



Connect Charter School:

A Leader in PVA 3 of 3 Parts



Lorrie Emin Connect Charter
School Art Specialist

It is a proven fact that having a strong arts program helps students succeed in all areas of learning. Art instruction helps students with the development of motor skills, language skills, social skills, decision-making, risk-taking, and inventiveness. A report by *Americans for the Arts* states that young people who participate regularly in the arts (three hours a day on three days each week through one full year) are four times more likely to be recognized for academic achievement, participate in math and science fairs and become better creative writers than children who do not participate in art. A study of Missouri public schools in 2010 found that a greater arts education led to fewer disciplinary infractions and higher attendance, graduation rates and test scores. Connect Charter School values art programs for these reasons and more. Connect Charter School Art Specialist, Lorrie Emin, strives to be innovative in the way art education is approached to best support and challenge her students.

“The art program at Connect Charter School offers students opportunities to learn the basics of artistic theory from a woman who has a strong specialization,” states chair of the PVA committee Kathy Bauer.

In grades 4 and 5, students are taught basic hand-building techniques of pinch pot, slab and coil construction as well as joining and balancing forms. The students also explore landscape painting while focusing on colour theory and colour identification. Towards the end of grade 5, students are able to select an area of inquiry they are interested in by either designing kinetic sculptures or creating abstract paintings on wooden cubes. From their very first introduction to art at Connect Charter School, students are encouraged and supported to explore form, theme, mood and solve design problems to create their artwork.

In grade 7, students have the opportunity to experience art and drama integration. In drama,



Grade 8 working on his
independent study project



Grade 9 students working on their independent study project

students choose plays and characters, they then use their characters as a basis to design leather masks. They sketched their concept, created a paper pattern, then cut, soaked and molded the masks to form them to the human face. Finally, students painted and decorated their mask to get it performance ready. Towards the end of grade 7 is also the first time students are given free range to work on independent projects. Students designed and created their own original artwork in the area of study they were most interested in learning about. Students explored a variety of interests including creating clay projects, both hand-building and thrown on the pottery wheel, mosaic projects, and both watercolour and acrylic painting.

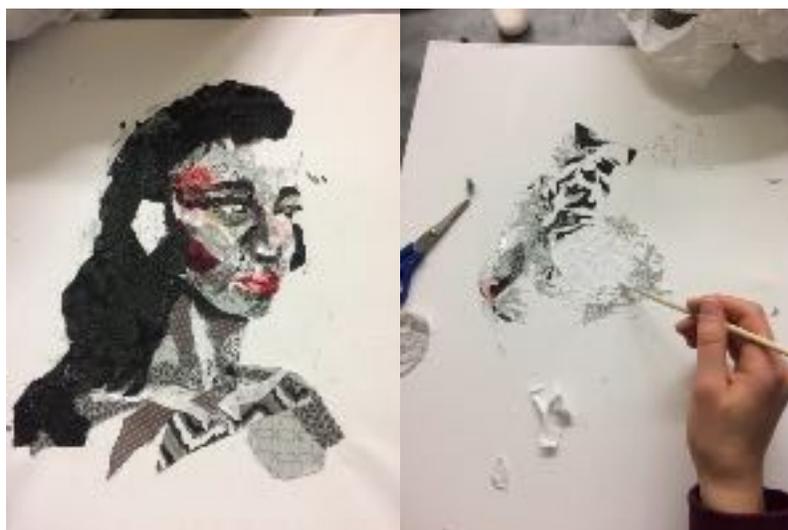
Grade 8 is entirely independent project study. Students designed and created their own original artwork in the area of study they are most interested in learning about. Students explore a variety of interests including creating clay projects, both hand-building and thrown on the pottery wheel, mosaic projects, and both watercolour and acrylic painting, Japanese paper marbling, paper sculpture, origami, spray paint, stencilling, drawings in pen and ink and pencil shading. Students are also encouraged to integrate and combine technology and art by creating 3-D printed designs, and practice graphic art using a tablet.

“I like that we have the freedom to explore and seek different forms of inspiration and then choose whatever kind of project we want to do,” explains a grade 8 student.

For their final year of art at Connect Charter School, grade nine students focused on textile exploration.

Students designed and created an independent project of their choice that used textiles as the main material. Students were encouraged to explore and exploit the tactile nature of different textiles as an art medium.

Projects this year included scenes created from wool, abstract wall hangings and pillow designs.





Students working on their contribution for the Indigenous artist in residence art piece

During the last term of grade 9 art, students are given the final opportunity to work on independent project study using the same medium options as in previous years. This year, a few select students chose to work on mural projects that will stay with the school for years to come.

Art education connects students with their own culture as well as with the wider world. This year, as a part of PIP events, the school welcomed the Indigenous artists-in-residence program. From April 9 to 18, three exceptionally talented artists from THE Tsuut'ina Nation worked with our students to illustrate their personal stories through a variety of mediums including paint, bead and quill work. At the end of the program, two similar art pieces were created using the individual projects from each grade. This program inspired students to think about different cultures and how they see colour and material in reference to art.

All this innovation surrounding Connect Charter School's art program is made possible through the hard work and dedication of Mrs. Emin. She is truly a master in her field and continues to keep her own artistic skills sharp in order to best support her students. Every student enrolled in the art program at Connect Charter School truly enjoys their time spent there, and the common factor is the support and encouragement of Mrs. Emin.



Final Indigenous artist in residence art piece