



# ACADEMIC PROGRAM

## THE VISUAL ARTS

An oft-neglected course of academic study is art. The tendency is to reduce it to a playtime activity like games at recess, in part, because mandated achievement testing does not include this area of study.

The Academy, in contrast, adopts the view of Leonardo Da Vinci, who reasoned that art and science are both essential methods of expressing the human experience.

The Academy provides classroom instruction in the visual arts. General concepts and specific objectives develop understanding and the basic skills necessary to interpret, evaluate and communicate by creating art. The conceptual framework of our visual art program includes:

**Art History & Culture** - Exploration of great art, artists, and cultures of the world.

**Aesthetic Perception** - Development of an understanding of and appreciation for art.

**Creative Expression in Art Production** - Employing a broad range of art media in a variety of hands-on art activities that give students avenues for self-expression.

**Art Criticism** - Enrichment of critical thinking skills as students learn about the elements and principles of art through examining their own and others' art work.

Specific objectives are tied to learning the elements and principles of art.

**Elements of Art** - Just as each language has its own system of words, the language of visual art has its own system. The words of the language are the basic elements of art: *line, shape, color, value, space, form* and *texture*. These elements are the building blocks that the artist puts together to create a work of art.



“The Starry Night” Van Gogh, 1889

**Principles of Art** - Visual images are organized according to rules, just like grammar rules in spoken or written language. In visual art the rules for organizing the elements of art are called the principles of art: *rhythm, balance, emphasis, variety, harmony, and unity*.

A typical art lesson focuses on a key concept, in this instance Curving Lines. In an example from 2nd Grade, the teacher shows the students a famous example of art, “The Starry Night.” The students learn the artist’s history, as they examine the painting for the elements and principles expressed. Then, led by the teacher, they form in straight lines walking around the classroom, and then curving lines between the tables. They draw lines in the air of big ocean waves and look for samples of curving lines in the classroom.

Then they produce their own art incorporating curving lines—roller coasters, river eddies, animals with long, curvy tails, sand dunes—whatever fits their experiences and imaginations.

The art curriculum is sequenced to continue to build upon familiar concepts at each grade level.