

Art Curriculum

Plymouth Meeting Friends School

Philosophy/Overview

The Visual Arts Program at Plymouth Meeting Friends School is designed to build confidence in each student's ability to visually communicate, while celebrating the innovation and creative potential of each individual student. Art projects invite students to learn how to work with a variety of materials and art processes in order to express their unique vision, while at the same time, developing awareness of and appreciation for the beauty of the world around them. Each lesson is designed to connect students to the greater world in order to better appreciate the diversity of artistic expression, both within our school community and the broader world community.

The Art Studio is a place that welcomes and uplifts the Light in each person. It is full of color, joy and the excitement of a school's wealth of projects in process. Art supplies are accessible to students so that they can use whatever they need to accomplish their vision for their artworks, and in so doing, they learn how to take care of a community art space as well as develop artistic independence. It is a place that celebrates the individual artistic journey of each child, where mistakes become opportunities to improvise, and where problem solving is a fun and important part of the artmaking process.

There is joy and empowerment that comes from being able to express oneself through visual means, and a satisfaction of working with ones' hands that cannot be overstated. The Art Teacher joyfully honors the individual beauty in the authentic creative expressions of each student.

Pre-Kindergarten

Pre-Kindergarten Art invites the joyful exploration of a wide variety of art materials as students learn vocabulary and develop fine motor skills for their artmaking. The goal of Pre-K Art is to introduce terms and concepts and to spark the kind of joy that comes from discovering how to create something from ones' own hands. In Art, we always solve creative problems and improvise solutions. Mistakes are welcomed as part of the process of discovery. Projects explore such media as paint, wool, clay, and collage, with a focus on celebrating each students' unique artistic journey.

We start each Meeting for Class Time with a moment of stillness and silence, and some stretches to get our art arms working. After a brief demonstration of today's materials, students are invited to express themselves artistically. The classroom bubbles with students sharing their discoveries with each other: conversations about how to mix a particular paint color, or how to make a particular shape in clay. These moments invite students to connect with one another as artist

colleagues and collaborators. Often, after we clean up, we do an “art walk” so that students can see each others’ work and celebrate the work of their peers.

In this explorative year, students create wet felt tapestries, clay pinch pots, color wheel collages, paintings and prints that explore texture and mark-making, and much more.

Kindergarten

Students in Kindergarten are invited to explore a wide range of artistic media while also developing language to describe and analyze works of art. The Art Studio buzzes with excited conversations about new discoveries and meanings behind the works of art we create together. Students are introduced to art terminology and a wealth of techniques that they can employ when creating works of art. At the core of our work in Art is the belief that each artist is capable of creative expression and that those expressions are unique reflections of each individual.

Students explore a wide range of art techniques such as clay building: slab, coil, and pinch pot; color theory, printmaking, painting, sculpture with armatures and plaster, gesture drawing, and much more.

1st Grade

Students in First Grade Art explore, analyze, and make connections between cultures using art as a vehicle for understanding universal art concepts and world cultures. By focusing on folk art from around the world, students learn how art techniques and craft are used to create meaning in art, and to see how artistic expression is deeply connected to the human experience. Each project introduces a different technique, and we look at that technique from its historical and cultural contexts. For example, we study how the technique used in making Adinkra cloth from Ghana connects to block printed textiles from India, and how personal narratives and symbolism are represented in each. We explore weaving, clayworking, fabric dyeing, sewing, painting, printmaking, and witness how these techniques serve as an essential way that people across cultures communicate their thoughts and feelings.

We explore personal symbolism as it relates to making works of art, approaching materials and techniques from a place of wonder and appreciation. At the start of the year, students create a sketchbook which serves as a place for them to record and reflect on their artistic journey throughout the year. As they build on their lexicon of skills, projects are designed to invite students to consider their own perspectives on art, their own personal symbolism, while enjoying the empowerment and satisfaction of being able to communicate through visual means.

2nd Grade

Students in Second Grade Art explore, analyze, and make connections between cultures using art as a vehicle for understanding universal art concepts and world cultures. By focusing on folk

art from around the world, students learn how art techniques and craft are used to create meaning in art, and to see how artistic expression is deeply connected to the human experience. Each project introduces a different technique, and we look at that technique from its historical and cultural contexts. For example, we study how the technique used in making Adinkra cloth from Ghana connects to block printed textiles from India, and how personal narratives and symbolism are represented in each. We explore weaving, clayworking, fabric dyeing, sewing, painting, printmaking, and witness how these techniques serve as an essential way that people across cultures communicate their thoughts and feelings.

We explore personal symbolism as it relates to making works of art, approaching materials and techniques from a place of wonder and appreciation. At the start of the year, students create a sketchbook which serves as a place for them to record and reflect on their artistic journey throughout the year. As they build on their lexicon of skills, projects are designed to invite students to consider their own perspectives on art, their own personal symbolism, while enjoying the empowerment and satisfaction of being able to communicate through visual means.

3rd Grade

3rd Grade Art explores the connections between Art and Science while developing critical skills for artmaking, including observation, analyzing, and interpreting. Using the natural world as inspiration, students build vocabulary and a lexicon of art techniques. Projects are designed to reinforce and develop visual communication skills while allowing many avenues for students to express themselves creatively and individually. We start the year with the Kids' Care program in conjunction with the Woodmere Art Museum, where students make a creation that is given with meals to people in need through MANNA. In this way, students learn the impact that their art can have on the world around them. Through painting, working with clay, pastels, construction, inventive uses of recycled materials and more, students continue to develop their voices as artists as they explore what it means to be an artist who has a message.

Projects include creating a clay biome that considers food chains, painting landscapes, exploring optics and perception through abstract art, kinetic sculpture, and more. Students become familiar with names of artists. Each project ties in a number of contemporary and historical artists for students to identify and discover ways in which their art connects to the experiences of the artists being studied. As we are on this gorgeous campus, 3rd Grade artists work in collaboration with nature - as a reference and as part of the artistic process. The Art Studio is a hub of creative and excited energy. It is also a place where students know that their individual expressions are valued and appreciated.

4th Grade

4th Grade Art connects to their study of American history units. The cross-collaboration is designed to invite students to make connections to history through a variety of cultural lenses.

Projects are designed to familiarize students with artists in whom they can find inspiration and commonalities. We take large ideas that occur frequently in art history, such as portraiture, and analyze them through a variety of both contemporary and historical artists. In doing so, we learn about the symbolism and meaning of works of art in their historical context. Projects include portraits in the style of Amy Sherald and Kehinde Wiley, wood burning in the style of Horace Pippin, basket weaving in the style of the Gullah weavers, clay projects inspired by the local landscapes around them, and more.

Works created are reflections of their makers' views, opinions, narratives, and personal symbolism. Students build on the skills they've acquired over the course of their PMFS careers while developing their independence with increasingly complex and well-developed artworks that take several weeks to complete. Students are encouraged to work with pyrography tools, xacto knives, and hot glue guns in order to develop proper safety habits and confidence in working with a variety of tools.

Our time together typically starts with sketching in the sketchbooks students create each year, reflecting on the meaning and historical contexts of works of art, which then informs the work we create.

5th Grade

5th Grade Art continues to develop students' confidence in themselves as visual communicators and empowers them to deepen the messages that they are able to express about themselves and the world around them. Building on their lexicon of skills acquired through their time at PMFS, students develop independence, personal style and responsibility for their learning spaces. Given that one of the main parts of the social studies/social justice curriculum is the Mexican Exchange program, students relate individual experiences to works of art by well-known Mexican artists, such as linocut prints inspired by Jose Posada and personal nichos reflecting on personal symbolism and experiences. As they develop skills for their upcoming middle school years, students also learn about one- and two-point perspective and create drawings of spaces that reveal three-dimensional space on a two-dimensional plane with shading and tone, thus balancing both the technical aspects of art as well as encouraging individual expression and personal narratives. Freedom is given to students to choose to complete projects in a range of art media, so that they can identify their own strengths and growing edges in their artmaking experiences. This freedom empowers students to make their own creative decisions and take ownership of their artmaking experiences.

Towards the end of the year, we work towards an Inquiry-based assignment that ties together a research component, the creation of an original work of art that is based in historical reference, and a presentation critique. Students are able to dig deeper into their own interests as artists and creative thinkers.

6th Grade

The 6th Grade Art program is the culmination of students' previous artmaking experiences, with a focus on inviting students to take ownership of their own creative process and discovering personal and relevant interests as artists and creative thinkers. Students are taken through the entire process of Inquiry-based learning. They conceptualize a unique work of art, write a proposal for it based on their individual interests, and then research, document, and analyze a work that inspires and informs a project of their choosing, in an art technique of their choice. This sustained and focused work, created over the course of several weeks, reflects their artistic development and autonomy as artists. At the completion of this project, with a scaffolded approach to its deadline, students present their work in the form of a class critique. By following this process, students are invited to be advocates for the ideas behind their works and deepen their understanding of art and artists throughout history.

As their time at PMFS concludes, they are invited to create a work of art that will be left behind when they graduate, as decided upon through consensus and with their Art Teacher's facilitation. Additionally, 6th Grade students are responsible for pieces of the annual school yearbook and all of the visual aspects of their culminating performance created in collaboration with the Drama and Music programs.

The Art Studio becomes a flexible, open studio workspace, in which students work on individual projects at their own pace. It is a space in which students are eager to share their process with each other, and feed off of each others' ideas, as they work towards their strengths, growing edges, and passions.