Pierre-Auguste Renoir (1841 – 1919)

A Girl with a Watering Can (1876)

Oil on Canvas, 28 3/4” x 39 3/8” - National Gallery of Art, Washington DC

Pronounced: Pea-air Oh-goost Ren wah
Art Style: Impressionism
Art Terms: Portrait, Canvas
Activity: Colorful Portrait
Medium: Colored Pencils

Meet the Artist

- Renoir was born in Limoges, France in 1841.
- As a little boy, he played in the streets of Paris near the Royal Palace. Sometimes he would see the Queen of France in the courtyard of the Louvre. (The Louvre is a part of the palace that was turned into a museum. A young Renoir spent hours there studying great works of art. Today some of Renoir’s art hangs in the Louvre.)
- At thirteen, Renoir worked in a dish factory painting china patterns. He painted designs and patterns (repeated lines) on dishes for seven years until he became an art student.
- When Renoir started painting, people liked the old-fashioned style of art. They liked art that had a lot of details and was painted in dark colors. Renoir and his artist friends (like Claude Monet) liked to use brighter colors and a lot of paint. They would sometimes take their canvas (stretched fabric that artists paint on) outdoors so they could see the way sunlight made colors look different.
- Renoir’s favorite things to paint were portraits (paintings of people). A Girl with a Watering Can is a portrait of a pretty child in a fancy dress holding a watering can.
- At first, people didn’t like Renoir’s art. They thought it was too new and too sloppy looking. But Renoir did not give up and kept painting the way he wanted. Eventually, his art became very popular.
- Renoir was happy with his style of painting and was proud of his work. As he grew older he continued to paint, which became difficult because he also had painful arthritis.
- Renoir died when he was 78 years old.
Art Style

Impressionism
- Art that was painted as if someone would see it if they just caught a glimpse of it. The paintings were usually in bold colors and did not have a lot of detail. The paintings in this style were usually outdoor scenes.

Art Terms

Portrait
- A portrait is a picture of a person. Usually, the person will pose or hold still, while the painter is painting. The purpose is to display what the person looks like, their personality, and even the mood of the person.
- Artist are hired to paint portraits so this was a good way for Renoir to make money.

Canvas
- A prepared cloth surface used for painting.

Questions about A Girl with a Watering Can
- What is the little girl wearing? Is it fancy or play clothes?
- What is she holding?
- Why would she wear such fancy clothes in the garden?
- Have you ever dressed up for someone to take a picture of you?
- Would you like to hold still for a long time so someone could paint your portrait?
- What colors do you see?
- Are the colors light or dark?

Activity
Colorful Portrait – Colored Pencils

Supplies
White drawing paper – 9" x 12"
Colored Pencils
Books – supplied by students (for support to draw on outside)

**Art Guide Notes**
Let the classroom teacher know ahead of time that the students will need to bring a hard book for them to draw on outside.
Directions

1. Take the kids outside to draw in the sunlight like Renoir did.
2. Hand out the paper and colored pencils.
3. Have students write their name and room # on the back of the paper.
4. Ask the students to draw a colorful picture of someone they love or pose the teacher for a portrait.
5. Have the students think about what that person could be wearing? What would you add to the picture to make it more colorful?
6. When done, see if their artwork looks different indoors. Ask the students if their colors look lighter or darker.
7. 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.