

CreativeConnections

Art Themes + Works

MOVEMENT+MEHRETU

VIEW



Let us begin with careful looking. Spend one whole minute quietly figuring out what we see. 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?

Julie Mehretu

American, born Ethiopia 1970

Entropia (review), 2004

color lithograph and screenprint on paper
33 1/2 x 44 in.

Des Moines Art Center Permanent
Collections; Gift of the Des Moines Art
Center Print Club in memory of John
Holms and Suellen Chance Tone, 2005.7

Photo Credit: Rich Sanders, Des Moines

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DIG

Let's go back to the artwork on page one and try another slow looking practice. You will spend one whole minute looking. After slow looking you will prepare three lists of the all things you notice. Sort these words into groups of nouns, adjectives, and verbs that you see, feel, or sense from the artwork. Try to find as many words as you can to fill up your lists!

Nouns | people places or things

- | | | |
|----|----|----|
| 1. | 3. | 5. |
| 2. | 4. | 6. |

Adjectives | describing words, size, color, feelings, shapes etc.

- | | | |
|----|----|----|
| 1. | 3. | 5. |
| 2. | 4. | 6. |

Verbs | action and doing words

- | | | |
|----|----|----|
| 1. | 3. | 5. |
| 2. | 4. | 6. |

What kinds of words were easiest to find in the artwork? Why do you think that is?

Do you think if you spent more time looking you would be able to list more words?
Why or why not?

Now that you have these lists of words inspired by the artwork, what could you use them for?

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DISCUSS

When you look at this artwork, do you sense movement and action? What are some of the things Julie Mehretu does with color, shape, and line to show movement and speed? What in the artwork shows chaos and stability? In the artwork what do you see that is moving? What is still? What is stable? What is disorganized?

It's exciting to look at *Entropia* and imagine movement through the rhythm of color, direction, and line. When you look at *Entropia*, how do you feel it in your body? Do you feel like dancing, jumping, or running around?

Julie Mehretu uses movement in her art to show how the world moves and changes over time. Places are changed by the people who live in them and by nature. How does movement relate to change in the world around us?

Mehretu makes her artwork by layering images, like maps. Do you think maps also relate to movement? How so?

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CREATE

ASSIGNMENT #1

Line Dances | Movement

Find creative ways to move our bodies to show the kinds of marks that artists make.

MATERIALS

Your Body
Lots of Space

INSTRUCTIONS

Think about the lines and patterns in Julie Mehretu's artwork. What if you were to express those lines with your body in how you walk or dance? For example, how would you move your body to show a wavy line? How do you show a zig-zag with your body? You can use your feet, arms, legs, neck... any part of your body to express the lines or shapes.

Try to walk, move, or dance the following art marks:

- a long line
- a swirly line
- a dotted line
- a circle
- a bold line
- a broken line
- a sharp mark
- a fancy line
- a twisty line
- a square
- a bubble
- an explosive line
- a scribble
- a paint drip

If you want, think of a couple different artist marks and put them together to make a choreographed dance! You could even video tape your dance to share with others.

ASSIGNMENT #2

Found Paper Layered Drawings | Visual Artwork

Make your own artwork inspired by the style of Julie Mehretu.

MATERIALS

Clean reused paper

Stencils

Drawing Tools

INSTRUCTIONS

The first step of this project will be the hardest – find a nice big clean piece of reused paper. What does that mean? Something that might end up in the trash that you could make art on instead, such as newspaper, junk mail, printed pages, maps, old homework or coloring sheets, your old artwork, anything that already has words or images on it. The bigger piece of paper the better.

Use drawing tools (markers, pencils, crayons, highlighters, pastels, or colored pencils, anything you have) to start making marks inspired by Julie Mehretu's artwork! Think about movement as you add lines, colors, shapes and scribbles. Try pressing harder and lighter with your drawing tools, see how that changes your lines. Use stencils or trace around objects to add shapes. You can color them in or leave them empty. Be sure to overlap your marks as you make them. Create lines crossing over one another! Add clusters of dashes or dots. You can even listen to music to help inspire your drawing movements! Be sure to share your finished artwork with a friend, teacher, and classmate or hang it up to display.

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RELATE

Look at other works of art by [Julie Mehretu](#). Do you see movement in her other artworks? What other similarities do you see throughout her artwork?

How would your body move if you were making this artwork? Watch this Art 21 [video](#) of Julie Mehretu making artwork, while watching list all the verbs (action words) that she mentions and that you see her doing.

Take a look at how ballet dancers help artist [Amenda Tate](#) of Des Moines create art. What are the differences between Amenda's artwork and Julie's? Which artist would you like to help make art?

Look at the following images – what about these remind you of Julie Mehretu's *Entropia*? [a map](#), [a blueprint](#), [a bus route](#), [a painting](#), and [a chart](#). Mehretu says that she is inspired by all of these things when she makes her artwork. Does this give you a better understanding of how she makes and thinks about her artwork? She says her paintings are like “communities,” what might she mean by this?

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WONDER

Now that you have spent time viewing and thinking about Julie Mehretu's artwork *Entropia*. What do you still wonder about this work? If you could ask the artist or artwork 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 Julie Mehretu's *Entropia*.

1.

2.

3.