

AT-HOME ART PROJECT: Hats Off to Mary Cassatt!

INSTRUCTIONS



INSPIRATION ARTIST:

Mary Cassatt (1844–1926)

Mary Cassatt was an American painter and printmaker born into an affluent family in Pennsylvania. Cassatt's parents believed it was important for women to receive an education, so she attended school and traveled in Europe during her childhood. This early exposure to the art and culture of Europe greatly influenced her. After formally studying art in Philadelphia, Cassatt returned to Paris as a young woman to continue studying art on her own, visiting museums across Europe and training in the studios of established artists. (The main art school in Paris, the École des Beaux-Arts, did not accept female students at that time.) She became a successful professional artist at a time when it was very difficult for a woman to do so.

Mary Cassatt is best known for her paintings depicting the social and private lives of mothers and children. Cassatt loved the language and fashion of France and was known for her subjects wearing French Couture (fashionable clothes made to a client's specific requirements and measurements). She especially loved the Parisian hats of her time.

Cassatt transformed these ordinary subjects with her vision and her artistic talent earned her the respect of a group of artists known as the Impressionists, which included the artists Claude Monet, Auguste Renoir, Camille Pissarro, and Alfred Sisley. These artists depicted fleeting moments in nature and human life, and experimented with bright colors, loose brushstrokes, and innovative viewpoints. Among the Impressionists, Cassatt was one of only three women and the sole American.



The Boating Party, 1893



Child in a Straw Hat, 1886



Summertime, 1894

ARTS EDUCATION PROGRAM

LESSON PLAN

MATERIALS NEEDED FROM HOME:

- Leaves and flowers from your neighborhood or garden
- Paper to draw on (any size any color)
- Sharpie or Marker
- Optional: Heavy book and glue stick or glue bottle

ART PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Participants will use their creativity in considering hat design using found objects in nature. Artists will consider the color, shape, and texture in natural elements when designing their imaginary hat composition in their work of art.

PROMPT QUESTIONS:

1. Why do you think Mary Cassatt incorporated so many hats in her works of art?
2. Think about the style of hat you want to create using items from nature. Will it be a baseball cap, a bonnet, a fireman's hat, a fanciful party hat?
3. How will you use the shapes you find in nature (leaves, flower petals, grass) to create your unique design?

ART MAKING PROCESS:

Step 1:

Before you begin the art making process, take some time to walk through your yard, garden or neighborhood and collect different items from nature. Consider color, shape, size and texture. Make sure you have permission to pick the items you select for your hat design!

Step 2:

With your marker or Sharpie, trace a simple face and neck on the lower half of your paper (FIG. 1). You will only need to draw the lower part of your face as your hat will cover the top of your head.

Step 3:

Arrange your found items on your paper, creating a unique hat design. Move your objects around until you are satisfied with how they look considering shape and color and how their position effects your hat design. Take a photo of your creation and if you'd like, try out a new arrangement and a new design (FIG. 2 & 3).

Optional: If you have a design that you especially love, place another sheet of paper carefully on top of it to keep the flowers from moving around and put them both into a book. Stack a few books on top to create weight and let sit for several days so the flowers will dry. When the flowers have dried, glue them down for a more permanent work of art.

POST PROMPT QUESTIONS:

1. What did you enjoy most about creating this type of art?
2. Mary Cassatt liked to paint mothers and children enjoying simple moments in life. Are there moments in your own life that you would like to capture in your own art?

LESSON PLAN

EXAMPLES:

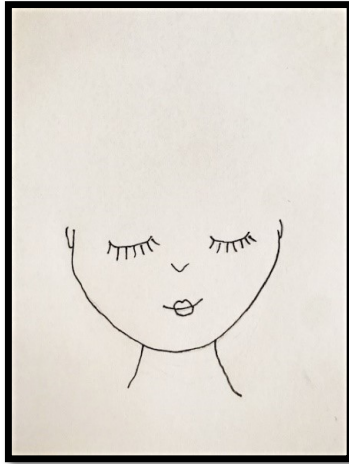


FIG. 1



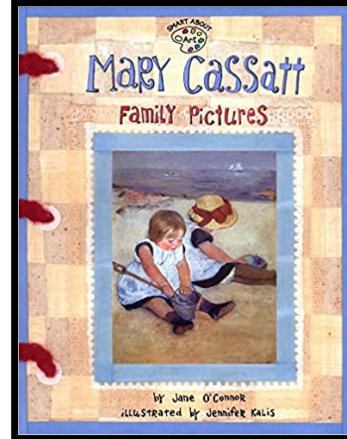
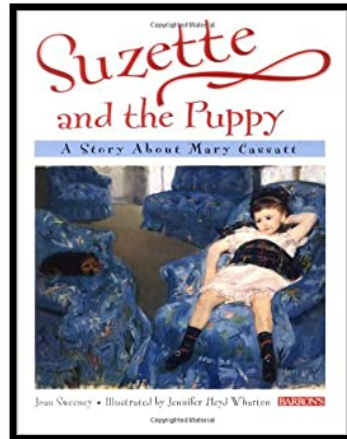
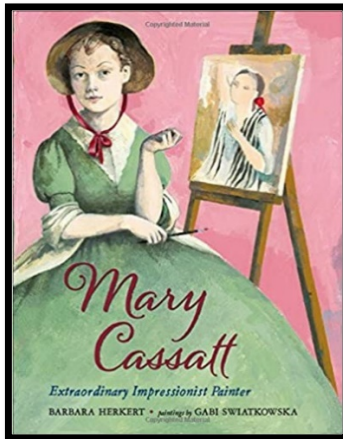
FIG. 2



FIG. 3

EXTRA FUN:

1. Read a book about Mary Cassatt:



2. Watch a short film about her painting *The Boating Party*

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vcTE5x7cTL8>

SOURCES:

<https://www.nga.gov/content/dam/ngaweb/Education/learning-resources/an-eye-for-art/AnEyeForArt-MaryCassatt.pdf>

https://npg.si.edu/object/npg_NPG.76.33

https://www.nga.gov/features/slideshows/mary-cassatt-selected-paintings.html#slide_7