

Phoenix Art Museum

Art Masterpiece

Training Guide

This guide supports discussions and demonstrations presented during the Art Masterpiece Training program offered annually for elementary-level classroom volunteers serving at the request of their individual schools and Parent-Teacher Organizations. Note that this program and guide is not comprehensive of all art forms, cultures or time periods, but reflects generally the collections of Phoenix Art Museum.

The Art Masterpiece Training Program is facilitated by the Phoenix Art Museum Docents, a Support Group of Phoenix Art Museum.

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How Do I Prepare for an Art Masterpiece Presentation?

Curriculum Goals

Each Art Masterpiece program is different, and will depend on the particular program established by the school. It is important, however, to understand the goals of the program overall, and how classroom teachers find it most useful to their curricula. Schools with Art Specialists (art teachers or art curriculum administrators) should involve these professionals in planning the Art Masterpiece program. The Art Masterpiece program emphasizes *looking* at art; whenever possible, lessons in art-making should be conducted with the input of school professionals in the field.

With the classroom teacher, understand:

- Length of presentation
- Subjects/topics students are currently studying and how the presentation could relate
- Whether a hands-on/brains-on project is appropriate. Discuss any ideas for activities.

With the school art specialist (when available), understand:

- Topics students are currently studying in art class and how the presentation could relate
- Whether an art-making project is appropriate. Discuss any ideas for activities
- Available materials

By working collaboratively with classroom teachers and art specialists, you can extend the benefits of talking about and looking at artworks beyond your presentation.

Know Your Audience

If you are a parent, you will already have a good idea of childhood developmental stages and what would constitute age-appropriate information. Keep in mind, however, that there is a diversity of opinion on what may be an appropriate art image. It is important to discuss possible images with classroom teachers to identify any areas of concern regarding images that reflect religious belief (of any culture) or that depict the human body. Don't assume there is or isn't an issue; just ask. Also, become familiar with the Arizona State Standards in the Visual Arts, available on-line at <http://www.azed.gov/standards-practices/art-standards/>. They will guide you in understanding what children should be learning in the visual arts at each grade level, and how you can support those learning objectives.

Grades K-3

Students learn to identify colors, shapes, lines and textures. They build vocabulary to describe what they see. They begin to understand sequencing (what comes next) and differentiation (compare/contrast). Young children do not have a refined sense of time other than past/present (dates of artworks will have little meaning/relevance). Their experience of the world is limited and very personal.

Grades 4-6

Students become more adept at evaluating, comparing and contrasting. They can distinguish points of view, personal preference vs. appreciation. They better comprehend historical time. They can express a point of view and defend it with logic, observation, or relevant knowledge.

Personal Experience

Looking at art in ways that provide a meaningful experience requires more than a brief glance. Spend at least 15 minutes observing the image you plan to share with the class. Set it up, look at it—really look at it – from far away and up close.

Ask yourself the following questions:

1. What draws your eye first? Where does your eye go from there?
2. Is there a certain mood projected in the artwork?
3. Where has the artist placed you, the viewer, in relation to the subject?
4. Do you see clues that suggest time and place?
5. Is there a sense of motion? What gives you that sense?
6. What indications, if any, are there of cultural and/or historical connections?
7. What questions do you have about the artwork?

Generating questions, posing hypotheses based on observations, finding answers, and arriving at an interpretation are skills that have broad application across the curriculum. Modeling curiosity and a thoughtful process of looking are vital to instilling an interest in experience of visual art that goes beyond personal preference.

What Do I Need To Know About Art?

Elements of Art

The Elements of Art are the building blocks of any artwork. They can be compared to words in a sentence – depending on how they are chosen and organized, the meaning or mood of the work changes. Identifying and discussing the elements in an art work are at the foundation of assessing an art work. It requires close observation.

Color

Color can be spoken of in terms of hue (blue, green, red, etc.) and tone (light or dark). Color can be used naturalistically, to replicate the actual appearance of color in an object/subject. Color can also be used expressively to evoke an emotional response or call to mind an experience. Colors help to identify time of day, setting, different objects/people, whether something is hot or cold. Contrasting colors and complementary colors attract attention to specific areas in an artwork; certain colors draw the eye more intensely to an area. Color may also carry symbolic meaning depending on culture. In this case, the artist and the viewer both need to “understand the color language”; for example, in works expressing Catholic religious belief, a woman dressed in blue is often understood to be Mary, the mother of Jesus. How an artist uses color to communicate ideas, feelings and information is an important aspect of understanding or “reading” any work of art.

Primary colors – red, yellow, and blue cannot be made by mixing other colors, but all other colors can be produced by mixing two or more of the primary colors.

Secondary colors – orange, green and violet are made by mixing two of the primary colors in equal parts (red and yellow make orange).

Complementary colors – a color having a maximum contrast with another color. The complement of a primary color is formed by mixing the other two primary colors. Red is the complement of green (yellow + blue); blue is the complement of orange (yellow + blue); yellow is the complement of violet (red + blue).

Warm colors – red, yellow and orange suggest warmth, excitement and energy.

Cool colors – blue, green and violet suggest coolness, calm and quiet.

Texture

The way something feels can be both *real* and/or *implied* (imaginary). Real textures are the ones you can feel with your hands: rough, smooth, hard, soft, bumpy. Sculptures, as well as many paintings have real textures that add to the understanding and meaning of a work of art. The *implied* textures are those we “sense” with our eyes: identifying and differentiating silk from velvet or wool, wood from bricks, water from mud, etc. Understanding implied texture in artworks depends on our ability to make a connection between a texture we see and one we remember experiencing. If a child has never seen and felt silk, they may not be adept at recognizing the implied texture of silk in a painting. Provide these experiences when appropriate. The skill of the artist to create the illusion of a texture helps us to interpret the importance or substance of an object.

Shape

Shape is the skeleton of a work of art. Shapes are often divided into two categories – geometric, i.e., circle, square, rectangle, triangle; and organic, which are shapes that come from nature, i.e., leaf, hand, mountain. Repeated shapes can form patterns; familiar shapes take on a whole other meaning. We fail to see the shape, and instead see the object we are familiar with. The shape provides the structure of the work. Shading of any of the shapes creates form, which leads to the suggestion of three-dimensionality of what is otherwise (in a painting) a flat surface.

Line

Line is like the verb of a sentence. It indicates action. Horizontal lines suggest calm; vertical lines indicate stability and growth; diagonal lines convey change or excitement. Diagonal lines also create the illusion of space within a painting (perspective). Implied lines, often called “sight” lines, help the viewer to move around an artwork and interpret any message or meaning. Artists also use lines to show perspective. Even though the picture is on a flat surface, converging sight lines give the illusion of depth or distance.

Subject Matter

Artworks are often divided into categories based on subject matter:

History painting: So-called “history paintings” or images depict culturally significant stories, often drawn from religious texts, mythologies, or events of broad cultural importance. They often serve to show the exemplary deeds and struggles of moral figures.

Portraits: Images of people, deities or mythological figures in human form. This painting type includes group portraits as well as individual compositions. A portrait may be face only, head and shoulders, or full body.

Genre: This category of imagery portrays ordinary scenes of everyday life in an un-idealized way; the characters are not given any heroic or dramatic attributes.

Landscape: A landscape is the depiction of a scenic view, such as fields, mountains, trees, rivers and seascapes. Many also include human figures, but their presence is a secondary element in the composition.

Still Life: This typically is comprised of an arrangement of objects laid out on a table, (i.e. flowers, fruit). Still lifes may contain ethical messages conveyed through the symbolism of the objects included in the image.

Abstract or Non-objective: Contemporary art works may have no concrete subject, but instead focus on capturing an ephemeral state (a condition, a philosophy, an experience, an emotion) or focus on the art work as an aesthetic object composed of lines, shapes, textures, colors.

Functional objects: Some objects in museum collections are valued for their aesthetic attributes in addition to their function. Glass, ceramic and bronze vessels, Japanese folding screens, and religious sculpture are but a few examples of art works that often fulfill a physical function as well as exemplifying careful use of the elements of art.

Media

Media is what the artist uses to create an artwork. Below is a brief summary of media, and in some cases technical application of media, as it is used in drawing, painting, printmaking and sculpture.

Drawing

Pastel: Made from pigment mixed with china clay to form a solid stick; generally used on textured paper. Pastels allow for a wide range of gradations of value.

Pen & Ink: Ink is made of carbon mixed with water and/or a binder of gum or glue; generally used on smooth, non-porous paper. Varied pen points create many different types of line. Note that ink can also be used for painting.

Charcoal: Made of charred wood formed into sticks or pencils; generally applied to paper, or used as under-drawing on canvas for paintings.

Pencil: Made of graphite encased in wood; generally applied to paper. Pencils come in a variety of hardness (H=Hard/B=Soft) that yield unique characters of density and line.

Crayon: Made of pigment mixed with paraffin wax; generally applied to paper, but does not lend itself to blending.

Painting

Fresco: Pigment mixed with lime and water generally applied to plaster walls and ceilings. Matte surface (non-shiny), pure but somewhat pale colors.

Tempera: Pigment mixed with egg yolk and water, generally applied to a rigid support such as panel, masonite, poster board. Linear quality, dries quickly, layered instead of blended color.

Watercolor: Pigment mixed with gum arabic and water (available in tubes or cake form), generally applied to a rough absorbent paper surface. Spontaneous, transparent effects. Cannot be re-worked once applied.

Gouache: Pigment mixed with gum arabic and white pigment, applied to paper. Similar to watercolor but opaque.

Oil: Pigment mixed with linseed oil (available in tubes only after 1850s), generally applied to primed wood panel or canvas. Dries slowly, allows blending. Can be applied as thin color glazes or thick textured paint, allowing for a variety of surface textures.

Acrylic: Pigment mixed with a polymer (plastic) medium, applied to various surfaces including wood, fabric, paper, cardboard. Fast drying, versatile, can look like oils or watercolor, transparent or opaque. Tough and permanent brilliant colors.

Printmaking

Print: A print is an image or design that has been transferred from one surface to another by rubbing or by manual or mechanical means. Traditionally, images are created by cutting into or drawing on wood or stone blocks or metal plates. The inked image is transferred to paper.

Impression: Each print produced by the transfer of an inked image from a plate or block to paper is called an impression. An impression is always a mirror image (reverse) of the plate or block.

Woodcut: This relief printing process begins with the drawing of an image, design or text on the flat surface of a block of wood. The block is carved so that the surface stands up in relief and shows up as black when the block is inked and printed. Areas that have been cut away receive no ink and show up as white. To print, the inked block and the paper to which the image is to be transferred are pressed together by hand or placed in a mechanical press. Because images and type could be cut out of the same block, woodblock printing was, from the

fourteenth through the sixteenth century, a common method of producing illustrated books.

Engraving: In this process an image is made by cutting directly into a metal surface with a sharp, faceted steel bar with a handle called a burin or graver. The engraver determines what kinds of lines will appear in the print by controlling the width and depth of the incisions or grooves.

Etching: In the etching process, the lines that form the image are “eaten” into the metal surface by chemical action, rather than cut into it with a tool. The process begins by coating a heated plate (usually copper) with a wax or resin ground that is resistant to acid. After the image has been scratched into the ground with an etching needle, the plate is immersed in acid. The lines or areas exposed by the removal of the ground are eaten or bitten into the plate. The depth of these lines is determined by the length of the immersion period. Different depths and line qualities could be achieved by separate workings and immersions of a plate.

Lithography: The artist draws his images on the surface of a limestone block with a greasy crayon or ink. After chemical treatment with gum arabic and nitric acid, the stone is wetted and an ink-charged roller is passed over the surface. Ink is rejected by the wet areas and accepted by the drawn, dry areas. A print is obtained by placing a sheet of paper upon the inked stone, which sits on a bed of a lithographic press, and then running the stone and paper under the pressure of the press.

Sculpture

Bronze: Bronze casting is an ancient, technical process that can be difficult to understand or explain without images to illustrate each step. The key points to understanding an object made of bronze are the following:

- **The object is designed first in another substance** – wax, wood, clay, plaster
- **A mold is made around the object** that captures the surface details.
- The mold is coated inside with a thin layer of wax
- When the hollow wax shape is hardened, the outer mold is removed and a new mold created in ceramic to encase both the exterior and interior of the wax
- The ceramic mold is heated to melt out the wax
- The mold is filled with liquid metal that hardens as it cools

- The ceramic mold is broken off, leaving a hollow metal version of the original design.

Depending on the age of students, discussion of this process is perhaps best limited to the highlighted sections, illustrated if desired with common materials like cake pans or other food-related molds.

Stone: Stones of various compositions and hardnesses (such as marble) are carved using metal chisels and abrading tools. The marks of the tools can sometimes be seen on the finished work.

Assembled materials, found materials, plastics, technology, etc.: Contemporary sculptures (20th century – present) have been fabricated out of every conceivable material. Consider the relationship between the message and the media used to create it.

Media Bags

Children have many different learning styles. Some are visual learners, some do better with tactile experiences and still others through an auditory approach. A media bag is an excellent way to offer children a variety of learning opportunities. The media bag is a collection of “hands-on” items to illustrate the medium and techniques used by the artist. Here are some suggestions to help you “build” your media bag:

- Examples of Oil Tubes, Watercolors, Pastels, Tempera paint
- Palette
- Selection of Paint Brushes for Various Mediums
- Palette Knives
- Sample of Wood Carving Tool and Clay Modeling Tool (beware of sharp edges!)
- Stretched Canvas, Masonite Board, Wood Panel, Selection of Watercolor Papers
- Small Slabs Marble, Granite, Clay
- Calligraphy brush, Mulberry paper, Ink stick
- Chinese Seal

What Do I Need to Know About a Specific Image?

Choosing the Right Information

You will want to have enough information to answer likely questions and to guide discussion. This does not have to be extensive, but should include any significant contextual information (e.g. any symbols and their meaning, location of a landscape, identity of a subject, text of any story or event), medium, and artist. Biographical information about the artist should be limited to what is relevant to an understanding of the art work (e.g. where he/she lives or lived if it relates to subject matter). Determine which art terms (1-3 should be plenty) are applicable for your Art Masterpiece image and are age-appropriate for the children.

Art works are the creations of individuals living in a particular place and time. The discipline of art history groups works along a continuum according to similarities in cultural expression, style, motivation, and purpose. By emphasizing observation skills, and then through comparing/contrasting art works, students can learn to differentiate many of these groupings for themselves.

Art History Movements (chronological)

Keep in mind that art movements often overlap and artists may work in or experiment with diverse styles throughout a career. Below is a quick synopsis of some major movements. For in-depth understanding of the course of art history, consult texts such as Marilyn Stokstad's *Art History, Combined Volume* (4th Edition, 2010), or for discussions of specific works as representative of movements, Khanacademy.org.

Realistic/Abstract

These terms can apply to art from many periods – ancient to contemporary – and many cultures. They reference the degree to which the artist chooses to depict a subject more or less as the human eye sees/interprets it. Realistic or representational images are closer to what the eye sees, while abstract images may simplify the subject into broader shapes, lines, textures or colors. Realism and abstraction occur along a continuum; one does not necessarily suggest greater “success” or expertise than another.

Classical

Generally applied to the art of Ancient Greece and Rome that particularly focused on representing the human figure in both idealistic and naturalistic ways. The term also applies to later art that emphasizes representation of an ideal type of human figure or references subject matter of ancient origin.

Byzantine

The term refers more to a style associated with Byzantium than to its area, the Eastern (Greek) Empire with its capital at Constantinople. Byzantine paintings and mosaics are characterized by rich use of color and figures that seem flat and stiff and have large eyes. Figures appear to be floating on a golden background. When intended to convey religious belief, Byzantine art was presented clearly and simply in order to be easily learned. First seen in the fifth-century, it lasted until the mid-fifteenth-century and the destruction of the Empire by the Turks.

Gothic

A style of late medieval architecture and painting that spread throughout Europe in the fourteenth and fifteenth-centuries. Originating in manuscript illumination, it transferred to panel painting the brilliant color, fine detail, rich sense of pattern and individual characterizations of miniatures. This style of painting was thought of as precious and jewel-like and was often decorated with gold leaf.

Renaissance (French, Rebirth)

Name given to an intellectual and artistic movement that started in Italy during the fourteenth-century, looking back at the ideals and humanistic values of classical antiquity. It expanded to most of Europe and lasted to the end of the sixteenth century.

Baroque

A style of art, architecture and sculpture practiced from the latter part of the sixteenth century to the latter part of the eighteenth century, characterized by dynamic opposition and energy, by the use of dramatic light and shadow and emotionally powerful figures, and by elaborate and intricate ornamentation.

Neoclassicism

A movement of the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth-centuries that sought to redefine the classical style by emphasizing linear elements and classical subject matter.

Realism

A style that stresses the actual as opposed to the ideal and sometimes insists on "ugly" subjects.

Barbizon

A mid-nineteenth-century group of French landscape painters centered around the village of Barbizon, at the edge of the forest of Fontainebleau. They sought to factually render the landscape about them and painted out of doors, a practice that made them precursors of the Impressionists.

Impressionism

A name derived from a painting by Monet, entitled *Impression: Sunrise* (1872) and conferred on an entire artistic movement. It was a method of painting in vibrant dabs of color, often straight from the tube. By this technique, the

Impressionists attempted to re-create the effects of light in nature. They emphasized painting out-of-doors and catching the impressions of the moment.

Pointillism

The commonly used term for the art in which dots or points of color are applied to the canvas so that the individual colors blend in the viewer's eye (optical mixture).

Expressionism

A movement that can be traced back to the 1880s, it searched for expressiveness by means of exaggeration and distortion of line and color. It showed also a deliberate abandon of naturalism implicit in Impressionism in favor of a simplified style which was intended to carry greater emotional impact.

Surrealism

A twentieth-century movement in painting, literature and sculpture that placed emphasis on instinctive expression and attempting to interpret the unconscious mind.

Cubism

A style of painting and sculpture developed in the early 20th century. It was a new way of viewing the world in which natural forms are replaced by fractured geometric ones and the organization of the planes of a represented object is independent of representational requirements.

Abstract Expressionism

A term used by critics in recent years in reference to a varied body of abstract painting that emerged in America during and after World War II. The painters preferred the term "painterly abstraction," which means creating an image through manipulation of paint rather than abstracting the image from real objects.

Minimalism

Minimalism is a style in which objects are stripped down to their elemental, geometric form, and presented in an impersonal manner. It is an abstract form of art which developed as a reaction against the subjective elements of Abstract Expressionism.

Conceptual Art

Conceptual artists emphasized the ideas underlying works of art, rather than execution of the idea by the artist. They often use photos, text, etc. to document ephemeral actions or events, or turn over production of designs to other fabricators.

Kinetic Art

Sculpture that actually moves, often using technology.

Pop Art

The apparent celebration of western consumerism after the austerity and rationing of WWI and WWII. The artists' work evokes the brash, colorful world of advertising, comic strips and popular entertainment.

Optical Art or Op Art

A classification of abstract painting utilizing geometrical patterns that create illusions of formal displacement or motion, often in black and white as well as chromatic juxtapositions that generate illusory color changes and pulsating vibrations. It was an International movement popular in the late 1950s-60s.

Contemporary

A term used to describe an artist who is living and creating in the present time.

Geographic/Cultural Expressions

Art historians and museums often divide objects first by culture, then by chronology, based on the premise that objects created in a place and time often share identifiable characteristics in terms of subject, media and style. It is important to remember that art styles travel across cultures and that diverse styles may exist simultaneously. Further, in an increasingly globalized art world, artistic expression may transcend cultural traditions and experience.

Phoenix Art Museum's collection is presented both by culture and by chronology. Areas of particular strength are described below.

Western Art

Western American Art is a subset of American Art based on subject matter (not style). Artists creating this work may or may not have lived in the West, but certainly visited and depicted landscape and other subjects unique to this environment. When selecting images for Art Masterpiece, consider giving special attention to Western/Southwest Art. Presenting art of our region will help the students better understand our regional history. Styles in Western Art follow broader trends in art historical chronology; one may find Impressionism, abstraction, realism, or romanticism in Western Art.

During the mid-19th century, landscape became an important subject for painters. Artists accompanied U.S. government survey expeditions throughout the West that sought transportation routes, town sites and mineral deposits. These artists depicted the flora and fauna of the West, often presenting the land as lush and ripe with opportunity. Some artists also chose to document the inhabitants of this land.

As the railroads pushed into the West and Southwest in the late 19th century, artists had greater access to the region and new markets for work depicting its unique qualities. Companies like the Santa Fe Railroad and the Fred Harvey Company teamed with artists to promote the Southwest beginning as early as the

1880s and continuing into the early 20th century. The West – its landscape, architecture, and diverse culture and lifestyle – has remained a significant source of inspiration to the present day.

Art in Mexico

Phoenix Art Museum collects art from all over Latin America, ranging in date from the Spanish Colonial period to the present day. It has a particularly strong collection of Modern (20th century to c. 1950) art from Mexico, including such artists as Diego Rivera, Rufino Tamayo, Frida Kahlo, Alfredo Ramos Martinez, and others. For Mexico's first generation of modern artists, social consciousness, politics and art were inseparably linked. Each seized upon, and became famous for, mural art as the way to reach and educate the masses. Their murals pictured the history of the Mexican people and glorified their indigenous heritage. Each left a legacy of murals in their own country and the United States, as well as a great number of paintings, drawings and prints.

Mexican artists born in the 1910s, 20s and 30s, came of age in a world traumatized by two World Wars and shaped by the tensions of the Cold War, the threat of nuclear annihilation and the social turmoil of the 1960s. Mexico also changed significantly in the decades following the Revolution, developing steadily from a largely agrarian to a nation oriented toward industry and commerce. With increasing concentrations of a growing working class and, especially, an affluent middle class in the cities, numerous galleries emerged to cater to the needs of a new audience of private collectors. Many of this second generation of modern Mexican artists sought inspiration from modern art movements like Cubism, Surrealism and Abstract Expressionism and from modern literature.

Contemporary artists from across Latin America participate in a global art environment where influences move rapidly. Their work may or may not express conditions specific to regions of Latin America.

Asian Art

Phoenix Art Museum collects Asian art, with particular strength in Chinese art of the Qing (pronounced "ching") dynasty (1644-1911), Japanese art, and Buddhist art (various Asian cultures). While much of this work is historical, Buddhist works retain their religious relevance to the present day, though they may have been created in the past. Many Asian paintings, textiles and ceramics include subjects or decorative motifs that have significance within their respective cultures. Similarly, the media and formats of traditional Asian works may vary from those created in the European tradition. Contemporary works may or may not echo cultural traditions of art-making.

Traditional Chinese paintings often provide a visual journey. To look at a hanging scroll, start at the bottom of the image and weave your way through the landscape to the top. Objects closest to you are at the bottom and space recedes as you move upward. Traditional Chinese artists use "conventions" or standardized ways of depicting some natural objects, like trees. Notice how all

the trees of a particular species are depicted using the same leaf shape or pattern. The artist seeks to capture the essence or timeless aspect of the tree, rather than its appearance at a specific moment.

Though landscape is the most popular subject for painting, there is usually a human element present. Within the grandeur of the landscape you can find people walking, boating or meditating before a view. The painting is often more a depiction of the artist's experience of a place than a visual rendering of the site's details.

Painting and writing are closely linked because they use the same tools. The relationships between painting, calligraphy and poetry are important in Chinese art. Artists and collectors often add poetic lines and other commentary directly on the surface of paintings as a method of showing appreciation for the work. The calligraphy is held in equal importance to painting. The same equipment and techniques are used, and the same standards apply to each.

A seal is a stamped mark, usually red, used since ancient times to supplement or replace a signature. The seal is carved in stone, pressed in damp red paste and applied to the surface of a completed writing or painting. It is also used as a mark of ownership.

Chinese Ceramics

The art of ceramic-making is one of China's great contributions to world history. It is no coincidence that in English-speaking countries, China is both the name of a place and a term for ceramic dishes. Chinese pottery has been found in ancient burial sites, along with jade and bronze objects. Excavations of these sites in the 20th and 21st centuries have revealed much about China's history, architecture, agriculture, statecraft, society and culture. Constructed for the elite members of society, these tombs often contain objects made of clay that reference the daily life, peoples, needs and pleasures of this earthly world so that the deceased could "take it with them" into the afterlife. From these beginnings, the ceramic tradition in China flourished, ultimately reaching across the globe and into our own day.

The appearance of ceramic objects depends on the clay used to make them and the temperature of the kiln used to harden them. Earthenware and stoneware are made from colored clays fired at low temperatures; they have a coarser texture and are slightly porous. As techniques advanced, China became known for its porcelain, made from fine white clay fired at a very high temperature. Porcelain is translucent and has a fine texture.

Ceramic objects are decorated and made waterproof by the addition of glazes. Glazes are often made of minerals and silica (an ingredient of glass) dissolved in a liquid and applied to the clay body. In the kiln environment, these minerals melt and change color, lending a decorative aspect to the object. Chinese ceramic artists achieved technical mastery over a number of glaze types over the

centuries.

Japanese woodblock prints

European painters such as Monet and Van Gogh greatly admired Japanese prints; they were inspired by the sense of 2-dimensional design and color. Making prints by carving and inking wooden blocks, then pressing them to paper, dates to the 7th century in China. Japanese artists expanded the technique to use multiple blocks – as many as 30 – to allow a range of colors for prints that appealed to an upscale urban class. Images of the so-called “floating world” of transitory pleasures showed theatre actors, beautiful women, or famous tourist sites.

How Do I Talk To Kids About Art?

Presentation Tips

Smile—it's contagious! The most important part of an Art Masterpiece presentation is to show your enthusiasm— if you're excited and interested, the children will be, as well!

Involve the children in the presentation by helping them to ask questions. (See section below on questioning techniques.) Be mindful that their answers may not be what you were expecting. Encourage students to support their opinions or comments with observations and reasoning.

Keep your facts to a minimum, rather let the students “discover” the work of art by exploring the elements of art, encouraging them to share their observations and interpretations.

Introduce the children to a few new art terms (1-3) appropriate to their grade level.

Look and speak directly to the children. Call them by name whenever possible.

Questioning Techniques

Questioning can encourage meaningful active participation in the learning process and in the enjoyment of art. Questions direct observation, highlight a unique attribute, spur imagination and can lead the students to share common experiences and emotions.

Formulate questions with care: what will this question help students to understand? Make sure there is a point. Questions should lead somewhere, not just affirm that students are paying attention to you. Most importantly, follow up on answers to generate new questions. Be wary of “quizzing” students with an endless series of questions for them to answer. Help them to generate, answer and discuss in a conversational rhythm, rather than the rhythm of a “test.”

Do not let a few moments of silence make you uneasy. Real thinking requires students to process and ponder.

Sample Questions You Can Ask

- Look at this painting /sculpture for 30 seconds. Now I'm going to turn the poster over. Tell me everything you remember about the art work.

- If this painting could make a sound or music, what kind of music would it make? What helped you decide what music would go with this painting?
- What is the subject of this painting/sculpture? Is it realistic or is it abstract? Why do you think an artist would choose this subject?
- Can you tell me a story to go with this painting?
- How do your eyes travel around this painting/sculpture? What did you see first? Was it an object or a color that attracted your attention? Where did your eyes go next?
- Is there anything going on just "outside" the painting? Why do you think and what might be happening?
- What would it be like to be "inside" this painting? Where would you want to enter?
- How does the artist make this painting look three-dimensional?
- How does this painting make you feel? Why does it make you feel that way?
- What are some things you like about this art work? What are some things you don't like about it?
- What title would you give this art work?

How to Handle Answers

- Be ready to redirect irrelevance without squashing a student's enthusiasm. Asking for students to support their answers with observations will reduce irrelevance and encourage thoughtful participation.
- Do not ask questions that will put an individual student on the spot. Instead, try and engage the entire class with a question
- Encourage students to let you know if they do not understand. Look at their expressions to judge comprehension.
- Let students know that even though their responses may differ from their friends, they are still valid if well-supported with observations.
- Bounce questions from one child to another. Examples:
 - *Does anyone else see that too?*
 - *Who would agree?*
 - *Why do you think it looks that way?*
 - *Does anyone else have another idea?*

Hands-on/Brains-on Activities

The first source for devising art-making activities should be the certified art teacher at your school. Working collaboratively with these professionals not only demonstrates that you value their expertise, but creates synergy across what students learn in art class and in other class sessions. If your school does not have a certified art teacher, consider incorporating some of the following activities that can be used with a diversity of art forms and styles. Comparing works using activities helps to convey the many ways artists over time have addressed similar artistic or social issues.

Symbols

- Discuss language as a form of symbolism using ancient Egyptian art or contemporary Chinese characters. Using a hieroglyphic alphabet chart, have students find letters of their name and create a cartouche (seal) using the Egyptian symbols. Research basic Chinese characters and allow students to practice writing them using brushes and thinned black tempera paint. Have students create their own symbolic/pictorial alphabet and write their name or a sentence using their personal language system.
- Consider artworks that have strong and obvious symbolic content, such as that from the Byzantine, Gothic, Renaissance (religious content), or traditional Chinese painting, and the role of symbols to quickly convey information to a viewer. Have students list symbols familiar to them – McDonald's arches, computer icons, seasonal references, state symbols, national symbols (flags, etc.). Have students create a personal symbol and incorporate it into a drawing or three-dimensional work.

Storytelling

- Find artworks that could tell a story, whether a documented story (e.g. historical event or myth/legend) or a story a child might imagine. Possibilities include classical Greek art, 18th and 19th century American paintings, Japanese woodblock prints, Mexican murals, photographs, work by artist Philip C. Curtis. Have students write or act out stories that accompany the artwork based on and supported by their observations. Students might imagine what happened immediately before or immediately after the image under consideration. Students might apply their stories to vessel shapes (use oatmeal boxes or similar). If cameras are available, have students take photos that “tell a story.”
- Ask students to write an eyewitness account of St. George and the Dragon from a painting depicting the story. What are the characters thinking? Write from the point of view of one of the characters. Students

should use the artist's clues to decide how the character feels about what is going on and what might happen next.

- Before the advent of the camera, a staff of artists illustrated the news. Illustrate a current event, carefully choosing which moment of the whole story to convey.

Description and Judgment

- Generate a word list by parts of speech – nouns, verbs, adjectives – to describe an art image. Use this list to create a “word picture” of the image.
- Using several images, play a game of Token Response, an activity that reveals the many ways individuals value artworks. The game can be adapted to many ages, using a variety of criteria. Available through Crizmac (http://www.crizmac.com/online_catalog/store.cfm?step=display&productid=815)

Landscape

- Choose an object for drawing and draw it from three perspectives: eye level, looking down and looking up.

Portraits and History

- Create a “moment in history” picture depicting the past, present or future.
- Create a single-figure or group portrait of people important to the student including objects, symbols, clothing, background details that convey something about the character of the people pictured.

Elements of Art

- Make a list of colors in a painting with the color appearing most frequently at the top of the list. Do the same with another painting. Compare the differences. What color does each artist use for the darkest shadow and brightest light?
- Texture/Taste a still life by bringing in the foods in the painting.
- Find the primary, secondary and complementary colors in an art print. Create a picture using one color group.
- Put a piece of red paper on white paper then look at the red on brown paper. Which makes the red more vivid? Now put the red with its opposite color green. Colors look stronger when their opposites are present. Try it with purple/yellow and blue/orange.

- Choose a single hue (color) and see how many different values and shades of that hue the class can find.
- Make a textured collage. Use natural and manmade items such as sandpaper, leaves, broken egg shells, velvet, etc.
- Sketch your backyard or playground, noting the size of objects close up and far away. Is the tree close by really larger than the house far away?
- After studying a Cubist painting, draw or paint something in the classroom based on the cubist theory of breaking it up into geometric shapes.

Expression/Mood

- Discuss the different kinds of expressions and postures used to record feelings and reactions. How do these actions reveal our moods Play charades giving each student a folded card with an emotion or situation on it that they need to portray.
- Create one happy and one sad portrait on each side of a circle or paper plate.
- Draw lines that create a feeling or mood: nervous, gentle, angry, tense, etc.
- Have the students draw or paint a dream they have had.
- Move like the characters in a painting in both fast and slow motion.

Cultural Values

- Talk about artists signatures. The Asian artist's signature can be a red seal stamped on the artist's work. Have students design their own unique signature, perhaps a vegetable stamp print.
- Learn to draw a Chinese word with ink and brush.
- Write a poem to go with an image of a landscape. The poem might reflect on the student's experience of looking at the image.

How to Establish An Art Masterpiece Program

School Relationships

Who supports you?

An Art Masterpiece program is usually initiated by the school administration or a parents' organization. A volunteer committee can effectively manage the program during the school year.

Where do you find art images?

Posters of selected Phoenix Art Museum images are available as sets free of charge (one of each available set/school, visit PhxArt.org for more information). Other poster images from the collection may be available for purchase in the Museum Store.

Poster images may be found online at vendors such as www.barewalls.com or www.allposters.com.

If your classroom has a projection system, consider accessing museum websites for images.

How do you find volunteers?

The first Open House or PTA Meeting of the school year is a good place to interest parents in becoming "Art Masterpiece" volunteers, whether the program is new to your school or expanding. Phoenix Art Museum generally presents its Art Masterpiece Training session annually in September. Check www.phxart.org/education for current dates and registration information.

How do you select images for the program?

Some programs are strongly related to the curriculum. Other programs may center on a specific artist or a specific art style/movement at each grade level. It is important to consult with the classroom teacher and visual art specialist in developing goals for the program and choosing images that support those goals.

Art Masterpiece Organization Ideas

Some schools have the information for each poster in "packets" such as a large expandable file.

- Packets are assigned to a grade level.
- Masterpiece volunteers check out a packet to develop their presentation.
- Each volunteer that uses the packet adds any additional ideas or projects they came up with.

- Find something that relates to that poster in a newspaper or magazine? Add it to the packet.
- General supplies are found in classroom or supply room or brought from home. Projects should involve simple and very inexpensive supplies.

Some schools assign a particular artist or art style to a grade level. Files or packets are created for the artists/art style and are kept in central location. (See "Ideas for Research Packets")

- Posters of a particular artist's work or posters representing a particular style of painting are made available. Since each grade level has a different artist or style of art, poster choices can come from a wide selection.
- A file cabinet can be used to hold the "artist" files.
- Projects relating to the specific artist or art style are identified.
- General supplies are used from classroom, supply room or brought from home. Simple and inexpensive are important concepts to keep in mind!

Ideas for Research Packets

Each packet or file contains information on a particular piece of art. It may include:

- Small picture of the art reproduction (photo/cut out)
- Name of artist and artwork
- Relevant vocabulary with a pronunciation guide that can be written the board
- Information on the image:
Medium (e.g. oil on canvas)
Style (e.g. Impressionism, Contemporary)
Key Observations
- Historical background of time/place created as relevant to the work
- Information on the artist that is relevant to specific artwork (Sources, art books, encyclopedia, magazines, catalogues)
- Other examples of artist's works

Displaying Art Masterpiece Projects

If children have created an project in association with the Art Masterpiece image, you may want arrange with the teacher to have a place in the classroom to display the outcomes. Consider some of these ideas for displaying work:

- Mat artwork for a professional look.
- Have a Gallery Walk. Display students' artworks on a prominent wall for all to see. Have students create labels for their art works that include their name, the title, the medium, and a few sentences about what they learned from the presentation/project.
- Run a string across a wall and clip students' project to it. Or, add date markers and form an *Art Time Line* to add to as new artists and eras are explored.
- Make a scrapbook or album filled with the students' Art Masterpiece work. Display at school open house events.
- Keep digital picture record of each Art Masterpiece project. Display this visual record at the end of the year for the enjoyment of all.

Displays need not be limited to the classroom! Share Art Masterpiece artworks with the entire school by setting up displays in:

- the cafeteria
- the school office
- sheltered hallways

Plan end-of-the-year activities:

- Art Festivals dedicated to the display of Art Masterpiece projects
- Gather all projects to be returned home at end of year