

Welcome to Miquon Art!

When you take a flower in your hand and really look at it, it's your world for the moment. I want to give that world to someone else. Most people in the city rush around so, they have no time to look at a flower. I want them to see it whether they want to or not.

– Georgia O'Keeffe

September 2017

Dear Miquon Families,

The natural role of the artist is as an observer—a collector of elements and details from their surrounding world. The artist then draws from this collection to create: they edit; they transform; they compose. Their inspiration and skill bring into being something new; something uniquely their own, that they can then share. Ms. O'Keeffe was speaking directly to the importance of this 'collection' process in the above quotation. She was well aware that the pace of modern life did not seem conducive to this process. She believed that her responsibility as an artist was to actively engage in this observation so that she may reorder and recompose the information she gathered into works to might help communicate the essence of what she has witnessed.

When I got to New Mexico it was mine...I'd never seen anything like it before, but it fitted to me exactly. It's something that's in the air - it's different. The sky is different, the wind is different.

...So we—myself, my husband Michael, and our two boys, Jonah and Caleb, went to see for ourselves. I had been to New Mexico before, but this time I was going with the expressed purpose described above: I was going to see; to feel; to smell; to be present—to be actively mindful of all that surrounded me. This time I went to see Georgia's New Mexico.

I know this feeling so strongly! I sit here, struggling to find a way to adequately explain

I found that I could say things with colors and shapes that I couldn't say any other way—things I had no words for.

my feelings about my experiences this summer, and my hopes and plans for the upcoming school year... This year we'll focus on Mindfulness. Children will be given the space to see; the space to feel; the space to be aware, and from there we will draw our inspiration to create. Our young artists will have an environment in which they can become engaged with their thoughts and feelings; to possibly have a moment in which they might notice the special and satisfying

gift it is to watch a drip of watercolor in a puddle of water bleed, forming lights, darks—another world... Our practice this year will be mindful and intentional. We will take the time to find the beauty in the ordinary, and to understand its significance as part of a greater whole.

I had the opportunity at the end of the last school year to sit with each child and reflect on their individual experience in the art room. I was struck by how many spoke of the feeling they had coming to art—their awareness of the space, and what it allowed them: a feeling of peace; happiness; the desire to make art... I want to continue to build upon what so many were naturally already noticing and feeling.

...and so, we're going to approach our studies of the elements and practices of art through the lens of the Mindful artist. Our art historical studies will be chosen specifically with this in mind: we will investigate several phases of Georgia O'Keeffe's long and varied career; we will explore the subtle precision and intentionality of Zen ink paintings; we will release our minds into the dream worlds of Australian Aboriginal Dream Paintings...we will seek; we will observe; we will consider, and we will create. Within the individual areas of study, technical, formal elements of art making will be taught and learned in context: this framework supports and contributes to the organic growth and retention of these skills, and makes every single act more purposeful and intentional.

Our outdoor areas have been—and will continue to be—a source of constant inspiration for our artists. Last year, we began to create a more harmonious, beautiful space around the art room: we made a bird-feeding area, which then grew into a small garden, which then inspired an expansion to the areas further behind. Children found peace in whatever quiet spot they perched: to draw; to watch; to breathe... Experiences with our animal friends—the birds; the squirrels; the fox kits—often led to exciting, inclusive discussions, which then inspired the children to create, their 'collections' filled just so...

I am so very excited to see where every one of our Miquon Artists take us through the year. Each of their individual perspectives will provide a different window into what there is to be seen, and how we may—on our own, and together—enjoy and be inspired by all that surrounds us.

Warmly,
Nicole