

Playing with Art & Technology

Craig Roland

In the artroom, students are frequently encouraged to play with ideas and to experiment with tools and materials as a way of developing their creativity and knowledge of different media. The following sites offer opportunities to foster this type of active engagement with digital technology.

ArtRage 2.5

www.ambientdesign.com/artrage.html

ArtRage is an easy-to-use digital paint program that offers a variety of tools and effects. You can paint with oils, sketch with pencils, sprinkle glitter, and more. You also have the option of loading an image to serve as a guide while you sketch and paint. ArtRage 2.5 is available for both Windows and Macintosh computers. You can download the starter edition at no cost or purchase the full version, which includes additional features. There are also tutorials available that help you learn how to use ArtRage, and a community forum where ArtRage users share their tips.

NGAkids Art Zone

www.nga.gov/kids/zone

The National Gallery of Art's NGAkids Art Zone offers a variety of online art interactives that children, especially young ones, will enjoy. BRUSHster, the newest activity on the site, is a painting machine with more than forty brushes of different sizes along with transparency, stroke, and special-effects options. With it, students can experiment with color, gesture, shape, and line while making their own abstract art. There is also the Dutch Dollhouse, an art game inspired by seventeenth-century Dutch genre paintings; Jungle, which allows children to create imaginary landscapes inspired by the artist Henri Rous-

seau; and the Collage Machine, for exploring photomontage and collage techniques à la Romare Bearden, and more.

Playful Invention and Exploration (PIE)

www.pienetwork.org

Developed by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Media Lab in collaboration with six museums, Playful Invention and Exploration is an approach to using new technologies that integrates art, science, music, and engineering. The aim of PIE is to encourage people to create, invent, and explore using a combination of traditional craft materials and new digital technologies. Their website includes: descriptions of projects to try at home or in the classroom; a project gallery; information on Crickets, which are small programmable devices you can use to create musical sculptures, interactive jewelry, and other playful inventions; suggestions on running PIE workshops; and information on the PIE Learning Philosophy.

Red Studio

redstudio.moma.org

The Museum of Modern Art's Red Studio site features several interactives that inspire experimenting with different

ideas and processes. Remix provides a palette of photographs, shapes, lines, and sizing tools that students can use to create new images out of existing ones. With Fauxtogram, students can make their own virtual photograms by selecting, arranging, layering, and exposing objects to light. Chance Words is an activity inspired by artist Tristan Tzara's recipe for making a Dada poem based upon random word combinations from a newspaper article.

Scratch

scratch.mit.edu

Scratch is a programmable toolkit, developed by the LifeLong Kindergarten Group at MIT, which students (ages eight and up) can use to create their own animated stories, video games, and interactive art that can be shared with others across the Internet.

Scratch is available free of charge and runs on Windows and Mac OS X computers. To learn more about Scratch, and to download a copy of the software, visit the Scratch website, where you'll also find tutorials, Scratch projects created by students, forums, and more. 

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