VISUAL ARTS

The Middle School art program offers students a rich artistic experience by cultivating visual and perceptual awareness, developing technical proficiency in a range of media and disciplines, and nurturing an appreciation and enjoyment of art and the creative process. As looking and seeing are at the core of any studio activity, students in the M.S. art program learn the value and importance of careful and thoughtful observation as an essential part of the creative process. And as drawing is at the root of all art making, M.S. artists are encouraged to deepen their understanding of the formal drawing issues introduced to them in our Lower School program. Level appropriate projects and exercises reinforce these issues and allow students opportunities for personal interpretation, and to explore their own solutions to visual problems. Using an assortment of materials from pencil, pen, charcoal, and pastel, to paint and sculptural media, students will gain confidence in their ability to make creative decisions as they tackle both figurative and abstract challenges. Middle School artists will also further develop the critical thinking skills essential for real progress in the visual arts. Analyzing, critiquing, and discussing art, inside and outside the Middle School studio, are important elements of the curriculum. The history of art, both past and present, is linked to many of the projects in all four grades, so that students understand and appreciate the important role art has played in society through the ages.

In seventh and eighth grades, students who elect to major in art shall participate in three different trimester-long offerings. “Explorations in Sculpture”, “The Illusion of Volume- Exploring the Methods of the Renaissance Masters”, “Digital Photography”, and “Drawing and Painting: Realism to Surrealism” are possible trimester offerings available to Middle School art majors.

875. Studio Art 5
The fifth grade art curriculum focuses initially on helping students transition from our Lower School program to the Middle School studio, and teaches our new Middle School artists appropriate studio behavior and practices. Fifth graders will become responsible for their own setup at the start of class and cleanup at the end of each class, and will be encouraged to work and focus in the studio as they would in any other classroom in the Middle School. The 5th grade curriculum strives to build on the interest and enthusiasm for art generated in our Lower School program, while reinforcing central concepts and fundamental techniques. Projects during the year are designed to develop drawing, design, and perceptual skills, as well as encourage creative thinking and growth.

876. Studio Art 6
The sixth grade art curriculum builds on the knowledge and skills learned in the fifth grade by presenting students with more challenging projects and visual problems, as well as greater freedom to solve them. Growing confidence and independence are fostered through expanded projects that emphasize the importance of careful observation and perceptual drawing. In the fifth grade, color theory is introduced, and craftsmanship is discussed as an essential component of the art making process.

MIN 7-6. Studio Art 7 (Minor)
The seventh grade art minor challenges students to create works with more sophisticated thinking
and techniques. The course emphasizes the importance of thoughtful mark making as an essential descriptive tool, and instructs students how to convincingly create the illusion of three-dimensional form on the flat surface of a drawing page. Seventh graders will have the opportunity to experiment during the year with painting, printmaking and sculpture.

**MIN 8-6. Studio Art 8 (Minor)**
The eighth grade art minor engages students with a series of in-depth projects that emphasize the human figure as a subject. Students will approach the figure with a variety of exercises and projects ranging from faster, intuitive gesture sketches to more developed analytical drawings. Projects will continue to focus on learning how to represent the illusion of form and volume on the drawing page, and a more complex understanding of color theory will be addressed and encouraged. At the end of the year, students will have the tools, knowledge, and confidence to matriculate confidently into our Upper School Foundation Art program.

**VAMA – 1. Studio Art 7/8 Major**
Conceived and designed to provide a broad range of experience to the serious and passionate Middle School artist, the 7/8 grade Studio Art major program rotates students through three different fun and challenging trimester mini-classes over the course of the year. A few of the possible trimester mini-classes are described below:

**Explorations in Sculpture**
Let your imagination flow. Students will experience the magic of throwing pottery forms on the electric wheel. In this course emphasis will be placed on gaining skill in craftsmanship and on learning to problem solve independently, as well as cooperatively. The fundamental principles of sculpture, such as composition, spatial design, use of texture, line, and color on form, will be investigated. Students will construct small and large scale architectural vessels and sculptures with extruded shapes and clay slabs. Each project will be inspired by art work from a variety of cultures including: Native American, African, Chinese and Latin American. Students will learn to articulate their ideas in class critiques and discussions. Important drawing and design concepts will be integrated into each class project. During the course the following questions will be considered: Why should we study art? What is art and how does art and design affect our lives? Students will also look at a variety of careers that require artistic knowledge and skill, especially in the field of ceramics. A visiting artist will join the group for a day and discuss his/her work and career.

**Drawing and Painting: Realism to Surrealism**
The class introduces students to the concepts and techniques put forth by the surrealist artists of the early 20th century such as: André Breton, Leonora Carrington, Frida Kahlo, Dorothea Tanning, Salvador Dali and Max Ernst. A variety of observational and experimental approaches to drawing and painting will be presented, and the fundamentals of composition and design will be reinforced as each student produces their own surrealistic-inspired painting from conception to finish.

**The Illusion of Volume- Exploring the Methods of the Renaissance Masters**
During the European Renaissance, artists made groundbreaking moves towards capturing the volume and depth of the real, three-dimensional world onto a two-dimensional surface. Students
will learn a number of “classical” drawing techniques including tonal range and chiaroscuro. The class will study the paintings of masters of these techniques, namely the works of Caravaggio, Artemesia Gentileschi, Peter Paul Rubens and Vermeer. Students will work with a range of art materials including ink and charcoal, and will finish the trimester with an “Incognito Self-Portrait” in acrylic on canvas.

**Digital Photography**

This course is designed for those who are interested in learning how to design commercial printed materials such as book and CD covers, brochures, and movie posters. Throughout the course, students will learn how to prepare creative electronic files and use Adobe InDesign and Photoshop to express their ideas and concepts. A series of fun and practical projects will teach students the fundamentals of good design. Group critiques will allow students to discuss their work, explore new ideas, and monitor their own progress. A digital camera is recommended for this course.