Elements of Art

We began our study on the Elements of Art by reading, *Ish* by Peter Reynolds. A book that teaches that thinking ISHly is far more wonderful that “getting it right”. We set up an ‘ISH’ easel in the classroom and each day the children were asked to sketch the objects placed there. Our ISH drawings turned into masterpieces that we displayed on our ISH wall! *The Dot* also by Peter Reynolds became another favorite - inspiring the uncreative to make a mark and see where that takes us. In keeping with that theme, Benjamin’s mom came to read *Beautiful Oops!* to the class, reminding us that it is okay to make a mistake. Doodling became our Morning Work for the month.

Once our creative juices began to flow, we eagerly explored line, color, shape and texture. We drew, cut and painted straight, curvy and zigzag lines. We worked with the colors of the rainbow, manipulating and mixing them to make interesting combinations. We graphed, stamped and contrasted shapes. We used descriptive words to compare and contrast a variety of textures.

**Important Notes**

- Please label all of your child’s winter clothing. Missing mittens are easier to find when they are labelled.
- Please make sure that your child has a set of extra clothing at school. The playground is wet and muddy at this time of year.
- Look for emails about upcoming celebrations: Valentine’s Day 100 Day
ARCHITECTURAL ALPHABET WALK

Reading the book, Alphabet Everywhere, inspired the children to take a walk around CMU’s campus to photograph letters found on the buildings and in the architecture. Armed with 3 cameras and our keen observation skills, we found and photographed over 100 different letters. The children worked with Mr. Rood to sort and organize the photos to find the best representation of the letters in the alphabet. Mr. Rood copied and cut these letters in order for the children to represent their names on foam core strips.

OUR “NOT A BOX” BOXES

Antoinette Portis’ story, Not A Box, challenged the children to think outside the box! Each child was given a cardboard box to transform into their own “Not A Box”.

Ms. Scholes challenged the children to create something unique. The children used paint for the background and then were given a variety of materials to add dimension and detail to their boxes. Kindergarten spelling was used to add labels to their creations. All the boxes were displayed on the hallway bulletin board. The display was photographed and made into a classroom book. Click here to read the kindergarten’s version of Not A Box.

OUR PERFECT SQUARE

Daily work for one week was based on Michael Hall’s book, Perfect Square, a story about a square that was manipulated in a variety of ways and then turned itself into something wonderful. Each day the children were given a perfect square and instructed to either shred, tear, punch holes, cut or crinkle. The pieces were then rearranged into an object of the child’s choice. Read our version of Perfect Square here.
LINE

The elements of art serve as building blocks. A person cannot create art without utilizing some of them. Line is essential as a concept to depicting objects and symbols and defining shapes.

To introduce the concept of line, we read the books, Lines That Wiggle and The Squiggle. Three dimensional Line sculptures were created using pipe cleaners and colored paper strips. The children folded, curled and bent the paper into various lines and attached them to a styrofoam base.

COMBINING LINE AND COLOR

We added the element of color during our second week of study. Starting with the colors of the rainbow, we sang, danced and painted until we had learned the order by heart. We completed two projects that combined color with line. First, the children used rulers, filling an entire page with line. The spaces were then filled with a rainbow of color.

The second project consisted of painting the colors of the rainbow, filling the page with the pattern. Once the paint was dry, we cut the paper into strips using straight and curvy lines. The rainbow was reassembled onto a black background, leaving a small space between each strip.

LINE AND COLOR CHALLENGES

Our weekly challenges and classroom manipulatives also incorporated the elements of art. One great resource that was recommended to us from Anna’s mom was Pattern Play by Mindware. The children sharpened their spatial skills by replicating the patterns shown on the card and manipulating the blocks into the wooden tray.

Color Stix is the hands-on game of speed and visual thinking. Each player gets a stack of colorful Stix, and then the race is on to see who can line up the most blocks of the same color before the timer runs out. Each color block is worth a point, so players try to arrange the sticks to get the maximum score. The children add the score when time runs out.

Thomas working with Pattern Play.
EXPERIMENTING WITH COLOR

Walking Water

I wonder... how can we make the water move from one cup to another without touching the cups.

I think...
- nothing will happen
- the colors will mix
- the water will move like a slide

I learned...
- a paper towel will absorb the water and carry it to the empty cup
- water will move downhill but not uphill due to gravity
- the water will move across to the empty cup until the water levels are equal.

Color Mixing

I wonder... what happens when we mix primary colored water together.

I think...
- we will make new colors

I learned...
- primary colors mix into secondary colors
- depending on the amount of the colors I use, I can change the hue.

INQUIRING MINDS...

Sudoku – To challenge our brains to think logically, we introduced a four color sudoku puzzle to the children. We practiced the puzzle first on the Smartboard and then with Unifix cubes. When we felt that we understood the concept, we completed paper puzzles. The children became experts at Sudoku!

Squares and Circles – After introducing shapes to the children, we wanted to know whether you can fill a circle with squares. The children were given a large circle and asked to fill all the space inside the circle with colored square tiles. We discovered that you cannot completely cover the inside because the circle has curved lines and the square has angles. The children then wanted to know whether a square can be filled with circles. They discovered the same thing...curved lines cannot fill the angles.

Sasha covering her circle with squares.
SHAPE

We began our discussion about shapes by reading *When a Line Bends, A Shape Begins* by Rhonda Gowler Greene. The children identified a variety of shapes, counted the sides and angles and recorded if the lines were straight or curvy. We sang and danced to *The Shape Song*. We used shapes to stamp a blueprint of a robot that we then made into a textured creation. We went on a shape scavenger hunt, finding the shapes around the classroom and identifying them with post it notes.

Adding shape to our study of line and color resulted in great practice of fine motor skills and sharpened our logical thinking.

Mrs. Perovich introduced radial patterning to the children. The children worked from the center out using colored tiles on a square grid. After the concept was practiced, we moved on to gluing colored paper squares onto the grid. The children quickly understood the concept and were able to complete a pattern independently for Daily Work.

We introduced the Creative Color Cubes to help build 3D visual discrimination and strengthen the math concepts of patterning, spatial positioning and counting. The children chose a pattern card and used the color cubes to build a matching block structure.

Ms. Scholes worked with the children to create Inside-Out Designs. The children cut a piece of folded paper several times on the fold, making smaller and smaller shapes. The resulting shapes were glued alternately to sides of a larger paper. The project required concentration, eye-hand coordination, and patience!
TEXTURE

Our last week of January was focused on texture in design. We read a variety of books by Lois Ehlert that were illustrated with textured collage pictures. The children described the textures of their clothing using words like soft, smooth, rough, scratchy, etc.

The children further explored texture by stamping blocks wrapped in yarn.

Ms. Scholes revisited the robot project by having the children build their robot by cutting out the shapes they had stamped on their blueprint, rubbing a texture over them with rubbing plates and crayons and adding a variety of textured details to the robot with puffy paint, buttons, textured paper, tin foil, beads, etc.

WORKING TOGETHER

Celebrating Martin Luther King, Jr.’s birthday presented us with a prefect opportunity to have a discussion on appreciating each other’s differences, practice working together on a collaborative project and just enjoy each other!

We read two books on differences, The Crayon Box That Talked by Shane Derolf conveys the message that we are all different, thus making the world a more interesting place, and One by Kathryn Otoshi teaches us to stand up for ourselves and others.

We celebrated our differences by drawing our portraits, paying particular attention to the colors of our facial features. We worked collaboratively to paint the table top of Table 2. We each made doves and faces to add to the Peace Sculpture that was built in the University Center, and enjoyed a sing-a-long with Mrs. Bird and the preschool classes.