

Art Tip of the Day 5

By Sharon Jeffus Copyright 2015

In this art tip we are going to explore the beautiful flying flower; the butterfly. There is a saying “Just when the caterpillar thought the world was over, it became a butterfly.” Butterflies spread beauty wherever they go. We are going to look at some famous butterfly pictures by master artists and then talk about some fun activities for older students and younger students. Many times in art we always use a white background. Recently I went into a discount store and noticed that the scrapbook tablets were very inexpensive. One had shades of gray, brown, black and white and the paper had a fine tooth or texture to it. The butterfly picture below by Wilhelm von Kaulbach is done on a dark background. You can see a tree and notice that light is coming in on the upper left. We say butterfly wings are symmetrical, but because of the light, they do not all look the same. A good project in science and art is to look up the beautiful moths and do a similar picture as the one below of a variety of moths. Go to http://www.grand-illusions.com/opticalillusions/butterfly_alphabet/ to see the beautiful butterfly alphabet and read about the man who put it together.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Paintings_of_butterflies#/media/File:Wilhelm_von_Kaulbach_004.jpg



The next painting is by Martin Johnson Heade and is called the Blue Morpho Butterfly. Do you see how the artist has light at the horizon line? The hill furthest in the distance is the lightest one. The leaves closer to you are more vivid in color. Which side of the branches are dark? Where is the light coming from? Do you notice that although the butterfly is all the same color on both sides, because of the light it looks different on both sides?

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Paintings_of_butterflies#/media/File:Martin_Johnson_Heade_-_Blue_Morpho_Butterfly_ATC.jpg

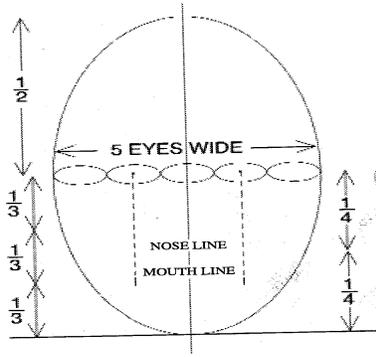


https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Paintings_of_butterflies#/media/File:Fairfacefairy_2.jpg

The next picture is by Sophie Gengembre Anderson. It is a lovely butterfly fairy or angel. How many butterflies do you count on her head? Do you see how the light falls on her hair? What do you think might be in the bag? Use the classic proportions of the face below and draw a similar picture. I drew one with the butterfly at her throat symbolizing what she speaks is sweet and gentle.

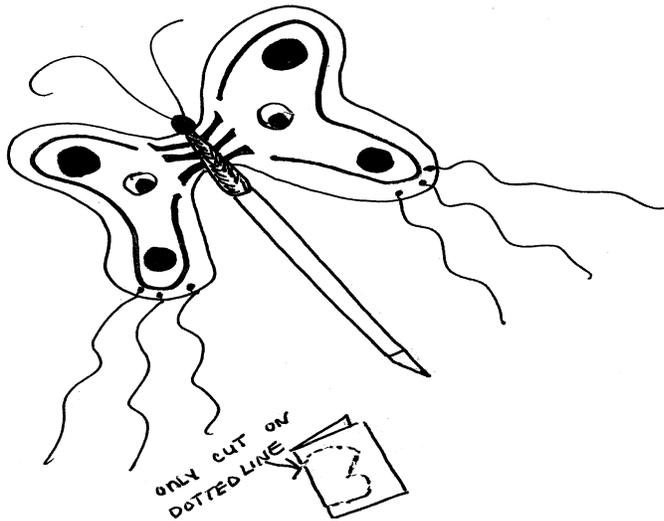


https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Paintings_of_butterflies#/media/File:Carl_Spitzweg_033.jpg

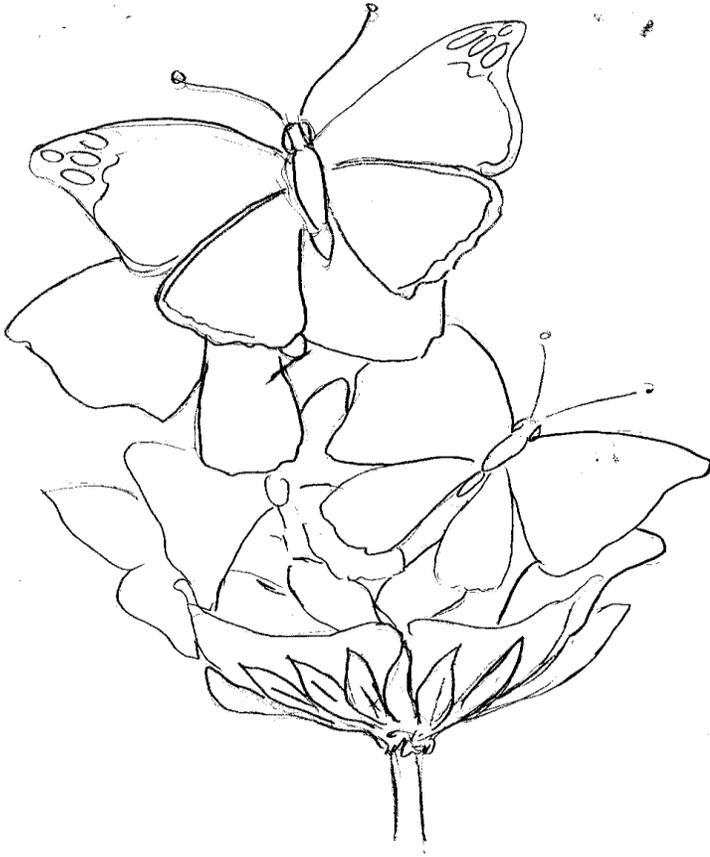


Finally we have Carl Spitzweg's butterfly hunter. Carl Spitzweg captures the essence of looking for butterflies and trying to catch one with a net. He is a famous Romanticist painter. The light comes from the upper right side of the painting. You can enjoy hunting for butterflies and even start to create a butterfly garden. http://www.grand-illusions.com/opticalillusions/butterfly_alphabet/

For little ones in art, you can use thumb prints for the body of the butterfly. Oil pastels are always a great medium to use as well. I always have little ones fold paper and then create the letter "B." Bee is for butterfly. For older students, mixed media is a good choice. You can paint the wings and detail the body and wings with markers or colored pencils. You can also make a pencil design, or even a butterfly kite.



The picture below shows that a butterfly is a flying flower. Color the picture with the colors of the color wheel.



There is an Irish Blessing “May the wings of the butterfly kiss the sun and find your shoulder to light on, Today, tomorrow and beyond.” Create a picture that you think goes with this saying.

