



Storytelling: Shapes and Symbols

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Summary

1. Big Idea and/or Question(s): **In this lesson, we learn about abstract art and two major ways to make it. We discuss and apply key words such as symbol, shape, and mark-making through a hands-on drawing and collage activity that encourages the student to use their imagination to create their own set of abstract shapes. The students will collage the shapes together and pay attention to what the artwork is telling them. They will look at their creations and interpret what hidden story might be evolving under their eyes and ask the following questions:**
2. - **What do you see?**
 - **Do any colors or shapes stick out to you?**
 - **What do you think they mean?**
 - **How does your artwork make you feel?**
 - **Show it to someone near you. What do they see?**
 - **How does it make them feel?**
3. Medium(s): **drawing, painting, collage**
4. Grade Levels: **K - 2nd Grade**
5. Time Breakdown: **Approx. 30 min lesson: 10 min video, 5 min discussion, 10 min activity, 5 min wrap**

Materials

1. The students can use basic art supplies that they might already have at home or can find easily.
 - **something to draw with: colored pencils, markers, etc.**

- something to draw on: brown paper bags, scrap paper, copy paper, etc.
- a piece of heavy weight paper
- paint, paintbrush, cup of water, paper towel
- glue stick
- scissors

Video

- a. **Introduction:** I was born in Tulsa, and received my BFA from the University of Oklahoma in 2015. I am an abstract artist creating paintings, sculptures, and installation-based art that explores storytelling through playful shapes, whimsical lines, and movement.
- b. **Present a Big Idea and/or ask an Essential Question:** What is abstract art? How can we follow an artist's clues to find a story in a painting? Abstract art can start with an idea and use symbols to explain it (If I am happy, I may draw a smiley face ☺), or you can start drawing shapes and look for the idea afterward.
- c. **Show an Artwork that Relates to the Idea/Question:** I show my painting "Forbidden Fruit Loops," (above) and explain that I created it at a time when I was happy. Together, we look for symbols of things that make me happy such as breakfast food and lava lamps.
- d. **Assign an Activity to Investigate the Idea/Question:** Make your own abstract art!
 1. Start with big heavyweight paper, this will be your background.
 2. Grab your paints and choose your favorite color. Load up your brush.
 3. Paint your heavyweight paper from edge to edge and set aside to dry.
 4. Next we will start creating our shapes and "symbols."
 5. Using your drawing tools, and your scrap paper, begin drawing.
 6. Use your imagination to create abstract shapes.
 7. Create blobs, lines, squiggles, squishy shapes HAVE FUN.
 8. Cut out the shapes with scissors.
 9. Place your shapes on the painted background.
 10. Use your glue stick to glue each shape down.
 11. Add extra "flair" and marks on top to complete the artwork.
- e. **Wrap-Up:** Everyone has different perspective on the world and see things differently. When you create art from your imagination, you are sharing your unique vision. I want you to think about this activity and idea whenever you feel full of emotions, it can be happy, sad, angry, scared or just have something you really want to say but maybe you don't know how to say it. All you need is something to draw on, something to draw with, and your imagination.



Above: Katelynn Noel Knick, *Forbidden Fruit Loops*, acrylic, colored pencil, and graphite on paper, 15"x11", 2020