

3D

CUBIST MUSICIANS



Marel Sitron

The housing boom in our neighborhood afforded our school access to an abundance of wood scraps. As a result, I constructed a lesson for my fifth-grade students that would further their foundation in art history and build upon previous lessons. The lesson translated Picasso's *The Three Musicians* from a two-dimensional painting to a three-dimensional construction.

We began with a review of the book *Picasso*, part of the *Getting to Know the World's Greatest Artists* series by Mike Venezia, and then moved on to a discussion of several exemplars from Picasso's various periods. Next, we focused on Picasso's *The Three Musicians*.

Through discussion we determined that the musician figures would need to have at least five or six basic forms: a head, a body, or a head/body combination, two arms, and two legs. Each student was given a cardboard tray to collect their wood pieces from the scrap wood boxes around the classroom.

Construction

I demonstrated a few wood construction techniques to show how to complete the basic freestanding figure. I found it important to demonstrate that a generous amount

of white glue was necessary to join two pieces of wood. Wood pieces that could rest on each other would glue very easily. Ones that defied

the force of gravity were more challenging to attach. The larger the contact surface area, the better

the glue would hold.

Students applied ingenuity, assembling the musicians in stages, altering the orientation of the figures as needed, and bracing and temporarily taping pieces in place. Students were encouraged to add any other wooden details. No limit was given to the amount of wood that could be incorporated.

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Finishing with Paint

Before painting our musicians, we discussed the color palette of *The Three Musicians*. Students determined that, in most of the painting, Picasso's colors were monochromatic and low-intensity with a brown or grey base. The few high-intensity colors were located on the middle musician in a diamond pattern. To mirror the effect of the diamond pattern, students were instructed to leave one of their pieces of wood blank as they applied the low-intensity colors to all other components of their figures.

To start, students mixed three values of grey and/or brown and then added another color from the color wheel to each value. Once the three low-intensity values were

mixed, painting began on the musicians. I encouraged students to paint each different piece of wood with a new value. When all of the forms had been painted, except for the one piece left blank, it was time to begin working on the pattern. I encouraged students to create a complex pattern on the one remaining blank piece of wood.

Once the work on figures had been completed, we focused our attention on completing the musical instruments. Students who had built their instruments out of wood painted them. Other students made their instruments from thick pieces of colored paper like mat board.

Then the musicians were ready to perform à la Picasso! This project, inspired by what some may have

seen as a mound of trash, resulted in one of my students' favorite art projects. ☺

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NATIONAL STANDARD

Students use different media, techniques, and processes to communicate ideas, experiences, and stories.

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