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BACKGROUND READING FOR ART PRESENTERS Paul Klee (Clay) (1879-1940)

Source: <http://www.paulklee.net>

Paul Klee was born in Switzerland. During the course of his career, he not only participated in various art movements, but he was also one of the leading forces in many of these movements. Some of the forms he worked on during his career include expressionism, cubism, and surrealism. During the later portion of his career, he also worked as an art instructor for some time, prior to the Nazi rule removing him from his post; at this point, he and his family fled Germany, and went back to Switzerland, where Paul Klee remained until he died several years later. As the son of a professional violinist, early in his childhood Paul Klee took a liking to music, and was quite talented in music. In fact, at the age of 11, he received an invitation to be a part of the Bern Music Association, for the work he was doing, and his exceptional talent in music. Early on during his teen years, his attention turned from music, towards the visual art forms. By 1898, Paul Klee was studying at the Academy of Fine Arts, located in Munich.

By the year 1905, it was clear that Paul Klee had developed his own unique style in art; One such signature technique that he had mastered, was drawing with a needle on a blackened pane of glass, to create magnificent depth and texture to the pieces he would design. From 1903 to 1905, he had completed a set of etchings, which was titled *Inventions*, and this came to be the first exhibit that he was a part of. In 1906, Paul Klee married Lily Stumpf, who was a Bavarian pianist, and they had a child. During the course of the next 5 years, his work progressed to new forms of art which were being presented to the art world. In 1910, In 1914, during a trip to Tunisia, Paul Klee had his first major breakthrough in the art world. He began to work on abstract art, due to the inspiration he had from the light exhibits which he viewed when visiting Tunisia. Upon returning to Munich, Paul Klee painted his first piece of abstract art, which was mainly composed of rectangles and circles, in a variety of color sequences and patterns blended together. The work he did took a change after the death of two close friends ([Franz Marc](#) and Auguste Macke). He created a series of seven pen lithograph works, which were a reaction to the loss which he had suffered, and the emotion that came from the loss of these friends and inspirations in the art world. He only worked at the academy for two years, where he was removed from his post in 1933; he was fired when the academy was taken under Nazi rule.

After being fired from the academy, Paul Klee and his family moved back to Switzerland, where he would remain until his death several years later. During this time, he was at the peak of his career and fame as an artist; during this difficult and tumultuous period, he was also at the peak of his creative output. He was producing nearly 500 pieces of art at this point annually and did so each year to follow, until his death.

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

ART PRESENTER PROGRAM
Kindergarten

Birds
Paul Klee

What is the brightest part of this painting?

Are the bright colors all in one part of the painting or are they spread around?

What colors do you see first?

What are dull colors? Where are they used?

Are dull colors more restful?

Are bright colors more lively?

Do your eyes jump from one bright yellow bird to another?

How do you think the artist felt about this painting?

Do you think he was the kind of person who liked nature?

How do you feel about this painting?

Do you suppose those birds can fly?

How do you feel about the prickly plants?

If you had painted this picture, would you have done anything differently?

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EXTENDED ACTIVITIES TO ACCOMPANY

Birds

***Paul Klee* - Kindergarten**

1. Mixed Medial Picture

Materials: black construction paper, watercolors, chalk, crayons

Give each child a sheet of black construction paper and a variety of media. Encourage them to do a picture filled with interesting objects and using various media provided.

2. Dr. Seuss group mural

Materials: large self or wrapping paper taped to wall, paper and drawing materials, crayons, scissors

Have a discussion with children about Dr. Seuss characters. Encourage them to talk about imaginary animals. Perhaps you could get the discussion rolling by discussing your favorite imaginary animal (a yellow, polka-dotted, five-legged stumble bunny with red feathers for hair and red painted toenails.) After children have contributed various ideas, let them draw large imaginary animals and color them. When finished, have them cut them out and paste them to the mural. Sky, grass, trees, etc. can be added after all the children have glued their animal to the mural.

Have the students put their name on the back of their paper before the project begins.