GRAM | GRAND RAPIDS ART MUSEUM

SORT. STACK. OVERLAP.

PURPOSEFUL PLAY + ARTFUL LEARNING

AGES 0-2 YEARS OLD

OVERVIEW:

This lesson plan will teach young learners about abstract art, shapes, and color. Instructing from Ben Nicholson's painting *16 December 1939,* students will have the opportunity to look at the relationship of shapes and colors as they overlap in a composition. Students will also create their own painting applying simple arrangements onto wooden panels with paint and tape.

OBJECTIVES:

The Learner Will (Bloom's Taxonomy Verbs):

- Identify colors, shapes, and patterns in works of art
- Experiment with one shape to create different shapes
- Create a minimalist painting using shape, color, and overlapping

GRAM COLLECTION CONNECTIONS:

Ben Nicholson was born in Denham, Buckinghamshire. He was the son of two famous artists, William Nicholson and Mabel Pryde. In his early years, he attended the Slade School of Art. He lived in many different places throughout his lifetime, some of which were: Switzerland, France, Italy, England, Cumberland, and Cornwall.

Nicholson was known as the first abstract painter in England. He was an English artist whose austere geometric paintings and reliefs were among the most influential abstract works in British art. His artwork was abstract and used figuration with cool, harmonious colors, subtle textures and precise interlocking shapes. Nicholson's earliest paintings were still lifes that were influenced by the works of his father. During the 1920s he began painting in figurative and abstract works inspired by Post Impressionism and Cubism. He produced his first geometric and abstract reliefs in 1933. He first exhibited in 1919, at the Grosvenor Gallery and Grafton Galleries.

Nicholson was identified with a group of like-minded artists and architects who wanted to apply "constructivist" principles to public and private art, advocating mathematical precision, clean lines and an absence of ornament. He had the ability to incorporate European trends into a new style that was recognizably his own.

Quote by Ben Nicholson: "I see man more as an instrument or an agent more than anything else."

Ben Nicholson (British, 1894-1982) *16 December 1939,* 1939. Oil on canvas, 27 5/8 x 30 5/16 in. Grand Rapids Art Museum, Gift of Hollis S. Baker, 1959.1.4

MATERIALS:

- Wooden panels
- Painters tape
- Paint brushes - variety of sizes for each learner
- Paint - Natural tones & select color palettes

INSTRUCTION:

Object Based Discussion:

Instructor will display or project Ben Nicholson's painting *16 December 1939,* 1939 for the class to see. Instructor will then ask a series of questions to lead learners towards identifying squares, color, and overlapping shapes. Leading questions may include:

1. What shapes do you see in this painting? How do you know they are squares/rectangles?
2. How many sides does a square have? Does a (triangle, star, oval, octagon, etc.) have the same or different number of sides?
3. What colors do you see?
4. What are some objects that you have at home that are the same color?
5. Are these shapes all lined up or are they stacked together? Expand on student answers.

Play & Discovery Activity:

In small groups, children and instructors will expand on the concept of overlapping shapes by allowing students to play with blocks or legos. Instructor should encourage children to look at their blocks from a "birds eye view" or from above. This activity will demonstrate how shapes can overlap and create new shapes. A compare and contrast activity of different views of their creation may be beneficial to older preschool aged students.

Hands-on Creative Activity:

DAY 1:

Referring back to Ben Nicholson's painting *16 December 1939,* 1939 for inspiration, instructors will create boxes for children to fill in with color on the wooden panel. Instructors can work with infants to place the tape on the board. This tape will act as a guide to create straight and precise lines.

Next, instructors will work with children individually to tear and place their tape, creating multiple squares on the wooden panel. Once tape is in place, students will select colors from a neutral color palette to apply to their painting. Children can experiment with creating smooth and textured brush strokes depending on their skill and developmental level.

DAY 2:

After paintings from day one have dried, instructors will assist students with removing the tape applied on day one. Next, students will place fresh tape on top of their composition to create new squares/rectangles to paint.

Students will fill in the final squares with the neutral color palette. At this time, instructors will also encourage children to select their favorite color to add to the composition, referencing the pops of color featured in Ben Nicholson's painting. Instructors may also work with individual students to mix secondary colors before applying to the final composition.

EVALUATION:

Skill Developed	Needs Improvement	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
Color Recognition	Cannot recall or recognize different colors.	Recalls and identifies colors correctly.	Easily identifies colors, was able to mix colors independently
Handling and placement of paint	Was not able to handle paint or make decisions regarding placement of the material.	Handled paint and was able to make decisions regarding placement.	Easily handled the paint and placement of medium. Was able to create shapes/texture on the composition independently.

Evaluation methods may require adjustment based on institutional/organizational requirements. Evaluation should also be modified for children meeting higher or lower levels of development.

SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE!

Help us to continue to develop kindergarten readiness resources that you can use with children ages 0-5. Follow the link below to complete a short survey and provide your insights.

Purposeful Play + Artful Learning Survey

STANDARDS FOR DEVELOPMENT:

COGNITIVE: Students will recall the differences between geometric shapes (i.e. the difference between a square and a rectangle or square and circle) in order to understand what they are seeing in the painting. They will also be able to recollect the different names of shapes, colors, and abstract ideas of what the shapes may or may not represent.

- Approach tasks and activities with increased flexibility, imagination, inventiveness, and confidence (3)
- Grow in abilities to persist in and complete a variety of tasks, activities, projects, and experiences (3)
- Explore, experiment, and ask questions freely (3)
- Demonstrate interest and eagerness in seeking information (e.g., be able to see things from a different perspective, fiddling with something to figure it out or attempting a reasonable solution) (4)
- Express a sense of wonder (4)
- Choose to take opportunities to explore, investigate, or question in any domain (4)
- Begin to organize projects or play; make and carry out plans (4)
- Demonstrate a growing capacity to make meaning, using one's habits of mind to find a solution or figure something out (5)
- Begin to hypothesize or make inferences (5)
- Show an increasing ability to observe detail and attributes of objects, activities, and processes (5)

- Children begin to develop strategies that assist them in viewing a variety of images and multimedia
- View images and other media materials for a variety of purposes (18)
- Use different strategies for understanding various media (18)
- Take pride in their own abilities and increase self-motivation (30)
- Recognize, describe, copy, extend, and create simple patterns with real objects and through pictures (35)
- Recognize patterns in various formats (35)
- Show awareness that things in their environment can be measured (38)
- Begin to use non-standard measures (e.g., length of hand) for length and area of objects (38)
- Begin to recognize and appreciate geometric shapes in their environment (39)
- Begin to build an understanding of directionality, order, and positions of objects through the use of words (39)
- Recognize, describe, copy, extend, and create simple patterns with real objects and through pictures (39)
- Investigate patterns and describe relationships (39)
- Recognize patterns in various formats (39)
- Explore the environment, experiment and play with natural materials, explore the texture and sound.
- Gather information and learns new concepts through experimentation and discovery, making connections with what they already know (43)

LANGUAGE: Students will learn more about geometric shapes and the words used to describe and define them. They will also learn how to name and describe colors as they communicate their choices to instructors.

- Show an increasing ability to observe detail and attributes of objects, activities, and processes (5)
- Enlarge their vocabularies both with words from conversation and instructional materials and activities (13)
- Use spoken language for a variety of purposes (15)
- Continue to develop vocabulary by using words learned from stories and other sources in conversations (16)
- Use nonverbal expressions and gestures to match and reinforce spoken expressions (16)
- Gain information from listening (17)
- Show progress in listening to and following spoken directions (17)
- Children begin to develop strategies that assist them in viewing a variety of images and multimedia materials effectively and critically (18)
- View images and other media materials for a variety of purposes (18)
- Demonstrate an increasing ability to comprehend or understand the English language at an appropriate developmental level (20)
- Demonstrate increased understanding of simple words and phrases used in daily routines or content studies (20)
- Increase understanding of multiple meaning of words (20)
- Express basic needs using common words or phrases in English (20)
- Begin to build an understanding of directionality, order, and positions of objects through the use of words (39)
- Recognize, describe, copy, extend, and create simple patterns with real objects and through pictures (39)

SOCIAL: Students will engage in conversation with instructors and peers as they identify shapes, colors, and imagery outloud. Students will also communicate their choices of color and shape during the creation process.

- Show an increasing ability to initiate and sustain age-appropriate play and interactions with peers and adults (6)
- Begin to develop and practice the use of problem-solving and conflict resolution skills (6)
- Show an increasing capacity to consider or take into account another's perspective (6)
- Exhibit a growing regard for one's mind and capacity to learn; demonstrate the capacity of consideration for others; show a growing capacity to self-regulate and demonstrate self-efficacy (7)
- Increasingly develop greater self-awareness; identify their own interests and strengths. Can be comfortable choosing to be alone (8)
- Begin to take action to fix their mistakes, solve problems with materials, and resolve conflicts with others; do not blame others inappropriately (9)
- Use materials purposefully, safely, and respectfully more of the time (9)
- Respect the property of others and that of the community (9)
- Increase their capacity to take another's perspectives (27)
- Gather information and learn new concepts through experimentation and discovery, making connections with what they already know (43)

EMOTIONAL:
- Can be playful with peers and adults (2)
- Create new images or express ideas (2)
- Propose or explore possibilities to suggest what an object or idea might be otherwise (2)
- Approach tasks and activities with increased flexibility, imagination, inventiveness, and confidence (3)
- Children begin to develop strategies that assist them in viewing a variety of images and multimedia materials effectively and critically (18)
- Make connections with situations or events, people or stories (18)
- Approach tasks and activities with increased flexibility, imagination, inventiveness, and confidence (18)
- Identify a variety of feelings and moods (in themselves and others) (26)
- Can adapt to different environments (27)
- Increase their capacity to take another's perspectives (27)
- Participate successfully as a group member (28)
- Increasingly develops greater self-awareness; identifies his or her own interest and strengths (28)
- Take pride in their own abilities and increase self-motivation (30)
- Gather information and learn new concepts through experimentation and discovery, making connections with what they already know (43)

FINE MOTOR:
- Show an emerging sense of self-awareness (26)
- Use materials purposefully, safely, and respectfully more and more of the time (26)
- Begin to recognize and learn the names of body parts (28)
- Increasingly develops greater self-awareness; identifies his or her own interest and strengths (28)
- Children experience growth in fine motor development and use small muscles to improve a variety of fine motor skills both in structured and unstructured settings (29)
- Develop and refine motor control and coordination, eye-hand coordination, finger/thumb and whole-hand strength coordination and endurance using a variety of age-appropriate tools. (29)

GROSS MOTOR:
- Show an emerging sense of self-awareness (26)
- Use materials purposefully, safely, and respectfully more and more of the time (26)
- Begin to recognize and learn the names of body parts (28)
- Increasingly develops greater self-awareness; identifies his or her own interest and strengths (28)
- Children experience growth in gross motor development and use large muscles to improve a variety of gross motor skills in a variety of both structured and unstructured and planned and spontaneous settings (29)
- Show their ability to use different body parts in a rhythmic pattern (29)
- Show increasing abilities to coordinate movements (29)
- Explore the environment, experiment and play with natural materials, explore the texture, sound and smells of nature (42)

INTEGRATED SUBJECT MATTER:

Whenever applicable, this portion of the lesson will provide a brief list of creative curriculum standards from other subject areas (i.e. math, science, imaginative play, etc.). The list will also note how the subject is being integrated into the art lesson.

Math: shapes, geometry, numbers, lines
- Students will learn about different shapes - during the discussion portion of this program, the instructor will ask students what shapes are already recognized and known, what defines certain shapes, and how many sides each shape has.
- Students will learn about the differences of points of perspective - students will be able to change the way they look at certain objects from a front-on perspective to a “birds-eye-view” perspective in order to see how shapes, lines, and colors change from a different view point
- Recognize, describe, copy, extend, and create simple patterns with real objects and through pictures (35)
- Identify patterns in their environment (35)
- Investigate patterns and describe relationships (35)
- Recognize patterns in various formats (e.g., things that can be seen, heard, felt) (35)
- Match, build, compare, and label amounts of objects and events in their daily lives (35)
- Develop an increasing interest and awareness of numbers and counting as a means for determining quality and solving problems (35)
- Use cardinal (e.g., one, two) and ordinal (e.g., first, second) numbers in daily home and classroom life (36) - students will describe the different levels of layers of colors and tape in order to describe their piece of work. They will also be able to describe the order in which they will apply different colors of paint
- Children explore and discover simple ways to measure (38)
- Show awareness that things in their environment can be measured (38)
- Begin to use non-standard measures (e.g., length of hand) for length and area of objects (38)
- Begin to understand that tools (e.g., rulers, scales, counters) can be used to measure properties of objects and amounts (38)
- Children build their visual thinking skills through explorations with shape and the spaces in their classrooms and neighborhoods (39)
- Can make models, draw, name, and/or classify common shapes and verbally describe them in simple terms (39)
- Begin to recognize and appreciate geometric shapes in their environment (39)

- Begin to build an understanding of directionality, order, and position of objects through the use of words (e.g., up, down, over, under, top, bottom, inside, outside, in front of, behind). Identify patterns in their environment (39)
- Recognize, describe, copy, extend, and create simple patterns with real objects and through pictures (39)
- Investigate patterns and describe relationships (39)
- Recognize patterns in various formats (e.g., things that can be seen, heard, felt) (39)

Science:
- children develop positive attitudes and gain knowledge about science through observation and active play (40)
- demonstrate curiosity about and interest in their natural environment that leads them to confidently engage in activities related to science (40)
- ask questions related to their own interest and observations (40)
- expand their observational skills (40)
- children show a beginning awareness of scientific knowledge related to living and nonliving things (40)
- demonstrate a growing ability to collect, talk about, and record information about living and nonliving things (e.g., through discussions, drawings) (40)
- begin to categorize living and nonliving things in their environment based on characteristics they can observe (e.g., texture, color, size, shape, temperature, usefulness, weight) (40)

Creative Arts:
- children show how they feel, what they think, and what they are learning through experiences in the visual arts (10)
- begin to show growing awareness and use of artistic elements (e.g., line, shape, color, texture, form) (10)
- show growing satisfaction with their own creative work and growing respect for the creative works of others (12)
- use creative arts to express their view of the world (12)
- can talk about their creations with peers and adults (12)
- begin to develop creative arts vocabulary (12)