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## Reach Out and Connect: Literacy Through Visual Art

The ROR GNY team will be focusing on teaching literacy through visual art! Though literacy and the arts may seem separate, analyzing and talking about art is just like analyzing and talking about books – they help develop comprehension and vocabulary in a similar way. Best of all, art is immediately accessible and engaging to most learners no matter their reading level.

### Process vs. Product Approaches to Art

To frame our discussion about learning literacy through the arts, it is important to first establish that this type of learning puts more emphasis on the process rather than the product.

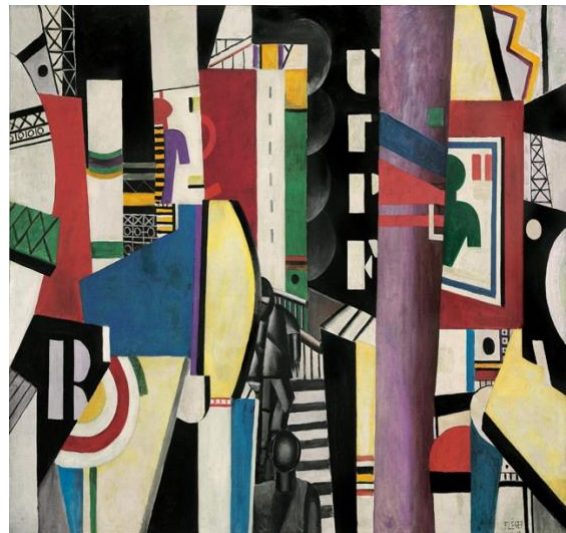
- Process Art
  - Focus on enjoying and learning from the process of making and doing the art – it's not so much about what the end product turns out to be or if there is even an end product at all.
- Product Art
  - Focus on a preconceived idea of what the art should look like. There are often steps or directions the child needs to follow to make the artwork look the way it is 'supposed to' according to the teacher or parent.
- For young kids, we want to focus on process art because this is where they can learn about creativity, self-expression, and bringing their own unique talents to their art

### 1. Abstract Art

One form of art that takes a “process” approach is abstract art! This kind of art does not try to represent things realistically, but rather through shapes, forms, colors, and textures.

- As an example of how we can use a piece of abstract art to teach literacy, take a look at the painting below by Fernand Léger! We've included an outline of a few questions you could ask your child to guide their literacy development. Make sure not to tell you child the title of the painting. We want them to use their imagination and tell you what they see!

- First, ask your child what they see.
- If they do not say anything, ask a more direct question: “do you see the color red? Where?” Point to the red. “Do you see any circles? Rectangles? Show me!”
- Then ask: “what do those colors and shapes make?” There is no wrong answer!
- Start making up a story together about the colors and shapes!
- As your child is telling their story, ask them **how** they know these things are happening. This is crucial – it will allow your child to use their vocabulary and explain “**why**”!



The City, Fernand Léger

## 2. Tippy Brush Demo with Watercolors

We can create our own abstract art with a process approach, all while teaching literacy! To do so, we'll be using one of the most well-known theories of educating children through art: Waldorf Education.



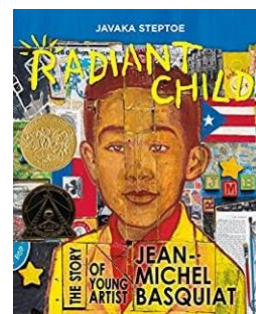
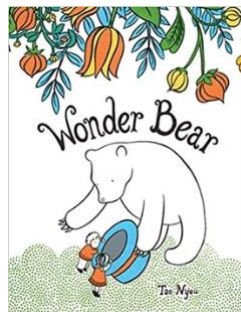
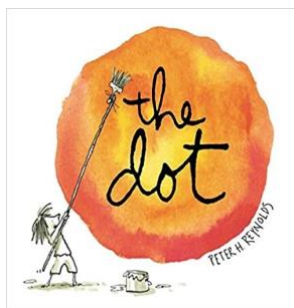
In the Waldorf method, there are many creative ways to teach, including painting, drawing, sculpting, knitting, weaving, and crocheting.

But as a common thread, all mediums visually depict the story that is being told out loud at the same time!

Check out the demo on our recording of the workshop! We tell the story of Tippy Brush in both English & Spanish using only paint, a piece of paper, a paper towel, and a paint brush! Demo starts at [27:19](#)!

## 3. Comic Books & Book Lists & Activity Lists

- One last tip for building your child's literacy skills through visual arts – encourage your child to read comic books! Comic books combine words with pictures, and as we know, this is a great way to build literacy skills!
- There are lots of great books about art that can be paired with a fun activity to teach literacy!
  - We have created a list of examples for you [here](#).



- We have also created a YouTube playlist with examples of creative projects you can do with your young kids that incorporate art and literacy. One of our favorites is no mess finger painting that keeps the paint in a bag and lets your kids use their hands to mix the colors!
  - You can access this playlist by clicking [here](#).

For any questions about the content or our virtual programming, please email Kristen Rocha Aldrich at [krochaaldrich@reachoutandreadnyc.org](mailto:krochaaldrich@reachoutandreadnyc.org).