

teach kids

ART

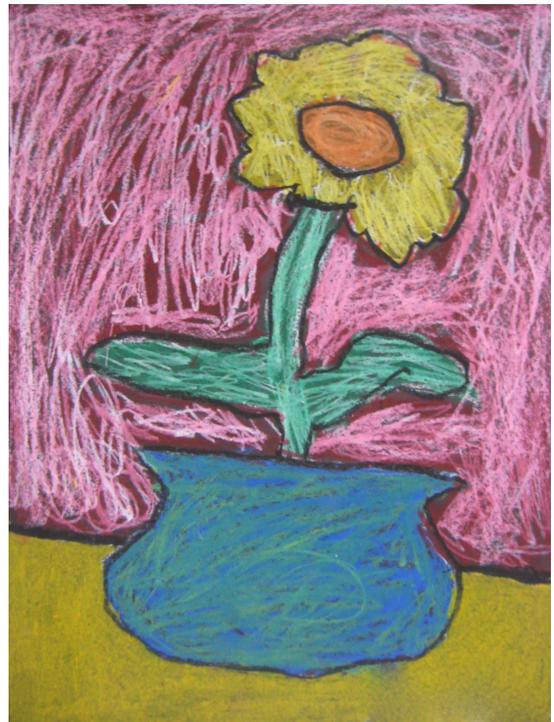
successful art lessons for kids

# Oil Pastel Sunflowers

Inspired by

Vincent Van Gogh

for  
grades  
2 - 5



# Oil Pastel Sunflowers

Inspired by Vincent Van Gogh



*Students will be surprised to learn that Vincent Van Gogh was not popular as an artist during his own lifetime.... a great example that the opinions of popular culture do not always prevail! This project usually takes 2 to 3 fifty minute sessions to finish, and as you can see, the results are **frame-worthy!***

## **You Will Need:**

- 12 x 18 black construction paper
- Pencil with pink eraser
- Oil pastels (*We use the Pentel 16 color set*)
- Wet wipes for clean-up (my students prefer that I don't call them "baby wipes"!)
- Photos or line drawings of a variety of flowers (*Calendars are a great source for flower photos, and if sunflowers are in season I'll bring in a real one. Silk flowers are great to keep on hand, too!*)
- Examples of paintings by **Vincent Van Gogh** (*from books, calendars, or the internet*)

## **Art History Connection:**

**Vincent Van Gogh** (1853-1890) was a Dutch painter from the Post-Impressionist movement. He is one of the best known and most beloved artists of our day, yet in his own lifetime he only sold one painting. He tried many different careers and didn't actually start painting until the last ten years of his life. Most of his paintings were done in his last five years, and in his last three years he was completing almost a painting a day!

**Post Impressionism** is an art movement that began in the late 19th century, adopting some ideas of the *Impressionist* movement (vivid colors, thick application of paint, distinctive brush strokes and real-life subject matter), but further exploring color, line, and emotion... eventually leading to the development of *Expressionism*.

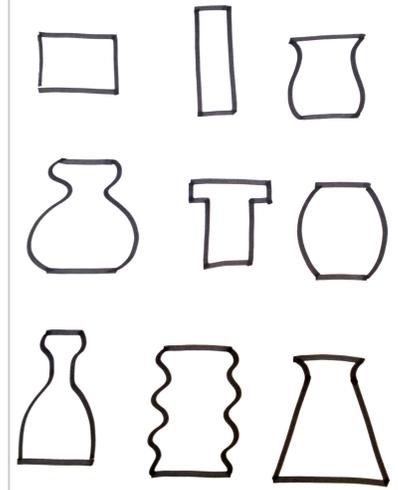
# Oil Pastel Sunflowers

Inspired by Vincent Van Gogh

## Directions:

1. Talk about the fascinating **life of Vincent Van Gogh** and show **examples of his paintings** (especially his sunflowers). Point out his *expressive brush strokes*!
2. Show **examples of a variety of vase shapes**. These can be photographs or just quick sketches. (*I like to just demo some simple symmetrical shapes on the white board — any kind of “vertical-ish” line on the left with a “mirror image” line across from it on the right, then straight horizontal lines connecting them at the top and the bottom.*)
3. Use the **pink eraser** on the end of your pencil to sketch a basic layout: a simple vase with one or more flowers. Allow “artistic license” - they don’t have to be sunflowers! Add a horizontal line behind the vase to indicate the table your vase is sitting on. Just sketch simple shapes — no details yet!
4. Use a **white oil pastel** to *lightly* trace over your eraser lines.
5. Now fill in your painting with **at least two layers of color** everywhere. Don’t use any black yet— we’re saving that for last! Try adding a layer of white to brighten any color. And make your “brush strokes” look *expressive*, like Van Gogh did!
6. Make sure your **entire paper is covered** with at least two layers of color. Then outline each separate shape with black oil pastel. (*Have students raise their hand to get permission to outline — check that they’ve used at least two layers of color everywhere.*)
7. Sign your name with black in the lower right corner.

some simple vase shapes



First sketch with your eraser, then lightly trace over your eraser lines with a white oil pastel.

# Tips for SUCCESS with Oil Pastels...

Everyone loves getting a brand new box of oil pastels, but **broken pieces will work just as well as whole ones!** If a piece of oil pastel is big enough to pick up, it's big enough to use. You'll know it's time to replace a set when the pieces are so small you can barely hold onto them and colors are missing. Then you can pour these "retired" sets into shallow boxes (I use box lids) for use with younger students - perfect for Kindergarten!

Use the **pink eraser** on the end of your pencil to **sketch your basic design** (no details). This will help you work quickly and loosely.... if you don't like any part of it you can simply wipe it away and try again!

Use **black paper** to make your oil pastel drawings "**pop**"! Then **outline** each shape with a black oil pastel as your final step.

**Press hard!** Always hold your oil pastels **close to the end** to keep them from breaking.

**Layer your colors!** Two or more layers of color will give you a richness and vibrancy you could never achieve with just a single color.

**Cover your entire paper** so your work looks "finished".

## Tips for cleaning up...

Carefully put your oil pastels away with each one going into its own space in the tray. When you close the box, **make sure the top is flat and not lumpy.**

After collecting artwork and putting oil pastels back in their box, give each student a "**wet wipe**" and have them first clean their hands and then wipe off their desk. **Wet wipes are the BEST for cleaning oil pastel off of hands and desks!**

# ~ Student Gallery ~

