

The Dr. Eric Jackman Institute of Child Study

Visual Arts Program, 2026-2027

Junior Grades

Philosophy

Children are born artists, and their time in Art should be a joyful process of discovery, self-expression, and the broadening of ideas and techniques. Hands-on experience continues to be emphasized in the junior years, and what may otherwise be seen as mistakes are instead looked at as creative opportunities and chances to grow. Each project aims to further the students' understanding of the different elements of art and design, and their applications.

In keeping with our constructivist approach, student ideas play an essential role in the direction of our projects, and creative problem-solving is among the most important skills developed. Inquiry topics explored within the grade classroom are incorporated in our art wherever possible. Inquiry pedagogy and the knowledge-building principles are also employed, and are fundamental to our process. It is of primary importance to promote a stress-free, supportive, and celebratory environment in our Art studio.

As well as the curriculum-informed skills and techniques that are explored in the junior grades, the Art program prioritizes First Nations, Métis, and Inuit artists; artists representative of the global majority; and art from diverse and marginalized communities, examining the great diversity and very important contributions to our landscape. We strive to ensure that everyone feels included and reflected in the Art Studio.

Class Routine

As in all classrooms, students in the Art Studio practise working and communicating responsibly and respectfully in a collaborative space. Classes will often begin with a story, activity, or discussion before students embark on their own journey with the chosen media and techniques. Whenever possible, students will be given a choice in media, allowing them to explore elements and principles within areas

they wish to achieve mastery. If students finish their class challenge early, they will either continue to the next stage of the project, proceed to a more open-ended exploration of media at hand, continue with an ongoing personal project, or enjoy one of the many art-themed books, puzzles, or games in the reading area. Each class has a developmentally appropriate clean-up routine.

Overview of Junior Grade Art Classes

The students in Grades 4, 5, and 6 come to the art studio in half-groups for an hour each week. Throughout the year we will be furthering our understanding of the elements and principles of art in activities that will include collage, drawing, painting, sculpture, construction, printmaking, and photography. New materials and techniques, and contextual links to a variety of artists will inform these explorations. Environmental and social justice themes are regularly explored in the Art Studio, as students continue to make sense of the world around them in a variety of ways. As we notice more and more of what exists around us, we will employ the artist's way of seeing to enable us to examine things more closely and deeply. We will also continue to be mindful of how our art supplies are sourced, and strive to reduce our impact on our natural world.

Tara Rousseau (she/they)
Visual Arts Teacher