



AND THE WINNERS ARE...

WHO GETS THE MOST OUT OF THE AUCTION'S CLASS PROJECTS?

Every year, at every West Side Montessori Annual Auction, the bidding becomes fiercest—and the atmosphere the liveliest—when our children's class projects are up on the auction block. After all, what WSMS parent wouldn't want the opportunity to take home a beautiful, one-of-a-kind work of art created by the kids in his or her child's class? What is important for all of us to remember, however, is who reaps the richest rewards from the creation of these projects: the children.

The planning of the class projects begins early in the school year. Prior to winter vacation, the teachers in each classroom brainstorm with the students, discussing the topics they have studied and exchanging ideas about what has most ignited their curiosity and excitement. Inspirations for this year's projects ranged from the work of beloved children's authors (4W's continent map, featuring the techniques of Eric Carle; 2E's transportation collage, inspired by the global perspective of Ann Morris; 3Wam's mirror framed with colored tissue paper collage, an homage to Leo Lionni) to discussions of such important universal topics as friendship (2Wpm's friendship wheel) and self-image (Garden's self-portrait collage); from paintings by famous artists (1W's splatter painting, à la Jackson Pollock; 3Wpm's multimedia work, based on Vincent van Gogh's "Irises") to the children's love and respect for nature (2Wam's butterfly collage; 3E's sphere sculpture and 4E's four seasons tapestry, both made with twigs and sticks found on nature walks).

The teachers come up with the actual projects, and they provide the materials, but it is then up to the children to bring their unique artistic vision to the task, sometimes on their own, sometimes collaboratively. To observe the creation of a class project is to witness so many aspects of Montessori education at work simultaneously: the building of fine and gross motor skills; the teaching of respect for other people's opinions and abilities; the nurturing of self-esteem by entrusting children with working independently; and the strengthening of social skills derived from working as a team toward a shared goal.

Upon completion of their class projects, the joy and pride shared by the children are boundless. At a celebratory class breakfast, we congratulate them on the beautiful results of their creativity, diligence, and collaboration. And every year we are eternally grateful to the teachers for their seemingly endless supply of energy and ingenuity in guiding our children along their artistic journey. Truly, this is a case in which the process is as valuable, if not more so, than the end result. Regardless of who takes home the class projects at the end of the Auction, ultimately, everyone wins.



GARDEN CLASS PROJECT "FRIENDLY FACES"

The children of the Garden class chose to create self-portraits using a favorite medium of theirs: collage. After studying self-portraits by artists such as Pablo Picasso, Frida Kahlo, and Andy Warhol, each child outlined his or her own head on cardboard while looking in a mirror. Then they created hair and facial features using glue and an assortment of collage materials (buttons, feathers, yarn, ribbon). Mounted together, the collages offer a beautiful and creative portrait of the Garden class.



1W CLASS PROJECT "POLLOCK PIZZAZZ"

As part of their exploration of the works of Jackson Pollock, the children of 1W created a canvas painting inspired by the artist's "splatter" painting style. After learning to drip paint onto paper with the different tools that Pollock used (brushes, sticks, whisks, spoons), the children made small-scale paintings and mural-sized practice runs, then worked together to produce their final masterpiece.





4E CLASS PROJECT
"WEAVING A NATURAL HISTORY"

The children of 4E created a woven tapestry celebrating their exploration of the natural world and the four seasons. This theme was even reflected in the tools for the project: the class used a loom made of sticks found on nature walks in Riverside Park. As the children learned the art of weaving, they also developed a tactile appreciation of the many art materials nature has to offer.



3WAM CLASS PROJECT "MIRROR, MIRROR ON THE WALL"

Inspired by beloved children's author and artist Leo Lionni, the children of 3Wam made a beautiful decorative mirror frame out of colored tissue paper collage. In so doing, the children gained a thorough knowledge of the collage process (cutting, glue brushing, composition), as well as elements of color blending and geometry.





“A CIRCLE IS ROUND,
IT HAS NO END.
THAT’S HOW LONG
I’M GOING TO BE
YOUR FRIEND.”



2WPM CLASS PROJECT “THE FRIENDSHIP WHEEL”

This decorative bicycle wheel represents the circular, eternal nature of friendship and of life. The children of 2Wpm wove strips of colored ribbon, fabric, and yarn through the spokes, revealing lovely patterns of triangles reminiscent of a flower, a star, or the sun. As they worked, the children sang songs about, and reflected together on, the nature of friendship, community, and peace.



3E CLASS PROJECT “NATURALLY LIGHT”

Taking their cue from artist Andy Goldsworthy, the children of 3E chose to make a project out of materials found in nature. Using twigs and sticks collected during nature walks in the park, the children created a large spherical sculpture. They wrapped gold and yellow ribbon around some of the twigs and placed a golden light bulb inside. The result is an extraordinary ceiling lamp derived almost entirely from the natural world.



2E CLASS PROJECT "ON THE GO"

This splendid collage depicts the various modes of transportation used around the world. The children of 2E got their inspiration from author Ann Morris, whose books explore the world's different cultures through a variety of universal topics (e.g., hats, tools, houses, food). In creating their project, the children mastered the skills and techniques of weaving, drawing, and cutting.



3WPM CLASS PROJECT "IRIS INSPIRATIONS"

Vincent van Gogh's masterpiece "The Irises" was the primary inspiration for this multimedia work on canvas. After studying van Gogh's works and various painting techniques, the children of 3Wpm examined actual irises. For their project, the children painted, cut apart, reassembled, and glued their individual iris portraits onto a large canvas, then painted over the collage with acrylic paint, producing a dazzling artwork of their own.





4W CLASS PROJECT
“HAND BY HAND AROUND THE WORLD”

As part of their yearlong study of the continents, the children of 4W made a Montessori continent map using the techniques of children’s author and illustrator Eric Carle. The whole class finger-painted large swatches of paper, traced the continents on them, and used pushpins to punch out the continent shapes. Using watercolors for the oceans and textile materials for added texture, the children created a map that is as cheerful as it is educational.



2WAM CLASS PROJECT
“FLYING COLORS”

Inspired by their study of the butterfly life cycle, the children of 2Wam decided to make an oversized butterfly out of collage. In the process the children employed a host of skills, including color mixing, finger painting, stenciling, cutting, and gluing. The rich, vibrant colors of the finished work reflect a color wheel.

