

Historica Canada Education Portal

War Art in the First World War and the Second World War

Overview

The impact of the First World War and the Second World War on artists and the art they produced cannot be denied. Along with everything else in Western society, the creators of art and the art they created post-war were much different than anything that had come before 1914. This lesson is about the depiction of war and its aftermath by artists affected by the conflicts. They may or may not have been participants.

Aims

To have students understand the nature of the art produced during, between and after the First World War and the Second World War. To have students analyze a single artist's work and compare it to other artists. To have students attempt their own interpretation of war art by creating a portrait or sketch about war similar to their artist's style, or to a trend discovered.

Background

There is an amazing amount of art about the First World War and the

Second World War. Students will look at the art, compare the art and the artists, recognize trends or commonalities, point out anomalies or incongruities, and ultimately attempt their own artistic interpretation of an artist, or a trend, or a war.

Activities

1. Teacher led powerpoint overview of the nature of war art, examples of war art, information on the artists who created the war art, and trends, similarities and differences etc.
2. Students select an artist from each war from a list provided. They must do a 10 page powerpoint on each artist's life and works produced using the 5WsH approach (Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How). In short, in their powerpoint they must summarize their artist's life and works and put it into the context of war.
3. Student's create a portrait or sketch in the style of one of their artists.

Resources

There are lots of books about war art. There is also a lot of Internet information to be sifted through.

[The Canadian Encyclopedia](#)

[Canadian War Museum](#)

[The Memory Project](#)

A Bitter Truth: Avant-garde Art and the Great War By Richard Cork

Modern Art, Britain, and the Great War: Witnessing, Testimony and Remembrance By Sue Malvern

Art & War: Canadian War Memorials : a Selection of the Works By Paul George Konody

The Artist at War: Second World War Paintings & Drawings By Angela Summerfield

London's Burning: Life, Death and Art in the Second World War By Peter Stansky

Shared Experience: Australia, Britain and Canada in the Second World War By Laura Brandon

Art from the Second World War By Roger Tolson,

