

Key Ideas

- Children can get ideas for art from anything they see, think about or care about.
- Studying the unique visual characteristics of subjects is one way to get ideas for art.
- Artists choose subjects that are visually interesting to them.
- Children can determine the sources used by artists to get their ideas.
- Artists collect and save ideas for art in many ways.

Program Summary

In search of ideas for art, Don and THE BIG A children visit a zoo. The children learn to choose animals that visually interest them. They study the animals' special characteristics by imitating the different ways each animal moves and by sketching in their Idea Books.

The children learn about the many different ways in which artists get ideas for art through visits to the studios of sculptor David Gilhooly and painter Jacob Lawrence. Both artists emphasize the importance of visual awareness and the use of their own interests and experiences.

The children are now able to look at works of art and speculate about how the artists got their ideas. Recalling the process of looking, remembering and imagining, the children and Don begin to discuss ways in which they can turn the ideas they have collected into finished works of art.

Key Words

drawing
lines
painting
sculpture
texture

Featured Artwork

The Cabinet Makers; Jacob Lawrence; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution (Date: 1957; Casein on Paper; 30 1/2" x 22 1/2")

The Library; Jacob Lawrence; 1960; Tempera on fiberboard, 24" x 29 7/8" (60.9 x 75.8 cm.) National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution; Gift of S.C. Johnson & Son, Inc. 1969.47.24

Children Playing on the Beach; Mary Cassatt; National Gallery of Art, Washington; Ailsa Mellon Bruce Collection (Date: 1884; Canvas; 38 3/8" x 29 1/4" (0.974 x 0.742 cm.))

Circus Elephants; John Steuart Curry; National Gallery of Art, Washington; Gift of Admiral Neill Phillips in memory of Grace Hendrick Phillips (Date: dated 1932; Canvas; 25 1/4" x 36 1/8" (0.640 x 0.918 cm.))

Persian Painting: "Puzzle sketch of four horses"; Safavid period; dated 1616; School of Isfahan; Signed by Riza Abbasi. Courtesy of the Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.; 4 3/4" x 6 1/8" (12. x 15.4 cm.); 53.23

Seattle's Own Ark; David Gilhooly; 1978; Reduced clay; H: 12' x W: 4' x L: 6'

Frog Big Mac; David Gilhooly; 1986; Ceramic; Life-size

Frog Fry; David Gilhooly; 1986; Ceramic; Life-size

Frog Dagwood; David Gilhooly; 1986; Life-size

Before the Program

Display several reproductions of art that have different subjects such as people, animals, buildings and natural objects. Appropriate reproductions can be found in THE BIG A Teacher's Art Kit, your school's collection or magazines. Ask students to identify the subjects in each artwork. Write the names for the subjects on the board.

Explain that many artists get ideas for their artwork by looking at and thinking about subjects such as these. Discuss what subjects the students like to look at to get ideas for their artwork. Tell the students that this program shows how THE BIG A children and artists get ideas by carefully looking at and thinking about important subjects in their lives.

After the Program

Recall the Program

Ask the students how a trip to the zoo helped THE BIG A children get ideas for their artwork. Which animals in the program do the students like to look at? Ask them to describe the animals' special qualities. (For example, "The giraffe has *skirmy* legs." "The elephant has a *wrinkly* trunk.")

Write the names of the artists, David Gilhooly and Jacob Lawrence, on the board. Ask the students to recall how they got their ideas. What subjects did they use? How is their artwork similar and different? What do the students like about the artists' work?

Discuss Ideas for Creating Art

Ask the students what subjects they could look at as sources of ideas for their artwork. List them on the board. (For example, pets at home, classroom animals, posing classmates, still life objects, the scene out the window, family photographs, pictures from magazines, animals at the zoo.) Discuss which of these are possible and not possible to use. Which can be used in school? Which can be used at home? Set up a sequence of subjects to use in art activities.

Create Art

Have the students sketch the same or similar subjects in their Idea Books. The subject could be a student's grandparent invited to pose, students posing for one another, a table display of still life objects, the class guinea pig, or plants in a science experiment.

While the students sketch, encourage them to look carefully at the subject. They can notice its overall shape, the way it moves, small details, lines and textures. Have the students take their Idea Books home to make several drawings of subjects they like to look at there.

Have a class discussion about other sources for getting ideas for art besides *looking* at subjects. List them on the board. (For example, dreams, imaginary people and animals, or memories of past happenings.) Ask the students to focus on one of these sources and sketch it in their Idea Books. Encourage the students to continue collecting ideas by sketching or by saving items such as postcards, photographs or magazine pictures in their Idea Books.

Respond to Art

Ask the students to study the classroom display of artists' work. Then challenge them to guess which ones were made by *looking* at the subject, by *imagining* the subject, or by *remembering* the subject. Ask them to rearrange the display under each of the three headings for getting ideas.