

**WORKSHOP TITLE:** Same but Different: Creating New Meanings from Old Motifs (Virtual Workshop)

**SUBJECT/GRADE/TARGET GROUP:** Elementary Students

**Activity Overview:**

In François Xavier Saint-Pierre's *The Spiders and the Bees*, the artist examines the persistent use of motifs such as coins and monuments to invoke the power and legacy of civilizations long past. These motifs are reintroduced throughout the exhibition as a way to explore the recurrence of historical subjects while also commenting on the creativity of artists past and present. As Saint-Pierre observes, there is an ongoing battle between tradition and innovation in the art world, which often results in images that are fragmented replicas of something that has come before.

Following a virtual tour of *The Spiders and the Bees*, elementary students will learn about artistic motifs and their symbolic use by eastern and western cultures over the centuries. After this discussion, students will be engaged in a game of 'Spot the Difference' where they will be shown two similar motifs from different art historical time periods and be asked to find all the differences and similarities between the two images.

Students will then examine modern and contemporary examples of recurrent motifs, learning how emphasis is gradually placed more and more on the time and context in which a subject is depicted, as well as the materiality of paint and the mechanisms of perception. This will lead to the final activity, which will ask students to colour-in a blank pattern of a similar motif (this will be sent to the teacher prior to the workshop). While colouring and adding texture, students will be prompted to render the motif and its surrounding environment/landscape based on different artistic themes such as time of day, emotion, or season. At the end of the workshop, students will be encouraged to share their drawings with the class. This will demonstrate that despite starting out with the same template, each student added a new meaning to the image through their individual creativity and conceptualization of artistic themes.

- Location of workshop: Zoom
- Length of workshop: 1 hour (20 minutes for tour and discussion, 40 minutes for activity 1 and 2)
- Materials for workshop: computer/laptop, colouring sheet, pencil crayons and markers.

**Key Terms:**

Classicism: When art resembles or makes reference to the classical forms, motifs and subjects from ancient Greek and Roman art, architecture and literature.

History Painting: Describes paintings with subject matter drawn from ancient Greek and Roman (classical) history, mythology, and the Bible.

Seriality: When something resembles or takes place in a series. In art, seriality means the repetition of a standard unit or object in sets or series.

**Glossary terms based on [The Ontario Curriculum](#):**

Appropriation: The taking or borrowing of elements to recontextualize them or create new works. The borrowed elements may include images, forms, or styles from art history or from popular culture, or materials and techniques from non-art contexts (e.g., everyday objects).

Contemporary art: Art created in the present by living artists.

Content: The meaning of an image beyond its overt subject matter, including the emotional, intellectual, symbolic, thematic, and narrative connotations.

Icon: A symbol, image, motif, emblem, or object that is generally recognized as representative of a person, place, era, or culture.

Modernism: Art in which the images are focused not on traditional subject matter but on elements of design (e.g., form, colour). A general term used for most of the artistic work from the late nineteenth century until approximately the 1970s, loosely signifying art that repudiates traditional forms or ideas.

Motif: A design or theme that may be repeated in a larger overall design (e.g., in a two-dimensional or three-dimensional art work) or a time-based art work (e.g., video) for decorative or narrative purposes.

Subject matter: The ideas, objects, figures, feelings, and understandings represented in a work of art.

**Overall Expectations based on [The Ontario Curriculum](#):**

D1.2 demonstrate an understanding of composition, using principles of design to create narrative artworks or artworks on a theme or topic.

D2.1 interpret a variety of artworks, and identify the feelings, issues, themes, messages and social concerns that they convey.

D2.2 explain how elements and principles of design are used to communicate meaning or understanding in their own and others' artwork.

**Specific Expectations:**

For this workshop, students are required to have access to a working computer with reliable internet connection and the ability to join Zoom.

Students will also be expected to have all of the materials necessary for the art activities. This includes: a colouring sheet and drawing utensils (pencil

<p>D2.3 demonstrate an awareness of the meaning of signs and symbols encountered in their daily lives and in works of art, as well as an understanding of how to interpret signs and symbols.</p> <p>D3.1 identify and explain ways in which artistic traditions in a variety of times and places have been maintained, adapted, or appropriated.</p> <p>D3.2 demonstrate an awareness of a variety of works of art and artistic traditions, and describe how they reflect the diverse communities, cultures, civilizations, times, and places in which they were made.</p>	<p>crayons or markers).</p>
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<p><b>Teaching &amp; Learning Strategies:</b></p> <p>Step 1 - Direct Instruction: Virtual Exhibition Tour (10 minutes)</p> <p>Students will be guided through a virtual tour of <i>The Spiders and the Bees</i> by watching a video of the exhibition and other interactive visual documentation. During the tour, students will learn about François Xavier Saint-Pierre’s artistic practice and his exploration of historical motifs and their various iterations.</p> <p>Step 2 - Indirect Instruction: Discussion and Q&amp;A (10 minutes)</p> <p>Participants will analyze various images of works from the exhibition and view examples of artistic motifs through the ages, using prompts and discussion questions. These questions will guide students’ understanding of symbolism in art.</p> <p>Step 3 - Interactive Instruction: ‘Spot the Difference’ Exercise (15 minutes)</p> <p>During this part of the workshop, students will be engaged in a ‘Spot the Difference’ exercise where they will be presented with a series of similar artistic motifs from different cultures and/or time periods and asked to find the similarities and differences. This exercise will demonstrate to students how motifs can be maintained, adapted, or appropriated in different times and places of creation.</p> <p>Step 4 - Experiential Instruction: Motif Colouring Activity (25 minutes)</p> <p>The final portion of the workshop will have students add colour and a surrounding landscape to a blank motif, based on prompts provided by the Gallery Educator. Students are encouraged to apply the elements of art to represent themes such as time of day, emotion and season. Students will share their final motif with the rest of the class to facilitate their understanding of how the use of specific visual elements can convey different meanings.</p> <p>NOTE - Students who would like to have their drawings featured on the Koffler Education</p>
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Instagram account (@koffler.education) can take a picture of their artwork and have their teacher email it to the Gallery Educator ([gallerieducation@kofflerarts.org](mailto:gallerieducation@kofflerarts.org)).

### **Extensions:**

Students may wish to further investigate the themes in the exhibition and workshop by participating in a 'Seek and Find' game that encourages students to look for visual motifs in their daily lives. For example, students may notice a particular motif in their home that can also be found at their school, or at their friend's house, or around their neighbourhood. Chances are that many images students see on a daily basis can be found elsewhere. This activity will help students practice their observational skills while emphasizing how certain motifs are frequently repeated and recycled by society.

### **Accommodations & Special Needs:**

The chat function in Zoom can be used to communicate various steps if oral or visual communication is a learning barrier.

This workshop can also take place outside of the virtual realm in a physical classroom setting with direction from an instructor/teacher.

### **Learning Materials:**

In order to participate in this workshop, students will need:

- Access to a reliable internet connection
- Access to Zoom
- Colouring sheet
- Drawing utensils (pencil crayons and markers)

### **Resources:**

A list of resources relevant to the workshop and/or exhibition that facilitators may want to consult if they are not already familiar with the topic:

On François Xavier Saint-Pierre:

[IN THE WORKS: François Xavier Saint-Pierre](#)

On Motifs & Symbolism in Art:

[Motif, TATE](#)

[Motif \(visual arts\), Wikipedia](#)

[Motif, Art History Glossary](#)

[Symbolism, TATE](#)

[Symbolism, The Metropolitan Museum of Art](#)

[Examples of Symbolism: Signifying Ideas Through Symbols, Your Dictionary](#)

[The Mystery of Symbols in Art, Medium](#)

On Other Artists & their Motif Art:

[The Art of Repetition: Top 10 Pattern Artists, Artland Magazine](#)

[4 Contemporary Artists that use figurative characters and motifs in their Artwork, Drahuws](#)

[Repetition in Art – To Be Exactly the Same Over and Over Again, Widewalls](#)

**Teaching Notes:**

This section includes additional notes that may be helpful for the delivery of the workshop. Please see below for examples of artworks featured in the exhibition that are relevant to the workshop, as well as photographs of similar workshop activities and materials.

**Exhibition Images:**



Left to right: *Currency*. Oil on panel. 2004. *Victory Currency*. Oil on panel. 2004. *Aur*. Oil on panel. 2004.



Left to right: *Chapiteau Mystérieux*. Oil on panel. 2017. *Capital*. Oil on canvas. 2017. *Capital in Evening Light*. Oil on linen. 2017.



Left to right: *Pyramid with Bust*. Oil on canvas. 2017. *Pyramid with Bust of Poseidon*. Oil on canvas. 2017.



Left to right: *Serenissima*. Oil on panel. 2017. *Serenissima II*. Oil on panel. 2017. *Serenissima III*. Oil on panel. 2017.

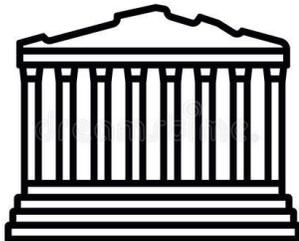


Left to right: *Verdant Ruin*. Oil on panel. 2008. *Amphitheatre Through the Arch*. 2008.



Left to right: *Ephebus*. Oil on paper. 2007. *Where the Tamarisks Grow*. Ink on paper. 2007. *Pink Ephebus*. Oil on canvas. 2008.

**Material Example Images:**



Blank Motif Example, <https://www.pinterest.ca/pin/338473728253040849/>.



Colouring Utensils Example, <https://www.pinterest.ca/pin/109423465929986224/>.