Edvard Munch (1863 – 1944)

The Scream (1893)
Oil, Tempera and Pastel on Cardboard, 28.9” x 36” - National Gallery, Oslo, Norway

Pronounced: Ed-vahRd Moongk
Art Style: Expressionism
Art Terms: Color
Activity: Expressionist Self Portrait
Medium: Watercolor Resist

Meet the Artist
- He was born in Norway and was often ill as a child. He had to deal with a lot of illness and grief in his family.
- He is considered one of his country’s greatest artists. He was a painter, lithographer, etcher and wood engraver.
- He played a vital role in the development of the Expressionist movement. His works were considered “objectionable” and provoked outrage during the late 1800’s, but he was a major influence on other artists and he later gained fame and respect of art critics.
- His art is reflective of his own unhappy life, as well as the basic fears and anxieties of mankind.
- Munch stated, “We want more than a mere photograph of nature. We do not want to paint pretty pictures to be hung on drawing room walls. We want to create, or at least lay the foundations of, an art that gives something to humanity. An art that arrests and engages. An art created of one’s innermost heart.”
- Munch died shortly after his 80th birthday. He willed over 20,000 works of art to the city of Oslo (capital of Norway) which built a museum in his honor.

About the Artwork
The Scream, also known as The Cry, is often described as the first Expressionistic painting, and is the most extreme example of Munch’s “soul paintings.” It is his most familiar painting. The scene, and in particular the foreground figure are grotesquely distorted and done in unrealistic colors. There are four versions of the painting.
Munch wrote a poem about his inspiration for the image: I was walking along a path with two friends – the sun was setting – suddenly the sky turned blood red – I paused, feeling exhausted, and leaned on the fence – there was blood and tongues of fire above the blue-black fjord and the city – my friends walked on, and I stood there trembling with anxiety – and I sensed an infinite scream passing through nature.

**Art Style**

**Expressionism**
- A style of art in which the artist tries to express certain feelings about something. The artist is more concerned about having their painting express a feeling than in making the painting look exactly like what they are painting.

**Art Terms**

**Color**
- The hue, value and intensity of an object. The primary colors are red, blue and yellow: every color except white can be created from various blending of these three colors. Color can be used to show emotion.

**Questions about The Scream**
- Do you recognize this painting?
- What do you think of this painting? How would you describe it?
- What do you think the artist is trying to convey? (an emotion)
- How did Munch use color to set the mood? (Discuss how the colors are based on emotion)
- Do you like it? Why or why not?
- Refer to the background information to pose more questions and encourage discussion of the painting.
- What colors represent what feelings to you? Happy, Sad, Fear, Excitement, Pain, etc.
- Do you like the title? Would you give it another name?

**Activity**

Expressionist Self Portrait - Watercolor Resist
Supplies
Watercolor paper – 9” x 12”
Watercolors
Crayons
Large paintbrushes or foam brushes
Bowls or cups for water
Paper towels (located by sink)

Directions
1. Have students write their name and room # on the back of the paper.
2. Ask for suggestions of different kinds of emotions and write them on the board (happy, sad, surprised, mad, etc.)
3. The students will pick an emotion and draw a self-portrait with crayons in a very exaggerated manner – they want to “express the feeling” as in the expressionist style, rather than make their face look real. Make sure they press rather hard with the crayons. The colors they use are not to be realistic, but instead reflective of their emotion.
4. They will “wash” over the entire picture with watered down watercolor – have them choose only one color that will complement the colors of their crayons. If they used dark crayons, use a light watercolor, etc. so that their portrait will stand out.
5. 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.