

FAMOUS ARTIST SERIES: MARC CHAGALL (1887 - 1985)

Supplies Needed:

ART BIN:

- Example of mosaic tiles
- Project example
- Roll of contact paper
- Assorted tissue paper colors and shapes
- 5x5 cardboard template

CFA CLOSET:

- Permanent marker for writing names on contact paper
- Scissors from classroom supply

OTHER:

- Online images to be pulled up in advance

 Chagall pictures

AHEAD OF TIME NOTE:

- Cut the contact paper into 5x5 squares (2 per child).

PRESENTATION:

Present SLIDE #2 *I and the Village*. Ask if they have ever had crazy dreams where odd things happen -- things flying into space, or people with animal heads?

The artist who made this painting made pictures about his dreams. His name is Marc Chagall. To understand his paintings it is important to understand where he came from:

Marc Chagall was born in a small village in Russia in 1887, more than one hundred years ago. He was the oldest of nine children. His father worked long hours packing salted herring and his mother ran a small shop out of their home selling flour, sugar and spices to the villagers.

Most of the people in March Chagall's village were poor Jewish peasants. The people showed their Hasidic faith through prayer, singing and dancing. Marc's uncle was a fiddler who played songs on the rooftops of houses!

When you look closely at Chagall's paintings, stained glass windows and mosaics, you see dreamlike memories of the small village he came from: the peasants working...the buildings...the animals. He showed the Jewish way of life with their seemingly magical rituals, music and dancing. He also alluded to popular Jewish folk tales.

While looking at “I and the Village”. Talk about the subject matter, composition, color, shapes. Chagall created dreamlike compositions of shapes and color, people and animals, all arranged to satisfy his own sense of design.

- Talk about the subject matter: his village. Are the people & animals always walking on the ground? They are flying all over the place!
- Look at the size of things: small, large, right side up, upside down?
- Chagall uses beautiful rainbow colors that look like the view through a kaleidoscope. Do you see anything that is an unusual color?
- He also uses repeated geometric shapes, like circles, triangles and squares, throughout his compositions. What shapes do you see?

Present SLIDE #3- Chagall painting a portrait of his wife

This photo shows Chagall at work in his studio. He is painting a portrait of his wife. She was an important subject in many of his paintings.

Present SLIDE #4 "Over the Town"

- Ask the students if they can guess who these people are (Chagall and his wife). Can the students tell if the couple is in love? Why are they flying? Could it be because they are so much in love they can take flight? You can't see anyone else in the town; is it because the couple is so absorbed they don't notice anyone else?
- Ask why Marc Chagall is known as “The Painter of Love”? Chagall loved life. He said, "You have to be simply honest and filled with love. When you have love, all the other qualities come by themselves."

As an artist Chagall did much more than create hundreds of paintings, he also made drawings, painted ceramics, illustrated books, built set designs for plays, and made large scale tile mosaics and stained-glass windows.

The Art Institute of Chicago owns several of Chagall’s creations. When he was a very old man, Marc Chagall presented two very famous gifts to the city of Chicago:

Present SLIDE #5 “Four Seasons” mosaic, outdoor installation at the BankOne Plaza.

1974: Five sides of a huge rectangular block (70’x14’x10’) are covered with “mosaic” pictures made from tiny bits of stone and glass, fit one-by-one into wet cement. Each colorful piece is a part of a puzzle that becomes a huge picture called “The Four Seasons”. Along with birds, animals and people, each season has an image of Lake Michigan and of the sun.

Present SLIDE #6, stained glass “America Windows” indoor installation at the Art Institute of Chicago.

1977: This magnificent stained glass “America Windows” takes up a whole wall of the museum (30’x8’). The blue windows were designed as a tribute to the arts and to celebrate the U.S. Bicentennial (200th birthday!) The windows are

like an “I Spy” picture filled with patriotic subjects and symbols of art, architecture, dance and music.

- *Ask the students what they see – People dancing? Buildings? Farm animals? Instruments?*

Suggested Project:

This is something Marc Chagall told young artists:

“Work, Work, Work!”

Be simple, natural, yourself.

Don’t try to copy someone else.”

Today we are going to make miniature stained glass “windows” in the style of Chagall’s beautiful stained glass “America Windows.”

- Provide each child with the two “5x5” contact paper squares and colored tissue paper. Children will use scissors to cut shapes out of the tissue paper and stick them to the contact paper in a side-by-side or overlapping fashion to form a small square of color. Remind students that their tissue paper should be stuck flat on the contact paper and not bunched up or their window will not stick properly.
- Once a child has filled their square with tissue paper, they are ready to peel their second (blank) square and place it directly on top of the decorated contact paper square. Students may need help lining the edges of the contact paper squares up so they don’t leave an overhang.
- When completed, the artwork can be held up to the light or the window and will look like stained glass.
- Have students use a permanent marker to write their names in the bottom corner.

Words to the wise:

- Be sure children write their name somewhere on their project.
- Be sure children leave a ½ ” border of contact paper around the entire edge of their “window” so it can be sealed.
- Tell them to cut shapes that are not very tiny. It will take a LONG time to fill their square if their shapes are tiny.
- Encourage children to overlap their tissue paper shapes to fill all of the “white space” in their square, but to lay them flat and not bunch up the tissue paper.