ArtRishi.com Project - Intermediate Cat
For: Ages 7, 8, and 9

Suggested media & paper:

11"x15" white drawing paper
 oil pastel set (make sure you have white)
 liquid watercolor (for background)

color pencil set
 drawing tool: waterproof fine-tipped marker, or colored pencil
large watercolor brush - #12 round or flat hake brush

This project is designed for students to experience the painterly technique of applying and blending layers of oil pastel. Color pencil is used for finer details of the cat and liquid watercolor (undiluted, for the brightest effect) is painted over the entire work for a finishing touch.

Steps to Success:

Step 1. Talk about cats. Who has a cat? Identify some different cat breeds - Abyssinian, Burmese, Korat, Persian, Somali, etc.

Step 2. Plan the composition. This cat is wearing glasses - will your cat wear glasses as well? What shape - round, rectangular, star-shaped, etc.? Since we will be using oil pastel, and it is rather chunky and yields a painterly look, we want to make sure our cat is LARGE - and takes up most of the paper. It is more fun to color a large cat with oil pastel than it is to color a teensy, detailed cat with oil pastel.

Step 3. Follow drawing directions using the provided art map that details line-drawing sequence.

Step 4. Color and paint:

>   Main color palette for cat fur: white, gray, golden ochre, van dyke brown
>   Eye (iris) colors: turquoise and ultramarine blue
>   Nose: peach color
>   Defining color for eyes: black
>
>   *Don't use black until very end of project, or young students may smear it all over the place.*

   When "painting" with oil pastel, start with the face. It helps for each student to have a photo copy of a real cat at his/her workspace. Begin coloring the eyes, but leave the pupil and "eye-liner" until the project is finished, so that black is not smeared into the project. What direction do the hairs grow in? It is important to pay attention to the directional flow of the facial hair - and to draw each hair one at a time in an overlapping fashion. Begin with white, then yellow ochre, then brown, then gray - let colors overlap. Encourage children to use firm pressure to achieve a painterly look. Where are the highlights? Where are the shadows? Encourage contrast.

Step 5. Finish with colored pencil. You can achieve nice results using color pencil on top of oil pastel. Use the color pencil to tighten and define any small details: the glasses, the eyes, the whiskers, the mouth line, designs in the tie or bow tie. Use black oil pastel to define the pupil in the eye and a few whiskers in the ears.   Last of all "ground" the cat with a contrasting color of oil pastel for underneath the body.

Step 6. Finish steps for the painting: For a bright background, fill a spritzer bottle with undiluted liquid watercolor, and spritz the entire painting - cat and all. Use a paper towel to soak up watercolor that is sitting on top of the oil pastel. The liquid watercolor will fill in the little spaces of white paper left behind in the cat painting and give the project a great, finished look.

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

ONLINE RESOURCES - **because the internet is ever-changing, we cannot guarantee online links will always be available:**
The collection of poetry dedicated to cats by T.S. Elliot - "Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats":

http://coral.lili.uni-bielefeld.de/Classes/Summer97/SemGS/WebLex/OldPossum/oldpossumlex/oldpossumlex.html

http://animal.discovery.com/breedselector/catselectorindex.do

Books to Purchase to enhance your lesson
books below may easily be ordered through the ArtRishi.com "Books and Resources" page

Carlotta's Kittens (The Cat Pack) by Phyllis Reynolds Nader
The Grand Escape (The Cat Pack by Phillis Reynolds Nader
Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats by T. S. Eliot
You Can't Rush a Cat by Karleen Bradford
The Fat Cat Sat on the Mat (I Can Read Book 1) by Nurit Karlin