

The Project Approach to Learning at

RisingOaks
Early Learning

Saint John Paul II



Project Name: Art Attack – Who Painted That?

Age Group: School age 2 (4-8yrs)

Project Start Date: November 2020

Project End Date: March 2021



RisingOaks
Early Learning

Growing minds through play

Background

The title of our project is Art Attack – Who Painted That? We wanted to research famous artists and their work. The ages of the children ranged from four to eight years old and there were 11 children in the group all together. We began our project in November of 2020 and wrapped it up in March 2021. The educators involved in this project were Erin Wilhelm RECE, BA and Jen Osborn, RECE.

Phase 1: Beginning the Project

The concept for this project came to the educators when they observed that the children in the class were very interested in every and any type of art project. As the children helped to plan activities for the month of October, the majority of the events that were suggested were art based. These seemed to be the type of activities that peaked the most interest from the children. This gave the educators the idea to introduce the children to some well-known artists and their different styles of art.

When first discussing the topic of art, the children were posed with various questions relating to the topic of interest. They were able to share their thoughts and ideas through a group discussion and collaboration. As we (the educators) began to plan and prepare for this project, we had hope that some of the artists and their techniques would have some type of impact on how art is viewed through the eyes of the children.

What Do We Know About Art?

- “Art is art and craziness.” ~Hunter (age 6)
- “Art is interesting.” ~Sebastian (age 6)
- “Art is creative.” ~Hadley (age 6)
- “Art is making stuff.” ~Milena (age 5)
- “Art is fun.” ~Tyler (age 4)
- “Art is pictures.” ~Troy (age 7)
- “Art is pictures, colouring and painting.” ~Matvey (age 8)
- “It’s about drawing.” ~Tommy (age 6)
- “It’s fun.” ~Mia (age 7)
- “Cutting.” ~Fred (age 5)

What Do We Know About Artists?

- “You can become famous.” ~Hunter (age 6)
- “They do art. They paint.” ~Matvey (age 8)
- “They paint really good.” ~Sebastian (age 6)
- “They can be different.” ~Piper (age 6)
- “They paint cool stuff.” ~Mia (age 7)
- “They do a lot of painting.” ~Tyler (age 4)

What Do We Want to Know About Art and Artists?

- How do artists create their work?
- What are some famous artist’s names?
- How long does it take to do their work?
- How do they paint really well?

Who Can We Ask?

- Look on the internet
- Library books
- Museums
- People (real artists)

Phase 2: Developing the Project

Over the weeks that we spent studying the various artists, the children participated in many art projects that reflected the work of that week’s particular artist being discussed. Information about each artist was found mostly on the internet in the form of videos, information websites and storybooks. Each child was provided a portfolio to keep their art pieces in. We researched many different artists for this project. Here are a few that stood out as favourites to many of the children.

Jackson Pollock – This artist was first discovered by the class when we had our virtual field trip. When the children initially saw his paintings, there were many “WOWs” heard throughout the group. They were very interested in how he created his work and were ready to try their own methods out.



Figure 1 & 2 - Tyler (4 years) and Sebastian(6 years), recreating a Jackson Pollock style piece with cars and paint



Figure 3 - Tommy 6 years, recreating a Jackson Pollock piece by marble painting

Two art projects were completed to recreate the splatter effect that Pollock is well known for. The first being marble painting and the second, painting with cars. In each project, the children chose what colours they wanted to use and how many marbles they wanted or what size of car they needed. Even though the method in creating the art pieces were the same for each child, every piece came out different and unique. When further researching this artist, we found many storybooks and videos explaining Jackson Pollock's life and work. The children were able to learn that it took weeks for Pollock to

complete one of his paintings, as they were very large pieces and that he used such thick layers of paint.

Pop Art (Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein) – The children were given the opportunity to create a couple of Pop Art pieces that resembled that of Warhol and Lichtenstein's style. The children were shown some examples of Warhol's style and were told that there were no "colour rules" when it came to this style of art. They were given brightly coloured pencil crayons and black and white photos of themselves and their creativity was endless. Even though it took some of the children by surprise that they did not have to colour their hair or eyes their actual colour, they quickly became excited to experiment with colour and turn their hair purple or their skin green. When experiencing Lichtenstein's style, the children were able to experiment using textures and layering methods. It was noted by the children, that even though these two artists created the same type of art, they did so very differently in a way that meant something to them.



Figure 4 - Hadley (6 years), working on her Andy Warhol art piece



Figure 5 - Fred (5 years), cutting out letters for his Pop Art

Kandinsky – This was a very interesting artist to research and we were able to find out that his style of painting was different than any other we had looked at. Kandinsky had the ability to hear his paintings through the different colours and shapes that he put onto the canvas. This is called Synesthesia, the ability to have 2 or more senses stimulated at the same time (ie. Seeing and hearing colours). An experiment was found online that the children were able to participate in, allowing them to have the same type of experience that Kandinsky had. They were able to hear what sounds he associated with each color and shape and were able to “listen” to one of his paintings. They seemed to have the most fun with this experience, as they requested it multiple days in a row.

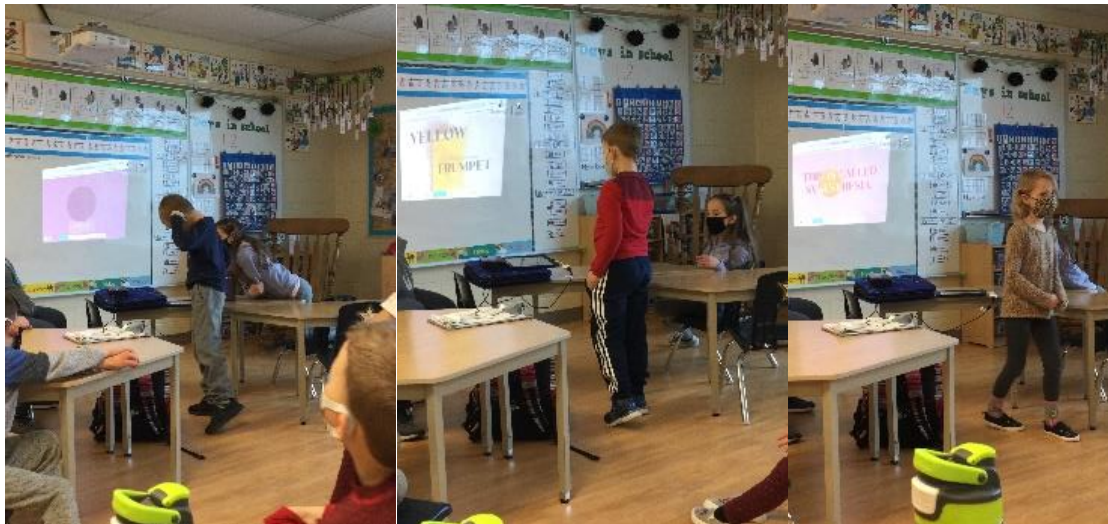


Figure 6, 7, 8 - Hunter guessing the sound of the purple circle, Sebastian discovering that Kandinsky thought yellow sounded like a trumpet. Hadley completing her turn with Kandinsky's sound experiment.

Field Study - On November 9th, it was International Visit an Art Museum Day. Famous art museums were researched and the educators looked for museums that had age-appropriate art and pieces that they thought might interest the children. The two museums that we chose were the Museum of Modern Art in New York City and The Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam.

Museum of Modern Art: Here the children saw some art that they really became interested in. Some of the favourite artists were Jackson Pollock, Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein, and Vincent Van Gogh. The educator (Erin) had been to this museum before, had some pictures of her favourite pieces by these same artists, and shared them during this time as well. As we looked at the pieces, the techniques and styles were explained to the children. For example, Pollock used a splatter technique to paint his canvases and Pop Art is seen in the art created by Lichtenstein and Warhol.

The Van Gogh Museum: Here the children learned about self-portraits, which was a style that Van Gogh is well known for. They were also introduced to Van Gogh's abstract work and as the children were shown a series of paintings, they would attempt to guess the name of the piece by what they saw. Their guesses varied which allowed them to see that not everyone sees the same thing when looking at an art piece and it can mean something different to everyone.



As part of our field study, we intended to connect with a local artist we had researched online and present our questions to her over a Zoom call. However, due to the children having to return to online school this event did not take place.

Vocabulary: During this project the children have built up their vocabulary surrounding the art world.

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|---------------------|------------------|
| 1. Pop Art | 6. Paint Palette |
| 2. Splattering | 7. Pointillism |
| 3. Self - Portraits | 8. Cubism |
| 4. Abstract Art | 9. Synesthesia |
| 5. Canvas | |

Phase 3: Concluding the Project

Unfortunately, due to the children having to return to online school, we were unable to complete the project the way we intended to. Our goal was to complete a group canvas using the various techniques that we had learned about and have it displayed somewhere within the centre.

Looking back on the last few months, we feel that the children have learned many things through this project. It became clear to the group that art can be interpreted in many different ways and can mean something different to everyone. They also discovered that anything could be considered art. Through our museum tours and internet research multiple styles and techniques were looked at and experimented with. The children were able to learn about various artists and their preferred methods of creating, as well as that, each artist spends different amounts of time on their art. They found that Jackson Pollock spent weeks completing one painting, but it took Michelangelo years to complete the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel.

Teacher Reflections

This project was very beneficial to the children in so many ways.

1. They were able to express their creativity in a way that made sense to them. They learned that there are very few rules to art and that everyone sees art in a different way. A painting can mean one thing to someone and make another person feel something else.
2. They were able to develop the ability to focus on a task and stick with it until it was completed. The children participated in projects that interested them and this allowed them to focus on the piece of art they were making and follow through on completing their creation.
3. It built upon existing fine motor skills. The children used all types of different tools when creating their works of art. This allowed them to build upon the dexterity of their hand movements and fingers while manipulating each tool.
4. Built self-confidence and self-esteem. The children always seemed very proud of their accomplishments and works of art when they were completed. They seemed happy to show what they had done to their peers and educators and chose what pieces they wanted to add to their art portfolios.

Educator Reflection:

As this project was introduced I, as an educator became excited as well, as I have a strong love for art. At the beginning of the project, my thoughts of my own artistic skills were not very high and even though I love other's work, I was not confident in my own. As the children learned that art means different things to everyone and that everyone's techniques are unique to their work, this resonated with me as well and was a lesson I carried away for future art projects. It was fun to introduce some of my favourite artists, art pieces and experiences with the children and see how they interpreted them. I feel the arts is an amazing way to build a person's confidence and self-esteem and to me it did just that for this group of children and could be seen as they proudly displayed their artwork to everyone in the room. It was so much fun to watch the children grow as artists and let their creativity soar. Erin Wilhelm RECE, BA

I was very excited for the children when we started this because art is so open ended it is something I have enjoyed my whole life. The artists we learned about throughout this project were of course talented with a paintbrush and any other tools used to create. My favourite thing that the children were show throughout is this: Each artist had troubles, people told them to quit or that their art would never be 'good' but they persisted anyways because it made them happy. The example that was set behind all those beautiful colours of paint I find very admirable. I was happy to be a part of this project not only to try different approaches to art but also to observe the children coming into their own creativity and enjoying it. Jen Osborn, RECE.