

Meet the Masters
February Program

Pierre Auguste Renoir "Two Sisters"

Ernest Ludwig Kirchner "Sertig Valley"

About the Artists:

(Refer to the following pages)

About Color:

Color is an element of art. The three primary colors (red, yellow, and blue) can be mixed to make three secondary colors (orange, blue and violet). When a primary color is mixed with a secondary color, an intermediate color is made. For example, red mixed with orange makes red-orange.

Tints and shades can be mixed by adding a little white or black to the color. Showing different tints and shades of a color creates value. Sometimes we group colors that remind us of heat together and call them warm colors (reds, oranges, yellows). The colors that remind us of snow and water are cool colors (blue, green, violet).

Topics for Discussion:

1. Which artist used the colors they saw in very realistic ways?
2. Which artist painted a realistic picture but used color in a more decorative or expressive way?
Kirchner
3. Which artist used mostly primary and secondary colors? both
4. Where do you see bright intense colors used for emphasis?
5. How are the colors in Renoir and Kirchner's paintings alike? How are they different?
6. How does Renoir's choice of colors lead your eye to the center of the picture?
7. How does Kirchner's choice of colors lead your eye around the picture?
8. What sort of feeling do you think the artist wanted to experience when you look at these paintings?



Pierre Auguste Renoir



Ernst Ludwig Kirchner

Pierre Auguste Renoir (1841-1919)

Pierre Auguste Renoir was a French impressionist painter. He is famous for paintings of young girls and children, and intimate portraits of French middle-class life at during the 19th century. He painted lively groups in outdoor, colorful surroundings, and often used his friends as models. He frequently painted his wife and children.

Renoir was born in Limoges, France. At the age of 13 he was hired as an apprentice at the porcelain factory. Later, he also painted window shades and fans in Paris. But it is for his great masterpieces of impressionist painting that he is remembered today. In Paris, Renoir studied at the same studio as Claude Monet, Alfred Sisley, and Frederic Bazille. Together, these four friends traveled the French countryside, painting outdoor scenes in the style that came to be called "Impressionism".

In 1874 Renoir and several other artists exhibited some of their works at a public auction. But the paintings were ridiculed and savaged by critics and the public. One early supporter of the Impressionists, the art dealer Paul Durand-Ruel, remarked: "The public....saw these great artists but ignorant and presumptuous men trying to attract attention by their eccentricities."

Renoir continued to paint in the impressionist style. Soon he sold a few of his works and began to acquire a reputation as a talented portrait artist. Unlike Monet and Pissarro, who painted mostly landscapes, Renoir preferred to paint figures. He often used his friends as models, capturing them in moments of relaxed conversation or at festive occasions. He usually painted outdoors in natural light and used bright, pure colors. In his later years Renoir was crippled by severe arthritis. But he tied paintbrushes to his hands and continued to paint.

Ernest Ludwig Kirchner "Sertig Valley"

In this highly personal vision of a small village in the Swiss Alps in winter. Kirchner expresses his love for the peaceful region where he spent the last twenty years of his life. During this time, Kirchner was an invalid, struggling to regain his health after a serious illness he contracted while serving in the German Army in World War I. Life in Switzerland, so serene and placid in pace, yet set off by the grandeur and dignity of the Alps, was the opposite extreme of the tempestuous street of Berlin that had earlier preoccupied the artist. In these later paintings, Kirchner tried to express the harmony between man and nature, which he felt was embodied in the small villages that hugged the Mountainside and in the simple life of the villagers.

"Sertig Valley" has a primitive quality about it, a simply homely perspective which shows us simultaneously the buildings snuggled against the mountainside, the landscape of mountains and forest, the steep ski slope and the procession of home-drawn sleighs, all rendered in the bold cheerful palette of typical German Expressionism.

Hands-on Art Project: Tempera Painting - Focus on Primary Colors

Materials: Paper app. 11 "x 14"
Tempera ~~cake~~ paints
Brushes
Water tubs
Newspaper and paper towels

1. Discuss the way each artist used color in the paintings. Color is important because it helps your eye to look all over the painting. Think about how you would use color to help your eye move throughout your painting.
2. Start with light colors then paint the darkest colors last. Remember red, yellow and blue are the primary colors.
3. Choose any subject that you know and would like to paint.
4. Be sure to repeat colors throughout the surface of the painting the way Kirchner and Renoir did.