



Art Masters of Jewish Heritage

LIGHT!

Camille Pissarro 1830-1903

The artist known as Camille Pissarro was born

Jacob Pizarro, a Danish citizen on the Caribbean island of St. Thomas. Pissarro's parents were of Sephardic heritage and were considered to be observant Jews by the standards of their time and place. Within the Jewish culture of the Caribbean, there were clear distinctions made between Jewish ethnicity (even to the point of racial identity) and the practice of mitzvot. As the artist grew he developed a personal viewpoint that regarded all religion as being inappropriate to modern philosophy. In 1855, he moved to France where he became a founding member of the Impressionist group of artists. Although Pissarro's contemporaries regarded him, quite fondly, as a "Jewish ethnic," Pissarro himself was distinctly secular and did not depict Jewish subjects in his work. Married to a Catholic woman, Pissarro devoted himself spiritually to his genre saying, "The Impressionists have a true position, they stand for robust art based on sensation, and that is an honest stand."

Impressionist artists painted the way light played on their subject(s). They were fascinated by the changes in color produced by light and shadow as each danced on leaves, flowers, water, people. To achieve this effect, Impressionist artist abandoned strict outlines in favor of placing small points, lines or smudges of colors next to one another. When viewing an Impressionist piece from afar, the scene unfolds clearly, the closer you approach however, the subject matter appears more indistinct.

The artistic style of Camille Pissarro lends itself perfectly to any subject matter dealing with light (Shabbat, Hanukkah, the Heavens, any text with light driving its intent.)

Materials:

- White paper (watercolor paper may be substituted for construction paper for a finer result)
- Watercolor paints
- Gold and/or silver tempera paint
- Small sponges
- Masking tape
- Subject- candlesticks, menorot, candles, silver Kiddush cups, texts
- 'Bleeding' tissue paper
- Water in dishes
- Broad paintbrushes
- Pencils (to write names only)
- Stencils of candles, menorot, candlesticks (optional)
- Clothespins –'spring' type (optional)

Teacher prep:

Cut the paper to the size desired.

Using the masking tape to tape a frame around the border of each paper.

Learning activity:

1. Sign name on back of paper.
2. Instruct students to paint water all over their paper.



3. Use the paintbrushes to cover the entire, wet, paper with tissue paper pieces (medium to large) that they either tear or cut.
4. Lightly paint water over the tissue and set the paper aside. (This will give you a quick pale background.)
5. Remove the tissue and the brushes.
6. Read texts that describe light both physically and metaphorically.
7. Encourage students to close their eyes and describe either aloud, or to themselves, how they envision this light.
8. If permitted, light candles and watch the flames dance, casting light on surrounding objects and reflecting light in the silver of the Kiddush cup.
9. Brainstorm words, images and feelings that come to mind.
10. Remove the colored tissue paper and discard. The color from the tissue will remain on the paper. (Students may or may not choose to actually incorporate this into their final design or simply apply color over it. Either choice is valid; the color from the tissue will give each piece a 'finished' look.)
11. Use small amounts of water to dampen paints.
12. With sponges, and watercolor paints (but no writing/drawing implements) gently sponge colors to create the scene or subject. Using this 'impressionistic' technique, each student will personally illustrate your area of study.
13. (Certain students may prefer using clothespins rather than fingers to manipulate the sponges.)
14. [Students who have difficulty conceiving the subject matter may wish to place a stencil on the paper. They can then choose to sponge either inside or around the stencil.]
15. Allow the painting to dry.
16. Ask student artists to regard their work and close their eyes to envision, once more, how the light plays into the picture.
17. Using sponge technique, lightly sponge metallics, yellow, white and perhaps a bit of purple or blue (*not black*) to achieve final light and shadow effects.
18. Gently remove masking tape border; sign and date, in pencil, on the lower right front corner.

You Can Conclude With:

- ✍ Students select a text quote they feel embodies their work.
- ✍ Students journal their thought process as they paint.
- ✍ Students relate the role the light plays in their work and in their thoughts or experience.
- ✍ Younger students dictate the story of their work.

CAMOUFLAGE – THE ART OF WHAT’S IMPORTANT

Solomon J. Solomon (1860-1927)

How intriguing it is that an artist of Jewish heritage is responsible for the design and implementation of strategic camouflage during WWI! Solomon J. Solomon was born to a well established, cultured ‘Anglo-Jewish’ family. Grounded in the traditional painting techniques of both the English and French schools of his time, Solomon positioned himself as a respected painter of Torah scenes with his rendering of ‘Samson and Delilah’ (1887). He went on to show his works depicting societal portraiture at the British section of the 1900 World’s Fair. It was during WWI that Solomon enrolled in the Artist Volunteers of the British military. He was commissioned as a Lieutenant Colonel and sent to France to implement the use of strategic camouflage. Upon his return to England in 1916, he set up a school for camouflage and in 1918 he was elected as the first Jewish president of the Royal Society of British Artists.

High Tea in the Sukkah (1906) is an intriguing painting to examine with students:

- a) Who in the painting is clearly Jewish? (the Chief Rabbi only)
- b) Can you locate the lulav? (center front)
- c) Which objects in the painting has the artist rendered in blue? (lady’s hat; teacup)
- d) Why has the artist drawn attention (by the use of color) to objects characteristic of, then, contemporary British society? (open to discussion and personal opinion/reasoning)

Materials:

- Crayons, markers, colored pencils (using all 3 gives artists a choice and provides different textures)
- Paper
- Pencils and erasers

Introduction to the Learning Activity:

Review the story, holiday or ritual you are studying.

Divide students into small groups. Ask students to brainstorm and create individual lists of subject elements.

Instruct each student to circle the elements (approximately 3) that they feel are the most important.

Learning Activity:

1. With a pencil, lightly sketch a scene or still life that reflects the important parts of the ritual, holiday, topic or story you have been studying.
2. Select a group of crayons and markers and pencils that are various shades of the same color (ex: red, magenta, red-orange, maroon or blue, turquoise, aqua; navy). These will be used to color the majority of the picture.
3. Select a crayon that is the complementary (opposite on the color wheel) color of your main color. Set this crayon aside for the time being.
4. With the crayons of the main color, use the many shades to color your scene, leaving the main (3) details you have circled without color.
5. To complete the picture, take the complementary color you have laid aside, and use this crayon/marker/pencil to color the 3 remaining details.
6. Sign and date the picture on the front!

For a more artistically complex, sophisticated activity:

1. Using a single color of tempera paint with white and black (remember proper mixing technique) to mix shades and tints.

2. Working on canvas or canvas paper, paint a scene or a still life leaving negative (empty) space where the 3 elements to be highlighted will be painted. Be certain to wash and dry brush between colors.
3. Allow painting to dry completely.
4. With the complementary color (shades and tints) paint the elements you wish to accentuate in the negative space.

To Conclude the Learning:

- ✂ Students describe their picture to the group or to the instructor, explaining the choices they have made to draw attention to certain elements.
- ✂ As a group, discuss what practices, in each of our lives stand out, complementing or in contrast to, the rest of our activities.
- ✂ How can we determine (or can we) which part of the picture actually supports the rest? Is it the major portion, the camouflage type colors or is it the smaller, but more distinctive portion

Judaism through the Day - Holidays, Heritage and Torah

Moritz Daniel Oppenheim (1800 – 1882)

Born in Germany to a successful merchant, Moritz Daniel Oppenheim is considered by many art historians to be the greatest Jewish genre painter of his time. Oppenheim studied drawing from his youth and was renowned for the realistic portrayal of daily life in his paintings. As an adult, he settled in Frankfurt where he was the first Jew to be honored as a member of the Frankfurt Museum Society. His portraiture depicted the Jewish personalities of his day and his subsequent work chronicled Jewish acculturation within the fabric of German society. In his later years, Oppenheim drew on memories of his youth to complete his portfolio *Scenes from Traditional Jewish Life*. His images focused on the importance of family in celebrating and transmitting Judaism. It is in regarding Oppenheim as a model Jewish diarist that we can transmit his lessons to value our own stories and customs.

Essential vocabulary:

Triptych – a painting made up of 3 distinct panels and scenes.

Materials:

- White construction paper (12X18)
- Black construction paper (12X18)
- Black construction paper (9X12)
- Glue
- Markers/crayons/colored pencils/watercolor paint palette
- Pencils and erasers
- Scissors and ruler or paper cutter

Advance preparation:

Cut large black paper into strips, 18" long and 1" wide

Cut smaller black paper into strips, 12" long and 1" wide

Study your curriculum area (Tanakh, ritual, holiday) considering 3 distinct scenes you can envision as components of your learning. Each student can use a visual web (see template) to elaborate the details for their scene ideas.

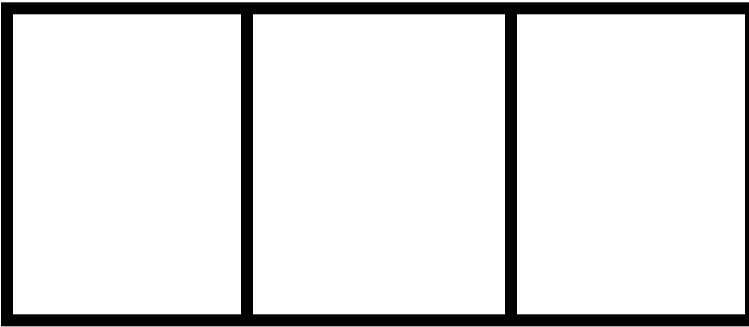
Art Activity:

1. Fold the white paper into thirds. Open paper and smooth flat.

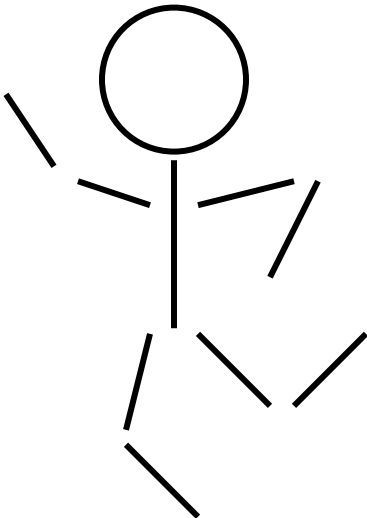
2. Glue short black strips along each side edge of the white paper and longer black strips along the top and bottom edge.
3. Glue short black strips along the fold lines that divide the white paper. (see figure below)
4. Using the visual web as a reference, students sketch 3 scenes, each of which teaches, illustrates or defines a different element of the lesson.
5. After explaining their thought process to the teacher, students complete their pictures using whatever color media they wish. Students who prefer, may collage their scenes rather than draw.

To Conclude the Learning:

- ✂ Ask each student to discuss their work with a friend.
- ✂ Each friend can be responsible for presenting the work of the other to the group.



Drawing people can be a real stumbling block but it needn't be so. Students naturally gravitate to drawing stick figures so, we can make the most of this by offering stick figures with shapes and joints.



Practice drawing and rearranging these limbs to create a person with different positions. By curving the lines you can add the implication of emotion. You can even add clothes. You will be amazed and so will your students!



CREATING WITH MUSIC – ABSTRACT EXPRESSIONISM

Helen Frankenthaler

Helen Frankenthaler, the daughter of a Supreme Court Justice, was born in 1928 on New York's Upper East Side. Encouraged by her mother to embrace the cultural opportunities available in New York, Frankenthaler developed rapidly as a painter in early adulthood. She rose to fame with her innovative method of "stain" painting. She would pour paint directly on canvas allowing it to soak in and travel, leaving empty spaces to give the work 'breathing space.' Helen Frankenthaler was a major force in the development of a group of painters (including Mark Rothko) known as Color Field painters. Her paintings evoke strong emotional responses, give the impression of limitless space and spontaneous expression.

Because abstract expressionist work is a responsive process, it is wonderfully suited to lessons that relate to nusach, trope, contemporary music and any study incorporating melody.

Materials:

Option 1-

- Watercolor paints
- White construction paper or watercolor paper
- Water and small dishes
- Towels
- *Pipettes or droppers*
- *Brush assortment*

Option 2-

- Tempera or acrylic paints
- White construction paper or canvas (stretched; 'paper,' or boards)
- Water and small dishes
- Towels
- Pipettes or droppers
- Brush assortment

Advance Preparation:

Select music to be studied.

Allow students to practice with paints and tools on scratch paper.

Learning Activity:

1. Introduce the music of the lesson.
2. Encourage students to listen to the music, eyes closed, and move their hand(s) and arm(s) however they are inclined.
3. Discuss the way the music 'looked' to their hands and the colors they saw in their minds.
4. Explain that they will now represent the look and feel of the music with colors and strokes.
5. Instruct that there is to be no talking out loud.
6. Play the music over again, as many times as desired while the students apply paint.
7. (You can continue with music of a similar genre for the rest of the session)
8. Allow work to dry.
9. Play music again while students turn their work to determine the orientation they prefer.
10. (Add text quotes to final picture if desired.)
11. Sign and date on the front.

To Conclude the Learning:

- ✂ Ask students to discuss in small groups or as a class, how the music motivated them to create.

- ✗ Share what images seem to emerge in each painting and how they relate to the intent of the music.
- ✗ Select text/tefillah quotes that speak to this activity.

THE WORLD OF DOLLS

Beatrice Alexander
(1895-1990)

*"children learn so much from their dolls -
about history, about imagination, about love."
Mme. Beatrice Alexander*

For as long as I can remember, and continuing today, there has been a delicate doll on my shelf. She has perfect skin and curls, a turquoise dress with a frilled pinafore and she used to have small velvet shoes. I do not recall ever knowing from where I got this doll, only that she was so special. This doll is a *Madame Alexander*.

Bertha (later Beatrice) Alexander was born in New York city to her mother Hannah and step-father Maurice who ran a doll hospital. She designed her first doll, a Red Cross nurse, when she was 23 years old. In response to a shortage of dolls caused by various wartime embargoes. In the 1920's Alexander decided to establish her own business, in part to help support her commitment to the Women's League for Palestine (later the Women's League for Israel). The Alexander Doll Company soared to the forefront of the doll world in 1935 and maintained that position as Madame Alexander pioneered the use of plastic for doll manufacturing. Beatrice Alexander won the Fashion Academy Gold Medal Award for 3 consecutive years and later received the Distinguished Public Service Award from the Anti-Defamation League.

Materials:

- Doll base – Stuffed muslin (Oriental Trading Company);
'Blank' puppet
Cardstock
Foam
- Fabric scraps
- Buttons
- Assorted trims
- Wiggly eyes
- Tacky glue in small dishes (apply with craft sticks)
- Scissors
- yarn
- Needle and thread (optional)



Advance Preparation:

Review the details about the life of the character upon whom the doll is based. (make notes or drawings on a visual imaging web.)

Learning Activity:

Use the materials to design a doll to reflect the selected character.

To Conclude the Learning:

- ✗ Write a short story about the doll.
- ✗ 'Interview' the doll about its experiences.
- ✗ Act out a short skit between the various dolls.

An Extra Special Doll:

Materials:

- Used bowling pins (ask your local bowling alley for donations)
- Gesso
- Large household paintbrush
- White tissue paper (optional)
- Acrylic paints and detail brushes (**stain warning**)
- Fabric scraps



- Buttons
- Assorted trims
- Wiggly eyes
- Tacky glue in small dishes (apply with craft sticks)
- Scissors
- yarn
- Needle and thread (optional)

Advance Preparation:

Coat each bowling pin with the Gesso primer (this makes the surface receptive to glue and paints.

While Gesso is wet, cover with white tissue paper for a more textured surface, if preferred.

Complete the **Learning Activity and Conclusion** as above but allow more time.

COMICS WITH PUNCH –PERFECT FOR PURIM AND OTHER DRAMATIC OCCASIONS!

***Roy Lichtenstein* (1923-1997)**

Roy Lichtenstein began drawing as a teenager. He desired a career as an artist and studied also to earn his living as an art teacher. In 1960, he realized that cartoon images were ingrained in American culture and that the figure doodles he had done through the years had a universal appeal. Although Lichtenstein's figures appear simple, with their hard edges and bold primary colors, they carry with them subtle messages of emotion and intellect. As he developed his style, Lichtenstein further textured his work with the addition of graduated dots and diagonal lines. We continue see the enduring effect of Roy Lichtenstein's 'pop' art, in commercial illustrations, comic strips and advertisement.

Materials:

- White construction paper
- Pencils and erasers
- Markers (broad line) – black, blue, red, yellow
- Pink paint
- Q-tip cotton swabs

Advance Preparation:

Review the characters and story lines you are studying.

Brainstorm the most dramatic characteristics of the personalities.

Make a list of short expressions and emotions each character might say.

Use scratch paper to practice drawing faces with exaggerated features (emphasize that Lichtenstein did not create accurate portraiture.)

Keep encouraging students to exaggerate characteristics and features!!

Learning Activity:

1. After selecting one or two characters, lightly draw their faces, necks and shoulders.
2. Add an arm if you wish.
3. Choose area(s) to paint with pink dots using the Q-tips.
4. Complete the characters using the primary color markers, coloring carefully to fill the space. Do one area with diagonal lines.
5. Allow the paper to dry.
6. Boldly outline the entire picture with the black marker.
7. Add a 'speech bubble' with a comment, emotion or action word.

To Conclude the Learning:

- ✂ Ask students to relate the story that has occurred prior to their scene and/or following their scene.
- ✂ Have student groups create storylines relating to their particular comics.

Just Imagine what you can do with.....

Frida Kahlo, family relationships, and questions of personal and cultural identity!

Maurice Sendak, wild things and night kitchens!

Mark Rothko and fields of color!

Yaacov Agam and multiple perspectives!

Judy Chicago and tables settings honoring Jewish women!

Lee Krasner and torn paper collage!

Alfred Stieglitz and Annie Leibovitz - photographs

Marc Chagall in an upside down world with flying people and magical animals! (there are many variations of Chagall art lessons. Check websites like KinderArt and Princeton's Incredible Art Department – and while there look for the weaving photos of my students at Oakland Hebrew Day School!)

*...there is no such thing
as great art about nothing - Rothko*

Great art picks up where nature ends - Chagall

Channi draws, flat on her back, to better understand the work of Frida Kahlo.

