

Painting with Weeds:

Students choose a natural resource to paint.

September 19, 2018



For several weeks now, the children have been exposed to different tools to paint. This time, Lila (4.6) and Alice (4.9) took this learning activity into their own hands. They came back from the playground with some weeds in a basket wishing to use them as brushes, “*we want to paint!!*”. While we started setting up the space for this naturalistic painting experience the children were offered the choice of the two primary colors we have been exploring: yellow and blue. They were also given the same choice of paper color and white.



Artie observed us set-up and asked to join. He was very interested in the way the weeds were absorbing the paint with the little leaves they have. He is using now his two hands and he confirms to me, “I make a sky”. Perhaps he is that he is creating the sun since he is using yellow and perhaps representing the rays of light, or this could be a bright yellow sky.



Alice chooses a lighter blue this time after she traced some strokes with a darker blue. She looks proud and says, “I can make rain”. Indeed it has been raining plenty here in Thailand the last months. We can see how the environment becomes clearly, a third teacher, and how it influences their representations of the world around them.





Here we can see how the two girls continue to explore the different strokes with the weeds. I can see the value they are putting in their natural resource as they manipulate it gently with the thickness of the paint. Both of them continue trying to use other weeds because I think they can see there are different textures in each weed as these are composed of different thickness.

When the children finished, Alice and Lila expressed the need to collect the weeds. In a sense of urgency for protecting their precious artistic-tool discovery, I kept wondering if these would break in the process of washing them.

...Minutes later, they brought them back to me, dried and in perfect condition. I was amazed. The girls confirmed that they wanted to keep them for a future painting session.

So, I found a small bottle to keep them in. This shows their high sense of accountability in their learning, agency as they take charge for their own learning with much confidence.

I was also able to observe their appreciation for their collective initiatives and discoveries as the environment turned into their third teacher.

