



**Creativity Express:
Let's Start With Art!
Furnace, Tickles, and Ruby**

\$29.95, one CD-ROM,
Madcap Logic, 888/375-0560,
www.madcaplogic.com

Arts programs have become underfunded or nonexistent in public schools over the past 20 years. Video games and television have blunted children's innate creative powers. So I was pleased to discover *Creativity Express*, an interactive, animated series of computer programs that help kids access their inner artists.

Hosted by the lovably drawn polar bear Furnace and purple penguin sisters Tickles and Ruby, the *Let's Start With Art!* CD-ROM is smart, accessible, colorful, and, probably most importantly, fun.

There's a *Jeopardy*-like game show that pits Sir Isaac Newton against a caveman (the caveman does surprisingly well), and a section that explores the passion of great artists by revealing little-known tidbits about Salvador Dali, stockbroker-turned-painter Paul Gauguin, and Michelangelo (who made paper hats that held candles so he could create art all night).

Creativity Express offers myriad ways to learn about art from prehistoric times through the modern age, and then offers quizzes and creativity-builders, where kids are challenged to make comic books, masks, portraits, and other works of art with the help of a slot-machine-like Idea Gizmo. There's also a gallery of famous artwork and an extensive glossary of art-related terms.

Madcap Logic, the company that makes the program, was founded by former Disney animators and producers. The animations are high quality and amusing, the sound effects are cute, and the possibilities are just about endless.

Having come from an art-deprived background myself, I certainly learned a lot with this program. Now I feel inspired to get some paints. — Diana Powell

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