In the vertical art storage rack you will find the following reproduction and posters:

Large reproductions:
*Revolution of the Viaduct (1937)*
*La Belle Jardiniere (1939)*

Posters:
- The *Art Elements & Principles* posters to use in the discussion

In the black cabinet you will find a white binder with a copy of this presentation and several 8.5 x 11 prints of the other paintings referenced in this presentation.
Personal Information

Name: Paul Klee (pronounced “Clay”)
Nationality: German/Swiss
Born: December 18, 1879; Münchenbuchsee, Switzerland
Died: June 9, 1940; Muralto, Locarno, Switzerland
Lived: Switzerland and Germany
Family: All the members of Paul's family had musical talent. Paul himself was a violinist. Not surprisingly he married a musician, pianist Lili Stumpf, in 1906. They had a son, Felix (born in 1907) who he encouraged to draw. Felix would become an artist like his father.

Professional Information

Type of artist: Klee's work is often described as a combination of primitive art, surrealism (dreamlike), cubism (style Picasso is best known for) and children's art. His distinctive style is classified as Expressionism.

**Expressionism** is a movement in fine arts that started in Germany that emphasized the expression of inner experience rather than realistic portrayal. Expressionist artists aims to express their feelings and emotions through the use of vivid colors and strong, distorted lines and do not seek to paint objects or subjects in a real manner.

*Ask:* How do you think and artist can paint what he or she feels? Discuss how a painting might look if an artist felt happy or sad.

Style/Technique: Although Klee is today considered a master of color; he spent a long time in his search for his sense of color. At first, he drew in black and white, saying he would never be a painter. But as an adult, after a visit to the country Tunisia in which he was impressed by the quality of light, he had found his sense of color and began experimenting with his newfound decision to be a painter.

He was so excited when he finally discovered how wonderful color can be he said:

*"Color has taken possession of me; no longer do I have to chase after it, I know that it has hold of me forever! Color and I are one. I am a painter!"*

Klee's work is gently humorous and often related to dreams, music and poetry. His paintings and watercolors showed a mastery of delicate, dreamlike color harmonies, which he usually used to create flat, semi-abstract compositions or even effects resembling mosaic. Klee was also a master draftsman, and many of his works are elaborated line drawings with subject matter that grew out of fantasy or dream.
Paul Klee

imagery; he described his technique in these drawings as taking a line for a walk. Klee believed that his art would communicate his unconscious thoughts and his dreams and he often incorporated letters, numbers and symbols into his paintings. Line and color predominate with Klee, but he also produced series of works that explore mosaic and other effects.

Later in his life, Klee became sick. As a result he adapted to the limited movement he had in his hands and changed his painting style to one that is characterized by broad, heavy flat black and large areas of subdued color.

Artist Background

Paul Klee’s was a Swiss born painter, with a unique style that was influenced by expressionism, cubism, surrealism, and orientalism. As a child, Klee was mainly oriented as a musician, having played the violin since he was eight, but in his teen years, he found that art allowed him freedom to explore his style and express his radical ideas. Belonging to no specific art movement, he created works known for their fantastic dream images, wit, and imagination.

The paintings of Klee are difficult to classify. His earliest works were pencil landscape studies that showed the influence of impressionism. Until 1912 he also produced many black-and-white etchings; the overtones of fantasy and satire in these works showed the influence of 20th-century expressionism as well as of such master printmakers as Francisco Goya and William Blake.

After his marriage in 1906 to the pianist Lili Stumpf, Klee settled in Munich, then an important center for avant-garde art. That same year he exhibited his etchings for the first time. His friendship with the painters Wassily Kandinsky and August Macke prompted him to join Der Blaue Reiter (The Blue Rider), an expressionist group that contributed much to the development of abstract art.

Klee’s legacy includes over 9,000 works of art, which have inspired many other painting and musical compositions.

Featured Artwork

**Show:** small reproduction in binder:

**Senecio (1922)**

*(Oil on canvas)*

Completed in 1922, *Senecio* is a manifestation of Paul’s sense of humor and African culture. The simple colors and shapes, Paul makes use of various shades of orange, red, and yellow to reveal portrait of an old man. Artistic use of shapes gives the false impression that one eyebrow is raised. His left eyebrow is
Paul Klee

represented by a triangle while the other one is made of a simple curved line. The portrait is also
called *Head of a Man Going Senile* and intentionally mimics children’s artwork by using random
shapes and forms with minimal detail in the face.

**Ask:** What shapes does the artist use to create the features of this face?
**Ask:** What emotions do you think Klee was trying to express while painting "Senecio"?
**Ask:** Would you agree that this painting has a “childlike” quality to it?
**Ask:** What is the age of the person in this painting? Answer: it is actually an old man

**Revolution of the Viaduct (1937)**
*(Oil on cotton)*

This painting, while simple, is very good at showing us how Klee knew about depth and *perspective*. Perspective is how we know how close or far away something is. If you look at the arches in the distance they are smaller than the ones in the foreground, which are bigger. When Klee does this he give us the impression of distance.

**Ask:** are there examples of perspective in the room around us? (look at objects close to you vs. those farther away)

Some people also think that these arches appear to be almost human-like: marching soldiers in a parade.

**Ask:** what might make them think this? (feet-like projections, the placement of one “foot” in front of the other, the “legs”

**La Belle Jardiniere (1939)**
*(Oil and Tempera on Jute)*

The title of this painting means *the Beautiful Gardener*. This painting is so *abstract* that is would be difficult to tell what it was without knowing the title of this piece. Subjects that are abstract look very little like the thing they are supposed to be. Simple shapes, lines and color are used instead trying to make something look real.

**Ask:** What parts of this painting hint at the fact that this is a person? A gardener (what is in the figures “hand”)? Is this a woman or a man?

**Ask:** What is the purpose of all this color? Do you think it has anything to do with the fact Klee’s painting have a childlike quality to them?
Discussing the Art Further

You may use these points to talk more about one or all of the paintings.

General discussion for the works of art

- What words would you use to describe the artist’s works? (Colorful, bold, geometric, vibrant, exciting)
- Do you see repetition in his artwork?
- How does this painting make you feel? (Relaxed, nervous, energized)

Line
- What kinds of lines are there in these paintings? (Straight, spiral, horizontal, vertical, curved, zig-zag, diagonal, wavy).
- Can you see what strokes he used in these painting to create the lines?
- How did the artist show movement or stillness in his paintings? Describe the lines.
- Are the lines thin or thick? What kind would you use to draw something delicate and with great detail? Something strong and bold?
- Why do you think many people describe his use of line to be childlike?

Light
- How did the artist use lights and darks to depict a certain mood?
- Did the artist use light to create depth in his art?
- Was the artist concerned with detail and using the light source to create a realistic picture?

Texture
- How did Klee depict texture? (did the colors he chose help to create a certain feeling or texture?)
- Do certain paintings look soft, hard, harsh, cold, hot, confused? Explain how klee conveyed these moods by using different brush strokes or textures.

Shape
- In many of his paintings, Klee used shapes to express himself. What kind of shapes did he use?
- Do you recognize a subject in this painting?
- What do you think these shapes represent?
- Are the shapes used in this painting geometric or organic?
- Are the shapes placed in a pattern or are they random?
- What shapes do you see in this painting?

Color
- What kinds of colors did Klee use? (bold, vibrant)
- Did Klee think that color was an important element in his painting?
- Why do you think many people describe his use of color to be childlike?
Space
- Was Klee able to show depth by using different colors and tints (lights) and shades (darks) of colors?
- If you look at a painting, how can you differentiate between the foreground (front), middle-ground and background.

Composition
- Did Klee make good use of his canvas?
- Did he fill his canvas with shapes and color?
- Do you want to look at the entire picture?
- Does your eye travel around the artwork, where does your eye start and where does it end?

Resources
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Klee
http://www.wikiart.org/en/paul-klee
http://totallyhistory.com/senecio/