



### The Artist

Frida Kahlo was a Mexican painter. She was known for her **surreal** and very personal works. She was married to Diego Rivera who was also a very well-known painter.

Frida was born in Mexico, just south of Mexico City, in *La Casa Azul* (which is now a museum) on July 6, 1907. She grew up in this house with her parents and sisters. She loved to draw when she was a child and preferred to be alone rather than playing with her sisters.

Frida had a very difficult life. She had many medical problems and injuries that caused her a lot of pain; this is important to note because she showed her pain and isolation in many of her paintings. She had polio that damaged her right leg when she was 6 years old and some people think that she may have had spina bifida (a birth defect affecting the development of part of the spine) as well. Later, when she was 18, she was in a terrible bus accident that broke her spinal cord, collarbone, ribs, pelvic bone, leg, foot, and shoulder. An iron rail went through her body, and due to her terrible injuries from this, she was never able to have children. She was in a lot of constant pain and had to be in a body cast for 3 months. She spent all of this time in bed, and while she was there, she painted what she felt and saw. She studied medicine before the accident because she dreamed of becoming a doctor, but she couldn't continue her studies after the accident, so she took up painting. She used ideas about things that had happened to her. Her paintings are often shocking in the way they show pain and the harsh lives of women, especially her feelings about not being able to have children.

### The Art

#### Sample Guided Questions

- What types of **flora** (plants) and **fauna** (animals) do you see in this painting?
- How do you think the lady in the picture feels? How do you know?

Frida's artwork was inspired by Mexican culture and folk-art styles. She used bright colors often with a mixture of **realism**, **fantasy**, and **symbolism**. Her work is sometimes called "**surrealist**". Although she organized art shows several times with European **surrealists**, she herself did not like that label.

Throughout the course of her career, Kahlo painted 55 portrayals of herself, including *Self-Portrait with Thorn Necklace and Hummingbird*. Today, this piece remains one of her most widely-recognized self-portraits, due to the moving context in which it was created and the symbolic nature of its imagery. It is a great example of how she portrayed her physical and emotional wounds through her self-portraits. This painting was completed in 1940, one year after

her divorce from Mexican muralist Diego Rivera (they eventually remarried a year later). Given this timing, *Self-Portrait with Thorn Necklace and Hummingbird* is widely believed to show how she felt after her split from her husband.

In the painting, Kahlo is in front of leaves and between a stalking panther or black cat (symbolic of bad luck) and a monkey (a pet of hers that was given to her by Rivera). Her position in front and staring outward directly confronts and engages the viewer. Around her neck she wears a necklace made out of thorns and adorned with a seemingly lifeless hummingbird. The hummingbird is a symbol in Mexican folkloric tradition as a good luck charm for falling in love, but this seemingly lifeless one symbolizes the opposite. Though the necklace draws some blood from her neck, the expression on her face does not show emotion. This calm approach to pain is typical of Kahlo, who—even when devastated over her divorce—stated that “at the end of the day, we can endure much more than we think we can.”

### **Art Project:** Self Portrait Frida Kahlo Style

**Materials:** white paper, pencil (students have in classroom), oil pastels

#### **Instructions**

- 1) Explain to the students that Frida often used various animals in her paintings just like this one (bird, cat, monkey) and that she often included other elements of nature, such as the leaves in this painting. These items are sometimes referred to as **flora** and **fauna**.
- 2) Instruct the students to sketch a picture of themselves from head to bust.
- 3) Tell them to include **flora**, **fauna**, or other symbols in the portrait that have meaning to them. This can be a pet or favorite animal.
- 4) Encourage them to choose objects that help to show how they feel. Are they happy? Excited? Calm? Confident? Courageous? Sad? Angry? Scared?
- 5) Have them color the portrait with oil pastels when they are finished drawing. Encourage them to use bright colors like Frida often used.



**The Artist**

Leonardo da Vinci was an artist, scientist, and inventor during the Italian **Renaissance**. He is considered by many to be one of the most talented and intelligent people of all time.

Leonardo was born in the town of Vinci, Italy on April 15, 1452 (da Vinci means “of the town Vinci”). At about the age of 14, he became an apprentice to a famous artist named Verrocchio in Florence. This is where he learned about art, drawing, painting and more. Even as an apprentice Leonardo demonstrated incredible artistic talent. In addition to painting, Da Vinci studied science and math.

He went to work for the Duke of Milan. There, he created many religious paintings and sculptures. He also designed buildings, churches, bridges and even war machines. He left detailed blueprints for inventions that resemble our modern-day helicopters and army tanks.

Leonardo da Vinci died on May 2, 1519 in Amboise, Touraine which is today Indre-et-Loire, France. Da Vinci has come to be regarded as one of the greatest painters of all time, and quite possibly the most talented person that has ever lived. *The Last Supper* and *Mona Lisa* are among his greatest artistic achievements. The *Mona Lisa* is among the most recognizable artworks in the world.

**The Art**Sample Guided Questions

- What do you see in this painting? In the front? In the background?
- What is a portrait? Have you ever sat for a portrait in a studio? Hint — think Sears portrait studio
- Can you describe the person sitting here? What mood do you think she is in?
- Can you find eyebrows or eyelashes? (Experts originally thought the reason that Mona Lisa had no eyebrows or eyelashes was because she plucked, as some wealthy women did at that time, but later research revealed the hairs had disappeared with repeated varnishing, cleaning, and the wear of 500 years.)
- What colors are used? What colors are repeated? Do you like the colors? Are they bright or dark?
- Why do you think this painting is important?

The *Mona Lisa* is quite possibly the most well-known piece of painted artwork in the entire world and was valued at \$100 million in 1962. Taking inflation into consideration, the painting is estimated at about \$790 million today. It was painted by Leonardo Da Vinci between 1504 and 1519 and is a half body commission for a woman named Lisa Gherardini. Her husband, Francesco Del Giocondo, requested the work by Da Vinci just after the turn of the century.

It is perhaps the most studied piece of artwork ever known. The *Mona Lisa* is an oil painting, with a cottonwood panel as the surface. The subject's facial expression has brought about a source of debate for centuries, as her face remains largely enigmatic in the portrait. Originally commissioned in Italy, it is now at home in France and hangs on display in the Louvre in Paris.

It is important because the Mona Lisa sparked a revolution in portraits by perfecting certain techniques. There is an absence of lines; everything in the Mona Lisa blends together without borders, and the brush-strokes disappear. Da Vinci also gave shape to the image through shadow and light.

### **Art Project:** Modern Mona Lisa

**Materials:** Copies of the Mona Lisa template from the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade specific bin for each student, pencil (students have in classroom), crayons or markers

### **Instructions**

- 1) After looking at the details in the renaissance Mona Lisa painting, have the students add to the Mona Lisa template found in the art enrichment supply closet to create their own version of Mona Lisa using modern elements.
- 2) Tell them to think about what her hair and clothes might look like today.
- 3) For the background, ask them to think about where she might be and what she might be doing.



**The Artist**

Anish Kapoor is an Indian-born British sculptor known for his large-scale works made of various stones, highly-saturated pigments and, most famously, highly reflective stainless steel. *Cloud Gate* was Kapoor's first permanent public outdoor work in the United States and has become one of his most famous. The sculpture was selected during a design competition in 1999 and was completed in 2006.

Kapoor combines Eastern heritage with Western influence and, as a result, makes truly international art. His influence has been felt widely. Kapoor's iconic public monuments can be found all over the globe showing that his is an art that speaks to us of being human, in the simplest and most everyday sense, wherever and whoever you are.

**The Art**

Anish Kapoor's *Cloud Gate* is affectionately called, "The Bean" and has become synonymous with the Chicago experience. It is located at Millennium Park in downtown Chicago. The *Cloud Gate* was created by using computer technology to cut 168 massive stainless-steel plates into precise shapes which were then pieced together like a puzzle and welded shut. The stainless steel plates reflect the city's famous skyline and the clouds above. Once fully assembled, the 12-foot-high central arch provided a "gate" to the concave chamber on the underside of the sculpture prompting Kapoor to formally name the piece *Cloud Gate*. The stainless-steel skin was attached to the internal structure with flexible connectors that allow it to expand and contract in response to the extreme weather conditions in Chicago. It invites visitors to touch its mirror-like surface and see their image reflected back from a variety of perspectives. They are encouraged to walk around and underneath the sculpture to observe the way it distorts their reflection. Inspired by liquid mercury, it is one of the world's largest permanent outdoor art installations. It measures 66 feet long, 33 feet high, and 42 feet wide. It weighs over 110 tons.

The cost of the sculpture was first estimated at \$6 million; this escalated to \$23 million by the time it was complete. No public funds were involved; all funding came from donations from individuals and corporations.

It is expected to survive for 1,000 years. The lower 6 feet of *Cloud Gate* is wiped down twice a day by hand with a Windex-like solution, and the entire sculpture is cleaned twice a year with 40 gallons of liquid detergent.

Anish Kapoor stated, "What I wanted to do in Millennium Park is make something that would engage the Chicago skyline...so that one will see the clouds kind of floating in, with those very tall buildings reflected in the work. And then, since it is the form of a gate, the participant, the viewer, will be able to enter into this very deep chamber that does, in a way, the same thing to

one's reflection as the exterior of the piece is doing to the reflection of the city around.” When standing underneath, the reflections are like those of fun houses.

**Art Project:** Two short activities to bring the sculpture concept and creativity alive

**Materials:** A sheet of aluminum foil for each student, scissors (students have in classroom), paper to sketch a draft of a sculpture.

### Instructions

- 1) Take a sheet of aluminum foil, cut into strips or use whole sheet. Create a model of a sculpture. You can make an animal, a person, an object in nature like a tree, or something abstract – something with form and shape but doesn't look like anything real
- 2) Sketch a pop art sculpture on a piece of paper of an everyday item that you use. Where would the sculpture be placed? What would it be made of?



### The Artist

Pierre-Auguste Renoir was born in 1841 in France. His family moved to Paris when he was a small boy. At 13 years old, he worked in a porcelain factory where his drawing talents led him to be chosen to draw designs on fine china. After, Renoir became a copyist at the Louvre museum in Paris. For four years, he copied the works off the master painters which hung in the museum, and he learned to paint very quickly. He found some work by decorating more than 20 cafes in Paris. However, he lived as a 'starving artist', often times not having enough money to buy paint. In 1861, Renoir went to art school under Charles Gleyre, who offered instruction to a number of future **Impressionist** including Monet, Sisley, Bazille. A year later, he enrolled at the famous Ecole des Beaux Arts where he met other future **Impressionist** artists including Fantin-Latour, Pissarro, and Cezanne. By 1863, the beginning of the future **Impressionist** group was formed.

**Impressionism** was very different from traditional European art. These artists drew and painted landscapes and scenes of everyday life, like cooking, sleeping, and taking a bath. These may seem normal things to see in art now, but in the 1860s and 1870s, most of the art that was made in Europe had much grander things such as battle scenes from history, stories from ancient Greece and Rome, or religious scenes. The **impressionists** often painted in thick layers and used quick (and quite messy) brush strokes. Most of the paintings before **impressionism** have a much flatter, neater surface, and you can't really see the brushstrokes at all. Before **impressionism**, landscapes in art were often imaginary and these perfect landscapes were painted in a studio. The **impressionists** changed all that. They painted outdoors, at the scene. As they were outside, they looked at how light and color changed the scenes. Lots of people didn't like **impressionism** as they thought it was a bit messy and that the paintings looked unfinished. They thought art should be neater and that subjects in art should be more important than just everyday scenes. At the first



public exhibition of these works, the artists were called mere “impressionists” by an art critic. This was supposed to be an insult, but the name stuck.

Renoir’s early work was the typical **Impressionist** snapshots of real life, full of sparkling color and light. By the mid 1880s, he started applying a more formal technique to portraits and figure painting, particularly of women. During a trip to Italy, he was inspired by works of Raphael and other **Renaissance** masters, to adopt a more classical style. He felt convinced that he was on the wrong path, and for the next several years he painted in a style that attempted to return to classic art. He concentrated on his drawing and emphasized the outlines of figures. However, after 1890, he returned to the use of thinly brushed color with blurred outlines like his earlier work. He married a young lady who had modeled for his work, and they had four children. His son Jean became a notable filmmaker and his other son Pierre became a stage and film actor.

Renoir painted every day and made about 6,000 paintings during his 78 years of life. He thought a picture should be “a pleasant thing, joyful and pretty” and his work showed that. Renoir’s paintings are some of the most well-known and frequently reproduced works in the history of art.

## **The Art**

### Sample Guided Questions

- What is depicted in this picture?
- What is the little girl wearing? Is it fancy or play clothes?
- Why would she wear such fancy clothes in the garden? (To look her best for the portrait)
- What colors do you see? What colors are repeated? Are the colors light or dark?

This painting has long been a favorite of visitors to the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. -- and it seems that Renoir painted it to please a large audience. After the first **impressionist** exhibition, he began to paint charming, light-filled scenes with women and children, like this one, in the hopes of increasing sales. Although it was landscape that was the first, and most important, inspiration for **impressionism**, Renoir's instinct always led him back to the people.

The deep blue of the dress, the bright red of the bow and the girl's lips, and the cool greens of the lush garden behind her are all given a brilliance by Renoir's brushwork. Rather than blend his colors, Renoir has applied them in individual touches that dissolve edges and seem to shimmer with light. Notice how Renoir captured the sunlight falling on blonde curls. He felt the skin of the girl, with porcelain tone and small features, should make us want to reach out and pinch it.

**Art Project:** Girl with a Watering Can Replica

**Materials:** White construction paper, tempera paints (in blue, green, white, red, orange, and brown), paint palettes, sponge brush, paint brush, cups for water, Q-tips, Copies of *Girl with a Watering Can* from the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade specific bin in the art enrichment area. Pens or pencils from classroom.

**Instructions**

- 1) Give each student a copy of *Girl with a Watering Can* to use for reference for their replica.
- 2) Note the lighter colors in the background, bright colors on the main subject in the center, and bright colors of larger flowers in foreground.
- 3) Begin in the center. Use paint brushes in the center to paint the girl. Mix oranges and/or browns with white to get desired skin shade. Use bright (not blended) color paints for clothing and hair. Use a cup of water to rinse brushes before changing colors.
- 4) Study the landscape of the art piece. Use sponge brushes to replicate the landscape in the background of the art piece.
- 5) Use a Q-tip in the front to detail flowers.
- 6) Students can draw face later with pen or pencil when painting dries.





**The Art**Sample Guided Questions

- Does the horse look like the horses of today?
- What colors are used?
- What do you think the lines and forms around it are?

Cave art is the first examples of art in history. **Prehistoric** cave drawings used to record life in tribes. This drawing was done 17,000 years ago. Artists were honored members of **prehistoric** community.

In 1940, four boys in France - who were playing in a field with their dog - found something very special. After their dog fell down a hole, the boys climbed in to find not only their pet - safe and sound - but caves full of prehistoric art. It was later discovered that the paintings inside the caves were more than 15,000 years old! These caves are called the Lascaux (pronounced las-co) caves. There are many limestone caves in the region and there are probably more cave paintings to be discovered.

This **pictograph** of an ancient horse was called "Chinese" because it resembled 3,000 year old Sung dynasty horse paintings. A **pictograph** is a painted (as opposed to carved) representation created by our **prehistoric** ancestors. The artist painted by flickering fire light, using handmade paint. **Prehistoric** artists made paint from minerals or rocks pounded into powder and mixed with animal fat, or they could paint the powder onto a damp wall (watercolor). The paint was applied directly to the wall, or, in some cases, blown through hollow reeds for special effects. Artists painted and drew common animals and hunting scenes. They sometimes used the bumpy surfaces of the cave wall to suggest an animal's form. The delicate execution of the painting and its remote underground location suggest the artist wanted the work to be protected and survive. **Prehistoric** paintings in caves are well preserved because it is cool and dark in caves which keeps the paintings protected. The Lascaux cave paintings remained hidden until the cave was discovered by the children and explored in the 1940s.

**Art Project:** Cave art paintings

**Materials:** Brown paper, white colored pencil, chalks (in shades of whites, browns, and yellows), paint palettes, tempera paints (in black, brown, and red), fine paint brushes, copies of cave art examples

## Instructions

- 1) First distress the paper.
  - Start by adding some “cracks” by drawing jagged lines with a white colored pencil.
  - Create patches of color with chalks in whites, browns, and yellows by rubbing the colored chalk into the paper with fingers.
  - To make the paper look like a fragment of rock, tear some pieces from the edges. This makes them appear rough.
  - Carefully crumple paper into a ball, and then open carefully to reveal a heavily textured surface with creases and crevices.
- 2) Pass out examples of cave art to the students.
- 3) Give each student a palette of black paint and a mixture of red & brown paint (Mix this before giving to students. You can prepare the palettes while the students do step 1). Using a fine paint brush and the black and/or reddish-brown paint, students can paint their own outlines of animals and human figures. They can copy images from the examples or use their imaginations to draw other creatures.

