



The Artist

Claude Monet was a French artist. He is considered to be one of the great French artists of all time. He was born on November 14, 1840 and lived until December 5, 1926. He loved to draw as a child. When he was a young teenager, it became apparent that he had artistic ability. Claude would draw **caricatures** of his teachers on his schoolwork. By the time he was 15 he had developed a reputation as a **caricature** artist, and his **caricatures** were displayed in the window of a local frame maker's shop where people began to recognize their fellow villagers in the drawings. Claude soon began to charge people to draw their **caricatures** and was able to make a steady income.

Monet was one of the founders of a style of painting called French **Impressionism**. The term "**impressionist**" was used by art critics at the time to imply that the art was just an impression of something and not completed. It was meant as an insult. In this new style, Monet wanted to paint a picture of light shining on objects. He liked to paint the images of the French countryside, and this led him to adopt a method of painting the same scene many times, over and over again, in order to show the changing of light and the passing of the seasons. He used a wide range of vibrant colors and painted quickly using short brushstrokes. If you go very close to one of his pictures it is hard to see what it shows, but if you stand back everything becomes clear. Monet painted en plein air (outdoors) leaving the studio and the familiarity of indoor scenes. He spent many hours painting directly from nature.

From 1883, Monet lived in Giverny, France, where he had a house and property, and began a large landscaping project which included lily ponds. This became the subject of his best-known works. In 1899, he began painting the water lilies, first with a bridge, and later in a series of large paintings. During much of the project, the aging Monet was suffering from bad eyesight. His eyesight was so bad that he nearly went blind. He spent the last 20 years of his life painting the waterlilies in his garden.

The Art

Sample Guided questions

- What colors do you see?

- How does this painting make you feel?
- What words best describe this painting? (shimmering, fuzzy, colorful)
- Does it look real?
- Does the picture look sharp or fuzzy?

This painting was created in oil paint in 1906 (over 100 years ago). It is hanging in the Art Institute of Chicago. The title *Water Lilies* is the name of the series of paintings by Monet. He painted around 250 oil paintings on this subject. At first, he painted small water lilies under a bridge. After that he started to paint them bigger and bigger. If you lined them up in a row, you would think that he was zooming in on the water lilies like you do with a camera. What color do you notice when you look at this painting?

Art Project: Waterlily Paper Plate Craft

Materials: Paper plates, scissors, Green paint, Colored tissue paper and glue.

Instructions

Paint (or color) a paper plate green, let it dry, and then cut a small wedge out and glue some tissue paper into a “poof” onto the center.





The Artist

Vincent Van Gogh was a Dutch artist who lived from March 30, 1853 to July 29, 1890. When Van Gogh was a child, he liked to draw and then started to paint when he was around 30 years old.

Vincent changed the way he painted pictures as he grew. Eventually, he painted in the style of a group called “**Post-Impressionists**.” He was influenced by the Impressionists because he painted outdoors on site, and he studied the effects of light on color. He began painting with intensity and emotion. The colors in his paintings became more vibrant and bright. He would sometimes apply the paint directly onto the canvas from the tubes leaving the paint thick with rough brush strokes. Sometimes it would take weeks for his paintings to dry because the paint was so thick. Van Gogh liked to paint self-portraits (pictures of himself), landscapes, trees, and sunflowers. Most of his famous paintings were finished in the last two years of his life.

Although he wasn't famous during his lifetime (he only sold 1 painting while he was alive!), today he is considered one of the greatest and most influential artists of his time. Many of his paintings sell for millions of dollars today.

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Sample Guided Questions

- What do you see in this painting? (Swirly lines, the stars, the crescent moon, the buildings/village, and cypress tree)
- What do you think the “big black thing” in the painting is? (Students give lots of interesting answers. Many think it’s a castle. It’s actually a cypress tree)
- What colors can you find in the painting?
- Why do you think the painting is called Starry Night? Is this the way the sky looks at night? Do you like the swirly sky? Does it look real?
- How does this painting make you feel? Is it peaceful, frightening, and exciting?

Starry Night was painted in June 1889. Today it hangs in the Museum of Modern Art in New York City. It is a painting of the view from Van Gogh’s window when he was in France. He chose to show us the village just before sunrise. Beneath the swirling sky,

stars, and moon is a small village. You can see the tall spires, or steeples, of churches. There is a large cypress tree in the front left of the painting.

Most art critics agree that this is one of Van Gogh's best works and one of the most recognized paintings in the history of art. Look at the brushstrokes and notice that they are like little lines. This was a new way of painting. And it made other artists think about the way that they used their brush too.

Art Project: Starry Night Coloring Page

Materials: Copies of the Starry Night drawing (you will need one per student), crayons, black construction paper.

Instructions

Have each student color a Starry Night page and then glue onto the center of black construction paper. Encourage them to copy the colors that Van Gogh used in his painting.





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Raphael lived in Italy from 1483-1520 (he was a young boy about the time Columbus sailed to America in 1492). He became a success during a period of art called the Italian **Renaissance**. Raphael is considered to be one of the 3 great masters of the **Renaissance** along with Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo.

His father was a painter, and so as a small boy he did artwork in his father's studio. He became an apprentice (helper) to famous artist in Italy named Pietro Perugino when he was 10 years old, and he learned a lot from him. He had lots of chances to paint on large canvasses. He was considered to be a fully trained master artist by the time he was 18 years old.

When he was 21, he went to Florence. At the time, Florence was the center of the art world. Raphael painted portraits of many famous and wealthy people. By the age of 26, he was considered one of the most important painters in Italy.

He died in 1520, leaving a large number of paintings, many of which were at the Vatican in Rome. Raphael died at the young age of 37.

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Sample Guided Questions

- How does this painting make you feel?
- What do you notice about the angels?
- Do they look like real children?
- What is the expression on their faces?

These angels are part of a bigger painting called the *Sistine Madonna*. Raphael's Angels are also known as 'The Sistine Cherubs'. They are seen at the bottom of the great masterpiece. He painted the Sistine Madonna for an altarpiece for a church in Italy. The two Cherubs are in the clouds looking up at Mary with her child. These Angels, a detail (or small part) of this painting, have become celebrities! Over the years, people have made copies of them for advertisements, greeting cards, sculpture, and even coffee mugs. They have inspired legends of their own. One says that when Raphael was painting the *Madonna* the children of his model would come in to watch. Struck by their posture as they did, the story goes, he added them to the

painting exactly as he saw them. Another story says that Raphael was inspired by two children he encountered on the street when he saw them looking wistfully into the window of a baker's shop.

Art Project: Angels on a cup

Materials: White construction paper cut in circles, paper plates cut in triangle-shaped “pie” pieces for wings, styrofoam cups, tape, crayons or markers, glue, cotton balls, pipe cleaners cut in half

Instructions

Pre-cut white paper circles, paper plate triangles, and pipe cleaners beforehand for the children. You can use a cup turned upside down on the paper for a stencil.

- 1) Have the kids draw a face on the white circles with crayons or markers.
- 2) Give each student a styrofoam cup.
- 3) Stick the face on one side of the cup with tape.
- 4) Stick the triangle shaped “pie” pieces from paper plates for wings on the other side with tape.
- 5) Pull cotton balls into pieces to use as hair. Tape or glue the cotton ball pieces to the top and/or side of the cup for hair.
- 6) Bend the pipe cleaner into a u-shape and stick the ends through the top of the cup for a “halo”.

