

Happy Winter, everyone! It has been an exciting few months in the art classroom. I've really enjoyed getting to know our new and returning students and watching them try new things: such as touching clay for the first time or finding out what happens when they mix all of the colors in their pallet together to make a muddy brown. The art room is a place where we can all communicate in our own way and empower ourselves by trying new things and developing our own ways of expression through various materials. Recently, the preschool students finished creating tall, wood sculptures and shared them with the class. The students proudly stood up in the front of the classroom with their artworks and talked about what



Sam experiments with paper

they had made. I was not only so proud of the work and explanation that each child gave for his/her work but also the way the class showed respect to one another by listening, asking questions, and even applauding each other! Art really served as a common thread in that moment to unite us all as a class.

Many exciting things are scheduled for this year, such as the Asteroids and Quasars classrooms yearlong partnership with Museum of Modern Art. A museum educator visits us once a month to discuss and create artworks based on the museum's collection. Many other classes have also visited the Met and the Whitney Museums recently, too. The museums serve as a classroom for us outside of Gillen Brewer where we can learn about ourselves and share in discussions based on personal experiences. We also have new bulletin boards in the upstairs hallways so our students' artwork is always showcased and celebrated. I hope you enjoy this Winter's newsletter. —Kate

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This year all students at Gillen Brewer have their own sketchbooks. We draw in them, bring them on fieldtrips, and paste images of artwork that are discussed in class.

The Comets: NYC Subway installation



The Comets are designing their own version of the New York City subway system. See page 4 for more details on this project.



Stars and Moons: Food in Art /Working with Clay

Our unit began with the Moons and Stars looking at postcards from the Museum of Modern Art that depicted food and talked about what our favorite foods were. Every child then got a different picture of a dessert painting by artist, Wayne Thiebaud, and we practiced counting cakes, lollipops, and other delicious treats. We used model magic to shape our own desserts and then mixed red and white paint to create a gooey pink icing. The students then had various choices of materials such as papers, foil, and wax to add to their artwork. Our food exploration turned into the crea-



tion of our own restaurant. Each child had a selection of various materials such as bendable wax, play-dough, wood, pom-poms, and paint to shape and create a special dish. They then created their own

drinks by reusing plastic bottles and painted them in various colors and added texture with tissue paper to reflect drinks of their choice. The Moons and Stars Restaurant was proudly on display during December and January in Gillen Brewer's own mini-museum, the display case next to the art room.

The preschoolers are also learning about other sculptural mediums such as wood and clay. They took various shapes and sizes of wood and joined them together to create a sculpture and added color with paintbrush markers and watercolors. The classes then shared their ideas with the entire group and talked about their designs. Among their creations were tunnels, buildings, and escalators.



Rosie uses her modeling tool

Both classes are now working with clay.

They are spending a lot of time talking



Joshua and Jake flatten their clay with the rolling pin

about the properties of clay such as color, texture, shape, and smell. The Moons and Stars are learning how to change the shape of the clay with their hands and with rolling pins and modeling tools. Recently we learned how to change the shape from round to flat by warming the clay in our hands and patting back and forth. By pressing and rolling, we turned the clay into a flat and smooth object. The children then pressed, scraped, and scooped their tools into the clay to change the texture. They will also incorporate mosaics and feathers in their work, as well.

The Galaxies: Arms and Armor



The Galaxies have been learning about arms and armor and how it was worn and used

Benny & Molly look at armor

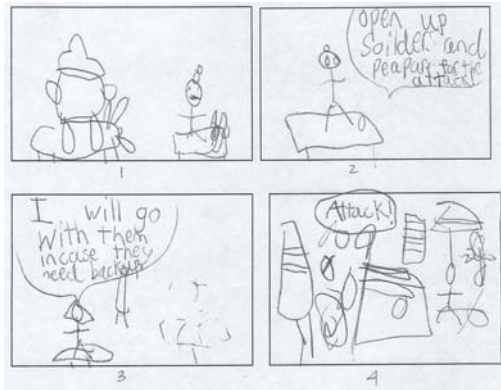
for protection in different time periods and throughout different countries. We took a trip to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in early February and looked closely at the armor of knights and samurai. The class worked together in groups of two to find various objects through the Arms and Ar- in the Arms and Armor Hall.



Eli and Rafael pose as samurai wearing heavy armor.

The Galaxies: Arms and Armor cont'd...

There were lots of opportunities to draw and think about what it must have been like to have lived the lifestyle of a knight or samurai. When we got back to school, we thought about what kind of armor we would design for ourselves. The Galaxies built their own helmets out of papier-mache. They used balloons and made layers with wet newspaper strips. Now the class is designing armor with cardboard, yarn, paint, and various recycled materials.



The class watched a scene from Kurosawa's Ran and created a 4 part storyboard based on the scene leading up to a samurai battle. The Galaxies visualized what was happening based on the actors' body language and facial expressions. (above: storyboard by Rafi)



The Galaxies pose in their samurai helmets. Next, they will design their own armor.

Self-Portraits: by the Neptunes

First row (L-R): Shayna, Matthew, Gabriel, Emma, David
 Second row (L-R): John, Wayman, Sakura, Marley, Elijah



The Neptunes painted large-scale self-portraits by looking in mirrors. We used various shades of brown, peach, and white to mix our skin color and then gave a close observation to the shapes in our faces. Finally, we discussed background and thought about patterns and shapes to make, as well as the colors we could make from the primary colors.

The Asteroids and Quasars

The Two Sides of Me

What do people see on the outside? What don't people see on the inside? These were the questions that began one of our recent assignments called, "The Two Sides of Me." The Asteroids began by writing down on the front of a folded piece of paper words that would describe them on the outside; what people know about them. We then opened up the paper and on the inside, each student wrote something that nobody knows about them. Some kids chose to share their ideas and other did not. We then broke the group into partners and using our digital cameras, took portraits of each other.

The second day of the project consisted of thinking about composition and mixing up photography and drawing to depict the theme of "The Two Sides of Me." Some Asteroids chose to write words, while others drew the other side of their body. The objective was for students to connect their feelings about self-image to writing and then to depict their thoughts through photography and drawing.



*"The Two Sides of Me"
portrait by Sarah*



The Quasars and Asteroids created abstract paintings based on music and movement. We listened to music and thought about how to move our arms in rhythm to the beats and sounds. Working in groups of 3, each student took turns making a movement on paper with an oil pastel. We then used watercolors together as a group to make these collaborative artworks.

The Comets: Building the New York City Subway



The Comets have expressed a great interest in learning about the New York City subway system. After a trip on the 6 train with their classroom teachers, the Comets decided to make their own subway system in art. First they designed their own trains with cardboard rectangles and silver paint. Students had a choice of various papers in different shapes and colors to create subway windows, doors, and other parts of the train.

They also added subway letters to determine different cars, as many of the Comets have their own favorite train line. We looked at pictures on the



SMARTboard of various stations and talked about the use of mosaics at each station. Each Comet got to pick a station name and designed a mosaic pattern around their station. We then created other parts of the station by piecing together various shapes to create benches, stairs, and windows. We also incorporated familiar images such as MetroCards, turnstiles, and system maps. We are in the process of connecting our stations together with wire to create a mural with all of our artwork in the upstairs hallway.



Gabriel and Lucas create while looking at an example of a subway tile mural on the Smartboard.

The Suns visit MoMA and learn about the art of Tim Burton

The Suns took a trip on February 2nd to see the Tim Burton exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art. Tim Burton is a filmmaker who has made movies such as "The Nightmare Before Christmas" and "Beetlejuice." The exhibit showed many of his drawings, paintings, photographs, costumes, and puppets. The Suns had a chance to talk in small groups with our MoMA educator about character traits and think about choices an artist has to

make when he or she creates a character such as: facial expressions, costume, pose, personality, etc. They had a chance to draw and participate in some hands-on activities during our time in the museum, too.

Back at school the class is in the middle of creating their own puppet characters using socks, felt, buttons, yarn, fabrics, and other found objects. The Suns will create special movements

that their puppets will perform to music and then make a short film .



At MoMA, Maddux creates a thaumatrope, a drawing that has two sides and when pulled quickly, looks like it is moving.

The Supernovas work with clay

The Supernovas are working with clay in art. We have spent the past couple of days talking about the ways in which the shape of the clay can be changed without hands and with the help of clay tools. Each Supernova came up with his or her own word to describe how to move the clay: twist, roll, break, squash, press, and bend. We are working with rolling pins and other modeling tools to find new



Niko holds up his clay, which has an interesting resemblance to the artist

The Supernovas will also be learning about ceramics and how to make a vessel using slab and coil techniques. The students will also learn to expand their ideas into new and interesting forms to create a unique ceramic artwork.

COLOR WALL

Watch out Crayola! Each student got to name every new color they created. Some of the color names invented include: spoiled peach, cheddar cheese, private pink & blueberry muffin.



Every class at Gillen Brewer learns about color mixing, whether it is through the color

parties in the preschool, Comets and Suns classrooms or by challenging

the older classes to create as many new colors as they could using the primary colors and white.

