
Art Masterpiece: *Hands with Flowers*, 1958, by Pablo Picasso

Keywords: Color, Line, Collage

Grade(s): 1st and 2nd

Activity: Flower Collage with Paper



About the Artist:

- Pablo Picasso is probably the most famous artist of the 20th century. He was born in Malaga, Spain. People who knew him as a child said he could draw before he could speak. His father, an artist, was amazed at his son's enormous talent. He gave all his brushes and paints to Picasso when the boy was 13.
- As a teenager, Picasso broke away from traditional art. He moved to Paris, France and lived in a cold studio with little food. There, he produced over 200 paintings of beggars, workers, and children who were also poor and lonely. Over and over, he used the color blue to paint what he saw and felt about their sad lives. Later, these works were called Picasso's Blue Period.
- Next Picasso stated to paint the acrobats and clowns who performed at the circus. He used warmer, pink tones that became known as his Rose Period.
- When Picasso was 25, he painted *The Ladies of Avignon*, his first painting in the style called *Cubism*. In Cubist paintings, objects are twisted and spread out so you see them from all sides at once. Then Picasso started painting portraits that looked like jigsaw puzzles with jumbled pieces. But if you look at them carefully, you can see how they fit together to make a human face.

- Picasso's next surprise was to paste bits of paper, cloth, buttons, or string onto his paintings. He created an art form called *collage*, from the French word for paste.
- When his children were born, Picasso painted some of his most beautiful realistic portraits. He wanted to show the sense of wonder and playfulness of young children. He painted mothers very large, as little children would see them.
- He made a statue by sticking together his son's toy car and other objects. It was the first time anyone had made a sculpture this way.
- Even after he became famous, Picasso worked on his art every day. He was still working the day he died, at the age of 92. He once said, "Creation is the only thing that interests me."

About the Artwork:

- This Picasso print is a simple colorful portrait of flowers. It is called "Bouquet de Fleur," which means "bouquet of flowers" in French.
- The flowers seem like radiant suns. The green stems look like they are shooting up like fireworks.
- The hands are very typical of Picasso. They are curvy, chunky, and slightly jelly-like. The hands seem to be holding on tight to the bouquet. When we first see the hands, we think that they belong to the same person. If you look closely, though, we see that they are two right hands. If they are two right hands, then one hand is probably giving the bouquet, and the other hand is accepting the bouquet.
- This drawing was originally used as a poster for a peace conference organized by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute in 1958
- This colorful image is not just a picture of flowers, but also suggests a message of love, from one person to another.

Possible Questions:

1. What is this a painting of?
2. What colors do you see?
3. Why do you think the flowers are in color and the hands are black and white? (Picasso wanted you to notice the flowers first.)
4. What feelings do you think the painting inspires? Is it cheerful? Sad? Mad? Friendly?
5. What would you name this painting?

Activity: Flower Collage

Materials Needed:

- 12"X18" white construction paper, one per student
- 9"X12" white construction paper, one per student
- 9"X12" green construction paper; one piece can be shared between two or three students.
- Tissue paper scraps.
- Scissors, one per student
- Glue, one bottle or glue stick per student
- *Optional:* 12"X18" black construction paper, pre-cut into strips, to "frame" the finished artwork.

Troubleshooting ideas: Pre-cut the green construction paper length-wise into two or three long strips. This will save the students' time during their projects.

Process:

1. Pass out the 9"X12" white construction paper. Have the students fold the paper in half, length-wise. (They will now have their paper in a 6"X12" size.)
2. Have the students place their right hand on top of the paper, fingers slightly apart. Have the students trace their hand lightly with a pencil.
3. Pass out scissors. Have the students cut out their paper hands. Because the paper is folded in half, they will get two paper hands.
4. Have them set their paper hands to one side of their desk and pass out the large white construction paper, green construction paper, and tissue paper scraps.
5. Have the students arrange the paper in the portrait (vertical) orientation on their desk.
6. Explain that they will be making a paper collage of a bouquet of flowers.
7. Have the students cut the green construction paper into three long "stems."
8. Have the students arrange the stems on their paper. Then, with the tissue paper scraps, have them cut, crumple, tear, and arrange three "blooms." (They can use more than one color per bloom, but keep it to two colors per bloom.) Have them put their blooms at the top of their stems.

9. Now, have the students arrange their paper hands around the stems.
10. Take a quick look at the student's arrangements of hands and flowers.
Explain that you are going to pass out glue and that they should use just one "dot" of glue (if using white glue) to fasten their stems, hands, and blossoms to the paper.
11. Pass out glue as you walk around. Students may need some help.
12. Optional – pass out the black strips of construction paper and show the students how to glue them around the edges of their white construction paper.
13. Display and enjoy!

Examples:



Parent Note:

Pablo Picasso (1881 – 1973), was a Spanish painter who spent most of his adult life in France. As one of the greatest and most influential artists of the 20th century, he is known for his “Cubist” style of painting, as well as one of the pioneering artists of collage. *Hands With Flowers* was originally used as a poster for a peace conference organized by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute in 1958

In Art Masterpiece today, students created a flower collage using their own hands as a model.



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