Why Is Art Appreciation So Important?

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When you think of art, you might first think of famous works from artists like van Gogh, Warhol, Picasso, or Monet. What we often forget is that art has been around since the days of the caveman. Art has played a significant role throughout our history. However, it is also a part of our lives now from the clothing we wear to the video games we play, the cars we drive to the covers or pictures in the books or magazines we read. It will continue to be a part of our future and the future of our loved ones for many generations to come.

Using the example of early civilizations, we know that they didn’t use a formal written language but instead used drawings to depict their everyday lives, emotions, and hopes. We can look at the images and it gives us not only a clear understanding of what their daily struggles and successes were, but it allows us to connect and empathize on an emotional level while also learning about their culture.

Art is not meant to be looked at only for what it is. It is meant to stimulate thought because it allows viewers to draw their own emotions and pull from their personal experiences when viewed. It is very powerful in this way and it naturally develops critical and innovative thinking skills. Art also teaches many important qualities such as listening, observing and responding to multiple perspectives.
Art appreciation is something the South Lyon Community Schools art teachers strive to instill in students. It encompasses so much more than just looking at a piece of art or learning about the artist. Due to the subjective nature of art, children can learn to construct meaning and articulate their thoughts when they express, in their own words, their personal opinions about what they are seeing, feeling and thinking. This allows students an opportunity to develop an open mind and understand that there is more than just one solution to a problem. Having an appreciation for art also helps us to develop an appreciation for each other and how we are all unique in our own way.

This conversation can be continued outside of the art classroom. As mentioned above, art is all around us. Talking about art with your children provides them with a forum for developing their literacy and communication skills. Things like, “There are so many different kinds of shoe designers in the world. If you were a shoe designer, what kind of shoes would you create and why?” “Both Olaf from ‘Frozen’ and Frosty from ‘Frosty the Snowman’ were designed by artists. What differences do you notice about them? What do you like or not like about them? What would you have done differently if you were the artist who created them?” Promoting these conversations about art help students develop visual thinking skills where they are able to observe closely, describe what they see in detail, and also provide evidence for their observations.

So next time you have a long car ride, are waiting at the doctor’s office or having a family dinner, think about engaging your child’s artistic and critical thinking skills using these types of questions. Small efforts like these can lead to a great appreciation for art!