

Artist Kelly Reedy will be sharing some of her favorite kids' art projects with students, parents and teachers over the coming months. Students aged 10 from the Hong Wen School Art Club made the following project, but children of all ages will also enjoy doing it!

Realism and Expressionism!

with artist Kelly Reedy

Studio Arts
4 kids + adults

Art movements often act as pendulums, where one generation is interested in naturalism the next will reject it and develop a more abstract style of their own. So it was in Europe in the mid-1800's when artists such as Edouard Manet and Edgar Degas were turning their attention towards "realism" or the depiction of objects and people as they actually are without any idealisation. Artists began to paint subject matter from contemporary life even if it was considered too lowly to be included in "high art" up until that time.

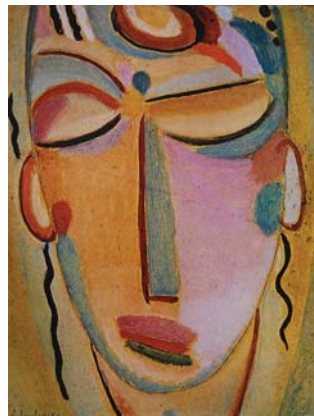
French artist Edgar Degas (1834 - 1917) was trained in classical and historical painting but later began to portray the everyday life around him. Some of his favorite subjects were ballet dancers and horse races. He is especially known for his fine portraits, often completed in oil pastels. Even though he showed his work with the early Impressionist painters, he always insisted that he was a "realist" painter who depicted the people and places he knew in Paris.

As interest in representing the external world through careful observation waned, the Impressionist movement took its course and from it sprang Post-Impressionism, Cubism, and Expressionism.

An important creative movement at the turn of the 20th century, Expressionism influenced visual arts, writing, theatre and even early cinema. In Germany the famous "Blue Rider" painters' group was founded in Munich around 1911, epitomising the turning away from the natural world and the delving back into the interior world. Many of the members of this group were inspired by the connection of visual art to music. They painted in a spontaneous and intuitive manner, considering colour to be spiritual and symbolic. They were interested in Cubism and Fauvism as well as Medieval art and Primitivism.



Edgar Degas



Alexei Jawlensky

Alexei Jawlensky (1864–1941) was born in Russia but spent much of his adult life in Germany. He was a member of the Blue Rider group and was known for his richly coloured paintings of heads. As he grew older he began to simplify and stylise the features of his portraits in a quest to find spirituality. His colours and abstract use of form reflect an observation of the inner-self rather than outward appearances of reality.

Both of these movements, Realism and Expressionism, still influence contemporary artists today. Depending on their temperament an artist may be more drawn to the realistic depiction of nature, while another has an intuitive feeling for colour. I set my students the task of drawing a self-portrait using oil pastels. They built up layers of colour, at times scratching back through the thick pastels to make lines highlighting the colours underneath. It is easy to see which student is a realist and which one an expressionist! What about you? Take some oil pastels and play with both of these styles!

For more information about the artist and Studio Arts courses for children, teens and adults, please visit www.kellyreedy.com



Step One and Step Two, Sharmaine Yap, age 10

Tamly Seah, age 10



Step One and Step Two, Gigi Lim, age 10

Chong Shi Min, age 10