

SEEING SHAPES AND COLORS

AN EDUCATOR'S GUIDE
The Kreeger Museum



*"Paintings
don't speak
our language,
or any other
human tongue.
They speak in
shapes and colors.
To understand
paintings, you must be
able to speak their
language."*

Welcome to The Kreeger Museum!

Opened in 1994 in Northwest Washington, D.C., The Kreeger Museum is committed to enhancing the understanding and appreciation of art, architecture, and music for all its visitors.

The collection, housed in a building designed by internationally renowned architect Phillip Johnson, features work by Pablo Picasso, Claude Monet, Auguste Rodin, Henry Moore, and Paul Klee. The Museum is open to the public Tuesday- Saturday, 10AM-4PM.

The Kreeger Museum offers a range of educational programs, each focused on a different aspect of the Museum's collection. Each program includes a tour of the Museum's collection and a hands-on activity led by a teaching artist.



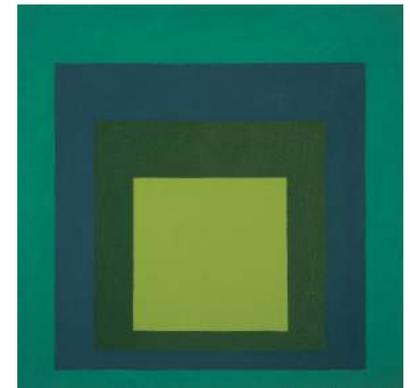
What is *Seeing Shapes and Colors*?

Seeing Shapes and Colors is an interactive, two-part educational program that asks students to consider how paintings and sculptures use shapes and colors to communicate. The visit includes a tour of the Museum exploring works by Picasso, Rodin, Monet, Van Gogh, and members of the Washington Color School, and a hands-on activity, which provides students with the opportunity to experiment directly with the lessons of the visit using artist-grade materials.

We welcome public and private school groups from Washington, D.C., Maryland, and Virginia. *Seeing Shapes and Colors* is designed for 4-7th graders, and will be scaled up or down according to grade level. (Left: Charles Hinman, *Sails*, 1965)

On the Educators' Guide:

This resource provides visiting educators with an introduction to the themes of *Seeing Shapes and Colors*. In the following pages, you'll find vocabulary related to color and shape, as well as examples of how artworks use these components to communicate. On the final pages, you'll find connections to local and national educational standards, as well as logistical considerations for the visit. Questions or concerns? Need more information? Don't hesitate to reach out: education@kreegermuseum.org (Right: Joseph Albers, *Homage to the Square: Wet and Dry*, 1960)



I want to know one thing. What is color? - Pablo Picasso

Color is something we perceive, or sense, like sound or taste or texture.

Color is a visible phenomenon, distinct from form and from light and shade.

Our eyes and minds have evolved over millions of years to distinguish even the slightest difference between one color and another.

How we perceive a particular color varies from person to person, and there is no wrong way to perceive color.

Right: Pablo Picasso, *Head of a Woman* (detail), 1929



Communicating about Color

Color has its own set of rules and vocabulary. The terms below may be considered helpful when beginning the conversation about color and its components.

Color spectrum – The range of colors visible to the human eye

Color wheel – A visual tool that displays the color spectrum in a circle.

Primary Colors – Yellow, red, and blue; the three pure, prime colors that can be combined to create any other color on the spectrum. The only three colors which cannot be made by mixing other colors (compare to prime numbers in mathematics)

Secondary Colors – Orange, Purple, Green. The three colors which result from the mixing of the primary colors

Complementary Colors – Colors directly opposite one another on the color wheel. (Yellow/Purple, Orange/Blue, Red/Green) Also known as contrasting colors

Tone (Value) – How light or dark a color is; the degree of light or darkness in a hue

Tint – A color mixed with white (e.g. pink is a tint of red)

Shade – A color mixed with black (e.g. burgundy is a shade of red)

Pigment – A naturally occurring or man-made material, usually processed to a powdered form, in a particular color. Also a synonym for "color"

Paint – Pigment and a binder, like oil or acrylic (plastic)

Warm colors – The yellows and reds of the color spectrum, associated with fire, heat, sun, and warmer temperatures

Cool colors – The blues and greens of the color spectrum, associated with water, sky, ice, and cooler temperatures

Monochromatic - Of the same or similar color



Color is my day long obsession, joy, and torment. - Claude Monet

Above: Claude Monet, *Cliffs at Les Petit Dalles* (detail), 1884

I paint with shapes. - Alexander Calder



What is shape?

Shape is synonymous with form; it is a particular, finite space.

We use the general word "shape" to describe forms in two-dimensional artwork (paintings, drawings and prints) and three dimensional art work (sculptures and installation art.)

Shapes, like colors, are infinite in their variety: they can be combined and manipulated in countless ways.

Above: Frank Stella, *Flin-Flon XIII*, 1970

Communicating About Shape

As with color, there is a unique set of vocabulary for describing the types of the shapes we encounter in paintings and sculptures. The terms below may be helpful in beginning the dialogue about shapes in artwork.

Size – Physical magnitude, extent, or bulk of a shape

Scale – The size of one thing relative to another shape

Pattern – Repetition of a shape or a combination of shapes

Two-dimensional shapes - Square, circle, triangle - "flat shapes"

Three-dimensional shapes - Cube, sphere, pyramid - "filled-in shapes"

Symmetry – Balanced proportions; equivalency in size, shape, and relative position of parts on opposite sides of a dividing line or distributed about a center

Asymmetry – Unbalanced proportions; the opposite of symmetry

Vertical shape – A shape that goes up and down; runs approximately perpendicular to the earth's horizon

Horizontal shape – A shape that goes side to side; runs approximately parallel to the earth's horizon

Organic/Natural Shape – A shape that comes from nature

Inorganic/Machine-made/Man-made Shape – A shape that relates to neither plant nor animal; a shape that does not arise from natural growth

Geometric shape – A shape that uses the straight lines and circles of geometry

Hard-edged shapes – Shapes with clean, sharp, decisive boundaries and transitions from one form to another. Think Frank Stella (left.)

Soft-edged shapes – Shapes with blurred, soft, irregular boundaries and transitions from one form to another. Think Claude Monet!

Opaque – Not see-through; solid; the opposite of transparent; like a glass of milk or thick sheet of construction paper

Transparent – See-through; clear or partially clear; translucent; like stained-glass windows or water

Composition – Arrangement or ordering of shapes and lines in paintings and drawings

Negative Space – Empty space that surrounds a shape or form; the space in a composition where the eye "rests"

Contour – The outline of the shape; like mountains on the horizon

Contour Line Drawing – A simple drawing which traces the outline of shape, distinguishing negative and positive space

Isolated Shape – A shape that is separate from other forms in the composition

Overlapping Shape – A shape with contours that flow under and/or over another shape

Painting Analysis: A Case Study of Colors and Shapes

Larry Poons, *Untitled*, 1967

There's something always instinctively visually right about nature. There's no difference, to my eye, between looking at a great painting and looking at nature. Because painting, when it's great, has the same immutable rightness, unquestioned rightness, about it. - Larry Poons

Overall composition: long horizontal rectangle

Soft edged, orange, rectangular shape which runs along the top of the painting

Hard Edge Shape

Oblong organic oval shapes; compare to grains of rice or seeds

Soft edge shape



Tint of Yellow

A variety of warm colors: yellows, ochres, oranges, and pinks. Despite this, the overall painting is relatively monochromatic.

Isolated shape

Overlapping shapes

Painting Analysis: A Case Study of Colors and Shapes

Wassily Kandinsky, *Relations*, 1934

*Each color lives by its mysterious life.
Color is a power which directly influences the soul.*

- Wassily Kandinsky

Two dimensional shapes; traditional shapes, and parts of traditional shapes, combined in many different ways

Inorganic/Man-Made shapes

Examples of warm color: orange

Purple, an example of a secondary color

Overlapping shapes

Horizontal Shape

Isolated, organic shapes

Negative Space; an important aspect of the painting's composition

Paint (pigment mixed with oil) with a special additive: sand

Shade of green (green mixed with black)

Vertical Shape



Museum Expectations

We request that schools observe a ratio of one teacher/chaperone for every eight students.

We request that students observe three rules while in the Museum:

1. Do not touch the artwork
2. Move slowly
3. Keep your voices down

We review these rules at the beginning of each visit.

In addition to these rules, we ask students to observe general classroom etiquette. (e.g. Avoid talking over classmates, remember to raise your hand, no chewing gum).

We depend on visiting teachers and chaperones to help enforce these rules.

Preparing for your visit

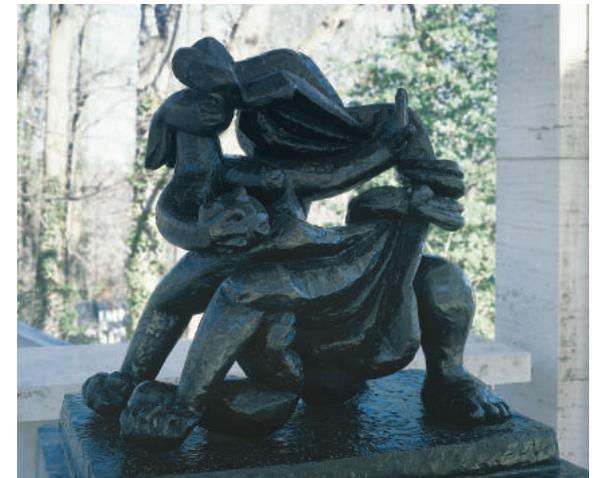
The entire *Seeing Shapes and Colors* experience lasts approximately 90 minutes.

We reserve a spot for your bus with orange cones in our parking lot. Please enter through the gate marked "Service Entrance." Note: most bus drivers choose to back in the gate off Foxhall Road.

Visiting students and teachers should come to the front door of the Museum at the head of the cobblestone circle. We'll be waiting to greet you.

If you have questions or concerns, or need more information, don't hesitate to reach out: education@kreegermuseum.org (202)337-3050 ext. 324

Right: Jacques Lipchitz, *Hagar in the Desert*, 1949-57



Connecting to Standards

The Kreeger Museum's Education Department seeks to provide exceptional, engaging programming emphasizing authentic, substantial connections to art, language, and the creative process. To this end, we are committed to ensuring that our partners and visiting teachers can make meaningful connections to the curriculum we offer. Connections to local and national educational standards are listed below.

Grade	Common Core State Standard for ELA	National Core Arts Standards	DCPSArts
4	Speaking and Listening (4.SL)	Responding and Creating	Connecting
5	Speaking and Listening (5.SL)	Responding and Creating	Connecting
6	Speaking and Listening (6.SL)	Responding and Creating	Medium
7	Speaking and Listening (7.SL)	Responding and Creating	Medium
8	Speaking and Listening (8.SL)	Responding and Creating	Medium

Special Accommodations

We offer discounts for Title I DCPS schools.

The capacity for *Seeing Shapes and Colors* is 30 students/trip. If you have a larger group, please contact the Museum to discuss alternatives.