

# MASTER PIECES

Picasso Collage by Marcia Gibson

**P**ablo Picasso is often described as the most famous artist of the 20th century. I wanted to introduce my K/1 class to Picasso in a way that would be fun and simple, yet artistically meaningful.

Our one-hour Picasso lesson began by viewing reproductions of some of his work. We discussed several of his Cubist-style portraits found in Taschen's posterbooks, postcards and other sources (see references list at end of story). I began by showing the children the more "normal" portraits and progressed to



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the more unique images.

The students were surprised by the way Picasso painted portraits by combining several different perspectives of his subject. They enjoyed discovering various "strange" elements of Picasso's portraits. When we considered the eyes of a subject, we found that one eye was often bigger than the other, they were often different colors, they were not horizontally placed and that sometimes they had eyelashes.

Then we examined the noses and discovered that they were usually painted in profile while the rest of the face was painted in frontal view. Also, they were often L-shaped, with both nostrils located on one side of the nose. We found that the mouth was usually placed in an unusual location and sometimes formed simply by two horizontal lines.

We also noted the C-shape of the ears, the simple strands of hair and the geometric shapes used to create some of his



## MATERIALS

- Oil pastels (24 set)
- Dark construction paper (12" x 18"), one per student
- Geometric shapes of construction paper, various sizes and colors, five per student
- White glue or glue stick, one per student
- Scissors, one per student

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The students will learn about...

- Picasso, a famous 20th-century artist, and his Cubist portraits.
- finding similarities and differences found in several works of art.
- blending, using oil pastels.

portraits. Each student contributed something to the discussion as we examined Picasso's artwork.

I then demonstrated how we would create our Picasso-inspired collage. Each student would start with five geometric-shaped pieces of construction paper. First, we would enrich the color of the construction paper by rubbing it with the side of an oil pastel. Next, the students would draw one facial feature on each piece of

paper. Then they would arrange and glue their Picasso-collage onto a large background. Last, they would draw strands of hair to complete their image. After the demonstration, the children were confident and excited to start on their own collage.

I had prepared lots of geometric pieces of construction paper before the lesson began: differing sizes of triangles, squares and rectangles in a variety of colors. I distributed five shapes to each student, making sure that each child received five different colors, as well. We then chose oil-pastel colors that would enrich our colored paper pieces.

The children needed some assistance in peeling down

see **PICASSO** on page 53

## PICASSO

continued from page 28

the oil pastels' paper. Using the side of the pastels, the pupils rubbed in a circular motion on each shape of paper. Sometimes they blended two colors of pastels together on a shape. A few students decided to outline their shape as well.

I asked each child to choose their favorite large geometric shape from their five pieces and to draw a large eye on that piece. Next, they chose a small shaped piece and drew a small eye on it. Some students added eyelashes and eyebrows at this time.

On their next selected piece, they drew an L-shaped nose with two nostrils. Then they chose the piece on which to draw a mouth. The fifth piece could be left blank to be used as a cheek or forehead, or they could draw a C-shaped ear on it.

Each child then arranged his or her five facial features on one large piece of construction paper. I reminded them to try arranging the features asymmetrically, just like Picasso did. I encouraged them to overlap some of the pieces and use all of the space to create an interesting composition.

After gluing each piece to the background, they used the pastels to draw on a hairdo like their own or like someone in their family. Since we used a dark background, we used some strokes of white pastel to enhance the hairstyle. The addition of hair served to frame the face and brought unity to the composition, creating a completed portrait.

This was a fun, inexpensive and successful project. Each collage was a unique and interesting composition. The children were very proud of their work. I think they may have even had a glimpse into the artistic mind of Picasso as they created their own collages. ■

*Marcia Gibson is an art teacher in Santa Ynez, Calif.*

### REFERENCES

- *Pablo Picasso Posterbook*, Taschen. (*Portrait of Marie-Therese Walter*, 1937.)
- *Picasso, 6 posters, Vol. II*, Taschen. (*Bust of a Woman with a Hat*, 1962; *Portrait of Dora Maar*, 1937; *Maya with Doll*, 1938; and *Bust of a Woman Wearing a Striped Hat*, 1939.)
- *Pablo Picasso, 30 Postcards*, Taschen. (*Woman with a Flower*, 1932; *Maya with a Boat*, 1938; and *Jacqueline in Turkish Costume*, 1955.)
- *The Art Book or The Art Box*, Phaidon. (*Weeping Woman*, 1937.)