DEGAS ART PROJECT
PASTEL AND PUFFY PAINT DANCERS

MATERIALS

• Pastels (cabinet)
• White cardstock with image printed on it (Ricoh)
• Pencils (cabinet)
• Black construction paper to pre mount image
• White puffy paint (cabinet)
**PREP**

- Get printouts made of ballet dancers on cardstock. Cut down and mount on black construction paper.
- Cover tables in white paper and lay out pastel boxes and pencils.
- Arrange small copies of ballet dancers on tables.
- Have puffy paint ready, but not at the stations. Hand out when it is time and make sure students are using lightly.

**PROJECT**

Degas worked in several mediums including oil paint, pastels, drawings and sculpture. Unlike the other Impressionists, he painted indoors because the sunlight hurt his fragile eyes. He would use many of the drawings he made as well as models or photographs to create the scene of movement he wanted to paint. Everything was deliberate for him and he is quoted as saying “In art, nothing should look like chance, not even movement.”

Degas would endlessly experiment with unusual techniques and would sometimes mix his pastel so heavily with liquid fixative that it became a thick paste. He would do a drawing in charcoal and use layers of pastel to cover part of this or even combine oils and pastels. This is how he created a richness of surface effects.

Today we are going to use one of his drawings as a base for a pastel. It shows two ballerinas stretching before dancing and has a composition that is off-center. We are going to focus on creating movement by the sparkle of light on the dancers clothes.

Name and class section on back of your papers.

**Please follow along and do not move ahead:**

1. Decide your main colors for each of the ballerinas. You will need at least three colors for each dancer. Some examples are three shades of blue, yellow and red, pink and red, etc. Put your three colors in order from darkest to light for each dancer. Do not count white, we will all be using that.
2. Use your pencil to add any other features you may want on the dancers,
such as butterfly wings, hair ribbons, flowers on the costume, etc. Look at the samples of Degas’ dancers on the tables for inspiration.

3. Start with the dancer in the center if you are right handed (the other if you are left) and begin with the darkest color drawing lines of movement on her skirt. Start in the center and move to the edge. Use the concept of fireworks to get a feel for how to make the movement.

4. Then use the second darkest and make more, in between the others, then add the lightest color.

5. Now add the “light” with white on top following the same lines of movement.

6. Color in the hair, costume bodice, and any other features you added. You can leave the skin as is or color that, as well.

7. Follow the same procedure for the other dancer with your other set of colors. You can also use the same colors, if desired.

8. We will be taking turns with the “liquid fixative” which is puffy paint to add some dimension and a richness of surface effects to our dancers like Degas did. Please do not squirt out massive quantities of the puffy paint, only lightly add some features to the skirts, hair or costume bodice. Some examples are lace, flowers, pearls, and lines of catch lights on the skirt.

Be careful not to smudge the paint, it will take a while to dry and will be delivered to your classroom when it is finished drying.