft, bumpy, broken, smooth. What kinds of words would you use to describe the line qualities you see in these three paintings? (Have students both point out visually and describe with words.)
2. You can use different line qualities to express a mood of feeling. Kandinsky was interested in making **non-objective** paintings that expressed feelings and

experiences rather than showing a scene or object. What feelings do you get looking at Kandinsky's *Improvisation No. 25*?

3. Artists can also use line quality to suggest the way things might feel to the touch. This is called **implied texture**. How do you think the various things in these two Chinese paintings might feel if you could touch them?
4. Both of the Chinese paintings were made with a bamboo brush and ink on silk. What do think the artist did to get those different qualities of line? (Dry brush, wet brush, very little ink, lots of ink, etc.)
5. The Japanese term for ink painting is **sumi e** (sumi – ink, e – painting), and this is what Asian-inspired ink painting is often called in this country.
6. We are going to experiment with making as many different line qualities as we can to suggest different textures in nature, and then we'll paint our own bamboo paintings with black tempera paint and bamboo brushes.

## **Art Making Activity**

### **Make a Texture Painting**

*How can use different qualities of line to suggest all the different textures of nature?*

1. First we are going to practice making different qualities of line with the bamboo brush and black tempera paint.
2. Chinese and Japanese and Korean ink painters practice for many years, perfecting their brushstrokes. We hold a sumi brush differently than we do a pencil. Squeeze the shaft of the brush between your thumb and other fingers, about 1/3 way up the shaft from the bristles. For most lines, you hold the brush straight up like a bamboo tree reaching for the sun. You make different qualities of lines by using more or less water to make smooth or rough lines, more or less ink to make darker and lighter tones, and by pushing down and lifting up gently to make thick/thin kinds of lines. Let's try!
3. Steps for the Teacher:
  - Demonstrate the correct way to hold the brush (straight up and down, with all fingers on one side and the thumb on the other) and some of the qualities of line you can get with brush and black tempera paint.
  - Let students practice making a variety of different qualities of lines with brush and black tempera paint.
  - After practicing, have students tell each other in pairs what kinds of textures their marks resemble.

- Have pairs of students select at least two objects to draw with different textures.
- Facilitate students painting the textures they see. Help students focus on suggesting texture more than trying to get the proportions of whatever they are drawing “just right.”
- Mount finished ink paintings on black construction paper with glue sticks, and put the work up. Facilitate a full-class discussion of the students’ work, using the “Reflecting on our Art” questions below.

**Each Student Needs**

- A sketchbook
- A sketching pencil (2H are good light pencils for sketching)
- Two pieces of rice paper (a 8x11 one to practice brushstrokes, and another one to paint final composition)
- A sumi brush
- A piece of black felt
- A paper towel

**Every Pair of Students Needs**

- Natural objects with a variety of textures from which to draw (driftwood, shells, feathers, rocks)
- A small container with 2 T of sumi ink
- A container of water

<b>Vocabulary</b>	
Line quality:	Non-objective art
Thick	Implied texture
Thin	Sumi-e
Rough	(“ink painting” - in
Smooth	Japanese)
Wispy	
Broken	

**Tips for Teachers**

***Before class***

- Prepare small containers (baby food jars work well) with approximately 1-2 T of black sumi ink in them, one for every two students.
- Fill water containers approximately ½ full, ready to distribute.

***During class***

- Have students collect various natural objects with a range of textures and combine into group still lifes for each table group.
- Be sure to have students practice with the medium to try to get the broadest range of line qualities before they try to render the textures they see in their still lifes.

**Reflecting on Our Art**

- **Describe:** Describe the different qualities of line you created in your bamboo painting. How did you achieve your favorite line?
- **Analyze:** Where do you feel you best captured the texture of the object you were painting?
- **Interpret:** What kind of mood or feeling do you think your bamboo painting has? What gives it that feeling?
- **Decide:** What kinds of pictures do you think would be best made with brush and black tempera paint? Why do you think so?

## Self-Assessment

Name \_\_\_\_\_

*Did you make at least three different qualities of lines in your texture painting?*

I made \_\_\_\_\_ lines for \_\_\_\_\_

I made \_\_\_\_\_ lines for \_\_\_\_\_

I made \_\_\_\_\_ lines for \_\_\_\_\_

*Describe your most interesting texture.*

---

---

*How did you make it?*

---

---

### Re-teach Suggestion:

1. You could explore line quality with the same focus on observational drawing but with other media. For example, you might bring in the same still lifes, but this time have the students practice with charcoal to get a range of line qualities and then render the various textures they see in their still lifes with charcoal instead of black tempera paint ink.

#### Each Student Needs

- A sketchbook
- A sketching pencil (2H are good light pencils for sketching)

- An 8x11 piece of toned paper (Canson Mi-Teintes) or watercolor paper
- A laminated art mat
- Vine/willow charcoal
- Block charcoal
- Conte crayons: black, white
- Tortillions
- Chamois cloths
- Staedtler erasers
- Tray for supplies at each table group

### **Every Pair of Students Needs**

- Natural objects with a variety of textures from which to draw (driftwood, shells, feathers, rocks)

### **Art Background** (for **Bamboos by Garden Stone**, 1280-1325, by *Guan Daosheng*)

The Chinese term for landscape painting is *san shui*, which literally translates as “mountains, water,” since all good landscapes, according to Chinese literati (scholar painters), should include these two elements to represent the yang/yin duality of all of life. A well rendered landscape should express a balance visually between yin/female/water/mists and yang/male/rock/mountains, and therefore reveal the underlying harmony of the universe.

One of the highest forms of painting is what the ancient Chinese called a “mind landscape” or “mountains of the mind.” This phrase refers to the ideal state of mind that a scholar tries to emulate in his painting, poetry and music. It is a natural, but elusive state of mind that is spontaneous, creative and endlessly varied like nature itself. Like water tumbling down a mountainside, the painter of the mind landscape both pursues his creative intent with all his mastery of his art form, but also responds to the chance occurrences in the ink and brush.

Traditional Chinese and Japanese master ink painters practice brush and ink techniques for years before creating paintings that sometimes take no more than days, hours or minutes to paint. The ink and brush can suggest all the textures in nature, from thin washes suggesting rising veils of mist to short choppy strokes suggesting a scraggly pine tree on a bluff. Not only do Chinese landscape painters study brush techniques for years, but they also study nature itself by quietly observing the land around them until they have memorized the specific features, textures, plays of light and shadow, and effects of water and air of a beloved place. When an artist begins to paint, s/he creates from this remembered inner landscape, and then responds to the natural occurrences of the ink, paper and brush to create his/her finished, harmonious composition.

### **Cross-Curricular Connections**

Science – Categorizing natural phenomena by surface texture

## Assessment Checklist

Student	Describes and draws at least three different qualities of line (3 points – 1 point for each different line direction)			Combines various qualities of line to create the illusion of at least three different natural surfaces (1 point)	TOTAL 4
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
6.					
7.					
8.					
9.					
10.					
11.					
12.					
13.					
14.					
15.					
16.					
17.					
18.					
19.					
20.					
21.					
22.					
23.					
24.					
25.					
26.					
27.					
28.					
29.					
30.					
31.					
<b>Total Points</b>					
<b>Percent Comprehension</b>					

*Teacher Notes:*

## Letter Home

*Dear Family,*

*Today we learned that you can describe different **qualities of line** – **rough, smooth, thick, thin, wispy, jagged**, etc. We learned that artists can use line quality both to express a certain mood or feeling and to **imply the textures** of our natural world. We looked at a **non-representational** painting by Wassily Kandinsky and two Chinese ink paintings, one by 16<sup>th</sup> century painter Wang Chao, and one by 13<sup>th</sup> century painter Guan Daosheng. All three artists used varied qualities of line, Kandinsky to express a feeling, and the Chinese painters to describe natural textures. Then we used real bamboo brushes and black tempera paint on rice paper to make our own paintings of natural textures with lots of different qualities of line.*

*At home, you could encourage your child to try making different qualities of line with a variety of media – crayons, rices, chalk pastels. How many different ways can you make a soft line, or sharp line, or bumpy line?*