

Art Masterpiece: 4th Grade, Lesson 6 (May)

Vincent Van Gogh (1853 – 1890)

Vase with Twelve Sunflowers (1889)

Oil on Canvas, 28" x 36 3/8" - Philadelphia Museum of Art

Art Style: Post-Impressionism

Art Terms: Still Life, Texture, Impasto

Activity: Still Life Painting (Fruit and Flowers)

Medium: Tempera Paints



Meet the Artist

- He was born in 1853 in The Netherlands.
- He wanted to be a preacher, but he was actually a schoolteacher in England, and then he became an art dealer.
- Largely self-taught, Van Gogh gained his footing as an artist by zealously copying prints and studying nineteenth-century drawing manuals and lesson books.
- He did not begin painting until his late twenties, completing many of his best-known works during the last two years of his life. In just over 10 years, he produced more than 2,100 works of art.
- 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.
- 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, produced a painting a day. However, he only sold 1 painting during his lifetime.
- He died in 1890 at the age of 37.
- After Van Gogh's death, it was his brother's wife who 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 purchase.

Art Style

Post-Impressionism

- Artist used vivid colors, thick application of paint, distinctive brush strokes, and real-life subject matter like still lifes and landscapes.

Art Terms

Still Life

- A drawing or painting of an arrangement of non-moving objects such as fruit, flowers, bottles, etc.

Texture

- Actual texture is texture which may be physically felt. Implied texture is texture that may be seen only, as in a painting. For instance, while the smooth texture of a statue or the uneven texture of a painter's brushstrokes are actual texture, the rough-appearance of a table in a still life painting is implied texture.

Impasto

- The application of paint applied so thick that it stands out in relief.

Questions about *Vase with Twelve Sunflowers*

- What do you see? (Sunflowers)
- How would you describe the colors used in this painting? Warm or cool colors? (Mostly warm colors)
Warm: Red, Yellow and Orange Cool: Blue, Green and Violet
- Examine the way Van Gogh layered the colors in his painting. Layering colors can create other colors and add dimension.
- How would this painting feel if you could sweep your hand over it? A thick paint application (**impasto**) creates an **actual bumpy texture** on the real painting and an **implied texture** on the print.
- How does this painting make you feel? Do you like it? Why or why not?

Activity

Still Life Painting (Fruit and Flowers) – Tempera Paints

Supplies

White drawing paper – 9" x 12"

*Tempera paint – red, yellow, blue, black, white, brown

(pour paint sparingly, you can always add more if needed)

Paint trays

Water cups or bowls

Paintbrushes

Silk flowers

Vase

Plastic fruit

Pencils

Paper towels (located by the sink)

*The students should only be given primary colors and neutrals so they can mix the secondary colors.

****Art Guide Notes****

The students will create a still life painting of flowers and fruits with visible brushstrokes and color layering. The art supply tub will contain silk flowers and plastic fruit that can be arranged to create a still life. Since the students will be sketching first you might want to have the paint trays filled and ready but keep them on the counter until the students have completed their sketch.

This lessons ties in with last month's color wheel lesson. Ask the students what colors they would mix to make:

Orange – Red and Yellow

Green – Yellow and Blue

Violet – Blue and Red

It might be helpful to write the color combinations on the board for the students to refer to while they are painting.

Directions

1. Have students write their name and room # on the back of the paper.
2. Have them lightly sketch the flowers and fruit with a pencil.
3. Students will need to mix primary colors to make secondary colors. (i.e. if they want violet then they will need to mix some blue and red together on their paint tray.)
4. Remind the students to try and create visible brushstrokes and texture like Van Gogh did in his painting.
5. The paint can be applied in layers with a little bit of drying time between layers. While one flower is drying paint another then come back and add more of the same color or another to help create dimension and distinct brushstrokes (texture).
6. When the students are done have them title their artwork. Write the title on a label sticker and place it on the back of their work.