



## Art Curriculum

### Art Overview

Wonder, beauty, and learning in art comes from the process of creation. We value times of discovery, experience with processes and materials, the development of skills, and development of historical links. As students grow they are challenged to use their skills to solve problems, deeply investigate materials, and use art to make connections across disciplines.

Art study expands outside the studio into Philadelphia's vibrant art scene, the neighborhood, and outdoor natural areas. Trips are regularly taken to the Philadelphia Museum of Art, relevant exhibitions, and other cultural events. Students learn that art is a practice in which they can participate as practitioners and viewers, inside the studio and in the larger world.

### Early Childhood

In preschool and kindergarten, through guided discovery, children are taught to value different media and art tools, as well as techniques for their use. They are then ready for explorations of line, shape, color, and texture. They experience sculpting, building, painting, drawing, collage, and printing. As students become more familiar with the materials, they are encouraged to work at a slower pace and with more intention and awareness. Ideas form, and exciting products of their own design emerge. Art promotes critical thinking and invites children to communicate emotions, questions, and insights. The skills they learn in the studio enhance their work and play in the classroom.

### Primary Unit - Third Grade

First and second grade students gain experience in a wide variety of mediums, gradually work on longer projects, explore ideas, and are encouraged to take pleasure in the process. Art projects often coordinate with a theme, incorporating content and process at an appropriate level. Students begin to choose processes and materials that are appropriate to independently express their vision. They gain understanding of line, shape, color, texture, and space, and they begin to explore compositional ideas of pattern, movement, scale, balance, unity, and emphasis.

By third grade, the children are ready to take on more of the planning for the final outcome of their projects. They continue to develop skills with tools and media as they apply them in more sophisticated ways. With a teacher's guidance, they learn to cultivate their ideas from the beginning to the finished project. Their work often reflects the new depth of understanding and confidence they have achieved.

### Junior Unit

The fourth and fifth grade curriculum consists of longer-term projects that emphasize basic design elements, craftsmanship, and originality. Classroom themes influence and inform the projects pursued in the art room. As students delve into their study of ancient Chinese and Greek civilizations, a project in paper manipulation and the construction of faux Greek columns reinforces the classroom work. At times, projects are inspired by local exhibitions throughout the city.



## **Middle School**

The Middle School art curriculum synthesizes previous experiences with an emphasis on individual expression and increasingly sophisticated concepts and materials. Brainstorming and problem-solving skills are stressed as projects become more complex, often lasting an entire semester. The Middle School theme often informs the art curriculum. For example, during a study of rites of passage in Africa, students create masks that emphasize qualities of their emerging adult selves. Electives and mini-courses offer students an opportunity to explore mediums, crafts, and ideas on a deeper level or in an area not usually part of the general art curriculum.