

Van Gogh - Sunflowers

Principle: Color and Balance

Concept: Creating a still life in the style of Vincent Van Gogh.

Objective: To become acquainted with Vincent Van Gogh
To learn to mix different shades and values of yellow and green and to compose a still life of sunflowers in the style of Van Gogh using the colors students have mixed themselves.

Vocabulary: **Balance**-A harmonious arrangement of the parts of a design.
Impressionist painting- visible brush strokes, ordinary subject matter, emphasis on light as it changes throughout the day
Expressionist painting – tendency of an artist to distort reality for an emotional effect
Impasto painting - technique used in painting where paint is laid on very thickly usually the brush strokes are visible
Still life – Art depicting inanimate subject matter, typically common place objects which are either natural (food, flowers, plants, rocks or shelves), or man-made (drinking glasses, books, coins, books and so on) in an artificial setting.

Supplies:

- ✓ Two 11x17-inch pieces of white drawing paper per student (one to practice mixing colors)
- ✓ Tempera paint in Blue, Red, Yellow, Green, Orange, White and Brown
- ✓ White palette or paper plates
- ✓ Paint brushes
- ✓ Paper towels
- ✓ Water bowls for rinsing brushes
- ✓ Plastic sunflowers in the bin marked Van Gogh Sunflowers
- ✓ Pots from the art room for the sunflower still life displays
- ✓ Fresh sunflower (optional, you will have to purchase)
- ✓ Roasted sunflower seeds (optional, parent teacher will need to provide)

Pre-Class Prep: Optional, purchasing fresh sunflowers for display

Set-up:

- Cover tables with old sheets or vinyl table cloths .
- Distribute practice paper and brushes for each student
- Pour small amounts of tempera paint (red, blue yellow, green, orange, white and brown) onto paint palettes leaving spaces between each color and set out.
- Set out water bowls for rinsing brushes and paper towels.

Prints: 155, 156, 156a

There are Van Gogh Calendar pictures in the yellow cabinet that you can use to either set up a "gallery" in the classroom ahead of the class and have the students walk around the "gallery" and stand next to the painting they like. Have the students discuss what it is they like or dislike about Van Gogh's paintings using descriptive words.

Samples: See First Grade Art Folder

Talk about the artist, Vincent Van Gogh, where he was from, about his life, even about his ear! Show the print of his sunflowers, discussing the bold strokes and colors he used. Sunflowers were his favorite flower! Point out the various shades of yellows and greens in his paintings.

Lesson:

Demonstration: Discuss how secondary colors are created from the primary colors red, blue, and yellow. Now demonstrate how to create different values of a color by showing them how when you mix a little green into yellow you get a yellowish green, now add a little white to that color to create a lighter shade. Now demonstrate how to create an orangey-yellow by adding a small amount of orange to yellow. Now add a little white to create a different shade. Explain that to mix colors you always want to start with the lighter color and add just a small amount of the darker color to create a new color. Have the students practice mixing colors on their practice sheet of paper. Encourage various greens and yellow because these are the colors in sunflowers.

Students: Have students paint their impression of the sunflowers. Children do not need to draw their sunflowers first; instead, have them paint lightly, sketching their vase and sunflowers with paint.

Step 1: Have the students draw the vase on their papers with paint. Explain that there needs to be space above their vase for the flowers.

Step 2: Have the students paint the vase any color they want.

Step 3: Observe sunflowers in a vase. Note the angle of the stems. Note leaf shape.

Step 4: Demonstrate painting stems and leaves. Note how the stems start from inside the vase and go up.

Step 5: Paint stems and leaves coming out of the vases on the paper.

Step 6: Observe the centers and petals of real sunflowers. Note color, shape, patterns, and that the petals all start from the center.

Step 7: Demonstrate how to make flowers on stems. Emphasize that it's all right to overlap on what was already painted. Make long yellow strokes starting from center and pushing out. Do this in every direction.

Step 8: Show students how to use the paintbrush to tap in brown or blue paint at the center of the flower. Remind them it is all right to paint on top of the yellow petals at the center.

Step 9: Encourage students to paint the background, maybe a table at the bottom and a solid color around their flowers.

After students have worked on placement, final colors should be painted using thick heavy "impasto" style paint. Have them title their art and write this on a label and stick to the back of the paper.

When students are finished cleaning up their work space have them write in their art journals. Have students practice drawing different kinds of flowers. Have students draw their favorite flower.

Instructions for Instructors

On the Artist:

- Vincent van Gogh became one of the world's most famous artists for his expressive style of painting. Born and raised in Holland, he spent most of his adult life in France. He was influenced by Impressionist artists, but developed his own style as a Post-Impressionist. His paintings use colors and thick brushstrokes to express moods and emotions. Van Gogh used bright colors applied with very visible brushstrokes in his paintings. He often created a pattern with the repetition of his brush marks and the quantity of paint. He often created an impasto (paint raised from the surface of the painting). The color plan for many of his paintings use complimentary colors (for example, red and green from the opposite sides of the color wheel). The use of complimentary colors often creates an intense visual vibration. Van Gogh stated he wanted to give the subjects of his portraits "something of the eternal which the halo used to symbolize". Van Gogh had a great love for people though he and his work were often rejected. He suffered from mental depression and possibly seizures.

Vincent Van Gogh filled his house with sunflower paintings to welcome his friend, fellow painter Paul Gauguin, when Gauguin was coming to stay with him, because yellow was such a bright, cheerful color.