

LEGENDS & LEGACIES

FROM THE PERMANENT COLLECTION
connections

Karl Wolf



Into The Woods: Fauvist Landscapes

THE KELLY
Kelly Fitzpatrick Memorial Gallery



Karl Wolfe, 1904-1984

The Dixie Art Colony, 1940, Watercolor on Paper, 20" x 14."
Gift of Elizabeth "Bebe" Wolfe, 2015 Acquisition

Karl Wolfe was born in Brookhaven, Mississippi in the year 1904. He was the oldest son of Wiley Wilson Wolfe and Elizabeth Heuck. He was still a boy when his family moved to Columbia Mississippi. Karl graduated from the Columbia High School and went to Soule Business College in New Orleans where he studied bookkeeping.

He later was accepted to the Chicago Art Institute, graduating in 1928. In his last year of study he won the William R French Traveling Scholarship, and spent the next year traveling and studying in Europe.

Karl met his future wife, Mildred Nungester, at the Dixie Art Colony, near Montgomery, Alabama in the 1930's. Karl and Mildred were friends and colleagues for many years before they married in 1944.

In 1942 Karl was drafted into the Army Air Corps and spent the War years at Lowry Field in Colorado, assigned to work as a photographer. After the war Karl and Mildred returned to Jackson, Mississippi, where Karl had begun to establish a clientele before the war. They homesteaded on land Karl had bought before the war, built and shared a studio there and raised a family. Karl became an accomplished and widely respected portrait painter. He also taught for ten years, replacing William Hollingsworth at Millsaps College after Hollingsworth's death. He was very active in helping to establish the Municipal Gallery and the Mississippi Art Association, which later became the Mississippi Museum of Art.

Karl's painting style in the early part of his career reflected the best of his times: solid 'tonal' painting grounded on skilled draftsmanship based on direct observation and careful control of color and value. His later work reflected his growing interest in color. His main media was oil painting and he always had a strong interest in portrait painting. His studies in Europe convinced him of the significance and dignity of portraiture as field worthy his life's energy as an artist. His work has a naturalistic feel- and is characterized by an empathetic and warm understanding of his subjects.

Other media he occasionally used include: watercolor, ceramic sculpture and mosaic.

By his own estimation, Karl painted over 800 portraits which are now in public and private collections. Karl died in 1984 at the age of 80.

Exploring Painting With the Fauves

Submitted by: Carolyn Brown, Lynnhaven Middle School, Virginia Beach, Virginia

UNIT: Painting - Fauves

Celebrating Nature: The Landscape

Concept: Changes: From Usual to Unusual!

Theme: Exploring Painting With the Fauves

Grade Level: 8 (adaptable to most levels)

Pacing: 3 to 4 days

Introduction:

Display the painting by Karl Wolf, "The Dixie Art Colony." Also Display a variety of Fauve landscape paintings by Matisse, Derain, and other Fauve artists. Include . (Resource: Scholastic Art: The Fauves, Sept./Oct. 2006)

OBJECTIVES:

- Students will be able to:
- Identify and describe the painting style of the Fauve artists.
- Understand why the works of Matisse and Derain outraged critics and labeled them as "wild beasts".
- Discuss the non-traditional use of color in Fauve paintings.
- Explore color mixing, and identify emotion expressed through color.
- Create a spontaneous landscape painting representing an explosion of color.
- Compare the painting by Karl Wolf with paintings by the Fauve artists.
- Paint like the Fauves!



Before a discussion of these works, ask students to "react" to the paintings with descriptive words in their journals. Students can share their writings. Then establish the place in time for the Fauve movement in 20th century painting.

Observe and discuss the style, technique, and color used by Karl Wolf.

Observe and discuss the style, technique, and color used by Matisse and Derain.

Why were there paintings described as unusual and unnatural?

Materials:

Painting surface (Mat board scraps in a variety of colors and small sizes), India ink, Brushes

Book: Fauvism - Fauvism was an extremely short-lived movement in modern painting, and an extremely important one as well. This book covers the period quite nicely.

Book: The Fauves: The Reign of Colour - This illustrated book celebrates the work of Matisse, Braque, Dufy, Derain, Vlaminck, Van Dongen, and many other artists who were dubbed "Fauves, " or wild beasts, when their work was first introduced in the early 1900s. 170 color illustrations.

Sketching the Composition

Students will gather ideas for a landscape painting. Students will make thumbnail sketches and choose favorite for composition.

A simple outline sketch the of painting plan will be drawn with brush and ink on mat board or other painting surface. Drawing with ink encourages students to be simplify and loosen up!

Painting: Guided Practice

The Fauve landscape painting is our first painting experience of the year. Spending a day to explore color mixing is important to painting success. I designed a worksheet called "dabble sheet" that walks the kids step by step through color mixing exercises.

We start out playing "paint along with me" as I guide them through simple painting basics. After a short introduction, they are ready to continue on their own. When finished, the kids have explored an arsenal of color mixing and are ready to continue their "color explosion" while painting like the Fauves.

Materials:

Acrylic Paint (or Watercolor Paint or Tempera Paint)
Palettes
Brushes
Water containers
Landscapes sketched in ink on mat board or watercolor paper

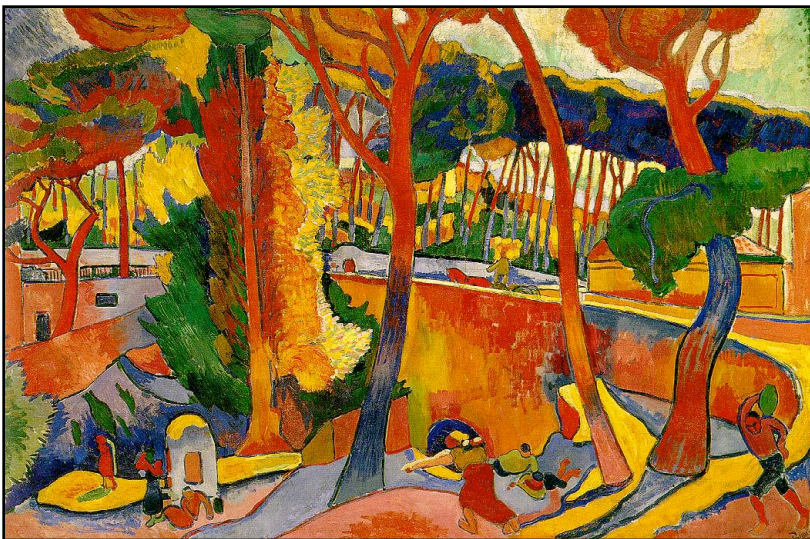
The classroom is set up for painting.

These are the simple directions that are read aloud to the students: "You are going to paint like the Fauves. Have fun with color. Painting the green grass and the sky blue would be too ordinary. Be original in your color choice! Be as wild as the "Wild Beasts". Today is your day to have fun and be free with your choice of colors! EXPLORE!" These directions are repeated as they paint.

Students can usually complete a painting in one class period. Offer students the opportunity to create a second painting. It is usually more original, daring, and expressive than the first!

Have class critique. Compare and contrast finished work by students to that of the Fauves and Karl Wolf of the Dixie Art Colony.

André Derain



Henri Matisse



Fauvism is the name applied to the work produced by a group of artists (which included Henri Matisse and André Derain) from around 1905 to 1910, which is characterized by strong colors and fierce brushwork.

Introduction

The name les fauves ('the wild beasts') was coined by the critic Louis Vauxcelles when he saw the work of Henri Matisse and André Derain in an exhibition, the salon d'automne in Paris, in 1905. The paintings Derain and Matisse exhibited were the result of a summer spent working together in Collioure in the South of France and were made using bold, non-naturalistic colors (often applied directly from the tube), and wild loose dabs of paint. The forms of the subjects were also simplified making their work appear quite abstract.

Other like-minded artists associated with the fauvism included Georges Braque, Raoul Dufy, Georges Rouault, and Maurice de Vlaminck.

The fauvists were interested in the scientific color theories developed in the nineteenth century – particularly those relating to complementary colors. Complementary colors are pairs of colors appear opposite each other on scientific models such as the color wheel, and when used side-by-side in a painting make each other look brighter.

What inspired fauvism? (And what happened to it?)

Fauvism can be seen as an extreme extension of the post-impressionism of Van Gogh combined with the Neo-Impressionism of Seurat. The influences of these earlier movements inspired Matisse and his followers to reject traditional three-dimensional space and instead use flat areas or patches of color to create a new pictorial space. Fauvism can also be seen as a form of expressionism in its use of brilliant colors and spontaneous brushwork. It has often been compared to German expressionism, which emerged at around the same time and was also inspired by the developments of post-impressionism.

Although one of the first avant-garde modernist movements of the twentieth century and one of the first styles to make a move towards abstraction, for many of the artists who adopted a fauvist approach it became a transitional stepping stone for future developments in their style. By 1908 most of the main artists in the group had moved away from the expressive emotionalism of fauvism. A renewed interest in post-impressionist artist Paul Cézanne and the analytical approach he took to painting landscapes, people and objects inspired many artists to embrace order and structure instead. One-time fauvist Georges Braque went on to develop cubism along with Pablo Picasso while one of fauvism's founders André Derain adopted a more conventional neoclassical style. Henri Matisse however continued to use the distinctive fauvist traits of bright emotive colors, simple shapes and painterly mark-making throughout his career.