

Art Rewards The Students (A.R.T.S.)
SVMA 2019/2020 Arts Education Program

FACES Project

Eyes are the windows of one's soul. So much expression and emotions are conveyed from the eyes as can be seen in the colorful portraits by fourth and fifth-grade Sonoma Valley students participating in SVMA's Art Rewards The Students (A.R.T.S.). This became the focus of this colorful project and reflects the contents of the two books.

Inspired by the portraits of Ukraine artist Valentin Popov's book of FACES, fourth- and fifth-grade students posed, photographed and edited their own portraits. Using photographs and hand drawing with graphite and paper, students explored drawing their own faces and their fellow classmates faces. The students decided to focus on their eyes, each pair of eyes having unique characteristics. We used the artistic mark making style to create each pair of eyes. They learned about control and out of control strokes to create expression in each pair of eyes. Sketching exercises and critiques opened up the conversation in class to how one small frown or a simple shrugged eyebrow can divulge happiness or sadness in a person in an instant. Eyes can invite a supportive hug, or say "watch out, a car is coming"!

Depending on our mark making and details, we can represent feelings and mood with our art! Using photographs of their own faces, as a background the students explored techniques of how different color can create different moods. With oil sticks and liquid watercolor, we began painting the portraits searching to incorporate different values, layering, shadow and light. Using images of Pop Art masters like Andy Warhol, students were inspired to create different moods using color. A pair of eyes when each eye is colored differently creates a unique mood and expression. At critique time, we developed an "art" vocabulary list consisting of words like shadow, opposites on the color wheel, mark making, composition, mood, line work, contrast, feeling and representation and variation.

As the project evolved the students took complete ownership of their portraits and this is reflected in the colorful and unique expressions of each child! It was very impressive to see how each student's artistic expression quickly evolved over four classroom sessions. The students had a lot of pride in their work and those who questioned their artistic ability realized they could create art. Always a good thing for developing self-esteem.

What an honor and total pleasure to teach this project to fourth- and fifth- graders.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Rosemary McNeely