



Unit 20: A Medieval Codex

IN THIS UNIT:

- Theory
 - General Principle of Beauty: Integrity
 - Specific Skill: Seeing & Creating Emphasis
 - Medium: Paper, Scissors, Thread
- Lesson: Making a Codex

THEORY

Definition:

Integrity: The state of being whole, entire, or undiminished; a sound, unimpaired, or perfect condition.

Emphasis: The act of drawing attention to a part or section of an artwork by making it stand out relative to the other parts or sections of the whole.

Seeing

When we are looking at a whole, at a scene in front of us, our eyes do not take in the parts of the scene equally. Instead, we tend to focus on a section or a single object. Perhaps, it is the lighting that draws our attention or perhaps the boldness of color. Each of these can draw our eyes. This section or part, thus, has a natural emphasis. In art, we wish to represent this aspect of reality by creating emphasis in our own artwork. We can do this with value (size, number, etc.) and intensity. For example, we might ask how dark or light is an object compared to the other objects or how intense is the color of an object compared to the other objects.

Creating

In place of animal skin this week, we are using paper. This is a practical consideration guided by cost and ease of use (it is quite possible to undertake to make a leather book binding). Students will create a mini-book to help them further understand the handwork that went into medieval manuscript-making. Look for emphasis this week as you consider the examples of manuscripts and bring it into the creation process later on. This project will be in two parts: Part I -making the manuscript and Part II - painting the manuscript.

LESSON: MAKING A CODEX

Before the Lesson:

- Review “Theory” to understand philosophy and ideas.
- Review materials list below and make sure you have everything ready.
- Review In-Class section below to make sure you understand the activity.
- Visual Aids: Use the image at the beginning of this unit; or you may print or download “Visual Aids” from the Schola Rosa online suite, if enrolled, or purchase them from the Schola Rosa Bookstore

Materials Needed:

- 1 piece 18” X 24” multi-media paper per 4th-6th grader
- 1 piece 14” X 17” multi-media paper per K-3rd grader
- 1 spool thread per student
- 1 needle per student
- 1 pencil per student
- 1 pair scissors per student
- 1 set of Visual Aids

Classroom Preparation (always plan at least 30 minutes):

- Place a piece of multi-media paper, scissors, thread, and needle for each student on the table.
- Set up your table with the supplies, neatly laid out.
- Have pencils to the side in case they are needed.

In-Class:

- Welcome the students.
- Show them pictures of medieval manuscripts, explaining how parchment was made.
- Look carefully at the manuscripts and identify sections of the illustrations that are EMPHASIZED. Refer to “Theory” for guidance.
- Instruct the students to fold their paper in half, creasing the fold carefully. Then, ask them to fold it in half again, carefully creasing the fold. The paper should now look like a book!
- Instruct students to cut the folds of the pages and sew the middle of the binding.
- If time is remaining, instruct the students to brainstorm what they want to write about and how they want to put their story inside a border (an illumination!). For the

non-writers, they can tell a story with pictures, illuminating pages with patterns. Encourage students to EMPHASIZE a section on each page as the medieval manuscripts have.

- 5-Minute Warning: Have students finish up and direct them to hand-washing, making sure there is a supervisor or hall-monitor at all times with students.

Clean-Up:

- Allow students to take home their projects to write, draw, and SKETCH their manuscripts!
- Instruct students to bring the project back next week to begin painting it.
- Follow Clean-up Schedule.

Student Samples



FOLLOW-UP:

Encourage students to work on their manuscript every day, making sure to complete each page in detail with their drawing tools. Ask to see their work and suggest which areas could be emphasized. Perhaps, the student wishes to enlarge that section or simply remember to emphasize it with color at co-op next week.