



Student Opportunity Artist in Residence Program (SOAR)

Artmaking helps children develop socially and cognitively in so many ways. Students who make art earn higher scores in standardized writing tests and even score higher in measurements of empathy for others. However, children today are much less likely to access art opportunities in their schools than those of previous generations. It is even worse for Black and Latino children where access drops by nearly 50%, significantly lower than white children.

To address this need for additional art in classrooms, The Drawing Studio launched the SOAR Program in late 2020, during the darkest days of the global pandemic. We deploy professional artists to local schools who no longer offer an arts program, or who have seen it diminished.

Each classroom residency includes 4-8 virtual creative arts workshops (with in-person time planned post-pandemic). While learning art skills and techniques, students explore subjects tailored to their individual interests and to their wider curricula.



River Otter by 2nd Grader



Pikachu! by 1st Grader

By complementing and honoring the unique artistic character and cultural traditions that already exist within each classroom and child, our teaching artists create an environment in which Tucson children can grow their technical skills; engage with issues, challenges, sorrows, and joys; and foster deeper human connections through art.

Each semester the SOAR program includes an exciting exhibit of the youth's work – please find last year's art from youth at Ochoa Community School and Pueblo Gardens elementary here!

<https://sites.google.com/view/thedrawingstudiooar20-21>

Program Outcomes (1 year):

- 250 young people impacted (K-5)
- Kids who otherwise would not have access to art (at least not at school), grew their creative and artistic abilities
- Kids encountered a safe space to express themselves and process emotions during the global pandemic

- School teachers learned artist techniques from teaching residents and wove lessons in the classroom with creative projects to reinforce learning
- Students experienced art as a possible career path
- Students developed stronger problem-solving skills
- Students learned to better appreciate diverse viewpoints



Little Froggie, by 1st Grader

Testimonial from Ochoa Elementary

What impacts of the SOAR program did you notice with your community of students?

This was a challenging year on Zoom. All my students are minority (Native, Hispanic, African American) students who qualify for free school lunch. Most of them experienced Covid-related deaths/illnesses in their immediate families. Therefore, it was crucial that Zoom school provided them an escape. The SOAR program did just this. My students looked forward to Mr. Trenton each week. They wanted to work on their artwork even during math and reading time! Some of them didn't even have color pencils or markers at home, but they found ways to be resourceful - using pencils and their fingers to shade!

Do you have any notable stories or feedback from your students from the 2 semesters of residencies?



By : A j a h

Clownfish, 1st Grader

One of my students wrote the following at the end of the program: *This art program was the best thing in my life - Jesus*

All of my 16 students this year are uncannily gifted in art. So, they really looked forward to a professional artist. They were NOT disappointed! My students even applied techniques Trenton taught them to math (ex. the line of symmetry for fractions) and reading (ex. connecting Trenton's strategy of starting with "the big shapes first, then the details," to sift through information in a text to find the main idea)!

Were there any students who struggled in academic areas but responded positively towards art?

Yes. Out of 16 students, I have 7 students with Individualized Education Programs for Specific Learning Disabilities. Yet these students were able to engage whole-heartedly in Trenton's art sessions and produce wonderful drawings! They felt safe and free to be creative at these art sessions.