

1st Graders are some of our smallest students but their brains are big enough to handle and appreciate several concepts at once: sustainability, robotics, art appreciation, and art creation. Earlier this year, New York's Findlay Galleries presented an exhibition of works by renowned sculptor Mia Fonssagrives Solow called Robots/Femmebots, consisting of cast aluminum and bronze robots originally made from repurposed materials and found objects. Findlay Vice President Stephanie Clark, a Green Vale parent, knew that the whimsical robots would capture children's imaginations and offered to bring actual works from the exhibit and speak to 1st Grade students about their origins.

Art teacher Lauren Privitera had visited the show and realized that the presentation could become an even deeper learning experience. What if the robot works of art were presented alongside Green Vale's actual robots? What if the students then had the opportunity to construct their own robot characters using the exact same approach as a famous artist had used?



# Robots as Art



This plan was an exact fit for the intention behind the School's brand new Innovation Lab: a hub for interdisciplinary creativity. The 1st Graders' first visit to the Lab included a demonstration of a voice-controlled robot by technology instructor Harvey Bass, along with a discussion of artificial intelligence and how robots are becoming more commonplace in our houses and our world. Clark then presented the robot works of art, encouraging students to touch and handle the sculptures as well as guess at the underlying materials the artist employed.

Finally, in subsequent art classes, the students created their own robots from found materials.



By repurposing discarded materials, students explore themes of sustainability.



“My robots are humorous ideas of what robots could be, instead of the fearful kind of robot that’s going to take over. The femmebots also show the power and strength of women.”

— Mia Fonssagrives Solow