
Art Masterpiece: *Starry Night* by Vincent Van Gogh

Keywords: movement, line, color
Grade: 5th Grade
Month: January
Activity: Watercolor resist landscape



Meet the Artist:

- Born in 1853 in The Netherlands.
 - Wanted to be a preacher, then he taught as a schoolteacher in England, then became an art dealer.
 - After that period of time, he moved to France and painted or drew 2000 works of art in the next 10 years of his life.
 - His life is very celebrated and has many myths involved in it.
 - His closest friend and relative was his brother Theo, who also supported him financially. He spent his life in poverty, choosing to spend money on paints rather than food to eat.
 - While he was strongly influenced by the impressionists of the day, he became much bolder in his paintings. He was a pioneer for expressionism. Expressionists profoundly show their emotions through their paintings.
 - Van Gogh never felt that his art was appreciated, which pained him very much. It wasn't entirely true; many of his fellow painters saw him as a genius. He was a prolific painter and in the end, painted a painting a day. However, he only sold 1 painting in his lifetime.
 - After Van Gogh's death, it was his brother Theo's wife that made sure that Vincent Van Gogh got the attention he deserved in his lifetime. His paintings are some of the most expensive in the world to buy.
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Possible Questions:

- What are the colors that you see? Are they mostly cool colors or warm? Explain the difference between the two.
- What do the swirling lines remind you of? What do they represent? How does this motion make you feel?
- What is the dark image in the middle of the painting?
- What time of day is it?
- Is Starry Night a good title?
- Would you want it in your room?
- How do you think Van Gogh felt when he painted it? What is he expressing?

Activity: Watercolor resist “Starry Night” landscape

Objectives:

- Students will show how to incorporate movement into their art through curved, rounded, and swirling lines
- Students will learn how color can create feeling

Supplies Needed:

- White construction paper
- Blue watercolor paint OR watered-down blue tempera paint
- Wide paint brushes or sponge brushes
- A cup or container for water
- Oil pastels or crayons
- Black construction paper
- Scissors
- Glue

**** Troubleshooting Thoughts ****

Foil may be used instead of paper plates and paper towels are available in the classroom dispensers if need be. It is easier to set up a table or desk at one place in the classroom for the watercolor wash. As the students finish their oil pastel night sky, have them come to the table to add the wash. Then return to their desks to glue on their trees and village.

Process:

1. Pass out one sheet of construction paper to each student and crayons/oil pastels. These can be shared between groups of students, if needed.

2. Have students draw a starry night, using orange, yellow, white, and other appropriate "star" colors. Have them use lots of swirls to show movement such as swirling clouds, or shooting stars, in the sky in their artwork. Remind students to leave the bottom of the paper empty so they can glue their village under the sky.
3. Once they have created their sky they can build their village by cutting out their houses with the black construction paper. Remind the students to keep their houses and buildings and trees small and at the bottom of the paper so there is lots of sky showing. Little lit windows can be added to houses and buildings with the oil pastels.
4. When they are done with the drawing and cutting, have them go to the paint table to add the watercolor wash.
5. Have the students return to their desks and glue their village on the bottom of their papers.
6. Make sure they sign their work.