
Masterpiece: *Flowering Arches, Giverny 1913* by Claude Monet

Pronounced: Klodd Moe-Nay

Keywords: Intro to
Impressionism

Grade: Kindergarten

Month: May

Activity: "Reflections in
Nature: Trees on
Water"

TIME: 1 - 1.25 hours



Overview of the Impressionism Art Movement:

Impressionism was a style of painting that became popular over 100 years ago mainly in France. Up

to this point in the art world, artists painted people and scenery in a realistic manner. A famous 1872 painting by Claude Monet named "*Impression: Sunrise*" was the inspiration for the name given to this new form of painting: "Impressionism" (See painting below) by an art critic. Originally the term was meant as an insult, but Monet embraced the name. The art institutes of the day thought that the paintings looked unfinished, or childlike.

Characteristics of Impressionist paintings include: visible brush strokes, open composition, light depicting the effects of the passage of time, ordinary subject matter, movement, and unusual visual angles. As a technique, impressionists used dabs of paint (often straight out of a paint tube) to recreate the impression they saw of the light and the effects the light had on color. Due to this, most Impressionistic artists painted in the "plein-air", French for open air.

Meet the Artist:

- He was born in 1840 in Paris, France. His parents wanted him to grow up and work in their grocery store. He only wanted to paint, eventually going to art school.
- He was fascinated with what different light would do to colors. He noticed that the brighter the light, the more vibrant the color. He started to paint outdoors so that he could really see the vibrancy of the colors. At the time, artists exclusively painted indoors, in their studios.
- He married twice (his first wife died) and had several children.

- It took him until he was 50 to sell enough paintings to buy his first home. Much of his life, he lived near poverty. This house he bought was in Giverny (Zhee-vare-ney). It was there that he painted "Les Arceaux Fleuris" (Lays-Arko Flurees) in 1913.
- He loved painting water, since light reflected off of it. He had a pond made and filled with water lilies in his back yard in Giverny.
- He started going blind in 1908 due to cataracts. After having medication, he was able to regain much of his sight. Some of his most memorable paintings were at the end of his life, his water lily paintings. They actually started to border on abstract art. He died in 1926.

Possible Questions:

- Is this painting realistic? Does it look real?
- Do you like this kind of art? Why or why not?
- Why do you think Monet liked to paint outside?
- Often, he painted the same thing over and over again. Why do you think he did that? (Different lighting, time of day, different seasons' colors)
- What does the painting look like close up? Far away?
- What time of day do you think it was painted?
- Have you seen this painting before? (It is in the Phoenix Art Museum)

Activity: "Reflections in Nature: Trees on Water"

Materials needed: 9"x12" heavy white paper; watercolor set; #10 or #12 paintbrushes for each student; green, red, white, purple, orange, yellow, and brown tempera paint; palette or small bowls for the tempera paints; paper plate for the palette or each tempera paint bowl; medium paintbrushes for each tempera paint color; water bowls for the watercolor sets; mats for desks; paper towels, art smocks.

Explain Activity: Students will create a simple reflection of seasonal trees reflecting on water using the fold over method. They may choose their season.

Process:

1. Cover desks with mats and students with their art smock.
2. Provide each student with a piece of heavy white paper, a watercolor set, and a large paintbrush. Have students label the back of their paper with their names.
3. In center of each workstation, place a couple of bowls of water.
4. Before you begin, have the students think about their tree and the season of their tree. Discuss some ideas: white blossoms for spring, red fruit or different leaf colors for fall, bare tree with snow for winter....
5. Have students follow along as you demonstrate each step: fold the construction paper in half along the 12" side (long side) and draw a line at the fold using a dark paint color from the watercolor set.

6. The bottom half of the paper will be the water so paint this with the blue watercolor using the large paintbrushes. Rinse the paintbrush when done. *Note: remind students to not saturate their paper with watercolor as we need this to dry fairly quickly.*
7. On the top half of paper (the sky), paint with a bright color using their large brush.
8. Take away the watercolor sets and the water bowls when students are done with this process.
9. When both halves are fairly dry (use paper towels to dab excess paint), stress to the students that they will need to work fast on the next step of their masterpiece.
10. Using the medium paintbrush, have students begin with the brown tempera to paint the tree trunks on the top half (sky portion) of paper. They need to use a good amount of paint for this.
11. Then continuing on the top half (sky portion), have students paint the tree leaves using the green paint. Depending on the season of their tree, they may dab in the green area using the yellow, red, white, or orange paints.
12. Before the paint dries, fold the paper in half so their tree make an image on the bottom half (blue water) portion.
13. Remind students not to mix the paint brushes...i.e. the brush in the green paint stays in the green paint for use by another student.
14. When art is dry, student may use the brown paint to outline the tree trunks on the top half only (sky portion).

