

Lesson Plan: Abstract Geometric Art – Balancing colors and shapes

Lesson Plan: The Hans Hoffman School, Lee Krasner, and Abstract Art

Grade Level: Grades 1 – 5 (Art history lessons and explanations will be adjusted according to age level)

Materials:

Poster weight 8 x 12 paper or 11 x 14

Squares and rectangles cut in various sizes – primary colors

1. Students gather in the Hans Hoffman School gallery. They are shown individual artwork and listen to a talk that explains in basic terms what abstract art is and how it is made. Talk about the Hoffman school of abstract art. This talk should be adjusted to age-level and will obviously be different for each grade. Students are shown the abstract artwork of Lee Krasner and her contemporaries. Gallery time and talk maximum 15 minutes.
2. Students will learn about how Lee Krasner was a first generation American born to parents who were Ukrainian Jews and who were escaping Tsarist Russian rule that was anti-Semitic. Hans Hoffman was German and was escaping discrimination in Germany. Talk to students about how today we have refugees from Ukraine, Gaza, Sudan and elsewhere escaping war and oppression and seeking refuge in the United States. (You may make the connection with refugee children in the group and the artists of the twentieth century). 5 minutes or so.
3. Talk to students about how rectangles, squares, and shapes are balanced in the Hans Hoffman School show. Have them think about balance, composition, and color in a work of art. Ask students to make observations about how shape and color is balance in the Hans Hoffman show.
4. Take the students to the art area. Each student will receive an 8 x 12 or 8 x 14 sheet of poster grade white paper. Have an assortment of pre-cut squares and rectangles in a range of primary colors. Have students select squares and rectangles and test out different compositions on the paper. Once they have settled on a composition they may paste the rectangles and squares onto the page.
5. After students complete their works, have them gather in a circle. Ask student volunteers to share their work and talk about their artistic decisions. With a small group, it is possible (time permitting) for all students to share. For a large group, select three students to share to give some variety. 10 to 15 minutes.