Ages 5+ | This is a free lesson created and supported by Art in Action, a nonprofit empowering students through arts education.

This lesson is intended for parents and their children to explore art as a powerful form of learning and play

About the Lesson

Lesson Overview: 30 min - 45 min
This lesson deconstructs Pablo Picasso's Mains aux Fleurs painting to learn about shapes, layering, and hidden secrets. You can create your own Mains aux Fleurs or 'Hands with Flowers' artwork to give as a gift to someone you care about.

Included in this Lesson:
• Discussion: Pablo Picasso's Mains aux Fleurs, shapes, layers, and feeling within the painting.
• Activity: Decoupled rendition of Picasso's Mains aux Fleurs
Discussion: Pablo Picasso's Mains aux Fleurs

About the Piece
In this painting, Pablo Picasso entitled 'Mains aux Fleurs,' we can see some brightly colored flowers arranged in a nice bouquet and two hands holding them. 'Mains aux Fleurs' is French and means 'Hands with Flowers.' Is the bouquet being held by one person or two?

To find out, let's take a closer look...

hand one: 

hand two: 

There are two right hands! That means that Picasso's bouquet is being held by two different people. We can guess that the flowers are being given as a gift - but the reason behind why and who is involved is a secret hidden in the painting. Why do people give flowers? Have you ever given or gotten flowers as a gift?
Discussion: Pablo Picasso's Mains aux Fleurs

What can you find in the bouquet?
What do you see besides the four large flowers? Do you see stems and leaves? What colors make up the bouquet? How many different colors do you see?

Which color do you see first?
Most people are attracted to bright colors and they are the first to be noticed. Which color did you notice first? Is it a bright color?

How do the flowers make you feel?
The flowers are brightly colored and their shape makes us think of sunshine. This might make you feel happy.

What shapes do you see?
The flowers are made of ovals which are repeated in the fingernails of the hands. The long lines for stems contrast these rounded shapes.

How did Picasso paint the flowers?
We can tell the order in which he painted by the layering we see. First, he painted the flowers' centers, next the petals, then the hands. He painted the stems and leaves last. We can see where they fit around the hands.
Discussion: Pablo Picasso's Mains aux Fleurs

About the Artist

Pablo Ruiz Picasso was born in Spain in 1881. Picasso’s father was an art teacher who encouraged his son to paint and draw. As a child, Picasso painted with extraordinary realism and talent. As an adult, he chose to use his talent to invent new abstract styles.

Picasso’s painting style changed many times during his life. As a young boy he drew so well he was given awards before he was 10 years old. As he got older he moved away from realism. He once said, “When I was a child I painted like a photograph. It took me a lifetime to learn to paint like a child. “When Picasso went to Paris as a young man he experimented with Impressionism.

Picasso is best known for the work he did in a style he developed called Cubism. Cubism is an abstract way of painting that breaks up forms, sometimes into little cubes, but often just into simple shapes. Using simple shapes helps focus on the meaning of the picture.
Activity: Pablo Picasso's Mains aux Fleurs

About the Activity
Picasso's Mains aux Fleurs shows the act of gift giving. Today you will make your own bouquet to give as a gift. Who will you give it to?

Preparation + Materials
First gather all of the materials you will need:
- Paper for your 'canvas'
- Printed hands (next page)
- Construction paper: yellow, orange, red, blue, pink, two shades of green. If you don't have construction paper handy, divide white paper into quarters and use markers or crayons to color the paper. For the shades of green, halve one sheet of paper.
- Scissors
- Glue stick
Activity: Pablo Picasso's Mains aux Fleurs

Hands
Print this page and cut out the following hands to glue onto the bouquet. Cut inside the blue lines to be sure that the dashed line does not show. If you do not have a printer, open this document on a screen and hold up an additional sheet of paper to the screen to trace over the black lines that make up the two hands.
Activity: Pablo Picasso's Mains aux Fleurs

Step One
Cut your paper into the following pieces:

- Cut out the hands on the previous page
- 6 thin long strips of green
- A few short strips of green
- 3 small boxes of green
- 1 large yellow oval
- 1 large red oval
- 1 large blue oval
- 1 large orange oval
- 2 sets of 8 small red ovals and circles
- 8 small blue ovals and circles
- 8 small pink ovals and circles

Step Two
Place the hands where you want them to go on your paper canvass and mark where the flower stems should go with a pencil.

Step Three
Now glue your large ovals onto your sheet of paper where you want them to go. Consult Picasso's painting for placement, or put them wherever you’d like.

Step Four
Now we can glue on the small ovals for our flower petals. Mix and match or follow Picasso's painting as an example.

Step Five
Go ahead and glue your flower stems into place. Be sure to keep them within the lines you marked with your pencil so that the hands you cut out earlier will appear to be holding them.
**Activity: Pablo Picasso's Mains aux Fleurs**

**Step Six**
Almost there! Time to glue the hands on so that they appear to be holding the bouquet. Once glued on, you may want to trace over them with a marker to make the lines bolder.

**Step Seven**
Now we will add some of the leaves and taller stems we see in Picasso’s bouquet. Take some of your smaller green strips and curl them around a pencil or a marker and glue the base to the top of the painting. Next, take the three green squares and cut out 3 interesting shapes to glue on to the stems just above the hands.

Be sure to sign your artwork before you give it away as a gift.

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Bring Art Into the Lives of Your Students!

Don't let the fun end here!
We hoped you enjoyed the lesson! Art in Action empowers students through arts education by providing schools with thoughtful visual arts curriculum, teacher training, and art supplies. We want as many kids to have access to art as possible. To do this, we partner with parents and other volunteer teachers to make art possible. Keep the fun going by joining the Art in Action community!

Reach out and let's find out how to bring art into your school:
Contact katie@artinaction.org or call 650.566.8339 x204

Don't miss out on more free art lessons and join the Art in Action community!

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