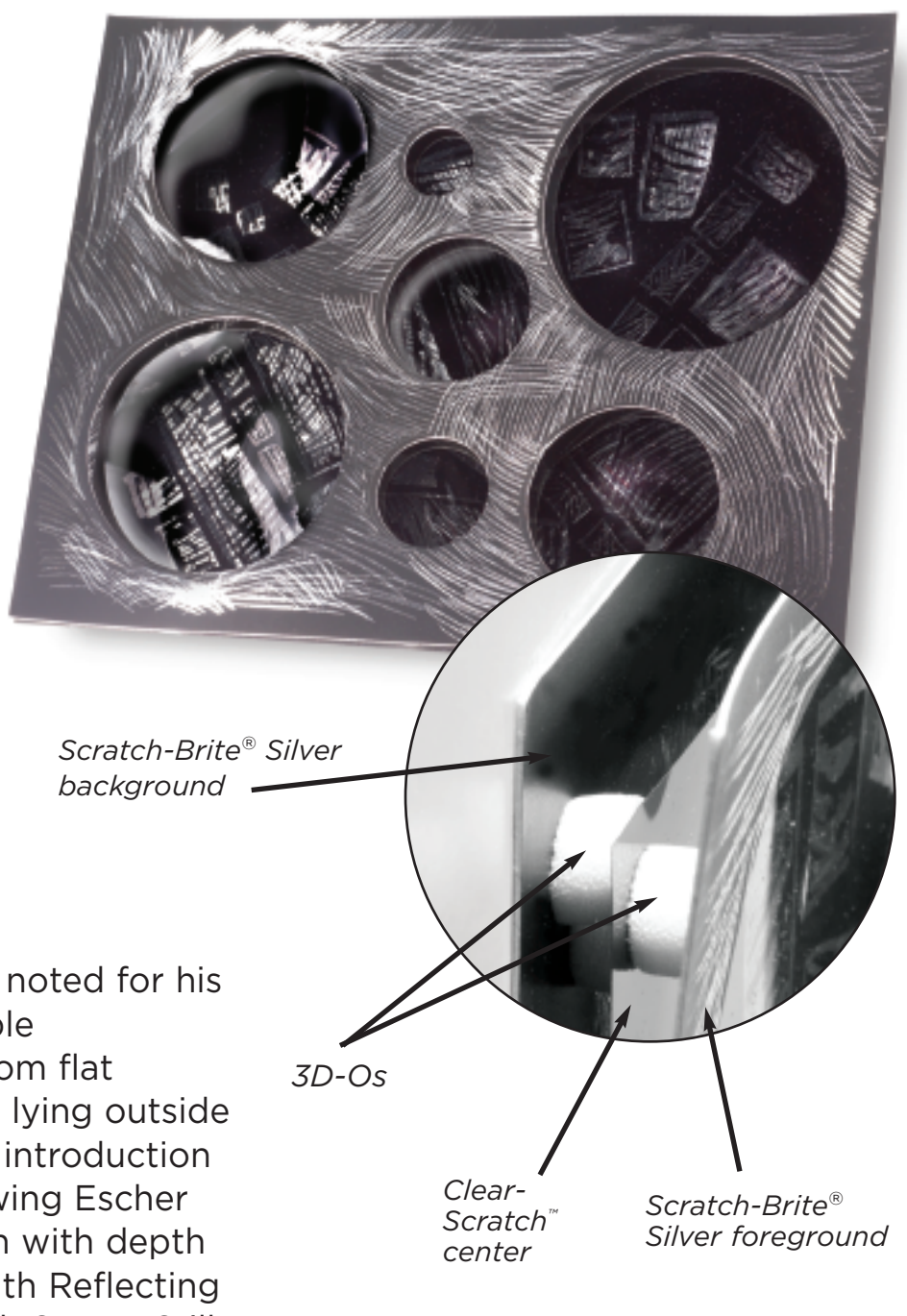
“Deep Silver”
A Study of M.C. Escher’s World within a World

(art + art history)

M.C. Escher’s “Three Worlds”



Graphic artist M.C. Escher is most noted for his manipulation of space — impossible perspectives, forms that evolve from flat surfaces and windows into worlds lying outside the borders of the artwork. As an introduction to this lesson plan, view the following Escher prints that illustrate his fascination with depth and spatial relationships: Hand With Reflecting Globe, Three Worlds, Still Life With Street, Still Life With Reflecting Globe and Puddle. These images reveal a “world within a world” — existing in reflections, shadows and imaginary places.

This lesson plan uses interactive floating layers and windows to create depth within the artwork. Incorporating a long-standing classroom favorite, Scratch Art®, the look of M.C. Escher’s woodcuts can be acheived in a safe and easy process that even elementary ages can enjoy. Scratch-Brite® Silver layered with new Clear-Scratch™ creates a play of shadows and reflections that is truly fascinating.

Grade Levels 3-12

Preparation

1. View Huffman Art Visuals of M.C. Escher prints and discuss his description of depth.
2. Prepare preliminary sketches. Start by drawing the back layer on a piece of newsprint with a pencil, keeping in mind the background should have approximately 60% of the silver showing. As you add the other layers of the piece, much of the background design will be obscured by the center and foreground sheets. Design the center layer on the translucent tracing paper, again with the thought that a significant portion of the design will be blocked by the foreground. Create areas on this layer that will be scratched away to become windows to the background. Use the transparency of the tracing paper to plan. The foreground sheet must be designed with windows to the center layer and background. Use a sheet of newsprint and cut out the windows with the scissors. Design the outside edges and negative space with the pencil.

   Hint: circular cut-outs support better than other shapes.

Process

1. Distribute two sheets of Scratch-Brite® Silver and one sheet of Clear-Scratch™ to each student. The sheets will be assembled in the following sequence: Silver for the background, Clear for the center layer and Silver for the foreground.
2. Begin with the background and refer to the preliminary sketch. Use one of the metal scratch tools to design the first Scratch-Brite® Silver sheet. The scratch tool set has 7 interchangeable knife tips for a wide variety of lines.
3. Design the center layer on the Clear-Scratch™ sheet using a wooden scratch stick. Metal tools will damage the surface of this sheet.
4. Using the second sheet of Scratch-Brite® Silver, begin by cutting out the foreground windows. We recommend using the Fiskars® Circle Cutter for precise shapes. Use the metal scratch tools to complete the design.
5. Mount the background sheet to the 11″ x 14″ foamboard. Use a multi-surface glue such as Weldbond® for best results.
6. Attach the center layer to the background using the 3D-Os as spacers. Clear-Scratch™ is flexible, so try to keep it as taut as possible. Placement of the adhesive foam is important to stabilize the floating sheets. Using firm pressure, place them at corners and along the sides, carefully hiding them so they won’t be visible. The 3D-Os can be layered on top of each other for greater depth. Repeat this process with the foreground layer.
7. Option: Insert the artwork into a clear box frame for presentation and protection. If this option is selected, be certain that the depth of the artwork does not exceed the depth of the frame. Carefully place the acrylic box over the top of the artwork and foamboard. It should be a snug fit. Place 2″ pieces of tape on each side, then continue to tape the edge carefully to the frame.
8. Use a 4″ to 6″ string secured by the clear tape on the back of the piece for hanging. Leave a little slack in the string.

Variations

- Layers may be placed at different angles
- Use colored Scratch-Art® sheets (13510-1085) or Scratch-Lite® Stained Glass sheets (13512-0009)
- Make a 3D-Os cylinder
- Use more than three layers

Materials

M.C. Escher Visual References, Huffman Art Reproductions #143 (F72202-1001), #144 (F72202-1002) and #145 (F72202-1003)

Blick Tracing Paper, 9″ x 12″ (10609-2003), one sheet per student

Blick All-Purpose Newsprint, 8-1/2″ x 11″ (10204-1085), two sheets per student

Blick Economy Graphite Pencils (20302-2009), one per student

Snippy Scissors (57040-2005), one pair per student

Scratch-Brite® Silver, pkg of 50 (13516-9012), two sheets per student

Clear-Scratch™, pkg of 30 (13524-1030), one sheet per student

Scratch-Art® Scratch Knife Tool Set (14939-1009), five sets per classroom

Scratch-Art® Scratch Knife Holder, pkg of 12 (22952-1012), one holder per student

Scratch-Art® Sticks, 100 pack (14907-1045)

Scratch-Art® 3D-Os, 100 pack (14904-0009)

Fiskars® Circle Cutter, (57124-0000)

Bienfang Foamboard, 11″ x 14″, pkg of two (13202-1005), one per student

Weldbond® Adhesive, 4-oz (23819-1004)

OPTIONAL MATERIALS:

Clear Box Frame, 11″ x 14″ (17007-1905), one per student

Book Tape, 3M Scotch #845, 2″ wide (23021-1002)

National Standards

Content Standard #1 — Understanding and applying media, techniques and processes

K-4
Students use different media, techniques and processes to communicate ideas, experiences and stories

5-8
Students intentionally take advantage of the qualities and characteristics of art media, techniques and processes to enhance communication of their experience and ideas

9-12
Students conceive and create works of visual art that demonstrate an understanding of how the communication of their ideas relates to the media, techniques and processes they use

Content Standard #2 — Using knowledge of structures and functions

K-4
Students describe how different expressive features and organizational principles cause different responses

5-8
Students employ organizational structures and analyze what makes them effective or not effective in the communication of ideas

9-12
Students create artworks that use organizational principles and functions to solve specific visual arts problems