

Describing Where Things Are Located: Postpositions/Prepositions

Languages: Japanese and French

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In the fall of 2019, three groups of Japanese language students, with varied proficiency levels, visited the Marianna Kistler Beach Museum of Art to observe and discuss two paintings by Roger Shimomura. The paintings, shown below, can be accessed through the museum's collection search engine at <https://beach.k-state.edu/explore/collection/>



Roger Shimomura (b. Seattle, WA 1939)
Enemy Alien #2, 2006
Acrylic on canvas
KSU, Marianna Kistler Beach Museum of Art, 2016.41



Roger Shimomura (b. Seattle, WA 1939)
Martin Cheng: Painter and Fisherman, 1991
Acrylic on canvas
KSU, Marianna Kistler Beach Museum of Art, Friends of the Beach Museum of Art purchase, 2002.480

Each class was divided into two teams and after observing their assigned painting (one of the paintings above), they described it to the other team in Japanese, who would then sketch the images according to the descriptions given. Most importantly, students were not supposed to look at the other's team's painting till the end in order to make this activity purely communicative.

The students were engaged in taking a close look at both paintings and taking turns to narratively describe the images. After the describing and sketching part was over, we all went to check to see if they had successfully communicated with each other by comparing their sketches and the actual art pieces.



Facilitator Role: As the facilitator for this workshop I elicited students' language output by questioning (e.g. What do you see in the background, middle ground, and foreground? What is the spatial relationship between figure/object A and figure/object B? etc.).

Procedures for how to deliver communication task one:

Step 1 – Information Gap Drawing Task: Divide the class into 2 groups. Group A will jointly describe *Enemy Alien #2 (2006)* by Roger Shimomura to the other group. Group B will do the same using other painting by Shimomura, entitled *Martin Cheng: Painter & Fisherman from the series – Return of the yellow peril (1991)*. As each group describes their painting, the other team sketches the images according to the descriptions. Important: DO NOT look at the other's team's painting till the end!

Step 2 – Checking Results: Check to see if they have successfully communicated with each other by comparing their sketches and the actual art pieces.

Step 3 – Interpretation Task: After taking a close look at the both paintings, students will take turns to narratively describe the images.

Step 4 – Wrap up: Debriefing/reflection on the strategies used. What are the implications for academic listening and note-taking?

Step 5 – Optional assignment (extra credit): Discuss in depth about what the artwork tells you about the culture and history of Japanese/Asian-American in America by writing the thoughts that you generated. 250 words double spaced

This visit was preceded by students reading about the artist Roger Shimomura. The activity was followed by an in-depth discussion about what the artwork could tell them about the culture and history of Japanese Americans in America.

Roger Shimomura

Kansas-based artist Roger Shimomura was born in Seattle, Washington in 1939, the son of Eddy and Aya Shimomura, who were *Nisei* or the 2nd generation of Japanese whose parents emigrated from Japan in the early 1900s. This makes him a *sansei* or the 3rd generation Japanese American. During World War II, as a result of the attack on Pearl Harbor, Shimomura was sent to the Minidoka concentration camp, along with his grandmother, parents and other family members. His memories of living there as a child, along with his grandmother's diaries, have served as one source of subject matter for his art. He has also drawn of his personal experiences of racial stereotyping, using the incidents as subject matter for art with a purpose. Shimomura was the first Fine Arts faculty member in the history of the University of Kansas to be honored as a University Distinguished Professor.

Enemy Alien #2 depict Shimomura's childhood memories, his grandmother's diaries, and family pictures from their time in the concentration camp in Minidoka, Idaho where more than 10, 000 Japanese Americans from the Seattle area were imprisoned because of their ancestry. Additional works about Minidoka are featured in the series *American Diary* (http://www.gregkucera.com/shimomura_diary.htm)

The portrait of *Martin Cheng* alludes to the experience of misunderstood identity often encountered by Asian Americans. Even though Cheng's ancestry is Chinese, he is portrayed wearing a traditional Japanese men's jacket called a *hanten* or *happi*. Under the jacket he wear a western style t-shirt and briefs, instead of customary Japanese undergarments.

Shimomura also addresses racial stereotyping suffered by Asian Americans in his series *Return of the Yellow Peril* and *Stereotypes and Admonitions*. He says, "This series illustrates incidents of racial insensitivity I have experienced during my life. Accompanying each painting is a written description of the incident that inspired the piece. Also included in this series are events that have affected the Asian American community on a regional and national basis over the past 60 years - essentially my lifetime." http://www.gregkucera.com/shimomura_stereotypes.htm

Activité de dessiner un tableau d'après une description orale

Démarches:

Avant la visite: Le professeur choisit deux tableaux du musée

Etape 1 – **Dessin (manque d'informations)**: Divisez la classe en deux groupes. Chaque groupe prépare une description d'un tableau différent (choisi par le professeur). Puis, un groupe lit/présente la description du tableau et l'autre groupe, en même temps, dessine une esquisse (*a sketch*) basée sur la description. (Notez bien : les membres du groupe de doivent pas regarder le tableau de l'autre groupe—ils doivent dessiner basé sur la description orale seulement).

Etape 2 – **Vérification** : Comparez les esquisses aux tableaux.

Etape 3 – **Interprétation** : Après avoir regardé les tableaux, les étudiants décrivent les images.

Etape 4 – **Conclusion** : Réflexions sur les stratégies employées. Quelles sont les conséquences sur l'acte de prendre des notes en classe ?

Etape 5 – **Écriture** : Ecrivez un paragraphe au sujet de ce que vous avez appris du tableau.