



Go Fish

Created by Robin Kiss

February 2025

"I wouldn't mind turning into a vermilion goldfish."

Henri Matisse

Project Description

With varied watercolor techniques that includes saturating color by layering washes, students will recreate Matisse's Fauve painting *The Goldfish*. Using Sharpie markers, they will draw the vase and fish on the transparency film. By placing the transparency film on top of the watercolor painting, students will introduce the illusion of depth by gently pushing on the transparency from both sides.

Learning Objectives

1. Use different kinds of lines and geometric shapes to create a drawing.
2. Learn watercolor technique.
3. Understand how color can change.
4. Create the illusion of depth.



Supplies: Per Student

- one (1) Watercolor paper 9" X 12"
- one (1) Transparency 8 1/2" x 11"
- 2 foam dots dual-adhesive 0.31 in.
- watercolor palette
- Large round watercolor paintbrush (size 10 or larger)
- one-two (1-2) Small containers to hold water (1 for both black & color or 2 to separate).
- Paper towel: 1 full sheet per student and 1 small piece
- two (2) Sharpie fine point markers: black and red
- one (1) 2 inch vinyl covered jumbo paper clip
- one (1) Richeson Black Art Paper 9" X 12"
- #2 Pencil with eraser
- Shape worksheet (TK-2)
- AAYF program label

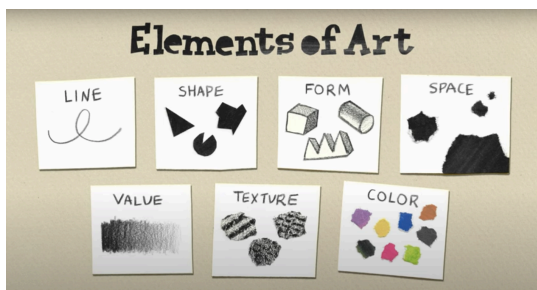
Supplies: Shared by 2 students

- *The Goldfish*
- Drawing/Painting Guide
- Glue stick

Optional Supplies

- alcohol wipes (needed for docents only)

Art Vocabulary



Children's Museum of the Arts, cmany.org

Elements of Art – are stylistic features/ building blocks used to make a work of art. The seven elements include line, shape, form, space, value, texture, and color.

color – Element of Art. The visual perception of color depends on the reflection or absorption of light spectrum from a given surface. The three characteristics of color are hue, value, and intensity.

intensity – Also called *chroma* or *saturation*. It refers to the brightness of a color (a color is full in

intensity only when pure and unmixed). Color intensity can be changed by adding black, white, gray, or an opposite color on the color wheel.

line – Element of Art. A point moving in space. Line may vary in width, length, curvature, color, or direction.

shape – Element of Art. A two-dimensional area or plane that may be open or closed, free-form or geometric. May be found in nature or made by humans.

visual balance – Principle of Art. The way in which the elements of art are arranged to create a feeling of equilibrium in artwork. The three types of balance are symmetry, asymmetry, and radial.

watercolor – Transparent pigment mixable with water. Paintings done with this medium are known as *watercolors*.

Historical and Cultural Context

Fauvism: Paintings expressed emotion with wild, often colors with little regard for the subject’s natural colors. Recognized as one of the leaders of the movement, Henri Matisse embraced the Fauve technique after experimenting with other various styles. He rejected traditional three-dimensional space seeking instead a new picture space defined by the movement of color planes. The Fauvist movement projected brilliant colors and spontaneous brushwork.

Henri-Émile-Benoît Matisse (1869-1954) was a French artist known for his use of color. Primarily a painter, Matisse is commonly regarded, along with Pablo Picasso and Marcel Duchamp, as responsible for significant developments in painting and sculpture in the beginning of the 20th century. Although he was initially labeled a Fauve, by the 1920s he was increasingly hailed as an upholder of the classical tradition in French painting. His mastery of the expressive language of color and drawing, displayed in a body of work spanning over a half-century, won him recognition as a leading figure in modern art. Later in his life he became ill and could no longer paint, Matisse picked up scissors creating masterful artworks with paper. He would say he was “painting with scissors”.

Matisse was born in France and lived with parents who owned a flower business. In 1887 he went to Paris to study law. He started painting in 1889 after his mother brought him art supplies while recovering from an appendectomy. He was said to have discovered “a kind of paradise” and decided to become an artist. Throughout his life he continued to absorb new influences and relationships. He met Picasso who became a life-long friend and rival. Their works were exhibited and collected by Gertrude Stein and her family. In middle age, Matisse moved to the French Riviera and remained there during World War II. Ultimately Matisse became the highest paid living artist of his time. He died of a heart attack at the age of 84.

Matisse, *The Goldfish*, 1912

Goldfish were introduced to Europe from East Asia in the 17th century. From around 1912, goldfish became a recurring subject in the work of Henri Matisse, representing a relaxed state of mind. They



appear in no less than nine of his paintings, as well as in his drawings and prints. *The Goldfish*, 1912 belongs to a series that Matisse produced between spring and early summer 1912. However, unlike the others, the focus here centers on the fish. The goldfish immediately attract attention due to their color. The bright red orange strongly contrasts with the more subtle pinks and greens that surround the fishbowl and the blue-green background. Blue and orange, as well as green and red, are complementary colors and, when placed next to one another, appear even brighter. Although he subsequently softened his palette, the bold red orange is reminiscent of Matisse's fauvist years, which continued to influence his use of color throughout his career.

Project

Docent Prep

- Print resource pages for students to share: *The Goldfish* reprint and Drawing/Painting Guide.
- Print the resource page, Shape worksheet if students are TK-2
- Trim watercolor paper to 8 1/2" x 11" (Keep the 8 1/2" x 1" scrap).
- Remove protective paper from only one side of dots and affix to top corners of transparency.
- Fill water containers less than halfway and set aside to distribute when painting begins.

Use Slides to Prepare Students

- Introduce Matisse and his painting *The Goldfish*.
- Describe the project. Students will recreate the artwork by drawing math shapes and paint with watercolors.
- Point out shapes on the painting by outlining with your finger.
- Activity will be broken into 2 parts (reference drawing and painting guides):
 - Drawing with a pencil.
 - Painting with watercolors. (Supplies handed out at painting time.)
- Grade appropriate: Review vocabulary words.

Supplies for Drawing

1. Shape Worksheet TK-2
2. Drawing/painting guide
3. *The Goldfish* reprint
4. Watercolor paper, placed vertically
5. Pencil with eraser
6. Transparency with 2 adhesive dots affixed
7. Black sharpie marker
8. Paper clip



Procedure: Drawing the Composition

1. Review shapes & solid figures (forms) from math: cylinder, ovals, ellipses, hearts, and circles.
2. Show students the shapes and solid figures found in Matisse's painting.

For More Help: Younger students will need help identifying shapes. Have them practice drawing the lines and shapes they will use on the worksheet. Ask them to first trace with their finger.

3. In guided practice, begin drawing the shapes for the vase, with *light pressure* since the pencil lines will be visible even after painting.
 - a. Draw two big ellipses. (Drawing small will make painting more difficult).
 - b. Connect ellipses with 2 straight vertical lines at each side.
 - c. Add additional ellipse to the middle so that it slightly overlaps the top ellipse. (reference drawing guide)

Note: Too much erasing will ruin the texture of the watercolor paper.

For More Help: Younger students (TK-2) will draw larger and not include all details. Remember standing closer to the vase makes it appear larger with fewer surrounding objects visible).

Drawing Guide

- 1. Vase**
 - Draw 2 large ellipses.
 - Connect with 2 straight lines.
 - Add additional ellipse slightly overlapping the first ellipse.
- 2. Draw a partial circle for the table.**
Start the curved line at one side of the vase. Don't go behind the vase.
- 3. Add hearts for leaves.**
 - Grades Tk-2 add 1 leaf.
 - Grades 3-5 add 3 leaves.
- 4. All draw 3 fish shadows.**
Grade 3-5 add other **details**.

Grades TK-2 draws a larger closer view with fewer surrounding objects visible.

Grades 3-5 draws a small further view with surrounding objects.

4. For the table, start a circle on one side of the vase and end the curved line on the opposite side of the vase.



5. Draw heart shapes for the leaves.
6. Draw 3 fish shadows in the middle ellipse.

For More of a Challenge: 3rd- 5th Grade add other details to the background.

7. Once the pencil drawing is complete, line up transparency on top of the drawing. Affix in place with paper clip.
8. Using the black Sharpie marker, trace the outside edges of the vase onto the transparency:
 - a. Trace the top ellipse completely
 - b. Only the front edge of the bottom ellipse.
 - c. Do not outline the middle ellipse at all.
9. Set transparency aside until painting is complete.
10. With pencil, print name in the lower right-hand corner of the drawing on paper.

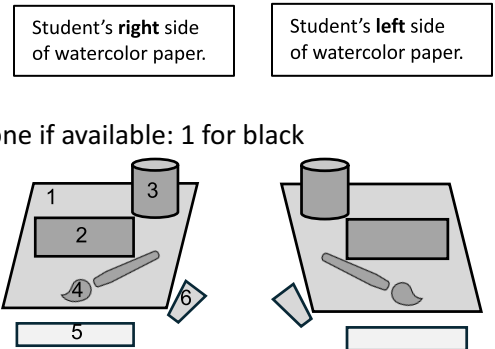
Setup for Painting

Setup before the lesson *without water*. Set to the right for right-handed students, on the left for left-handed students. Students should not share palettes or water containers to avoid reaching over paintings while working.

1. Place paper towel next to watercolor paper
2. Put watercolor palette on paper towel
3. Water container set to the right and slightly above the palette. 2nd one if available: 1 for black wash, other for colored washes).

Note: Hand out water when it is time to paint.

4. Paintbrush below palette
5. Scrap watercolor paper below large paper towel
6. Small pieces of paper towel next to the large paper towel.



Procedure: Painting the Composition

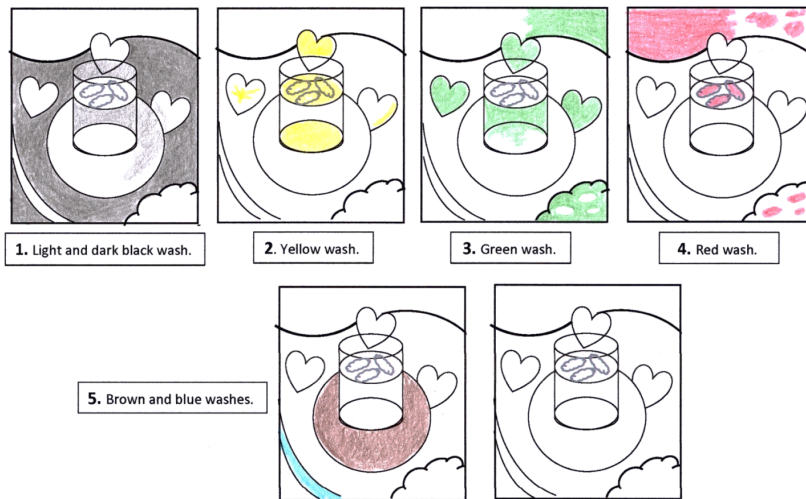
1. Direct students to pick up the paintbrush and swish in the water.
2. Have students remove the brush from the water and gently roll the bristles back and forth on the end of the paper towel (in front of the palette). Explain that because the bristles are made to hold lots of water, rolling the brush will remove some of the excess water and result in shaping the bristles into a point.
3. Demonstrate making black wash: watercolor paints are transparent, explain that color will be added in layers. A color becomes lighter by adding more water, darker by adding less water. Too much water will make the color spread on the paper.
 - a. Dip paintbrush in water.
 - b. Roll on a paper towel.
 - c. Pick up black paint.
 - d. Test on watercolor paper scrap.
 - e. Model using scrap paper towel for quick fixes. (See section "Quick Fixes").
4. Have students try to make the black wash and test on watercolor paper scrap.
5. Students are ready to begin painting over the pencil drawing. Remind them that they will be applying the different colors in layers. Some colors will overlap areas already painted. Begin with





a wash of light black. (Note: *It is easier to go light to dark rather than dark to light*).

6. Wet the brush and pick up some black. Test the color again on the paper towel to see if the wash is light enough to apply. If too dark, dip the brush into the water container again.



7. Apply black as shown above.
8. Let it dry for a moment while cleaning brush in water and rolling on paper towel.
9. Add a wash of yellow, followed by green, red, brown, and blue by layering colors.
10. When all color layers have been added, allow to dry slightly

For More of a Challenge: With a dry brush, Apply more paint to add darks for contrast.

Note: A wet brush might cause the previously painted color to spread.

11. Now the painting is finished and the paint set-up should be removed.

Procedure: Adding the Goldfish

1. Hand out red Sharpie markers.
2. Carefully place transparency on top of dry painting, aligning the black Sharpie outline with the vase in the painting.
3. Show students where the goldfish will go. Point out that they should be drawn under the painted shadows.
4. Draw the outline of the fish on the transparency with the red Sharpie marker. *Students can draw Matisse's fish or their own (prefer their own).*
5. Remove the transparency from the painting and turn it over to the other side.
6. Color in the fish with the red marker and add black for the eyes.
7. Remove remaining protective paper from dots.
8. Turn transparency over and put it back on the watercolor, lining up the black outline of the vase with the one in the painting. *Make sure the fish are at the bottom of the vase and not at the top.*
9. Press down on the adhesive dots to adhere the transparency to the watercolor.
10. Complete AAYF program label with pencil and affix to the black mounting paper.

11. Apply glue to the back of the artwork and apply to black mounting paper (label at back).
12. Push gently on both sides of the transparency to create the illusion of three-dimension.
13. If time permits, have students exhibit their artwork by everyone holding them up together. Have them look around the room at other student's projects.

Quick Fixes

- Color spread dab with a small piece of paper towel.
- Color too dark add a bit of water
- Mistake with Sharpie on transparency (only) remove with alcohol wipe immediately.

Notes

- **Manage your time:**
 - o Remember to watch the clock and make sure you are where you need to be to complete the project. Artwork can always be mounted later but should absolutely be mounted.
 - o Decide in advance of the class, how many minutes to allocate for drawing, painting, and assembly. This will vary based upon grade level skill. For example, younger students will probably need more time to draw than paint.
 - o Leave discussions about historical and cultural connections until later in the lesson. Instead begin with the reproduction of *The Goldfish*, painted by Henri Matisse explaining it is the inspiration for our artwork today.
 - o Consider doing a light pencil drawing prior to class and tracing in class with a black Sharpie marker, as it will be easier for students to follow along.
- Remind students to draw big shapes, small ones will make it difficult to paint.
- Sharpie mistakes on the transparency can be carefully erased with an alcohol wipe.
- Instead of paper towel pieces, students can use swabs for watercolor quick fixes.
- Paint colors will spread with too much water or wet paper, not to worry. Placing the transparency with the sharpie outline and fish, will help to define the painted image.

Aesthetic Valuing

Take time at the end of the project to have students reflect on their project by asking these grade level questions. The conversation can be facilitated by docents or classroom teachers:

1. What took longer: your drawing or painting?
2. Did applying the transparency change the artwork?
3. What would you change about your painting?
4. Like Matisse, are you also mesmerized by the swimming goldfish?



AAYF Artist Bio

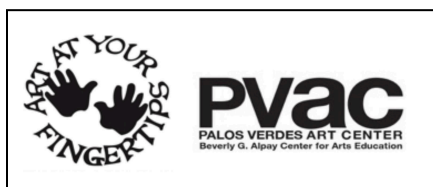
Robin Kiss is a teaching artist. She has held most every post in the AAYF program. Robin has held positions as past AAYF president, current board member, selected program artist, docent and helping hand. She has been regularly selected as an AAYF Artist and thus presented several projects to students. Robin has also taught integrated art residencies to students in the Palos Verdes and Paramount Unified School Districts, provided professional development, and unique programming for GATE, and Art/ELL residencies. Robin returns to AAYF as a Helping Hand for the new generation in her grandchildren's classrooms. She continues to engage students in the learning process through a variety of hands-on art activities.

Robin earned a degree in Art, Drawing, with honors, from the State University system, New York. Robin trained with renowned Realist artist Phillip Pearlstein and Abstract Expressionist Jimmy Ernst. She spent many years in the classroom as both a paid kindergarten aide and Title 1 aide across the grade levels. Robin and her husband moved to California in 1978, residing here ever since with her family.

Art At Your Fingertips is a Palos Verdes Art Center school-based outreach program that brings visual arts education to elementary school classrooms from transitional kindergarten through fifth grade.

Established in 1976, this program reaches 6,000 students annually on the Palos Verdes Peninsula. Run completely by parent volunteers, AAYF's paramount objective is to make every child feel comfortable using art as a means of expression. We thank the Palos Verdes Peninsula Unified School District, PTA, PTO, and Booster Club for their support.

pvartcenter.org





Go Fish

Learn more about artist Henri Matisse and get inspired to create your own artwork with these resources at the Palos Verdes Library District.



Young Readers Section:

J Biographies MATISSE, H. MACLACHLAN. *The Iridescence of Birds : A Book About Henri Matisse*
by Patricia MacLachlan
A picture book biography of how Matisse's experiences as a child inspired the artist he grew up to be.

J Biographies MATISSE, H. O'CONNOR. *Henri Matisse : Drawing With Scissors*
by Jane O'Connor
A short biography of Henri Matisse told from the perspective of a student writing a report on the artist.

J Biographies MATISSE, H. PARKER. *Colorful Dreamer : The Story of Artist Henri Matisse*
by Marjorie Blain Parker
A picture book biography of how Henri Matisse became an artist.

J Biographies MATISSE, H. WINTER. *Henri's Scissors*
by Jeanette Winter
A picture book biography of how Matisse began "drawing with scissors" in his later years as an artist.

J Picture Book ANHOLT. *Matisse: The King of Color*
by Laurence Anholt
A picture book based on the true story of the friendship between Matisse and Monique Bourgeois, a nursing nun who took care of the artist during his illness.

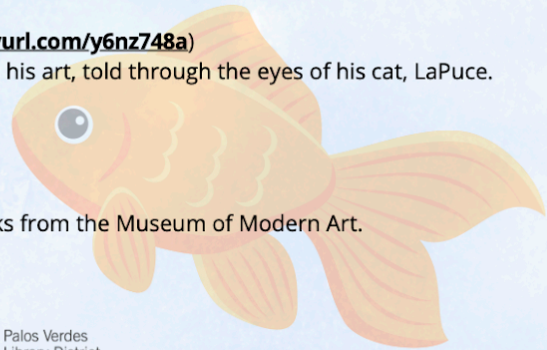
J Picture Book SAXTON. *Snail Trail*
by Jo Saxton
A snail introduces artwork by various artists while searching for the one inspired by him, *The Snail (L'Escargot)*. Also includes *The Goldfish* by Matisse.

E-book:

A Purr-fect Painting. by Joan Waites (<https://tinyurl.com/y6nz748a>)
A picture book story inspired by Henri Matisse and his art, told through the eyes of his cat, LaPuce.
Available through Hoopla with your library card.

Explore the Web:


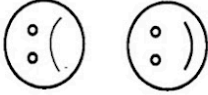
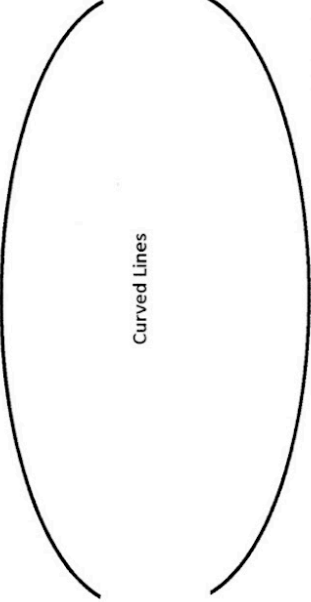
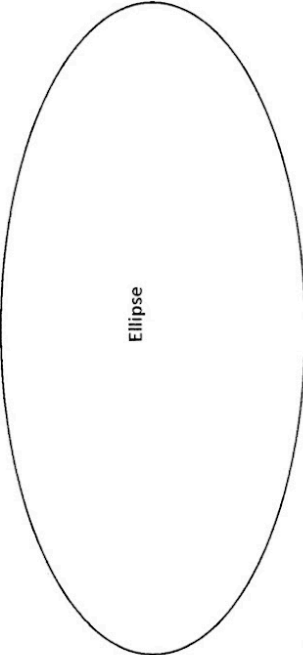
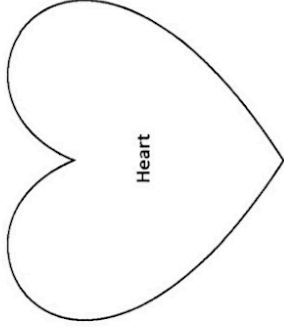
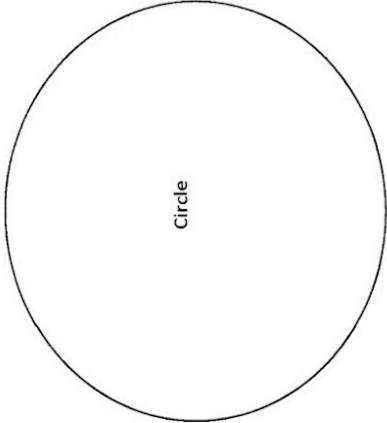
MoMA (<https://tinyurl.com/yj88dj8a>)
Find information about Henri Matisse and his works from the Museum of Modern Art.





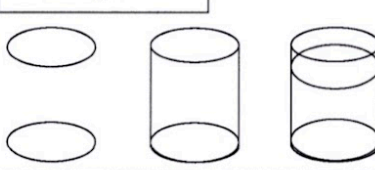
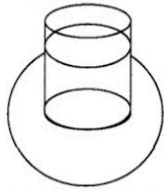

Shape worksheet

Line/Shape Worksheet TK-K

<p data-bbox="418 1780 440 1896">Straight Line</p>   <p data-bbox="440 1239 461 1354">Curved Lines</p> 	<p data-bbox="776 1266 797 1325">Ellipse</p> 	 <p data-bbox="1193 762 1214 821">Heart</p>
 <p data-bbox="1161 1640 1182 1698">Circle</p>		

Drawing & Painting Guide

Drawing Guide

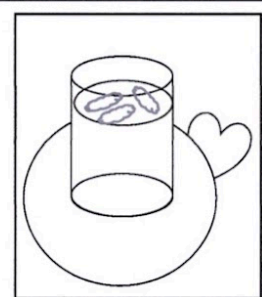
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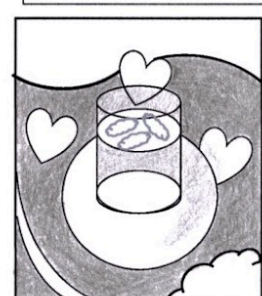
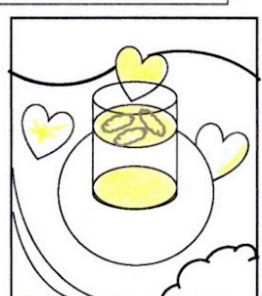




Grades 3-5 draws a small further view with surrounding objects.

Grades TK-2 draws a larger closer view with fewer surrounding objects visible.

Grades 3-5 draws a small further view with surrounding objects.

Painting Guide: Colors applied in layers

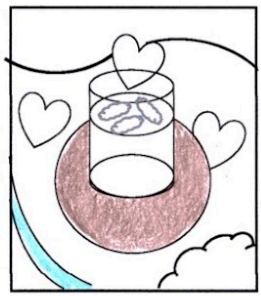
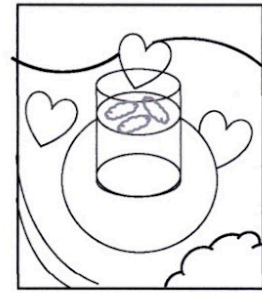





1. Light and dark black wash.

2. Yellow wash.

3. Green wash.

4. Red wash.

5. Brown and blue washes.

Kiss©

The Goldfish Reprint



The Goldfish, 1912