

FOUR FAMOUS FEMALE ARTISTS!



Overview

With this program, girls will learn about four women who paved the way for the visual arts, a field that was mostly dominated by men. Girls will work in teams and as they create art inspired by the *featured artists. Use the materials in the kit to get started on art projects. Be sure to use your resources wisely and consider using recycled materials or things that you find around your home to complete art projects.

Program Grade Level: Brownie, Junior & Cadette

Award Connections: Brownie Painting, Junior Drawing, Cadette Comic Artist, Senior Collage

**Please be aware that the examples included in this kit are preselected, age appropriate images of the featured artist's work. Please use the photos provided as examples of the artist's work.*

Opening: Where are all the female artists?

SAY: Let's list our favorite artists. How many of those listed are women? Did you know that several women artists paved the way in the history of art?

DO:

1. Lead a discussion using the questions below.
2. Give girls a chance to share their thoughts before providing an answer.
 - **Why are most of history's famous artists, men?** *(Until the 1960's it was socially unacceptable for women to produce art. Early female artist were often disregarded or their work was not held to the same level of worth)*
 - **What were most women roles in daily life before modern times?** *(Often, women's roles were seen as childcare providers and caregivers of the home)*
 - **What were women commonly responsible for?** *(Some of the things women were responsible for were raising the children, cooking, cleaning, and gardening)*
 - **If women worked outside the home, what jobs did they mostly do?** *(Two socially acceptable jobs women held outside the home before the industrial revolution were, school teachers and nurses)*
 - **Historically, what were some forms of art that were socially acceptable for women?** *(Sewing, knitting, quilting, baking and other domestic arts)*
 - **What was education like for women before the industrial revolution?** *(Depending on their economic status, some girls were able to attend school. It wasn't until inventions like indoor plumbing, refrigeration and washing machines, alleviated work and opened opportunities for girls to finish their schooling.)*
 - **Why is it important that we recognize these female artists?** *(It is important that we recognize these women artists because they climbed a hard, uphill journey to be able to make their art, sell their art and ask for fair wages for their art. They paved the way for future girls to achieve their dreams)*

Activity 1: Artist Bios

SAY: We are going to learn about four different female artists. They had very different styles and used different mediums or tools in their art. In a fine art context, "art medium" refers to the art materials or artist supplies used to create a work of art. Basically, it's whatever you use in your artistic expression.

What do artists do? What different types of artists can you think of? What mediums do they use? (paint, clay, paper, fabric, photos, etc.)

DO:

1. Have a troop leader or girl (depending on age) read the artist biographies.
2. Pass around samples of their featured artist's work for girls to see and discuss.
3. Have the girls answer the questions below.

Reflection:

1. What was one of the most interesting facts about each of these artists?
2. What do you like or dislike about their work?
3. What would you change or do differently in their work?
4. Why do you think these artist became famous?

Extra activity! Go beyond the troop meeting and plan a field trip to a local art museum. Check to see if you can take a tour, visit a female artist's exhibit or create your own museum scavenger hunt.

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Frida Kahlo



Mexican painter, Magdalena Carmen Frida Kahlo y Calderón (July 6 1907 –July 13 1954), usually known as Frida Kahlo, was born in Coyoacán, Mexico.

She had polio that left her disabled when she was 6 years old. She studied medicine and was going to become a doctor. Because of a traffic accident at age 18 which badly injured her, she had periods of severe pain for the rest of her life. After this accident, Kahlo no longer continued her medical studies, but took up painting.

Frida was known for her surreal and very personal works. Fifty-five of her 143 paintings are of herself. She was also influenced by native Mexican culture, shown in bright colors, with a mixture of realism and symbolism. Her paintings attracted the attention of the artist Diego Rivera, whom she later married.

In 1939, Kahlo went to live in Paris for a time. There she exhibited some of her paintings and developed friendships with such artists as Marcel Duchamp and Pablo Picasso.

In 1953, Kahlo received her first solo exhibition in Mexico. While bedridden at the time, Kahlo did not miss out on the exhibition's opening. Arriving by ambulance, Kahlo spent the evening talking and celebrating with the event's attendees from the comfort of a four-poster bed set up in the gallery just for her. She died soon after in Coyoacán.

Annie Leibovitz



American portrait photographer Annie Leibovitz was born on October 2, 1949 in Connecticut.

Annie's father was a Lieutenant Colonel in the USA Air Force, leading the family to move frequently; she took her first photographs while they were stationed in the Philippines during the Vietnam War.

Annie Leibovitz's artistic abilities began to shine through while at school, she went on to study painting at the San Francisco Art Institute, and continued to hone her camera skills while working in various jobs.

In 1970 Annie starting working as a photographer for the famous, *Rolling Stone* magazine, within three years she was named as the magazine's Chief Photographer. Annie captured many famous movie and music celebrities on film including, John Lennon, The band-*The Rolling Stones*, and Actress, Demi Moore.

In 1983, Leibovitz left *Rolling Stone* and began working for *Vanity Fair*. With a wider array of subjects, Leibovitz's photographs for the magazine ranged from presidents to literary icons to teen heartthrobs.

Annie was honored to photograph the British Royalty and Queen Elizabeth on her United States visit in 2012. The finest museums in the world now exhibit Annie Leibovitz's lifetime work including, the National Portrait Gallery in London and The Smithsonian Museum. Widely considered one of America's best portrait photographers, Leibovitz continues to be in demand as a photographer.

Edmonia Lewis



American sculptor Edmonia Lewis (July 4, 1844 - Sept. 17, 1907) was born in New York.

Lewis was the daughter of an African American man and a woman of African and Ojibwa (Chippewa) descent. She was orphaned at a young age and afterward reportedly lived among the Ojibwa, who called her Wildfire. She attended Oberlin College from 1860 to 1863.

Lewis thrived at Oberlin, excelling particularly at drawing. She then made her way to Boston, where abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison introduced her to a local sculptor, from whom she received a few lessons.

Edmonia Lewis became the first internationally recognized African-American woman sculptor. She is best known for her work in representing those who worked for civil freedom and emancipation. Lewis's most famous work, *Forever Free*, was completed in 1867.

Some of her subjects were: Abraham Lincoln, noted abolitionist John Brown, Colonel Robert Gould Shaw, Sergeant William H. Carney, and Horace Mann. She also found great support and recognition in Rome. Her studio there became an important stop for those pursuing "the Grand Tour" of art. Recently discovered in a scrap heap, her work "Death of Cleopatra" amazed those who attended the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition in 1876. It now resides in the Smithsonian Institution.

It was variously reported that Lewis had last been seen in Rome in 1909 or 1911, but death records discovered in the early 21st century show that she died in London in 1907.

Mary Cassatt



American painter, Mary Stevenson Cassatt (May 22, 1844 - June 14, 1926) was born in Pennsylvania.

She was the daughter of a well-to-do investment broker, and her upbringing reflected her family's high social standing. During the 1850s, the Cassatt family took their children to live in Europe for several years. This time in Europe influenced Mary's love of the arts.

Mary Cassatt's father forbid her to become an artist. Despite the discouragement from her family, she enrolled in Philadelphia's Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts at age 16.

Mary decided to find something more challenging, and soon left the program to move to Europe where she could study the works of famous artists firsthand. Mary began her study with private art lessons in the Louvre, the largest and most famous museum in the world. One of Mary's portraits was selected at the prestigious Paris Salon, an annual exhibition run by the French government.

After several years at the Paris Salon, Mary became bored with her style of painting. She began to experiment artistically. Her new work drew criticism for its bright colors. Mary, drew courage from painter Edgar Degas, whose use of color inspired her. She commented that this time spent studying with Degas and his use of bright colors "changed her life forever."

Mary Cassatt exhibited 11 of her paintings with a famous group Impressionists in 1879. The show was a huge success. While many of her fellow Impressionists were focused on landscapes and street scenes, Mary Cassatt became famous for her portraits. She was especially drawn to women in everyday domestic settings, especially mothers with their children. Later, a family trip to Egypt greatly inspired Mary Cassatt. Seeing the ancient art made Mary re-think her style of painting and try new techniques.

After 1910, her increasingly poor eyesight virtually put an end to her serious painting. She died in 1926 in Le Mesnil-Théribus, France.

Activity 2: Inspired Masterpiece

SAY: Now we will have the opportunity to get creative and create a masterpiece that is inspired by one or more the artist we learned about. You do not have to be a skills artist to contribute. This activity is all about expressing yourself and having fun!

DO:

1. Divide girls into 4 teams. Each team will choose one of the four female artists. Individual girls or small groups may choose one or more artists.
2. Help girls decide on an art project they would like to do that is inspired by one of the four female artists.
3. Use “project starter” questions below and the samples of the artist work to help girls make their decision on a group project. Volunteers will need to divide up and help individual teams.
4. Supply girls with a variety of materials for them create their own “Famous Female Inspired Masterpiece.” Challenge girls to use as many of the supplies as possible. Paints, markers, crayons, colored pencils, glue, scissors, scrapbook paper, clay, wire, beads, tissue paper rolls, empty boxes, tape are all examples of items you can collect for this meeting.
5. Save time at the end of the meeting for each team to present their masterpieces to the group. Consider recording the girl’s presentation. Who will they share this with? Why is this presentation important for them to share? Take a group photo of the girls holding their artwork.

Project starters

1. What is your inspiration from your featured artist’s work?
2. What do you want the subject matter to be?
3. What materials do you want to use for your piece?
4. How will you divide up the work amongst the group?
5. What will you name your masterpiece?
6. What do you want the troop to know about this masterpiece?

Materials List:

Please place all of these items neatly in the box!

- 6 watercolor paint sets**
- 5 Tempura paints**
- Play dough**
- Pencils**
- 14 Paint brushes**
- Scrap book paper**
- 2 Pencil sharpeners**
- Stencils**
- Markers**
- Pipe cleaners**
- Color pencils**
- Examples of artists work**