ABOUT CONSERVATORY LAB

Consortium Lab is a K-6 music-infused charter school in the heart of Boston. We believe in the power of music to transform the lives of children and adolescents.

We use Expeditionary Learning as a framework for our unique, interdisciplinary curriculum that integrates music and other creative processes. Our learning expeditions are discovery operations. They start from scratch and travel light, relying on courage, compassion, and creativity as much as on intellectual acumen. We channel active, hands-on situations where what we are doing matters to us, and its consequences.

To encourage experiential learning, our expeditions demand fieldwork and assistance from experts. Many of the photographers in this book feature fieldwork experiences and experts who guided our young activists as they created their self-portraits. As you can see from the children's faces, when you have a need to know, when you are eager to do something, a different level of energy kicks in.

Our interdisciplinary academic curriculum deepens students' appreciation of the role of music in the world and provides opportunities for students to create and perform music and to achieve scholastic benchmarks.

Consortium Lab is also the only school in the country to incorporate El Sistema Program and Methodology into its core school day. El Sistema is a unique program designed to effect social change and nurture promising futures for underserved communities through intense, ensemble-focused music education. Music at Consortium Lab is like a heart that pumps and beats to infuse vitality into all aspects of the school community.

Our students will remember their experiences at Consortium Lab with stories about problems they solved, ways they helped the community, performances they participated in, and exciting projects they worked so hard on. They will remember how one idea led to another and how they followed those ideas like true detectives until they understood them and made them their own. They will remember being challenged to push themselves to accomplish things they didn't think they were capable of accomplishing.

Diana Lehr, Head of School

Be brave when you are singing songs & making art.
SEOULÉ, K-1 STUDENT
Introduction

The 24 vibrant self-portraits featured in this book were created by preschoolers at the end of a five-month learning expedition called "Portrait of an Artist." Visitors to our classroom often ask, "How did 4- and 5-year-olds create such extraordinary works of art?" Here's what we did.

We began by exploring the color spectrum. We mixed colors together to make different shades and new hues, read books about color, and created art with tempera paint, finger paint, crayons, watercolors, photographs, and more. We experimented, followed our imaginations, and made artistic choices.

As we painted, we listened to the sounds and rhythms of folk, jazz, and classical music, letting the lines and colors dance across the page. Children especially delighted in making connections between their art and the folk songs we listened to each day as part of our yearlong study of world folk music. We also made connections between color and emotion, responding to tempo and mood as we moved to music about different colors.

Heidi Matson, Frota Kehoe, Weslylly Kendomsy, Andy Wehr, Palos Picasso—these are some of the master painters we studied and emulated. At the Museum of Fine Arts, we viewed famous portraits by accomplished artists of the past and painted our own portraits with watercolors and oil pastels in the Museum studio. In the classroom, we reassembled cut-up photographs of our faces to create Picasso-inspired self-portraits. We asked, "How far apart are my eyes? Where does my nose fit?"

After drafting many self-portraits, we were ready to start the final acrylic paintings. We sketched our heads, faces, necks and shoulders on canvas, then took our first brush strokes with local artist Ellen McGivney, who helped us mix paint colors to create each child's unique skin tone. We added facial features and other details—a golden medallion, a striped shirt, hair beads in three shades of pink—that tell a story about who we are.

Children reflected on our process during interviews we conducted with each artist. Their words bring a smile and startle us with their refreshing perspectives on color, art, and music. Their words too—step-by-step—how 4- and 5-year-olds created the beautiful self-portraits in this book.

"Art is joy," declares Bevall, one of our young artists. We hope you will read this book with a child and share the joy.

Joan Cech-Stone and Mary Endo
K-J Teachers

How did 4- and 5-year-olds create such extraordinary works of art?

To learn more about the "Portrait of an Artist" expedition, curriculum, and student products, visit the Teaching and Learning Curriculum (K-1) section of our website.
**Art is...**

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<td>Tony</td>
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<td>Carlos</td>
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**How to paint a self-portrait**

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<td>Bryan K.</td>
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<td>Fabio</td>
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<td>Graco</td>
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Art is painting yourself.

My favorite color is dark black because it's like a car.

I like to listen to "Sarah Sponda" when I paint because I like the rat, sat, sat.

What is your favorite color?
Art is joy.
Art is quality work.

My favorite colors are pink and gold because they are such pretty colors together. I like to use pink and golden colors in my art.

I like to listen to "Amazing Grace" when I paint because it sounds really good.

What colors do you like to use together?
Art is a face and a head and legs and eyes and Matisse.

My favorite color is dark blue. I like my portrait because I mixed colors to make my skin brown. I mixed brown and green paint to make my skin color.

I like to listen to “Hip Hop Here We Go” when I paint because it makes me want to dance.

What colors would you mix to make your skin color?
I like art because it's beautiful.

My favorite color is blue because it can be light or dark, but I really like the light shades. When I'm an artist, I like to choose reds and pinks and oranges and blacks.

I like to listen to "Ode to Joy" when I paint because it's my favorite song that doesn't sing.

Can you find the color blue in my portrait?
You draw. You paint.

My favorite color is yellow because it's the color of the sun.

I like to listen to folk music when I paint because it's calm.

Can you find the color yellow in my portrait? Look closely!
You can draw whatever you want to draw.

My favorite colors are blue and red because I saw art on TV at my house and there was blue and red.

I like to listen to "Bruno Mars," my favorite song that I hear on my home TV. I want to draw his face and his whole body.

What do you want to draw?
My favorite color is yellow because I notice a yellow hat that I like.

I like to listen to folk music when I paint. "Amazing Grace" makes me want to try to paint it, and paint Judy Collins—the singer.

What music do you like to listen to when you paint?
How to paint a self-portrait
You need to think about what to do. Make a plan.

My favorite color is pink because it's like my shirt and my skirts.

I like to listen to gentle music when I paint because I like it when it's soft.

What color clothes do you like to wear?
Choose a canvas. Choose a color. Put an easel on the table.

My favorite colors are black and green and grey because those are my choices to put on my canvas.

I like to listen to my favorite song, "Dynamite," when I paint. It makes me want to draw a T. rex!

What do you notice about my shirt?
Look at a photograph of your face.

My favorite colors are blue and yellow because blue and yellow make green—light green and dark green.

I like to listen to the song "Low Bridge" when I paint.

What color do you get when you mix the colors blue and red?
You can look at your face in a mirror.

My favorite color is green.

I like to listen to Chris Brown sing "Superman" when I paint.

Can you find something gold in my portrait?
Get pencils...

My favorite color is light pink.

I like to listen to slow music when I paint. It makes me draw hearts.

*Can you find light pink in my portrait?*
...and a paintbrush.

My favorite color is blue. I like all blues.

I like to listen to fast music when I paint.

*How many shades of blue can you find in my portrait?*
Get a small brush or a big brush.

My favorite color is blue because it's shiny.

I like to listen to "Black is the Color of My True Love's Hair" when I paint because I like the hair part.

What color is your hair?
You put the brush in water.

My favorite color is green because green is to "go" in the car.

I like to listen to slow music when I paint because I need to go slow to not cover my face.

Can you find the color green in my portrait?
Put the brush in the color you want.

I like red, green, orange, black, white, and blue. Blue is the sky. Red is "Stops." Green is trees and grass. Orange is like the Power Ranger Samurai. White is the color of some owls and snow.

When I paint, I like to listen to singing songs like "I'm a Barbie Girl" in the Wii dancing game, Just Dance 2.

How many colors can you find in my portrait?
Then you can start to paint.

My favorite color is pink because I love pink to draw. And I love purple to draw.

I like to listen to “Sleeping Beauty” when I paint because I love to watch it. My favorite song is “I Know You.”

What color are my cheeks in my portrait?
Painting a portrait is painting on the edge and painting a background.

My favorite colors are yellow and purple and green because green is always next to yellow. Green is always yellow's friend. Yellow is purple's friend. They are all 3 friends.

I like to listen to folk music when I paint because some music is beautiful and some music is really great.

Can you find the different shades of pink I used to color my beads?
You have to paint hair carefully so you don’t mix it up with the eyes.

My favorite color is red because I love my cousin and my brother and The Red Balloon.

I like to listen to "The Jerk" when I paint because it’s cool.

Can you find the color red in my portrait?
I like to paint with black to make the hair.

My favorite colors are pink and purple.

I like to listen to Nina Simone when I paint because she sings about the boy she loves in “Black is the Color of My True Love’s Hair.”

What do you notice about my hair?
Do your mouth, and your nose, and your eyes.

My favorite color is a Popsicle color. I like the green Popsicle.

I like to listen to "This Pretty Planet" when I paint because it makes me joyful and cooperative.

What color makes you feel joyful?
Eyes, mouth, hair, ears, shirt, cheeks, eyebrows, eyelashes.

My favorite color is blue. I like blue and dark and light colors.

I like to listen to "What a Wonderful World" when I paint because it sounds beautiful.

What color are my eyes in my portrait?
Put your portrait on the drying rack. You're done!

I like to mix blue and pink. I like to paint grey on my hair.

I like to listen to "Yankee Doodle" when I paint because "Yankee Doodle went to town." I will draw a machine for him to wash his clothes.

What do you notice about my nose in my portrait?
If you don’t find any materials, you can’t paint. You could play instead.

My favorite color is purple because it’s like grapes.

I like to listen to folk music when I paint because I like the singing.

Can you find the color purple in my portrait?
Thank you!

Steven Levy, our Expeditionary Learning class, for launching our instruction with us. This taught us that creating quality portraits takes time, focus, and perseverance.

Portrait artist Kathleen, for showing us the entire artistic process, from, and final products. You encouraged us to be experts, too.

Kristen Norey and the Artful Adventures program at the Museum of Fine Arts (MFA), for taking us on a tour to see the MFA’s famous portraits. Thanks for giving us the opportunity to paint self-portraits with watercolors and oil paints in the Museum studio.

Abbi Ellen McGill, for teaching us how to mix our skin tones with acrylic paint. You gave us the courage to start painting our self-portraits.

Rebecca Leet, for teaching us songs about race, color, and music can make our world a better place.

Tina Jackson, for always being there with her热量.

Rhonda Berkman, for providing us with a non-flurry fill of books about race, art, and music.

Finally, thank you to all who make the studio a special place in which to grow and learn. We will continue to improve in the future!
ART IS PAINTING YOURSELF

The 24 vibrant self-portraits featured in this book were created by Conservatory Lab Charter School preschoolers during a five-month learning expedition in the winter and spring of 2011. "Art is joy," exclaims five-year-old Seoulé. Read this book with a child and share the joy.