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Broken Store Window
(anonymous photo)



Rose Garden, 1920



Picture of a City, 1921



Ad Parnassum, 1932

Swiss artist Paul Klee (pronounced "clay") wrote "It is not my task to reproduce appearances - for that there is the photographic plate." But Paul Klee's paintings did show specific scenes as observed from a single viewpoint. Klee's technique involved breaking portrait scenes down into well defined lines and distinct patches of color. He used line and color to evoke emotions and humor.

Paul Klee lived from 1879 to 1940. In that time he completed at least 8926 paintings, was a gifted violinist, taught college level art, and was a published poet. For awhile he was a stay-at-home dad, as his wife Lily pursued a career as a concert piano player.



A Paul Klee Inspired Children's Art Project

"To paint well is simply this: to put the right color in the right place." -- Paul Klee

Brief Description:

Student-artist Rebecca (age 12) contributed two "Broken Window Paintings" to the Arthouse Children's Art Gallery, and told us about her teacher's wonderful project ideas. On Rebecca's tip, we got in touch with innovative art teacher Jessica Broom to hear about this particular lesson, and how she uses Arthouse in her curriculum.

When a classroom window cracked, Ms. Broom noted that looking past the cracked glass altered perception of the scene beyond. She began thinking about how to combine this "broken window" idea with an existing lesson on line, color, and the work of painter Paul Klee. Jessica felt students would quickly see how "glass-crack" lines could be used to divide sketches into sections for color experimentation.

Keywords:

Paul Klee, cubism.

Materials Needed:

paper,
#2 pencil,
ruler or straight edge,
white glue,
[watercolor crayons](#),
Arthouse (recommended).

Lesson Plan - Background and Historical Information:

(see column at left)

Lesson Plan - Activity:

Day One: Making "Broken Window Drawings"

Step 1: The class reviewed the art of Paul Klee and discussed his use of lines. In early works, like the ones at left, Klee outlined blocks before adding color.

Step 2: Sketching lightly in pencil, students drew their choice of animal or human figures. They were asked to make simple, blocky drawings so later they'd be easy to paint over. Ms. Broom instructed them that no line should be shorter than one half-inch, and no two lines should come closer together than a half-inch unless intersecting. Since Ms. Broom's students were already familiar with Arthouse, they didn't need additional instruction on how to draw basic "architectural" perspective lines such as the outlines of windows and doors or the intersection lines between walls, floors and ceilings.

Step 3: Students made a dot anywhere near the center of the page. With straight-edges, they drew radiating glass-crack lines outward from these dots to the edges of the paper, separated "about the width of pie slices."

Step 4: With squeeze bottles of white glue, students were challenged to put narrow beads down the middle of every pencil line. Glue was allowed to dry overnight

Day Two: Experimental Paintings in the Style of Paul Klee

Step 1: The class reviewed the art of Paul Klee and discussed his use of color.

Step 2: Using [Aquadcolor crayons](#), students colored-in their drawings. They were challenged to make each segment a different color than its neighbors. Watercolor crayons are easy to blend, or different crayons can be used for each segment. The glue-lines made this step move along quickly because raised lines stop the crayon tips.

Step 3: Students painted over their drawings with wet brushes. With watercolor crayons, the crayon effect is easily transformed into a distinctive painterly "watercolor" effect. Again, the raised lines of dried glue help prevent watercolor from migrating across borders.

Day Three: Discussion

Arthouse makes it easy for small groups of students to point out details, similarities and differences between artworks in a visually interesting three-dimensional context. Ms. Broom gave each project group a list of discussion questions to work from.

Example discussion question: "Do these painting meet the definition of cubism? Why or why not?"
(Although these may look a little like famous cubist paintings, they fail to meet the definition of cubism.)

Question: Did Paul Klee's paintings meet the definition of cubism?

Characteristically, cubist painters tried to show objects and scenes from multiple perspectives simultaneously. Like Paul Klee's paintings, these student paintings reflect a single viewpoint.)

Summary:

Want to See More Lesson Ideas As We Publish Them?

Ms. Broom likes to use ArtHouse for small project groups because it gets students onto the same page quickly. Students can easily work on their own component parts, and then bring them together for display - and they love seeing their artwork displayed in ArtHouse.

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ArtHouse provides a focal point for **studio art projects** at all grade levels from pre-kindergarten right through the middle grades. As shown here, it's easy and fun to combine traditional art styles and techniques with new creative ideas in decorating ArtHouse. Project-based learning - using ArtHouse - makes **your** lessons more memorable!

Your name: (optional)

Our sincere thanks go out to Rebecca for sharing her artwork, and also to teacher Jessica Broom for sharing her wonderful "Broken Window" Paul Klee lesson plan.

E-mail address:

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