

## Art Masterpiece-Frieze of Dancers, 1895 by Edgar Degas



**Pronounced:** Ed-Gar Day-Gah

**Keywords:** Movement, Rhythmic Flow, Impressionism

**Movement:** the arrangement of the parts of a design to create a sense of motion that cause the eye to move over the work.

**Rhythmic flow:** motion may be slow or swift, flowing or jerky, ascending or descending, or have other qualities. It is the pace of movement.

**Impressionism:** A theory or style of painting originating and developed in France during the 1870s, characterized by concentration on the immediate visual impression produced by a scene and by the use of unmixed primary colors and small strokes to simulate actual reflected light

**Grade:** 2nd

**Activity:** Foil sculptures-Figures in motion

### Meet The Artist: (5 min)

- ✦ Born in Paris France, 1834- 1917 (born before the automobile was invented.)
- ✦ He had an American mother and Italian/French father who was a banker. They sent Edgar to an expensive boarding school as a child. His father was not happy when Edgar wanted to be a painter instead of a lawyer. At one point, his father cut him off financially, but Edgar survived on his own trying to be an artist. Eventually his father, impressed with his son's determination, helped support him.

- ✧ At 18, Degas was sent to art school in Paris and became friends with other artists known as the Impressionists. Some of his friends were artists like Monet, Renoir, Manet and Cassatt.
- ✧ Degas was a deep believer in the traditional style of painting like the old masters- Da Vinci and Michelangelo had painted. He would spend his days studying their style and did not consider himself an Impressionist. However, he eventually incorporated both styles into his own work. He painted in the method of the old masters but also liked to use light and color much like the Impressionists did.
- ✧ Degas is most famous for capturing moments and movement in his work. He liked to paint his subjects as if they didn't know they we're being watched. He also loved to paint the human form changing shape. Painting ballerinas on stage and in class was a way that he could do both.
- ✧ About the time he was 50, Degas' eyesight started to fail. As he grew older, he did less painting and more pastel drawings and sculpture. He died at 83.

### Discussion: (10 min)

- ✧ What do you see in this picture?
- ✧ What are the students doing?
- ✧ How does your eye travel around this picture? What do you see first? (The light plays off the tutus of the ballerinas, directing our sight around the composition. -You may have the student come to the board and map this out with his/her hand.) This is how the artist uses Rhythm and Movement. Movement is the path that our eyes follow as we look at a work of art. If the artist has created a Rhythmic flow, then our eyes are easily led from one place to another.
- ✧ Do you think there is a Rhythmic flow in this painting? Does anyone see the picture differently?
- ✧ This is an Impressionistic painting. Impressionists painted in a style that showed a lot of brushstrokes, color and light. Can you find examples of this in the painting?
- ✧ What do you like about this painting? If you owned this painting, where would you hang it in your house?

### Project- Foil sculpture figures in motion

#### Supplies Needed:

Aluminum foil (1-12 x 12" squares, 1-6 x 12" rectangle per student)

9x12" black construction paper for mounting (1 per student)

Chalk-class set

Hair spray (chalk fixative)  
Hot glue gun and glue sticks  
Scissors-class set  
parent letter

**Advance Preparation:**

Pre cut foil. Each student should receive one 12 x 12" sheet of foil cut into 3-4X12" strips (these will form the body—you can cut foil on the paper cutter!)  
One 6 x 12" piece of foil (used for embellishment). Copy and cut the parent letter.

**Mini lesson: (5 min)**

Brainstorm a list of activities that include motion (throwing a ball, dancing, skipping, karate, skateboarding, swimming, etc.) As you go through the list, have the children stand and pantomime doing that action. Say, "Freeze" and have them hold that action and look at others around the room to get ideas for their action sculptures.

**Process: (30-40 min)**

Please refer to pictures.



1. Squish the 4 x 12" strips into long "wires." Try to keep them as long as possible—just compressing the width of the strip and not the length.



2. Take 2 of the wires, and fold one in half over the other. Twist below the horizontal wire. These pieces will form the legs. and the torso and head.



3. Bend the horizontal wire up and twist at the fold just above the "legs." You now should have the legs and the bottom of the torso. Place the 3<sup>rd</sup> wire horizontally on top of the sculpture just above the torso twist, and wrap it around the body bringing the arms back around to the front.



4. Twist the torso wire once just above the arms to form a neck. There should be just enough left of the torso to form a small circle for the head.



5. Pose the sculpture in an action pose. This does not have to be a dancer—it can be any action they choose. The only limitation is that it will need to have one side that can be glued down.



6. Use the remaining foil to embellish the figure. You may use the foil for something such as clothing or hair on the figure, or as a prop (such as a skateboard, ballet bar, etc.) that goes with your figure's action.

7. Glue the parent letter to the back of the black paper.
8. Place your sculpture on the front of the black paper. Use the chalk to decorate a background on your black paper. The chalk can be used to add lines that imply movement, or to complete a background that would be in the scene where your figure would be doing action.
9. When your background is complete, sign your masterpiece and have an adult hot glue the masterpiece to your background.
10. Use hairspray to spray the chalk areas to set the chalk. It will curl, but will flatten as it dries.