

**The Artist**

Marjorie Acker was born in Bourbon, IN and was raised in Ossining, NY. She had relatives who encouraged her painting, including her Uncle Gifford Beal, who was a well-known artist. She studied at the Art Students League in New York and met her future husband at an exhibition in the Century Club; they married 10 months later. Her landscapes and still lifes, many done while she and her husband raised a family, have been exhibited at several museums and in several one-woman shows. Many of her more than 400 paintings and drawings are in museum collections.

Her visits to Europe with her husband, especially a trip to France in 1923, sharpened her awareness of the possibilities inherent in **impressionism** and **post-impressionism**. Her attention to structure and rich color in her work was sparked, in part, by her careful study of the paintings of Cézanne and Renoir. Phillips said of her work: “I decided to paint the celebration of the wonder of the world. I didn’t want to paint depressing pictures. There were so many depressing things; so many self-conscious, forced, foolish things. That’s why my paintings are all on the cheerful side—I felt it was needed.”

The Phillips Collection, created by Marjorie and her husband, was the first major museum of modern art in the United States when it opened in the fall of 1921 when they settled in Washington D.C. During their years together until Mr. Phillips's death in 1966, the couple assembled 2,500 works, including numerous paintings by such 19th- and 20th-century masters as Cezanne, Renoir, Matisse, Braque, Picasso, Daumier, Bonnard, Klee and Rothko. Marjorie helped her husband gain insight into the artistic process and shift his emphasis from maintaining a memorial gallery in honor of his father and brother to building a vital museum committed to the contemporary world and the art of both men and women.

**The Art**Sample Guided Questions

- What are some things you notice: Color? Cool colors/warm colors? Details?
- When did this take place?
- Have you been to a baseball game at night?
- Can you tell which teams are playing?
- Where do you think she was sitting looking at this picture?

- How do you think she was able to paint the action at the game?
- Do you think it's harder to paint a picture or take a picture with camera?

Although not the least bit interested in baseball, Mrs. Phillips often accompanied her husband, who was an avid fan, to games, and she took her sketch pad with her. While he followed the progress of the game, she drew the fans, the players, and the scene at the stadium.

Two of her baseball pictures are among her best known. This one, *Night Baseball*, which included Joe DiMaggio, was said to be so accurate a portrayal of the ambience at a ballgame that the Baseball Hall of Fame tried to purchase it.

**Art Project:** Movement sketches with pastels

**Materials:** Black paper, pencil (students have in classroom), colored pastels, colored chalk

### Instructions

Have children lightly sketch a picture of something that moves or of themselves moving with a pencil on the black paper. You can brainstorm some ideas with them...for example: fish swimming, dancers dancing, a person running, a dog chasing a bone, etc...

Have them color the picture with colored pastels and/or colored chalk, encouraging them to blend colors and to cover most of the paper.

Encourage them to show setting as well. For example: if drawing a baseball player, show the stadium or field in the background. If drawing a dancer, show the stage, the stage lights, and the stage curtains as well.

You can explain the concept of “**perspective**” where objects/people that are closer are larger and more details can be seen. Objects/people that are further away are smaller and less detailed.





### The Artist

Born Hilaire-Germain-Edgar De Gas in 1834 into a wealthy Parisian family, Degas devoted himself exclusively to painting without needing to sell a canvas. He originally went to law school before dedicating his studies to art. His training was conventional: he spent five years in Italy, studied the old masters in the Louvre, and trained at the École des Beaux-Arts.

The official art exhibition in France was The Salon. In order to be considered a major artist, your paintings had to be accepted by the Salon. However, the Salon wasn't impressed with Degas' paintings. When a number of new artists, including Degas, decided to part ways with the Salon and have their own art show, many people laughed at them. One critic said their paintings looked unfinished, as if they were "impressions" of a scene rather than finished paintings. The name stuck, and they were called **impressionists**. Besides Degas, other artists that were part of this group included Claude Monet, Pierre Renoir, and Camille Pissarro.

Degas is regarded as one of the founders of **Impressionism**, although he rejected the term, and preferred to be called a **realist**. He wanted to paint scenes of real life and try to capture a moment, almost like a camera. His paintings may look spontaneous, but he spent a lot of time planning them out. He would study his subjects and make lots of sketches before starting on a painting.

Fellow **Impressionist** Berthe Morisot remembered him saying that the study of nature was meaningless, since the art of painting was a question of conventions, and that it was by far the best thing to learn drawing from the works of the German artist Hans Holbein. By the mid-1860s, Degas was turning to modern themes, particularly contemporary Parisian life. Unlike other Impressionists, he emphasized **composition** and drawing, and he usually did not paint outdoors. Degas was primarily concerned with depicting movement, from horses to women doing various things — dressing, bathing, and as cabaret performers. Always captivated by gesture and motion, Edgar Degas in the 1870s became interested in ballet dancers, particularly in the youngest ballerinas of the corps. During frequent visits to the Paris Opera's ballet school, he found what interested him most: movement—not free and spontaneous action, but precise exercises. He painted the first of his ballet dancers around 1873. Today, he is especially identified with the subject of the dance, and over half his works depict dancers. These display his mastery in the depiction of movement.

## The Art

### Sample Guided Questions

- How can you tell that this is pastel and not paint? (Degas blended the pastels with his hands and with other colors of pastels to create the look of movement.)
- Can you see any distinct lines? Can you tell outlines of people? What types of color did he use?
- Degas sat in the theatre to sketch these dancers...can you tell where he sat? Close to the stage? Far away? In the balcony?

He made a lot of sketches before he started painting or drawing with pastels. He became known for using pastels. This scene was done when he was almost blind. The finished work is large, partly because he couldn't see well enough to do any more small, detailed paintings. Pastels allowed him to sketch and create expression at the same time. This is done on cardboard. Two things influenced him: First, the introduction of photography. Second, the importing of Japanese art showing a different style of painting. He liked both of these new ideas. He organized his artwork as though you were looking through a camera lens capturing the action.

**Art Project:** Dancing model craft for observational drawing

<http://krokotak.com/2017/06/dance-craft-ideas/>

**Materials:** Drinking straws, pipe cleaners, scissors (students have in classroom), quick drying clay. \*See handout with photo instructions in AE supply bin for 1<sup>st</sup> grade

### **Instructions**

Cut straws into 1/4 inch – 1/2 inch pieces then string the straw pieces onto 2 pipe cleaners. Bend 1 pipe cleaner w/straw pieces in half. Twist a circle in the center of the bent pipe cleaner to form a “head”. Bend the ends of the pipe cleaner to form “hands”. Bend the 2<sup>nd</sup> pipe cleaner with straw pieces in half and string through the “head” of the 1<sup>st</sup> pipe cleaner. Twist pipe cleaner #2 to secure onto pipe cleaner #1. Twist a circle in the center of pipe cleaner #2 to form a “body”. Roll a small amount of quick drying clay into a ball. Stick 1 foot into the center of the clay. Move the figure into different positions and sketch on paper.





### The Artist

Piet Mondrian was a Dutch modern artist known for his abstract style. He was born in the Netherlands in 1872. At a very young age his father Pieter and his Uncle Fritz, both artists themselves, introduced Piet to the world of art. As a young man, Piet Mondrian worked as a draftsman. For fun, he used to paint things he saw in Holland. He started out painting realistic scenes – like trees, windmills, flowers, rivers and canals.

While Mondrian's early works represented the world he saw around him, his discovery of Cubism in 1911 guided him toward pure **abstraction**. The more Mondrian looked at trees, buildings and vases, the more he saw their basic shapes and colors. Art that is **abstract** does not show things that are recognizable such as people, objects or landscapes. Instead artists use colors, shapes and textures to achieve their effect. At first, his paintings transformed into something somewhat representational, but they consisted mostly of the geometric shapes of Cubism.

As he painted more and more, his style began to change. Along with another artist, he founded the journal *De Stijl* in 1917. *De Stijl*, or "the style," was a movement among Dutch artists, architects, and designers that presented an ideal of total **abstraction** as a model for harmony and order across the arts. Mondrian and these artists developed a vision of **modernism** independently from that found in Paris. Mondrian termed the resulting artistic style **Neo-Plasticism**, or the new plastic art. This simply meant that it was a new way of representing reality, found on the surface of the painting itself. He didn't want art to bring about any emotion or feelings. Dedicated to the "absolute devaluation of tradition" the artists emphasized "the need for **abstraction** and simplification" and limited the elements in their paintings to **straight horizontal and vertical lines, right angles**, the three **primary colors** (red, yellow, blue) and the three achromatic colors (grey, white, and black) – or non-color.

Mondrian became an important artist whose ideas and work influenced lots of later artists. In fact, it wasn't just art that Mondrian inspired. The influence of his paintings can be seen in lots of other things today – from furniture to fashion!

### The Art

#### Sample Guided Questions

- Do you think you could paint this painting all by yourself? (While these paintings look very simple to paint, figuring out the perfect arrangement of squares, rectangles and black lines can be a significant challenge. Mondrian was a successful artist because he had a flawless ability to compose the perfect arrangement of these artistic elements.)

- What makes this painting **abstract**?
- What are the **primary colors**? (blue, red, yellow)
- All around us are examples of Mondrian's grids and his rectangles of bright **primary** colors. How many rectangles can you see in this painting? Around your classroom?

*Composition (Blue, Red, and Yellow)* is part of a long series of Compositions. This one was made in 1930. These paintings are composed of rectangles with primary colors on a grid of black lines. The finished works of this long series are of paint on canvas, but as he got older, he would try out his designs using tape that he could move around. Mondrian tried to achieve **balance** in every painting. Sometimes he tried to do that with color and sometimes with lines.

### **Art Project:** Mondrian Abstract Paper Art

**Materials:** White paper, skinny black construction paper strips, construction paper squares and rectangles in primary colors & black in various sizes. Glue sticks and scissors can be found in student classroom.

\*Tip: cut squares, rectangles, and black strips beforehand. This may be a bit time consuming but will save time for working on the project if the children do not have to cut the strips and squares themselves.

### **Instructions**

Glue strips of black paper, squares, and rectangles of colored paper to create geometric art. Explain **vertical** and **horizontal** to the students. Make sure black strips are vertical and horizontal only (not diagonal). It's easier to glue the colored pieces first and then fit the black strips on top. Cut the strips of black paper to any length. Trim any excess pieces of a strip that extend off of the page.



**The Artist**

Edvard Munch was born in Norway and regarded as Norway's most important artist. He was an **expressionist**. He is well known for his treatment of emotion such as fear. As a child, he showed talent in drawing and painting and attended art school.

There was a lot of tragedy and illness during Munch's younger years. He was often sick as child forcing him to spend the winter months at home from school. He started to draw to keep himself occupied. His mother and sister died when he was very young, which may have caused him to use "death" as a theme in many of his paintings for his first 40 years. He used lots of dark blue and violet (the color of night) in his paintings to symbolize the feeling of death.

His "emotional" paintings had a great effect on the German artists of that time. 4 years after he painted this picture he had a mental breakdown. After that, his style changed to a more positive one.

After his death, he willed all 1,100 of his paintings, 4,500 drawings, and 18,000 prints to the city of Oslo. They eventually opened a museum to keep all his artwork on display.

**The Art**Sample Guided Questions

- What colors did the artist use? Did he use warm colors or cool colors?
- How does this painting make you feel?
- Why doesn't the artist paint their faces with much detail? (Painting without specific detail = impressionism)
- Do you think he had these girls pose for this painting or is he painting from a picture in his mind?

Munch uses oil paints on canvas with wide brush strokes. At first, you see the painting for what it is, 2 girls watering flowers. Edward projected a feeling in this painting. It's not the subject matter that makes us feel sad when you look at it...it's the colors, lack of detail, and the darkness that creates a mood.

Discuss what specific colors and color tones make you feel. Use the mood color chart handouts provided in the first grade art specific bin.



- **Warm colors:** comfort and warmth, hostility and anger
- **Cool colors:** calm, soothing, sadness

**Art Project:** Painting: Expressing Mood in Impressionistic Style

**Materials:** white paint paper, tempera paints, brushes, cups for water, paint palettes (Pour a little of each color paint in the palette for each student. Add more as needed), Mood Color Chart Handouts (in 1<sup>st</sup> grade specific bin)

\*Ask kids to rinse brushes in water before using a different paint color.

**Instructions**

Explain to the children that they are going to make their own painting that expresses mood. They will do this in the Impressionistic style by choosing something that is an everyday activity. Examples: Kids playing football, kids baking cookies, a dog chasing a cat, a parent driving a car, etc. Tell them to refer to the mood color chart handout to express a particular mood with their choices of color. Encourage them to show **VERY LITTLE SPECIFIC DETAIL**, especially in faces.

Painting Criteria

- 1) People or animals doing an everyday activity
- 2) Use color to portray a particular mood
- 3) Very little specific detail (especially in faces)





**The Artist:**

Giuseppe Arcimboldo (1527-1593) was the child of a painter of the Milan Cathedral. He used all sorts of spellings of his first and last name to sign his art. In 1549, he made his debut as an artist by designing several stained-glass windows with his father for the Milan Cathedral and other cathedrals until 1558, when his father passed away.

When he was 35 years old, he moved to Vienna, Austria to become the court painter for the emperor in Vienna. During these years, he painted his first series of Four Seasons. At that time, great power belonged to whichever European king was also the Holy Roman Emperor. Arcimboldo was so highly regarded by his fellow artists and royalty, that he was invited to move to whichever country the Holy Roman Emperor was elected in (as the Pope is elected from various countries still today). In fact, even when he moved back to his native Milan, Italy, he continued to paint for the Emperor.

**The Art**Sample Guided Questions

- What are these paintings supposed to be? What are the subjects of the painting made of?
- Why did Arcimboldo use ripe cherries, berries, plums, and cucumbers in his summer painting? What is Summer's ear made of? (*ear* of corn) What are his teeth made of?
- Which painting has the most blooming flowers?
- Which man looks the youngest? Which looks like he is an old man?
- Which painting has the brightest colors?
- Which painting has a pumpkin (or squash)?
- Which painting is mostly made up of a tree?

Arcimboldo painted many series about "*The four seasons*". The painter represented the faces of every season with the most typical element of any of them. The face of the spring is made of flowers, the summer has a face of fruits and a body of wheat, while the autumn is a collection of fallen leaves, fruit, and mushrooms. The series ends with the winter, in which we can find bark that forms the face, leaves for the hair, and the two fruits hanging on the neck.

**Art Project:** Arcimboldo Fruit and Vegetable Portrait

**Materials:** Black construction paper, copies of fruit & vegetable coloring pages for each student (copy from art supply area or download your own from internet), white crayon, colored crayons. Glue sticks and scissors can be found in student classroom.

- 1) Draw a large circle or oval on the black construction paper with a white crayon to resemble a head.
- 2) Color some fruits and vegetables from the coloring pages and cut them out with scissors.
- 3) Arrange the cut-out fruits and vegetables on the head on the paper to form a face. Use your creativity to make eyes, nose, mouth, cheeks, chin, ears, hair, etc. out of the fruit and vegetable shapes.
- 4) Glue the fruit and vegetable pieces onto the head when you are satisfied with your arrangement.

