

**Encouraging Art Appreciation
In Young Children**

**Roy &
Matilda**

The Gallery Mice



***Based on the Roy and
Matilda series
by Sue Venn***

The Gallery Mice



Visiting Programme for Young Children

at Hotham Street Kindergarten

Introduction

- Playing with art postcards;
- Aline Wolf's series of sequential activities, Stages 1, 2 & 3.
- Beautiful box postcards (our own Gallery's works) finding matching pairs;
- Discussion about artists who, when, what, where, how!
- Artist in Residence, as part of everyday program. *No particular attention drawn to this. They are just there and children can come and go as they watch and talk to her / him.*
- Roy and Matilda story a few times.
- Discussion about artists, their works and Art Galleries. Types of paintings e.g. portraits, landscapes, seascapes, still life - sculpture, ceramics, photos, silver etc. Behavior in Galleries particularly stressed, in a positive manner.
- Full size portrait of Mrs Venn in oils on canvas brought along to talk about and touch.
- Large poster size reproductions of paintings we will see put out at children's level, with things to touch from subject matter e.g. sheep's wool for *Shearing The Rams*.
- Learn *Roy and Matilda* song.
- Music and movement group based on paintings and subjects.
- Puzzles of art works.
- Books on art appreciation theme.
- Masterpiece biscuits baked and decorated with food paints for Gallery visit picnic.
- Teachers wear Roy and Matilda ear rings and tee shirts!
- Make raffia hat with children.
- Notes sent home to parents to make arrangements for visit.

* Explanatory meeting for parents about programme before visit.

The Visit

Parents, children and masterpiece biscuits, a Toilet visit vital before going into ...
Children get Gallery boxes in which are their badges and mouse ...
are transformed into a family of mice who need to stay together! This ...
supervision so much easier. The Gallery boxes are useful to keep tiny hands occupied.

Water window always has to be touched (take dry towel for wet hands!)

Australian section: Children sit in front of 'our' paintings, we discuss what we can see.
Questions such as following facilitate discussion.:

"What do you think you could smell...hear...taste?"

"How does this painting make you feel?" *Restful / busy ...*

"Let's play a guessing game. I'll turn my back to the painting and you tell me what you can see. I'll try and guess which painting it is."

"What kind of a person do you think he/she is?"

"Do you like this painting. Would you like it in your house. In which room-why?"

"Can you see some lines in the painting? Take a pretend paint brush and follow those lines (demonstrate at first.)"

"What do you think the people are going to do next?"

"The artist would need a lot of colours on his palette, what colours can you see?."

"Let's stand like the lady in the painting" *Muslin Dress* or shearer in *Shearing The Rams* ... mention feet, hands, head etc to facilitate kinaesthetic memory and emphasize nature of pose or movement suggested.

After talking about each painting children are given a piece of tactile material to emphasize subject matter of each painting e.g. sheep's wool, piece of muslin, shell, feather, little artificial flower, tiny biscuit - *The Arbour*, cicada's wing, gum leaf / gum nut, straw, grassy bunch. Put in Gallery box to take home.

The little door - After seeing ten art works (*for only a couple of minutes each*) we 'find' Roy and Matilda's little door! Children sing their song to the mice (who don't appear as we all know they sleep during the day time)

The Great Hall - Children lie on floor with their parents to look at coloured glass ceiling together, discuss colours, shapes and patterns, that they like best .

Choosing a postcard of a work of art they liked best. Then its home before fatigue sets in. A happy time remembered and we want to come again!

* Parents are given an evaluation sheet on a board to record children's responses.

The main aim is to expose the children to the works - an encounter experience - not a lesson in facts.

We set up our own 'Art Gallery' - with sculpture, paintings, photographs, ceramics, silver. Dress ups for the people who visit it. Included in this Gallery are the paintings we saw, portraits of the teachers, and the children's own 'framed' works.

A child sized 'little door' is painted, tied on to table legs and becomes the entry to Doll's Corner, adjacent to the Gallery, to be used by the children in dramatic play as mice who live in our own Gallery. Pin on tails for mice.

Use other art appreciation books such as *I Spy* by Lucy Micklethwaite, *For The Love of Vincent* by Brenda Northeast in the programme.

Drawings, painting, collage, clay all done in 'frames' to encourage children to think about the composition of their own art works.

A palette with three finer brushes is offered as a special painting activity (colour mixing). Maybe real artists pastels if visiting artist had used them and children were inspired.

Scrapbook - Children choose art postcard and make up their own story to accompany it & decorate around their chosen picture with a frame using gold texta.

Visits from people who make have been suggested in painting subjects and discussions e.g. wool spinner.

Animals to visit, including real mice.

Art Show later in year of children's work, set up like a real exhibition with catalogue and accompanying activities.

* Make illustrated book as an evaluation for interested parents, including children's comments, and art works.