

**Two-point Perspective of Buildings in an Urban Landscape** (inspired by Ethel Spears)  
developed by Karen Schaschwary Brinker



**State Standards**

25.A.4, 25.B.4, 26.B.4d, 27.B.4b

**National Standards** (grades 9-12)

1, 2, 5

**Materials**

drawing paper, pencils, sharpeners,  
erasers, rulers

Ethel Spears (1903-1974)  
*Weehawkin Street New York, 1935*  
oil on canvas

**Steps**

1. Students will create a pencil drawing of an urban landscape that includes at least three buildings, one street, and two contemporary objects drawn in 2-point perspective.
2. Students will create a sketch of a building and street in 1-point perspective on 9"x12" white paper.
3. Students will explain in writing how Ethel Spears became an artist, her inspiration for her paintings, and how her artworks show the time period in which they were made.
4. Students will verbally compare and contrast the use of shape, space, and emphasis, along with the details that help the viewer to determine the time period of the art, in their 2-point perspective drawing and Spear's *Weehawkin Street New York* in a written worksheet.
5. Students will self-assess their 2-point drawing using a written rubric.
6. Students will verbally defend why they believe female artists were important in the United States in the early 20th century, and why their work continues to be important. (Students may use Ethel Spears as an example.)

**Resources**

[http://www.chicagomodern.org/artists/ethel\\_spears/](http://www.chicagomodern.org/artists/ethel_spears/)

<https://schwartzcollection.com/artist/ethel-spears/>

<http://www.wpamurals.com/SpearsEt.pdf>

<http://illinoiswomenartists.org/dev/author/ethel-spears/>

### Questions and Answers (to be filled out on worksheet.)

1. **Q:** How did Ethel Spears (1903-1974) become an artist? What was her inspiration for her paintings? How do her artworks represent the time period in which they were made?

**A:** Ethel Spears was born in Chicago and her interest in the arts is thought to stem from her Grandfather who had a painted diary. She enrolled in the Art Institute of Chicago to study textiles after high school. She exhibited her work at the school when she was twenty. She re-enrolled in the AIC after deciding she wanted to study painting instead. At the time the faculty was very conservative, but she was able to find a progressive teacher. After that she spent time in New York and Paris, continuing to take art classes and work. She returned to Chicago and received her MFA and began teaching art at the AIC. The inspiration for her paintings has speculated to be the bustling city around her and the diary her Grandfather kept. Her artworks show the time in which she created them by the style of the clothing worn by the figures, the vehicles on the street, and the style of the furniture in the homes. She also created murals for the WPA/FPA, which were created during The Great Depression.

2. **Q:** Why were female artists important during the early 20th century? Why is their work still important?

**A:** Women's experiences in history, shown through artwork, help us to gain a well-rounded understanding of historical events. By viewing art made by Ethel Spears, for example, we learn the experiences and perspectives she had during The Great Depression. Spear's paintings give the viewer a unique perspective of her observations around Chicago and New York. We are able to pick up on the styles, domestic and public happenings, and interactions that took place between people and places. We also know that her work was valuable to society because she was employed by the Work Progress Administration (WPA) and/or Federal Art Program (FAP) to create murals. Spears was able to contribute to WPA/FAP by helping to add color and life, along with stimulating an interest in the arts, during hard times.

### Activities

Begin by showing students *Weehawkin Street New York*. Ask students what looks familiar, and what looks different than cities today. Ask students what time period they believe the work to be created during. Teacher will introduce Ethel Spears, including how she became an artist, her inspiration, along with history of WPA/FAP. Students will listen to instruction on 1-point perspective and create a sketch of a building and street. (This lesson will work best if students have previous experience with 1-point perspective.) In the next class, students will verbally review information learned about Ethel Spears and the WPA/FAP. Students will identify Spears's use of 2-point perspective in *Weehawkin Street*. Students will be asked to identify the use of shape, space, and emphasis in the work. Students will watch a demonstration on 2-point perspective. The teacher should assist students in brainstorming contemporary objects to include. Students will receive the self-assessment rubric and begin working on their 2-point drawings. The next class students will complete the written worksheet about Ethel Spears and WPA/FAP. Students will continue to work on

their drawings. When students have completed their artwork, they will fill out the self-assessment rubric. Next students will verbally compare and contrast the use of shape, space, and emphasis, along with the details that help the viewer to determine the time period of the art, in their 2-point perspective drawing and Spear's *Weehawkin Street* in a written worksheet. At the end of the lesson students will verbally defend the importance of women artists in the early 20th century.

*see below for:*

**Reflection and Evaluation:** Rubric for Reflections and Evaluation

**Worksheets:**

Ethel Spears Biography Worksheet

Compare and Contrast Ethel Spears Worksheet

## REFLECTION AND EVALUATION

Student work may be assessed with the following rubric and worksheet. They may also use the rubric below to self-asses their 2-point perspective artwork.

<b>Feature</b>	<b>Novice (1)</b>	<b>Developing (2)</b>	<b>Developed (3)</b>	<b>Exemplary (4)</b>
<b>Structures and Composition:</b> Does the student include at least three buildings, one street, and two contemporary objects in 2-point perspective.	attempted, little regard for and ineffective use of design elements and principles	limited attention to effective use of design elements and principles	adequate attention to effective use of design elements and principles	exemplary, effective use of design elements and principles
<b>Originality:</b> Does the student show unique thought in their artwork?	attempted, needs more thoughtful approach, no personal expression	limited personal expression, needs more thoughtful approach	adequately developed personal expression in an original manner	exemplary, personal expression is in an imaginative and innovative manner
<b>Process/Media:</b> Does the student use the drawing materials effectively in order to create shapes, space, and an area of emphasis?	attempted, needs more experience and commitment to better understand media, tools, and processes	limited understanding of media, tools, and processes	adequate understanding of media, tools, and processes	exemplary understanding of media, tools, and processes
<b>Technical Skills/Presentation:</b> Does the student carefully use the materials?	attempted, needs to spend more time on skill development in the use of media, tools, and processes	limited control in the use of media, tools, and processes	adequate control in the use of media, tools, and processes	exemplary control in the use of media, tools, and processes



