

Art Masterpiece: *Goldfish, 1935* by Paul Klee

Pronounced: Paul Clay

Keywords: Positive and Negative Space

Patterns

Grade: 2nd

Month: January

Activity: Crayon Resist



Meet The Artist:

- Paul Klee (pronounced clay) was born in Switzerland in 1879. (About the same time as the invention of the automobile.)
- His parents were musicians. As a boy, he played the violin. He also loved art and his grandmother taught him how to draw and paint.
- When he grew a little older, he had to choose between becoming a musician or an artist. In the end he chose to be an artist.
- He married a concert pianist and while his wife worked out of the house, Paul became a "stay at home dad" and worked on his art.
- Klee's art is very colorful and fun. He really liked art that was done by children and sometimes he tried to make his art look like it was done by a child. Klee was considered a Modern artist, that means he went against tradition-he wasn't afraid to paint blue cows or purple trees.
- Paul liked to paint a lot and sometimes more than one painting at a time. He could have up to 12 paintings in his studio, all halfway done. Klee has painted over 8,000 paintings in his lifetime.
- At the height of his career, Paul became a very respected artist and went on to teach art in German Universities.
- In 1933, the German government said his art was "below standards" and locked most of it away in museum cellars. Luckily, many of them were found so we can enjoy them today.

Possible Questions

- What do you see in this picture?
- How do you think this painting was made? (Oil paint and watercolor).
- How many fish do you see?
- What shapes do you see? Are they organic shapes (natural) or geometric (squares, triangles, circles etc.)? Are any of the shapes repeated?
- What colors do you see the most? Would you describe them as bold/shy/weak or strong?

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- Where are the colors repeated? This repetition helps to keep the viewers eye moving around the painting.
- How does the artist use color to show what's important? How?
- Do you see where there is **NO** color, lines or pattern? This area is called Negative space. **Negative space is an art term that means empty space or a void.**
- Positive Space is the area filled with color, lines or designs.
- Do you see patterns in this painting? What are patterns? (repeated lines, shapes, colors or designs)-show me.

Activity: Crayon Resist

Materials Needed: White construction paper 8 X 10, brightly colored crayons or pastels. Watered down blue tempera paint (see below) and foam brushes.

Recipe for blue paint mixture:

Fill paint container with blue tempera paint up to "paint line", and then add water to "water line." Mix thoroughly with tongue depressor.

Process:

Display and discuss print. Briefly discuss the artist's life and times in which he lived.

- Have students draw their own version of "Goldfish" using only brightly colored crayons or pastels. Be sure to have them draw the main subject and items in the background like seaweed, bubbles, smaller fish etc. Ensure they are pressing hard enough.
- When their drawing is complete, have students lightly "wash" over their picture using the sponge brushes and blue paint.
- The crayon should resist the paint creating a bright contrast like the one Klee has in "Goldfish".
- Be sure to emphasize the keywords while the students work and reinforce the aspects of positive and negative space.
- Have students sign their masterpiece!

NOTE: if the kids are having trouble pressing hard enough with the small crayons, get out the large (fat) crayons. They don't break as easily under pressure.