

Early Light, 1984

Vincent Ceglia (b. 1923)

acrylic and collage

H. 21.5 x W. 29 inches

Collection of the Bucks County Intermediate Unit #22



Biography

Vincent Ceglia uses many art materials in his artwork. He uses found objects, paper and ink. He also uses watercolor and acrylic paint. He works from his memory and imagination. He likes to let chance and accident play a part in how his artwork looks when it is finished.

Ceglia liked to do artwork, even when he was a child. He liked to draw and paint with watercolors. In high school he liked to make linoleum-block prints. After high school, he had an art job as a designer and an illustrator. He kept doing watercolor paintings at home. In the 1950s, he was in many art shows. He also taught Saturday art classes. He and his wife moved to a farmhouse in Washington Crossing, along the Delaware River in Bucks County. He started the Lambertville House Gallery in 1956 and the Yardley Art Association in 1957. He kept teaching at local colleges. In the 1970s and 1980s, Ceglia traveled in Italy. He loved the warm light and colors he saw in nature. He also taught summer painting classes in northern Italy.

Ceglia still lives in Bucks County area. He enjoys the natural beauty and quiet at his home.

Is this a mountain or an ocean scene?

We know Vincent Ceglia loved to be outside. We also know he traveled quite a bit, both in the United States and in Europe. We also know Vincent Ceglia spent many years painting images from nature and from memory. Like many works of art that are semi-abstract, it is hard to tell the exact subject matter of this work. Is it a landscape or a seascape? The blue at the top of the image could be the sky. It could also be the surface of the ocean. The brown, green, pink and yellow surfaces toward the bottom could be the ground, but they could also be the ridges at the bottom of the sea, or tall sand dunes along an ocean coast. One of the wonderful things about looking at this art for a long time is that your interpretation of it may change day to day. Many artists who create work like this believe it is the imagination and intelligence of the viewer who ultimately give the most meaning to a work of art. So, when you look at *Early Light*, relax and enjoy it. It can be anything you want it to be.

I don't see any signs of human activity – there are no people, no houses, and no roads.

That's true. In his landscapes, Vincent Ceglia often left out the human element in



his work. He appreciated nature, and valued the time he spent outdoors. It is possible Ceglia painted this image from nature, looking out over a scene that was filled with the color, texture, and light of a mountainside. Perhaps there was a hiker, or a village, or even a city around the top of the mountain in the foreground. However, in real life, there may have been no people, animals or buildings in his view. It is also possible that he created this scene from his memory into a beautiful work of art, and he chose to leave out all signs of human life. We will never know.

Did the artist make this en plein air, or in a studio?

Vincent Ceglia usually worked from memory. That means he spent a great deal of time outside. He observed scenes and details from nature. After that time, he would go into his studio and recreate an image or scene from his memory and imagination. *Early Light* is a collage, made out of many types of paper and glue. He may have cut or torn the papers for this artwork, or he may have used them as he found them. He also put some acrylic paint under the surface of the papers he used, and then applied more paint to the top of the surface of the work. Some of the papers overlap, some are smooth, and some are wrinkled. Can you imagine setting up an easel or a table outdoors, with all these art materials to arrange? What would have happened to his assortment of paper if a brisk wind started to blow? For that reason alone, and because we know Ceglia loved to work from memory, we can assume he created this work of art in his art studio.

It looks like I can see through the things in this artwork.

The mixed media technique used by Vincent Ceglia in his artwork *Early Light* has many transparent and translucent surfaces. This effect is created by layering art materials on top of one another. A variety of types of paint and paper create this unusual effect. Can you think of types of paper that are transparent and translucent? How could you use them in a work of art?

What is the meaning of the title, “Early Light”?

Artists title their work in a variety of ways. The Post Impressionist artist Vincent Van Gogh used very descriptive titles for his work. A vase of sunflowers would be called *Sunflowers*, a group of people sitting at a table eating potatoes would be called *The Potato Eaters*, and a starry night scene would be called *Starry Night*. The abstract artist Vassily Kandinsky titled many of his works after musical compositions, including *Improvisation 7*, *Composition IV*, and *Composition X*. Why do you think he named his paintings after music? Surrealist painter Salvador Dali incorporated strange imagery into his titles, including *The Persistence of Memory*, *Invisible Afghan with the Apparition on the Beach of the Face of Garcia Lorca in the Form of a Fruit Dish with Three Figs*, and *Swans Reflecting Elephants*. It is often difficult to find a connection between his titles and the artwork they represent. Vincent Ceglia’s titles tend to be descriptive, and sometimes evoke a mood or a feeling. How do the titles Vincent Ceglia uses correspond with the abstract images you see in his work?



Learn More

Imagine using tissue paper, wax paper, paper towels, tissues, and even plastic wrap with acrylic paints to create a collage. You may achieve a similar effect to *Early Light* in your artwork. See the activity sheet “Layered Landscapes,” below.

How do artists organize their art studios when working with a variety of art materials? See the activity “Planning an Art Activity,” below.

Related Images

You can look at some of Vincent Van Gogh’s paintings at the website of the Museum of Modern Art in New York City at www.moma.org. Pay attention to how the titles relate to what you see in the paintings.

You can look at some of Kandinsky’s paintings at the website of the Museum of Modern Art in New York City at www.moma.org. Notice how his titles are often connected to music.

Look at some of Salvador Dali’s Surrealist paintings and read his unusual titles at the Salvador Dali Museum website at www.salvadoralimuseum.org.

Look at the works of Vincent Ceglia at the Bucks County Database on the website of the James A. Michener Art Museum, www.michenermuseum.org. How are the titles reflected in the works?

Related Links

To learn more about the open art studios at the Banana Factory, visit www.bananafactory.org.

To learn more about the open art studios at the Torpedo Factory, visit www.torpedofactory.org.

Celia Reisman, Stacie Speer Scott and Rob Evans are all landscape, collage, and/or mixed media artists who have unique art studios. To learn more about them, visit their websites.

To learn more about painter and printmaker Celia Reisman, visit www.celiareisman.com.

To learn more about painter, printmaker and sculptor Stacie Speer Scott, visit staciespeerscott.com.

To learn more about artist and art curator Rob Evans, visit www.robevansart.com.

To learn more about the Tuscan landscape, visit www.florenceholidays.com.



To learn more about the geography of Italy, visit
www.library.thinkquest.org.

