

WEEK 5

**Art Easel/Art Studio: Action Painting**

Children use a variety of tools to paint together on large cardboard and boxes.

<b>Big Idea</b>	Human beings are a kind of animal.
<b>Guiding Question</b>	How do animals move? How do we move?
<b>Vocabulary</b>	<p><b>action:</b> movement</p> <p><b>dab:</b> to press lightly</p> <p><b>drip:</b> to flow downward in drops</p> <p><b>splat:</b> to fall or drop down fast</p> <p><b>swirl:</b> to spin or twirl around</p>
<b>Materials and Preparation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>The Lion and The Little Red Bird</i>, Elisa Kleven Flag pages 27-28 (“Lion, Lion,’ the bird chirped, delighted.”).</li> <li>● a selection of large cardboard boxes Break down a few of the boxes to create large pieces of cardboard.</li> <li>● tempera paints in a few colors, in containers</li> <li>● tempera paint sticks (optional, as an option in addition to tempera)</li> <li>● eye droppers and spoons, to mix/drip paint</li> <li>● clear plastic or glass containers</li> <li>● a variety of tools to use for painting, such as paint brushes, potato mashers, textured rolling pins, small paint rollers, dish brushes, toothbrushes, small toy vehicles, cotton balls, wine corks, crumpled tin foil, eye droppers</li> <li>● plastic spoons, and/or popsicle sticks, for mixing paint</li> <li>● small trays or plates, for mixing paint</li> <li>● covers for paint containers (lids, aluminum foil, plastic wrap)</li> <li>● smocks</li> <li>● dropcloth, butcher paper, or newspapers, to protect the floor</li> <li>● Action Painting Artists Resource</li> </ul> <p>Set up in an open space between the easel and art studio table and make room for two to four children working together. Use the table to set up the paints and tools needed. Protect the floor with a drop cloth or newspaper.</p>

	<p>See the Action Painting Artists Resource for examples of setup.</p> <p>Fill a few small containers with paint. Place plastic spoons and trays for mixing colors on the table or floor, along with tools to paint with. Display the Action Painting Artists Resource nearby so children can reference the work of contemporary artists for inspiration.</p> <p>Bring the Action Painting Artists Resource, some painting tools, a container of paint, and a piece of cardboard to the Intro to Centers meeting. If possible, gather children in the Art Easel/Art Studio once it is set up for Action Painting.</p>
<p><b>Intro to Centers</b></p>	<p><i>In The Lion and the Little Red Bird, the bird discovers that the lion is using its tail to paint the wall of the cave.</i></p> <p>Show the flagged pages. Read the first several lines of text, ending with "...chirping on a berry bush."</p> <p><i>This week you will play with paint, mixing colors together and using new tools to paint with.</i></p> <p>Refer to the Action Painting Artists Resource.</p> <p><i>First, let's look at artwork by a Japanese artist named Kazuo Shiraga. Here's a picture of Kazuo making his painting.</i></p> <p>Show photographs of Kazuo at work and read the short description.</p> <p><i>Here is one of Kazuo's paintings.</i></p> <p>Show the painting, 'Unitited (1972)'. Ask the questions below, pausing after each one to invite children to respond.</p> <p><i>What colors do you see?</i></p> <p><i>What does the painting remind you of?</i></p> <p><i>How do the colors make you feel?</i></p> <p><i>How do you think the artist made this painting?</i></p> <p><i>What do you notice about the way he is using his body?</i></p> <p>Guide children to notice the actions that Kazuo makes with his body, moving his arms and legs, in big movements.</p> <p><i>An <b>action</b> is a movement. In Action Paintings artists use their body to move the paint around on their canvas.</i></p> <p><i>We have combined the Art Easel and the Art Studio so you have space to try some Action Painting, like Kazuo.</i></p> <p><i>You will paint together on big pieces of cardboard.</i></p> <p>Show a piece of cardboard, and then the paint.</p> <p><i>You can decide which colors to use, and mix the paint on a tray. I might mix green and white. What colors would you like to try mixing together?</i></p>



	<p>Harvest a few responses.</p> <p><i>Ok, you can mix _____ and _____, and I can mix green and white. We can both add our ideas to our action painting.</i></p> <p>Model using a spoon to scoop some paint onto the tray. <i>Now I'll choose a tool to paint with. We have some interesting choices!</i></p> <p>Show an array of tools. <i>You might try using this cotton ball to <b>dab</b> paint onto the cardboard. You might also <b>swirl</b> the paint to see what happens.</i></p> <p>Model dabbing and swirling, as well as <b>dripping</b> and <b>swirling</b>. <i>Let's see what you create together in your action paintings!</i></p>
<p><b>During Centers</b></p>	<p>Engage children in looking through the Action Painting Artists Resource to get ideas for paintings. Provide descriptive language to support children's exploration.</p> <p>Describe children's actions as they paint, naming the different movements and approaches (e.g. dabbing, swirling, dripping). Invite children to describe their actions. Support children to select materials and use actions such as dripping, stamping, and rolling to make a collaborative artwork.</p> <p>Children can choose to mix paint on a tray, or to apply paint directly to the cardboard and mix it in place.</p> <p>Talk with the children about their work, the materials they choose, and why. Encourage all modes of expression.</p> <p>Support children to navigate sharing the space and encourage children to share strategies and to collaborate with each other.</p> <p>Take photos and video documentation of children's action painting.</p>
<p><b>Differentiation ideas</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● For children with sensory sensitivities, offer tempera paint sticks as an alternative medium to apply paint.</li> <li>● Some children might prefer to work on an individual painting. These individual works of art could then be put together at the end of the activity to create a collaborative artwork.</li> <li>● For children who paint seated, place the cardboard on the table or attached to an easel.</li> <li>● To create a defined space to work on this project, children can explore action painting by putting a piece of paper inside of a box cover and painting on it.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Offer a broad range of painting tools, encouraging children to select materials that appeal to them and that work with their individual preferences and abilities.</li> </ul>
<b>Facilitation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What tools will you paint with? Why did you choose this?</li> <li>● How did you create this color/these colors?</li> <li>● How are you moving your body as you paint?</li> <li>● How does it feel to paint with your whole body?</li> <li>● How are you collaborating to create an action painting?</li> <li>● How are you inspired by others' ideas?</li> </ul>
<b>Extension</b>	Invite children to tell stories about their action paintings.
<b>Standards</b>	<p><b>SEL7.</b> The child will demonstrate the ability to communicate with others in a variety of ways.</p> <p><b>SEL8.</b> The child will engage socially, and build relationships with other children and with adults.</p> <p><b>APL4.</b> The child will demonstrate creativity in thinking and use of materials.</p> <p><b>RI.PreK.7.</b> With prompting and support, describe important details from an illustration or photograph.</p>

**Image citations**

action: Drew Dizzy Graham on Unsplash  
dab: photo by Louisa Penfold  
drip: photo by Megina Baker  
Splat: photo by Megina Baker  
swirl: photo by Sarah Richardson

U2 W 5-6

## Art Easel/Art Studio: Action Painting

### *Facilitation prompts:*

- What tools will you paint with? Why did you choose this?
- How did you create this color/these colors?
- How are you moving your body as you paint?
- How does it feel to paint with your whole body?
- How are you collaborating to create an action painting?
- How are you inspired by others' ideas?



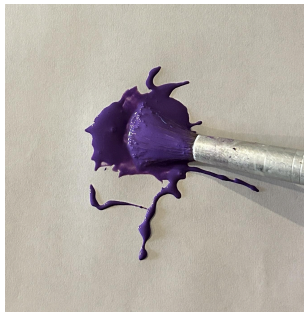
action



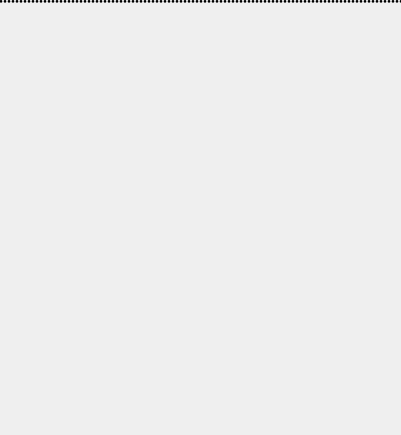
dab



drip



splat



swirl

### *Children are learning to...*

- communicate and build relationships.
- use materials creatively to express their ideas in their action painting.
- describe important details from an illustration or photograph.

Centers U3 W5

## Art Easel/Art Studio: Action Painting Artists Resource

Learn about some contemporary artists who engage in action painting.

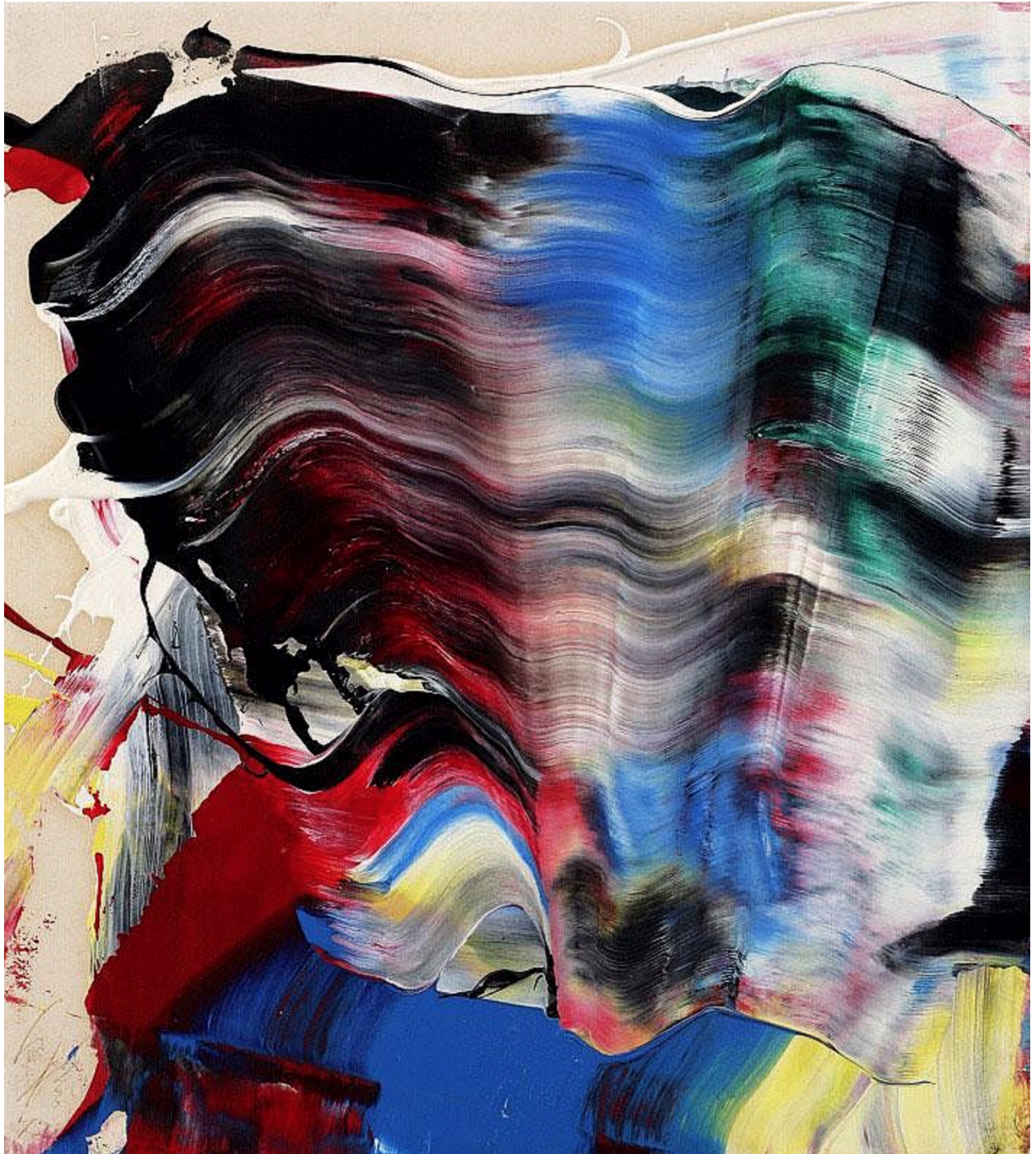
### Artist 1: Kazuo Shiraga



Left: Image from Wikiart.org. Right: A photo of Kazuo Shiraga, whitestone-gallery.com

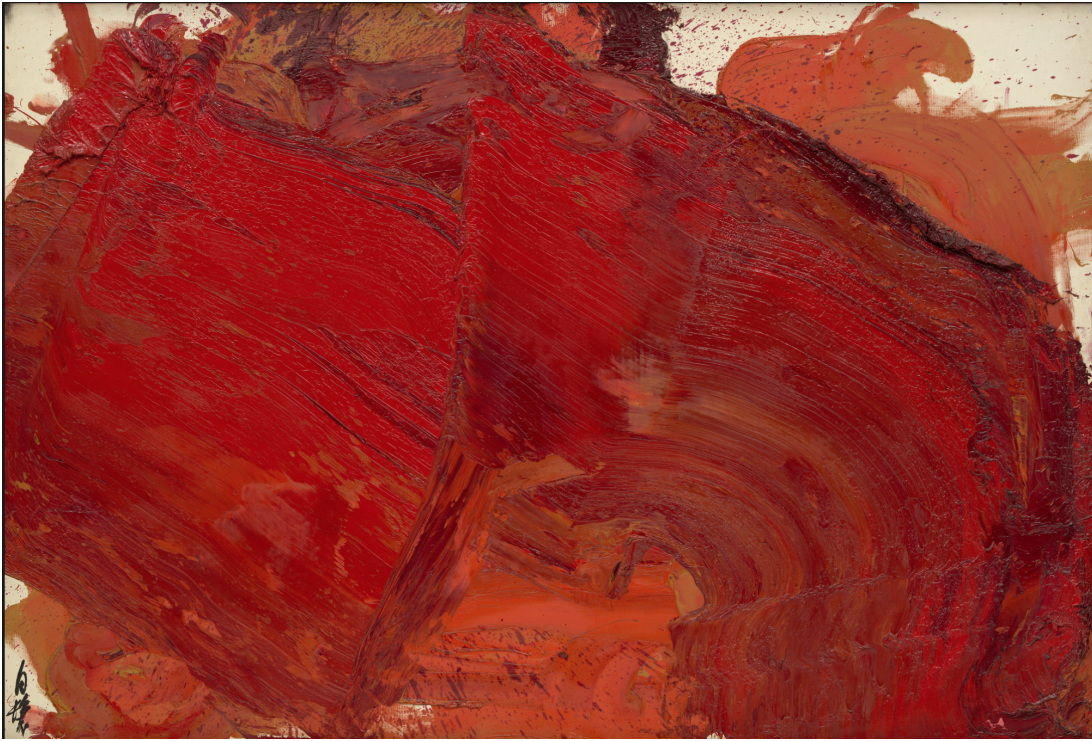
This is Kazuo Shiraga, a Japanese artist who used his feet to make paintings. He would move his feet to make the paint drip, swirl, and splat paint in different ways to make big, colorful artwork.





Kazuo Shiraga. *Untitled*. 1972.





Kazuo Shiraga. *Untitled*. 1964. MoMA Collection



Kazuo Shiraga. *Untitled*. 1980. Image: Whitestone Gallery.



## Artist 2: Cicely Carew



Cicely Carew in her art studio

This is Cicely Carew. She is an artist who lives in Boston. She loves to make big and colorful paintings. Cicely thinks that making and looking at art is a great way to help people feel joy and freedom.

Read more about Cicely in [this article](#) and by looking at her [website](#).



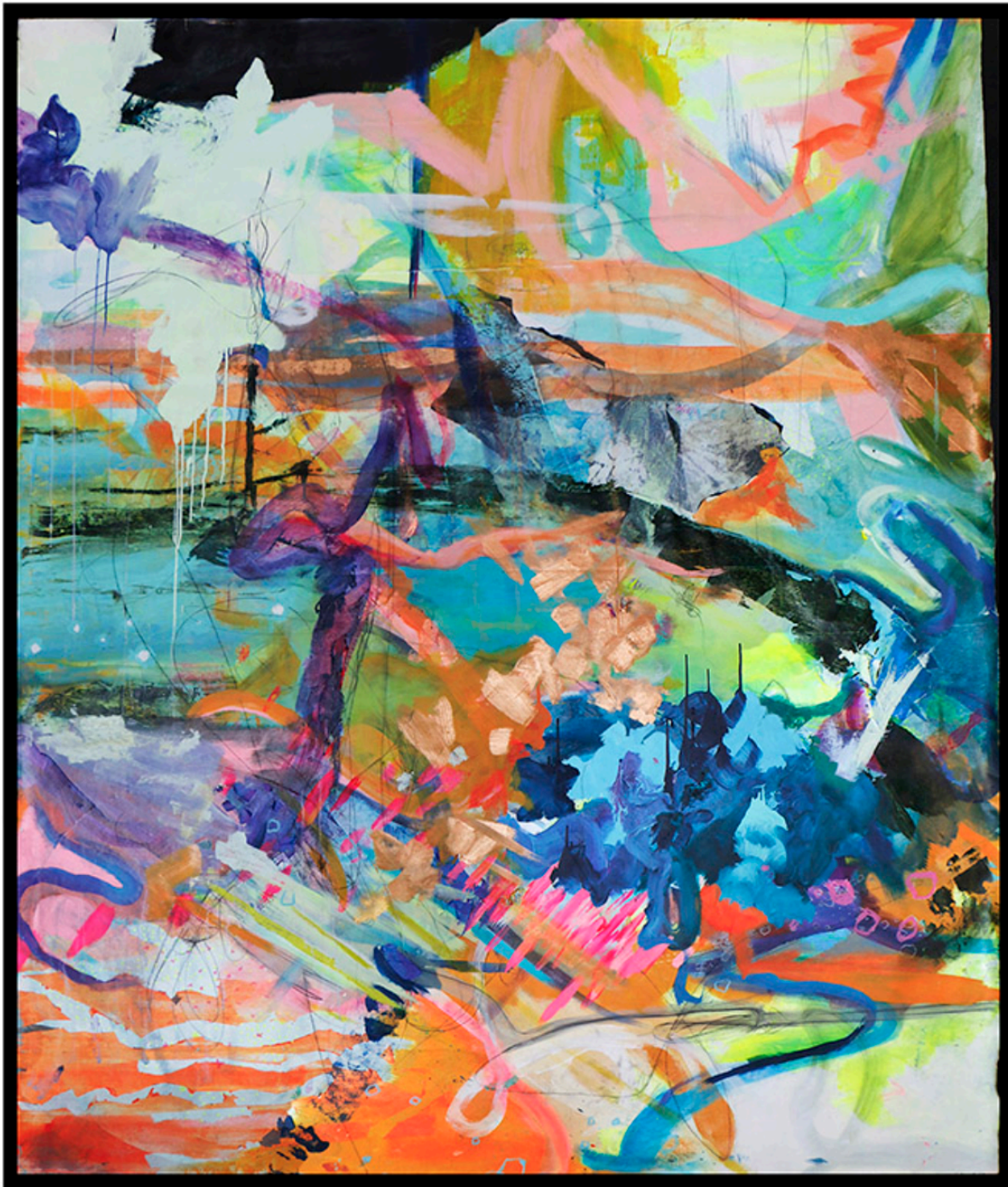
Cicely Carew, *Resonance*, 2023. Installation view, 2023 James and Audrey Foster Prize, the Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston, 2023-24. Photo by Mel Taing.





Cicely Carew, *Resonance* (detail), 2023. Installation view, 2023 James and Audrey Foster Prize, the Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston, 2023-24. Photo by Mel Taing.





Cicely Carew, 'What They See' (2019), Acrylic and vinyl on canvas. 80" x 68". Image courtesy of the artist.



## Setting up the activity



Image by Louisa Penfold

## Painting tools



Centers U3 W5





Ideas for painting tools children can explore. Images by Louisa Penfold



Make your own paintbrushes using clothes pins and found objects. Image by Louisa Penfold

More instructions on how to make your own paintbrushes with kids:  
<http://www.louisapenfold.com/diy-paintbrushes-kids-art-projects/>

## Tips for doing paint activities in the classroom

- Put a drop sheet (for example, a bed sheet from a thrift store), shower curtain, or disposable table cloth under the area where the children will paint.
- Only put a small amount of paint out at a time and replenish, as needed.
- Set activity up on a table without chairs so children can move around and explore the materials while the area is still contained.
- Tempera paint is washable if it gets on clothes or the carpet. It also dries brittle and can be scraped or picked off once dry. Any remaining bits can be sprayed with a fabric cleaner.



Image: Alison Rieck