

MR. PICASSO HEAD

Jacqui Spetrino

My third-graders recently read a biography about Pablo Picasso in their reading book, and now they always come to class talking about his life and artwork. After a couple of years of trying to find the perfect project to match their enthusiasm, I stumbled across one at the dinner table while talking to my daughter. She suggested that I use Mr. Potato Head to teach about Picasso. I realized instantly that it was the idea I had been looking for.

Explaining Cubism

I explain Cubism to students in a very simple way: by using the Mr. Potato Head toy to show how Picasso would put objects in the wrong place so that the viewer sees two or more different viewpoints at once. Students have fun passing around the toy and rearranging the parts of the face to make it look like his portraits. This is a great technique for reinforcing the concept of Cubism.

Making Mr. Picasso Head

The project begins by rolling newspaper up into the shape of a potato and wrapping it with masking tape. Students paint the shape light brown, then make the facial features with modeling compound dough. When the modeling compound dries, students can paint the features any way they choose.

Once the paint dries, the parts are added to the potato with a low-heat

glue gun. Take this opportunity to remind students that Mr. Picasso Head should have his parts in the wrong place like Picasso's Cubist paintings.

The last step is to add feet and a base. Legs are optional; I use a soft modeling wire to make mine. The base is a piece of corrugated cardboard cut into a square. Each is finished with a nametag that reads, "Hello, my name is Mr. Picasso Head."

Display

Our finished sculptures are displayed with a Mr. Potato Head toy in the school showcase. Mr. Potato Head is captioned with a thought

I explain Cubism by using the Mr. Potato Head toy to show how Picasso would put objects in the wrong place so that the viewer sees two or more different viewpoints at once.

bubble that says, "Is it just me, or is there something very strange going on around here?" It gets a lot of laughs from the other classes and before you know it, everybody in the school

knows that Picasso put the parts of the face in the wrong place. ☺

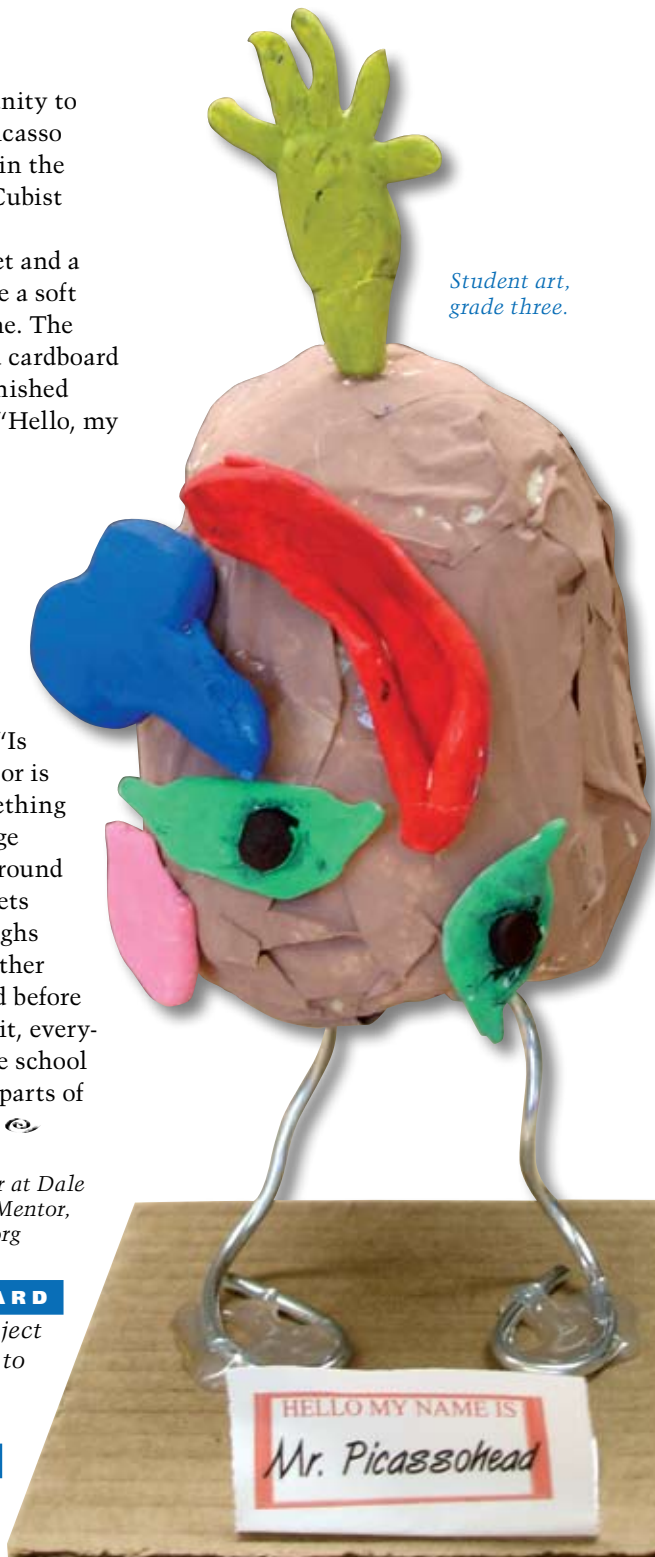
Jacqui Spetrino is an art teacher at Dale R. Rice Elementary School in Mentor, Ohio. bundy@mentorschools.org

NATIONAL STANDARD

Students select and use subject matter, symbols, and ideas to communicate meaning.

WEB LINK

www.mrpotatohead.net



Student art, grade three.