



## LESSON 9 LEVEL C TEMPERA PAINTING

### WHAT YOU WILL LEARN:

impasto painting with tempera on cardboard

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

powdered or liquid tempera colors: red, white, yellow, black, light blue; liquid laundry starch; wall paper paste (or one of SVAM recipes in the Introduction); paper plate; plastic picnic knife or popsicle stick; stiff cardboard about 15 x 23 or 23 x 30.5 cm (6" x 9" or 9" x 12"); small cups or washed yogurt cartons; newspapers; paper towels.

### WORDS TO LEARN:

impasto painting using very thick paint and letting the brush or palette knife marks show.

**"TIPS":** Mix powdered tempera in 60 ml (1/4 cup) amounts in cups with 5 ml (one teaspoon) of wallpaper paste and enough liquid starch to make the consistency of cake frosting. (or you may thicken liquid tempera, but it takes a lot of stirring to absorb the paste.) If it gets too thick, use liquid starch to thin it again.) Cover until needed. It will keep for a

## VAN GOGH TEXTURE "Textured Tempera"



Vincent Van Gogh Starry Night, 1889  
Museum of Modern Art New York City

**GETTING STARTED:** Look closely at paintings by Vincent Van Gogh and other artists who applied their oil paints thickly using the impasto technique. Notice places where the surface is piled up with thick, bumpy paint to create a rough surface. This texture was probably made with a palette knife (a thin, flexible blade usually used for blending colors on the palette) rather than with a brush. (Van Gogh painted rapidly. He never smoothed his strokes as earlier artists had done.) You are going to use "textured tempera" in the impasto manner of Van Gogh.

1. Put a little of each color of the textured tempera paint on your



few days.

The painting will be done with a plastic knife or a craft stick instead of a brush. The artist's "canvas" is a piece of cardboard. No water is needed. Wipe the "palette knife" on a paper towel when changing colors. Paint the background first; then, the details. When the painting is finished, cover the back of the cardboard with leftover paint to prevent warping as the artwork dries on newspaper overnight.



Manuel Age 12

paper plate palette.

2. Sketch a very simple landscape, still life, or portrait on scratch paper or directly on your cardboard "canvas." Do it as Van Gogh might have done.

3. With your "palette knife" (not your fingers!) mix and apply the colors to make your painting. Don't try to smooth the surface. Let the paint stand up.

4. When your picture is finished, carefully hold it so you can spread the leftover paint all over the back of the cardboard. Let it dry overnight. Put the painting down on a piece of the newspaper with the back side down on the paper. This step will keep your picture from curling up. (Pieces of newspaper may stick to the back of the painting, but it won't matter.)

**CLEAN UP:** Wrap your palette and knife in newspaper and put them in the trash. Clean yourself up, too.

**TALK ABOUT IT:** Did you mix some unusual "in between" colors? Can you remember how you made them? Did you create an impasto surface? Look at your painting to find the part with the most contrast (light against dark or bright against dull.)

**MORE IDEAS:** 1. Learn more about Vincent Van Gogh and his very brief career and great fame. Try:

[http://www.artcylopedia.com/artists/van\\_gogh\\_vincent.html](http://www.artcylopedia.com/artists/van_gogh_vincent.html)

2. Make a texture collage: Collect objects with surfaces that are smooth, bumpy, slippery, scratchy, shiny, flaky, etc. Arrange them on a large piece of cardboard. Fasten them down and label them with a descriptive word. Then help a younger child to learn this vocabulary of textures.