Hello, students and parents!

Welcome to Discovering Art History, a 9-week course that will help you learn to group paintings or other artwork by style, subject, or artist. I would also like for you to learn about different careers in the arts, in case you’re interested in taking your art to that level when you’re older. Each week or so, you will learn about a different artist or style of art and get to practice that style.

One of the fun things about doing art is creativity. Do you have a lot of creativity? This course will be a good way to expand your creativity. Feel free to tweak projects and change things up to make this your course.

While you’re taking this course, plan to visit art museums in your area, learn how to sew or knit, take pictures, make patterns, arrange flowers, visit a ceramics shop, analyze illustrations in picture books and illustrate your own writing, pay attention to packaging, and notice how art is used in fashion and advertising. In short, pay attention to the art around you and widen your scope. Art is more than just brushes and canvas, though we will be focusing mostly on art of that sort in this class. Remember, art is all around you. Above all, have fun!

Sincerely,

Carla Earley

Here is a list of art books that will help you explore art and artists in a fun way. See if you can find them at your library!

- *The Great Art Adventure* by Bob Knox
- *Suzette and the Puppy: A Story about Mary Cassatt* by Joan Sweeney
- *The Fantastic Jungles of Henri Rousseau* by Michelle Markel
- *Danger! Tiger Crossing* by Lin Oliver
- *Once Upon a Picture* by Sally Swain
- *Katie and the Waterlily Pond* by James Mayhew
- *Katie and the Mona Lisa* by James Mayhew
- *Katie Meets the Impressionists* by James Mayhew
- *Katie and the Sunflowers* by James Mayhew
- *Katie and the Spanish Princess* by James Mayhew
- *Katie’s Sunday Afternoon* by James Mayhew
- *The Sleeping Gypsy* by Mordicai Gerstein
- *A Blue Butterfly: A Story about Claude Monet* by Bijou Le Tord
- *You Can’t Take a Balloon into the Metropolitan Museum* by Jacqueline Weitzman
Who Stole Mona Lisa? By Ruthie Knapp
The Boy Who Loved to Draw: Benjamin West by Barbara Brenner
Dan’s Angel by Alexander Sturgis
Lucy Micklethwait books
Mike Venezia books about artists
Rockwell: A Boy and His Dog by Loren Spiotta-Di Mare

Also, it would be worth checking out one of those oversize books on Norman Rockwell when you study him.

Just for reference, here are some different styles, subjects, and artists. We don’t have time to cover all these styles, but you could put them on your timeline, if you wish.

Naturalism: 1300-1600 Europe, popular during the Renaissance, beginning in Italy after the invention of linear perspective and oil paints; portrays the world realistically, shows feelings and emotions, natural settings, represents light and texture convincingly; Giovanni Bellini, Italy; Pieter Bruegel the Elder, Flanders; Jan van Eyck, Belgium; Leonardo da Vinci, Italy; Michelangelo; Italy; look for light, texture, linear perspective, emotions

Mannerism: 1500s’ Italy, experimented with unnatural poses, proportions, and colors, unusual settings and mysterious details. Not afraid to change or distort reality: elongated figures, odd poses and facial expressions, imaginary settings, unbalanced compositions, unnatural colors or lighting, illusions; Agnolo Bronzino, Rosso Fiorentino, El Greco, Parmigianino, Pontormo, Jacopo Tintoretto, Archimboldo

Neoclassicism: late 1700s, early 1800s; inspired by ancient Greek and Roman art; “new classicism” (which was in the 1400s and 1500s); during the Age of Reason people believed in the power of science, nature, and logical thought. Challenged power of kings and churches, modeled their work after the Greeks and Romans whom they considered the first believers in the power of reason; John Singleton Copley, Jacques-Louis David, Joshua Reynolds, Benjamin West; look for: mythology and history (Greek & Roman), hero at the center, balanced and orderly composition, moral message

Romanticism: late 1700s, early 1800s, western Europe and US; reaction against Neoclassicism and reason; believed feelings, instincts, and intuition were as important as reason; emphasized intuition, instinct, and imagination; very emotional, moody, or spiritual, nature and landscapes, horror scenes or the supernatural; William Blake, Eugene Delacroix, Casper David Friedrich, Theodore Gericault, Francisco Goya, Joseph Mallord William Turner

Realism: mid-1800s; showed real life—dirty and ugly, ordinary people doing everyday things instead of wealthy people’s portraits; look for: ordinary people and everyday activities, not idealized, critical of social conditions, influenced by photography, sometimes ugly or distasteful subject matter; Gustave Courbet, Honore Daumier, Thomas Eakins, Jean-Francois Millet

Impressionism: 1860s-1880s France; everyday life, capturing the moment, often outdoors to see changes in light, spontaneously with loose brushstrokes and mixing colors right on the canvas; Mary Cassatt, Claude Monet, Berthe Morisot, Camille Pissarro, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Alfred
Sisley; look for: nature and everyday life, painted outside, quick, loose brushstrokes, bright colors, spontaneous poses

**Pointillism:** 1880s’ France; scientific theories on color and how our eyes see it—tiny dots that blend to form new colors; Henri-Edmond Cross, Camille Pissarro, Georges Seurat, Paul Signac; look for primary colors, dots, ridged compositions; shimmers with light and color

**Post-Impressionists** 1886-1905: movement led by Paul Cezanne; vivid colors, thick paint, real life subjects, but emphasized geometric forms, sometimes distorted or unnatural arbitrary colors. Henri Rousseau, Camille Pissarro, Vincent Van Gogh

**Cubism:** early 1900s’ France & Spain; reducing everything to its basic shapes—cylinders, spheres, and cubes and piecing them back together on canvas with an abstract form; revolutionized the art world; Georges Braque, Pablo Picasso; look for: abstract, geometric shapes without realistic details, subdued colors

**Futurism:** 1909-1918 Italy; power and excitement of machine age, cities more industrial, automobile and airplane, wanted to be free from the past and focus on everything new; trains, cities, cars, crowds, people moving; Giacomo Balla, Umberto Boccioni, Carlo Carra, Gino Severini; look for: power, movement, visual noise, violence, energy, chaos of modern life, bright colors, zigzagging angles

**Surrealism:** 1920s-30s Europe; means “super realism”; unconscious thoughts and dreams, set their imaginations free, experimented with different ways to be spontaneous; want to shock viewer to realize that normal is uncertain, want to reveal deeper, truer part of human nature: Salvador Dali, Marc Chagall; look for: surprise, free association, dreamlike, dark colors, dreamlike

**American Regionalism:** 1930s-40s American realist modern art movement including small-town America, mostly the Midwest and Deep South; Grant Wood; (Norman Rockwell?)

**Abstract Expressionism:** after WWII-1950s America (began in NYC); express emotions about the way people feel about the fast pace and confusion of modern society, many different styles; most original style created in the US; Willem de Kooning, Barnett Newman, Robert Motherwell, Jackson Pollock; look for: large canvases, abstract, emphasizes the physical process of painting, spontaneous

**Modernism:** 1890-1945 stressed newness and changes in style to reflect modern life. Rebellion against artistic formulas of the 1800s, abstract art with shapes, colors, and patterns instead of recognizable subject matter, includes cubism, surrealism, and fauvism, often emphasized political messages: Georgia O’Keefe, Henri Matisse, Pablo Picasso, Jackson Pollock, Diego Rivera (muralist), and Frida Kahlo (symbolist)

**Pop Art:** 1950s’ England and 60s’ America, everyday commercial illustrations, screen painting: Claes Oldenburg, Andy Warhol, Wayne Thiebaud, and Roy Lichtenstein

**Postmodernism:** mid 1900s’ reaction and rejection of Modernism, ornamental, cluttered, revival of tradition with texture, shape, color, or line
Week 1

Day 1

In order to learn about art, we’re going to go back in time a bit and meet some interesting people. We’re going to look at many different paintings. The first thing I want you to do is print out some of the paintings we will be studying in this class. Print them on cardstock, cut them out, and write the name of the painting and the name of the person who painted it on the back. As you do so, take a look at the paintings and decide what you like and what you don’t like. Look at details as much as you can. What is going on in the painting? Is it trying to tell a story? Is there movement? What colors are used?

Day 2

Today, we are going to look at some paintings by Guiseppe Arcimboldo. At first, they might look a little odd, but they’re so interesting! These are a set of four paintings that can be found in a really famous art museum in Paris—The Louvre. It used to be a palace for kings, but now people can go in and see artwork from all over the world!

The first one, called Spring, Guiseppe painted in 1563. Then about 10 years later, he painted the other 3: Summer, Autumn, and Winter.

- Look closely at each painting and make a list of different things you see. Remember, Guiseppe lived in Italy almost 500 years ago, so some of them you may not recognize.
- Find a friend and play “I Spy” with the paintings. I spy some peas!
- Why do you think they’re named after the four seasons?