

Big, Big Paintings



JULY 2026



This theme allows us the opportunity to explore Clyfford Still's favorite media - paint! We invite infants to explore the paintings in our galleries, and then explore paint and canvas outside on our lawn!

Paint as a material:

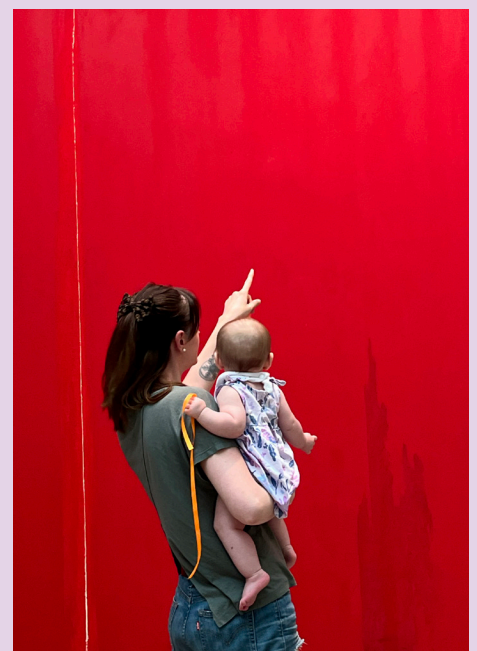
When we consider paint simply as a material for interaction, exploration, manipulation, and expression, we can find a deep opportunity for sensory learning with infants. Paint allows us to interact with texture and color in a tactile way. It provides the opportunity to make connections between the galleries and their everyday life.

Paint as an action:

Painting is also an action. It invites us to make marks on canvas or paper, to use a paint brush, a palette knife, our fingers, or our whole bodies. Infants embrace the physicality of painting instinctually. We encourage caregivers to pause, embracing and acknowledging that the "messiness" of paint can instigate a desire to intervene. Instead, notice how your infant wants to interact with the paint. What might we be able to learn from them in this process?

Art Crawl's educational foundation is centered around the idea that the caregiver is the infant's first and best teacher. While this is true, we also believe that learning is co-created. It's an exploration of the relationships between people, things, and environments. So we encourage you to consider what you might learn from your infant. How might their exploration impact your understanding of the world?

"Being able to "listen" to children and stay by their side in their strategies and mental images, can lead us along paths or knowledge that are utterly original and of enormous epistemological interest. This way of investigating and working brings back the scent of childhood, with its timeframes, rhythms, wonder, and questions, which we cannot lose sight of if we mean to be teachers, or even simply to inquire into the relationship between children, art, and artists." (Vea Vecchi, 2004)



“The physicality of these art explorations encourages them to investigate possibilities, to uncover subtle aspects of the materials with which they are working. Their understandings become embodied, and their embodied understandings become part of their intellectual awareness” (Ann Pelo, 2017)



In the first image, you can see the educator modeling a way to engage and explore the paint by moving it around in big circles with both of their hands while the infant observes. This invitation to play is captured in the following images. The educator offers the infant paint and then encourages natural exploration.



In the first image, you can see the educator offering a choice of paint color to the infant. This offering is reinforced by the caregiver verbally and physically by pointing to both options. The infant selects orange and then explores by moving the paint around with their hand and fingers. The infant goes back to the original choice that was offered, selects the green paint, and begins exploring using a paint brush.

