

Mary Cassatt LESSON 2019, 3rd Grade

Materials needed:

White construction paper (1 sheet for each student)
Chalk pastels (in art closet to be shared by students)
Plain printer paper (to cover artwork to take home)
Tape (to tape the plain paper over the artwork)
Wipes to clean up

LESSON

Introduction

Background of Mary Cassatt

Mary Cassatt was an American artist. She was born near Pittsburgh in the late 1840s, but lived most of her life in France.

Her parents took her to museums in Paris and she was inspired by all the great art work that she saw there. When she was older, she came back to America and went to art school, even though most women did not study art-or go to college at all.

When she was done with art school, she moved back to France and started painting. She loved to paint and draw families and children, especially scenes with mothers and babies. In France, she met a group of artists who called themselves "Impressionists," and she asked to join their group.

Impressionism

The Impressionists wanted to paint scenes of everyday life, and they used bright colors and quick brushstrokes to create the scenes. Mary Cassatt also wanted to paint people as they really looked, doing everyday things. She was inspired to use bright colors and patterns that she had seen in Japanese prints.

Mary Cassatt's paintings make you feel like you're right there, looking in on a special moment. Her art helped make everyday scenes important and also show the world that women could be great artists too.

The Child's Bath

The Child's Bath is one of Mary Cassatt's most famous paintings-and it's at the Art Institute of Chicago, so you can go see it in person!

Mary Cassatt used different viewpoints in her paintings. In this one, are you looking up, down, or straight at the scene?

Where do you see patterns? What colors do you see?

Notice that the little girl's bath is in a bowl rather than a modern shower or bath. What kind of relationship do you think the mother and child have? How does the artist show the sweet relationship between the two?

PROJECT

Have the students write their name on the back of the paper.

Tell the students to think of a special relationship that they have with someone: parent, grandparent, sibling, teacher, coach, uncle, etc. Using the pastels, have students draw a picture of that relationship, using Mary Cassatt's images as inspiration. Remind students to use patterns in their artwork-on clothes, wallpaper, etc.- and to smudge the pastels but avoid mixing color to mimic the Impressionists' brushstrokes.

Wrap-up

When the students are done, tape a piece of paper over the drawing so they can transport it home without making a mess of the chalk.

Make sure to leave a few minutes to wipe up hands and desks and to clean up the materials.

