

ELINOR WONDERS WHY

EP 155 A Change of Art

By: Adam Ruben

Elinor's Question: How do we use nature to make art?

Logline: When Mr. Lion's art class runs out of paint, Elinor and her friends learn to make art using the colors found in nature.

Curriculum Goals: LS8. Begin to understand that there are many different kinds of living things and how they may be the same or different. (Different plants have different colors.)

ND2. Begin to understand that systems developed in our world often work in similar ways to systems found in the natural world. (Elinor and her friends learn that plants have an array of colors, just as plants have an array of colors.)

SEPl a. Demonstrate curiosity about the greater world outside of their environment. (Elinor and her friends wonder which plants and other natural items can be used for their art.)

SEP6a. Use background knowledge, experiences, and data to construct reasonable explanations and theories of natural phenomena. (Ari theorizes, from having stained his clothes in the past, that some of the most dramatic colors will come from deeply colored blackberries.)

Main Characters: Elinor, Olive, Ari, Mr. Lion

Non-Speaking Characters: Children in art class (Goat Twins, Tito Mouse, Camilla Dromedary, Sally Beaver, Gael Lynx, and others)

Backgrounds - Forest clearing near the school

Props - Paints, easels, blade of grass, handful of grass, fruit bowl, dandelion, glue, blackberry, paintings, paint bottles, paint palettes, Olive's notebook and crayon, smocks

OUTLINE: October 28, 2019

FIRST DRAFT: November 26, 2019

SECOND DRAFT: December 16, 2019

FINAL DRAFT: January 9, 2020

1. EXT. FOREST CLEARING - DAY

Open on a wide shot of a forest clearing, with ELINOR, ARI, OLIVE, and several of their classmates standing behind easels arranged in a semicircle. The kids all wear pin-on smocks or backwards old dress shirts to protect their clothes from the paint.

In the center of the circle is MR. LION, the fun, energetic, expressive art teacher wearing a smock. He stands at his own easel, holding a paintbrush aloft, squinting at the easel as he plans his next brush stroke. We can't see his easel, but we can see that he's looking at a still-life bowl of fruit on a small table. With his fluffy mane, he even looks a bit like Bob Ross. *

We zoom in for a bit, then see a much closer shot of Mr. Lion, weighing his options for what to paint next.

1 MR. LION 1
Hmmm...

The next shot pans over the kids watching Mr. Lion in anticipation. He has really captivated them.

ANGLE ON: Mr. Lion gets a look of determination in his eyes, then boldly slashes a few strokes across his canvas. He smiles, satisfied, then stands next to the canvas so that he's not blocking the kids from seeing it.

2 MR. LION (CONT'D) 2
Ta-da!

ANGLE ON: We see that Mr. Lion has painted a perfect representation of the still life fruit bowl.

<SFX: WOW, COOL, AMAZING WALLA> The kids applaud <SFX: applause> their approval. *

3 MR. LION (CONT'D) 3
And THAT'S the joy of painting!

ANGLE ON: The kids look impressed.

4 ELINOR 4
That's great, Mr. Lion!

5 OLIVE 5
Yeah, your painting looks just like the bowl of fruit!

6 ARI 6
Mmm. It looks so real, it's making me hungry! *
*

Olive <SFX: GIGGLES>.

*

7 ARI (CONT'D) 7
 (shrugging)
 What? I'm a fruit bat.

8 MR. LION 8
 Thanks, kids. And now, it's your
 turn to paint!

*

*

9 ELINOR 9
 Are we going to paint the bowl of
 fruit, Mr. Lion?

*

*

ANGLE ON: Mr. Lion looking passionate -- he really cares
 about the spirit of art.

10 MR. LION 10
 You can. Or you can paint whatever
 you want! Art isn't about rules --
 it's a way to show your feelings
 about what you want to paint.

*

*

*

ANGLE ON: Elinor frowns.

11 ELINOR 11
 But I don't know what I want to
 paint.

He dances around and indicates/wiggles the body parts as he
 mentions them.

12 MR. LION 12
 You will! Just think about
 something you love, and let your
 heart tell your brain, then let
 your brain tell your fingers, then
 let your fingers pick up a
 paintbrush and create something
 wonderful!

The kids giggle at his antics. Elinor looks reassured. The
 kids start to move toward their easels, then stop when Mr.
 Lion holds up his hands.

*

13 MR. LION (CONT'D) 13
 But before you start! The most
 important thing of all, something
 you cannot forget! (pause) You need
 paint. Everyone come take some from
 the table in the middle.

The class picks up their empty paint palettes and moves
 toward the middle table.

ANGLE ON: The kids surround the table, each helping themselves to a dollop of each color from squirt bottles. <SFX: excited talking as everyone prepares to paint>. Elinor seems to be taking a larger pile of green paint than any other color.

14	OLIVE	14	
	That's a lot of green paint, Elinor.		
15	ELINOR	15	
	Yup! Mr. Lion said to paint something we love, so I'm going to paint nature.		
	The kids start walking back to their easels.		*
17	ELINOR (CONT'D)	17	
	I'm going to paint the trees, and the bushes, and the leaves, and the grass...		* * *
18	ARI	18	*
	(looking around) Yup, you're definitely going to need a lot of green.		* * *
19	OLIVE	19	*
	What about you, Ari?		
20	ARI	20	
	Well, I love fruit, so that's what I want to paint. But...Mr. Lion already painted that bowl of fruit.		* * *
21	ELINOR	21	
	I think that's okay, Ari. You can paint something even if someone else already did.		* * *
22	OLIVE	22	
	I'm glad you said that, Elinor. Because I love nature, too, and I also want to paint the forest.		* *
23	ELINOR	23	*
	That's great! We can both be nature painters!		* *
24	OLIVE	24	*
	Awesome!		*

25	ARI	25	*
	(striking a determined pose)		*
	It's time...to make art!		*

CROSSFADE TO:

2. EXT. FOREST CLEARING - A FEW MINUTES LATER

The kids stand back at their easels, and we see that the whole class is excitedly working away, though we don't yet see what's on their easels. Mr. Lion walks behind the kids, reacting to their paintings in progress.

26	MR. LION	26	*
	Wow, Sally, look at that sunrise!		*
	... Javier, I love those melting clocks, how unusual! ... Beautiful work, Ari! That apple looks tasty enough to eat, but I'm not going to, because it's a painting.		*

ANGLE ON: Elinor and Olive paint side by side, but with their easels angled slightly so that they can't see what the other is working on. Olive is a virtuoso, painting with a brush in her trunk as it twists around.

27	ELINOR	27	*
	(singing to herself as she paints)		*
	I'm painting a scene. I'm using the green. And now some blue. (to Olive) How 'bout you?		

Olive giggles. Elinor turns her canvas around so that Olive can see it: She has painted a kid-quality landscape with green grass, trees, and a blue sky with a yellow sun. It's clearly unfinished, though, with a large portion of one side unpainted.

ELINOR (CONT'D)	*
What do you think, Olive?	*

28	OLIVE	28	*
	That's really nice, Elinor!		

29	ELINOR	29	*
	Mr. Lion is right -- it's so fun to paint what you love.		

She moves slightly so that she can see Olive's canvas, then gives a little gasp.

ANGLE ON: We see Olive's canvas. She's still working on it, but what she's painted so far looks like a higher-resolution version of Elinor's painting. The tree trunks look more defined, individual branches are visible, the clouds have texture.

30 ELINOR (CONT'D) 30
Olive, that's beautiful!

31 OLIVE 31
(alternating squinting at
her painting and looking
above/beyond the canvas)
Thanks! I'm trying to paint all of
the things I notice in nature. *

She leans back for a moment and assesses her canvas.

32 OLIVE (CONT'D) 32
Hmm. Needs more birds. *

With a flourish of her trunk, she expertly adds a few birds
to the sky. *

33 ELINOR 33
Your painting is so good. It looks
...real. *

34 OLIVE 34
(with a shrug)
You think so? Thanks, Elinor! *

Olive keeps painting happily. *

ANGLE ON: Elinor looks back at her own painting, a little
discouraged. *

ELINOR
(sighs)
I wish mine looked real, too. *

Ari leans in. *

35 ARI 35
It doesn't have to look real,
Elinor! *

He holds up his canvas. In addition to the bowl of fruit, he
has now painted a few robots. *

ARI (CONT'D)
See? I've added some robots to my
painting. *

He returns to working on his painting.

36 ARI (CONT'D)
 (robot voice, as he
 paints)
 ROBOTS EATING FRUIT. DOES NOT
 COMPUTE.

ANGLE ON: Elinor still looks a little discouraged. Mr. Lion walks over, having heard Elinor's disappointment.

38 MR. LION
Elinor, there isn't a "good" or
"bad" way to make art. Art is just
your own way of showing how you
feel about what you're painting.

Elinor looks reassured.

39 ELINOR
Thanks, Mr. Lion. Okay, I'm going
to make my painting really show how
much I love nature!

ANGLE ON a closer shot of Elinor; she looks determined. She touches her brush to her palette.

40 ELINOR (CONT'D)
(singing again)
I'm painting a scene. I'm using the
green.

When she says the word "green," she puts the brush to her canvas, attempting to add leaves to a bare tree trunk -- but nothing comes off of her brush.

41 ELINOR (CONT'D)
 Hmm.

She picks up her palette, and we can see that she's out of green paint (i.e., it's in its usual spot in a rainbow of paint blobs, but there's only a tiny smidgen left on the palette).

42 ELINOR (CONT'D)
Uh-oh. I'm out of green paint.

ANGLE ON: Elinor carries her palette to the table where Mr. Lion keeps the paint bottles. She picks up the green paint bottle and tries to squeeze a dollop onto her palette.

43 ELINOR (CONT'D)
(trying her song again)
I'm getting more green...

On the word "green," she gives the bottle a squeeze, but
nothing comes out. *

44 ELINOR (CONT'D) 44 *
I'm getting more...green! *

This time, on the word "green," she gives the bottle an extra
hard squeeze. It makes a <SFX: spluttering bottle sound>, but
again nothing comes out. *

45 ELINOR (CONT'D) 45 *
Hmmm...we're out of green paint. *

Ari comes up behind her, carrying his own palette. *

46 ARI 46 *
Elinor, can you please hand me the
blue paint? I think my fruit-and-
robot picture needs a blue dragon. *

Elinor picks up the bottle of blue paint, but before she
hands it to Ari, she realizes it's also light and gives it a
test squeeze. *

47 ELINOR 47 *
It looks like we're out of blue
paint, too. *

48 ARI 48 *
We're OUT? *

Olive approaches with her palette. *

49 OLIVE 49 *
What about brown? I need more brown
paint for the tree trunks. *

Elinor picks up the bottle of brown paint and tries to
squeeze it onto Olive's palette. *

50 OLIVE (CONT'D) 50 *
There's no more brown paint? *

A few more kids start to show up, hoping to add paint to
their palettes but finding none. <WALLA: hey, we're out of
paint/what's going on?/but I need more red/etc.> *

Mr. Lion approaches, and Ari steps out to talk to him. *

51 ARI 51 *
Mr. Lion? It looks like we're out
of paint. Do you have more? *

Elinor hands a bottle to Mr. Lion, and he shakes and squeezes it himself. Nothing comes out.

52 MR. LION 52 *
 Hmm...

He grabs bottle after bottle, squeezing each. *

53 MR. LION (CONT'D) 53 *
 Oh no! I thought I had brought
 enough paint, but it looks like we
 ran out. *

54 SALLY 54 *
 (holding up an unfinished
 painting of a tree) *
 But how am I going to finish my
 painting of my favorite tree? *

55 TITO 55 *
 (holding up a painting of
 an adult female mouse in
 the pose of Whistler's
 mother) *
 And how am I going to finish
 painting my mom? *

57 ELINOR 57 *
 Now what do we do? It's an art
 emergency! *

58 ARI 58 *
 (overly dramatic)
 It's an art-mergency! *

56 MR. LION 56 *
 I'm so sorry, kids. We'll have to
 wait until next week to finish your
 paintings. I'll be sure to bring
 more paint then. *

The kids walk sadly back to their easels. *

ELINOR *
 Aw. I really wanted to finish my
 nature painting. *

OLIVE *
 Me too. *

ARI *
 Yeah, now we'll have to wait a
 whole week. *

He again moves his arms robotically.

*

ARI (CONT'D)
(robot voice)
CANNOT PAINT BLUE DRAGON. VERY SAD.
BEEP BOOP BEEP BOOP...

*
*
*
*

His silly robot motions intensify, and he gets his whole body into the beep boops. This distracts him from where he's walking, and he trips over an easel and falls into the grass.

*
*
*

59 ARI (CONT'D) 59
I'm okay, I'm okay.

Elinor <SFX: GIGGLES> at his antics and helps him stand and brush off his smock, but then she notices that some of the green stains on his white smock aren't brushing off.

*

60 ELINOR 60
Huh. Ari, your smock has green stains on it.

61 ARI 61
(noticing the stains)
Sure. That's what it's for -- to keep my clothes from getting paint on them!

*
*

62 OLIVE 62
But these stains weren't here a minute ago.

*
*
*

The kids look around for a moment, and then Elinor looks closely at Ari's smock. She picks a broken blade of grass off of it and holds the grass up. CU: We can see that it's vibrant green.

*
*
*

65 ELINOR 65
I don't think these stains came from the paint. I think they're from the grass.

*
*
*

ANGLE ON: Olive examines the stain, too.

66 OLIVE 66
You mean like the stains you get on your pants sometimes when you're playing in the grass?

67 ELINOR 67
Yes. That is SO INTERESTING.

*

Elinor has an idea.

68	ELINOR (CONT'D)	68	*
	I wonder...		*
	Elinor rubs the grass onto a blank part of her canvas.		*
69	ELINOR (CONT'D)	69	*
	Wow, look! The green from the grass		*
	gets on my canvas.		*
70	OLIVE	70	*
	It's like you're painting with it.		*
	Ari picks up a few grass shoots and uses the green to start		*
	shading an otherwise unfinished pear in the fruit bowl.		*
71	ARI	71	*
	Whoa, cool!		*
72	OLIVE	72	*
	<Gasp!> Maybe we can use it to		*
	finish our paintings!		*
73	ELINOR	73	*
	We can use grass to paint the		*
	grass!		*
	ARI		*
	Yeah, but that only gives us green.		*
	How do we paint the other colors?		*
	Elinor looks around.		*
74	ELINOR	74	*
	Hmm...I wonder what else we can use		*
	to paint with around here. (beat)		*
	We need more observations!		*
	CROSSFADE TO:		*
	3. EXT. FOREST - A FEW MINUTES LATER		*
	Elinor, Olive, and Ari explore the edges of the forest, which		*
	is near the painting area. Elinor carries her canvas with		*
	her.		*
	Olive finds a flower with yellow petals on the forest floor,		*
	and she picks it up.		*
75	OLIVE	75	*
	Look! Maybe we can use the petals		*
	from this flower to make yellow.		*

She hands the flower to Elinor, who rubs a petal against her canvas, leaving a faint streak of yellow in the sky.

ELINOR

That works!

Ari pulls two handfuls of dirt from the ground.

76

ARI

(holding up one handful)

This dirt is brown...(he holds up the other handful)...and this dirt is more like orange.

76

Elinor takes a smidgen of dirt from each hand and wipes them on her canvas to make a tree trunk and orange leaves.

ELINOR

That works, too!

Elinor picks up a small, white rock.

77

ELINOR (CONT'D)

And this rock is like chalk -- we could use this for white!

77

She adds some white highlights to her painting.

78

OLIVE

Looks like the rock works too.

78

79

ARI

We can paint with nature!

79

80

ELINOR

Let's go tell Mr. Lion!

80

4. EXT. FOREST CLEARING - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Elinor, Olive, and Ari run over to Mr. Lion, carrying multicolored plants, rocks, dirt, and berries. They're so excited!

83

ELINOR

Mr. Lion! Guess what! We can finish our paintings after all!

83

84

ARI

(pointing to the grass stain still on his smock)
(MORE)

84

ARI (CONT'D)

I had a grass stain on my smock,
and Elinor thought that maybe we
could paint with colors from
nature!

*
*
*
*

85

OLIVE

85

(indicating the objects in
their hands)

We found all kinds of colorful
plants and nature things. Maybe
some of them will work.

*
*
*
*
*

87

MR. LION

87

What a great idea, kids! You're
right -- there are no rules in
art. Not even that you have to use
paint.

*
*
*
*

ELINOR

We can use nature to paint nature!

*
*

ARI

Wait. I still need blue for my
dragon.

*
*
*

Ari looks off-camera.

*

88

ARI (CONT'D)

88

<GASP!> I'll be right back.

He rushes away.

89

MR. LION

89

Another inspiration!

Over near the paint station, Ari picks up a blueberry from
the still life fruit bowl, then rushes back.

*

90

ARI

90

Mr. Lion, can I use this blueberry?

*

91

MR. LION

91

Sure, but what for?

96

ARI

96

Maybe I can use it to paint my blue
dragon.

*
*
*

97

MR. LION

97

Wonderful! Let's use all the colors
of nature.

*
*

Mr. Lion leads a song as the kids experiment with plants and soil on their paintings. Scenes during the song include: *

Kids run excitedly from plant to plant.

Olive tries plants one at a time, then records the results in her notebook.

Elinor uses grass to spread more green across her canvas.

Tito Mouse hauls a giant (to him) bundle of flowers to his canvas. *

The Goat Twins paint pictures of each other in unison.

Sally Beaver thinks while chewing on the back of her paintbrush, then realizes she's shredded it. *

Mr. Lion dances; his dancing looks like meditative tai chi.

SONG:

MR. LION: The world is full of
colors that can all be found
Hanging from the trees or growing
in the ground.
Put down your pen and pencil,
'cause here's the greatest part:
Nature is a work of art!

ELINOR: A berry's blue -- *
OLIVE: The grass is green --
ARI: The dirt is brown --
MR. LION: And hello!
The flowers all around are orange,
pink, and yellow.

ELINOR: With berries in your
painting, instead of in a tart,
Nature is a work of art!

ARI: You don't always need to buy
things in stores.
ELINOR: You might find them if you
just look outdoors.
OLIVE: The world is full of colors, *
so pick one up and start. *
ELINOR, OLIVE, AND ARI: Nature is a *
work of art!

MR. LION (slowly, operatically):
You see it all around you; you feel
it in your heaaaaaart!

(MORE)

ALL (happily shouting, resuming tempo): Nature is a work of art!

ANGLE ON: Elinor considers her canvas; Mr. Lion stands behind her. She's holding a dandelion head and weighing how to represent it in her painting. She's almost done, but not quite.

Mr. Lion comes up behind her.

He dramatically reveals that he's holding a bottle of white glue.

He hands Elinor the bottle. She smiles, then puts a dab of glue on her canvas and attaches the dandelion head as a bright, yellow sun in the sky. It looks great!

Elinor steps back to look at her work. Olive and Ari come over to look at it as well.

103 ARI 103

The dandelion is the sun -- what a
cool idea!

104 ELINOR 104

I love how my painting turned out.
Like you said, Mr. Lion, it shows
how much I love nature -- because
it's beautiful, and interesting,
and full of surprises.

105 MR. LION 105
See? I told you not to worry,
Elinor. Art isn't about right or
wrong, it's just a way share your
feelings and ideas with others. *

106 ELINOR 106
Nature makes it easy to share my
feelings -- it's so colorful! *

ARI
(robot voice, holding up
his painting and waving
it as though he's making
the robots talk) *
MY ROBOTS AGREE. BEEP BOOP BEEP *
BOOP. *

Elinor, Olive, and Mr. Lion laugh, and we start to zoom out. *

AS WE ZOOM OUT: Ari sticks two berries to be the robot's eyes
-- Olive then grabs a few flowers and glues them below the
tree in her painting, then we see the whole scene, with kids
painting, chatting, and having a good time, all painting with
plants and dirt. *

FADE OUT, THE END.