

Quick art ideas

1. Paint a backyard landscape

Go outside and paint or draw what you see. Look at the space from different angles before choosing where you'll set up your art area. For extra credit: Look at some Monet landscapes for inspiration.

2. Pantry Pop Art

Open the cabinet, pantry, or fridge, and choose an interesting item to paint or draw. Use bold outlines and bright colors like Andy Warhol did in his Campbell's Soup Cans series. For extra credit: Do a series of 4 all using the same composition, but varying the color palette.

3. Frida Kahlo inspired self portraits

Invite your kids to look in the mirror, and paint a self portrait. They can think about how they see themselves vs. what they think others see. For extra credit: Read: Frida Kahlo: The Artist Who Painted Herself by Margaret Frith.

4. Action paintings like Jackson Pollock

If the weather is warm, you can go outside and set up your drip paintings in a place that will be easy to hose down later. If you use washable tempera paint, it should be easy to clean up. On rainy days, this is a great project to try in the bathtub (just make sure your kids know the paint will make the tub slippery, so they should try to stay sitting, or kneel on their knees). For extra credit: discuss how non-representational art (like splattering paint) can help you to express your emotions.

5. Sketch a cozy memory

Take a look at the art of Mary Cassatt. She painted the same thing over and over again... moms with their kids. Ask your kids to remember a cozy moment that the two of you shared, and invite them to sketch it using chalk pastels. For extra credit: Invite your kids to keep their color palette soft, pastel, and kind of dreamy feeling... just like Mary Cassatt and the Impressionists did.

6. Draw The Great Wave

Have your kids use markers to create their own version of Katsushika Hokusai's famous woodblock print. Ask them to pay special attention to the curves and points in the wave.

Their drawing doesn't have to match... they can use their imagination to design their own waves! For extra credit: Play a CD of ocean sounds in the background as they create.

7. Make a chalk mural

Check out some of the murals Diego Rivera painted, and then invite your kids to go outside and create their own with sidewalk chalk on the patio. They may want to make a quick sketch of their idea, to make translating their ideas onto a large art area a little easier. This is a great spacial exercise, and is extra fun if multiple kids work on the mural together. For extra credit: Ask your kids to have their mural tell a story of something they recently read about or learned.

8. Sculpt a tiny dancer

Look at some of Degas' sculptures of ballerinas. There are LOTS to see. Then, give your kids a piece of modeling clay, and ask them to sculpt a dancer. It doesn't have to be a ballerina! If they like hip-hop, tap, ballroom, folk, or any other style of dance, they can sculpt a dancer in any pose they choose. The main idea is for them to look at some sort of reference, and use their observational skills to re-create the human body in that position. For extra credit: Snap a selfie of your child and their sculpture together, with them making the same pose as their art! Then, post it to the Art History Kids private Facebook group or on instagram with #arthistorykids.

9. Paint your dreams

Invite your kids to paint a dream they've had recently. For extra credit: Look at some surrealist artists like Magritte or Dali... they loved to paint their dreams!

10. Explore color interactions

Get out a bunch of construction paper, and cut them into 3 different size squares... small, medium, and large. Start playing with them, and notice how the colors effects are altered depending on the colors that surround them. Look at 'Homage to the Square' by Josef Albers for inspiration. For extra credit: This project is even more fun if you use subtle color variations not found in most construction paper packs. Have your kids paint some color swatches with their own custom colors, or use some paint chip swatches from the hardware store if your have them leftover from a home decorating project.