

Nixon Art News April 2008

The Nixon Art Program Web site has been upgraded! I hope some of you have visited. Web sites are always a work in progress. In addition to the links currently posted, I hope to eventually include pictures of artwork on display at Nixon, and links to museum web sites featuring very cool interactive kid sites. To visit the Nixon Art Program Web site, just click on this link!

http://fc.sudbury.k12.ma.us/~toby_kopman/
Check it out!

1st Grade

First graders have been learning more new skills and concepts. First Grade students learned about geometric shapes in their classrooms, and in the art room as well. Our activity involved painting outlines of shapes that can be named; geometric shapes but also stars, hearts and many others. Then we made our first foray into color theory, studying warm and cool colors. Students painted inside the shapes with either warm or cool colors, then outside the shapes (the background) with the opposite color group. The beautiful results are just the beginning of color studies which will spiral through future grades. We finished the painting unit with self-portraits of either "Brushing My Hair" or "Brushing My Teeth." Students depicted themselves in different places, from a variety of points of view and used color in very interesting ways.

First Graders brought home paper sculptures not too long ago. We studied how to create paper sculpture using many methods for changing flat paper into 3 dimensional forms. Ask your First Grader what a crimper is, or how many ways papers can be attached. As classes constructed sculptures with paper, a wide variety of creatures, real and imaginary, filled the art room!

Currently, First Grade artists are exploring the designs of Ghana. We will create printing blocks based on Ghana designs and make Adinkra paper!

2nd Grade

Weavings by students in Mrs. Warner's, Miss Hutchinson's, Mr. Greene's and Ms. Roth's classes have been lighting up the display space near the front office for several weeks! These art works are extraordinary. Skill levels are high and the use of color and pattern is impressive. Each 2nd Grader accomplished the creation of something beautiful. Weaving is really a lifelong skill. The materials used can be very simple. A loom can be made of any sort of cardboard or wood. The warp can be string or twine or yarn. You can weave with anything that can be put over and under the warp, even vines or other weft from nature.

Our last Native American activity in the Art Room was the creation of clay seed pots similar to those made by the Acoma tribe of New Mexico. Once again Second Graders used their hands, eyes and knowledge of shapes and patterns. These lovely small pots are still on display in the second Grade hall at Nixon.

3rd Grade

As you know, 3rd Graders studying the Animal Kingdom in the art room looked at pictures and models of animals, and did a lot of animal drawings. The AWESOME clay animals students created were fired, glazed and displayed. The whole school admired the many, many different kinds of animals.

Third Graders have completed the Animal Kingdom unit with printmaking activities. It's been a lot of fun and **everyone** has done really well! After all the drawing and clay work with animals, students looked at paintings of animals in their habitats by Henri Rousseau, Franz Mark, Oskar Kokoschka and others. We noticed the use of pattern and repetition, and the techniques artists use to create the illusion of distance: size, placement on the page, details, overlapping and color.

The next step was to create drawings of animals in their habitats for a block print. Practice was the crucial step in creating wonderful drawings which show a lot of knowledge and skill! The drawings were transferred to styrofoam blocks. Two weeks of printing followed. We printed with many different colors of ink on a rainbow of construction paper colors. During the second printing week, we tried some experimental printing with wonderfully surprising results. While reviewing all the prints, we discussed why some were more successful than others, and the impact color choices and good printing techniques have on results.

Most prints have been sent home. Within the next month Third Grade prints, one print chosen by each student, will be on display. All Third Graders learned a great deal this term. I am extremely proud of each one of them.

4th Grade

Fourth Graders have been learning basic color theory concepts including primary, secondary and tertiary colors, and the concept of color wheels, which were produced by students both digitally and in tempera paint. We studied the three main color schemes (monochromatic, analogous and complementary) and practiced sorting compositions into the correct scheme. Now Fourth Graders are beginning a wonderful activity extending the objective information of color theory into the subjective realm of mood and feeling.

We looked at artworks by well-known artists Marc Chagall, Faith Ringgold and Romare Bearden and noticed how these artists tell stories through art and use color to help create a mood. Students were asked to choose a memory from their own lives which holds some emotion for them (happy, excited, elated, sad, nervous and so forth). 4th Graders will connect storytelling with color, feelings and mood as they develop an illustration of their memories.

5th Grade

After working very hard and very successfully at drawing observational self-portraits, 5th Graders are taking a break from realism, and themselves! We are creating balloon form ceramic heads that focus on exaggeration and expression. The process is to fashion two pinch pots and connect them together to make a sealed ovoid form filled with air (just like a balloon). Next, the face and head features (eyes, noses, mouths, ears, hair, and more) are attached using excellent clay construction skills. Fifth graders usually create the most unusual and humorous clay heads. So far, this year's Fifth Graders are no exception! When the heads are completed and dry, they will be fired and then painted. I can't wait to see how they turn out!

Art students review and learn new clay skills every year. The balloon form clay heads are the culmination of five years of ceramic activities. The Art curriculum explores pinching, work in relief on tiles, modeling, and coil and slab construction. (Earlier this year, Fifth Graders created beautiful glazed boxes through slab construction.) Nixon students have a firm foundation in ceramics on which to build if they have future opportunities.

After spring vacation, all the Fifth Grade students will begin working on scenery and props for the Fifth Grade play, "Voyage Aboard the Charming Sally," which will be performed for parents on Tuesday, June 10 at 7pm. I hope to see you then!