

Dear Families:

January 27, 2010

Today Mrs. Gina Patterson and I (Mrs. Lisa Halberg) came to class and gave our first Art Docent presentation. We introduced the artist Mary Cassatt and featured her painting "The Boating Party".

We talked about how Mary lived in a time period (1844-1926) when girls/women did not have jobs or careers. They became wives and mothers. Their world was centered on home and family. Mary had to work very hard to be accepted as an artist because she was a woman. She was born in America but lived in France most of her life because Europe was the center of the art world at that time. She was the first woman artist to be invited to join the Impressionist art movement. Those artists like Monet and Degas who broke the traditional rules of painting by depicting everyday activities of people with everyday emotions showing. Mary painted what was familiar to her. She used mothers and children in almost all of her paintings.

"The Boating Party" is one of Mary's boldest paintings. She used primary colors to catch our attention. The focus of the painting is off-center, and the background is simple and uncluttered. This keeps our attention on the people in the boat. We talked about primary colors. We talked about the people in the boat. We wondered if they were a family.

Mr. Z let us use the scooters and plungers to "row" our own boats on a pretend lake (the gym). We had fun racing our boats. Then we made sailboats and raced them in containers of water. We learned that both rowing and the wind moved the sailboat in Mary's picture.

Ask to see the sailboat your student made (if the mast will not stay up, try some glue around the bottom) and the picture magnet of Mary Cassatt's "The Boating Party". We will be back next month with Henri Matisse as our featured artist.

The Cleveland Museum of Art has many original Cassatt's in its collection. Visit its website at <http://www.clemusart.com/>. General admission is always free.



self portrait



"The Boating Party"