

I Can Make ART like Marcelle Ferron

Kids explore the work of abstract painter and stained glass maker Marcelle Ferron.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Art is a powerful vehicle across the curriculum and can be integrated into other subjects.

Related subjects: language arts/music (rhythm unity and harmony)/history/social studies/history/geography/science/mathematics

Suitable for ages 9-12

OBJECTIVES

To discover the art and influences of Marcelle Ferron.

To encourage the expression of mood and feelings through abstract art.

To experiment with spatula painting and cellophane stained glass activities.

To explore design and pattern and to create new colours.

PREVIEWING TIPS AND POST-VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Look at some of Marcelle's work and other examples of abstract art. Hold a class discussion on the following points: What is abstract art? How would you describe Marcelle's work? What emotions might Marcelle have wanted people to feel looking at her work? What experiences influenced her life and work? Do you think Marcelle had a difficult or easy life as an artist? How is stained glass different from paint? How is public art different from private art?

1) MAKING A SPATULA PAINTING

Marcelle Ferron made the majority of her works using spatulas. This activity gives kids a chance to learn the technique and create their own works in that style.

Materials

- Gouache paint
- Various sized spatulas
- Large sheets of paper
- Water
- Newspaper for covering tables

Preparation

Cover table or desk surfaces with newspaper. Set up a place for the paintings to dry, perhaps on the floor at the edge of the room.

Technique

Spatula painting is an exercise in self-expression. Encourage students to think of a feeling or a mood and express it with big, wide gestures that go off the page and use their whole arm. Have students use three different gestures and one colour per gesture.

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2) MAKING CELLOPHANE STAINED GLASS

Ask the children to think of a design they would like to create. It can be abstract or a real scene.

Materials

- Clear acetate sheets to use as a base (one sheet for each design)
- Large pieces of coloured acetate
- Water-based varnish or watered-down white glue
- Large paintbrushes
- Water jars for cleaning brushes
- Newspaper for covering desks or tables

Preparation

Cut sheets of coloured acetate into smaller pieces and place in a central location in the classroom. Cover desks with newspaper. Hand out sheets of clear acetate, paintbrushes and water. Then give each student a small quantity of water-based varnish.

Technique

Have students choose pieces of coloured cellophane, then cut and arrange the shapes in a pattern on their desk. Encourage them to experiment with the arrangement of their design. Have them try overlapping pieces or placing them side-by-side. When they are happy with the design, they can glue the pieces in place on the clear acetate sheet.

The final step is to brush a thin coat of varnish onto a small area of the clear acetate base and lay the coloured strips on top, gluing the pieces down as they go.

The varnish will harden if exposed to air, so remind students to put their brushes in water when they aren't using them. It's a good idea to have students try a small sample first to let them see how the process works.

Finishing

Put finished pieces somewhere flat to dry. Have students think of a title and write it on the bottom along with the date and their signature.

FOLLOW-UP DISCUSSION

After the work is completed, hold a group discussion:

- Describe the energy and mood of the colours.
- How does Marcelle's inspiration show in your work?
- How does your work capture or reflect you?
- What was most difficult about the process? What was most fun?
- Did the work change from start to finish?
- If it was a planned work, how does the finished art compare to the original idea?
- If the piece has a title, what does it add to the work?

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

1. Research different kinds of abstract art and the colours and materials used.
2. Find out about abstract art and artists in your community.
3. Plan a field trip to an art gallery, museum or an artist's studio.
4. Invite an artist to come to your classroom.

For more information, visit the I Can Make ART Web site at <www.nfb.ca/icanmakeart>.

