

Tales To Tell

Artist: David Charles Wade (1952-) Salt Lake City, Utah

Title: *Dawn Patrol* 1986

Media: oil on board

Size: 24" x 30"

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

David Wade is a Western wildlife artist who specializes in North American animals. He has liked to draw animals since he was a child, and as a teen, even went to zoos to draw animals. However, he mostly now paints big game and has been a full-time artist for 20 years. The inspiration for his paintings are the animals themselves, which he observes in their own environment. Although raised in a hunting family, Dave now carries a camera when he hunts, taking pictures of big game in its natural settings. Because of his interest in wildlife, he supports many conservation organizations.

David Wade attended school at the Los Angeles Art Center and at the University of Utah. As an artist, he is noted for his outstanding ability to translate visual light into paint. Although best known for his paintings of elk and other big game, Wade has recently expanded his repertoire to include swans, geese, ptarmigan, bears, and other birds and animals. He does paint a few landscapes, but they always include animals.

Over the last 20 years Dave has won many awards and also has won the Wyoming game license stamp competition four times. These stamps are placed on all game licenses and prints of the stamps made and sold. His illustrations appear in several books and in magazines such as *Outdoor Life*. Wade sells his work through the Wilcox Gallery in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, and the Taminah Gallery in Park City, Utah.

Wade is a quiet man who doesn't like to promote himself as an artist but instead chooses to work on projects such as designing a logo for a community outreach program and drawing animals for his four-year-old daughter Madison. His wife points out that when Madison asks her father to draw her a bunny, the drawing actually looks like a rabbit!

Dawn Patrol is an unusual painting. It depicts three turkeys "marching" through a field. The artist describes his inspiration for this work as follows:

“At the time I created this painting, I was living in a home which bordered on an open field. That year there was an incredible grasshopper infestation, and thousands of grasshoppers had invaded my yard. I acquired three young turkeys to help me with this overwhelming battle. They immediately contained the problem—not only by eating the grasshoppers but also by scaring away the stragglers. Their daily routine started at first light, when they came off their roost, converging on my garden. One of my fondest memories from that summer was watching *Dawn Patrol*.”

Although there was resistance to purchasing this painting, Dr. Vern Swanson, director of the Springville Museum of Art in Springville, Utah, argued that this oil is an important work because of its painterlyness, its boldness and directness, and its strong composition. The long, flat brush strokes give it fluidity. The background resembles an impressionist painting in referred to it as a domestic "fowl" genre. This painting shows how the ordinary can be shown as not so ordinary.

SUGGESTED CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

QUESTIONS FOR LOOKING (History, Aesthetics, Criticism)

Where does this scene take place? What time of day is it? Can you tell what time of year it is? Is this an urban or rural setting? What can you tell about the artist based on this painting?

What is your feeling about turkeys? Does this painting change your opinion of turkeys? Many people think of the turkey as a dirty animal. Given this feeling, does the turkey deserve to be honored in a painting?

How does this painting make you feel? What is the mood of the painting? Imagine yourself in this painting. What else do you see around you? Are there buildings, cars or trucks, other animals?

ACTIVITIES

Art

Objectives: The student will be able to demonstrate the use of triangular shapes to strengthen a composition by creating an artwork using triangular shapes.

Discuss with students the use of triangular shapes and why the use of triangles can strengthen a composition. Use David Wade's *Dawn Patrol* as an example of the use of triangular shapes in art. Have the students identify the main triangular shape and discuss what this painting might look like without this triangular shape. Would it be as strong?

Discuss how the triangle shape leads the viewers' eyes through the painting and what techniques the artist has used to keep the viewers' eyes in the painting. Find other works of art that use triangular shapes and discuss them with the class.

The students will then pick a topic to paint and depict the subject using at least one triangular shape. To strengthen their understanding of this topic, the students could also depict the same subject without using the triangular shape.

Variation: Give students a variety of magazines that feature fine art or art photography and have students identify triangular shapes in the works. You may want the students to share their findings in small groups or to have them use the exercise as part of the above activity, which then culminates in the students producing artworks using triangular shapes.

Art

Objectives: The student will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the impact of content in art by exploring a variety of sources of inspiration for making art.

Wade's *Dawn Patrol* shows three turkeys, a bird we generally associate with our dinner table on Thanksgiving and Christmas. Turkeys are often made fun of because they aren't very smart and because turkey farms have an unpleasant smell. This painting does not show them as such. Show students artworks showing a variety of subjects both lofty and common, discussing how subjects can become an inspiration for a work of art. Look at Steve Songer's *Liberty Patchwork* (also included in this packet) which shows an ordinary scene he passed every day on his way to work and which inspired a work of art. Have the students find other examples.

Students will compile an annotated list of things from their own personal experiences that could be sources of inspiration for them for making art. The list should include not just the object or scene but also the reason it inspires the student.

Art

Objective: The students will demonstrate their understanding of the portrayal of EVENTS in art by comparing various artworks.

Show the class the slides of *Dawn Patrol*, *Ropin' Out the Best Ones*, and *Deacon Jones' Experience*, from this packet. Also include works such as C.C.A. Christensen's *Handcart Pioneers' First View of Salt Lake City*, Cyrus Dallin's sculpture *Paul Revere*, Calvin Fletcher's *Wash Day in Brigham City*, and Gary Smith's *Youthful Games*, from the Elementary Art Core Poster Set. All these artworks depict events.

Discuss the differing ways the artists have chosen to depict events as well as the differing kinds of events chosen to be the artworks' subjects. Have the students write a comparison of two of the pieces, specifying differences and similarities between the

works. You may want to provide the students with biographical information on the artists and with information about each artwork.

Using the information provided and everything they know about the elements and principles of design, the students should use a critical model to compare the artworks. Remind the students to be specific in their comparisons. Have the students share and discuss their comparisons in small groups.

Variation for Young Children: After the discussion, have the students make a list or write several sentences comparing the artworks. Limit the writing to match the students' skills.

Variation for Advanced Students: Art and Language Arts: Have the students write an essay that compares two or more artworks. The essay should not only demonstrate the student's understanding of art criticism but also should demonstrate good writing skills.

The essay should include an introductory paragraph that provides the thesis and an overview of the content, three to five paragraphs that develop and support the thesis and a concluding paragraph that summarizes the ideas presented. As with all writing, correct grammar and language usage should be employed.

Variation with Art Production: After the discussion or after the written comparison is finished, have the students choose an historic or personal event to portray. This artwork may use any medium you have available and should be a work that takes an age-appropriate amount of time to complete. Try to get the students to stretch the time they are willing to spend on their art project and not just rush through in order to be finished.

The art production section can be correlated with Social Studies curriculum by having the students choose an event from the time period you are studying to use in their artwork.

Responsible Healthy Lifestyles

Objective: The students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of basic dietary guidelines as outlined by the USDA, and discuss which of these guidelines can be met by the use of turkey in one's diet.

Discuss the basic dietary guidelines and their importance to maintaining a healthy lifestyle with students. Using turkey as an example, discuss how protein from poultry can be used in the diet to help meet the guidelines. Discuss what other options may be better (or worse) than turkey. A visit with a nutritionist or a dietitian from a hospital would give the students a first-hand look at how these guidelines are applied in a practical way.

Have the students design a weekly menu that includes turkey in a variety of ways and promotes good health based on the USDA guidelines. The students also can create a diet for special needs situations such as a diet for diabetics, a low salt diet for heart patients,

or a diet that helps prevent cancer.

Library Media

Objective: The students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of using the catalog system to select print and non-print media and use appropriate reference sources by creating a bibliography of materials related to the turkey.

Review with students the use of the card or automated cataloging system in the library for both print and non-print materials. Review how to make an appropriate source reference for a variety of materials including books, magazines, encyclopedias, atlases, almanacs, artworks, and other sources.

Have students compile a bibliography of materials related to the turkey. This can include, but not be limited to, how to raise turkeys, the history of turkeys, where the turkey originated, how to butcher a turkey, turkey recipes, menus using turkey, and turkeys in the arts including the visual arts, books, poems, songs, plays, etc. The bibliography should conform to the standards discussed.