

Viktor Lowenfeld's Stages of Artistic Development in Children



Scribbling - 2 years

First disordered scribbles are simply records of enjoyable kinesthetic activity, not attempts at portraying the visual world. After six months of scribbling, marks are more orderly as children become more engrossed. Soon they begin to name scribbles, an important milestone in development.



The Preschematic Stage - 3 - 5 years

First conscious creation of form occurs around age three and provides a tangible record of the child's thinking process. The first representational attempt is a person, usually with circle for head and two vertical lines for legs. Later other forms develop, clearly recognizable and often quite complex. Children continually search for new concepts so symbols constantly change.



The Schematic Stage - 6 - 8 years

The child arrives at a "schema," a definite way of portraying an object, although it will be modified when he needs to portray something important. The schema represents the child's active knowledge of the subject. At this stage, there is definite order in space



The Gang Stage - The Dawning of Realism - 8 - 12 years

The child finds that schematic generalization no longer suffices to express reality. This dawning of how things really look is usually expressed with more detail for individual parts, but is far from naturalism in drawing. Space is discovered and depicted with overlapping objects in drawings and a horizon line rather than a base line. Children begin to compare their work and become more critical of it. While they are more independent of adults, they are more anxious to conform to their peers.



The Pseudo-Naturalistic Stage - 12 - 14 years

This stage marks the end of art as spontaneous activity as children are increasingly critical of their drawings. The focus is now on the end product as they strive to create "adult-like" naturalistic drawings. Light and shadow, folds, and motion are observed with mixed success, translated to paper. Space is depicted as three-dimensional by diminishing the size of objects that are further away.



The Period of Decision - 14 - 16 years

Art at this stage of life is something to be done or left alone. Natural development will cease unless a conscious decision is made to improve drawing skills. Students are critically aware of the immaturity of their drawing and are easily discouraged. Lowenfeld's solution is to enlarge their concept of adult art to include non-representational art and art occupations besides painting (architecture, interior design, handcrafts, etc.)