OBJECTIVE:
To introduce the concept of impressionism and show how color and light can define texture. To explore the importance of dynamics in music.

I'm _____ and this is______. We are here with our second FAME lesson for the year. Last month we studied color contrasts and looked at a painting telling a story using geometric shapes. Who can tell me the artist we studied? What was the name of the painting and music? Can you describe the art project we did?

Today we will learn about the artist Claude Monet and the composer Camille (Charles) Saint-Saens (san-SAWN). Both were French artists who liked to create IMPRESSIONS. Monet did his impressions of outdoor scenes with paint and Saint-Saens created his impressions with music.

Claude Monet grew up in the French seaport of Le Havre. He developed a love for the way the water looked, felt and smelled. Fascinated by the subtle changes in the atmosphere, Monet created a new painting technique. By using short, rhythmic brushstrokes filled with individual color he created a canvas alive with activity. This was the opposite of the smooth, blended surfaces of the past. This technique was called IMPRESSIONISM, a title derived from his painting: Impression, Sunrise. He painted in “plein air” which meant he painted outside to capture all the colors in his landscape as the light changed from sunrise to sunset.

When you walked outside to go to school this morning, how was the weather? What did the sky look like? Was it bright? Foggy? Hazy? Did you see flowers? Trees? Close your eyes and imagine exactly the same scene that you saw this morning, now think of what it would look like this afternoon and now evening. Does it look the same during the day as it does at night? What one thing makes it look different? Light greatly influences and drastically changes the colors and textures. What you were doing is giving your IMPRESSIONS of what the scene looked like. If all of you were to paint a picture of that scene, would your pictures all look the same? Why not? (Your impression is different than others).

"Landscape is nothing but an impression, and an instantaneous one, hence this label that was given us, by the way because of me." —Claude Monet

ARTIST: Claude Monet (1840-1926)

Students recall IMPRESSIONS

- Same scene changes depending on time of day
- Each student’s impression is different

REVIEW:
- Paul Klee & Rimsky Korsakov Sinbad at Sea
- Geometric castle using pastels on acetate

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MONET FUN FACTS
Monet wanted to be an artist, but his father wanted him to go into the family grocery business.

While visiting the Louvre he saw painters copying from the old masters. Having brought his paints and other tools with him, he would instead go and sit by a window and paint what he saw.

The term Impressionism was originally meant as an insult by an art critic but the painters liked it and embraced it as their style.

He wrote daily instructions to his gardeners at Giverny, precise layouts for plantings, and invoices for his floral purchases and his botany books.

You can visit the Musée de l’Orangerie in Paris to see monumental murals that wrap around an oval gallery of his Water Lilies as well as visit his gardens at Giverny.

His painting Water Lily Pond sold for 80 million dollars in 2008.
Monet spent his lifetime recording his impressions of the subtle changes that occur throughout the day. During the last thirty years of his life he focused on painting waterscapes from his garden in Giverny and created nearly 250 oil paintings of Water Lilies (Nymphéas). He would have one canvas after another brought to him while working furiously to capture the light of that particular moment then move to another canvas as the light changed. Many of these were mural sized and painted as he was losing his sight to cataracts.

Let’s look at one of Monet’s Water Lilies paintings. Are the colors wild and bright like Paul Klee’s? (Monet uses a pastel palate). What does the pink wispy image of sky tell us? (Morning or evening?) What about shape and line? Can you find clean, defined lines like you made for your castle? (The impressionistic brushstrokes are thick and rough). When an artist paints he/she sometimes uses paint to create texture. When the paint dries it can be smooth or bumpy. (For older grades you can refer back to Van Gogh’s project with the thick paint they used to create sunflowers). Even though this is a copy of his painting you can tell it has texture because your eyes see the roughness and bumps made by the paint and brushstrokes. Yet, there is a softly-sheer silky look that invites our touch.

Monet painted his impression, but impressions can also be created with sounds. That is what our composer, Camille Saint-Saens did. As young as two, Saint-Saens loved sounds and would imitate them. He began writing music at age four. Some his most famous pieces were his IMPRESSIONS of animals. In his music suite The Carnival of Animals, depending on the animal different DYNAMICS create a certain feel. The DYNAMICS of the music means how loud or soft a piece is played. By choosing different instruments a composer can make louder and softer tones. They can also play the music fast or slow to create a mood. Let’s listen to The Swan, a piece from The Carnival. It is a truly “visual” sound picture of a swan floating gracefully over the waters of a Monet-like pond. The music is written for the full, deep strains of a cello with its bow gliding easily across its strings. Do you get the impression of a gracefully gliding beautiful creature?

When we do your art activity, you will have an opportunity to do some impressions with the placement of colored circles on your paper. Yours will look similar because we will use tissue paper circles in light colors, layered randomly, to simulate water and the lilies he loved to paint. What colors do you see in the water? (pale green, light blue, lavender) We will be using square paper, tissue paper and glue sticks to create our background, then we will go to the table in the room and use a glue wash over our circles. This will make you background shiny and smooth. Next we will use our water lily template, cover it with tissue paper squares, cut them out and add to your background. We will build our flowers using the colors of your choice (magenta, pink, yellow) and glue them down. Finally we will trim our artwork, mount on a piece of black paper and sign our artwork like artists do in white pencil.