Title: Backyard Birds

Designed by: Leah Schultz

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Recommended Grade Level(s): 4th - 6th grade

Topic(s) (Tags):

Birds, State Bird, Realism, Painting, Blending colors, oil pastels

Objective:

To create a realistic bird artwork, students will look at a variety of images and focus on blending colors with oil pastels. Students will also learn how to achieve a blurred background effect with watercolor paints. Once complete each one is a unique masterpiece.

This lesson could also be a cross curricular tie with social studies, by learning about different state or national birds.

Standard/Concept

Students will be able to:
- Create a realistic bird drawing based on observation
- Use a oil pastels to blend colors
- Explore how to use watercolor paints to create a blurred effect
- Examine the works by **Charley Harper** and **John James Audubon**
- **Optional:** Identify state/national bird

Materials

- High-quality, 8X10 white paper (Free from Art to Remember)
- Watercolor paints
- Paintbrush
- Water Cup
- Pencil
- Oil Pastels
- Bird Images
  - Backyard Bird Drawing Guide
  - Suggested: Old calendar pages or images

- Optional: Messy mat or paper to cover workspace

Breakdown

Day	Direction
1	**Choosing and Drawing bird image** Birds have often been a subject of fascination. In fact, birdwatching generates $41 billion annually in the United States. So it is no surprise that birds make a great subject in art as well. Artists like John James Audubon and Charley Harper both drew art featuring birds. After exploring a variety of bird images we will use basic shapes to draw a bird of choice. Then by observing images, add specific details to the bird and the background.
2.	**Color with Oil Pastels** By looking at bird images students color birds drawing with oil pastels. Press hard with oil pastels, leaving no white spots. Start with the lightest color to darkest color - back last or it tends to smear. Also white can be used to help blend colors together.
3	**Final Details and Outline** Once the bird is colored, use black to outline the bird, use black lightly. For the background only color things like branches, leaves or cover pencil lines do not color in the entire background, it will be painted later.
4	**Painting Blurred Background** To create a background use a wet on wet watercolor technique to create more of a blurred background like the photo examples. For wet on wet, use a brush to get paper wet with water first. Then add blobs of wet watercolor paint onto the wetten paper allowing the paint to mix together. Paint an area at a time until the entire background is filled in.

Steps for the Lesson

Step	Directions	Image
1	Students will **DRAW** a bird with pencil. Focusing on basic shapes, like oval or football shape. Teacher will provide a bird drawing handout and additional bird images to use as a reference.	
2	Students will use oil pastels to blend colors to create a realistic bird image and color in any background details .	
3	Students will use black oil pastels to create an outline of bird art.	
4	Teachers will demonstrate how to use the wet-on-wet watercolor technique to paint the background. Using the wet-on-wet watercolor technique, students will get the paper wet 1st then add blobs of wet watercolor on top	