

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 green 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.)

SEP1a. 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

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.

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

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

2 MR. LION (CONT'D) 2

The kids applaud <SFX: applause> their approval.

ANGLE ON: The kids look impressed.

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

Olive <SFX: GIGGLES>

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

8 MR. LION 8
Thanks, kids. This is what you'll
all be doing today.

9 ELINOR 9
Painting a picture of the bowl of
fruit?

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

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

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 stops 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.

16	ARI	16
	(looking around)	
	Nature does have a lot of green.	

17 ELINOR 17
I'm going to paint the forest.

The kids start walking back to their easels.

18 OLIVE 18
What about you, Ari?

19 ARI 19

Well, the thing I want to paint
most ... is the bowl of fruit. But
Mr. Lion already painted it.

20 ELINOR 20

That's okay! There can be more than
one painting of the same thing.

21 OLIVE 21

I'm glad you said that, Elinor.
Because I love nature, too, and I'm
also going to paint the forest.

22 ELINOR 22
 (a little unsure how to
 respond)
Oh! Okay.

CROSSFADE TO:

28 OLIVE 28

Thanks! I'm trying to paint all of
the details in nature.

She leans back for a moment and assesses her canvas.

29 OLIVE (CONT'D) 29

Needs more birds.

With a double flourish of the brushes in her hand and trunk,
she expertly adds a few birds to the sky.

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

30 ELINOR 30

Your painting is so good. It looks
...real.

31 OLIVE 31

I guess.

Olive keeps painting happily. Ari leans in, holding his
paintbrush.

32 ARI 32

It doesn't have to look real,
Elinor! In fact, when I'm done
painting the bowl of fruit, I might
add a few robots.

33 ELINOR 33

I know. But still.

Mr. Lion walks over, having heard Elinor's disappointment.

34 MR. LION 34

Art isn't "good" or "bad" -- it's
your own way of showing how much
you love what you're painting.

Elinor looks reassured.

35 ELINOR 35

Thanks, Mr. Lion. Okay, I need 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.

36 ELINOR (CONT'D) 36
(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.

37 ELINOR (CONT'D) 37
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).

38 ELINOR (CONT'D) 38
Uh-oh.

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.

39 ELINOR (CONT'D) 39
(trying her song again)
I'm using the...green!

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

Ari comes up behind her, carrying his own palette.

40 ARI 40
Elinor, can I please have the green next? I added a bunch of robots to my fruit picture, but now it needs a dragon.

41 ELINOR 41
Uhhh... there's no more green paint in this bottle.

42 ARI 42
Mr. Lion? Is there any more green paint?

Mr. Lion approaches. A couple other kids approach as well, including Olive -- they're also out of green. Elinor hands the bottle to Mr. Lion, and he shakes and squeezes it himself. Nothing comes out.

43 MR. LION 43
It looks like we're fresh out of
green. Sorry, Ari!

44 ELINOR 44
Uh-oh. It's an art emergency!

45 ARI 45
(overly dramatic)
An art-mergency!

When he says this, he casts his hands skyward and pretends to faint, falling into the grass.

46 ARI (CONT'D) 46
I'm okay, I'm okay.

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

47 ELINOR 47
Huh. Ari, your smock has green
stains on it.

48 ARI 48
(noticing the stains)
Sure. That's what it's for -- to
keep my clothes clean!

49 ELINOR 49
But these stains aren't paint.

She picks a broken blade of grass off of Ari's smock and holds it up. CU: We can see that it's vibrant green.

50 ELINOR (CONT'D) 50
They're from the grass.

ANGLE ON: Olive examines the stain, too.

51 OLIVE 51
You mean like the stains you get on
your pants sometimes when you're
playing in the grass?

52 ELINOR 52
Yes.

Elinor has an idea.

53 ELINOR (CONT'D) 53
That is SO INTERESTING. Come on, I
have an idea to solve our paint
problem.

Elinor runs off.

54 ARI 54

I don't understand. What does my
messy smock have to do with paint?

55 MR. LION 55
I think Elinor just had what both
artists and scientists call an
inspiration.

CROSSFADE TO:

3. EXT. FOREST CLEARING - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Elinor stands at her canvas, holding a handful of grass.

56 ELINOR 56
Plants have beautiful colors,
right?

57 OLIVE 57
Right.

58 ELINOR 58

And we saw on Ari's smock that
sometimes those colors can be wiped
onto other things, right?

ARI

Right.

60 ELINOR 60
Then maybe we can take the green
from the grass...

She scrubs her handful of grass onto the spot where she had previously tried to paint green leaves. A faint green stain appears there.

61 ELINOR (CONT'D) 61
...and put it into a painting!

<SFX: COOL, NEAT WALLA>

62 MR. LION 62
What a creative idea: using nature
to paint nature!

Ari gasps.

63 ARI 63
<GASP!> I'll be right back.

He rushes away.

64 MR. LION 64
Another inspiration!

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

65 ARI 65
Mr. Lion, can I use this
blackberry?

66 MR. LION 66
Sure, but what for?

67 ARI 67
Well, one time I sat on a berry by
mistake, and it stained my pants.

68 OLIVE 68
(completing his thought)
So maybe you can use fruit to paint
fruit!

69 ARI 69
Or...

Ari makes a few motions on his canvas with the blackberry,
then steps back.

ANGLE ON: We see the canvas, where Ari has used the berry to
draw a wide-mouthed purple dragon set to devour the fruit
bowl.

70 ARI (CONT'D) 70
I can use fruit to paint a dragon!

71 MR. LION 71
Very clever Ari! You know, back
before you could buy paint in a
bottle, cave dwellers used to paint
using nature!

A THOUGHT BUBBLE appears next to Mr. Lion, illustrating the
following as he says it.

72 MR. LION (CONT'D) 72
They'd crush up rocks and charcoal
to make pictures inside their
caves, and we know this because
some of the pictures are still
there, thousands of years later.

The THOUGHT BUBBLE disappears.

73 ELINOR 73
We could paint with dirt!

74 ARI 74
Or beets!

75 ELINOR 75
Or flower petals!

76 OLIVE 76
I need to write these down.

She takes out her ever-present notebook and crayon and starts to write. 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) flower to his canvas.

The Goat Twins paint pictures of each other in unison.

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 red --
OLIVE: The grass is green --
ARI: The dirt is brown --
MR. LION: And hello!
(MORE)

OLIVE (CONT'D)

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: We'll figure out the colors
and write them in a chart.

ELINOR AND ARI: Nature is a work of
art!

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

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

END SONG.

ANGLE ON: The class smiles at their paintings; they're all
pleased with how they turned out.

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

77	ELINOR	77
	It just needs one more thing. I want to add a real-looking dandelion.	

78	MR. LION	78
	Then maybe you don't need paint. And maybe you don't need colors from nature, either. Maybe what you need -- is glue!	

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. It looks
great!

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

79	OLIVE	79
	Wow. A picture OF nature, BY nature, IN nature, made WITH nature.	
80	ARI	80
	I especially love the dandelion - nice touch.	
81	MR. LION	81
	See? I told you not to worry about how your painting would turn out, Elinor. You're a natural!	

They laugh as we zoom out and see the whole scene, with kids painting, chatting, and having a good time, some using paintbrushes and others using plants.

FADE OUT, THE END.