

CreativeConnections

Art Themes + Works

COLOR + O'KEEFFE

VIEW



Let us begin with careful looking. Using our eyes, let's spend one whole minute silently seeing what we notice. Scan the image. What stands out? What are you drawn to? Look for colors, shapes, and lines. What is in the background? The foreground? What objects can you identify? What appears mysterious? Is there anything you notice after looking for one minute that you did not see at first glance?

Georgia O'Keeffe (American, 1887 - 1986)

From the Lake No. 1, 1924

Oil on canvas

36 x 30 in.

Purchased with funds from the Coffin Fine Arts Trust; Nathan Emory Coffin Collection of the Des Moines Art Center, 1984.3

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Photo Credit: Rich Sanders, Des Moines

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DIG

Looking at a piece of artwork makes our eyes and brain notice and think many things. Look at the artwork again on page one and write down things that your eyes notice by answering the question, “What is going on in this work of art?”. Then, listen to what your brain thinks and answer the question, “What makes you say that?” to help you look for supporting clues and to help you understand what you see and think about this work of art.

What is going on in this work of art?	What makes you say that?

Which question was more difficult to answer? Why do you think that is?

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DISCUSS

Looking at this artwork, what are the first things you feel? What is it about the artwork that might make you feel this way? What words would you use to describe the colors in the piece? How do the colors make you feel?

This is an abstract painting by Georgia O’Keeffe. In abstract art, the artist is not necessarily trying to represent a “thing” exactly how we see it, but trying to suggest a feeling or even a place. What do the colors O’Keeffe uses make you think of? How do the colors and lines that she uses suggest movement? What might be moving in the painting?

O’Keeffe was deeply inspired by nature and did many landscape paintings. A landscape is a painting of nature. What colors do you see in this painting that you can relate to nature? Can you identify any shapes that you think might represent parts of nature?

Colors can remind us of different places. Two of the places O’Keeffe lived and painted were New Mexico (near the desert and mountains) and New York State (near the woods and a large lake). How do you think she would paint these two environments differently? How might she use different colors? Where do you think she was when she made this painting? What do you see that makes you say that?

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CREATE

ASSIGNMENT #1

Traveling Colors Experiment | Science

Explore the way that colors mix and bleed and create your own traveling rainbow.

MATERIALS

Red, Blue, and Yellow
Food Coloring
Seven Cups
Six Paper Towel Sheets
Scissors
Water

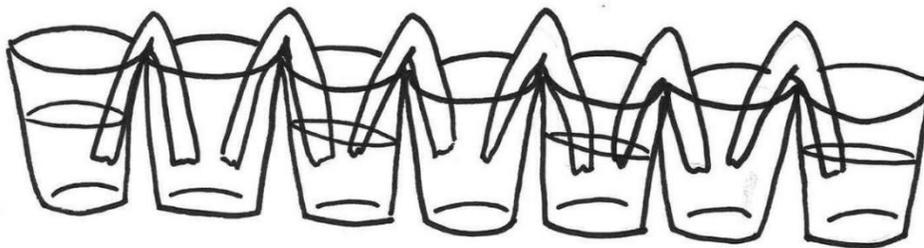
INSTRUCTIONS

The first step is folding your paper towels. Take each individual paper towel sheet and fold it three times in on itself lengthwise, so that it makes a long, thin, folded strip. Now fold the strip in the middle widthwise, as if you are folding it in half. Your paper towel should have a point like a triangle in the middle now. Using your scissors, trim a tiny bit off the bottom, opposite of the point, to give it a freshly cut edge. Repeat this process again with the rest of your paper towels and set them aside.

Place your seven cups in a line next to one another and fill every other cup halfway with water. You will have water in the first, third, fifth, and seventh cups. Put a few drops of red food coloring in the first and seventh cups. Put a few drops of blue food coloring in the third cup and put a few drops of yellow food coloring in the fifth cup.

You will now take your six folded paper towels and put the end of the first one and in the cup of red water with the other end of it in the empty cup next to it. The point of the paper towel will be on the edge of the top of the cups with its legs sticking into the cups. Do this for the rest of the paper towels moving down the line of cups. When they are all in the cups, it should look like a wave of paper towels moving in and out of the cups of colored water and empty cups.

Watch what happens. What happens to the empty cups? What happens to the colors? What new colors do you see? Why do you think this happens?



MATERIALS

Paper
Paint
Paintbrush
Water
Paper Towels

ASSIGNMENT #2

Abstract Landscape | Visual Art

Thinking about color and shape, create a one-of-a kind abstract landscape.

INSTRUCTIONS

In art, a “landscape” is an image of an outdoor place and “abstract” means an image that does not look quite like real life. In this project, we are going to combine both ideas into one painting. Think about the setting you would like to depict in your artwork. What outdoor place will this be: a desert, the woods, an ocean, or cityscape? Think about the features that are found in this place that are important to include. Does it need trees or water, buildings or mountains?

Draw with your pencil a sketch of your landscape. Often, an important feature in a landscape is a horizon line. The horizon is the line that cuts across the image defining the sky from the ground. Though your image will be abstract, include a horizon line across the middle to help viewers see the landscape. Begin drawing your landscape features, remembering that it doesn't need to look real. Draw the landscape to emphasize how it feels. Is it hot? Draw the sun extra big. Is it lonely? Keep the scene emptier. Are you retelling a memory? Make the most memorable parts front and center, even if that isn't how it really looked. Georgia O'Keeffe liked to zoom in close to her favorite parts of nature. Try zooming in on parts of your landscape.

Select the colors you will use to paint your landscape. Again, the colors you use do not need to be true to life. You can make your painting more magical with a purple sky. Make the artwork happier with pink water or yellow grass. Focus on a peaceful mood and paint everything different shades of blue. Blend and mix colors so that they are perfect shades for expressing the emotion in your landscape. Let yourself be inspired by the colors Georgia O'Keeffe used in your own work.

What elements of your painting did you make more abstract? What is the overall feeling and story that your landscape is expressing? How did you feel about trying to make artwork that doesn't look like real life?

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RELATE

Georgia O'Keeffe is well known for her paintings of flowers. Look at [this gallery](#) of O'Keeffe flower paintings. How did she paint flowers in a special way? What do you notice about the colors that she uses to paint flowers? What words would you use to describe her flower paintings? How are they like *From the Lake No. 1*? How are they different?

Watch a video of [My Name is Georgia, a Portrait by Jeanette Winter](#). Listen closely. Make a list of things Georgia does in her life that you learn about in the story. Make a list of the colors that you hear. Do Georgia's different actions remind you of colors? What color do you think of when you picture little Georgia copying pictures from her art teacher's books? What color do you think of when Georgia paints in the winter, in the bitter cold? What colors make you think of Georgia O'Keeffe? Why?

Georgia O'Keeffe famously said, "I found I could say things with color and shapes that I couldn't say any other way." What do you think she meant by this? Do you think you are able to see what she is talking about in her artwork? If you could make a statement about Georgia O'Keeffe's work, what would you say? What would you say about Georgia O'Keeffe as an artist?

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WONDER

Now that you have spent time viewing and thinking about Georgia O'Keeffe's painting *From the Lake No. 1*, what do you still wonder about this work? If you could ask the artist or the painting anything, what would you want to know most? Use the question starters below to write three questions.

Why is...	I am curious about...	What part....	Are we...
Who is...	How did you...	What if...	Is she...
Where...	Did you know...	Suppose that...	Do you...

My questions about Georgia O'Keeffe's *From the Lake No. 1*:

1.

2.

3.