

# **RIOT ON THE WALLS!**



Interpretive Guide & Hands-on Activities



# RIOT ON THE WALLS!

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program

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Produced by the Art Gallery of Alberta

TREX is funded by the Alberta Foundation for the Arts

*The Alberta Foundation for the Arts, the Travelling Exhibition Program (Trex), and the Art Gallery of Alberta acknowledge that the artistic activity we support takes place on the traditional territories of Treaty 6, 7 and 8. We acknowledge the many First Nations, Métis and Inuit who have lived on and cared for these lands for generations and we are grateful for the traditional Knowledge Keepers, Elders and those who have gone before us. We make this acknowledgement as an act of reconciliation and gratitude to those whose territory we reside on. We reaffirm our commitment to strengthening our relationships with Indigenous communities and growing our shared knowledge and understanding.*

**Image left**

Clay Ellis  
*Holdings - Brighton Chair, 2023*  
Mixed Media  
Courtesy of the artist

**Cover image**

Zachary Reid  
*#2, 2024*  
Acrylic  
Courtesy of the artist





Gibril

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### Image left

Gibril Bangura  
*Ambience*, 2023  
Mixed Media  
Courtesy of the artist

# ABOUT TREX

## The AFA Travelling Exhibition Program

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program (TREX) strives to ensure every Albertan is provided with an opportunity to enjoy fully developed exhibitions in schools, libraries, health care centres and smaller rural institutions and galleries throughout the province.

The TREX program assists in making both the AFA's extensive art collection and the work of contemporary Alberta artists available to Albertans. The program also offers educational support material for teachers to encourage visual arts exhibitions into the school curriculum.

Four regional organizations coordinate the program for the Foundation:

- **TREX Northwest**  
Produced by The Art Gallery of Grande Prairie, Grande Prairie
- **TREX Central & Northeast**  
Produced by Art Gallery of Alberta, Edmonton
- **TREX Southwest**  
Produced by Alberta Society of Artists, Calgary
- **TREX Southeast**  
Produced by Esplanade Arts & Heritage Centre, Medicine Hat

These partners offer a wide range of exhibitions to communities from High Level in the north, to Milk River in the south, and virtually everywhere in between!



## Alberta Foundation for the arts

Beginning in 1972, the Alberta Art Collection was proposed as an opportunity to support and encourage Alberta artists by purchasing original works, as well as creating a legacy collection for the people of Alberta.

The AFA was established as a Crown agency of the Government of Alberta through the Alberta Foundation for the Arts Act in 1991, with a mandate to support the arts in Alberta.

This mandate is accomplished by providing persons and organizations with the opportunity to participate in the arts in Alberta; fostering and promoting the enjoyment of works of art by Alberta artists; collecting, preserving, and displaying works of art by Alberta artists; and encouraging artists resident in Alberta to continue their work.

## Art Gallery of Alberta

The Art Gallery of Alberta is a centre of excellence for the visual arts in Western Canada, connecting people, art and ideas. The AGA is focused on the development and presentation of original exhibitions of contemporary and historical art from Alberta, Canada and around the world.

The AGA produces TRENZ Central & Northeast Alberta. Through TRENZ the AGA ships exhibitions to over 50 venues in over 35 communities each year.



## Interpretive Guide

With each TRENZ exhibition comes an educational Interpretive Guide. The suggested topics for discussion and accompanying activities can act as a guide to increase the viewers' enjoyment and to assist in developing programs to complement the exhibition. Questions and activities have been included at both beginner and advanced levels. This guide also contains images of the artworks in the exhibition which can be used for review and discussion. Be aware that copyright restrictions apply to unauthorized use or reproduction of artists' images.

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# ***RIOT ON THE WALLS!***

## ***EXHIBITION STATEMENT***

***Color! What a deep and mysterious language,  
the language of dreams.***

- Paul Gauguin, French artist

For most, the world is a riot of colour. One of the principal elements of art and design, colours describe everything around us; direct our attention and actions; and affect and symbolize our emotions.

The first colour pigments were created as early as 40,000 years ago. Since then colour and its use in painting has constantly been revised and reinterpreted. From an original palette of five colours – red, yellow, brown, black and white – scientific and technological advances through time have provided artists with a wealth of colours to work with. This, in turn, has influenced artistic styles, actual subject matter and artistic intents in painting.

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts travelling exhibition *Riot on the Walls!* explores colour as it is used by three contemporary artists from Edmonton. Featuring works by Gibril Bangura, Clay Ellis and Zachery Reid, the paintings and mixed media works in this exhibition are united in their use of vibrant, bold colours.

The reasoning behind the choices these artists make, however, are very different. Both Gibril Bangura and Zachery Reid are storytellers and use colour to create a mood and accentuate the story related. As expressed by Bangura, colour motivates him and brings him joy and he wishes

to share this joy with viewers as he relates the stories and scenes of his African heritage. Reid also strives to create a happy mood in his work through his use of colour, though his choices may actually contradict the imagery and story related. Through colour Reid invites viewers into his work and his 'own little world', and then leaves it to them to figure out what is actually going on. Finally, Clay Ellis is an actual part of the 'story' he creates. Seeing himself as an explorer, Ellis utilizes abstraction to investigate materials and processes. In this exploration, colour introduces a spatial quality to a piece and allows Ellis to create a sense of animation in his works.

Whether creating 'representational' works or investigating complete abstraction, the artists in the exhibition *Riot on the Walls!* are united by their use of colour as a principle means to express their aims and extend the moment of looking. As expressed by Gibril Bangura:

***The colour brings viewers into the  
work and the story holds them.***

In the process, all three artists strive to create a conversation with viewers, enabling them to learn about themselves and the world around them.

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*Riot on the Walls is curated by Shane Golby and produced by the Art Gallery of Alberta for the Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program. TREX is funded by the Alberta Foundation for the Arts.*



# EXHIBITION INVENTORY

3 artists | 18 framed 2D artworks | 2 text panels | 60 running feet



Gibril Bangura  
*Connection*, 2024  
Mixed Media  
36" x 24"  
Courtesy of the artist



Gibril Bangura  
*Going Home*, 2023  
Mixed Media  
31.5" x 23.5"  
Courtesy of the artist



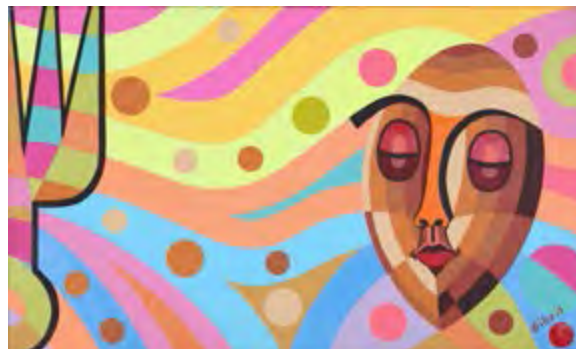
Gibril Bangura  
*Hope*, 2024  
Acrylic  
24" x 32"  
Courtesy of the artist



Gibril Bangura  
*Ambience*, 2024  
Mixed Media  
22" x 28"  
Courtesy of the artist



Gibril Bangura  
*Dreams 1*, 2024  
Acrylic  
30" x 18"  
Courtesy of the artist



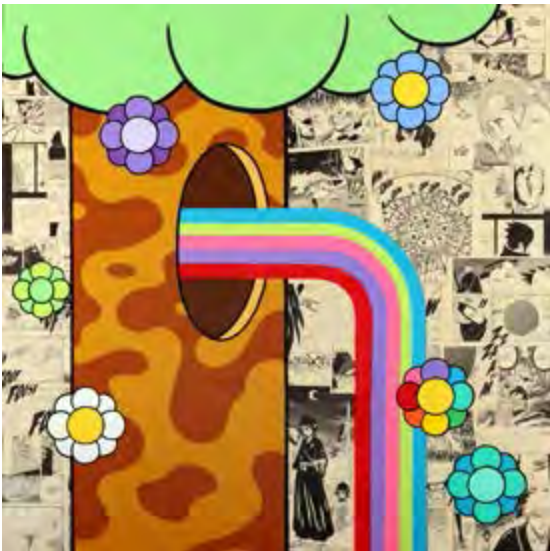
Gibril Bangura  
*Dreams 2*, 2024  
Acrylic  
30" x 18"  
Courtesy of the artist



Zachary Reid  
 #1, 2024  
 Acrylic  
 24" x 24"  
 Courtesy of the artist



Zachary Reid  
 #2, 2024  
 Acrylic  
 24" x 24"  
 Courtesy of the artist



Zachary Reid  
 #3, 2024  
 Acrylic  
 24" x 24"  
 Courtesy of the artist



Zachary Reid  
 #4, 2024  
 Acrylic  
 24" x 24"  
 Courtesy of the artist



Zachary Reid  
#5, 2024  
Acrylic  
24" x 24"  
Courtesy of the artist



Zachary Reid  
#6, 2024  
Acrylic  
24" x 24"  
Courtesy of the artist



Clay Ellis  
*Holdings - Bantry Splash*, 2022  
Mixed Media  
24" x 24"  
Courtesy of the artist



Clay Ellis  
*Holdings - Bent Stick*, 2023  
Mixed Media  
24" x 24"  
Courtesy of the artist



Clay Ellis  
*Holdings - Bantry Flare*, 2023  
Mixed Media  
24" x 24"  
Courtesy of the artist



Clay Ellis  
*Holdings - Boreal Tard*, 2022  
Mixed Media  
24" x 24"  
Courtesy of the artist



Clay Ellis  
*Holdings - Brighton Chair*, 2023  
Mixed Media  
24" x 24"  
Courtesy of the artist



Clay Ellis  
*Holdings - Boreal Cross*, 2023  
Mixed Media  
24" x 24"  
Courtesy of the artist

# ARTIST STATEMENTS & BIOGRAPHIES

## Gibril Bangura

### STATEMENT

My mother never had it easy in her life. She had always been on the receiving end. She was a beautiful woman; very creative with an outgoing personality. She was misunderstood by the men in her life. My paintings mainly depict the lives of women in various places around the world but mostly African. I try to paint them in beautiful coloured dresses to make them look empowered and confident. Because my mother was absent from my life, portraying women helps me connect with her even at this stage of my life. The other reason I paint is to make people happy. My paintings were dubbed HAPPY PAINTINGS by an interviewer at the CBC radio in Winnipeg. The vibrant colours of my paintings help me stay positive and happy.

### BIOGRAPHY

I am originally from Sierra Leone, a country by the Atlantic Ocean of west Africa. I grew up in a polygamous family: my dad had three wives including my mom so my mother ran away from my father's house with her children. After some unfortunate events I ended up living on the streets of Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone, at the age of seven years old. To keep my self from bad company and to think less about my loneliness i would go down to the sandy beaches of the city and draw on the sand day after day, morning to evening. That's how my love for the art started. When I was 12 I was invited to stay in an orphanage called the Boys Society of Sierra Leone; a charitable organization. At the orphanage I received my first set of water colours and brushes and sketch paper, I started putting colours to all the images I had in my head. I had my first exhibition at the UNESCO HEADQUARTERS Paris, France, in a conference titled THE POOREST OF THE POOR IN MANY NATIONS. My paintings were exhibited in the lobby of the hall. My exhibit depicted the deplorable conditions of living on the streets as a child.

I have been a full - time artist for over 30 years, using art as a medium to protest against bad government policies of all political parties. I fled my country due to political persecution because of my paintings that exposed the under belly of government power. I came to Canada in 2014 through the UNHCR Resettlement Program for Refugees. I lived as a refugee for many years in Guinea Conakry before resettling in Canada. I lived in Winnipeg before transferring to Edmonton in 2016. In Guinea I was able to teach art and batik and tie dye to women, youth and children. In Winnipeg I organized art classes in collaboration with nonprofit organizations to teach people with special needs in various places like art galleries and community centres. I was invited to talk at the HUMAN RIGHTS MUSEUM in Winnipeg for two sessions. I also brought children and young adults from different backgrounds and races to nursing homes, pairing them with seniors so that they could create a relationship through art. In Edmonton I have had exhibitions in galleries and the city hall and have art workshops where ever and when ever I can.

# Clay Ellis

## STATEMENT

Over the years I've developed a repertoire of images and forms which I've used repeatedly in sculptures, paintings, prints, videos, or installations. Some images are in a constant state of refinement, some stay connected to the spirit in which they were first realized, some are derived from process itself . . . with repetition or replication, certain marks become standards, riffs of sort. All are connected to certain moments in my studio practice . . . so the work process itself elicits memories.

I seldom begin work with the intent of illustrating a particular event from my past. Though memories of places, or moments in time, often surface during the process of assembling a piece . . . sometimes setting the tone or feel, sometimes steering a piece towards a conclusion, sometimes simply prompting a title.

It is the assemblage that distinguishes each new piece from the past. Even a minor shift in the placement of a mark can change the overall character of a piece. . . jolly can turn sinister, a wave can become an obscene gesture. And with a number of pieces simultaneously on the go, which is often the case, the entire series can be put into a state of flux. This interconnection, when an adjustment to one piece can ripple through the entire studio, is what I work towards . . . and is usually the stimulus for a new series of images.

# Zachery Reid

My name is Zachery Reid. I was born in 1994 in eastern Canada and raised in western Canada. My first experience with art began very early, earlier than I can remember. Growing up, there was amazing art everywhere for a child like me. From the video games and cartoons to the toys and everything in between, bright and colourful art was everywhere to inspire a kid. But it was never until I was an early adult that I even realized I liked to draw at all, and it was not until 2014 that I started to learn how to paint. I always had a deep love for art, but I never really knew how much.

One day I realized that being creative has less to do with practise or perfection and more to do with the desire to create that lives inside you. The feeling

## BIOGRAPHY

Clay Ellis was born in Medicine Hat, Alberta, Canada, in 1955. He currently resides in Edmonton, where he has maintained a studio since 1981. Ellis has been included in numerous exhibitions in England, France, Spain, Botswana, the USA, and Canada. He has been a participant in many international workshops.

In 1995, while living in France, he co-organized Triangle France, an international artists workshop held at the l'Ecole d'Art de Marseille-Luminy. In 2003 he was the guest artist at the Emma Lake Workshop, Saskatchewan, Canada. In 2006, he was invited to be an artist in residence and construct an installation in the Hopkins Center, Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH.

He has given lectures at the University of Lethbridge, the University of Saskatchewan, the Georgian College, the Emily Carr School of Art and Design, and the New York Studio School. He is represented in private and public collections including the Mendel Art Gallery, the Art Gallery of Alberta, the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, the Canada Council, the Alberta Foundation for the Arts, and the Museum of Contemporary Art in Barcelona.

you get when you enjoy a piece of art is the same feeling you get from creating a piece of art; it feels very personal and no one can take that away from you. Likewise, I have no formal education or training; I'm completely self-taught, but that does not stop me in any way from being creative. Through a determination to want to improve my artistic abilities to better convey my ideas and a commitment to learning from myself, pop culture, and the art of the world so that I can continue to improve and make more and better art into the future, my art style is a mix of colourful and crazy, focusing on creating my own world of wacky characters and surreal settings mixing inspirations from pop culture, cartoonism, pop art and graffiti styles.

# ARTIST INTERVIEWS

## Zachery Reid

Born in Cornerbrook, Newfoundland, in the late 1990s, Zachery Reid was raised in Edmonton and continues to call the city home. A self-taught artist, he began his art practice in 2014 and after about two or three years felt comfortable sharing his work with others. While he had always liked art and feels he is a creative person, he never really explored his creativity until one day, when he was about twenty years old, something just clicked in him and he decided to start drawing and painting.

Being of the millennial generation, Reid's primary artistic influences come from animation, toys, cartoons and video games. Finding these genre a good jumping-off point to start investigating art, he continues to learn and investigate the world and art around him. Besides the fields mentioned above, he derives inspiration from pop art, graffiti art, abstraction and fantastical/surrealist art as well. As he describes himself:

*I'm like a traveler... absorbing (influences) from many styles and artists and now just take it all in and have refined and developed my own style.*

*I find it all very interesting. My intent with colour is to try to make my artwork feel 'happy'. It's important for me to create my own little world and you (the viewer) can look into it. It doesn't have to be any deeper than that.*

Speaking in more detail concerning these influences, Reid expresses that his interest in graffiti directed him to develop his own style: that the cultivation of a name or idea in graffiti art influenced him to cultivate his own unique vision. As concerns pop art, Reid is most influenced by the contemporary Japanese artist Takashi Murakami. As he indicates, the bright colours and 'noise' characteristic of Murakami's works reflects contemporary life and Murakami's art is 'art for today'. Finally, Reid is also very interested in the fantastic

and surreal and finds inspiration in artists such as the 16th century artist Hieronymus Bosch.

As a self-taught artist, Reid approaches his work in a very intuitive manner. As he states,

*I like the idea of breaking the rules in art and making my own rules.*

This is clearly seen in his use of colour. As he expresses, his use of colour is not based on traditional colour theories. Rather, his colour choices come from his own understanding of how colour works and he plays with what colours he should use and his analysis of whether or not the colour combinations make sense. In his works there is usually an explosion of very bright, intense colours. As well, the colours often contradict the actual imagery in the work. As voiced by the artist:

*I find it all very interesting. My intent with colour is to try to make my artwork feel 'happy'. It's important for me to create my own little world and you (the viewer) can look into it. It doesn't have to be any deeper than that.*

In speaking of himself, Reid would love to live a life creating art. He finds creating artwork truly fulfilling and is not really asking for much more than that. As for the viewer, Reid hopes his work creates a conversation: that people think of something when looking at his work and that it tells them something about themselves or the world around them.



# Gibril Bangura

***Colour is a language that has no barriers. Colour is a language that unifies the universe. Colour speaks, even without a word.***

Gibril Bangura was born in Sierra Leone, West Africa. Orphaned at age seven, he spent five years living on the streets of Freetown before being taken into an orphanage by the Boys Society of Sierra Leone.

Bangura began his art career as a child, drawing on the beach in Freetown to pass the time and cope with his loneliness. In the orphanage his talent was encouraged and tutored by instruction from orphanage instructors and professional visiting artists. When he was around fifteen or sixteen years old he was mentored by the Ghanaian professional artist Munir Deishinni Mohammed, an experience Bangura relates as his first introduction to a real artist at work.

In 1988, when he was 19, Bangura won a scholarship to go to the United States to participate in an art exchange project sponsored by the US government. This program, which sponsored students from Africa and the Caribbean, enabled Bangura to share his knowledge and culture with others and learn from other artists in Universities around the United States. When this program was completed, the orphanage in Sierra Leone then sent Bangura to Canada (Whitby, Ontario) to collaborate with Canadian artists. After a few months he then returned to Sierra Leone.

The experiences Bangura had in his travels were life changing. As expressed by the artist:

***With the knowledge I gained in the United States and Canada, I saw things with a different perspective. What I gained from the west was an opening to my creativity as an African artist. The various skills I was exposed to opened me up to the various possibilities of how I could create as an African artist and I began to tap into my heritage, culture and traditions and develop my own path.***

Gibril Bangura's paintings could be described as vibrantly coloured abstract or stylized in nature. Influenced by pictures by western artists, he began his practice as a realist artist, creating portraits and scenes with charcoal, pastels and whatever paints he could access. Through time, however, he has moved to his present style with the aim that people/viewers should be able to look at his paintings and interpret them in their own way. Colour is integral to this. As stated by Bangura:

***The colour brings viewers into the work and the story holds them.***

In discussing colour, Bangura shares that his world and upbringing was very dark. For the artist colour proved therapeutic. As he describes it,

***Colour was my saving grace.***

For Bangura, colour radiates happiness and enlightens him: it motivates him and brings him joy. As he states:

***The more I painted these colourful paintings, the more I began to experience a kind of freedom in my own life. I began to experience peace and happiness. The more I paint these things, the more I feel liberated and I see the healing powers of colours transforming my own life.***

As also expressed by the artist, his colour choices occur 'naturally'. He begins a work with a story or image in his mind but everything else, such as colours and designs, develop as he paints.

In his work Gibril Bangura has two main aims. One is for people to understand his culture and traditions. Above all, however, he wants people to look at his paintings and bring their own interpretations in a language they will understand. He wishes viewers to take a journey into the world of his art; to interpret the works in their own ways; and to tap into their own inner creativity.

# Clay Ellis

Clay Ellis was born in Medicine Hat. Always interested in art, his artistic desires were fuelled by attending Medicine Hat High School. Affiliated with Medicine Hat College, the school had, in Ellis' words, an incredible art studio and this really changed things for him.

While he attended Medicine Hat College for a short time following high school, it was an invitation from Albertan ceramicist Luke Lindoe from the Alberta College of Art in Calgary for Ellis to work at Lindoe's business, Plainsman Clay, which really allowed him to take his work to another level. Working with Lindoe, Ellis developed his own ceramic works and glazes. He also began to attend summer courses at the Banff School of Fine Arts and other workshops, such as at Emma Lake, Saskatchewan, all of which influenced his work and the direction it followed. As expressed by the artist:

***My art education was a self-directed process. Everything was about working and working with artists and working in studio environments.***

Ellis' art career has primarily concentrated on abstraction. While he did figurative work early on, in his ceramics he focused on process and design. As stated by Ellis:

***With abstraction I was given more flexibility with what I produced. In abstraction one is not confined by an image in their head of what they want to create and is able to react to the process and materials.***

In his ceramic and later metal sculptural work, he developed a number of skill sets, which have allowed him to explore a variety of materials.

***The art process is not linear. It's a volume which can expand in numerous directions and on all sides. This 'philosophy' gives me the freedom to explore. I come to the studio to explore and that is the greatest pleasure. I'm a bit of a nerd when it comes to materials and process and focus on exploring these.***

Ellis' current works are characterized by the use of intense colour combinations. This, however, was not always the case. In his early works he tried to make polychromatic works but found that the only way he could do that was through using a limited range of primarily earth-toned colours. This changed when he did a series of ceramic sculptures with Kim Noland, an American Abstract painter. Noland used intense colours on the sculptures, responding directly to what happened before him and Ellis responded to this freedom and began to just try things out. As he indicates:

***My sense has nothing to do with colour theory but rather with just trying something out and deciding if it works. Some artists are more considered in their use of colour whereas others are more intuitive. I respond to what I've already laid down.***

Ellis' colours function in space. Even if a work and the colours are flat, the colours create a relief and his interest is in where colour positions an object in space and how it affects other elements in the piece. As he expresses:

***Colour allows me to introduce a spatial quality to a piece that isn't limited by the actual relief in the work. It also opens my works up to a different level of collage. I want my works to read as single pieces but also play with the elements through colour, scale and placement to create a sense of animation in them.***

As an artist, Clay Ellis' intent is to present what is of interest to him as clearly as he can. What the viewer takes away from viewing his works is entirely up to them but he does strive to extend 'the moment' of looking so the viewer can find what they need in a piece.

# TALKING ART

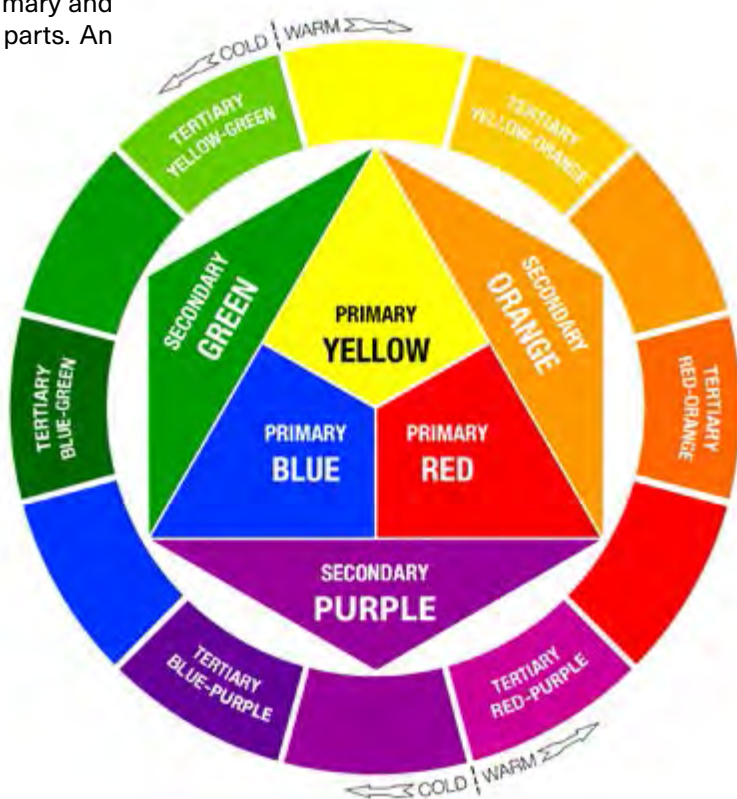
## THE ART OF COLOUR

For the majority of people, the world is made up of colour. When speaking of art, colour is one of the principal elements and gives an artwork meaning, beauty - or ugliness - and can evoke strong emotions. Colour is the result of reflected or absorbed light. Light, in the form of wavelengths, reaches receptors, called rods or cones, in our eyes which allow us to see specific colours.

Colour is charted on what is known as the colour wheel. This was first invented in the 1600s by Sir Isaac Newton and provides a visual colour key to the different colour categories or schemes and how they relate to each other.

The first colour scheme refers to colours which occur naturally. These are known as **Primary Colours** and refer to blue, red and yellow. The second scheme of colours are formed by mixing two primary colours. These **Secondary Colours** are green (blue + yellow), orange (yellow + red) and purple (blue + red). The third scheme - **Tertiary Colours** - are formed when primary and secondary colours are mixed in equal parts. An example of this is red-orange.

Two other colour schemes that can be discussed are Complementary Colours and Analogous Colours. **Complementary Colours** are those that are opposite each other on the colour wheel. An example of this is red and green. **Analogous Colours**, on the other hand, are those that are beside each other on the colour wheel. An example of this would be orange, yellow-orange, and red-orange. The use of complementary colours create a strong contrast, emphasis and sense of energy in a work whereas the use of analogous colours creates a more harmonious effect.



Toni-Hauri  
Colour Theory Wheel, 2020

## COMPLEMENTARY COLOURS



Wassily Kandinsky  
*Composition X*, 1939  
Oil on canvas

## ANALOGOUS COLOURS



Claude Monet  
*Haystacks, Sunset*, 1890-1891  
Oil on canvas

Four different ways colour can be described are:

- **Hue** - the colour's location within the colour spectrum and its dominant colour.  
Example: Blue
- **Saturation or Intensity** - this refers to the hue's purity. When a colour is not mixed with another, it is called 'pure'. Colour intensity can create spatial depth or focus in a work. In a 'traditional' landscape painting, for example, as objects recede in space they become lighter or the colour becomes less saturated/intense.
- **Temperature** - colours can be described as warm or cool. Warm colours are yellow, red, orange while cool colours are blue, purple and green.
- **Value** - colour value refers to the level of light or darkness of a colour.



John James Audubon  
*Arctic Hares* 1841  
Pen and black ink and graphite with watercolour and oil paint on paper

Colours can affect the composition of an image in various ways. They can be used to provide harmony or unity or contrast in a scene. They can also create a visual path in a work and create rhythm. Finally, they can create emphasis in an art piece and can be used to create a mood and feeling in an art piece.

# THE ART OF COLOUR: COLOURS AND SYMBOLISM

The first colour pigments were invented nearly 40,000 years ago. Using soil, animal fat, burnt charcoal and chalk, early humans created a basic colour palette of five colours: red, yellow, brown, black and white. Since prehistoric times these basic pigments have undergone tremendous transformations with advancements in science and 'new' colours have been added to this grouping. These developments not only opened new doors for artists but also facilitated the development of new art movements from the Renaissance to the present day.

**As colours were developed, they became associated in the minds of both artists and viewers with certain meanings and representations.** Such associations, or symbolic meaning, is dependent on context, culture and time and has an affect not only on art but on everything we see around us. Diversity in colour symbolism occurs because colour meanings and symbolism occur on an individual, cultural and universal basis. As a result, the meaning attached to a colour by one culture can be significantly different than that found in another culture and even within one culture a colour can have a multitude of often contradictory meanings.



Czechoslovak Socialist Realism painting, 1948-1958

**One of the first colours ever created is the primary colour red.** Originally derived from red ochre or clay that contains the mineral hematite, red ochre is one of the oldest pigments still in use. In the 16th and 17th centuries, red was also

derived from small, cochineal cactus-feeding insects native to Mexico. Because red is associated with fire and blood it symbolically represents danger, anger and violence. For the same reason it is also used to symbolize love and passion. Other meanings for red are energy, hate, rebellion and revolution. In China and India, however, red is a symbol of good luck.



Leonardo da Vinci  
*Virgin of the Rocks*, 1483-1486

**Blue, the second of the three primary colours, is often associated with the ocean and the sky.** Because of this, it can be a calming colour and is used to symbolize serenity, stability, inspiration and wisdom. Blue is often used for baby boys' clothes or rooms and can represent sadness or depression. In India, blue is symbolic of mercy while in the Jewish tradition, blue denotes holiness. Painters have traditionally used blue for the robes of the Virgin Mary but there is no religious symbolism behind this. Rather, the choice of blue for the Virgin's robes is due to the high cost of blue paint during the Middle Ages up to the 20th century. Until the 1950s the blue used to create blue paint came from the gemstone Lapis lazuli, which could only be found in Afghanistan. For centuries this gemstone, and the colour created from it, commanded a price equivalent to gold.



Vincent van Gogh  
*Van Gogh's Chair*, 1888

**The third primary colour is yellow.** The colour of the sun, yellow has been associated for millennia with feelings of joy, happiness, playfulness and warmth. Despite these very positive attributes, however, yellow can also mean caution or warning and is also used in association with cowardice or fear.

Red, blue and yellow are primary colours and cannot be mixed or formed by combining other colours. All other colours are created by mixing the primary colours and can be defined as either secondary or tertiary colours. Secondary colours are formed by mixing two primary colours while tertiary colours are created by mixing primary and secondary colours. Secondary and tertiary colours, like primary colours, also have their symbolic associations. The secondary colours are green, orange and purple.

**Green, a secondary colour made by mixing yellow and blue, evokes nature and renewal and is associated with such things as fertility, freshness, growth, health and good luck.** In America, however, green can also be associated with money, greed, envy, naivety, sickness and jealousy. These negative connotations are partly the result of how green was made. In 1775 a Swedish chemist named Carl Wilhelm Scheele invented a green hue that was mixed with toxic arsenic. This pigment, called Scheele's Green, and emerald green which was invented a few years later, were extremely popular with Impressionist artists but it is believed they were responsible for many early deaths and sicknesses that resulted from their use.

**Orange is a secondary colour created by mixing red and yellow.** Generally bright and bold, orange is associated with amusement, extroversion, fire, energy and activity and is the colour most closely associated with autumn. In the Buddhist faith, orange represents humility and renunciation. In China and Japan it represents love, happiness and plenitude.

**Purple, a secondary colour made by mixing blue and red, is a very ancient colour.** Approximately developed in the first millennium BC, purple derived from a tiny shellfish and the pigment was known as purpura or Tyrian purple. Because of its rarity and cost of production, articles using purple could only be afforded by the wealthy/aristocracy and by the highest orders of the Catholic Church and so purple became associated with majesty, wealth and value. Because of its association with the Church, purple also came to represent religious devotion/spirituality, solemnity and leadership. Other meanings associated with this colour are femininity, grief, homosexuality, sensuality, sorrow and individualism.

# PAINTING WITH COLOUR: A BRIEF SURVEY



Johannes Vermeer  
*The Milkmaid*, 1658

**The use of colour in painting is a story of scientific discovery, technological advancements and the creative inventiveness of artists.** Artists invented the first pigments as early as 40,000 years ago. Using a combination of soil, animal fat, charcoal and chalk, these early artists created a basic palette of five colours: red, yellow, brown, black and white. Over time, through scientific experimentation and colour mixing, other colours such as blue and green were added to this original palette.

Despite the addition of other colours, however, in Medieval Europe colours were rarely mixed and colour choices were often dictated by the importance of a subject rather than any attempt at realism. The Virgin Mary, for example, is usually portrayed wearing a blue cloak. This was not for any religious reason but due to her importance and blue, which was a very expensive colour to create and use, was thus deemed appropriate for the mother of Christ. Also, because colours were rarely mixed, medieval paintings often have a distinctive 'paint by numbers' appearance to them. By the 1500s the use of colour began to loosen up and colours were no longer used for

specific purposes or treated as separate 'entities'. Pigments began to be mixed to create more realistic effects and the growing emphasis on realism or naturalism, with colours related to the object/subject being portrayed, dominated painting until the mid 1800s.

The Industrial Revolution in Europe (approximately 1760 to 1840) brought two important innovations to the act of painting. First, this era saw the creation of synthetic pigments which made vibrant colours more available and affordable. Secondly, paints began to be produced in tubes. This allowed paint to be portable which led to *plein air* painting (outdoors) which, in turn, facilitated more experimentation in the use of colour. Both of these inventions, combined with the development of photography in the early 1800s, gave birth to the art movement known as Impressionism in the late 1800s.



Georges Seurat  
*A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte*,  
1884-1886

**Impressionism** had a tremendous influence on the use of colour in painting. The impressionist artists, a group of Paris-based artists who came to prominence during the 1870s and 1880s, were radicals in their time. Ignoring the rules of academic painting, they constructed their works with freely brushed colours that took precedence over lines and contours. Painting outdoors or *en plein air*, they portrayed visual effects instead of details and used short brush strokes of mixed and pure unmixed colour to achieve an effect of intense colour vibration.

### Key impressionist techniques are

1. Colours are applied side by side with as little mixing as possible. This exploits the principle of simultaneous contrast to make colours appear more vivid to viewers.
2. Greys and dark tones are produced by mixing complementary colours. Pure impressionism avoids the use of black paint.
3. The play of natural light is emphasized and close attention is paid to the reflection of colours from object to object.



Vincent van Gogh  
*The Night Cafe*, 1888

The development of impressionism was partly the result of the development of photography which seemed to make the artist's skill in reproducing reality unnecessary. Photography, while seeming to make painting realistically superfluous, inspired artists to pursue other avenues of creative expression. Instead of competing with photography, impressionist artists were encouraged to express their perceptions of nature rather than create exact representations. This allowed artists to depict subjectively what they saw and exploit aspects of painting, such as colour, which photography was unable to do at that time.

The art movement of impressionism was succeeded by the **post-impressionist movement**, which developed between 1886 and 1905.

Including such artists as Paul Cezanne, Paul Gauguin and Vincent van Gogh, the post-impressionists extended impressionism while rejecting its limitations. While they continued using vivid colours and painting from life, they were more inclined to emphasize geometric forms, distort forms for expressive effects, and use unnatural or modified colour. Vincent van Gogh, for example, often used vibrant colours and conspicuous brush strokes to convey his feelings and his state of mind.

The revolutionary use of colour which began with the Impressionists and continued with Post-Impressionism progressed further with a group of early 20th century artists known as **les Fauves** (French for 'the wild beasts'). These artists, led by André Derain, Maurice de Vlaminck and Henri Matisse, emphasized painterly qualities and strong colour over aspects of representation and realistic colour values retained by the Impressionists.

In **Fauvism**, paintings were characterized by wild brush work and strident colours and the subject matter of such paintings evidenced a high degree of simplification and abstraction. Fauvism has been compared to Expressionism in its use of brushwork and colour. With the post-impressionist, Fauve and Expressionist artists, paintings moved further and further away from any references to reality and, from the early 1900s to approximately the 1950s, complete abstraction came to dominate the art world in both Europe and North America. With abstraction, paint itself became the central part of an artwork. In this process and throughout the centuries examined, colour moved from being an inseparable and intrinsic part of the material something is made of to being a changeable, almost arbitrary attribute of a thing.

**“How do you see these trees? They are yellow. So, put in yellow; this shadow, rather blue, paint it with pure ultramarine; these red leaves? Put in vermilion.**

- Paul Gauguin



# ART STYLES: ABSTRACTION

**Of all the arts, abstract painting is the most difficult. It demands that you know how to draw well, that you have a heightened sensitivity for composition and for colours, and that you be a true poet. This last is essential.**

-Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944)

**Abstract Art** is a term applied to 20th century styles in reaction against the traditional European view of art as the imitation of nature. **Abstraction stresses the formal or elemental structure of a work and has been expressed in all genres or subjects of visual expression.** Characteristics of abstraction are seen in all the works in the exhibition *Riot on the Walls!*.

**Like all painting, abstract painting is not a unified practice.** Rather, the term 'abstraction' covers two main, distinct tendencies. **The first involves the reduction of natural appearances to simplified forms.** Reduction may lead to the depiction of the essential or generic forms of things by eliminating particular and accidental variations. Reduction can also involve the creation of art which works away from the individual and particular with a view to creating an independent construct of shapes and colours having aesthetic appeal in their own right.

**The second tendency in abstraction involves the construction of art objects from non-representational basic forms.** These objects are not created by abstracting from natural appearances but by **building up with non-representational shapes and patterns.** In other words, in this mode, abstract works are ones without a recognizable subject and do not relate to anything external or try to 'look like something'. Instead, the colour and form (and often the materials and support) are the subject of the abstract painting.

Whatever the tendency in abstraction, it is characteristic of most modes of abstraction that they abandon or subordinate the traditional function of art to portray perceptible reality and emphasize its function to create a new reality for the viewer's perception. As described by Roald Nasgaard in his work Abstract Painting in Canada:

**The first message of an abstract work is the immediate reality of our perception of it as an actual object in and of themselves, like other things in the world, except that they are uniquely made for concentrated aesthetic experience. (pg. 11)**



Clay Ellis  
*Holdings - Brighton Chair, 2023*

# ABSTRACTION IN EUROPEAN ART HISTORY

**Wassily Kandinsky** (1866-1944) is usually credited with making the first entirely non-representational painting in 1910. **The history of abstraction in European art, however, begins before Kandinsky in the later decades of the 19th century with the work of the French Impressionist artists** such as Claude Monet, Paul Cézanne and Georges Seurat. While the work of these artists was grounded in visible reality, their methods of working and artistic concerns began the process of breaking down the academic restrictions concerning what was acceptable subject matter in art, how artworks were produced and, most importantly, challenged the perception of what a painting actually was.



Paul Cézanne  
*Maison Arbres*, 1890-1894



Wassily Kandinsky  
*Composition VII*, 1913



George Seurat  
*A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte*,  
1884-1886

Radicals in their time, early Impressionists broke the rules of academic painting. They began by giving colours, freely brushed, primacy over line. They also took the act of painting out of the studio and into the modern world. Painting realistic scenes of modern life, they portrayed overall visual effects instead of details. They used short “broken” brush strokes of mixed and pure unmixed colour, not smoothly blended or shades as was customary, in order to achieve the effect of intense colour vibration.

**The vibrant colour used by the Impressionist artists was adopted by their successors, the Fauve artists.** The Fauves were modern artists whose works emphasized painterly qualities and strong colour over the representational or realistic values retained by the Impressionists. This group, which basically operated from 1905 to 1907, was led by Henri Matisse and André Derain.



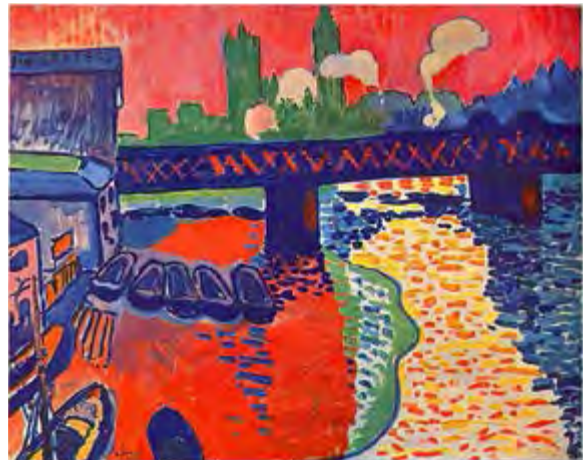
Henri Matisse  
*Harmony in Red*, 1908

The paintings of the Fauve artists were characterized by seemingly wild brush work and strident colours and, in their focus on colour over line and drawing, the subjects of their paintings came to be characterized by a high degree of simplification and abstraction.

**While the Impressionists and Fauve artists are the direct ancestors of the abstract movement in 20th century art, the real creator of abstraction was Pablo Picasso.** Picasso used primitive art from Africa and Oceania as a 'battering ram' against the classical conception of beauty. Picasso made his first cubist paintings, such as *Les Femmes d'Alger*, based on Cézanne's idea that all depiction of nature can be reduced to three solids: cube, sphere and cone. Together with Georges Braque, Picasso continued his experiments and invented **facet or analytical cubism**. As expressed in the *Portrait of Ambrose Vollard*, Picasso created works which can no longer be read as images of the external world but as worlds of their own.



Pablo Picasso  
*Portrait of Ambrose Vollard*, 1910



André Derain  
*Charing Cross Bridge, London* 1906

Fragmented and redefined, the images preserved remnants of Renaissance principles of perspective as **space lies behind the picture plane** and has no visible limits. By 1911 Picasso and Georges Braque developed what is known as **Synthetic Cubism** which introduced collage into art making. Through this process these artists introduced a whole new concept of space into art making.

In synthetic cubism, **the picture plane lies in front of the picture plane and the picture is recognized as essentially a flat object**. This re-definition of space, so different from the Renaissance principle of three-dimensional illusion that had dominated academic teaching for centuries, would have a profound effect on the development of abstraction in art and was a true landmark in the history of painting.

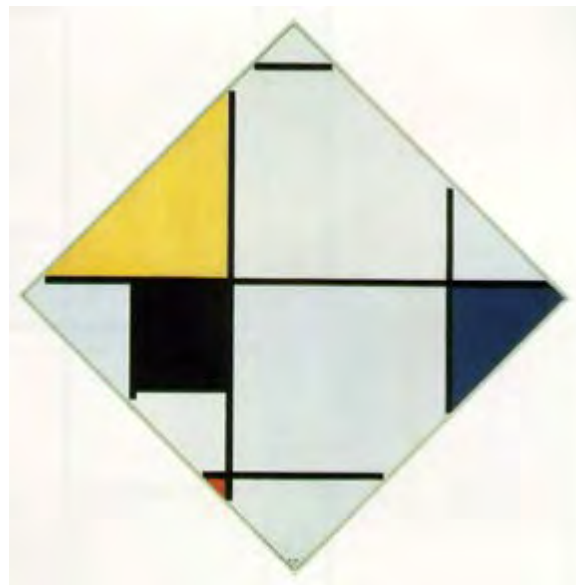
**Influenced by the practices of Impressionism, Fauvism and Cubism, artists gradually developed the idea that colour, line, form and texture could be the actual subjects of a painting and formed the essential characteristics of art. Adhering to this, Wassily Kandinsky and Piet Mondrian developed the first pure abstract works in 20th century art.**

**For both Kandinsky and Mondrian, abstraction was a search for truths behind appearances, expressed in a pure visual vocabulary stripped of representational references.**

**Wassily Kandinsky** (1866-1944) was born in Moscow. Originally trained in law and economics, Kandinsky started painting at the age of 30 and, in 1896, moved to Germany to study art full-time. After a brief return to Russia (1914-1921) Kandinsky returned to Germany where he taught at the Bauhaus school of art and architecture until it was closed by the Nazis in 1933. He then moved to France where he remained for the rest of his life.



Pablo Picasso  
*Still Life with a Bottle of Rum*, 1911



Piet Mondrian  
*Lozenge Composition with Yellow, Black, Blue, Red and Gray*, 1921



Wassily Kandinsky  
*Composition X*, 1939

Kandinsky's creation of purely abstract work followed a long period of development and maturation of theoretical thought based on his personal artistic experience. At first influenced by both pointillism and the Fauve artists, by 1922 geometrical elements had taken on increasing importance in his paintings. Kandinsky was also extremely influenced by music as he considered music abstract by nature as it does not try to represent the exterior world but rather to express in an immediate way the inner feelings of the human soul. He was also influenced by the theories of Theosophy expressed by H.P. Blavatsky. These theories, which had a tremendous influence on many artists during the 1920s, postulated that creation was a geometrical progression beginning with a single point. Kandinsky's mature paintings focus on geometric forms and the use of colour as something autonomous and apart from a visual description of an object or other form and through relinquishing outer appearances he hoped to more directly communicate feelings to the viewer.

**The most radical abstractionist of the early 20th century was Piet Mondrian (1872-1944).** Born in Amersfoort, the Netherlands, Mondrian began his career as a primary teacher. While teaching he also practiced painting and these early works, while definitely representational in nature, show the influence various artistic movements such as pointillism and fauvism had on him. Mondrian's art, like Kandinsky's, was also strongly influenced by the theosophical movement and his work from 1908 to the end of his life involved a search for the spiritual knowledge expressed by theosophist theory.

In 1911 Mondrian moved to Paris and came under the influence of Picasso's cubism. While cubist influences can be seen in his works from 1911 to 1914, however, unlike the Cubists Mondrian attempted to reconcile his painting with his spiritual pursuits. In this pursuit he began to simplify elements in his paintings further than the cubists had done until he had developed a completely non-representational, geometric style. In this work Mondrian did not strive for pure lyrical emotion as Kandinsky did. Rather, his goal was pure reality defined as equilibrium achieved through the balance of unequal but equivalent oppositions. By 1919 Mondrian began producing the grid-based paintings for which he became renowned and this subject motivated his art practice for the rest of his life.

## Conclusion

Abstraction in the visual arts has taken many forms over the 20th and into the 21st century. Among these modes are Colour Field Painting, Lyrical Abstraction, Abstract Expressionism/Action Painting, Op Art, and Post-painterly Abstraction. Whatever the tendency in abstraction, it is characteristic of most modes of abstraction that they abandon or subordinate the traditional function of art to portray perceptible reality and emphasize its function to create a new reality for the viewer's perception.

# ABSTRACT PAINTING IN EDMONTON: A BRIEF HISTORY

**The full impact of New York abstraction was not felt in the Canadian West until the 1950s.** These influences were first expressed at the Emma Lake Workshops and Regina in the 1950s, then Saskatoon in the 1960s, and finally in Edmonton in the mid to late 1960s and the 1970s. The effect was to put the prairies on 'the map' of Canadian art and marked the first time in Canada's cultural history that artwork from the prairie region was deemed worthy of national attention.

**The push of the Edmonton abstract art scene to the forefront of national attention was the result of a number of factors which came together in the late 60s and early 70s. The first of these was the construction of the new Edmonton Art Gallery (replaced by the new Art Gallery of Alberta in 2010) in 1968 and the directorship of the gallery by Terry Fenton (director: 1972-1987) and the gallery's chief curator Karen Wilken (1971-1978). The EAG under Fenton and Wilken was eager to nurture a coherent art scene that coalesced with its own views on art.** In 1973 Fenton invited New York artist Michael Steiner to appear at the EAG to jury an exhibition of abstract art and lead a workshop. At this very popular event Steiner encouraged local artists to be freer with materials and methods of paint application. Steiner's visit was followed by frequent visits to Edmonton by New York art critic Clement Greenberg and other American abstract artists which reinforced this direction.

**A second factor which led to the flowering of abstraction in the city was the revitalization of the Department of Art and Design at the University of Alberta.** A number of new instructors trained in England, the United States and elsewhere began their teaching careers at the U of A in the late 1960s and their influence, coupled with the curatorial interests of the EAG, would have a major influence on a younger generation of Edmonton artists. Among these important instructors were artists such as Graham Peacock, Phil Darrah, Ann Clarke, Douglas Haynes, and David Cantine. **Many of these artists, influenced by the work of the Americans Jules Olitski and Larry Poons, began putting an emphasis on the physical qualities and surface activity of paint itself, applied in a relatively all-over manner.**



Douglas Haynes  
*Emma Grecho IV*, 1988

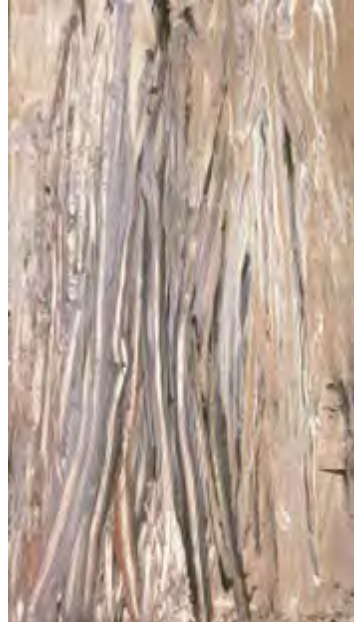
**The process of these artists was aided by the on-going transformation of acrylic paint technology. Because of Olitski, the use of acrylic gel became ubiquitous as the sign of advanced modernist painting.** Gel permitted painters both to reiterate the flatness of the surface and to build up a substantial surface texture where literal depth and relation to the surface remained transparently visible. The addition of a number of additives to acrylic paint and gel also made a huge variety of paint colours available for these artists to choose from.



Jules Olitski  
*Fair Charlotte*, 1961



Phil Darrah  
*Untitled, 1986*



Ann Clark  
*Ariadne #2, 1975*

Final factors which fostered the proliferation of abstract art in Edmonton during the 70s and 80s were the Commercial Galleries and corporate clients who supported the sophisticated New York style and the fact that a number of local artists were generally interested in the practice of abstraction.

**In the 1980s the predominance of formalist abstraction on the Edmonton scene ended and abstract artists were re-positioned on the margins of the art world. According to some, however, this marginalization has had its positive aspects. First, it has led to more distinctive styles.** Abstract artists now use recent developments in contemporary art like metaphor and external references which give the practitioners the freedom to abandon the self-referential and a strict 'art for art's sake' attitude. Edmonton's abstract painting is no longer simply a tale about 'close-valued, subtle colour compositions and heavy textured surfaces' but an open-ended exploration of abstract concerns.

**Secondly, being placed on the side-lines of the art world has 'forced' Edmonton's abstract artists to look for or develop other venues to support their work.** In 1993 twenty-two Edmonton

artists formed the Edmonton Contemporary Artists Society (ECAS) in order to create new exhibition opportunities and to show art in whose presence the viewer '...has an experience rather than an idea...art that should move you emotionally.'" (Abstract Painting in Canada, pg. 308) As expressed by Mary-Beth Laviolette, '...persistent throughout this apparently non-objective art is a strong current of romantic energy where a work is defined as 'an expression of feeling and personality...essentially the product of an independent vision'. (An Alberta Art Chronicle, pg. 165)

## Conclusion

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## ART STYLES: POP ART

**Pop Art** refers to an art movement that began in the mid 1950s in Britain and in the late 1950s in the United States. From the very start its imagery was largely based on American mass media and the movement thus had a special appeal to American artists. The Pop Art Movement reached its fullest development in America in the 1960s. Influences of Pop Art are seen in the works of Zachary Reid in the exhibition *Riot on the Walls!*.

Pop Art challenged tradition by asserting that an artist's use of the mass-produced visual commodities of popular culture is contiguous with the perspective of Fine Art. Pop Art is aimed to employ images of popular as opposed to elitist culture in art, emphasizing the banal or kitschy elements of any given culture. As such, pop art employs aspects of mass culture such as advertising, comic books and mundane cultural objects as art subjects such as hamburgers and ice-cream cones. Pop Art is also associated with the artists' use of mechanical means of reproduction or rendering techniques such as the commercial advertising technique of silk-screening.

In the United States Pop Art was initially regarded as a reaction to **Abstract Expressionism** because its exponents brought back figurative, representational imagery and made use of **hard-edged, quasi-photographic techniques**. Pop artists were often labeled Neo-Dadaists because they used commonplace subjects such as comic strips (Roy Lichtenstein), soup tins (Andy Warhol) and highway signs which had affinities with Marcel Duchamp's 'ready-mades' of the early 20th century.

Artists associated with the Pop Art Movement are not unified in their artistic approaches but, generally speaking, **Pop Art works can often be defined in style by the use of simplified imagery and bright colours and their paintings are about something beyond personal symbolism and 'painterly looseness'**.



Roy Lichtenstein  
*Drowning Girl*, 1963



Zachary Reid  
*#4*, 2024  
Mixed Media



# STORY-TELLING AND NARRATIVE ART

**Story: 1/ narrative, account**

**2/ report, statement**

**syn: chronicle**

**Storyteller n: a teller of stories**

**Storytelling - adj. or noun**

-The Merriam-Webster Dictionary

According to most historians and psychologists, storytelling is one of the things that define and bind humanity, and human beings are perhaps the only animals that create and tell stories.

Storytelling is the conveying of events in words, images and sounds. Storytelling is a means for sharing and interpreting experiences and stories or narratives have been shared in every culture as a means of entertainment, education, cultural preservation and to instill moral values. Stories mirror human thought as humans think in narrative structures and most often remember facts in story form. Facts themselves can be understood as smaller versions of a larger story; thus storytelling can supplement analytical thinking.

Stories are also effective educational tools because listeners become engaged and therefore



Gibril Bangura  
*Going Home, 2023*  
Mixed Media

remember. While the listener is engaged they are able to imagine new perspectives, inviting a transformative and empathetic experience. The history of storytelling demonstrates that stories come in a number of varieties: myths, legends, fairy tales, trickster stories, fables, ghost tales, hero stories, epic adventures, and explanatory tales. Crucial elements to all stories, however, are the elements of plot, characters, and narrative point of view.

**While stories are most often told through oral traditions or through written forms, they have also been 'told' visually for thousands of years, at least since the time of the ancient Egyptians. Narrative art is art that tells a story, either as a moment in an ongoing story or as a sequence of events unfolding over time. Until the 20th century much of Western art has been narrative in nature, depicting stories from religion, myth and legend, history and literature.**



John Everett Millais  
*The Boyhood of Raleigh, 1870*

**Narratives occur in a space and unfold over time (they are diachronic). Pictures do not naturally lend themselves to telling stories as they are seen all at once (synchronic). As a result, artists choose how to portray the story, represent the space, and how to shape time within the artwork. Narrative art can thus be categorized into various types, also known as modes or styles.**

**1/ Simultaneous Narrative:** A simultaneous narrative is one that has very little discernible organization except to viewers acquainted with its purpose. It can focus on geometric or abstract designs as well as the placement or arrangement of items within the artwork. Such narratives concentrate on repeatable patterns and redundant systems with a focus on dualities. The interpretation of a simultaneous narrative is dependent on the reason for its creation or its creator who can interpret it as it was meant to be. Simultaneous narratives are common in cultures that are oral in nature rather than literate as they require human agency in order to be understood as originally intended.

**2/ Monoscenic Narrative:** A monoscenic narrative is one that represents a single scene. There is no repetition of characters and there is only one action taking place. Under this definition most art could be considered narrative. However, **it is important to remember that Narrative Art tells a story and so, although only one scene may be represented, the scene must usually involve action or imply events occurring before or after what is portrayed.**



*Trajan's Column, detail*  
Rome, Italy



*Amphora by Exekias*  
*Achilles kills Penthesilea*  
Ancient Greece

**3/ Continuous Narrative:** A continuous narrative is one which illustrates many scenes of narrative within a single frame. In this type of narrative, multiple actions and scenes are portrayed in a single visual field without any dividers. The sequence of events is defined through the reuse of the main character or characters and scene or phase changes in the narrative are indicated through the change in movement and state of the repeating characters. The Column of Trajan (right) is an example of a continuous narrative as events flow from one scene to another without any physical indicators such as vertical lines to divide actions or time periods.



Buddha's birth as the elephant Chaddanta

**4/ Synoptic Narrative:** In this type of narrative a single scene is depicted in which character/s are portrayed multiple times to convey that multiple actions are taking place.

**5/ Panoptic Narrative:** Such narratives depict multiple scenes and actions without the repetition of characters. Actions may be in a sequence or represent simultaneous actions during an event.

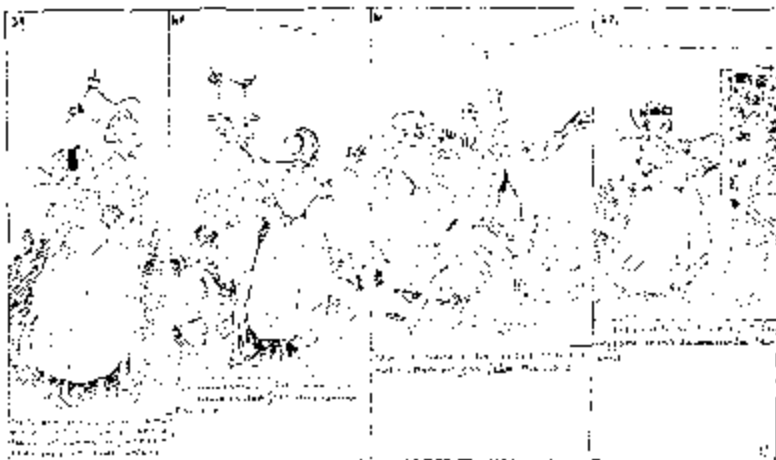
**6/ Progressive Narratives:** These portray a single scene in which characters do not repeat. However, multiple actions are taking place to convey a passing of time in the narrative.

**7/ Sequential Narrative:** A sequential narrative is similar to a continuous narrative but focuses on enframement to develop temporal development. Each scene and action is represented within its frame as a unit and each frame is a particular scene during a particular moment in time. This mode of narrative is used in comics and manga.

**In summary, when an artist creates a narrative art piece he/she has a choice on how he/she wants the composition.** The story can be all in one simultaneous view; in sequential views such as comics; as one moment in the overall story; or shown through the use of symbols such as seen in pictographs. The actual story of the work itself can be about the subject matter; how the art was created; how the story is connected to the artist's cultural context; or be found in the response to the piece by those who view it.

Beginning in the Renaissance 'history painting' - paintings of events from biblical or classical history - acquired the highest status in visual art. By the nineteenth century paintings and sculptures which depicted not only great moments in history but also contemporary and domestic dramas were avidly collected by art patrons and supported by the academic salons.

In the 1950s and 60s modernist artists rejected narrative art, believing painting should be pure to itself and storytelling was best pursued by writers rather than visual artists. By the late 1960s, however, the modernist insistence on abstraction and the taboo against narrative made telling tales in art irresistible to many artists. POP Art, new realism, and post-modern styles such as video and performance art all provided figurative imagery into which narratives could be read, whether or not they were actually intended by the artists.



Rodolphe Toepffer  
Plate 13 of the book *Histoire de Monsieur Cryptogame*, 1830

# VISUAL LEARNING & HANDS-ON ACTIVITIES

## What is Visual Learning

All art has many sides to it. The artist makes the works for people to experience. They in turn can make discoveries about both the work and the artist that help them learn and give them pleasure for a long time. How we look at an object determines what we come to know about it. We remember information about an object far better when we are able to see (and handle) objects rather than by only reading about them. This investigation through observation (looking) is very important to understanding how objects fit into our world in the past and in the present and will help viewers reach a considered response to what they see. The following is a six-step method to looking at, and understanding, a work of art.

### STEP 1: INITIAL, INTUITIVE RESPONSE

The first 'gut level' response to a visual presentation. What do you see and what do you think of it?

### STEP 2: DESCRIPTION

Naming facts - a visual inventory of the elements of design.

#### Questions to Guide Inquiry:

- What colours do you see?
- What shapes are most noticeable?
- What objects are most apparent?
- Describe the lines in the work.

### STEP 3: ANALYSIS

Exploring how the parts relate to each other.

#### Questions to Guide Inquiry:

- What proportions can you see? eg. What percentage of the work is background? Foreground? Land? Sky? Why are there these differences?

- What effect do these differences create?
- What parts seem closest to you? Farthest away? How does the artist give this impression?

### STEP 4: INTERPRETATION

Exploring what the work might mean or be about

#### Questions to Guide Inquiry:

- How does this work make you feel? Why?
- What word would best describe the mood of this work?
- What is this painting, photograph, or sculpture about?
- Is the artist trying to tell a story? What might be the story in this work?

### STEP 5: INFORMATION

Looking beyond the work for information that may further understanding.

#### Questions to Guide Inquiry:

- What is the artist's name? When did he/she live?
- What art style and medium does the artist use?
- What artist's work is this artist interested in?
- What art was being made at the same time as this artist was working?
- What was happening in history at the time this artist was working?
- What social/political/economic/cultural issues is this artist interested in?

### STEP 6: PERSONALIZATION

What do I think about this work? (Reaching a considered response).

# ELEMENTS OF COMPOSITION TOUR

The following pages provide definitions and examples of elements and principles of art that are used by artists in the images found in the exhibition *Riot on the walls!*. Teacher/facilitator questions for inquiry are in **bold** while possible answers are in regular font.

The elements of composition are components of an artwork that can be isolated and defined. They are the building blocks used to create a work of art.

***\*Use this tour to better understand the purpose of the artist's choices!***

## 5 Elements of Composition

### LINE:



An element of art that is used to define shape, contours and outlines. It is also used to suggest mass and volume.

### TEXTURE:



The surface quality of an object that can be seen or felt. Texture can also be implied on a two-dimensional surface through mark making and media handling.

### COLOUR:



Colour is light that is reflected off objects. Colour has three main characteristics: Hue, or its name (red, blue, etc.) Value: (how light or dark the colour is) and Intensity (how bright or dull the colour is).

### SPACE:



Space is the relative position of one three-dimensional object to another. It is the area between and around objects. It can also refer to the feeling of depth in a two-dimensional work.

### SHAPE:



When a line crosses itself or intersects with other lines to enclose a space it creates a shape. A two dimensional shape is one that is drawn on a flat surface such as paper. A three-dimensional shape is one that takes up real space.

# Line

Discuss the image *Connection* by Gibril Bangura



**What types of line are there? How can you describe line? What are some of the characteristics of a line?**

- **Width:** thick, thin, tapering, uneven
- **Length:** long, short, continuous, broken
- **Feeling:** sharp, jagged, graceful, smooth
- **Focus:** sharp, blurry, fuzzy, choppy
- **Direction:** horizontal, vertical, diagonal, curving, oblique, parallel, radial, zigzag

**Now describe the lines you see in this image. Follow the lines in the air with your finger. What quality do the lines have? How do the lines operate in the image?**

Line is very important in this image. The long curving lines move throughout the composition. Intersecting lines strongly tie the different objects of the composition together. The outlines have varying thickness. There are a great variety shorter lines that add texture detail.

**Line can also be a word used in the composition, meaning the direction the viewer's eye travels when looking at a picture. How do lines in this image help your eye travel within the composition? Where does the eye start? Where does it finish?**

Starting at the 'eye' a large circular line pulls the viewers gaze around the image and into to the centre. An s-shaped line guides the viewer from the centre and down along the bottom of the image. Numerous curving and radial lines continually bring the viewer back in and through the image.

# Colour

Discuss the image *Holdings - Bantry Flare* by Clay Ellis



**What are primary colours? Do you see any? Point to them in the drawing. What secondary colours do you see?**

Colour is made of primary colours: red, blue and yellow. Secondary colours are created from primary colours and include green, orange and purple. This image has a bold use of the three primary colours and two of the three secondary colours, green and purple. One of the yellow shapes uses a lighter tint than the rest of the image.

**Where is your eye directed to first? Why? Are there any colours that stand out more than others?**

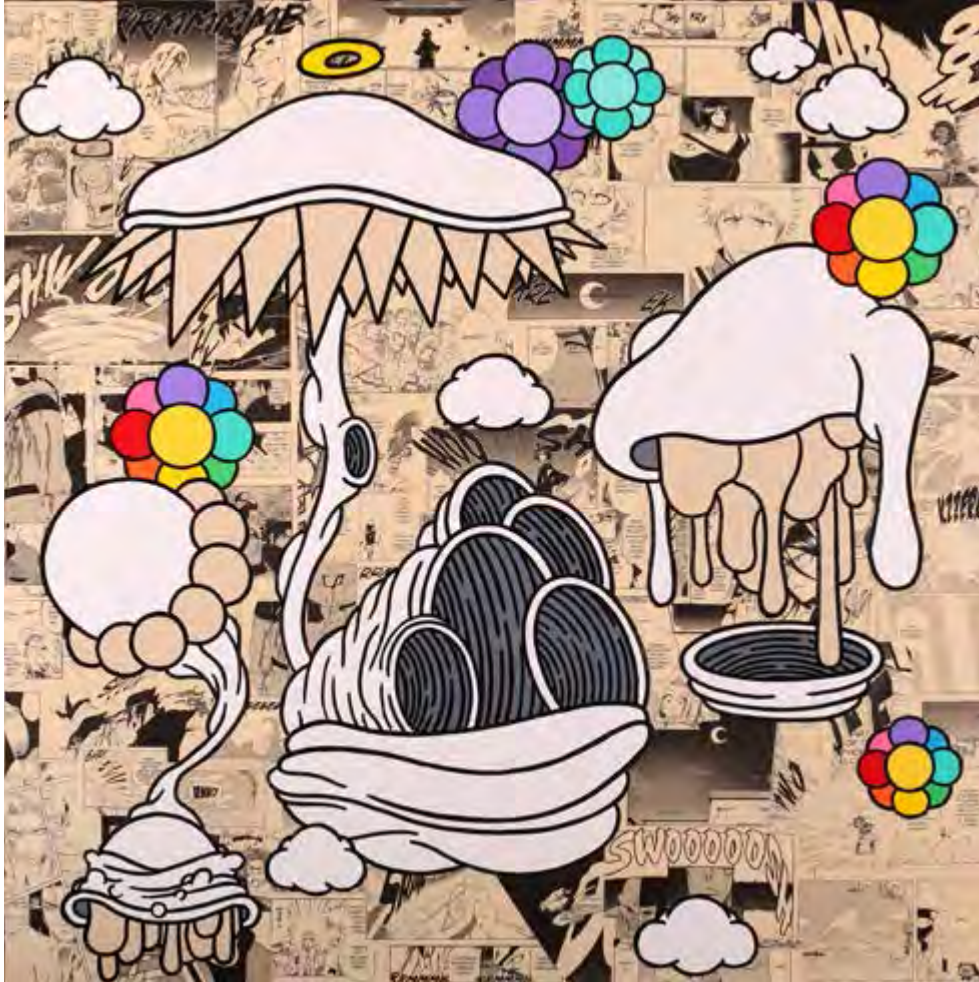
The viewer's eye is drawn first to the dark red shape near the center of the image. Colour ties the different shapes in the image together. When looking at one of the yellow or red shapes the viewer naturally looks to a corresponding shape of the same colour on the other side of the image.

**What are complementary colours? How have they been used to draw attention?**

The green and purple shapes balance the image. They soften what would have otherwise been a completely primary colour scheme.

# Shape

Discuss the image #1 by Zachary Reid



## What kinds of shapes can you think of?

**Geometric:** circles, squares, rectangles and triangles. We see them in architecture and manufactured items.

**Organic shapes:** A leaf, seashell, flower. We see them in nature with characteristics that are free flowing, informal and irregular.

**Static shapes:** Shapes that appear stable and resting.

**Dynamic shapes:** Shapes that appear moving and active.

## What shapes do you see in this image?

There are both geometric and organic shapes in the image. The drippy shapes with their folded curves contrast the perfect circles shapes of the flowers. Curved shapes dominate the image and are contrasted with the sharp spikes of the triangles.

## How do the shapes operate in this image?

The repetition of circular shapes give the image rhythm and cohesiveness.



# Space

Discuss the image #2 by Zachary Reid



## **What is space? What dimensions does it have?**

Space includes the background, middle ground and foreground. It can refer to the distances or areas around, between or within components of a piece. It may have two dimensions (length and width) or three dimensions including height and depth.

## **What do you see in this work? What is closest to you? Farthest away? How do you know this?**

In this work we see cartoon figure in the foreground. There is also an oval shaped object with a vertical rainbow rising out of it in the upper right of the image. There is an ambiguous sense of scale

because both objects are surrounded by negative space and there are no background elements or discernible light source to use as reference. The oval shape could be a large shape in the background or a smaller shape in the foreground depending on how the viewer chooses to look at it.

## **In what way has the artist created a sense of space?**

The image is rendered in an illustrative style with no discernible background which leaves the objects floating in space. This gives the viewer the opportunity imagine the scene and decide for themselves what kind of world this character might exist in.

# Texture

Discuss the image *Going Home* by Gibril Bangura



**What is texture? How do you describe how something feels? What are the two kinds of texture you can think of in artwork?**

Texture can be real, like the actual texture of an object. Texture can be rough, smooth, hard, soft, glossy etc. Texture can also be implied. This happens when a two-dimensional piece of art is made to look like a certain texture.

**Allow your eyes to 'feel' the different areas within the work and explain the textures. What kind of texture do you think the artist uses in this work? Real or implied?**

The work has both implied and real texture. This is a 'mixed media' artwork because the figures and background are painted while the clothing and pot patterns are made from real fabric swatches that have been glued onto the canvas.

**What about the work/its manner of creation gives you the idea about the surface texture?**

The background of the image features a colourful blending of colours applied with a 'dry brush' technique which shows the texture of the canvas by not saturating it with paint. The fabric swatches provide a variety of additional woven textures.

# READING PICTURES PROGRAM

## Ages 10 - adults

### OBJECTIVES:

The purposes of this program are to:

1. introduce participants to art and what artists do – this includes examinations of art styles; art elements; the possible aims and meaning(s) in an artwork and how to deduce those meanings and aims
2. introduce visitors to the current exhibition
  - the aim of the exhibition and the kind of artwork found in the exhibition
  - the artist(s) - his/her background(s)
  - his/her place in art history
3. engage participants in a deeper investigation of artworks

### TEACHER/FACILITATOR INTRODUCTION TO PROGRAM:

This program is called Reading Pictures. What do you think this might involve?

- generate as many ideas as possible concerning what viewers might think 'Reading Pictures' might involve or what this phrase might mean.

Before we can 'read' art, however, we should have some understanding of what we're talking about.

What is art? If you had to define this term, how would you define it?

Art can be defined as creative expression - and artistic practice is an aspect and expression of a peoples' culture or the artist's identity.

The discipline of art, or the creation of a piece of art, however, is much more than simple 'creative expression' by an 'artist' or an isolated component of culture.

How many of you would describe yourselves as artists?

You may not believe it, but every day you engage in some sort of artistic endeavour.

*How many of you got up this morning and thought about what you were going to wear today? Why did you choose the clothes you did? Why do you wear your hair that way? How many of you have tattoos or plan to get a tattoo some day? What kind of tattoo would you choose? Why.....? How many of you own digital cameras or have cameras on cell phones? How many of you take pictures and e-mail them to other people?*

Art is all around us and we are all involved in artistic endeavours to some degree. The photographs we take, the colour and styles of the clothes we wear, the ways we build and decorate our homes, gardens and public buildings, the style of our cell phones or the vehicles we drive, the images we see and are attracted to in advertising or the text or symbols on our bumper stickers – all of these things (and 9 billion others) utilize artistic principles. They say something about our personal selves and reflect upon and influence the economic, political, cultural, historical and geographic concerns of our society.

Art, therefore, is not just something some people in a society do – it is something that affects and informs everyone within a society.

Today we're going to look at art - paintings, prints, drawings, sculptures – and see what art can tell us about the world we live in – both the past, the present and possibly the future – and what art can tell us about ourselves.

Art is a language like any other and it can be read.

Art can be read in two ways. It can be looked at **intuitively** – what do you see? What do you like or not like? How does it make you feel and why? – or it can be read **formally** by looking at what are called the elements of design – the “tools” artists use or consider when creating a piece of work.

What do you think is meant by the elements of design? What does an artist use to create a work of art?

Today we’re going to examine how to read art – we’re going to see how art can affect us emotionally... and how an artist can inform us about our world, and ourselves, through what he or she creates.

### **TOUR PROGRAM**

Proceed to one of the works in the exhibition and discuss the following:

1. the nature of the work - what kind of work is it and what exhibition is it a part of?
2. examine the work itself
  - What do visitors see?
  - How do you initially feel about what you see? Why do you feel this way? What do you like? What don't you like? Why?
  - What is the work made of?
  - How would you describe the style? What does this mean?
  - What is the compositional structure? How are the shapes and colours etc. arranged? Why are they arranged this way?
  - How does the work make them feel? What is the mood of the work? What gives them this idea? Discuss the element(s) of design which are emphasized in the work in question.
  - What might the artist be trying to do in the work? What might the artist be saying or what might the work ‘mean’?
3. Summarize the information

**At each work chosen, go through the same or similar process, linking the work to the type of exhibition it is a part of. Also, with each stop, discuss a different element of design and develop participants' visual learning skills.**

**At the 1st stop, determine with the participants the most important element of design used and focus the discussion on how this element works within the artwork. Do the same with each subsequent artwork and make sure to cover all the elements of design on the tour.**

**Stop #1: LINE**

**Stop #2: SHAPE**

**Stop #3: COLOUR**

**Stop #4: TEXTURE**

**Stop #5: SPACE**

**Stop #6: ALL TOGETHER**

**How do the elements work together to create a certain mood or story? What would you say is the mood of this work? Why? What is the story or meaning of this work? Why?**

### ***Work sheet activity – 30 minutes***

Divide participants into groups of two or three to each do this activity. Give them 30 minutes to complete the questions then bring them all together and have each group present one of their pieces to the entire group.

### ***Presentations – 30 minutes***

Each group to present on one of their chosen works.

**Visual Learning Activity Worksheet \* Photocopy the following worksheet so each participant has their own copy.**

# Reading Pictures Worksheet

**Instructions:** Choose two very different pieces of artwork in the exhibition and answer the following questions in as much detail as you can.

1. What is the title of the work and who created it?

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2. What do you see and what do you think of it? (What is your **initial reaction** to the work?) Why do you feel this way?

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3. What colours do you see and how does the use of colour affect the way you 'read' the work? Why do you think the artist chose these colours – or lack of colour – for this presentation?

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4. What shapes and objects do you notice most? Why?

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5. How are the shapes/objects arranged or composed? How does this affect your feelings towards or about the work? What feeling does this composition give to the work?

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6. How would you describe the mood of this work? (How does it make you feel?) What do you see that makes you describe the mood in this way?

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7. What do you think the artist's purpose was in creating this work? What 'story' might he or she be telling? What aspects of the artwork give you this idea?

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8. What do you think about this work after answering the above questions? Has your opinion of the work changed in any way? Why do you feel this way?

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9. How might this work relate to your own life experiences? Have you ever been in a similar situation/ place and how did being there make you feel?

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# AN ART-FULL SCAVENGER HUNT

## Ages 6 - adult

In teaching art, game-playing can enhance learning. If students are engaged in learning, through a variety of methods, then it goes beyond game-playing. Through game-playing we are trying to get students to use higher-order thinking skills by getting them to be active participants in learning. *Blooms's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*, which follows, is as applicable to teaching art as any other discipline.

1. *knowledge*: recall of facts
2. *comprehension*: participation in a discussion
3. *application*: applying abstract information in practical situations
4. *analysis*: separating an entity into its parts
5. *synthesis*: creating a new whole from many parts, as in developing a complex work of art
6. *evaluation*: making judgements on criteria

A scavenger hunt based on art works is a fun and engaging way to get students of any age to really look at the art works and begin to discern what the artist(s) is/are doing in the works. **The simple template provided, however, would be most suitable for grade 1-3 students.**

## INSTRUCTIONS

Using the exhibition works provided, give students a list of things they should search for that are in the particular works of art. The students could work with a partner or in teams. Include a blank for the name of the artwork, the name of the artist, and the year the work was created. Following the hunt, gather students together in the exhibition area and check the answers and discuss the particular works in more detail.

## SAMPLE LIST

Scavenger Hunt Item	Title of Artwork	Name of Artist	Year Work Created
someone wearing a hat			
a specific animal			
landscape			
a bright red object			
a night scene			
a house			

\*This activity was adapted from *A Survival Kit for the Elementary/Middle School Art Teacher* by Helen D. Hume.

# An Art-full Scavenger Hunt Worksheet

Scavenger Hunt Item	Title of Artwork	Name of Artist	Year Work Created



# CRAYON ENGRAVING

## Ages 6 - 12

### OBJECTIVES

Students will, through the studio activity, use mixed media to express a uniform composition.

### MATERIALS

- wax crayons
- white drawing paper
- brushes
- paint trays
- sharp etching tools paper clips, pins, compasses, scissors, etc.)
- black tempera paint
- pencils
- water containers
- white cardboard

### INSTRUCTIONS

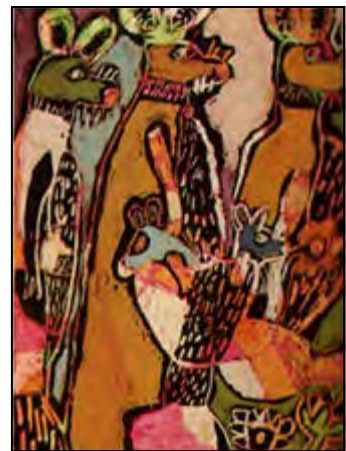
1. Have students create a drawing on newsprint. This could be something viewed from the exhibition *Riot on the Walls!*.
2. Once the “rough” drawing is completed, have students re-draw their image on the white cardboard.
3. Have students use wax crayons to colour in their drawing. *\*Make sure students press hard when colouring and that they colour all areas of the drawing. The most brilliant colours are recommended for the richest results.*
4. When colouring is completed, have students cover their drawing with an even layer of black tempera paint and allow this to dry. *\*More than one coat of paint may be necessary so that the underlying colours are completely covered. However, do not make the paint too thick, as when dry, it may chip during the engraving process. Also, to make the paint adhere to the waxy, crayoned surface, it must, in most cases, be conditioned with liquid soap.*
5. Have students draw with a variety of etching tools, guessing at the design underneath, or referring to their preliminary drawing. *\*Make sure they do not etch too deeply or they may rip the paper. The aim is to reveal the drawing and colours underneath.*



*The initial line engraving with a nail through the black tempera coating to the crayoned surface underneath including characteristic details and some textual effects.*



*The scraping away of black to produce some solid crayon shapes as well as the introduction of oil pastel areas. Some people prefer this secondary stage.*



*The completion of the oil pastel embellishment.*

# ABSTRACTION WITH WATERCOLOURS

Ages 6 - 12



1. Mix different colours of water colour paint. Make them quite watery. Paint them in patches close to each other.



2. Before the paint has dried, cut a piece of plastic food wrap larger than your painting. Then, lay it over the paint.



3. Use your fingers to move the paint under the food wrap, to make patterns and blend the colours together.



*\*To get a speckled effect, sprinkle sea salt onto the wet paint when you're filling in the patterns. Brush the salt off when it's dry.*



4. Leave the food wrap on top of the paint and let the paint dry completely. Then, carefully peel off the food wrap.
5. Use watercolour paints to fill in lots of the patterns left by the food wrap. Leave a space around each shape.
6. Continue filling in the patterns using some strong colours and some paler ones. Leave some of the patterns unfilled.

# EXPERIMENTS IN COLOUR

## Ages 9 - adult

When artists create a composition, they plan their colour combinations very carefully. Colour can serve many functions in a work of art. It can be used to create the illusion of space; it can be used to provide focus and emphasis; it can be used to create movement; and it can be used to create a certain mood. In the works in the exhibition the artists use colour to serve all of these functions. In the following project students will examine the use of colour relationships to create the illusion of space and mood within a painting.

### MATERIALS

- Colour Wheel Chart
- Pencils/erasers
- Paints and brushes
- Water container
- Mixing trays
- Paper towels
- Paper
- Magazines/ photographic references
- Still life items or landscape drawings

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Distribute paper, pencils and erasers to students.
2. Instruct students to make several sketches of ideas for their painting - they may base their work on a still-life arrangement or create a landscape based on magazine or photographic sources.
3. Have students choose a sketch they like and then plan their colours by first examining the colour wheel. Students to first choose their **dominant or main colour** and then pick the **split complements or triad** to that colour.
4. Students to use their colour scheme to paint their painting.

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What are the split complements and triad colour schemes used in your work?
2. What is the colour relationship of the colours used in your painting?
3. Why have you used these particular colours?

### METHODOLOGY

Through an examination of the colour wheel provided, discuss with students the concepts of **complementary colours** and **split-complements**.

#### Questions to guide discussion:

- What is the lightest colour on the colour wheel? *yellow*
- What is the darkest colour on the colour wheel? *violet*
- What is the relationship of these two colours? *the colours are opposite each other.*

Colours that are opposite each other on the colour wheel are called **complementary colours**.

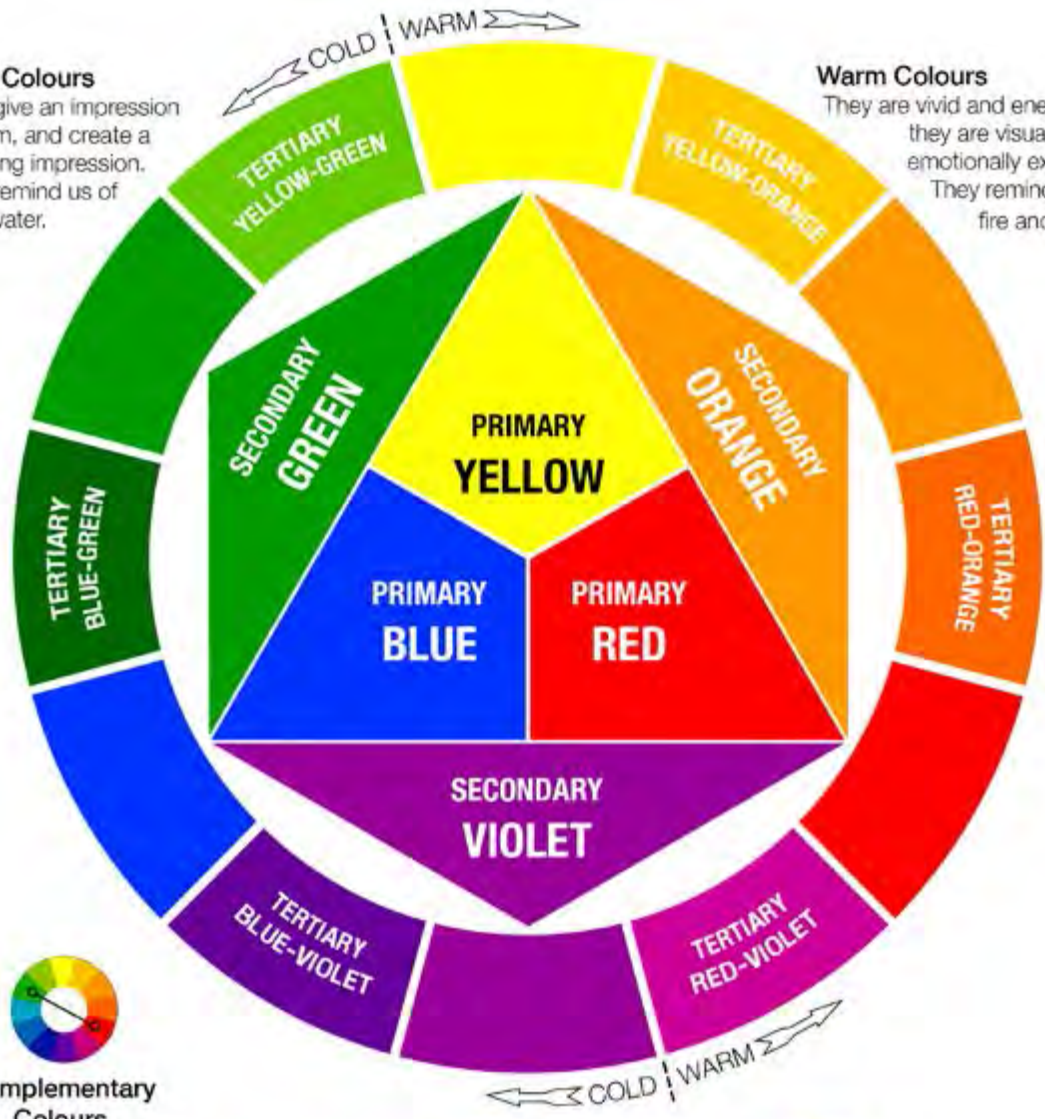
- What are the colours next to violet? *red-violet and blue-violet*

These colours are called **split complements** because they are split, or separated, by the true complement of yellow. Complements can be split one step further to become a **triad**, three colours **equally spaced** on the colour wheel.

**Complementary colours can be used to create focus, emphasis, and the illusion of space. Brighter (warm) colours in the colour wheel tend to appear in front of - or come forward on the picture plane - compared to darker (cool) colours.**

**Cold Colours**  
 They give an impression of calm, and create a soothing impression. They remind us of cold water.

**Warm Colours**  
 They are vivid and energetic, they are visually and emotionally exciting. They remind us of fire and heat.



**Complementary Colours**

Colours that are opposite each other on the colour wheel are considered to be complementary colours (example: red and green).

When put together, they appear more vivid than when apart.



Triadic colour scheme



Rectangle (tetradic) colour scheme



Split-Complementary colour scheme



Square colour scheme

Toni-Hauri  
 Colour Theory Wheel, 2020

# FROM REALITY TO ABSTRACTION

## Ages 9 - adult

Abstract art often uses bright colours, sharp edges, geometric shapes, and interesting contrasts to create a mood. Sometimes abstract art simply shows an artist's emotional response to an object or idea. Details may be minimized, proportions distorted, and unusual colours applied. Nonobjective art occurs when abstraction departs completely from realism.

Henri Matisse was a French artist who enjoyed changing the usual form of an object. His versions emphasized the pure idea of the object, and are a type of abstract art. To create the cutouts for the

snail shown here, he first picked up a real snail and examined it closely. Then he drew it from every angle possible, noting its texture, colour, and construction.

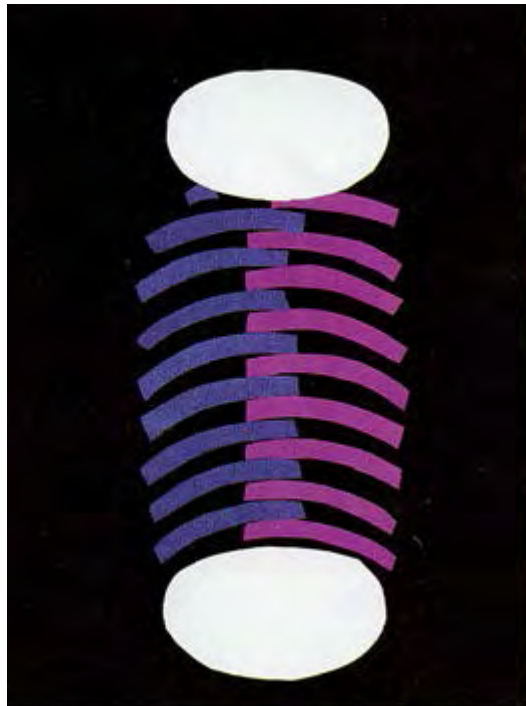
Observe the cutout paper shapes Matisse used in his snail of many colours. Can you see how the simple blue rectangle represents the foot of the snail? Notice which parts of a snail Matisse omitted, and which parts he thought were essential.

In this lesson, you will create an abstract cutout design of an object.



Henri Matisse  
*The Snail*, 1952  
Tate Gallery, London

*Examples of abstract paper cutout compositions*



**INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Choose an object with an interesting shape and study it. Sketch it from several angles. Examine how it is built. Does it have a centre? What basic shapes compose it? Observe the texture and colours of your object.
2. Now draw the general outer shape of your object. What idea does it give you? Next, draw only the inside parts of your object, without any outside lines. Think about what colour reminds you of the feeling or idea of the object. Notice curved and straight lines, light and dark values, and small and large shapes.
3. When you find a shape that seems to capture the idea of your object, practice distorting or changing it to make a more pure, simple shape.
4. Choose one or more colours for your shape, and cut it out of coloured paper. Mount the shapes on a sheet of a different colour, and display your abstract cutout design. Can your classmates guess what the real object was?

**MATERIALS**

- A variety of objects such as a shell, spoon, corn cob, flower, leaf, model, toy, piece of fruit, etc.
- Sketch paper
- Pencil and eraser
- Coloured construction paper
- Scissors
- Glue

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

1. Name two ways of making abstract art.
2. Describe how you distorted the shape you made of an object.
3. What parts of your object did you leave out of your cutout design? How did you decide which parts to keep and which parts to omit?

# CHAGALL OIL PASTELS DRAWING

**Ages 6 - adult**

## OBJECTIVES

By studying the art and style of Marc Chagall, students will create a surreal piece of art representing themselves and their surroundings and illustrating Chagall's quote, "Great art picks up where nature ends". Students will show effective use of colour and design principles.

Art Concept: Artists use colour for emotion  
- Artists use their imagination - Surreal art is fantasy (beyond real).

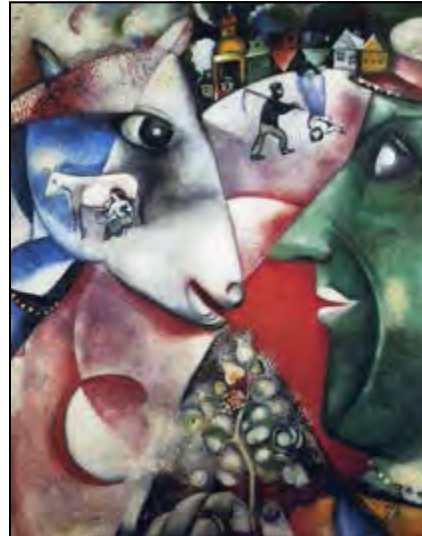
## INSTRUCTIONS

Introduce students to the art and style of Chagall, engaging them in discussion about his work, and use of intense colour to create a dreamlike effect.

Instruct students to write "Great art picks up where nature ends" around the perimeter of their papers.

Using black oil pastel, have students draw a house, then turn their papers and draw themselves holding something they like, turn the papers again and draw trees and /or flowers, have them include a sun or moon with a face.

Once their paper is filled they may render their illustrations with oil pastels taking care to use lots of intense colour like Chagall.



Marc Chagall  
*I and the Village*, 1911

## MATERIALS

- 18x24 inch paper
- oil pastels

## VOCABULARY

- Elements: colour, form, shape, value
- Principles: balance, contrast
- 2-dimentional
- culture
- historical period
- fantasy
- Surreal

*Examples of surreal oil pastel by students*





# GLOSSARY

**Abstraction:** Is a term applied to 20th century styles in reaction against the traditional European view of art as the imitation of nature. Abstraction stresses the formal or elemental structure of a work and has been expressed in all genres or subjects of visual expression.

**Automatism** a technique first used by Surrealist painters and poets to express the creative force of the unconscious in art.

**Collage:** A work of art created by gluing bits of paper, fabric, scraps, photographs, or other materials to a flat surface.

**Complementary colour:** Colours that are directly opposite each other on the colour wheel, for example, blue and orange. These colours when placed next to each other produce the highest contrast.

**Composition:** The arrangement of lines, colours and forms so as to achieve a unified whole; the resulting state or product is referred to as a composition.

**Contemporary artists:** Those whose peak of activity can be situated somewhere between the 1970's (the advent of post-modernism) and the present day.

**Cool colours:** Blues, greens and purples are considered cool colours. In aerial perspective, cool colours are said to move away from you or appear more distant.

**Dream imagery** as seen in the art movement surrealism, ideas concerning the unconscious and incongruous images drawn from dream elements.

**Elements of Composition:** The basic components which make up any visual image: line, shape, colour, texture and space.

**Exhibition:** A public display of art objects including painting, sculpture, prints, installation, etc.

**Fantastic art** 1940's, a modern style of art similar to Surrealism; a combination of Cubism mixed with rich imagination based on childhood memories, folklore, and country life; Chagall is best known for his paintings based on Jewish folktales and theatre scenes with bright colour, fantasy, and abstraction.

**Geometric shapes:** Any shape or form having more mathematical than organic design. Examples of geometric shapes include: spheres, cones, cubes, squares, triangles.

**Gradation:** A principle of design that refers to the use of a series of gradual/transitional changes in the use of the elements of art with a given work of art; for example, a transition from lighter to darker colours or a gradation of large shapes to smaller ones.

**Mythology:** The body of myths (sacred stories) of a particular culture, or of humankind as a whole; the study and interpretation of such myths.

**Organic shapes:** An irregular shape; refers to shapes or forms having irregular edges or objects resembling things existing in nature

**photomontage** the technique of making a picture by assembling pieces of photographs, often in combination with other types of graphic material.

**Surrealism** (1924-1945) An era of art expressed by fantastic imaginary thoughts and images, often expressing dreams and subconscious thought as part of reality; illogical and unexpected, surprising imaginary art; followed Dada; the most famous Surrealists are Chagall, Magritte, Oppenheim and Dali.

**Symbolism in art** a late 19th-century movement in art that sought to express mystical or abstract ideas through the symbolic use of images.

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## Image right

Zachary Reid  
#4, 2024  
Acrylic  
Courtesy of the artist



