



Overview

We believe that all children are artists. The goal of our visual arts program is to provide an environment of encouragement and enthusiasm for the creative talents of each child. Students learn that art is individual and non-judgmental. The skills they acquire as they create art help them to imagine and explore possibilities, recognize and accept multiple perspectives, and appreciate hard work. Art teaches us so much about our world. It tells us who we are and who we were.





MIDDLEFORK SCHOOL VISUAL ARTS

The imagination of young children knows no bounds. Our goal is to encourage creative growth and teach the language of art by introducing students to art from the past and giving them experiences to create using the elements of line, shape, texture, color, and space.

MF students Students in Grades 1-3 have one hour of art each week, while Kindergarten teachers provide art experiences to students in the classroom, The visual arts teacher serving as their expert resource.

The focus of each unit is on process as well as product. Completion of every project is strongly encouraged. Students are introduced to a variety of art materials in the areas of drawing, painting, ceramics, collage, printmaking, sculpture, and fiber arts.

In addition, integrating art history into visual art units introduces students to selected artists and their styles, including impressionism, abstraction, realism, pop art, portraiture, landscape, still life, and multicultural art.

Interdisciplinary Units

Interdisciplinary projects are coordinated by the art teacher in cooperation with the classroom and/or enrichment teachers. These projects parallel the classroom unit, broadening students' knowledge and allowing them to explore topics through the visual-spatial experience.

- Grade 1 -- Castles, Insects
- Grade 2 -- Native Americans, King Arthur
- Grade 3 -- Mammals, Solar System
- All Grades -- Authors and Illustrations

Assessment

Individualized instruction and differentiation meet the artistic needs of each Middlefork student. At the end of the hour students assess their work for the day with a verbal "self test" given by the teacher. It gives them the opportunity reflect on the main points of the lesson. A check list is used to report each student's progress to parents. The most important assessment in visual arts is the students' satisfaction with their work. Students learn to appreciate their art work and that of others by looking at it and expressing their personal feelings and opinions. Every student's art work is exhibited throughout the halls and classrooms at Middlefork School.



SUNSET RIDGE VISUAL ARTS PROGRAM, 4-6

Middle School students are experiencing greater awareness of their surroundings as well as greater self-consciousness. Our goal is to help students become more responsible, to help them develop their artistic skills, and to make them feel secure as they take greater risks with their creativity. The principles and elements of design extend into a growing awareness of composition, value, repetition, balance, and variety within a work of art. The students in Grades 4-5 have one hour of art each week. Students in Grade 6 meet for five 45 minute sessions each week during one quarter of the school year.

The focus of each unit is on process and quality of product. Completion of each project is expected. Each year builds on previous experiences in drawing, painting, ceramics, collage and construction, sculpture, printmaking, weaving, mural-making, and architecture. Students are introduced to professional art tools and materials. They learn the skills to use them in creating original art. In addition, appropriate art history selections, contemporary artists, and global cultural connections reinforce the concepts of selected units. Impressionism, abstraction, realism, portraiture, surrealism, landscape, still life, animation, and multi-cultural art are reviewed and extended.

Interdisciplinary Units

- Grade 4 -- Folktale Festival, The Rainforest
- Grade 5 -- Day of the Dead Celebration, Holocaust, Ocean Studies
- Grade 6 -- Connections of Art, Music, Dance, and the Social Sciences

Assessment

Differentiation of project expectations meets the artistic needs of each Sunset Ridge student. Students are responsible for keeping a personal sketch-book and portfolio of their work, and to personally review them at the end of the year. The Student Art Gallery, Learning Center, and main entrance foyer exhibit every student's art work on a regular basis. These exhibits encourage students to assess their work and discuss art informally with their friends. The "self-test" at the end of class allows students to reflect on the main points of the lesson.

A checklist is kept by the teacher to monitor each student's progress. A letter grade is used to report the student's progress to parents.



SUNSET RIDGE VISUAL ARTS PROGRAM, 7-8

The personalities of junior high students truly emerge in their artwork.

They often become very critical of their work. Our goal is to help students take complete responsibility for their work and take pride in what they create. They are encouraged to make their own creative decisions as they pursue an area of art in depth. Students who feel comfortable expressing themselves will develop higher self-esteem and be able to share their knowledge with other students.

Elective classes meet for three 45-minute sessions each week for one quarter of the year. Mixed-media classes meet for two 45-minute sessions each week for one quarter of the year. Students may work additional time during lunch recess and before/after school. Students are expected to arrive on time and be prepared to work. They are responsible for their own set-up and clean-up. Students attend teacher demonstrations of tools and procedures and then design their own projects. The teacher works individually with students to help them achieve their highest creative potential.

Elective/Mixed Media Selections

Choosing to concentrate in one area of art for nine weeks allows students to become familiar with the medium and achieve greater understanding of it. Students choose from the following classes: architecture, arts and crafts, ceramics, decorative art, drawing, mural-making, painting, and sculpture, and technology arts.

Assessment

Informal assessment between student and teacher occurs daily. Informal class critiques are held weekly. Deadlines are flexible to allow students to work independently. A project is complete when student and teacher agree that expectations have been met and the student is satisfied with the art work. A letter grade is used to report the student's progress to parents. Junior High art work has been exhibited at the Arrends Gallery at NIU, the School of the Art Institute, the Illinois Traveling Art Show, and the Junior High Art Show at New Trier High School.



ENRICHMENT AND SPECIAL PROJECTS

Service Learning

Students learn the joy of giving by making art for others. Middlefork students have produced several beautiful quilts and given them to local charities. Students at both schools also enjoy making decorations for PTO activities and scenery for school programs. Several pieces of decorated furniture have been donated to the PTO fundraiser.

Fine Arts Day

The Visual Arts Department organizes a bi-annual Fine Arts Day. Artists are invited to share their artistic talents with students in the areas of visual arts, theater, dance, and music. This project is supported by the PTO.

Public Art

Sunset Ridge and Middlefork murals include a variety of themes developed by students. Examples are personal heroes (Middlefork Wall of Respect), respecting multiple intelligences (The Lunchline), celebration of excellence in District 29 (It Takes a Village, Too), our living ocean (The Voyage of the Mimi), and honoring the heroes of September 11 (United We Stand).

Student Art Collections

At Sunset Ridge students may give a lasting gift of art to their school. The PTO generously funds the framing of student artwork that is permanently installed throughout the school. In the Middlefork Learning Center a framed collection of student artwork highlights the work of all students on a rotating basis.

You've Got Art Mail

Students in Grade 4 create drawings about their community and send them to the Student Exhibition in Yokohama, Japan. In return, Sunset Ridge receives drawings created by Japanese students.

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Artists in Residence Program

The Artists in Residence Program invites students in grades 6-7-8 to exhibit their artwork in the Learning Center for four weeks. Students learn how private galleries operate. Students create titled lists of the art works they wish to exhibit. A reception is held for students and their families. The PTO helps sponsor this project.

Excursions

Throughout the visual arts experience in District 29, students are introduced to art in Chicago. Excursions may include programs at the Art Institute, the Museum of Contemporary Art, private galleries, Architecture from the Lake, the Mexican Museum of Fine Arts, the Field Museum, and Garfield Conservatory. Current Chicago art exhibits are often included in the art curriculum at both schools. Many District 29 staff members attend the annual Art Institute Educators' Open House. This program focuses on a current exhibit at the museum and gives teachers the opportunity to tour galleries and visit the teacher resource center.