

imag'nation

LESSON PLANS

HELEN FRANKENTHALER: THREE POSTERS



Solar Imp

LINCOLN CENTER SALUTES
NEW YORK CITY BALLET



Mary, Mary

THE SAMUEL B. & DAVID ROSE BUILDING
LINCOLN CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS



Aerie

HIGH SCHOOL GRADES VISUAL ARTS STUDY

Lincoln Center | **institute**
Developing Skills of Imagination, Creativity, and Innovation

Dear Educator:

The design and content of these Imagination Lesson Plans represent LCI's inquiry-based approach to teaching and learning. This approach develops in the learner the Capacities for Imaginative Learning*, defined outcomes for your students' work that align with the national Common Core Standards. The Capacities and Common Core Standards listed at the beginning of each Lesson Plan are the ones addressed in the plan.

Imagination Lesson Plans are initially rooted in the study of works of art and employ four main concepts: art making, questioning, reflection, and contextual information and research. Each is based on a specific line of inquiry, which is a guiding question that gives the Lesson Plan its framework. Plans were developed for Elementary, Middle, and High School levels, and can easily be adapted for the specific grade you teach. They are intended for you to use as written or modified—used as a springboard for new ideas and further development, depending on your interest and curricular goals. You can complete the whole Lesson Plan in the course of several days, or spread it out over a number of weeks. As well, depending on the duration of your classroom period, any one lesson may be completed within a period or carried over to another day.

However you choose to adapt the lessons to your needs, we encourage you to conduct experiential lessons before you engage your students with the work of art; ask open-ended questions to guide students' noticings throughout the Lesson Plan; and teach further experiential lessons after you have viewed the work of art—the goal of these post-viewing lessons is to lead students to a synthesis that helps them acquire a deeper understanding. The Imagination Lesson Plans are designed to develop imaginative thinking abilities and creative actions that lead to innovative results for all students, and prepare students for greater in-depth learning in all subject areas.

We are eager to support imaginative learning in your classroom, and participate with you and your students in the joy of learning.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott Noppe-Brandon". The signature is fluid and stylized, with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

Scott Noppe-Brandon
Executive Director

**Please refer to the PDF of the Capacities that accompanies this lesson plan.*

COMMON CORE STANDARDS ADDRESSED IN THESE LESSONS

NOTE: These connections to the Common Core Standards are based on the general 6–12 Standards. Identify the grade-specific Standard that is appropriate for your class that also relates to the general Standard numbers below.

Reading Standards for Literature

Key Ideas and Detail

Standard 2

Standard 3

Craft and Structure

Standard 4

Standard 5

Standard 6

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

Standard 7

Standard 9

Writing Standards

Text Types and Purposes

Standard 3

Standard 4

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

Standard 7

Standard 9

Speaking and Listening Standards

Comprehension and Collaboration

Standard 1

Standard 2

Standard 3

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

Standard 4

CAPACITIES FOR IMAGINATIVE LEARNING ADDRESSED IN THESE LESSONS*

Noticing Deeply

Questioning

Making Connections

Embodying

Identifying Patterns

Living with Ambiguity

Creating Meaning

Reflecting/Assessing

*For the definitions of the Capacities, refer to the PDF that accompanies this lesson plan.

STUDENT LEARNING GOALS

Students will:

- o Learn to work collaboratively.
- o Deepen their skills of observation, analysis and description.
- o Develop descriptive vocabulary and practice using it both verbally and in writing.
- o Deepen their understanding of metaphor and symbolism through the interpretation of emotion from visual abstraction.
- o Enhance their understanding of concepts found in other subject areas by connecting them to concepts they will explore in the Frankenthaler plan.

PREPARING FOR FRANKENTHALER POSTERS LESSONS

SUPPLIES AND CONTEXTUAL MATERIALS

NOTE: Watercolor paint or craypas, wide markers or water-soluble crayons, can be substituted for colored pencils.

Lesson One

Supplies:

Slide frame or index cards with a one inch square cut out of the middle (1 for each student)

Large unlined white index cards (1 for each student)

Pencils (1 for each student)

Lesson Two

Supplies:

11 x 17 white paper (2 for each student)

Cray-pas (a selection for each student)

Lesson Three

Contextual Materials:

Helen Frankenthaler—born 1928

Mary, Mary—1990

Aerie—2009

Solar Imp—2001

- Quotes about abstraction by Helen Frankenthaler

“My paintings are full of climates, abstract climates. And not nature per se but a feeling.”

“It isn’t the image that works for me, it is that they are great abstract paintings. I leave it (image) out of my pictures more and more as I become increasingly involved with colors and shapes. But it is still there.”

- Definition of Abstract Expressionism

http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/abex/hd_abex.htm

A new vanguard emerged in the early 1940s, primarily in New York, where a small group of loosely affiliated artists created a stylistically diverse body of work that introduced radical new directions in art—and shifted the art world's focus. Never a formal association, the artists known as “Abstract Expressionists” or “The New York School” did, however, share some common assumptions. Among others, artists such as Jackson Pollock (1912–1956), Willem de Kooning (1904–1997), Franz Kline (1910–1962), Lee Krasner (1908–1984), Robert Motherwell (1915–1991), William Baziotes (1912–1963), Mark Rothko (1903–1970), Barnett Newman (1905–1970), Adolph

Gottlieb (1903–1974), Richard Pousette-Dart (1916–1992), and Clyfford Still (1904–1980) advanced audacious formal inventions in a search for significant content. Breaking away from accepted conventions in both technique and subject matter, the artists made monumentally scaled works that stood as reflections of their individual psyches—and in doing so, attempted to tap into universal inner sources. These artists valued spontaneity and improvisation, and they accorded the highest importance to process. Their work resists stylistic categorization, but it can be clustered around two basic inclinations: an emphasis on dynamic, energetic gesture, in contrast to a reflective, cerebral focus on more open fields of color. In either case, the imagery was primarily abstract. Even when depicting images based on visual realities, the Abstract Expressionists favored a highly abstracted mode.

Source: Paul, Stella. “Abstract Expressionism.” In *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000–.
http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/abex/hd_abex.htm

- Quotes by artists on abstraction

Source: Genn, Robert (ed.). “Art Quotes.” *The Painter’s Keys*. Online resource.

“Abstraction allows man to see with his mind what he cannot physically see with his eyes... Abstract art enables the artist to perceive beyond the tangible, to extract the infinite out of the finite. It is the emancipation of the mind. It is an explosion into unknown areas.” —Arshile Gorky

“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 color, and that you be a true poet. This last is essential.” —Wassily Kandinsky

“One of the most striking of abstract art’s appearances is her nakedness, an art stripped bare.” —Robert Motherwell

“Abstract painting is abstract. It confronts you.” —Jackson Pollock

“A conscious decision to eliminate certain details and include selective bits of personal experiences or perceptual nuances, gives the painting more of a multi-dimension than when it is done directly as a visual recording. This results in a kind of abstraction... and thus avoids the pitfalls of mere decoration.” —Wayne Thiebaud

Lesson Four

Contextual Materials — these are suggestions; you do not have to use the complete list

- About Frankenthaler: Websites

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PsoaxUcwp3s>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Helen_Frankenthaler
(Frankenthaler entry on Wikipedia)

http://www.askart.com/AskART/artists/search/Search_Repeat.aspx?searchtype=IMAGES&artist=30037

(Frankenthaler images on askart.com)

<http://www.artchive.com/artchive/F/frankenthaler.html>-Frankenthaler bio on artchive.com

<http://www.theartstory.org/artist-frankenthaler-helen.htm>

(Well organized bio on Frankenthaler)

http://www.artcyclopedia.com/artists/frankenthaler_helen.html

(Links to other articles and museum websites)

<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,957902,00.html>

(Article by Robert Hughes about Frankenthaler)

http://www.artnet.com/magazine_pre2000/features/schjeldahl/schjeldahl1-29-98.asp-

(About Frankenthaler and other color field painters)

<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,839975,00.html>

(1969 *Time Magazine* review of Frankenthaler show)

<http://www.theartstory.org/artist-frankenthaler-helen.htm>

<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,957902,00.html>

<http://www.observer.com/node/40117>

- **About Frankenthaler: Books**

Frankenthaler, Helen, and Karen Wilkin. *Frankenthaler at Eighty: Six Decades*. New York, N.Y: Knoedler & Co, 2008. (Exhibit catalog; good reproductions; short introduction; very accessible). Purchase. Find in a library.

Frankenthaler, Helen, and Julia Brown. *After Mountains and Sea: Frankenthaler 1956-1959*. New York, N.Y: Guggenheim Museum, 2003. Purchase. Find in a library.

Rose, Barbara. *Frankenthaler*, New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1972. (Long biography of Frankenthaler, with good reproductions). Purchase. Find in a library.

Rowley, Alison. *Helen Frankenthaler: Painting History, Writing Painting*. London: I. B. Tauris, 2007. Purchase. Find in a library.

Stiles, Kristine, and Peter Selz (eds.). *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art: A Sourcebook of Artists' Writings*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1996. (Includes an interview with Frankenthaler). Purchase. Find in a library.

- **About Abstract Expressionism and Other Influences: Websites**

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abstract_expressionism

(Wikipedia entry on abstract expressionism)

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Color_field_painting

(Wikipedia entry on color field painting)

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Post-painterly_abstraction

(Wikipedia entry on post-painterly abstraction)

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lyrical_abstraction

(Wikipedia entry on lyrical abstraction)

<http://bit.ly/fxAByv>

(*Life Magazine* article written at the time of the Abstract Expressionists, via Google Books)

- **About Abstract Expressionism and Other Influences: Books**

- Action Painting: Jackson Pollock*. Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2008. Purchase. Find in a library.
- Barnes, Rachel. *Abstract Expressionists*. Chicago: Heinemann Library, 2002. Purchase. Find in a library.
- Chave, Anna. *Mark Rothko: Subjects in Abstraction*. Yale publications in the history of art, 39. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989. Purchase. Find in a library.
- Gaugh, Harry F. *Franz Kline: Cincinnati Art Museum*. New York: Abbeville Press, 1996. Purchase. Find in a library.
- Goodman, Cynthia. *Hans Hofmann*. Modern Masters series, v. 10. New York: Abbeville Press, 1986. Purchase. Find in a library.
- Greenberg, Jan. *Action Jackson*. Diane Pub Co, 2005. Purchase. Find in a library.
- Herskovic, Marika. *American Abstract Expressionism of the 1950s: An Illustrated Survey: With Artists' Statements, Artwork and Biographies*. New York: New York School Press, 2003. Purchase. Find in a library.
- Hess, Barbara, Uta Grosenick, and Michael Scuffil. *Abstract Expressionism*. Hong Kong: Taschen, 2009. Purchase. Find in a library.
- Hunter, Sam, and Hans Hofmann. *Hans Hofmann*. New York: Rizzoli, 2002. (About Frankenthaler's teacher). Purchase. Find in a library.
- Kleeblatt, Norman L, Maurice Berger, and Debra B. Balken. *Action/abstraction: Pollock, De Kooning, and American Art, 1940-1976*. New York: Jewish Museum under the auspices of The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 2008. Purchase. Find in a library.
- McDarrah, Fred W, and S McDarrah. *The Artist's World in Pictures: The Photo Classic That Documents the New York School Action Painters*. New York: Shapolsky Publishers, 1988. Purchase. Find in a library.
- Sandler, Irving. *Abstract Expressionism and the American Experience: A Reevaluation*. Lenox [Mass.: Hard Press Editions, 2009. Purchase. Find in a library.
- Spilsbury, Richard. *Abstract Expressionism*. Chicago, IL: Heinemann Library, 2009. Purchase. Find in a library.

- **About Frankenthaler's Cultural Milieu: Websites**

- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_York_School (Overall article on arts in New York during the period of Abstract Expressionism.)
- http://www.nytimes.com/1999/07/04/arts/art-architecture-when-artists-and-writers-shared-the-scene.html?ref=frank_ohara (New York Times article about Frank O'Hara—art critic, poet, and friend of abstract expressionists.)
- <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9800E3D91739F93BA15754C0A960958260> (Article about Morton Feldman, a musician active in the cultural scene of the abstract expressionists.)

<http://www.nytimes.com/books/00/06/04/specials/koch-ny.html> (*New York Times* article on the poets of “The New York School”.)

- **About Frankenthaler’s Cultural Milieu: Books**

Diggory, Terence. *Encyclopedia of the New York School Poets*. New York: Facts On File, 2009. Purchase. Find in a library.

O'Hara, Frank, and Bill Berkson. *In Memory of My Feelings: A Selection of Poems*. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2005. (Written by artists in memory of poet and critic Frank O’Hara.) Purchase. Find in a library.

- **About Color Field Painting and Stain Painting: Websites**

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/07/arts/design/07colo.html> (*New York Times* article on “color field painting” featuring staining method used by Frankenthaler.)

<http://www.theartstory.org/artist-louis-morris.htm> (Article on Morris Louis, stain painter who was influenced by Frankenthaler.)

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/06/arts/06noland.html> (Article on Kenneth Noland, strongly influenced by Frankenthaler.)

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB122609409221009463.html> (2008 *Wall Street Journal* article about Frankenthaler’s technique.)

- **About Color Field Painting and Stain Painting: Books**

Moos, David. *The Shape of Colour: Excursions in Color Field Art 1950-2005*. Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 2005. Purchase. Find in a library.

- **About Printmaking: Books**

D’Arcy, Hughes A, and Hebe Vernon-Morris. *The Printmaking Bible: The Complete Guide to Materials and Techniques*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2008. Purchase. Find in a library.

The History of Printmaking: Prehistoric Prints, Calligraphy, Engraving, Etching, Posters, and Comic Strips. New York: Scholastic, 1996. Purchase. Find in a library.

Lesson Five

Supplies:

11 x 17 white paper (1 for each student)

A selection of Cray-pas (for each student)

Pencils (1 for each student)

Lesson Six

Rubrics for the Capacities for Imaginative Learning*

*A PDF of the Rubrics accompanies this lesson plan and can also be found on lcinstitute.org.

The work of art, Helen Frankenthaler: Three Posters, and contextual materials are available on the LCI website. Contextual materials include web and database links. Visit www.lcinstitute.org and log in with your user ID and password (please contact us if you have forgotten your user ID or password).

NOTES TO TEACHERS

Wall Journaling

We encourage you to write on large paper posted on walls (vs. on a less permanent black board or smart board) when documenting during your study of the work of art. This way, wall journaling can be brought forward and referenced in subsequent lessons throughout the plan. As well, students can reflect on their past experiences, responses, connections, and questions as they enter each new experience.

NOTE: some lessons may specifically reference past wall journaling.

Portfolios and Displayed Student Work

We recommend that all student-generated art, writing, and other evidence of their process and learning be posted in the classroom throughout the duration of the plan—or, if there is a lack of space in the classroom, that student work be saved in a portfolio or container (large folder or binder) to reflect on during the plan, and even after the Imagination Lesson Plan is completed, if you like. As with wall journaling, this is another way for students to reflect on their experiences and learning.

NOTE: Lessons may revisit prior art making. The Celebration of Student Work lesson at the end of the plan, can involve a reflection on all wall journaling and student-generated materials as a way of honoring student work and reflecting on the learning and connection making.

What You Will Need to View the Posters

For each Frankenthaler Imagination Lesson Plan (ILP), you will receive:

- A securely packed, heavy-duty mailing cylinder containing the three high-quality posters by Helen Frankenthaler (*Mary, Mary*; *Aerie*; and *Solar Imp*).
- One box of twelve (12) Display Clips and one box of twenty (20) Push Pins (mailed separately from the posters).

For detailed instructions regarding the use of display clips and push-pins, please see a second attachment to the email in which you received this ILP.

Poster Display

- **Begin by flattening the posters.**
- **It is recommended that you have the posters professionally framed.** Hang them in a place with sufficient indirect light to view the poster clearly without glare.
- **If professional framing is not available, a bulletin board with a minimum depth of 1/2 inch will be needed.** The Display Clips and Push Pins provided with the ILP will allow you to display the posters on a bulletin board in a classroom or hallway setting without damage to the posters. The bulletin board needs to be thick enough to allow for the push pins to enter it deeply enough to hold and secure the weight. Most bulletin boards will be just fine for this purpose; however, the slim types that are 1/8" to 1/4" narrow strips will not be sufficient as the point of the Push Pins is 1/2" long.

Please remove all other papers and objects from the bulletin board. The poster(s) should be the only thing hanging on the bulletin board.

Once the posters are ready, easels are another option for displaying them.

THE THREE FRANKENTHALER POSTERS LESSONS

Line of Inquiry*: How does Helen Frankenthaler, in her abstract paintings, *Mary, Mary*, *Space Imp*, and *Aerie*, use individual and combined shapes, color and paint application to suggest emotion?

* A line of inquiry is an open, yet focused question that incorporates elements and concepts found in a specific work of art, and is related to the concerns of students and teachers. It invites questioning, guides our exploration throughout, and serves as the framework for constructing experiential lessons.

LESSON ONE: Shapes, Relationships of Shapes and Interpreted Emotion

Activity #1: A Written Memory and Associated Emotion

Ask students to write a short paragraph of a memory of an experience that made them feel one particular emotion very strongly. Let them know that they will be sharing these writings.

In groups of 4, students read aloud their writing. (Suggestion: These groups can remain intact for all small group work during this unit.)

Ask the groups, after each reading, to document one question that the group has about the shared memory. (The questions are not answered by narrator).

Students share their questions with the whole class.

Ask:

- What do you notice about the questions?
- What kinds of questions are these?
- What types of things do they represent (for example: Information, noticings, curiosities, other...)?

Activity #2: Physical Embodiments of Emotions

In same groups: Ask students to make a list of emotions that they think are represented by the different personal stories.

The groups then pick one emotion from their list and make a physical tableau or “picture” that embodies that emotion.

One group shows their tableau.

(Note: The following questioning process is done with at least 2 tableaux.)

Ask:

- How would you describe this tableau?
- What are their bodies doing?
- What do you notice about their arms, torsos, legs?
- What shapes are their whole bodies or body parts making?
- Are any of the shapes connected or combined in some way? How?

Each student who is observing is given a slide frame or index card with a one inch square cut out of the middle.

Ask observers to focus on 1 shape that they see through their slide frame.

- How would you describe that shape? Be specific.

Students are then asked to move their slide frame to other areas of the tableau to find a very different type of shape.

- How would you describe the new shape you found?
- How is it different from the first one you focused on?
- What does that shape express to you? Why?

Take a look at the tableau as a whole without your slide frame.

- What relationships do you see among shapes? (Example: shapes are linked, side by side, overlapping, the circles shapes are creating a circle, etc.)
- How do individual or combined shapes create a whole?

Have students reflect on what was said about the different types of shapes and their relationships.

Ask:

- What emotion is being conveyed to you in this tableau? Support your observation with evidence of what you see.
- Who sees something else, another emotion? What do you see that makes you say that?
- How is it possible to interpret an emotion from a shape or a group of combined shapes
- How are we doing that?

Students look at another tableau, but hear the intended emotion first.

Ask:

Where do you see this emotion in this tableau?

Could it be some other emotion? Why? What do you see that makes you say that?

Activity #3: A Shape and Its Emotion

Each student is given a large white unlined index card and pencil, and asked individually to:

- Remember 1 shape they focused on through their slide frame

- Draw that shape on their card
- Write, underneath the shape, the emotion they felt the shape represented within the tableau, or the emotion of the tableau, overall.

NOTE: These index cards will be used in Lesson Two.

LESSON TWO: Exploring the Relationship Between Color, Shape, and Emotion

Activity #1: Color and Color Mixing

Each student is given 2 pieces of 11 x 17 white paper and a selection of Cray-pas, and prompted to explore the following question using one of the sheets of paper:

- What are some different ways you can mix colors?

Students get into their groups of 4 to share their discoveries about color mixing.

Some comments are shared aloud with the whole class.

Activity # 2: Color Choices Inspired by Shape and Emotion

Ask students to look at their index card from Lesson One with the drawn shape and emotion written on it, and consider how they would like to use color or mix color to re-create that shape.

Ask:

- What color or color mixing do you think you would like to use?
- In what ways does your shape or its emotion inspire these choices?

On the 2nd piece of paper, students work on color renderings of their shapes.

Activity 3: Reflection and Questions

Post the color shape drawings on the walls.

While students silently look at the drawings, ask them to consider the following:

- What is 1 question that occurs to you about the relationship between color, shape and emotion as you observe your classmates' drawings?

Students take their seats and are given the following three writing prompts:

- a) Write the question you had about the relationship between color, shape and emotion when looking at the drawings
- b) Write one thing you discovered today about color
- c) Write one question you have about color and mixing color

Students share some of their responses aloud.

LESSON THREE: Viewing The Works Of Art: The Three Frankenthaler Posters

Viewing the Works of Art

NOTE: Bring students' color shape drawings from Lesson Two to this viewing lesson.

Looking at each Frankenthaler painting individually, ask the questions below.

Additionally, after viewing the first painting, you can compare and contrast the paintings.

For example: What are some things we are seeing in this painting we did not see in the last? How does the use of color and shape differ?

Activity #1: What do you notice?

- What do you notice about this painting?
- How would you describe this painting?
- What colors do you see? Describe.
- Where in the painting do you think the artist may have mixed colors to achieve the color you see? Why?
- Where do you see colors combined or overlapping?
- What are some shapes that you see? Describe.
- Thinking back to your group's tableau from Lesson 1: Do you see any shapes in the painting that are combined in similar ways to how your group combined your individual shapes?
- How are the shapes similar and different in these paintings?
- What are some relationships you see among shapes and colors?
- Do any patterns emerge? How would you describe these patterns?
- We just talked about your tableaux. What other connections are you making between these paintings and the work we have been doing in class?

Each student is given his or her color drawing from Lesson Two. They are asked to consider their shape and color choices they made to express a particular emotion in their drawing.

Ask:

- Noticing the shapes and color choices this artist, Helen Frankenthaler, has made, what emotion(s) might we interpret from any of the 3 paintings? Why?

Activity #2: Introducing Context

Share the following contextual information with students, regarding the artist's name and date of birth, the titles of the paintings and the dates of their creation:

Helen Frankenthaler—born 1928

Mary, Mary—1990

Aerie—2009

Solar Imp—2001

Choose from the contextual information on Abstract Expressionism and Abstraction (see Contextual Information for Lesson Three, on pages 4-5) and share verbally or as prepared handouts to be read individually by students.

Following the sharing of information or reading, ask the following:

- Why might an artist choose to paint abstractly?
- What connections are you making to other subject areas where you have perhaps already explored ideas of abstraction and/or metaphor, symbolism?

Choose one quote on Abstract Art (see Contextual Information for Lesson Three, on pages 4-5) and ask a student to read it aloud.

- In what ways might you relate this quote to the paintings?

Activity #3: Reflective Writing

Ask students to write on the following question:

- If any of these paintings were a metaphor for something, what might it be? And why? What do you see and experience in front of the painting that makes you think of that metaphor?

Some students share their writings aloud.

A final writing prompt:

Write 1 question you are left with about these paintings.

NOTE: Save these questions for Lesson Four

LESSON FOUR: Contextual Information and Research

Activity #1: Questions and Areas for Research

Ask students to get in their groups of 4 and share the questions they wrote at the end of their viewing (in Lesson Three).

Ask the whole class:

- Which of these questions do you think it would be possible to research?
- What are some new questions you have that we might be able to research?

Students write down all questions that are being discussed as questions to which they may be able to find answers through research.

Activity #2: Contextual Research

Introduce selected contextual materials (for suggested resources, see Contextual Materials for Lesson Four, on pages 5–8)

NOTE: You may also wish to have websites set up on computers, if available.

Ask the students to research the materials, and give them the option of either focusing on one of the questions from Activity 1 or browse freely.

Instruct them to note one or two pieces of information that stand out, or are of interest to them, to share later with the class.

Activity #3: Information Found

Students share what they learned from the research with the whole class.

Ask:

NOTE: Document responses to the first question below to reference in Lesson Five.

- Did anyone find any information on the use of color or paint application by Frankenthaler or other Abstract Expressionists?
- How does any of the information we have learned affect our experience of the paintings?
- What new things do you notice about the paintings?
- What new meanings can we create?

LESSON FIVE: Composition of Shapes and Color Application

Exhibit the Frankenthaler posters in the classroom.

Activity #1: Composition: Arranging and Combining Shapes

Each student is given a piece of 11 x 17 white paper, a plain pencil, and a selection of Cray-pas.

Students sit in their groups of 4, with each group's 4 different color shape drawings from Lesson Two.

Referring to the exhibited Frankenthaler posters, ask:

- What are some of the ways Helen Frankenthaler has arranged or combined shapes on her canvases?

Ask students to look at the group's drawings and individually recreate every shape (outline only) from these drawings on their new piece of paper, using a regular pencil and paying attention to how they want to arrange or combine the shapes.

Ask students to share aloud some of the choices they made around the arranging and combining of shapes in this new drawing.

Activity 2: Deliberate Choice of Color and Application

Referencing what students learned from their research about color or paint application (see Activity 3, Lesson Four), ask:

- what would you like to try out when choosing and applying color to your drawing?

Ask class to now focus on the 3 paintings:

- How would you describe the ways Frankenthaler has applied paint, according to your observations?
- How do you imagine she moved her arm or brush?
- What kinds of strokes do you see?
- Considering something you learned through research and/or something you see, what colors or technique for application of color would you like to try out on your new arranged/combined shape drawing?

Students share some of their ideas and then get to work on finishing their drawings, considering color and how they apply it.

Ask students to display their work on their desks or the wall, and walk around the room silently noticing each other's work with a focus of 3 lenses (written on wall):

- The arrangement or combination of shapes
- How color was used and applied

—Emotion(s) the drawing suggests

Students share with the whole class their observations of each other's work, using the above lenses.

As well, they share their own creative process; what they were inspired by and what they did.

LESSON SIX: Celebration and Self-Assessment

The Frankenthaler posters are exhibited in the room.

NOTE: You may want to invite parents for this celebration and self-assessment. During this event, students can ask their parents “noticing” questions about the artwork, as well as speak to their own work and describe for the parents what they were exploring.

Celebration

Display all student art and wall documentation from the plan.

Lead a walk-through, and at each area, have students speak about their memory of that moment and/or the different things learned, explored, and experienced.

Ask students to write on the following question:

- What is something you will remember and take with you from your study of the three paintings by Helen Frankenthaler?

Ask some students to share their writing aloud.

Self-Assessment

Ask students to write:

3 “What I studied...” statements;

3 “What I learned...” statements; and

3 ways in which they are connecting any of the above statements to any of their other subject areas or to their lives.

Lead a whole class discussion as students share their statements and the connections they made.

Next, each student is given a copy from the High School Rubrics for the Capacities for Imaginative Learning for two Capacities you have chosen from the list of Capacities addressed in these lessons on page 3 (*see PDF of the Rubrics for the Capacities for Imaginative Learning, which accompanies this Lesson Plan*).

Ask the class:

- If you were to assess your own learning and progress and choose a “type” (or level) that you feel suits you, which one(s) would you choose?

Ask students to write which “type(s)” they feel they have accomplished and to provide evidence from their experience of the entire *Frankenthaler Posters* plan.

NOTE: This self-assessment writing can serve as an impetus for a whole group discussion or used as a starting point for individual conversations with students.



Helen Frankenthaler

Photo of Helen Frankenthaler by Marabeth Tyler-Cohen

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