

K • 1

Vincent van Gogh

art in
action



Masterpiece:

Sunflowers

1888, oil on canvas

91 cm. x 72 cm.

Neue Pinakothek, Munich, Germany

Artist:

Vincent van Gogh, 1853-1890

Project:

Still Life Vase of Flowers

KEY CONCEPTS

Style: Still-Life

Color: Warm/Cool

Shape: Round/Oval
Geometric Shapes

Line: Straight/Curving

Space: Overlap/Balance

ABOUT THE ARTIST

- Born in Holland in 1853; painted in France.
- Used bright color and heavy brushstrokes to show the wildness of nature.
- Rough brush strokes and thick paint, called impasto, show movement.
- He painted flowers as if they were people with personalities.
- Expressionist painter - he expressed his feelings in his paintings.
- No one liked his paintings when he was alive; now they are very popular.

CONCEPTS

Style:

- Still Life

Expressionism

Color:

- Warm

Cool

Mixed

Line:

Personalities

Straight

Curving

Horizontal

Shape:

- Round
- Oval

Space:

Overlap

Balance

Texture:

- Impasto

Rough

Smooth

Vocabulary:

Museum

Sketch

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR KEY CONCEPTS

Why is this painting called a still life?

A still life shows objects that are still and cannot move on their own. Van Gogh first drew a sketch of an oval for the vase, then he drew the flowers in the arrangement.

What shapes are repeated?

The flowers and the vase repeat round and oval shapes. Flowers seen from the front have round shapes; flowers turned sideways have oval shapes. The vase has an oval shape with a flat top and bottom.

What makes this still life seem alive?

Van Gogh liked to paint still-life compositions because he could arrange the objects in pleasing ways. Some flowers have straight stems. They seem to stand straight and tall. Some flowers have curving stems and petals.

They appear to be shy or sad.

Why is yellow called a warm color?

The flowers show the warmth of fall. Yellow is a happy, warm color. Yellow is considered a happy, warm color because it is the color of the sun.

How does Van Gogh show that some flowers are in front of others?

Artists overlap objects in their paintings in order to show that one thing is in front of another. Some flowers overlap others and hide their shapes.

How did Van Gogh make this picture?

Van Gogh painted this picture with oil paint and a wide paintbrush. He used thick, impasto paint, like toothpaste, to paint the flowers and vase. If you could touch it, you would feel the rough texture of the flowers and vase.

Did Van Gogh paint the table line or the vase first?

Van Gogh painted the vase first and then added the table line. The table is a different height on each side, which means the vase was in the way when he painted the line.

What did Van Gogh do first when he painted this still life?

Van Gogh first drew a sketch of an oval for the vase, then he drew the flowers in the arrangement. Next, he mixed the colors, using oil paint, and then he painted the canvas. He painted the flowers, one at a time, in a balanced and lively arrangement, placing some overlapping others and some overlapping the vase.

How does Van Gogh show that some flowers are in front of others?

Overlap shows that one thing is in front of another. Some flowers overlap others and hide their shapes.

MATERIALS

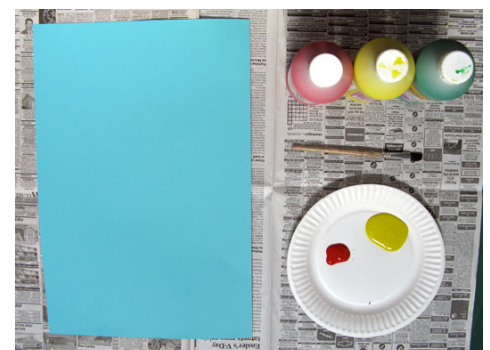
- sketch paper
- 12x18 (6x9) turquoise paper
- vase with flowers
- drawing pencil, sketch book
- 1/2" brush, palette
- tempera paint: yellow, red, green,
- wheat paste
- color wheel
- How to Draw Flowers guide

SETUP

- Make a sketchbook for each student by folding 12x18 construction paper in half and filling it with 10 pieces of 9x12 sketch paper. Staple along folded edge to bind.
- Add 4 tablespoons wheat or rice paste to a 16 oz. container of yellow tempera. (Do not thicken the other colors.) Mix the paint in advance, so it has time to thicken to frosting consistency.
- Cover work surfaces with newspaper.
- Set out a vase of flowers, sketchbooks, drawing pencils, How to Draw Flower Shapes guides, and color wheel.
- Have ready for each student 12x18 turquoise paper, a palette with about 1 tablespoon yellow and 1 teaspoon red tempera, and brushes..
- Have ready green paint for stems and vase.
- Have ready buckets of water and towels for cleanup.

TIPS

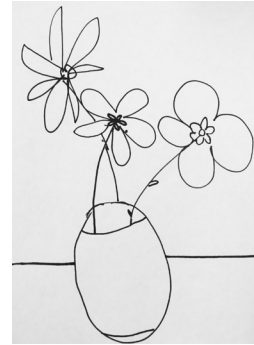
- Have extra paint brushes available to avoid washing brushes in this lesson. Or have adults wash and thoroughly dry brushes between colors.
- Encourage students to stand back and evaluate whether they like their work when finished.



PROJECT: STILL LIFE VASE OF FLOWERS

Sketch:

1. Air draw round and oval shapes.
2. Sketch flower shapes. Use How To Draw Flowers guide.

**Project:**

1. Draw an oval vase with curving top and bottom on 12x18 turquoise paper.
2. Draw several flowers above the vase, flowers of different shapes, sizes and heights. Have sunflowers overlap.
3. Draw a table line behind center of vase.
4. Paint flowers using impasto paint using thick brush strokes.
5. Paint in thick, short brush strokes without scrubbing the paint on.
6. Mix a shade of orange by adding small amounts of red to existing orange. Paint a flower with this new orange. Mix at least two different shades of orange.
7. Paint centers of flowers dark orange.
8. Use a clean brush to paint stems green. Add leaves.
9. Mix brown by mixing green and orange. Paint vase.
10. Paint tabletop yellow.

