

Looking to the Sky
designed for 7th grade (but may be adapted for other grades)

This lesson incorporates two works of art from the *Cardinal Points* exhibition on display in the Baum Gallery, UCA campus in Fall 2009.

1. José Bedia (1959)

Born in Havana, Cuba; resides in Miami, Florida

De aquí pa' allá'

From Here to There

1999

Acrylic and conté crayon on canvas

Image: 11 1/2 x 83 3/4

Frame: 13 5/8 x 86 x 2 11/16

2. Marcelo Pombo (1959)

Born in Buenos Aires, Argentina; resides in Buenos Aires, Argentina

Figura contra el cielo #2

Figure Against the Sky #2

2000

Enamel on panel

Image: 27 1/2 x 39 1/4

Frame: 34 1/2 x 46 1/4 x 3

Enduring Ideas of the Unit:

Humans have closely observed the cosmos with wonder to gain understanding our world.

Artists have responded to the traditions, mysteries, and beauty associated with the sky to create their own personal meanings and ideas.

Lesson Objectives:

Students will be able to identify clues in works of art (*From Here to There* and *Figure Against the Sky*) that express the artists' use of the sky to express personal ideas.

Students will create original works of art that utilize the sky as a reference to express imaginative ideas.

Arkansas State Frameworks:

Foundations

Use various types of lines in a work of art (VA.5.7.1)

Demonstrate knowledge of color schemes in a work of art (VA.5.7.3)

Analyze various textures in the environment and artists' work (VA.5.7.4)

Demonstrate various types of movement and rhythm within works of art (VA.5.7.9)

Demonstrate an understanding for the various purposes for creating art. (VA.5.7.16)

Demonstrate responsibility, conservation, and proper and safe use of tools, materials, and equipment. (VA.5.7.17)

Creative Processes

Create various surface qualities using any medium (VA.6.7.3)

Mix color in wet and/or dry media to apply color theory in observational situations or to solve design problems (VA.6.7.6)

Produce artwork that involves problem solving (VA.6.7.10)

Select subject matter, symbols, and/or ideas to communicate meaning (VA.6.7.11)

Reflections and Responses

Evaluate historical connections between the artwork of self and others (VA.7.7.1)

Apply methods for art criticism (VA.7.7.4)

Participate in the process of exhibiting artwork (VA.7.7.6)

Vocabulary:

Constellation- a pattern envisioned and imaged by people to help identify stars. The patterns of stars resemble and have been named for humans, animals, objects, and characters by poets, farmers, and astronomers to help identify stars. The constellations help us identify stars by breaking up the sky into patterns.

Constellations are a kind of dot-to-dot picture in the sky. Some of the more recognizable constellations are Orion, the Big Dipper and the Little Dipper.

See: <http://www.astro.illinois.edu/~jkaler/sow/const.html> and

<http://www.astro.wisc.edu/~dolan/constellations/constellations.html>

Cosmos – the order and harmony of the universe.

Cuba- is an island country in the Caribbean. Cuba is 90 miles from the tip of Key West, Florida. See: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cuba>

Argentina- the second largest country in South America. It includes 23 provinces. It is located in the southern half of South America.

See: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Argentina>

Buenos Aires- the capital and largest city in Argentina

See: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buenos_aires

Contextual information

José Bedia was born in Havana, Cuba in 1959. He graduated from the Escuela de Arte San Alejandro in Havana in 1976 and from the Instituto Superior de Arte in Havana in 1981. He left for Mexico in 1991, and later moved to Miami, where he now lives. His art reflects an influence from the Afro-Cuban religion and ancient belief systems of Native American culture. He interweaves myths, rituals, and symbols that reflect both personal

and universal meanings. He crosses boundaries between ancient and modern. *From Here to There* is acrylic and conté crayon on canvas.

See: <http://theferrellcollection.com/bios/Bedia.aspx> and <http://images.google.com/images?gbv=2&hl=en&q=jose+bedia&sa=N&start=0&ndsp=20> (additional note: The Arkansas Art Center holds two works by Bedia in its permanent collection. See: [http://www.aacwebkiosk.com/VIEO*1\\$38*426362](http://www.aacwebkiosk.com/VIEO*1$38*426362))

Marcelo Pombo was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina and currently resides there. Pombo spent many years as an art teacher for the mentally handicapped in a school in the outskirts of Buenos Aires. It is noted that this teaching experience influenced him to decorate discarded items for other usages. He was associated with a group of artist labeled “light art,” suggesting their lack of reference to local political themes and suggesting them to be more of a carefree group. *Figure Against the Sky* is enamel on panel.

See: http://www.dailyserving.com/2008/05/marcelo_pombo.php and http://cgrimes.com/index.php?option=com_artists&view=set&id=18

the exact image from the exhibition has not been found online, but there is one that can be used for this lesson on the above website or:

<http://www.artnet.com/artwork/425133457/112692/atardecer-con-figura.html>

Art Analysis

Included below are three activities to consider for guiding students to look closely at each work of art and to form their own connections and interpretations. These activities are important motivational strategies prior to students making their own original works of art.

Activity 1:

1. Project digital images of *From Here to There* and *Figure Against the Sky*.
2. Have students identify what they see in these two works of art.
3. Ask students to select something (figure, art element, or object) in the artwork.
4. Have students personify, characterize, or act out the figure, art element, or object using their own physical movements.
5. Have others guess which element is being portrayed.
6. Discuss how this made students notice or understand more about each work.

Activity 2

1. Project digital images of *From Here to There* and *Figure Against the Sky*.
2. Ask students to choose one of the artworks and imagine what it would say if the work of art could talk.
3. Have students write a “statement” the work would make verbally.
4. Ask students to justify their statements with visual clues from the artwork.

Activity 3:

1. Project digital of images of *From Here to There* and *Figure Against the Sky*.
2. Distribute a small sticky note to each student.
3. Have students write one word that describes the work of art.
4. Stick the words near the work of art.

5. Read the words aloud while students look at the work of art.
6. Discuss, compare and contrast. Which words are surprising or change the way you view the art?

Provide students with some brief contextual information, such as title of art, artists' names and background and the media.

Other possible discussion questions that include contextual information and personal connections:

1. How do the titles suggest meaning?
2. What does the artwork remind you of?
3. Why do you think these artists created these works?

Personal Artmaking

Project digital images of *From Here to There* and *Figure Against the Sky* for reference as you guide your students to begin reflecting and brainstorming ideas for their personal artmaking.

Neither of these focused artists, José Bedia or Marcelo Pombo, simply recorded a direct observation of the sky. Bedia incorporated his elongated figure, obviously making large strides forward, into a constellation-type appearance. Is the figure a guiding light? Or does he represent personal or human progress? Or universal adventures that we all face? Is he making sure one foot stays firmly planted as he stretches forward? Pombo's sky seems almost psychedelic. It appears to be in constant motion. Yet, instead of forward progress, the movement is a bouncing up and down. A play of the hot reds verses the cool blues. Is it the sky from another planet or universe? It is a playful movement? Or are things heating up, soon to boil over? And what is the green rectangular "figure" that obstructs our view?

This lesson asks students to utilize the sky to express their own idea or story. They will produce a 2-dimensional work in the media of your or their choosing.

Here is the opening scenario to present to the students: "You have been carefully studying the sky for a considerable time and have recently **made a discovery** that you wish to share with others through a work of art."

The students will be asked to consider the following sections to begin forming their ideas.

Content:

1. Choose one from each of the following three columns to narrow down the content of your artwork:

Night	from planet earth	viewed with normal vision
Day	from another planet	viewed using telescope or other means

2. Once you have those three characteristics decided, next identify what you have discovered. Is it a planet? A star? A constellation? A cloud formation? A storm formation? Or what?

3. Begin to make sketches of your ideas.

Design:

4. What will be your dominant art elements? Will it be lines of a constellation? Will the temperature or mood be expressed using warm or cool colors? Will there be circular shapes? Are they large or small? Is your discovery rocky or made of a gas? What are the textures?

5. Consider movement. Will you suggest a forward progress? A bouncing up and down? Or a wavy flow?

6. Consider point of view. For example, will you show the whole constellation? Or will it be a close detail of the surface of your newly discovered planet? Just as with Pombo's, the viewer may not know what they are looking at—but you, as the artist, will know!

7. Consider the shape of your paper. Bedia's is about 11" high, but it is 83" in width!

Media:

8. Review your answers in #1-7. Would you prefer to work on white paper? Or possibly black, blue, or red? What media will best support your ideas? Values in pencil? Rich colors of oil pastel? Subtle watercolor? How about combinations?