Art Masterpiece
3rd Grade Projects

Contents

Foster Elementary
PTA – Art Masterpiece – 3rd Grade

October Project

Thanksgiving Food Collection Box

The project will consist of decorating a box that will be placed inside each classroom for the collection of canned goods for the fall community service project benefitting Society of Saint Stephens.

Goal: To get the class to work together to come up with a theme and ideas on how to decorate your class box. Complete the project in class and show students how they can work together on a project.

Example: Box decorated as a turkey. Divide class into groups and have each group work on a body part. One group can paint and assemble the head, another, the body, another, the wings, another, the legs and the last group can create a poster with a slogan. "Flocking together to Feed our Friends in Need"

Supplies: The boxes will be supplied for the project. Any art supplies that in the art masterpiece cabinets on the bottom can be used as well as the butcher paper that is in the work area in the back half of the teachers lounge.

Theme ideas: could be...
Helping hands working together... Have the class put their handprints around the box with various pictures of people helping one another.
A Thanksgiving theme ...where each child puts something he or she is thankful for on the box.
A fall theme... with leaves and fall items around the box.
A school spirit ...theme with Foster bulldogs on the box.
Have fun with the kids on this and let them "own" the project!

Boxes should be displayed inside the classroom due to fire hazard in hallways.

This project will help the students feel more involved in the giving process and help them appreciate the difference they are making in the lives of people who are less fortunate in our community.

Boxes have been placed in the supply area..one per classroom.

For examples, please click on the photo gallery tab above!

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November Project

Frescos - Michelangelo and the Sistine Chapel

QUESTIONS:

1. What do you think this is? (a painting)
2. Where do you think this is painted? (in the Sistine chapel, in the Vatican in Rome, on the ceiling. Flip up text on artwork poster to reveal the Sistine chapel picture.)
3. When art is painted on the walls using plaster what is it called? (a fresco)
4. How big do you think the ceiling is? (131 feet long x 43 feet wide!)
5. How do you think the artist painted this since it's on the ceiling? (Michelangelo conceived and had constructed a unique scaffolding system. It was sturdy enough to hold workers and materials, but began high up the walls of the chapel in order that Mass might still be celebrated below. The scaffolding curved at its top, mimicking the curvature of the ceiling's vault. Michelangelo often had to bend backwards or lay down and paint over his head. (an awkward position which must've made his neck and back ache, his arms burn painfully and according to him, permanently affected up his vision)
6. How long do you think it took to complete this? (a little bit over 4 years; from July 1508 to October 1512)

HISTORY:

Pope Julius II (also known as Giulio II and *"Il papa terribile"*), requested that Michelangelo paint the chapel ceiling. Julius was determined that Rome should be rebuilt to its former glory, and had embarked on a vigorous campaign to get the job done. That such splendor would add luster to the name of Julius II and serve to supersede anything that Pope Alexander VI (a Borgia, and Julius' rival) had accomplished, were not unimportant considerations.

The main panels down the center depict scenes from the Book of Genesis, from the Creation, to the Fall, to shortly after Noah's deluge. Adjacent to each of these scenes, on either side, are immense portraits of prophets and sibyls who foretold the coming of the Messiah. Along the bottoms of these run spandrels and lunettes containing the ancestors of Jesus and stories of tragedy in ancient Israel. Scattered throughout are smaller figures, cherubs and *ignudi* (nudes). All told there are more than 300 painted figures on the ceiling. By the way, have you noticed the wealth of architectural members and moldings which dissect the ceiling? Most of those are actually two-dimensional, skillfully painted in by Michelangelo to demarcate separate compositions.

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ART

Materials:

Plaster of Paris	Straws	Paint Brushes	Yarn
Small Foam Plates	Watercolors	Water Cups	

DO AT HOME PRIOR TO LESSON:

1. Follow the package directions to make Plaster of Paris.
2. Fill a foam plate for each student with Plaster of Paris.
3. Near the top of the plate, insert a 1-inch piece of straw. Gently press it in to the foam, but do not puncture the plate. As the plaster sets, this will create a hole in the plaster for hanging.
4. Let the plaster set until it is dry.
5. Remove the straws from the dried plaster.

Cleanup: If you have leftover Plaster of Paris in your mixing bowl, let it harden. Then, break apart the plaster pieces and discard them in the trash. DO NOT discard plaster down the drain.

AT SCHOOL:

6. Distribute a plate of dried plaster to each student along with paint, water, and paintbrushes.
7. Have each student paint the Plaster of Paris. Encourage them to be creative with their paintings. Be sure and tell them to put a lot of paint on the plaster as it will lighten when it dries. Remind them that the hole in the plaster is the top of the painting.
8. When students are done painting, set the frescoes aside to dry.
9. When the frescoes are dry, remove the foam surrounding each painting and string a piece of yarn through the top hole to hang.
10. If students finish quickly, they can carefully flip over their plaster circle and paint on the back side. (plaster is breakable so stress them to be careful!!!)

Michelangelo

Pietà

Michelangelo (1475 - 1564)
Marble sculpture, c. 1550-1555 Size of original: 90"
Santa Maria del Fiore, Florence
AE156

Now in frail bark, and on the storm-tossed wave, Doth this my life approach the common port,
Wither all haste to render up account Of every act,—the erring and the just
Wherefore I now do see, that by the love Which rendered art my idol and my lord,
I did much err. Vain are the loves of man, And error lurks within his every thought...
Michelangelo

INTRODUCTION

Probably one of the most well-known and important biographers of artists was a man named Giorgio Vasari who lived in the sixteenth century. Among artists and art historians his *Lives of the Painters* has proven an invaluable resource book. Although probably best known for his role as biographer, Vasari was an architect who had been apprenticed to Michelangelo when he was merely in his teens. In the biography of "the master," Michelangelo, he shows his own great, if somewhat excessive, admiration for his teacher and friend:

While the best and most industrious artists were labouring, by the light of Giotto and his followers, to give the world ensamples of such power as the benignity of their stars and the character of their fantasies enabled them to command, and while desirous of imitating the perfection of Nature by the excellence of Art...and were universally toiling, but for the most part in vain, the Ruler of Heaven was pleased to turn the eyes of his clemency towards earth, and perceiving the fruitlessness of so many labours...he resolved, by way of delivering us from such great errors, to send to the world a spirit endowed with the universality of power in each art...one who could give relief to Paintings, and with an upright judgment could operate as perfectly in Sculpture; nay, who was also so highly accomplished in Architecture also, that he was able to render our habitations secure and commodious, healthy and cheerful, well proportioned, and enriched with the varied ornaments of art.

Vasari's poetic expressions of praise perhaps also stated the admiration of sixteenth century Italy for the artist who gave them such artistic glories as the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in painting and the early *Pietà* and *David* in sculpture, as well as many buildings in Florence and Rome. Even today, Michelangelo's work cannot be glorified too highly. He was a master in all of the arts and devoted his life to the creation of art. And although, in anticipation of his death, he was to write the sonnet decrying the error of his love for and devotion to art, had it been otherwise the world would be immeasurably poorer.

HISTORY

In the history of art, a Pietà has traditionally been a representation in painting or in sculpture of Mary, the mother of Christ, cradling the figure of her dead son on her lap. The original image of the *Pietà* was a German, rather than an Italian invention that had spread to France in the fourteenth century. When Michelangelo created his most famous *Pietà*, at about the age of 25, it was probably a novelty to the people of the Italy of 1500 who came to marvel at its beauty, but he was following this tradition, as well as showing his debt to the artists of the Early Renaissance. Like Leonardo's *Mona Lisa*, this *Pietà* is a work of art of which myths are made. It is described with words like beauty, and perfection; indeed Vasari wrote:

It would be impossible for any craftsman or sculptor no matter how brilliant ever to surpass the grace or design of this work or try to cut and polish the marble with the skill that Michelangelo displayed...It is certainly a miracle that a formless block of stone could ever have been reduced to a perfection that nature is scarcely able to create in the flesh...

The PIETÀ that was begun by Michelangelo some fifty years later was so different from the first that it was almost as though they had been done by two different artists. The early *Pietà* has a sweetness and a sense of the piety from which the name, *Pietà*, derives. The later PIETÀ is rough and unfinished and a sculpture which has been praised less for the beauty of its surfaces and perfection of figures and draperies than for the power of its expression of emotion. Some authorities attribute the change of style, and of concept—the later PIETÀ consists of four figures instead of the traditional two—to a more Humanistic approach. Humanism is described by Kenneth Clark as "a sense of the dramatic relationship of human beings to one another," and it may best be characterized by the *quattrocento* (meaning the fourteen-hundreds or fifteenth century) artistic style of Donatello with his large, energetic figures and the

intensity with which he has depicted human reactions to the forces of emotion. The differences between the two *Pietàs* may be due to the fact that, at this time in his life, Michelangelo was confronting his own mortality. According to Vasari, who was then in contact with Michelangelo through an exchange of letters, the master was certain that *"the end of his days was nearly come,"* and *"no thought arose in his mind which did not bear the impress of approaching death."*

CRITICISM

In the early 1550's one of Michelangelo's biographers, Condivi, wrote of the PIETÀ, now in Florence:

At present he has in hand a group in marble, which he works at for his pleasure, as one who, full of ideas and powers, must produce something every day. It is a group of four figures, larger than life—a Deposition. The dead Christ is held up by his Mother; she supports the body on her bosom with her arms and her knees, a wonderfully beautiful gesture. She is aided by Nicodemus above, who is erect and stands firmly—he holds her under the arms and sustains her with manly strength—and on the left by one of the Marys, who, although exhibiting the deepest grief, does not omit to do those offices that the Mother, by the extremity of her sorrow, is unable to perform. The Christ is dead, all His limbs fall relaxed, but withall in a very different manner from [the early Pietà]...It is impossible to speak of its beauty and its sorrow, of the grieving and sad faces of them all, especially of the afflicted Mother. Let it suffice; I tell you it is a rare thing, and one of the most laborious works that he has yet done, principally because all the figures are distinct from each other, the folds of the draperies of one figure not confused with those of the others...He intends to give the Deposition from the Cross to some church, and to be buried at the foot of the altar where it is placed.

CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Look at the two different *Pietàs*, the one that Michelangelo sculpted when he was in his twenties and the one created when he was in his seventies. Can you tell that one was created by a young man and the other by an old man? Why do you think he used four figures instead of following the tradition of *Pietàs* which showed only the two figures, the mother cradling the dead Christ? One important difference seems to be that the early *Pietà* was an ideal representation of two beautiful figures shown in the most pious manner. In the later Florence PIETÀ, neither the faces nor the figures seem to fit any ideal form. In fact, the nose of the figure of Nicodemus which has been said to be a portrait of Michelangelo, himself, appears to have been broken. And, too, through the four separate figures Michelangelo is able to show, not only a range of human emotions, but also the relationships among humans—in the Humanist manner. Look especially at the figure of the dead Christ. In the earlier sculpture, the figure has been scaled so that it lies

Michelangelo. *Pietà* c. 1497 - 1500
St. Peter's Basilica, Rome

comfortably across the mother's lap. Imagine how small the Christ figure would be in comparison to the figure of the mother if it were placed in a standing position. It also appears almost to be sleeping, as the babe in arms of the many sculptures of the *Madonna and Child*. The position of the Christ figure in the Florence PIETÀ, on the other hand, is contorted and twisted in an attitude of agony; and there is no question of the distinction between peaceful slumber and the sleep of death.

AESTHETICS

The sculpture described by Condivi was a work in progress. How much the PIETÀ that is now in Florence resembles the sculpture on which Michelangelo was working in the early 1550's is difficult to know. What is known is that sometime, perhaps in 1555, Michelangelo attacked the PIETÀ and broke it to pieces. Vasari stated that: *He did this either because it was hard and full of emery and the chisel often struck sparks from it, or perhaps because his judgement was so severe that he was never content with anything he did...*

This discontent resulted in Michelangelo's leaving a major portion of his sculptures unfinished. But the Florence PIETÀ is not merely unfinished. Michelangelo reported that *"a piece had fallen off from the arm of the Madonna...as well as other mishaps including his finding a crack in the marble, had made him so hate the work that he had lost patience and broken it."* We know also that Michelangelo had given the broken sculpture to an apprentice, Calcagni, who worked on it until his own death, leaving it still in an unfinished state. Some authorities report that Calcagni's imperfect work was distinguishable from Michelangelo's own and that the dissimilar chisel marks are still evident. The questions that aestheticians might consider are these: When we are not only unsure of the amount of work that was actually completed by Michelangelo or the extent of the damage done to the sculpture before his servant intervened, but we do not know how much work Calcagni did or what changes were necessary to put the work together again, is the sculpture truly a Michelangelo? Duke Cosimo de Medici refused to put the Florence PIETÀ in the Medici chapel because it seemed to be of lesser worth than the other sculptures there. The taste of the sixteenth century was for a highly finished art, such as the Rome *Pietà*. In spite of its roughness, its mutilated and unfinished state, the Florence PIETÀ remains one of Michelangelo's most famous works. Is the taste of the sixteenth century Italians for highly finishished sculpture superior to a twentieth century taste for more unfinished sculpture? Is our own taste superior?

Marjorie Wilson, Ed. D
Penn State University

REFERENCES

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Giorgio Vasari. *Lives of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*. (Vol. V) London: George Bell & Sons, 1897.

Foster Elementary

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December Project

"THE GREAT WAVE" - HAIKU

by Katsushiku Hoksai
English translation of haiku by Matsuo Basho

Today we are going to talk about a special type of Japanese poetry called Haiku.

Haiku is a form of poetry that developed in Japan from about 400 years ago. The style reached its peak from1603-1868, when a poet named Matsuo Basho wrote distinctive verses on his journeys around the country describing the seasons and the scenery of the places he visited. Let's take a look at our examples and discuss the artwork.

QUESTIONS:

1. What do all these pictures have in common? (nature element in all, writing on all pictures)
2. What do you think poetry is? (rhyming words, feelings, expressive writings)
3. In the Haiku's you can read, what is the syllable counts in line one? (3, 1, 5)
4. What is the syllable count in line two? (5, 7)
5. What is the syllable count in line three? (3,5)
6. Do all the poems follow the same syllable structure? (no, most are either 3,5,3 or 5,7,5) The Swan was done by an American writer and does not always conform to the Japanese rules)
7. How do the different Haiku's make your feel? (any answers)

SUMMARY:

Poetry is a kind of writing, usually in verse. Poetry verse is set out in short lines with words put together in rhythm or rhyme or both. Poetry is about a writer sharing with the reader an experience or strong feelings. Poems are written with words chosen for their sounds and beauty as well as their meaning.

A haiku is special type of poetry; a short verse of 17 syllables, divided into units of five, seven, and five syllables. Haiku use simple expressions in ways that allow deeply felt emotions and a sense of discovery to be readily conveyed to the reader. As a rule, a haiku must have a word that is identified with a particular season.

The popularity of haiku has spread beyond Japan to Europe, North America, Africa, and China. Haiku composition is especially popular in the United States.

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Japanese Haiku's follow the following structure:

- Have 3 lines. In classical structure the first line has 5 syllables, the second has 7 syllables, the last has 5 again.
- Refer to nature
- Use ordinary things to talk about significant issues like finding happiness in the beauty of nature, falling in love, being left alone, not having friends, etc.
- Can be happy, sad, humorous, frightening, etc.

Examples:

English translation of a haiku by Matsuo Basho in reference to Katsushiku Hoksai's Great Wave:

WINTER SEAS ARE WILD
STRETCH OVER SADO ISLAND
SILENT CLOUDS OF STARS

TREES WITHOUT THEIR LEAVES
SHIVER AS THE NORTH WIND BLOWS
WHITE DUST FALLS SOFTLY

ART:

Have student write a haiku poem by picking one of the four seasons. Check it for nature references and correct form. Have student neatly write the poem to the side on white paper. Students will create a tree and add details to the landscape based on the season they chose.
Mount on large black paper to make a border around the painting.

Materials:

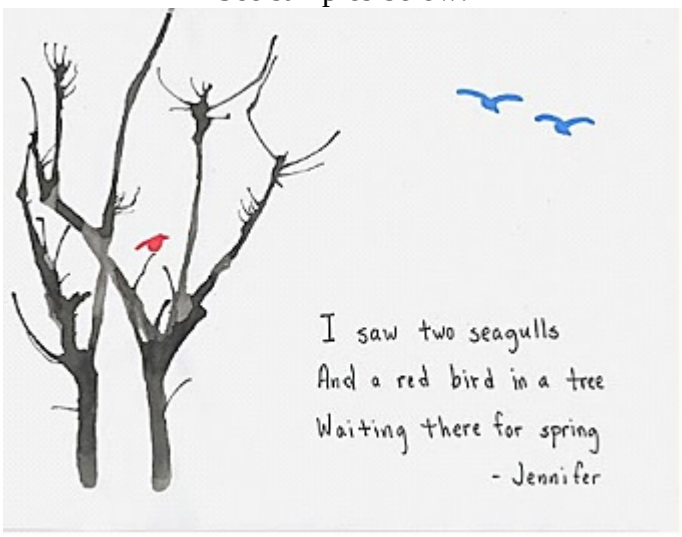
Watercolor Paper
Straws
Tape
Markers
Tissue paper; green, orange, red, yellow, pink, white
Watercolors
Paint brushes and water cups
Glue

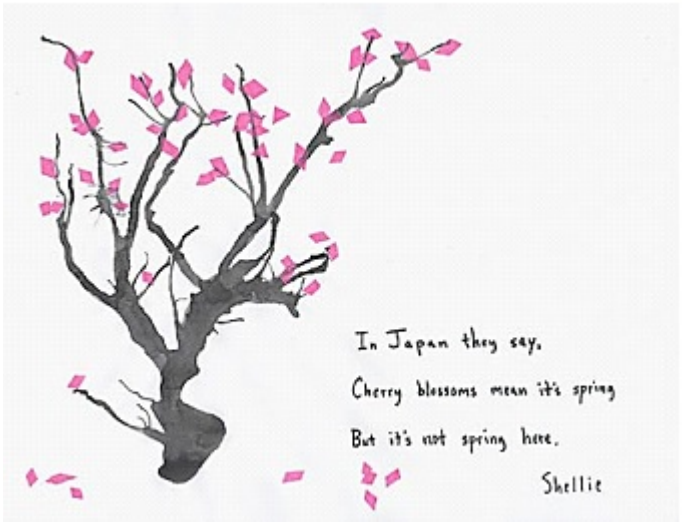
Procedures:

First, tape down your paper so both hands are available to work. Put just several drops of water in black or brown paint. Add some clear water to the paper about 1-2” long to make the base of the tree. Now add a couple of drops of paint along tree base. Use your straw to blow paint drops outward from the center to create branches. The line helps start and direct the flow. It's

important not to blow too hard! Just blow slowly and "push" the paint along. The straw should be held at a low angle, back an inch or two from the flowing paint. If you like, add more paint and or water at the base and repeat. Students may add details to their drawings so they match the season their Haiku was written for. Tissue paper can be added to the trees to create leaves and/or blossoms.

See samples below:





Haiku

The Great Wave by Katsushiku Hoksai

INTRODUCTION

A haiku is a short verse of 17 syllables, divided into units of five, seven, and five syllables. Haiku use simple expressions in ways that allow deeply felt emotions and a sense of discovery to be readily conveyed to the reader. As a rule, a haiku must have a word that is identified with a particular season.

HISTORY

Haiku is a form of poetry that developed in Japan from about 400 years ago. The style reached a peak in the first half of the Edo period (1603-1868), when a poet named Matsuo Basho wrote distinctive verses on his journeys around the country describing the seasons and the scenery of the places he visited.

In the ensuing Meiji period (1868-1912) haiku developed as a uniquely Japanese form of poetry thanks to the efforts of another poet, Masaoka Shiki. It was Shiki who promoted a new form of haiku that emphasized realistic portrayals of nature and human life. The popularity of haiku has spread beyond Japan to Europe, North America, Africa, and China. Haiku composition is

especially popular in the United States. The following is an English translation of a haiku by Matsuo Basho in reference to Katsushiku Hoksai's Great Wave:

WINTER SEAS ARE WILD
STRETCH OVER SADO ISLAND
SILENT CLOUDS OF STARS

ANALYSIS

The Japanese haiku and the English language haiku have several critical differences. In Japanese the haiku is composed of 17 sound units divided into three parts - one with 5 units, one with 7 units and another with 5 units. Since sound units are much shorter than English syllables, it has been found that following the Japanese example results in a much longer poem often filled up to make the count with unnecessary words. The Japanese write their haiku in one line, in order to see clearly the parts of the haiku. In English each part is given a line. This allows the reader time to form an image in the mind before the eyes go back to the left margin for more words. The line breaks also act as a type of punctuation. The kigo, or season word, is a vital part of the Japanese haiku, but in English it is often ignored and not well understood. Therefore, a great number of English haiku do not have a season word and yet are considered to be haiku. The Japanese, because of their longer history of reading haiku, understand that there are two parts to the poem. In English these are called the phrase and fragment. One line is the fragment and the other two lines combine grammatically to become the phrase. Without this combining the two lines together the haiku will sound ‘choppy’ as the voice drops at the end of each line.

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January Project

"Eiffel Tower"

QUESTIONS:

1. Look at the photo here - Is this a building, a sculpture or what is it? (yes - a building, people can go inside it, yes - it is a 3D sculpture, and it is a monument)
2. Can anyone remember what a monument is? (a structure that represents something or someone; a symbol of something)
3. What is a symbol? (a sign that stands for something else; bald eagle - America)
4. Do you know where this monument is? (Paris, France)
5. Does anyone know why it was created, what it is a "symbol" of? (* In 1889 France celebrated her 100th year anniversary of the French Revolution - when it got rid of its King and Queen - by holding an International Exhibition in Paris. The Eiffel Tower was constructed to show Frances many advances in engineering and technology. It has become a symbol of the Industrial Revolution. That was the time when man built machines to take over the work of men and animals.)
6. Can you think of any other monuments that are "symbols"? Pyramids - symbol of an ancient civilization
    - Statue of Liberty - symbol of the American Ideal - "freedom for all" Gateway Arch - St. Louis - symbol of the door to the West
    - Golden Arches - McDonald's symbol of fast food
    - Foster Elementary - symbol of education in Kingwood
7. How tall do you think this building is? (984' - 3 football fields)
8. What do you think it's made of? (steel)
9. How would you describe this building to someone who had never seen it?(very tall, wide at the base, narrow at the top - it has 3 sections divided by 2 floors)
10. There is a connection between the Eiffel Tower and the Statue of Liberty - Does anyone know what it might be? (Alexander Gustave Eiffel was a French engineer was commissioned to design the inner structure of the Statue of Liberty.
11. Something else was invented at this time and used in the Eiffel Tower. Can you guess what it was? (elevator)

SUMMARY:

The Eiffel Tower was built in 1888-1889 by Alexander Gustavo Eiffel. He was bom in Dijon, France on December 15, 1832. From his studies in engineering he developed a life-long interest in bridge design. He was one of the first to discover the advantages of steel as a building material. In 1885, he designed the inner structure of the Statue of Liberty which was a gift to the U.S. from the French Government recognizing 100 years of American Independence. Eiffel's Tower was a great success during the exhibition. 100,000 people visited the tower each day. Not only were people in awe of the tallest building ever constructed, but they were able to experience the sensation

of seeing Paris from almost 1,000' above the ground. You have to remember that this was the first time people had the chance of being able to go so high off the ground.

ART:

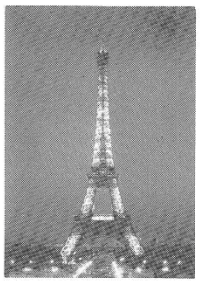
Materials:

black construction paper
toothpicks
glue

Procedure:

1. Explain to the children that they are going to construct a building or structure with their toothpicks.
2. Show examples to the children as to how to make columns, arches, doorways, and remind them about making triangles, squares, rectangles and various shapes with toothpicks - whole or half.
3. Talk about the base of their structure and that it needs to be strong and able to support the entire building.
4. Allow the children to create anything that they like.

Eiffel Tower



Alexandre Gustave Eiffel (1832-1923)
Paris, France, 1889
Comstock Inc./Stuart Cohen
AE 197

The most spectacular thing about the Eiffel tower in the 1890's was not the view of the tower from the ground. It was seeing the ground from the tower. —Robert Hughes

INTRODUCTION

In 1889 France celebrated her first one hundred years of the revolution by holding a large international exhibition in Paris. To demonstrate its many advances in engineering and technology, the nation constructed two innovative structures on the site of the exhibition. One of these buildings, The Machine Hall, was an enormous covered space in which the most recent inventions in machinery and equipment could be displayed to an amazed and fascinated populace which often numbered one hundred thousand a day.

The second structure commissioned by the French for their centenary celebration, a nine hundred and eighty four foot tower, was to be the largest man-made one in the world, and was conceived to highlight the leadership role of the French nation in this new machine and industrial age. Alexandre Gustave Eiffel, a fifty- seven year old French engineer, was commissioned to build the commemorative tower which has become a symbol for the city of Paris all over the world.

The tower, with its mechanized lift to the top platform area high above the daily bustle of Paris, provided an opportunity to view the world from a greater height than had ever before been accessible to the general public. The sensation of seeing the tower was exceeded only by the experience of surveying Paris from almost one thousand feet above the ground. Consideration of this gigantic, yet beautiful structure which dominates the heart of one of the world's major cities, provides insight into important aspects of modern architecture and of modern art.

HISTORY

Alexandre Gustave Eiffel was born in Dijon, France, on December 15, 1832. From his studies in engineering he developed a life-long interest in bridge design. He formed an engineering firm which developed an international reputation for innovative solutions to problems associated with bridge construction, and was quick to realize the structural advantages of steel as a building material. As efficient production of steel was made possible through the work of Sir Henry Bessemer in England, Eiffel began to develop techniques of using steel supports for bridges throughout Europe and Asia.

One of the many advantages of steel construction is that it allows a skeleton-like support system for large-scale construction, thereby relieving the need for the traditional thick and expensive supporting walls. This technique later led to the increased use of glass walls in high-rise buildings, and in bridges it led to exposed steel supports rather than stone support walls. In addition to being cost efficient, Eiffel's steel support systems reduced resistance to wind forces, a constant concern with earlier massive stone walls. The open steel armature, or support system, used by him helped introduce many new architectural advances. The look of the exposed support system on his bridges was to play a role in his design of the famous Eiffel Tower.

In 1885, three years before constructing the Tower, Eiffel designed the inner structure (the armature) of the Statue of Liberty. The Statue of Liberty was a gift to the United States from the French Government recognizing 100 years of American Independence. The design of the Statue reflects an approach to monumental sculpture which date back to ancient Greece and Rome. Abstract concepts such as liberty, wisdom, or justice were frequently personified, or given human form. Following that tradition, the French sculptor Frederic Auguste Bartholdi designed a large female figure holding high a torch to represent the idea of Liberty. Placed in New York Harbor, the statue continues to welcome the many travelers who arrive in the United States through the port of New York City.

Beneath the 300 sheets of copper which formed the exterior surface of the Statue of Liberty was a strong, lattice-work steel framework designed by Eiffel. When, three years later, the French government wanted a symbol to commemorate its first one hundred years of the revolution, they turned to him to design the nine hundred and eighty-four foot monument. His design converted the earlier hidden interior steel framework into the structure itself, and much as his bridges had shed the need for stone encasements, his tower could stand as a symbol of the modern world with no ornamental covering required, and as a statement of the promise of new architectural techniques and materials. It was also an early monument to the concept that formalistic qualities such as shape, proportion and line can be appreciated for their own sake.

The Eiffel Tower became an instant symbol not only for Paris but for the late nineteenth century's enthusiasm for the approaching age of technology. Robert Hughes captures well what must have been the late nineteenth century visitor's reaction when he states, *"...in its height, its structural daring, its then-radical use of industrial materials for the commemorative purposes of the State, it summed up what the ruling classes of Europe conceived the promise of technology to be...the promise of unlimited power over the world and its wealth."*

Eiffel constructed his commissioned tower for a cost of one million dollars. Because the French government allocated only a small portion of that amount for the costs, his contract allowed him to keep the admission profits for the first twenty years, enabling him to recover his investment in the tower within a year. Throughout his professional career, Eiffel continued his interest in the effects of wind upon large man-made structures. Laboratory space was reserved at the top of the tower to allow continued scientific studies of wind forces by world scientists. He himself went on to develop one of the first wind tunnels and to begin investigations into aerodynamics.

CRITICISM

Looking at the Eiffel Tower in this dramatic

night photograph, one sees the grace and simplicity of this beautifully proportioned structure. Eiffel's design is built on a unit of steel grids and braces which support the three platform areas and a crowning spire. Four large pylons provide the base from which the tower begins its impressive ascent to nine hundred and eighty-four feet above the city of Paris. To visually connect each pylon, Eiffel has designed a set of four graceful arches that frame a view of the busy city and provide a base for the tower. These arches serve no structural purpose and were added by Eiffel solely for the graceful visual effect which they provide.

The modular units of the tower decrease in size as they rise to the top, providing a lovely pyramidal shape to the structure. Each unit, with its diagonal bracing provides a visual break in the ascent of the tower, allowing the viewer to move from ground level to top platform in regular incremental stages. There is a strong sense of balance and stability to the total structure, provided in large part by the proportioning and spacing of the two lower platforms.

The scale and balance of the tower is so beautifully calculated that it is difficult to imagine any change in the placement of platforms or spire. There is a grace and freshness to this unadorned structure which has been retained for over one hundred years. Eiffel designed a symbol for the French people which commemorated the coming of a new age of technological advancements. His architectural language of exposed structural supports declared that this new age would have a new vocabulary and new appearance.

AESTHETICS

Works of art can be understood and discussed in many ways. It is important to look at the subject matter of the work and to understand a story or a geographic location. The Eiffel Tower can be appreciated both for its formal qualities of proportion, scale and line as well as for its effectiveness as a symbol for a period in history.

Imagine the response of the many daily visitors to the Eiffel Tower looking down upon their city from the unheard of heights of the top platform. The Exhibition of 1889 and its many activities and events celebrated the new world of the machine. Chief among these new inventions was the elevator which could now allow Parisians and world visitors to ascend to the top of this impressive tower and look down upon the city from a new perspective. The world seen from the top of the Eiffel Tower would have appeared as many flat, two-dimensional shapes. It is suggested by Robert Hughes that this vision and interest in flat, two-dimensional decorative shapes was shared by contemporary Parisian artists at the end of the nineteenth century. Hughes states that "...*This way of seeing was one of the pivots in human consciousness. The sight of Paris 'vu d'en haut" (seen from above), absorbed by millions of people in the first twenty years of the Tower's life, was as significant in 1889 as the famous NASA photograph of the earth from the moon.*" Influenced from many sources other than skyscraper views of the ground below, the modern movement, as it was taking shape in Paris at the end of the century, also stressed patterning and flatness rather than three-dimensional perspective.

Eero Saarinen, *Gateway Arch*, 1965
St. Louis, Missouri

Late nineteenth century artists were becoming concerned with the formal aspects of art. The idea that art could be appreciated for itself rather than only for the subject matter that it conveyed was new and revolutionary for the times. This concept that the work of art had meaning within itself was certainly in harmony with Eiffel's willingness to allow the support structure to be an object of beauty itself. Each of these movements developed independently, but Eiffel's architecture reflects ideas of beauty being explored throughout Europe in the late nineteenth century.

The desire to express an idea through a symbolic structure or sign has been common to all peoples and cultures. Just as the Eiffel Tower represents France at the time of the Industrial Revolution, other buildings and structures have been constructed throughout history that stand as representations of a particular place. The Sphinx and Pyramids (AE 193) stand as symbols of Ancient Egypt, built by a Pharaoh to remind the world of the immortal and lasting qualities of Egypt's God-King. The Statue of Liberty was erected in New York Harbor to symbolize the American ideal of freedom for all. In mid-twentieth century American society, the city of St. Louis built a colossal arch on the banks of the Mississippi River to serve as a symbol for the city and its people. All of these monuments were built by societies to reflect the collective beliefs of their people at that time.

Compare Gateway Arch in St. Louis, built by Eero Saarinen in 1965 with the Eiffel Tower. How are the two monuments alike? They are both symbols for the cities in which they are located. The Arch represents a gateway into the west; the Eiffel Tower represents the French celebration of its first one hundred years of the revolution. Both monuments soar high above the ground to be seen for miles as a symbol for their respective cities. Their clean lines and graceful proportions make them both aesthetically pleasing from a distance, as well as from close up. How do the structures differ? The Eiffel Tower is linear, open and pyramidal; the Arch is flowing and curvilinear. Discuss the appropriateness of each design for its purpose. What makes these two structures works of art?

STUDIO ACTIVITIES

Encourage students to think about symbols as ideas which are communicated visually. Discuss symbols which are easily recognized by all students. Universal symbols for food, travel, hospitals, or traffic crossings may be good examples to begin with. Discuss signs which could represent twentieth century society.

As a class project have students think of symbols which could be representative of themselves or of their community. Students can work individually or in groups to practice expressing ideas in symbols. A beginning brainstorming session with a pencil and scratch paper allows students to become comfortable drawing quick sketches of ideas for symbols. Participation through brainstorming allows all students to become involved in the creative process. Students can select their best design to be refined for a more in-depth project. Discussions of composition and design elements can help strengthen good ideas into strong visual statements.

Mary Ellen Maxwell & Rebecca S. Johnson
Carnegie Arts Center, Leavenworth, Kansas

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Foster Elementary

PTA – Art Masterpiece – 3rd Grade

February Project

"Starry Night"

by Vincent VanGogh

QUESTIONS:

1. What is this a picture of? (any answer)
2. What medium do you think is used? (oil)
3. Which elements of art are used? (color, line, texture, pattern)
4. Can you see the wind? (no, you get an impression of the wind though the swirls)
5. How does looking at this picture make you feel? (accept any answer)
6. Do you like it, why or why not? (accept any reasonable answers)

HISTORY:

The artist, Vincent Van Gogh, was a Dutch impressionist painter born in Holland in 1853. He lead a very sad and lonely life. During his life, he sold only one of his paintings. After his death, his entire body of artwork became sought after and influenced all other artists who came after him. Starry Night is one of the most well known images in modern culture as well as being one of the most replicated and sought after prints. From Don McLean's song "Starry, Starry Night" (based on the Van Gogh painting), to the endless number of merchandise products sporting the image, it is nearly impossible to shy away from this amazing painting. Van Gogh painted "Starry Night" while in the Asylum at Saint Remy in 1889, just one year before his death.

ART:

Materials:

- white paper cut to 6" x 9" size
- black paper cut to 6" x 9" size
- scissors
- glue
- sticks for making swirls
- shaving cream
- liquid water colors
- aluminum foil
- paper towels
- yellow markers

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PTA – Art Masterpiece – 3rd Grade

Procedure:

1. Place a piece of aluminum foil in front of each student; approx. 10" x 12" & 1 - 2 pieces of paper towels.
2. Squirt 1-2 TBS of shaving cream onto the center of the foil.
3. Have students smooth out shaving cream with stick or fingers to form thin rectangle of cream about 6"x9". Clean stick/fingers with paper towel.
4. Then go to each student and drop 3-4 drops of liquid water color/food color on the smoothed out shaving cream. Use 2 or 3 different colors; ex blue, green & purple are good sky colors.(1 drop of each color is plenty)
5. Next, students use their stick to make swirls in the shaving cream, don't overwork or colors will all blend and become muddy. Wipe off stick with paper towels.
6. Lay white paper on top of swirl design. Press slightly and gently peep up paper.
7. Use the side of your stick to scrape off excess shaving cream from your paper. Throw away stick, paper towels and foil.
8. Now, have the students create a black silhouette of a landscape out of the black paper. Glue landscape across bottom and if time allows; add yellow dots with markers for stars.

Foster Elementary
PTA - Art Masterpiece - 3rd Grade

Vincent van Gogh

La Mousmé

Vincent van Gogh (1853-1890)
Oil on Canvas, 1888 Size of original: 28 7/8 X 23 3/4"
National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.
AE184

Ah! portraiture, portraiture with the thoughts, the soul of the model in it, that is what I think must come.

Vincent van Gogh, 1888

INTRODUCTION

When art historians and critics write about works of art, they examine all of the circumstances surrounding the creation of a work of art—the artist him or herself; the artist's other work; work by other artists, both contemporaries and those of the past; as well as the cultural, social, and political nature of the time in which the work was created. Each of these elements is vital to the interpretation of a work of art, and it is important that each be given consideration.

LA MOUSMÉ is a portrait by Vincent van Gogh, a *Post-Impressionist* whose work was both an extension of and a reaction against the art of the *Impressionists*. In order to understand and to interpret this work, it is important to know something of the artistic climate of the time in which it was painted. It is necessary to know of the color of Gauguin, and of the art of the *Impressionists*, of the Japanese prints that van Gogh collected and admired and of the nature of the artist himself. With van Gogh it is impossible to separate his personal anguish from his art. It appears in his depictions of the landscape, in works such as *Starry Night*, and shows itself in every stroke of his brush. In the art of van Gogh, the daubs of color of the *Impressionists* and the dots of color of Seurat (see *La Grande Jatte*) which were blended together by the eye rather than mixed together on the pallette, became "*patches of thickly laid-on color, spots of canvas left uncovered, here and there portions that are left absolutely unfinished, repetitions, savageries.*" In fact, he prided himself on the fact that there was no system to his brushstrokes at all.

HISTORY

Vincent van Gogh was an artist who painted his own portrait time and again. It was through his portraits that he was able to reveal "the soul of the model," whether it was that of van Gogh, himself, or of LA MOUSMÉ In his work, van Gogh demonstrated his admiration for the color of Delacroix, a delight in orchestral music, and a love for the Japanese print. Van Gogh not only included images of Japanese woodblock prints in his works such as the portrait of *Pére Tanguy*, but he also made his own versions of the work of such Japanese artists as Hiroshige (see *A Sudden Shower at Ohashi).* Although he was one of the artists who would be most important to "the revolution in painting," van Gogh described it in this way to his sister, Wilhelmina:

You will be able to get an idea of the revolution in painting when you think, for instance, of the brightly colored Japanese prints that one sees everywhere, landscapes and figures. Theo and I have hundreds of Japanese prints in our possession.

LA MOUSMÉ, with her dark hair pulled back with its bright hair ornament, and her variously patterned dress set against a plain light background is reminiscent of the figures of women in the Japanese prints that van Gogh collected and admired such as Utamaro's *Courtesan.*

CRITICAL ANALYSIS

As it was with Gauguin, the color in van Gogh's work is of prime importance. In the painting, LA MOUSMÉ, van Gogh has painted a young girl of Arles dressed in bright clothing and holding in her hand a sprig of flowers. Are we to see this as simply a portrait or was van Gogh telling the viewer something about "the soul of the model?" Look at some of the Japanese woodblock prints of women by artists such as Utamaro. The head of the woman is generally smoothly oval in shape, the hair black, pulled back from the face and typically ornamented with a bright comb or other decoration, and the eyebrows are exaggeratedly dark. How close to this description is the image of LA MOUSMÉ? Have students compare van Gogh's LA MOUSMÉ and one of Utamaro's woodblock prints. Look at the

Click HERE to goto video link of work by Van Gogh to show to class!

Foster Elementary

PTA – Art Masterpiece – 3rd Grade

March Project

"Retrato de Ignacio Sanchez" by Diego Rivera - Poster Print

"A Girl With A Watering Can" by Pierre Auguste Renoir

QUESTIONS:

Note - First use the poster print and then put it aside and show the other picture, AE101. You will use the same questions below for both pictures.

1. What is this a painting of? (little person, boy/girl)
2. What do you call a painting with only one person in it? Does anyone know? (portrait)
3. Where has the artist used line in this picture? (divides the background, both horizontal and vertical line - the pants/skirt has vertical lines, horizontal lines in the hat and with folded arms)
4. Which country do you think this little boy/girl comes from? Can you tell? Look at his/her clothes -overalls, hat. (Mexico)/(France)
5. Is he rich or poor? (poor, no shoes)/ (rich, very nice clothes)
6. Does he/she look happy or sad? (no expression)/ (happy and careless)

COMPARE/CONTRAST:

1. What is the same in each picture? (portraits)
2. What is different? (lines in one picture are straight and in the other they are curvy, boy vs girl but both pictures of children)
3. Do the children come from the same country? (no)
4. Is one rich and one poor? (yes)
5. What's different about the background? (plain, stark versus floral, busy)
6. Compare the clothes? (simple, fancy)

SUMMARY:

These pictures were painted in two different countries. Rivera was from Mexico. He painted this picture to represent what all Mexican children looked like to him - strong but poor. Renoir was French and very famous. He loved life, people and his work shows happiness, charm and grace! He did this with the use of color.

Foster Elementary

PTA – Art Masterpiece – 3rd Grade

ART:

Materials:

white paper, pencil, colored pencils, mirrors

Procedure:

1. Discuss face shapes and write them on the board
2. Discuss facial proportions. Use the technique demonstration sheet to walk students through the basics of drawing a face. The Drawing Technique paper is provided with the art supplies in the cabinet.
3. Discuss color of hair, eyes and skin.
4. Pass out mirrors and let the children first sketch themselves as they see themselves; then, allow them to add color.
5. Discuss backgrounds. Allow children to create a background that best represents them.

Foster Elementary

PTA - Art Masterpiece - 3rd Grade

Pierre Auguste Renoir

A Girl With A Watering Can

Pierre Auguste Renoir (1841 - 1919)
Oil on canvas, 1876 Size of original: 39 1/2 X 28 3/4"
National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.
AE101

Fulfillment, for Renoir, involves frisking the foliage, dappling the flesh with sun and shade, plunging into rapport with every living thing.

William Feaver

INTRODUCTION

In 1873, Armand Silvestre wrote of the new group of painters, called the *Impressionists*:
What could help to ensure the eventual success of these young painters is the fact that their pictures are done in a singularly bright tonal range. A blond light pervades them, and everything is gaiety, clarity, spring festivals, golden evenings, or apple trees in blossom—once again an inspiration from Japan. Their canvases, uncluttered, medium in size, are open in the surface they decorate; they are windows opening on the joyous countryside, on rivers full of pleasure boats stretching into the distance, on a sky which shines with light mists, on the outdoor life, panoramic and charming.

Over one hundred years after it was written, we know that the argument used by Silvestre for appreciation of the work of the *Impressionists* is what still charms us today. Pierre Auguste Renoir's A GIRL WITH A WATERING CAN is probably one of the most famous little girls in the history of art. In her velvet and lace finery and her high button shoes, she is certainly a child of her time, but like the majority of the works of Renoir, she represents an ideal—a picture of what the perfect young girl should be. Like the girl in the poem, she is made of "sugar and spice and all things nice." One could not imagine this child doing anything naughty and it is perfectly reasonable to send her out in the garden to play in such elegant dress because she would never get dirty or even splash water on her velvet gown. The setting, too, is idyllic, and with the sunshine shimmering on the landscape and the child's hair, like flecks of gold, the entire painting appears to be a scene from a brilliant sunny wonderland. Renoir once declared, "*What I love is skin; a young girl's skin that is pink, and shows that she has good circulation. But above all else, I love serenity.*" This painting is pure Renoir.

HISTORY

Art has been many different things at different times, and its functions and purposes relate to the era in which it was done. One of the functions of art is to allow the viewer to understand the world with all its ills and foibles; another is to offer the viewer an ecstatic glimpse "of a universe into which we can move without strain." According to the critic, Robert Hughes, "*It is not the world as it is, but as our starved senses desire it to be: neither hostile nor indifferent, but full of meaning — [a] terrestrial paradise...*" Hughes calls this "the landscape of pleasure." The *Impressionists* were innovators, offering the world of pleasure, not merely to the aristocracy as had been the case in eighteenth century art, but to the people. The art of the *Impressionists* gave the viewer the feeling that these pleasures could be found in the familiar, in the everyday world—in the city and the country, in the cafe, the salons and theatres, on the boulevards and at the seaside. It had then, as it does today, a charm and an enchantment of the hidden worlds of dreams, "a world of ripeness and bloom, projecting an untroubled sense of wholeness." But, as viewers of these idyllic visions, we are torn; we are both charmed and left with a feeling that here are worlds that no longer exist and have little to do with our own time. Perhaps even this is a part of their charm.

The *Impressionists* were able to create their sunlit worlds by taking painting out of the studio and working outdoors, as the French say *en pleine aire*. Their concern was not only with capturing on canvas the effects of light and air (see Monet's *Gare Saint-Lazare*) but with painting the optical sensations of light and color. Monet once told a young artist, *"When you go out to paint, try to forget what objects you have before you—a tree, a house, a field, or whatever. Merely think, here is a little square of blue, here an oblong of pink, here a streak of yellow, and paint it just as it looks to you, the exact colour and shape, until it gives you your own naive impression of the scene before you."* Renoir was later to return to a more classical form; however, as one of the artists to exhibit in the first *Impressionist* exhibition, his early paintings such as A GIRL WITH A WATERING CAN fully demonstrate these principles.

CRITICISM

Another of Renoir's early Impressionist paintings, *The Luncheon of the Boating Party*, has been described in this way: *Its diaphanous brushwork beautifully catches the trembling leaves and shimmering water and quivering vibrations of air inundated with blazing summer light filtered through canvas awnings on to clean white linen and cut glass and soft human flesh.*

Certainly we can see the same "quivering vibrations of air inundated with blazing summer light" in A GIRL WITH A WATERING CAN. Students could write a short paragraph using the critical statement above as a model to describe the effects of the light and color in the painting.

CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Look at Renoir's A GIRL WITH A WATERING CAN. Who is she? Many of Renoir's paintings of women and children are portraits of friends or of his own children. But of this little girl we know only that she is the image of the ideal child—perhaps of childhood itself, childhood as it should be with all its gaiety and joy and sunshine. And Renoir has placed all of his considerable talent for color and form at the service of his subject. In spite of the fact that the treatment of the paint with the daubs of color seems to flatten the surface, we still experience the child as a solid form, as she occupies the very center of the canvas in her velvet and lace finery. Why do you think that she, above all, appears to have a solidity not found in the rest of the painting? This could probably be attributed to the fact that Renoir was more interested in painting figures than in almost any other object, and it is his figures that have always appeared the most exciting—men and women dancing, portraits of women and children, bathing figures. In these paintings, Renoir could utilize his knowledge of the figure, learned from such classical masters of figure painting as Boucher and Courbet, and exercise his desire to set forth on canvas the pleasures of landscape and dappled sunlight and the glow of a young girl's skin. But, when we carefully examine the painting, is the figure really as solid as she appears? Look first at the legs of the young girl. They are so close to the color of the background that they appear to be almost transparent; and yet they still stand sturdily in the black high-buttoned boots. One also has to look very closely at the painting to see the white socks and the lace-edged pantaloons that border her bare legs. We experience the expanse of green grass and the flowers that seem to crown the child's head as a flat area, almost as though she were standing in front of a painted backdrop, rather than in a real garden. Even the watering can she holds in her right hand could almost be made of paper. But Renoir has created the illusion of solidity first by the contrasts of dark against light, such as the deep blue of the child's gown and the dark little boots contrasted with the backgound colors and especially with the glow of her face.and her halo of golden

Renoir. *The Luncheon of the Boating Party*
The Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C.

hair. Renoir also used color itself to create the effect of three-dimensionality. For example, in A GIRL WITH A WATERING CAN, red is used for the same purpose as the red of stoplights and stop signs; it catches and stops our glance. Red is used so sparingly and subtly that we hardly notice it, but our eye goes from the red of the rose on the bush in front of which the young girl stands, to the healthy red of the child's lips and the echoing pink of her cheeks, and rests on the jaunty crimson bow in her golden locks, which are themselves flecked with red, and the muted red of the roses that seem to shower splashes of color about her head.

STUDIO ACTIVITIES

In the paintings of Renoir, the subject matter and the techniques for depicting the subject matter are so well suited to one another that it is not one or the other, but the combination of the two that create the total effect—the quivering vibrations of air, the gaiety and clarity, the blazing summer light—a vision of ideal childhood in a world of ripeness and bloom. Renoir has peopled his landscape of pleasure with pretty young women and, as in the case of A GIRL WITH A WATERING CAN, sweet children. And his technique is wonderfully suited to these depictions of joyous youth and summer pleasures. Imagine the same scene painted by Gauguin, with his harsh colors and hard edges). Would the effect be the same? Would we experience the same sense of innocent charm as we do in looking at the Renoir? Imagine Renoir's soft colors and luminous treatment used to depict a strong male figure, such as a lawyer or a policeman—Renoir's men are generally pictured dancing or picnicking or as part of his joyously magical wonderland. Look at some of Renoir's other works, such as the *The Luncheon of the Boating Party* or *The Swing*. What other subjects would be suited to Renoir's methods? Students could paint a scene with one or more figures in a setting, such as at a picnic or a beach, using the techniques of Renoir and the *Impressionists*. What would the people be doing? Would they be relatively still or engaged in an activity such as volleyball or tennis? Would some scene from our everyday life with people in blue jeans and tee shirts be suitable, or would they first have to be dressed in velvet and lace? How might we show an ideal of childhood today? What kind of technique would be most suitable for a painting of even the ideal child of today? All these things should be considered before starting to work. These are the kinds of ideas that artists think about before putting brush to canvas, and it is through working with the ideas and methods of artists that we can better understand artists and their work.

Marjorie Wilson, Ed. D.
Penn State University

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Diego Rivera

Delfina Flores

Diego Rivera (1886-1957)
Oil on canvas, 1927 Size of original: 32 1/4 X 26"
Marion Koogler McNay Art Institute, San Antonio, Texas
AE165

[Diego] created symbols for a new age which had to be linked with symbols already accepted; whose long life and familiar presence would endow them with overtones of feeling, provided they could be seen afresh.

Bertram D. Wolfe

INTRODUCTION

In this painting the legend written in Spanish below the figure of the child, *Retrato de la niña Delfina Flores: lo pintó Diego Rivera,* reads when translated: Portrait of the child, Delfina Flores: Diego Rivera painted it. This kind of an inscription (generally written on a ribbon) which was derived from Mexican colonial painting, was often used in paintings by both Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo, an artist whom he married in 1929. The inscription would seem to indicate that this painting is nothing more complex than a simple portrait of a young girl, but is it? The child has more of the impassivity of stone than of flesh and blood. There is, indeed, something reminiscent of stone pre-Columbian figures about her, so much so that we are forced to wonder about "*the child, Delfina Flores.*" Ever since the Greeks carved their heroic sculptures, based on the conception of the 'perfect mind in the perfect body,' artists, for various reasons, have sculpted and painted the representatives of a particular race or culture as an 'ideal,' or alternatively, as a 'stereotype.' Whatever the particular artist's primary reason for representing an ideal, as viewers, that conception has ultimately become our own. When Degas, for example, sculpts a young girl, standing regally, feet turned out in her ballet pose, her taut bronze body adorned in an actual pink tulle 'tutu', her long bronze ponytail tied with a pink satin bow, we see every ballet 'brat.' In spite of the fact that photographs tell us differently, when Gauguin paints a brown, handsomely solid native woman, with an uncharacteristically masculine body, we imagine that this is the type that Gauguin found in Tahiti. When Diego Rivera paints a sturdily solid brown, barefooted Mexican, perhaps he wants us to imagine that this is what all Mexicans look like—the *peón,* strong and invincible, poor but proud. Degas and Gauguin were creating worlds of their own, peopled with characters of their own making. Rivera's motives, on the other hand, were surely political. Unlike the other two instances, he would not have been promoting himself or his ideas as an artist so much as he would have been promoting an idea of Mexico and of the Mexicans after the Mexican Revolution of 1910.

HISTORY

According to art historian Jacinto Quirarte, "*The purpose and function of the new art [after 1910] was to educate the Mexican people and to create a Mexican national identity. The motifs and themes used by the artists in their murals, drawings and prints revolved mainly around the history of Mexico, although other areas of Mexican life were eventually included in these works.*" The themes and formal sources of this "*distinctive Mexican style*" were "*Indian arts and crafts, pre-Columbian art, and the work of earlier 'authentic' Mexican talents.*" It is interesting that the Mexican School artists, as they were to become known, chose the mural—painted on the walls of public buildings—as the medium by which to demonstrate the national identity. Later the creation of the *Sindicato de Obreros Técnicos, Pintores y Escultores* (Syndicate of Technical Workers, Painters, and Sculptors) was to call for artists to "*identify with the Mexican people and their struggle against imperialism and the class structure [in a] revolutionary art that would reflect the social conditions, the native land...of the Mexican people, and the AmerIndian heritage....*" Three of the most famous of the Mexican muralists were José Clemente Orozco (see *The Prophecy*), David Alfaro Siqueiros (see *Zapata*) and Diego Rivera. These artists were able to pursue their work primarily because the murals and most of the exhibitions of Mexican [easel] art were either commissioned by the Mexican government or were under its patronage. In Mexico, Rivera was the favored muralist, and when the government's sponsorship of mural programs was withdrawn so that artists such as Orozco were forced to find work in the United States, Rivera was still supported in the execution of murals at the Ministry of Education, the National Palace, and the National Agricultural School at Chapingo.

CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Diego Rivera painted DELFINA FLORES in 1927, when he was still very much involved with mural painting and the revolutionary principles with which the muralists identified. His art would glorify the heroes of the Revolution, such as Emiliano Zapata (as would the art of Orozco and Siqueiros), illustrate the Mexican people's struggle against imperialism, the history of Mexico, and "*the trials of the white-clad peón, symbol of the Mexican peasantry.*" Of the 124 murals in the Education Building, Wolfe writes, "*Future historians, discovering the ruins of this single building—the frescoes are painted to endure as long as the walls themselves—would be able, from them alone to reconstruct a rich and varied picture of the Mexican land, its people, their labors, festivals, ways of living, struggles, aspirations, dreams.*" In this context, it would be strange, indeed, if Diego Rivera were to set aside his revolutionary concerns simply to paint the portrait of a sweet little girl. We need to ask these questions about DELFINA FLORES. Who was she? Although she may have been the daughter of Rivera's long-time assistant and chauffeur, Andrés Sánchez Flores, two of the heroes of the Mexican Revolution were the Flores Magóns brothers, Enrique and Filipe. Could DELFINA FLORES have been related to these revolutionaries in some way? Or could the name, itself, be a symbol of those icons? Flores also means flowers in Spanish. Could this be a clue to Rivera's symbolism? The child and her surroundings are certainly symbolic, but symbolic of what? As his biographer Wolfe writes, "*[Diego created] symbols for a new age which had to be linked with symbols already accepted...*" In spite of the designation, in the inscription, of this painting as a portrait and the name of the child, has Rivera painted a particular child? Or might she be any child? Perhaps the already accepted symbol with which Rivera has linked a new symbol comes from pre-Columbian art or from Mexican colonial painting as does the idea of the inscription below the figure. Find some examples of these various art forms. Perhaps she is a symbol of the proud *peón*. Why might this interpretation be credible? DELFINA FLORES stands with both bare feet planted firmly on the ground. The figure appears to stretch between the top and the bottom of the canvas almost as though she were too large to fit within the confines of the painting. Why do you think that Rivera plants this sturdy figure so firmly between the sky above and the earth below? Perhaps Rivera is saying that she, as do all peasants, belongs to and grows from the earth. And how do we read the strangely abstract background? Diego Rivera was devoted to Mexico and to "'*the people,'...plants, the earth.*" In DELFINA FLORES, Rivera gives us a vision of 'the people' and, symbolically, of Mexico, but if the plants and the earth are also symbolic of Mexico, has he failed to show this Indian child's true connection to the earth? Look carefully at the background of DELFINA FLORES. If we are to believe the cues that Diego Rivera has given us, then she appears to be standing on a green carpet which has been placed on a red earthen tile floor, against a wall that has been painted a darker blue below and a lighter blue above. But look again. Could it not as easily represent a small patch of green, almost an island, in the parched Mexican earth, burnt red by the sun? And beyond, the vastness of the ocean and the sky? Whether or not DELFINA FLORES was modelled after an actual child or is simply a portrait is unimportant. We are able to see, in this painting of a young girl, what Diego Rivera wanted us to see—the flowering of a new Mexico, rising from its peasant roots and standing firmly and proudly in the midst of the sun-dried earth, not diminished but imposing, against the majestic panorama of the blue ocean and the sky.

Urn, Oaxaca. Museo Nacional de Antropologia, Mexico City.

STUDIO ACTIVITIES

The most important aspect of Diego Rivera's work, whether it is the murals with which he is most often identified or a simple portrait such as DELFINA FLORES, is the symbolism. When Wolfe writes that Diego created "*symbols for a new age which had to be linked with symbols already accepted; whose long life and familiar presence would endow them with overtones of feeling, provided they could be seen afresh,*" he is pointing to the very attribute that has been characteristic of the best artists of all time. Like so many artists before and after him, Diego Rivera was able to turn to the art of the past and, rather than merely emulating that art, he was able to create new symbols, symbols that were appropriate to his own time and the Revolution in Mexico, and to forge an art which was at once new and distinctive. Look at the way DELFINA FLORES becomes a modern Mexican symbol based on pre-Columbian sculpture—not only in the squareness of the figure and head, but the stance, the bare feet beneath the tunic—which has become for Rivera the skirt—the position of the hands, even the way in which the hair is arranged to resemble the headdresses of the pre-Columbian figures. Students might take a work of art of earlier times as a symbol, such as Rivera has done, and create a new work or symbol appropriate to our own times. An interesting problem might be to take a painting or sculpture of a single figure such as Rivera has. The students' task would be to create a work which would bring the figure into the late twentieth century, and, if necessary, America. Would the people look differently—their dress, their headwear, their facial expressions, their positions? How else might the students bring the work into our own time?

Marjorie Wilson, Ed.D.
Penn State University

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