



GRAND RAPIDS ART MUSEUM

## PETAL PAINTINGS

### PURPOSEFUL PLAY + ARTFUL LEARNING

AGES 3-4 YEARS OLD

### OVERVIEW:

This lesson highlights Robert Motherwell's painting, *Black Plant and Window*. Students will discover different ways to create a painting as they begin to understand how their own bodies work. After discussing the history and concept of Motherwell's painting, students will be encouraged to explore non traditional painting techniques with their hands and feet to create a composition that incorporates a plant like image.

### OBJECTIVES:

The Learner Will (Bloom's Taxonomy Verbs):

- Identify colors, shapes, and patterns in works of art
- Experiment with materials to create different textures
- Create an abstract painting using shape and color
- Combine body parts to create new shapes

### GRAM COLLECTION CONNECTIONS:

Robert Motherwell was an American painter who lived from 1915-1991. He became close with members of a group called the Abstract Expressionists in New York when he was younger. Abstractionists were artists who created art that wasn't necessarily something in front of them, like a painting of a house or beach that is easy to recognize. Motherwell named this painting *Black Plant and Window*, which gives the viewer the idea that the black image might be a flower.



Robert Motherwell (American, 1915-1991) *Black Plant and Window*, 1950. Oil on masonite, 25 1/2 x 47 1/2 in. Grand Rapids Art Museum, Museum Purchase, Kate P. Wolters Family in memory of Richard Wolters, and Gift of Dedalus Foundation, 2006.1 Art © Dedalus Foundation, Inc./Licensed by [VAGA](#), New York, NY.

## MATERIALS:

- Canvas board/canvas panel
- Body Paint
- Acrylic/tempera paint
- Foam brushes (for body paint)
- Smocks
- Drop cloth
- Wipes
- Mixing containers

## INSTRUCTION:

### Object Based Discussion:

Instructor will display or project Robert Motherwell's painting *Black Plant and Window*, 1950 for the class to see. Instructor will then ask a series of questions to lead learners towards identifying colors, shapes, and subjective views of what each child believes the object may or may not represent. (Cognitive, social, language, emotional)

Leading questions may include:

1. What do you see in this painting?
2. What do you think this is a painting of?
3. What colors do you see?
4. What are some objects that you have at home that are similar to what you see in this painting? Expand on student answers.

In the discussion of Motherwell's painting, be sure that children recognize or are informed of the plant like representation of the subject in the composition. During this conversation, instructors should share with students that the title of the artwork is *Black Plant and Window*. This important fact helps to set up the discovery, play, and hands-on elements of this lesson plan.

### Creative Problems to Solve:

In small groups, with a reference image of *Black Plant and Window*, 1950, instructors will ask children how they can use their body to create plants and flowers like Robert Motherwell's painting. Instructor should ask leading questions about what media they could use to create something similar to Motherwell's painting. Instructor should ask leading questions about how our hands, feet, and other body parts can make marks. This will help to guide students in the right direction for the final project. (Cognitive, social, language, emotional)

### Hands-on Creative Activity:

#### DAY 1:

In the classroom, instructors will prepare a space for children with easels, paint (including primary colors, black, and white), a variety of paint brushes, and drop cloths. Working with individual children, instructors will help to mix paint colors determined by the child. For older students, this may be a good opportunity to allow them to mix their own paint colors. This exercise will allow the child the choice of color while referencing colors in Motherwell's painting. When students have mixed their palettes of color, they may begin to cover the background of their painting. Instructors can demonstrate different styles of applying paint while referencing the painterly brush strokes that many abstract expressionist artists, like Robert Motherwell, use in their work. (Fine and gross motor, cognitive, emotional, social)

## DAY 2:

On the second day of this activity students will begin to use their body to make marks and patterns with paint. Instructors will need to prepare the space with drop cloths and have clean up supplies readily available.

Using *Black Plant and Window* for inspiration, children will use their feet and hands to create large petal like images similar to the four oval shapes arranged in Motherwell's composition. Students should feel empowered to make decisions about the placement of their hand and footprints and encouraged to create arrangements like Motherwell's but unique to their own choices. (Fine and gross motor, cognitive, social, emotional)

## EVALUATION:

Skill Developed	Needs Improvement	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
Shape & color Recognition	Cannot recall or recognize different shapes and colors.	Recalls and identifies shapes and colors correctly.	Easily identifies shapes and colors, was able to create colors using mixing techniques.
Identification of representational objects	Is not able to identify and interpret realistic images from abstract representations.	Is able to identify and interpret realistic images from abstract representations.	Easily identifies and interprets realistic images from abstract representations. Is able to expand on identification in conversation and demonstration of their understanding.
Utilizing fine motor skills to handle paintbrush and apply medium to canvas	Was not able to handle brush or make decisions regarding placement of the material.	Handled tools and media well, was able to make decisions regarding placement.	Easily handled tools and media; placement of tape. Was able to create shapes on the composition independently.

Evaluation methods may require adjustment based on institutional/organizational requirements. Evaluation should also be modified for children meeting higher or lower levels of development.

## SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE!

Help us to continue to develop kindergarten readiness resources that you can use with children ages 0-5. Follow the link below to complete a short survey and provide your insights.

[Purposeful Play + Artful Learning Survey](#)

## STANDARDS FOR DEVELOPMENT:

This portion of the lesson plan will provide instructors with a brief explanation of how the lesson plan will activate areas for development in 3-4 year olds.

### COGNITIVE:

- Create new images or express ideas (2)
- Propose or explore possibilities to suggest what an object or idea might be 'otherwise' (2)
- Approach tasks and activities with increased flexibility, imagination, inventiveness, and confidence (3)
- Initiate 'shared thinking' with peers and adults (3)
- Explore, experiment, and ask questions freely (3)
- Demonstrate an interest and eagerness in seeking information (4)
- Express a 'sense of wonder' (4)
- Choose to take opportunities to explore, investigate, or question in any domain (4)
- Re-conceptualize or re-design (4)
- Begin to organize projects or play; make and carry-out plans (4)
- Demonstrate a growing capacity to make meaning, using one's habits of mind to find a solution or figure something out (5)
- Begin to hypothesize or make inferences (5)
- Demonstrate enjoyment in solving problems (5)
- Contribute individual strengths, imagination, or interests to a group (6)
- Exhibit a growing regard for one's mind and capacity to learn; demonstrate the capacity of consideration for others; show a growing capacity of consideration for others; show a growing capacity to self-regulate and demonstrate self-efficacy (7)
- Increasingly develop greater self-awareness; identify their own interests and strengths. Can be comfortable choosing to be alone (8)
- Demonstrate a reasonable self-perception of confidence, can make choices and explain discoveries (8)
- Children begin to develop strategies that assist them in viewing a variety of images and multimedia materials effectively and critically (18)
- Use different strategies for understanding various media (18)
- Begin to compare information across sources and discriminate between fantasy and reality (18)
- Take pride in their own abilities and increase self-motivation (30)
- Investigate patterns and describe relationships (35)
- Show awareness that things in their environment can be measured (38)
- Begin to use non-standard measures (e.g., length of hand) for length and area of objects (38)
- Begin to build an understanding of directionality, order, and positions of objects through the use of
- Recognize, describe, copy, extend and create simple patterns with real objects and through pictures (39)
- Investigate patterns and describe relationships (39)
- Recognize patterns in various formats (39)
- Explore the environment, experiment and play with natural materials, explore the textures, sounds and smells of nature (42)
- Gather information and learn new concepts through experimentation and discovery, making connections with what they already know (43)

### LANGUAGE:

- Create new images or express ideas (2)
- Initiate 'shared thinking' with peers and adults (3)
- Explore, experiment, and ask questions freely (3)

- Share through words or actions the acquisition of increasingly complex concepts (5)
- Show an increasing ability to observe detail and attributes of objects, activities, and processes (5)
- Enlarge their vocabularies both with words from conversation and instructional materials and activities (13)
- Recognize a few personally meaningful words including their own name, 'mom,' 'dad,' signs, and other print in their environment (13)
- Use spoken language for a variety of purposes (15)
- Continue to develop vocabulary by using words learned from stories and other sources in conversations (16)
- Speak in increasingly more complex combinations of words and in sentences (16)
- Use nonverbal expressions and gestures to match and reinforce spoken expression (16)
- Gain information from listening (17)
- Show progress in listening to and following spoken directions (17)
- Children begin to develop strategies that assist them in viewing a variety of images and multimedia materials effectively and critically (18)
- Use different strategies for understanding various media (18)
- Demonstrate an increasing ability to comprehend or understand the English language at an appropriate developmental level (20)
- Demonstrate increased understanding of simple words and phrases used in daily routines or content (20)
- Increase understanding of multiple meanings of words (20)
- Express basic needs using common words or phrases in English (20)
- Begin to build an understanding of directionality, order, and positions of objects through the use of words, identify patterns in their environment (39)

#### **SOCIAL:**

- Initiate 'shared thinking' with peers and adults (3)
- Explore, experiment, and ask questions freely (3)
- Demonstrate increasing ability to be together with others, in play or intellectual learning opportunities and/or making positive efforts for the good of all; join a community of learners in person and digitally as appropriate (6)
- Show an increasing ability to initiate and sustain age-appropriate play and interactions with peers and adults (6)
- Show an increasing capacity to consider or take into account another's perspective (6)
- Contribute individual strengths, imagination, or interests to a group (6)
- Exhibit a growing regard for one's mind and capacity to learn; demonstrate the capacity of consideration for others; show a growing capacity of consideration for others; show a growing capacity to self-regulate and demonstrate self-efficacy (7)
- Increasingly develop greater self-awareness; identify their own interests and strengths. Can be comfortable choosing to be alone (8)
- Demonstrate a reasonable self-perception of confidence, can make choices and explain discoveries (8)
- Begin to take action to fix their mistakes, solve problems with materials and resolve conflicts with others; do not blame others inappropriately (9)
- Use materials purposefully, safely, and respectfully more of the time (9)
- Respect the property of others and that of the community (9)
- Become increasingly more independent (26)
- Increase their capacity to take another's perspective (27)
- Gather information and learn new concepts through experimentation and discovery, making connections with what they already know (43)

**EMOTIONAL:** Students will have to realize that paint is on the bottoms of their feet and create an emotion to connect that feeling.

- Can be playful with peers and adults (2)
- Create new images or express ideas (2)
- Approach tasks and activities with increased flexibility, imagination, inventiveness, and confidence (3)
- Demonstrate an interest and eagerness in seeking information (4)
- Children begin to develop strategies that assist them in viewing a variety of images and multimedia materials effectively and critically (18)
- Approach tasks and activities with increased flexibility, imagination, inventiveness, and confidence (18)
- Can adapt to different environments (27)
- Increase their capacity to take another's perspective (27)
- Participate successfully as a group member (28)
- Increasingly develops greater self-awareness; identifies his or her own interest and strengths (28)
- Take pride in their own abilities and increase self-motivation (30)
- Gather information and learn new concepts through experimentation and discovery, making connections with what they already know (43)

**FINE MOTOR:** By putting paint on the students foot, it will allow the student to know what paint feels like and what the bottom of their feet look like as well.

- Manage reasonable frustration (4)
- Meet new and varied tasks with energy, creativity, and interest (4)
- Demonstrate enjoyment in solving problems (5)
- Become increasingly more independent (26)
- Use materials purposefully, safely, and respectfully more and more of the time (26)
- Begin to recognize and learn the names of body parts (28)
- Begin to understand spatial awareness for themselves, others, and their environment (28)
- Increasingly develops greater self-awareness; identifies his or her own interest and strengths (28)
- Children experience growth in fine motor development and use small muscles to improve a variety of fine motor skills both in structured and unstructured settings (29)
- Develop and refine motor control and coordination, eye-hand coordination, finger/thumb and whole-hand strength, coordination, and endurance using a variety of age-appropriate tools (29)
- Demonstrate greater knowledge and respect for their bodies (41)

**GROSS MOTOR:** Students will be able to walk on paper with feet covered in paint, where they will use gross motor skills to walk on the paper and rearrange his or her feet to create a flower-like image. They will also be able to use other body parts to help create their piece of art.

- Create new images or express ideas (2)
- Manage reasonable frustration (4)
- Meet new and varied tasks with energy, creativity, and interest (4)
- Begin to organize projects or play; make and carryout plans (4)
- Demonstrate enjoyment in solving problems (5)
- Show an emerging sense of self-awareness (26)
- Become increasingly more independent (26)
- Use materials purposefully, safely, and respectfully more and more of the time (26)
- Begin to recognize and learn the names of body parts (28)
- Begin to understand spatial awareness for themselves, others, and their environment (28)
- Increasingly develops greater self-awareness; identifies his or her own interest and strengths (28)

- Children experience growth in gross motor development and use large muscles to improve a variety of gross motor skills in a variety of both structured and unstructured and planned and spontaneous settings (29)
- Show their ability to use different body parts in a rhythmic pattern (29)
- Show increasing abilities to coordinate movements (29)
- Demonstrate greater knowledge and respect for their bodies (41)
- Explore the environment, experiment and play with natural materials, explore the texture, sound and smells of nature (42)

## INTEGRATED SUBJECT MATTER:

### Math:

- demonstrates positive approaches to learning (33)
- students will learn to look at their works of art and the process of creating art in a positive manner
- solves problems without having to try every possibility (33)
- begin to record their work with numbers in a variety of simple, concrete, and pictorial formats, moving toward some use of number and other mathematical symbols (34)
- begin to recognize that information comes in many forms and can be organized and displayed in different ways (34)
- children begin to develop skills of recognizing, comparing and classifying objects, relationships, events, and patterns in their environment in everyday life (35)
- recognize, describe, copy, extend, and create simple patterns with real objects and through pictures (35)
- identify patterns in their environment (35)
- recognize patterns in various formats (e.g., things that can be seen, heard, felt)

### Science:

- use observation skills to build awareness of plants and animals, their life cycles (e.g., birth, aging, death), and basic needs (e.g., air, food, light, rest) (40)
- begin to describe the places in which familiar plants and animals in their neighborhood live (e.g., city, drainage ponds, parks, fields, forests) (41)
- demonstrate greater knowledge and respect for their bodies (e.g., describe visible parts of the human body and their function) (41)
- can talk about the observable properties of earth materials (sand, rocks, soil, water) and living organisms (41)
- develop a sense of connectedness through the exploration of the natural environment and materials, caring for animals or plants (42)
- explore the environment, experiment and play with natural materials, explore the texture, sound, and smells of nature (42)

### Imaginative Play:

- students will work together to discuss the possibilities of what they see in the painting with the help of an instructor in the classroom
- students will work in small groups to discuss how they are going to recreate Motherwell's *Black Plant and Window*, and what possible body parts they are going to use
- students will use their imaginations to view their footprints or handprints of their own piece of work to represent a flower or plant like Motherwell did

**Social Studies:**

- explore the environment, experiment and play with natural materials, explore the texture, sound and smells of nature (42)
- extend information gained from books and stories or projects to learning in the outdoor setting in which they live and play (42)
- develop a sense of connectedness through the exploration of the natural environment and materials, caring for animals or plants (42)
- children show growth in their understanding of the concept of time and begin to realize that they are a part of a history, which includes people, places, events, and stories about the present and the past (43)
- can talk about recent and past events (43)

**Nature:**

- students will be able to learn about plants and how they grow.
- students will work as a team to determine what the black figure really represents - by using previous experiences in the outdoors or simply in a playground, students will be able to realize the figure represents a plant or flower
- students will be able to feel the texture of paint and canvas - even though paint is not made from natural materials now, they will be able to understand the physical state of paint, and the feel of canvas