

LESSON PLAN

AT-HOME ART PROJECT: Sunflower Still Life

INSTRUCTIONS



Sunflowers, 1889

INSPIRATION ARTIST:

Vincent Van Gogh (1853-1890)

Van Gogh's paintings of Sunflowers are among his most famous. He did them in Arles, in the south of France, in 1888 and 1889. Vincent painted a total of five large canvases with sunflowers in a vase, with three shades of yellow 'and nothing else'. In this way, he demonstrated that it was possible to create an image with numerous variations of a single colour, without any loss of eloquence.

The sunflower paintings had a special significance for Van Gogh: they communicated 'gratitude', he wrote. He hung the first two in the room of his friend, the painter Paul Gauguin, who came to live with him for a while in the Yellow House. Gauguin was impressed by the sunflowers, which he thought were 'completely Vincent'. Van Gogh had already painted a new version during his friend's stay and Gauguin later asked for one as a gift, which Vincent was reluctant to give him. He later produced two loose copies, however, one of which is now in the Van Gogh Museum.

MATERIALS NEEDED FROM HOME:

- Thick white paper
- Pencil and Eraser

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- Black Sharpie or pen
- Crayons, colored pencils, watercolor, Crayola markers, oil pastels or whatever you have on hand.
- Option: If you have oil pastels, try taking a q-tip with a little baby oil to spread the colors on your still life.

ART PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Create a sunflower still life in the style of Vincent Van Gogh considering line, texture and pattern.

VOCABULARY:

Line is an identifiable path created by a point moving in space. It is one-dimensional and can vary in width, direction, and length. Lines often define the edges of a form. Lines can be horizontal, vertical, or diagonal, straight or curved, thick or thin.

Texture refers to the way an object feels to the touch or looks as it may feel if it were touched.

Repetition refers to one object or shape repeated; pattern is a combination of elements or shapes repeated in a recurring and regular arrangement.

PROMPT QUESTIONS:

- Where did Van Gogh place his vase on the table? Where will you place yours in your drawing?
- What will the size and shape of your vase be?
- How do the flowers sit in the vase? Do some overlap?
- What are the size and shapes of the sunflowers (buds, open and wilting)
- Van Gogh used only shades of yellow for this artwork. Will you follow his example or choose a different color? Or many colors?
- How can you create different shades of your chosen color with the art supplies you have on hand? What happens when you color in areas lightly? What happens when you apply more pressure with your colored pencil or crayon?
- How will you add texture to your drawing using lines and repetition?
- Where did Van Gogh sign his artwork?

ART MAKING PROCESS:

Step 1:

- Decide where your vase will sit on the paper and start out drawing it lightly with your pencil.

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Step 2:

- Add the horizon line behind the vase.

Step 3:

- Fill your vase with sunflowers. Think about the different sizes, heights and shapes. Add the flower stems and centers first, thinking about how the flowers will overlap.

Step 4:

- Add the petals. Note how each petal is different and also how they overlap. If you are feeling brave, skip the pencil and jump right in with the sharpie!

Step 5:

- Go over all your pencil marks with a black sharpie or pen. Use the sharpie to add texture and detail to the flowers. Erase any visible pencil marks.

Step 6:

- Fill your still-life with color, choose a single color and create different shades or choose many colors. Artist's choice!

Step 7:

- Sign your stilllife in the style of Van Gogh.

POST PROMPT QUESTIONS:

- How is your still life similar to Van Gogh's?
- How is it different?
- How did you decide which color/colors to use? Why did you choose these colors?

EXTRA FUN:

- Fill a vase, cup or bowl with flowers from your own garden or neighborhood. After you have arranged the flowers, observe the arrangement from many different angles. When you have found the angle that appeals to you, start drawing.
- Find and print this free drawing sheet as well as many others inspired by famous artists and artworks.

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EXAMPLES:



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SOURCES:

<https://www.vangoghmuseum.nl/en/collection/s0031V1962?v=1>