

Harmony - Ava

Ava is usually a shy and quiet individual, but she is always bursting with kindness. Her family is very important to her, and is usually included in her art work. She often adds little hearts to her work - "Because we love each other" she said. When Ava began exploring the art materials, she had a giant grin on her face. She loved how the chalk pastels smeared all over her hands. "Now look at my hands!" she shouted. (The shouting in class is a first for Ava). Throughout the two days that she worked on her drawings and paintings, Ava's enjoyment in the process was evident. Over the 2 hours she spent on her creations, she added many details. The depth of her expression is a breakthrough for her at school. When asked about how she could change the world, Ava looked up at me with her deep blue eyes and said nothing. I asked her in a different way, and she began to describe her picture. What a foreign question for me to be asking. Why would she want to change her world, when her life is filled with love and joy - Family. Ava painted "the moon, because everyone likes the moon. This is a candy, and these green bugs are grasshoppers, and this is a house, and that's a person in the house - me. That is the grass. This is a little tree and this is two big trees and this is the sun." I asked her why she had painted the sun AND the moon together. She said: "Because sometimes they go out at the same time."

This keen observation from a little child of 5 years old is why I love to teach Kindergarten. Little people have the best and biggest ideas. I began to think about how balanced the sun and the moon are in her picture, like Ava's own beautiful life. This idea of balance and harmony in the world is what I tried to express in my own painting.

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AVA

The Present - Elizabeth

Elizabeth confidently explored the art materials from the beginning of the project. When I asked her what she could do to change the world, she had a very clear idea. “Do something special - make someone happy with a surprise. A present for mommy and daddy and my sisters. Some dolls for my sisters and some special flowers for mommy and daddy, and a picture.” I then asked her how this would change the world. She said: “With magic - the earth it makes a wish for people, special things.” Elizabeth painted her final picture based on these ideas. When she was finished, she described her painting. “Someone holding a picture frame of a heart - moi. The sun, grasshoppers, and blue grasshoppers. That’s a mask because there’s holes for me to see. The earth made the blue grasshoppers as a wish. Someone made the mask, someone at school. But then we bought it cause I like the colour of it.”

Elizabeth’s ideas about how she could change the world are beautiful and generous. She wishes to give presents to her family, just as she imagines that the Earth magically wishes “special things” for people. I found this to be a very powerful idea. The Earth gives us presents every day. The beauty of nature, if we take the time to observe it, is in the colours of the sunset, the dew drops on the grass, the blue of the water, the eyes of a child. Over the last few weeks, our students have been observing and learning about insects, including grasshoppers. The Earth has given us so many wonderful presents. It’s gifts are continually evolving.

“The grasshopper ... symbolizes taking a leap of faith and listening to one's inner voice. To many, the grasshopper represents good luck.”

<https://www.reference.com/world-view/grasshopper-s-symbolism-32203d6a0b87cde9>

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ELIZABETH

** I'm not sure how you want to describe this one - I worked with Rory, but then Julie did the art response

Falling-Up - Rory

Rory's energy comes through in everything that he does - including his art work. His drawings are full of action, often characters running and jumping in combat. When I invited him to work with me, Rory wasn't terribly excited. He was busy playing in the dramatic arts center with his friends. At first he was hesitant to use the chalk pastels. He drew one large red person, then experimented with the orange. "My hand's all orange! I rubbed-in my orange chalk!" He instantly wanted to wash his hands, and that was enough with that. As he was drawing with a pencil, he talked: "Me and my mom played a board game - Clue. I got it for my birthday." "I'm not using a pencil anymore," he stated, then picked-up a marker and continued to add detail. He chose the markers because: "They are easier to colour." "This is how you make a 4. This is a big zombie made out of fire. This is a guy with a sword. This is a guy made out of bushes. This is a black ninja..." Rory proclaimed that his picture was done, and he wanted to paint. (By this point, he had long forgotten about the dramatic center.) He experimented with the paints, using many different colours. The following day I gave Rory the board for his final piece and asked him what he would do to change the world. He said: "The Earth - breaking it because. Change it to a square... You will fall off the Earth." After painting his picture he described it: "This is the earth, and this is a green frog, the orange stuff are flying squirrels and the brown stuff are dirt. Red and blue are the earth, the planet. That's a square because some people turned the earth that way.

Julie's response to Rory's work.

When I look at Rory's picture it makes me think of the earth and the blue represents the water. The action of the whole painting and the movement makes me think of my little boy and his energy. I decided to take a picture of my son in action, playing in the rain. Like Rory, my son is full of action. Both boys love to jump, run, tease and make people laugh. I chose to take a picture of my son in a moment of pure joy. At first he was hesitant to jump

in the water, but with a little encouragement his fun spirit took over. I'm happy I was able to capture this moment.

PHOTOS BY JULIE PAQUETTE

CELESTE OVENS
WORKING WITH
RORY