

THE RENEE & CHAIM GROSS FOUNDATION



Women Artists: Elements of Art

Grade level: K–2

Time estimate: 15–20 minutes for looking and discussing the images in the slideshow, 15–20 minutes for optional classroom activities and extensions.

Overview and Learning Objectives:

Through these activities, students will use critical thinking skills to closely observe, describe, and respond to works of art. They will strengthen speaking and listening skills by describing what they notice and will utilize evidential reasoning skills to support their conclusions with visual evidence. They will learn about several elements of art including line, shape, and color. They will make connections to math concepts through discussions of shape, pattern, symmetry, and asymmetry.

***A note to teachers:**

A wonderful follow-up question to ask students after they make an observation or share an idea about a work of art is “What do you see that makes you say that?” This question encourages further development of their thinking and asks them to use evidential reasoning skills to support their idea with visual evidence. For more information on this strategy, see the Artful Thinking resources on Harvard’s Project Zero website:

http://pzartfulthinking.org/?page_id=2

Classroom activities:

Exploring line (Art, Language Arts):

With one or more of the paintings, explore making different kinds of lines.

- Give each student a small piece of string. Identify a line in the painting to create with the string, discuss observations.
- Identify a line in the picture to recreate by extending and bending arms or fingers/hands.
- With paper and pencil for each student, ask them to experiment making different kinds of lines that express feelings, such as a line that is nervous, excited, sad, shy,

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tired, silly, and proud. Discuss what the lines look like, how everyone expressed those feelings through lines. How are the lines similar and different?

Symmetry and Asymmetry (Math):

With one or more of the paintings, discuss examples of symmetry and asymmetry within the picture. Draw an example of each and use a ruler to draw the line of symmetry within the symmetrical shape. Extend your exploration of shape and symmetry to the classroom. Identify and draw objects that have symmetry and asymmetry, making sure to draw a line of symmetry to prove it.

Collaging shapes (Math, Art):

As a class, identify the different shapes in the classroom that you see. They could be the shapes of windows, lights, bookshelves, posters, desks, chairs, rugs, or even objects that you see through windows. Make a big list of shapes, perhaps grouping similar shapes together. Using a pencil and colored paper, students can draw and cut out 10–12 of the shapes that they'd like to use in their work. Next, they can rearrange, overlap, and move the shapes around on a separate piece of paper to arrive at a pleasing arrangement. Glue them down to create a shape collage. Discuss the similarities and differences among the creations. As a writing extension, create the collage onto a blank card so that students can write a greeting card to a friend or family member.

See/Think/Wonder (Critical Thinking):

Look at one of the paintings in this lesson and ask the following series of questions:

- What do you see?
- What do you think about what you see?
- What do you wonder about?

Have students take turns describing what they see, think, and wonder. Invite others to reflect on and respond to the ideas shared. This “thinking routine” is one of several discussion prompts in the Artful Thinking palette by Project Zero at Harvard. This routine helps students practice making observations and interpretations. By asking about what they wonder, this routine encourages curiosity, prompts more discussion, and encourages more connections to be made.

Extensions:

These picture books are about the elements of art and the process of making art. Read one or more as a way to extend your discussion.

- *What If* by Samantha Berger playfully goes through the possible things an artist can use to make art, even if the obvious choices weren't available. Soon it becomes clear that you can make art out of anything.
- *Follow the Line* by Laura Ljungkvist is a whimsical picture book that follows a line through various landscapes, encouraging children to count and look carefully.

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- *Lines that Wiggle* by Candace Whitman is a fun picture book that explores many different kinds of lines in the world around us.
- *Niko Draws a Feeling* by Robert Raczka is a wonderful picture book about a boy who draws in an abstract way to capture his feelings and experiences. It is a great way to introduce abstract art to kids.