

# CONTEMPORARY ART & DESIGN



Jasper Johns, *Device*, 1961-62; Oil on canvas with wood and metal; 72 1/8 x 48 3/4 x 4 1/2 in.; Dallas Museum of Art, Gift of the Art Museum League, Margaret J. and George V. Charlton, Mr. and Mrs. James B. Francis, Dr. and Mrs. Ralph Greenlee, Jr., Mr. and Mrs. James H.W. Jacks, Mr. and Mrs. Irvin L. Levy, Mrs. John W. O'Boyle, and Dr. Joanne Stroud in honor of Mrs. Eugene McDermott, 1976.1

## AT THE DALLAS MUSEUM OF ART

Teaching Materials prepared by Ken Kelsey, Gail Davitt, Mary Ann Allday,  
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These materials have been made possible by the Southwestern Bell Foundation.

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**DEAR TEACHER/READER:**

## ***CONTEMPORARY ART & DESIGN***

is a resource guide for viewing art at the elementary and secondary student level. An **introductory text** section presents a brief overview of the works of art. Nineteen **artworks** are provided as a sample of the works on display. The artworks are accompanied by **object sheets** which focus on questions that can be used to direct discussion of the works reproduced. A list of **activities** suggests projects for the classroom. Sheets with **quotations** and a **time-line** provide context information. The **glossary** and **bibliography** can be used to complement your classroom work both before and following the tour. A pair of **evaluation sheets** provides places for your responses.

**We greatly appreciate your comments.**

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The printing in these materials has been manipulated in several ways.

- The titles of individual objects and foreign words are put in italics. For example, the title of the first artwork sheet is *Untitled* by Arshile Gorky.
- Possible student/reader responses to the questions asked in the text have been placed in parentheses.
- The first mention of a glossary word is also put in italics. For example, the word *Surrealists* is italicized in the first object sheet because there is a corresponding entry in the glossary.
- When special research tools are needed, their names are printed in all-caps and bolded. For example, the reader may be advised to consult the **GLOSSARY**, a **DICTIONARY**, or an **ENCYCLOPEDIA**, if necessary.
- The boldness and scale of certain words is increased for emphasis. For example, in the first object sheet on Gorky's *Untitled*, this statement is made, "**Focus on the colors.**" The sentence has been bolded and the scale of the word "colors" has been enlarged.

These changes were made to call visual attention to certain parts of the text. It is hoped the result will be helpful and interesting.

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## Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), Grades 6, 7, 8

### Language Arts

- 6-8.1 Listening/ speaking/ purposes
- 6-8.2 Listening/ speaking/ critical listening
- 6-8.3 Listening/ speaking/ appreciation
- 6-8.4 Listening/ speaking/ culture
- 6-8.8 Reading/ variety of texts
- 6- 8.9 Reading/ vocabulary development
- 6-8.14 Reading/ culture
- 6-8.15 Writing/ purposes
- 6-8.20 Writing/ inquiry/ research
- 6-8.22 Viewing/ representing/ interpretation
- 6-8.23 Viewing/ representing/ analysis
- 6-8.24 Viewing/ representing/ production

### Social Studies, Grades 6, 7, 8

- 6.1 History
- 6.2 History
- 6.3 Geography
- 6.18 Culture
- 6.19 Culture
- 7-6.21 Social studies skills
- 7-6.22 Social studies skills
- 7-6.23 Social studies skills
- 8.27 Culture
- 8.30 Social studies skills
- 8.31 Social studies skills
- 8.32 Social studies skills

### Fine Arts, Grades 6, 7, 8

- 6- 8.1 Perception
- 6-8.2 Creative expression/ performance
- 6-8.3 Historical/ cultural heritage
- 6-8.4 Response/ evaluation

### Math (Activities)

- 6-8.8; 7.9 Measurement
- 7.8; 8.7 Geometry and spatial reasoning (C) use geometric concepts and properties to solve problems in fields such as art and architecture
- 6.11; 7.13; 8.14 Underlying processes and mathematical tools

### Science (Activities)

- 6-8.13 Science concepts

In a continuing effort to support **Texas teachers**, the following list of **Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)** has been compiled from the Texas Education Agency standards. Teachers who use these resource materials are working toward satisfying these state-mandated goals. We hope this list will help in the creation of classroom curricula and lesson plans.

Another important resource for connecting the TEKS to art education in Texas is the Center for Educator Development in the Fine Arts (CEDFA), which can be accessed on the World Wide Web at [http://finearts.esc20.net/resource\\_center.htm](http://finearts.esc20.net/resource_center.htm).

**ENJOY YOUR VISIT TO**

***CONTEMPORARY ART & DESIGN***

**AT THE DALLAS MUSEUM OF ART!!**

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# CONTEMPORARY ART & DESIGN



Robert Rauschenberg, *Skyway*, 1964; Oil and silkscreen on canvas; 216 x 192 in.; Dallas Museum of Art, The Roberta Coke Camp Fund, The 500, Inc., Mr. and Mrs. Mark Shepherd, Jr., and the General Acquisitions Fund, 1986.8a-b  
© 2002 Robert Rauschenberg / Licensed by VAGA, New York, New York

*CONTEMPORARY ART AND DESIGN* is about the art of our own time. Contemporary art surrounds us in paintings, sculptures, photographs, prints, and drawings. Contemporary design shapes the look of our furniture, silver, ceramics, and textiles. Post-1945 art was made specifically for contemporary culture and people. Yet, many today feel uncomfortable with it. They may ask, "but what is it about?" or "What does it mean?" Often it is difficult to find recognizable subject matter, and when there is something that looks familiar, the subject matter seems inappropriate to "art." People wonder if the artist is teasing them. It may appear as if the artist is not skilled in the way that artists of the Renaissance were, and we might wonder if he or she is really serious. However, like all art, contemporary art and design also reflect the time in which they were made. Paintings and sculpture which look very strange and chairs we wouldn't buy for our homes embody the ideas, values, politics, and history of the last half of the 20th century. This is our art; it's all about us.

Throughout history, artists have been drawn to thriving cities that are alive with ideas, cities that are the centers of political and economic power. During the 16th and 17th centuries, artists gathered in Rome. In the 19th century, they went to Paris. By the middle of the 20th century, New York had become the political and economic center of the world, and, for the first time, a U.S. city began to emerge as a cultural capital as well. During World War II, many European artists took refuge in New York; some stayed and became the nucleus for a new international art community. When U.S. artists moved to New York, they were able to learn from the work and ideas of these European artists.

Many of the U.S. artists who moved to New York worked during the 1930s on the Federal Art Project, a division of the Works Progress Administration, which provided jobs for artists during the depression. The government paid artists to produce paintings and murals for government buildings, schools, and libraries. Because they were steadily employed as artists (receiving an average of \$95 a month), they could concentrate on learning and developing their talents. Through the "Project," artists also had the opportunity to socialize, to talk about their work, and, thereby, to begin to build a sense of themselves as a community of professionals. During the 1940s, they gathered with their friends, both European and American, at the newly opened Art of This Century gallery, where they saw the work of the most influential European artists and where some of them, eventually, had their own work exhibited also.

## ABSTRACT EXPRESSIONISM

This mix of talent, experimentation, encouragement, and excitement regarding new possibilities of art resulted in the development of Abstract Expressionism, the first avant-garde art movement to originate in the United States. The artists generally included in this movement are Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko, Mark Tobey, Philip Guston, Clyfford Still, Franz Kline, Lee Krasner, Robert Motherwell, Adolph Gottlieb, Barnett Newman, and Willem de Kooning. Each artist in his or her own way explored the use of color, line, and abstract shapes in order to find new, more direct ways to express the energy and confidence as well as the anxiety of the post-war world. Many of these artists believed that the subconscious could be a source of abstract images and marks that would be universally understood. Through dreams and the process of automatism (an intuitive or spontaneous method of drawing or painting similar to doodling), they sought to probe beneath the rational, conscious mind and find a new visual language that would unify the modern world because all could understand it. They believed in the power of abstract art to directly communicate profound spiritual and philosophical truths.

## POP ART

Younger artists who directly followed the Abstract Expressionists doubted the ability of abstract art to effectively convey universal spiritual truths. During the 1950s Robert Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns experimented instead with a new focus on the more concrete reality of everyday life. Rauschenberg used three-dimensional commonplace objects such as tires and quilts in his "paintings." Johns made works based on familiar objects such as flags, targets, and coffee cans.

The Pop artists of the sixties extended many of the ideas and methods of Rauschenberg and Johns with their use of mass-produced images from popular (meaning that they are seen and known by many people) culture. Comic strips, billboards, labels from products on supermarket shelves, and magazine advertisements became the inspiration for artists such as Roy Lichtenstein, James Rosenquist, Andy Warhol, and Tom Wesselmann. Seeing Robert Rauschenberg's *Skyway* provokes the public to see images in a new way. The use of mass media images by Pop artists changed the way we define "culture." Instead of referring only to the noblest achievements of the elite, culture became more widely understood as a description of the activities of an entire society.

## COLOR FIELD

While Color Field artists, also working in the sixties, retained the Abstract Expressionist interest in color, line, and non-representational shapes, they abandoned the idea that pure use of the visual elements could communicate the truth of the artist's innermost being. Color Field painters delighted in the visual effects of pure color and varied-shaped canvases. Helen Frankenthaler and Morris Louis applied flowing paint to unprimed canvas as if they were staining or dyeing the cloth. The effect of color embedded in large expanses of canvas allowed these artists to create works which seemed to envelop the viewer in a breath of color. Frank Stella's more structured canvases play with the effects of warm and cool colors and with overlapping flat shapes.

## MINIMALISM

Minimalism, a third movement of the 1960s, also challenged some of the basic beliefs of the Abstract Expressionists. Artists such as Carl Andre, Ellsworth Kelly, Dan Flavin, and Robert Morris focused on the literal aspects of the objects they made. For these artists, their works exist only as objects, like any other object in the viewer's environment, without claiming any special cultural significance or meaning beyond their physical existence. By assembling repeating units or simplifying colors and shapes, Minimalist artists draw the viewer's attention to the "wholeness" present in their works of art. Often these works are industrially fabricated. If paint is applied, the viewer cannot distinguish brushstrokes

hat would indicate the personal touch of the artist. The viewer becomes a participant, not in interpreting meaning, but in his/her physical relationship to the object as an equal. "What you see is what you get."

## DESIGN

The ceramics, glass, metalware, and furniture of the second half of the 20th century have also undergone radical changes. Design - or how an object looks - has become more important than the use of expensive, exotic materials and evidence of fine craftsmanship. As artists and architects turned to the design of functional objects, those objects tended to be less functional and more sculptural. Although today we can see these objects in most airports, libraries, and schoolrooms, most Americans do not choose them for their homes. As with painting and sculpture, contemporary design also can be difficult to appreciate and understand.

The Abstract Expressionists worked in new ways and investigated new ideas in order to stretch the possibilities of art. In turn, the artists of the 1960s who followed the Abstract Expressionists challenged the basic principles and beliefs of these earlier artists in a variety of ways. Pop artists, Color Field painters, and Minimalists made art radically different from that of the preceding generation. In a similar fashion, a more recent artist such as Christopher Wool challenges the assumptions of the artists who have gone before him as he responds to the values and conflicts of his world. Contemporary art and design continue to reflect the times in which they are made, and thus, continue to connect to contemporary Americans. Post-1945 art may often be difficult to decipher and intellectually challenging; nevertheless, it offers the exciting possibility of investigating our world and knowing ourselves better.

Arshile Gorky  
(American, born Armenia, 1904-1948)

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*Untitled*, 1943-48

Oil on canvas; 54 1/2 x 64 1/2 in.

Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas Art Association Purchase, Contemporary Arts Council Fund, 1965.17



Arshile Gorky emigrated to the United States from Armenia when he was sixteen. Throughout the early part of his life, Gorky made paintings that looked much like the works of famous modern European masters, such as Pablo Picasso or Wassily Kandinsky. Near the end of his life, Gorky used what he had learned from these influential Europeans to make his own original and unique works of art, such as *Untitled*. Arshile Gorky became a very important link between the artists of Europe and America and a creative inspiration to a generation of American artists.

1. What does this painting mean? That is a question that many people ask when they look at contemporary art. Can you decode this work of art and figure out what it means? **First of all, where are the clues? What parts of this painting provide useful data?** (The colors give us information. The shapes and the space could give us information. The title could tell us something.) Lines, textures, light and dark are all used by the artist to create the meaning of a painting.
2. **Focus on the colors.** How would this painting change if that big area of Sunkist-orange color was Levis-blue? (The painting would feel different. The picture would look dark, like a night scene. The shapes wouldn't show up as much. The picture would seem more quiet and less exciting.) Name some adjectives that describe the colors of this painting. (Adjectives might include bright, full, intense, warm.) Gorky uses lots of orange, but there is also a long pink rectangle at the bottom. The smaller shapes are made of light blues, greens and blacks. Do the colors in this painting go together? How does this mix of colors make you feel? (Some may enjoy the excitement of the mix, while others may find it unsettling.) Choose some more adjectives that describe this combination of pinks and orange and green and black. (Adjectives might include jarring, exciting, ugly, upsetting, strange, hot.)
3. What do the **shapes** in this painting look like to you? Explain your answer. (They look like animals or bugs or people because they seem to have arms, legs, and faces, and they could be standing or moving around. They look like accidental doodles because they are irregular and don't have firm edges.) Notice that there are no "contour lines" around the shapes. How would the shapes change if they were edged by lines? (The shapes wouldn't seem to move. The shapes might look more like cartoons. Things wouldn't seem to float around like they do now.) Would you say this picture was flat or had some kind of **space**? Defend your answer. (People might say that since there are no shadows or rounded forms, this is a composition of flat shapes. Or, they might say that since all the shapes are moving around and doing something in the orange space, the pink bar at the bottom could be a stage.) Gorky doesn't seem to make his painting definitely flat or definitely three-dimensional. Does this bother you? Explain your answer.
4. Gorky was influenced by the European *Surrealists*, a group of artists who were interested in hidden emotions, feelings, and dreams. **How does this painting show hidden emotions, feelings, or dreams?** (Gorky could have seen things like this in his dreams, or he could have imagined them. Maybe the images are doodles. Maybe Gorky was in a certain mood when he painted this picture.) Imagine that

this is a memory from Gorky's past. Describe what's happening, and tell how it feels. (Events will vary. The situation could feel wild, scary, puzzling, funny, mixed-up, tense, dramatic, uncomfortable, energetic, or hot.)

5. Titles of paintings can be very informative, but this one, *Untitled*, refuses to give any clues. Why do you think Gorky would name his picture *Untitled*? (He might want to confuse us. Maybe he doesn't want us to figure out this painting too easily. Maybe he wants to make the picture strange.)

6. You have investigated the important "clues" and "data" about this painting, and along the way you have written down a number of adjectives and comments that pinned down your findings. In addition, you have found that Gorky does not make things simple. Review that first question again. **What does this painting mean?** Like many works of contemporary art, there may not be an exact, or single answer. Instead, Gorky provides us with an object that stirs both our senses and imagination .

Jackson Pollock  
(American, 1912-1956)

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### *Cathedral*, 1947

Enamel and aluminum paint on canvas;

71 1/2 x 35 1/16 in.

Dallas Museum of Art, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Bernard J. Reis, 1950.87

© 2002 Pollock-Krasner Foundation / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York



Jackson Pollock painted for many years before this work was made. His earliest paintings looked like moody, but realistic scenes with recognizable people and landscapes. From the beginning, he wanted to make pictures that communicated deeply with viewers. Over time Pollock changed the look of his paintings. He worked constantly to develop images that communicated more simply and forcefully with his audience and that visualized more effectively his creative energy. *Cathedral* is very important because it is one of Pollock's first "Drip Paintings."

- 1. Look carefully at the lines in this painting.** In the air, trace one of these lines with your finger. Choose adjectives that describe either the lines or the movement of your hand. (You might choose flowing, curvy, tangled, intertwining, squiggly, web-like, accidental, knotted, drippy, scattered, stringy, overlapping, jumbled, free-form, springy, meandering.) **Overlapping shapes** is one of the ways artists create the **illusion of space** in their paintings. Many of the lines in this painting overlap. Is there a sense of space in this painting? Explain your answer. (Yes, the overlapping does make space, but it is very shallow. No, the paint all lays together on the surface.)
2. The paint seems to move across the surface of this painting. Experience these lines another way. Imagine these lines making sounds. How does *Cathedral* sound to you? (It might sound scratchy, very noisy, delicate like mice in a box, overpowering, buzzing like honeybees, harmonized, impressive like thunder and lightening. It might sound like jazz or like a city street.)
3. Because of their revolutionary technique, paintings like *Cathedral* were called "**Drip Paintings**" or "**Action Paintings**." Why do you suppose critics came up with these names? (Answers will vary.) Think about how a **traditional painter** works. He/she uses brushes and a stretched canvas that is placed on an easel. Jackson Pollock's painting was **not** created by this time-honored method. How could you create a painting like Pollock's? (You could drip the paint onto the canvas. You might put the canvas on the floor, and drip lines of paint on it. You could use a brush, a stick, or even a turkey baster to apply the paint.) **Imagine Pollock painting.** First, he spread very large pieces of raw, unprimed canvas on the floor. Using industrial paints, he moved all around the canvas, dripping and spattering paint onto the surface in *rhythmic*, almost dance-like gestures. The paint made a record of Pollock's movements around the canvas.
4. Jackson Pollock wanted his painting to be **automatic**, made without rational control and therefore open to inspiration from his own inner impulses and feelings. This emphasis on the creative possibilities of the inner, or subconscious mind came from the European Surrealists, many of whom were living in New York. Talking about his work, Pollock stated, "When I'm in my painting, I'm not aware of what I'm doing. It is only after a sort of 'get acquainted' period that I see what I have been about. I have no fears about making changes, destroying the image, etc., because

the painting has a life of its own. I try to let it come through" (Crofton, p.147). Have you ever gotten so into something that you forgot to think about people watching you? Were you carried away with a special, creative energy? How did you feel? (People might relate similar experiences when they danced or when they played sports or read a story.)

5. As you traced the poured lines with your finger, were you able to find a beginning or an end? (Answers may vary.) Pollock once stated, "There was a reviewer a while back who wrote that my pictures didn't have any beginning or any end. He didn't mean it as a compliment, but it was. It was a fine compliment" (O'Connor, p.125). Why do you think Pollock would be glad there was no beginning or end to his painting? (Maybe he wanted the painting to be unified. Maybe the painting was meant to be timeless. Perhaps he wanted to shock art viewers.) As a result of his technique, no one part of the painting seems any more important than another, and the lines look as though they continue past the edge of the canvas. **The painting has a strong, *all-over* quality.**

6. The title of this painting is *Cathedral*. **What ideas or feelings do you think the artist wanted to "come through" to us?** (Perhaps this image is like stained glass, and light or energy comes through. Maybe it is meant to convey an idea about all religions becoming one. Perhaps this is meant to convey something the artist was feeling. Maybe he thought the process of making art was spiritual.) When you get to the Museum, find the artist's **signature** at the bottom of the painting.

Mark Rothko

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(American, born Russia, 1903-1970)

## *Orange, Red and Red, 1962*

Oil on canvas; 93 1/8 x 80 1/8 in.

Dallas Museum of Art, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Algur H. Meadows and the Meadows Foundation, Incorporated, 1968.9

© 2002 Mark Rothko-Prizel & Christopher Rothko / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York



Not all Abstract Expressionist painters applied their paint in linear, overall patterns. One group, including Mark Rothko, Barnett Newman, Clyfford Still, Adolph Gottlieb, and to some extent Robert Motherwell, explored the expressive use of large areas of color.

1. Translate this painting into words. Start by describing exactly what you see, and be sure to record all you can about the colors and the shapes. (There are two rectangular shapes with blurred edges. One soft-edge shape is dull red; the other one is a bright, intense orange. The orange shape on top is almost square. These two shapes are set in a blurry haze of grayish brown. The orange and red color-forms are stacked one above the other, and they just fit inside the perimeter of the painting, making their edges vertical and horizontal.) Add adjectives that describe this painting. (Adjectives might include big, blocky, quiet, unmoving, warm.) How would this picture change if the orange and red shapes were set at a diagonal? (The painting would not seem so calm and balanced.)

2. Generally, when we look at a painting, some parts look like "figures," and the rest looks like "background." The figure-part seems to advance toward us and to be in front of the background. This is known as the *figure-ground relationship*. With abstract art, this relationship can be perplexing. Look at Rothko's painting. Are the orange and red shapes the "figures" or the "background"? (Answers may vary.) Try to look at the painting both ways, flipping the figure-ground relationship. How does your reaction to the painting change as the relationship alternates? (When the orange/red shapes are the figures, they look more like paint that's spread out with a spatula. When the orange/red areas are the background, the grayish brown edge becomes a window frame and the orange gets really bright.) Does this bother you that Rothko doesn't seem to make the painting one way or the other? (Answers may vary.) What other experiences or situations does this back-and-forth movement bring to mind? (It's like a doorway. It's something like breathing.)

3. Midway in his career, Rothko began making his paintings very large. This one is nearly eight feet tall. Talking about size, Rothko said, "Painting a small painting means placing oneself outside the experience. When we paint a large painting, we are in it" (Ferrier, p.519). What do you think this statement means? (Big paintings affect us more strongly simply because they are bigger than we are. A big painting pulls us into it.) In your mind, make the grayish brown area the frame and the orange square the background. Now, "walk into" that orange-square background. How would this feel? (It might feel warm, alive, tingly, fiery, happy, intense, bright, "orangey," like swimming in the sun, like turning orange.) Considering its size, this painting has very few parts. **Why has Rothko made his painting so "simple"?** (Maybe he is suggesting that the simple things are the important things. Maybe he wants us to focus on the colors or to think about the shapes. Maybe he means for us to take our time and investigate our responses.) Abstract Expressionists believed their works could communicate directly with viewer's unconscious. For these artists, shapes and colors alone could convey deeply felt personal feelings.

4. Now finish your translation of this painting into words by explaining what the painting "means" to you.

Franz Kline  
(American, 1910-1962)

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*Slate Cross*, 1961

Oil on canvas

111 1/4 x 79 1/4 in.

Dallas Museum of Art, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Algur H. Meadows and the Meadows Foundation, Incorporated, 1968.18

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Franz Kline came to New York City from central Pennsylvania in 1938. His early paintings were filled with scenes of working people in industrial settings. Kline translated this interest in urban structures into a bold, gestural abstraction that was heavily influenced by drawing. *Slate Cross* is an example of this later, more confident stage of Kline's career.

1. Franz Kline said "...painting is a form of drawing and the painting that I like has a form of drawing to it" (Johnson, p.26). Look carefully at this painting by Franz Kline. **How could this painting be like a drawing?** Explain your answer. (It looks like a drawing because it appears to be made entirely of lines on a white background. It looks like a drawing that has been blown up or enlarged. The surface still looks like thick paint.) Do you think Kline's statement describes *Slate Cross*?

2. **Imagine making the lines you see in this painting.** Describe the kind of movement you would need to make these forms. (You might need a big, confident, aggressive, bold, sweeping, two-handed, stretching, determined movement to make these forms.) The physical act of putting paint on the canvas was very important to painters like Jackson Pollock and Franz Kline. The term "Action Painting" is often used to identify their work. The shapes and lines on his canvas may look as though they were done very quickly, but details on the surface show that the artist took some time to make them. When you get to the Museum, look closely at the surface, and you will find that some of the black areas were painted over with white. This overpainting shows that Kline carefully considered the look of his marks and spent a considerable time "fine-tuning" his images.

3. **Which areas are more important, the black ones or white ones?** (Answers may vary. Some may say the black areas suggest forms, while others may point out that the white areas suggest space.) Kline has taken care to balance the two, so that one depends on the other. How would this painting change if it were made in colors instead of whites and blacks? (It would be lighter in mood. It would be less serious. It might seem less important. It might seem more emotional.)

4. What do these shapes look like? (They might look like beams in a building, like charred logs in a forest, like girders from a construction site, or stacks of railroad ties.) *Slate Cross* may remind us of urban structures and movements or, for different reasons, a geological formation. It can also cast a certain mood. Kline has said that he tries to create a painting "...so that the overall thing has a particular emotion" (Johnson, p.26). Think about the title. **What emotions or ideas do you find in this painting?** Explain your answer.

Robert Motherwell  
(American, 1915-1991)

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*Elegy to the Spanish Republic (The  
Barcelona Elegy)*, 1966

Oil and acrylic on canvas; 84 x 147 in.

Dallas Museum of Art, The Art Museum League Fund, 1967.7

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Robert Motherwell became friends with a number of the European artists who emigrated to the United States, especially the Surrealists. Besides being influenced by their ideas about the creative role of intuitions and feelings in making works of art, he was also very sensitive to their political problems in Europe and especially what these problems might mean to all peoples.

1. What is the most important part of this painting? (Many may say the large black shapes, but some may mention the bright areas of white and color.) Is this painting totally flat, or does it seem to have space? (It looks flat because there are no shadows and because there are no recognizable objects to tell us about distances. On the other hand, it seems to have space because the black shapes overlap the colors and shapes in the background.)

2. **Look at the black shapes.** Are they standing still or moving? How can you tell? (They look like they are moving because the tall ones bend toward the left, because the bottoms of the tall shapes look like footsteps, because the black shapes don't seem to be stuck to the "ground," because these shapes form a rhythmic pattern of "talls and shorts" across the front of the painting.) If they are moving, how would you describe their movement? Explain why you say this. (The movement is slow because the shapes are so big and lumpy. It looks like they are marching because they are in order.) Suppose these shapes were people. Where would you see a group of people dressed in black and marching solemnly? (You might see public officials marching in a parade. You might also see mourners marching in a funeral.)

3. Now, look at the areas behind the black shapes. Imagine you are in that area. **What kind of "place" is it?** (It looks sunny and warm with no shadows. There is a bright, almost brilliant sunlight. The colors are pure and simple.) The look of white-washed buildings and bright sunlight reminds many viewers of Mediterranean village scenes.

4. Look at the title. Use a **DICTIONARY** to find the meaning of the word "elegy." The Spanish Republic existed from 1931 to 1939. The Republic was destroyed during a bitter civil war and was replaced by the Dictatorship of General Francisco Franco (1892-1975) with the aid of war supplies from his fascist supporters, Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini. The city of Barcelona was one of the last strongholds of the Republican forces. Now that you know the meaning of the word "elegy" and some of the history of Spain, how do you think Robert Motherwell felt about the Spanish Republic? What do you think he felt about warfare and repression in general? When you have finished discussing this among yourselves, look again at the painting. **How could this non-realistic, abstract painting convey Motherwell's feelings about the Spanish Republic?** Explain your answers.

David Smith  
(American, 1906-1965)

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*Cubi XVII*, 1963

Polished stainless steel; 107 3/4 x 64 3/8 x 38 1/8 in.

Dallas Museum of Art, The Eugene and Margaret McDermott Art Fund, Inc., 1965.32 McD

© 2002 Estate of David Smith / Licensed by VAGA, New York, New York



Using steel to create fine art sculptures was considered very innovative in the 1930s and 1940s. Up to then, most art audiences expected to see sculpture made of more traditional materials, like bronze or marble. To David Smith, the use of steel was natural. Smith had worked in an automobile plant where he learned metal-working techniques, such as riveting and welding. He constructed his first welded sculptures from agricultural machinery and other objects.

1. Does this nine-foot tall sculpture look **heavy and massive** or **light and airy** to you? Give reasons for your answer. (The work looks heavy because it is made of all those strong, blocky shapes. Since it is made of metal, it must weigh a lot. The work looks light because its surface is so shiny and wavy. The way the forms are "thrown out" in space makes them look weightless.) Do you think it is a good or bad thing that this sculpture might look heavy and light at the same time? Explain why.

2. Do you think these forms are balanced? (Answers may vary.) Explain why or why not. When you come to the Museum, walk around this sculpture and notice how the appearance of the forms and the spaces, or voids, between the forms shift and change as you move.

3. **Describe the forms the artist has used.** (They are geometric. They are like building blocks or boxes. Except for one cylinder, all the shapes are rectangular.) These forms are made of steel. What kinds of objects are usually made of this material? (Steel is used to make cars, bridges, large ships, skyscrapers, handtools, stoves.) The use of steel is associated with the industrial world of the 20th century. These hollow steel boxes were welded together. That means the edges of the plates were heated red-hot so that the pieces of metal would fuse. Look for these once-molten seams when you can get close to the sculpture.

4. The surfaces of the forms were polished with an abrasive disk grinder. Look at the lines made by the grinder. How do the lines compare to the boxes? (The lines are uneven and squiggly, while the boxes are firm and geometric.) Smith once said, "I like outdoor sculpture and the most practical thing for outdoor sculpture is stainless steel, and I make them and I polish them in such a way that on a dull day, they take on the dull blue, or the color of the sky in the late afternoon sun, the glow, golden like the rays, the colors of nature....They are colored by the sky and the surroundings, the green or blue of water....They reflect the colors" (McCoy, p.184). Do you think *Cubi XVII* would blend or contrast with an outdoor, natural setting? Explain your answer. (The shapes and material would look very different from the hills and trees. The shiny surface of the sculpture would reflect and blend with the atmosphere.) When you are in the Museum, see if you can find David Smith's **signature** on the piece. How do you suppose he "wrote" his name?

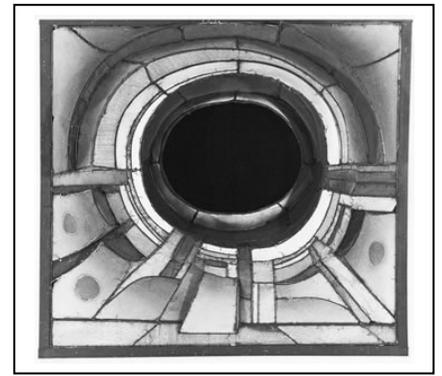
Lee Bontecou  
(American, born 1931)

Page 1 of 2

*Untitled*, 1961

Welded metal and canvas; 48 1/2 x 56 x 38 1/8 in.

Dallas Museum of Art, Foundation for the Arts Collection, Gift of an anonymous foundation, 1963.92.FA



The art world of the later 1950s was a time of transition. Abstract Expressionist goals and techniques became too familiar to many artists. Some younger artists, such as Robert Rauschenberg or Jasper Johns, reacted by turning to new subject matter. Lee Bontecou, on the other hand, continued to work in an abstract manner and to express powerful emotions and ideas. Her innovation was the choice of materials.

1. Is this supposed to look like something that is made by man or something that is made by nature? Defend your choice. (It looks like it is nature-made because its form is irregular and round like some kind of star or growing thing. It looks like it is man-made because parts of it look like metal or some kind of machine.) What does it look like to you? (Answers may include a star, an eye, a volcano, a map, a porthole, the side of a tank, a festering wound, a cell, a mouth, the plan of an ancient castle, something from a Sci/Fi movie.)
2. This work is made of gray steel angle iron, steel rods welded together, canvas fabric, and reddish copper wire. **Look carefully at the image and locate where the artist has used these different materials.** You may have to look up "angle iron" in the dictionary. (The image cuts off some of the picture, but the edges look like angle iron. The dark lines are the metal rods that are welded together. You can just make out the welded joints where the rods meet. The canvas, which looks like it must be painted in places, is stretched between the rods. The copper wire is used to tie the canvas to the rods.)
3. Think about how this work was made and list the stages in its production. (The artist probably welded the big pieces together first and then the smaller rods to form a skeleton. Then she could have cut the pieces of canvas to fit the different spaces. She would have to cut the wire into little pieces and then use them to tie down the canvas shapes. Maybe she painted the canvas last.) Does this sound like the way to make a painting? Explain your answer. (No, paintings are made with paints and brushes and stretched canvases. The process for making this piece sounds more like a model project. Yes, if you throw out traditional methods of painting, then this could be a painting if the artist says it is.) **Much modern art does not fit easily into traditional categories of art-making.** Bontecou's *Untitled* is hung on the wall like a painting. However, it is clearly an object that has been constructed as well as painted. If it is a sculpture, then it is very untraditional because it is assembled instead of carved or cast and because it is made of machine age materials instead of marble or bronze.
4. Imagine the dark core of this work as a doorway. How would it feel to go in this opening? (It might feel unsettling, scary, exciting, creepy, or weird to go in.) Now, what could come out of it? (Polluted fumes, exhaust, liquids, big insects, or spaceships might come out.) This work was made at the height of the Cold War period when relations between the Communist and Western alliances of countries were competitive and tense. The Cuban Missile Crisis occurred in 1962. World-wide atomic destruction was a possibility. Furthermore, Americans were just beginning to take a closer look at the effects of industrial pollution upon the environment. How could *Untitled* relate to this period? (Like that period

of history, this work looks unsettling, soiled, war-like or war-torn, and somewhat dangerous. Also, the work has a hidden quality of things being tensely guarded, hidden, or held secret, even the title is anonymous.) **Lee Bontecou's work remains abstract, but it is still able to communicate powerful emotions.** When you get to the Museum and see *Untitled*, you will encounter other aspects to this work. The metal and canvas surfaces look like they would be interesting to touch, but touching the copper wires looks dangerous. Perhaps most surprisingly, *Untitled* is very three-dimensional and juts dramatically out from the wall.

Robert Rauschenberg  
(American, born 1925)

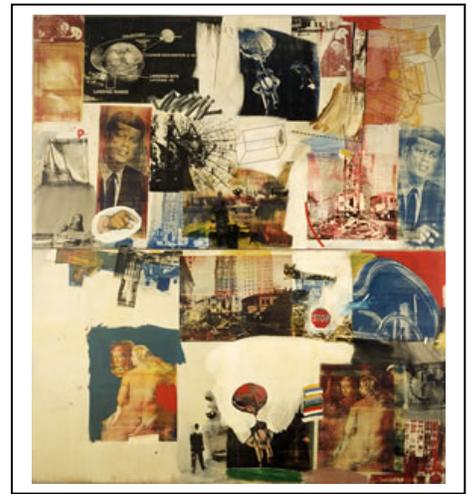
Page 1 of 2

*Skyway*, 1964

Oil and silkscreen on canvas; 216 x 192 in.

Dallas Museum of Art, The Roberta Coke Camp Fund, The 500, Inc.,  
Mr. and Mrs. Mark Shepherd, Jr., and the General Acquisitions Fund,  
1986.8a-b

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York



Perhaps one of the most important influences on the career of Texas-born Robert Rauschenberg was his interaction with the *avant-garde* composer John Cage. At the time of their meeting at Black Mountain College, Rauschenberg painted white canvases enlivened only by the shadows of the viewers. Cage encouraged the artist to be more sensitive to the everyday world of common objects, noises, and images and to include these in his work.

1. **Carefully list the images you see in this painting.** (The list will probably include President Kennedy, space capsules, an American eagle, city scenes with people and stop/go lights, a female nude from an old painting, a diagram of the earth and moon from outer space, three-dimensional drawings of boxes. Some lists may include a star surrounded by red paint next to the image of Kennedy and a statue of President Washington that is upside-down.) Where do you think the artist saw these images? (He might have seen them in magazines, newspapers, on TV, or in books. He probably found these images in the everyday world.) Because of these images, can you guess what year this painting was made? Defend your choice. You may need an **ENCYCLOPEDIA** to pinpoint the facts and deduce the date.

2. Some of the images in this painting appear more than once. Are all the versions the same or different? First, find the images that have doubles. Then investigate their similarities and differences to decide how closely they repeat. (a. The Kennedy image repeats. The two look like the same picture, but they have been printed in different colors, and the one on the left has a white oval painted around the pointing hand. b. The eagle image repeats. The two images are the same, but the one in the upper left-hand corner is on its side, and the other one further to the right has part of the corner painted over with white. c. The female figure looking in the mirror repeats, but the one on the left has unimportant areas painted over in bright, flat blue and red.) *Silkscreening* is the name of a technique that is used to print images, often from photographs. This technique is very similar to using a **stencil**. Companies that print images on T-shirts use silkscreens to transfer pictures to cloth. Perhaps you have used this process in school. If not, check the word in a **DICTIONARY**. Rauschenberg used the silkscreen technique to make the repeating images of *Skyway*. See if you can find areas that were NOT silkscreened. Here is a hint: hand-painted areas will show brushstrokes, uneven edges, and sometimes drippy spills. **Why would an artist use silkscreening to make part of his or her painting instead of doing it all by hand?** (Maybe he wants to make the images quickly. Maybe he wants to be an artist of his time and use images that are familiar to people. Maybe he wants his work to look like the evening news on TV, or like newspapers and magazines.)

3. Do you think this painting has a **central focus**? Explain your answer. (No, there are a lot of places to look, and no single image dominates. No, the colors and shapes are all equally interesting. Yes, it is focused on a particular time period and the things that were happening then.) Think about the way

Rauschenberg has arranged, or not arranged, his picture. What other kinds of things or experiences look and feel like this? (Answers may include bulletin boards, sketch pads, doodles, scrapbooks, or walking around a mall, switching channels on TV, thumbing through a magazine.)

4. When he was interviewed, Robert Rauschenberg once said, "My paintings are invitations to look somewhere else" (Crofton, p.156). How could this statement relate to *Skyway*? (Maybe he means for us to look at the world around us. Maybe *Skyway* is supposed to make us think about what happened in the U.S. in the 1960s. Maybe the painting is supposed to make us look inward and think about our lives.)

**5. Imagine you are a critic for a New York City art journal of the 1960s.** You are used to seeing the paintings of Jackson Pollock and Mark Rothko, and you like Abstract Expressionism. You think paintings are meant to be very personal, both in the way they look and how they are made. You think paintings are supposed to convey deep and important emotions simply through shapes, colors, and lines. Now imagine being confronted with this new painting *Skyway* by the young artist Robert Rauschenberg. How would you react? Why would you feel this way? (I might feel shocked because this painting uses common, popular imagery. I might be irritated that the artist has used a rather commercial technique like silkscreening to create a large part of the painting. On the other hand, I might feel excited because a new artist has embraced popular culture and made painting look new. I might like *Skyway* because it captures the experiences I have when I watch TV or read the newspaper.)

6. Did you notice that this painting is in two parts? That horizontal line in the center is where the two pieces fit together. When you get to the Museum and look at the real objects that are illustrated in this packet, see how many works of art have more than one piece.

Jasper Johns  
(American, born 1930)

Page 1 of 2

*Device*, 1961-62

Oil on canvas with wood and metal

72 1/8 x 48 3/4 x 4 1/2 in.

Dallas Museum of Art, Gift of the Art Museum League, Margaret J. and George V. Charlton, Mr. and Mrs. James B. Francis, Dr. and Mrs. Ralph Greenlee, Jr., Mr. and Mrs. James H.W. Jacks, Mr. and Mrs. Irvin L. Levy, Mrs. John W. O'Boyle, and Dr. Joanne Stroud in honor of Mrs. Eugene McDermott, 1976.1

© 2002 Jasper Johns / Licensed by VAGA, New York, New York



This painting is part of a series of works by Jasper Johns called the "Devices." They all contain actual objects which were used to make parts of the pictures. In these works Jasper Johns explores the possibilities of painting.

1. **Look carefully at this oil painting and describe the different parts.** (#1. One area consists mainly of bold, paint strokes. Most of these strokes are made with the colors, red, yellow, and blue, but others are mixtures. The paint seems to be applied in random, irregular patches which overlap and intersect. #2. Another area is defined by two bars attached near the top of the canvas, one on each side. The bars have been pushed through the paint to form parts of circles. #3. In a third area, stenciled letters spell out the word "DEVICE".) Red, yellow, and blue are the building blocks of color. Check a color wheel to investigate their relationship to each other and to other colors. Each of the "bars" in area two is a stretcher bar, a specially-cut board used to make the frame on which canvas is stretched for paintings. Since it is supposed to be a support on the back of the canvas, it is not normally meant to be seen by the viewer.

2. Concentrate on areas #1 and #2, and imagine the physical motions that were used to apply and mix the paint. Describe these motions. (Area one motions are irregular. They go in different directions for different distances. Area two motions are geometric, smooth, circular.) Which set of motions are "**personal**" and which are "**mechanical**"? Explain your choice. (The first set are more "personal" because the artist decides where each one will go. The second set is more "mechanical" because it is made with an instrument.) Each area has a different feel. But whether it is the artist's hand or a stretcher bar, Johns seems to be saying they are both useful ways of applying paint. This attitude toward applying paint is very different from that of an Abstract Expressionist like Jackson Pollock. Pollock felt that his method of applying paint could express inner emotions and creativity. Johns, on the other hand, does not seem to mind having a mechanical device do the painting for him.

3. Is the use of stencils to write the word "DEVICE" also "**mechanical**"? Explain your answer. (Yes it is because anyone could use a stencil and the letters always take the same shape. No it is not, because you can choose the order of the letters and the colors that are used. The **e's** in "DEVICE" aren't the same.) Johns chooses something that everyone is familiar with, in this case stencils, and then uses them in a way that is very individual.

4. The title of this work is *Device*. What does the word "device" mean? (A "device" is a thing someone makes. It's supposed to do something. It's a tool.) You may want to check the dictionary to catch all the possibilities. It can also mean "...a plan, scheme or trick for effecting a purpose" (*Random House*).

**How does this title relate to the painting?** (The word "device" is written on the canvas. Johns has used those stretcher bars at the top as "devices" to mix paint. He used the stencils as "devices" for making the letters. The circles in the paint are symmetrical "devices" for creating a sense of balance.) The use of these "devices" seems odd, foreign, and even shocking when compared to traditional painting. However, traditional artists also use "devices" like paint brushes, stretched canvas, picture frames, and the symmetrical placement of images. Why would Johns call our attention to such "devices"? (He might want us to think about how art is made. Maybe he wants us to investigate what is "behind the devices." Maybe he is trying to get to a deeper level of meaning.)

5. *Device* demands a lot of analysis and thinking. It also seems to play a lot of games. What do you think about a painting that teases us and makes us think? Defend your choices. (I like it because it isn't always so emotional and it has a lot of levels. I don't like it because it doesn't seem to say one thing and it's hard to understand.) Whatever the exact meaning of the painting, Johns seems very clearly to be making a different kind of painting than the Abstract Expressionists.

Tom Wesselmann  
(American, born 1931)

Page 1 of 1

*Mouth # 11*, 1967

Oil on canvas; 68 x 152 in.

Dallas Museum of Art, Foundation for the Arts Collection

Mr. and Mrs. Edward S. Marcus Fund, 1968.7.FA



These bold lips are modeled after those of Peggy Sarno, the model and friend of artist Tom Wesselmann. He focused on her mouth while she was taking a cigarette break and created a number of sketches. These sketches inspired a whole series of paintings on the same theme.

1. When we visit museums, we sometimes go expecting to see a certain kind of picture. **What makes this painting different from traditional painting?** (It's a picture of a woman smoking. It looks big. The painting is just of the lips and the cigarette; it's been cut out of a face. It doesn't have a frame, and so it looks like the picture is the same shape as the image. The painting looks like it came out of an advertisement or commercial.) This painting is big. By moving the projector closer or farther away from the wall, make the projected image of *Mouth # 11* the same size as the original.
2. In the 1960s when this painting was made, cigarette commercials were shown on TV. Today they are not. How have attitudes toward cigarette smoking changed since then? (This discussion may tie in with studies in other areas such as science or history.)
3. Traditionally, oil paintings are painted on canvas, a cloth woven of cotton or linen, that is stretched over a rectangular wooden frame and held in place by tacks. This painting really does have the same shape as its image. How do you suppose the artist went about making the support for this *shaped canvas*?
4. Usually, we must be very friendly with someone to get this close to his/her mouth. **Does this image seem "friendly"?** (Answers may vary. However, the hard-surfaced lips and the aggressive or confident grip on the cigarette do not make this person sweet, innocent, or nurturing.) Although the rest of the face is missing, describe the person smoking the cigarette. (She might be unfriendly, sophisticated, snotty, confident, mean, sure of herself, hard, fashionable, sexy, distant.)
5. During the 1960s, artists in the United States and Britain started looking to the world of popular culture, with its comic books, advertising, and TV, to find images for their art. This style is called Pop Art. Looking at this painting, *Mouth # 11*, as an example of that style, do you think Pop Art celebrates or criticizes popular culture? Or, is it neutral?

James Rosenquist  
(American, born 1933)

Page 1 of 1

### *Paper Clip*, 1973

Oil and acrylic on canvas; 102 1/4 x 224 in.  
Dallas Museum of Art, Gift of the 500, Inc., Elizabeth  
B. Blake, Mr. and Mrs. James H.W. Jacks, Mr. and

Mrs. Robert M. Meltzer, Mr. Joshua Muss, Mrs. John W. O'Boyle, Dr. Joanne Stroud and two  
anonymous donors in honor of Robert M. Murdock, 1978.28.A-D.

© 2002 James Rosenquist / Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY



While struggling to make it as an artist, James Rosenquist painted billboards in New York, at times while being suspended 20 stories above the city. Rosenquist felt that creating paintings like *Paper Clip* was a way to bring the excitement of working on a billboard into a room. This painting is nearly eight feet tall and eighteen feet wide, which led him to compare the feeling he had while painting such works to the way a fly might feel on a sheet of paper.

- 1. What objects do you recognize within this painting?** (There is a wallet, a paper clip, a roll of register tape, a Mobil petroleum sign, a section of something with words on it, a pair of hands, and a sketched triangle and rectangle.) In terms of size, what is unusual about how these things relate to one another? (The paper clip is larger than the hands that would use them. It is also bigger than the wallet and the register tape which would normally be larger than the paper clip. The Mobil sign, which would be big in actual life, is smaller than the wallet and the paper clip.)
- 2. Describe the hands in this painting.** (They look like a woman's hands. They appear to be cut off, like they are from a magazine.) For Rosenquist, hands like these are meant to refer to those found in advertisements, which present items in an attractive way so that people will be interested in buying them. What are these hands doing? (They seem to be measuring something. They are holding a strip of something with words on it.) Can you identify what the hands are holding? (It is difficult to tell. It looks like a ruler with no numbers on it. It could be a piece of a sign.) If the other half of the words were filled in, what would they say? ("This is love in 1971.") How does this relate to the inch that the fingers seem to be showing us? (Maybe the artist thinks love is small in 1971.)
- 3. You have already explored the unusual way in which the objects within this painting relate to one another in size and scale; now see if you can discover a connection that might exist between these items as far as their use is concerned.** (Most of the things are objects that have something to do with money, business, or advertising. The section with the statement on love seems out of place.) **What connection, if any, do you think there is between the items that deal with business and the statement about love in 1971?**
- 4. Early in 1971, Rosenquist was involved in a car accident that left his wife and eight-year old son hospitalized and the artist greatly in debt.** Based on what you have seen in the relationships between objects in this work, what effect do you think this event might have had on Rosenquist's painting?

Morris Louis  
(American, 1912-1962)

Page 1 of 1

### *Delta Kappa*, 1960

Acrylic on canvas; 103 1/2 x 146 in.

Dallas Museum of Art, Foundation for the Arts Collection, Given in memory of Mary Seeger and John William O'Boyle by their children and grandchildren, 1984.14.FA



Many painters in the 60s continued to believe in abstraction but wanted to purge their art of what they saw as excessive, individual emotion. These artists, including Morris Louis, reduced painting to its most essential properties of color, line, and shape.

1. **Look at the areas of color.** Louis applied the paint by pouring it across the canvas fabric. This pouring process could be difficult. Can you imagine what might go wrong? (The colors might spill off the canvas or might pour in the wrong direction. The colors might mix with each other. The colors might get too diluted.) **Look at the shapes the colors form.** How do you think Louis poured these shapes? Be sure to include the role of gravity in your explanation. (Explanations will vary.) The paint was poured across the canvas fabric before it was stretched upon the wooden support that keeps it taut and rectangular.

2. Many people like to look at the way artists brush their paint onto the canvas. Brushstrokes can be choppy and excited or long and elegant. Brushstrokes can be very personal. They are a record of the artist's physical gesture as he/she applies paint. Some people can even guess who made an unsigned painting by studying the way the paint strokes are applied. **How does Louis' way of applying paint change all this?** (There are no brushstrokes to see. We can't tell anything about how he moved or felt when he applied the paint. He doesn't leave a personal mark.) When you get to the Museum, look closely at the edges of the paint and notice how it has soaked through the canvas. Instead of staying on the surface, the paint has actually dyed or stained the *unprimed*, or raw, canvas. The idea of staining unprimed canvas came from Helen Frankenthaler, an artist who had worked with Jackson Pollock.

3. Look at the large area of canvas that has been left unstained. **Why would an artist leave so much open space?** (Maybe he likes the shape. Maybe he wants to contrast canvas and color. Maybe he wants this area to seem like open space. Maybe we could walk in here and be surrounded by the colors.) Notice that Louis almost equally divides the area of the painting into unstained and stained, allowing one area to balance the other.

4. Morris Louis made many of his paintings in a series. All the paintings in one series used the same composition, and only the colors and sizes varied. This painting is from a series that Louis called the "Unfurleds." You may have to look this word up in a dictionary. **How does this title relate to the look and feel of this painting?** (The color-areas look like they are rolled out onto the canvas. Since the color-areas defy gravity, they look like flags uncurling in the wind, and this feels light, airy, open. The color-areas could be like flowers with clear, intense colors that open up.)

Frank Stella Page 1 of 1

(American, born 1936)

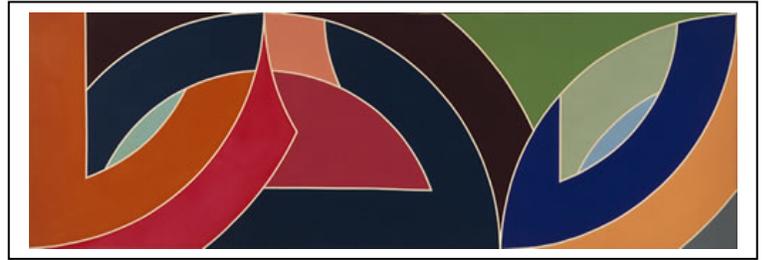
*York Factory Sketch, No. 1*, 1970

Acrylic on canvas; 54 1/8 x 163 3/8 x

3 1/8 in.

Dallas Museum of Art; Gift of the Meadows Foundation, Incorporated, 1981.135

© 2002 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York, NY



The Abstract Expressionists investigated strong emotions and the hidden springs of creativity; they often applied paint in ways that emphasized the gestures and actions of the painter. Frank Stella, like many artists of the "next generation," wanted to paint differently. By painting flatly, he took the personal, "signature" quality out of his brushwork. By eliminating the connections to his own emotional state, he made his paintings "stand on their own."

1. Look carefully at the image. Mark off the length of this painting on the floor so that you can know its true size. What is the most important part or feature of this painting, the **size**, the **colors**, or the **shapes**? Defend your choice. (The size is the most important because it is so much bigger than regular paintings or people. The colors are the most important because they are bright, flat, and "fluorescent." The shapes are the most important because they take up the entire painting.) When you get to the Museum, look carefully at the surface of the painting and see if you can find the places that are not covered by paint.

2. **Why would an artist want to make a painting this size?** (He/she might want to get our attention, might want to make the painting more impressive, might want to make the painting something we can't ignore.) Many public works of art, memorials, or signs are purposely made large and grand.

3. **Describe the shapes in this painting.** (They look like circles. They look like machines. They look perfect because their edges are so smooth. They look like the little plastic protractors we have in school.) Can you find a mathematical relationship among the different shapes? (Example: The painting is one and one-half "protractors" long.) Space can be suggested by overlapping shapes and by *warm/cool color* combinations. Warm colors appear to come forward, while cool colors seem to recede. Does Stella use overlapping and warm/cool color combinations in this painting? (Students may point out a number of instances.) Explain why these spatial illusions don't work in this picture. (They are used inconsistently.) Why do you think Stella would do this? (He might want to play games with our sense of depth. He might want us to keep returning to the flat surface of his painting. He might want us to have fun looking.) Since we are on the subject of "flatness," notice the lack of shading and the Day-Glo, sign-like quality of the colors.

4. Read the title of the painting. Frank Stella has consistently chosen titles for his paintings, which, #1, are not well-known, and #2, refer to places, things, or animals that no longer exist. For example, this title, *York Factory Sketch, No. 1*, refers to a settlement of the Hudson's Bay Company in northeastern Manitoba that had become a ghost town by the late 1950's. **Why do you think Stella would name this painting after an extinct community?** (Maybe Stella likes creating mysteries. Maybe he wants us to think of the painting as a thing on its own without a connection to something we know about. Maybe the artist wants us to enjoy the qualities of the painting, like the geometry, or the blues' "blueness.")

Ellsworth Kelly  
(American, born 1923)

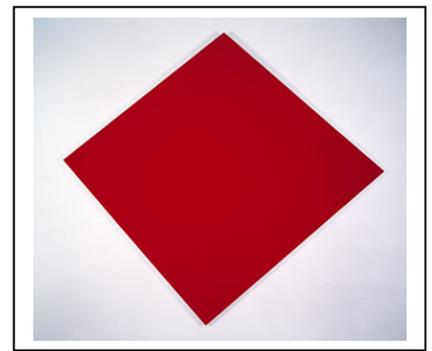
Page 1 of 1

### *Red Panel*, 1980

Oil on canvas; 118 1/2 x 130 1/4 in.

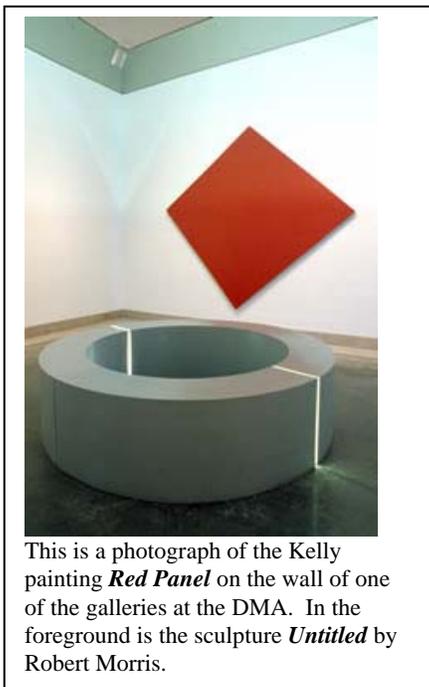
Dallas Museum of Art; General Acquisitions Fund and a gift of Robert Meltzer, by exchange, 1985.99

© 2002 Ellsworth Kelly



**My Paintings are like fragments of something you see out of the corner of your eye.** -- Ellsworth Kelly

Ellsworth Kelly attempts to show the viewer the way the eye actually sees the world -- in fragments. The artist has said, "I try to see the corner of a table as it would look to me before my brain telegraphs the message TABLE...as a shape [rather than as] part of a table" (Merleau-Ponty, p. 29). He often takes his "fragments" and paints them a solitary color in order to make the finished piece seem whole.



This is a photograph of the Kelly painting *Red Panel* on the wall of one of the galleries at the DMA. In the foreground is the sculpture *Untitled* by Robert Morris.

1. How is the shape of this painting different from most paintings you may be familiar with? (Many paintings are rectangular, but this one is nearly diamond shaped.) Kelly is very interested in the appearance of fragments of furniture, shadows from buildings, and buildings themselves. What fragment do you think Kelly had in mind for *Red Panel* before he painted it red? (It could be a fragment of a shadow from a table top, a car's reflection, or maybe a street sign.)

2. In paintings with no image and only a single color, the eye travels quickly to the edge of the canvas. Imagine that Kelly changed the shape of this work from the irregular diamond shape to a traditional rectangle. Would it still be like a fragment? Explain your answer. (No, it would look like a regular, rectangular picture. It would look like a color block.)

3. Many artists attempt to paint objects or scenes as they appear in nature. As you look at this image, it becomes obvious that Kelly did not intend to paint a recognizable object in this painting. Knowing this, what visible qualities do you think are most important to the artist? (He appears to be

primarily interested in color and shape.) Artists interested in portraying nature accurately, often create paintings of objects. Kelly, however, creates paintings that are meant to **BE** objects themselves and nothing more.

4. Traditional paintings have **subjects and backgrounds**. In a naturalistic painting of a bowl of fruit, the bowl of fruit would be the subject of the painting, and the space painted around it would be the background. If, for Kelly, the painting itself becomes the subject of the painting, what might you consider to be the painting's background? (The wall that it is placed on can be seen as the painting's background. The museum is the background.) The French writer Merleau-Ponty said that there will be a third important element besides the painting and its background that will make this work significant. This third element will be you. When Merleau-Ponty stood in front of Ellsworth Kelly's paintings he said that he became very aware of himself in relation to the painting and that this realization turned out to be an important part of experiencing the work. Keep this in mind when you view *Red Panel* in person.

Robert Morris  
(American, born 1931)

Page 1 of 1

### *Untitled*, 1965-66

Fiberglass and fluorescent light; 24 x 14 x 97 in.

Dallas Museum of Art, General Acquisitions Fund and matching grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, 1974.145



One concept that is important for understanding Robert Morris' sculpture is the idea of **GESTALT**. The word "gestalt" (ge stahl't) refers to a 'shape,' 'configuration,' or 'structure' made of individual parts that forms a **complete unity** that cannot be expressed simply in terms of the parts. For example, a melody forms a whole that cannot be perceived simply by looking at the individual notes that make it up.

1. **Imagine what it would feel like to touch this sculpture.** Would it be hot or cold? (It might have the temperature of a machine that has been left on. It has a surface that looks cool.) From what you can see from this image, name other things that you think might have the same texture as this work. (A kitchen counter top, a filing cabinet, curved walls in a room all might have the same texture.) If this sculpture were capable of making a noise, what kind of sound would you expect to hear coming from it? (It looks like it might hum or make a pulsing noise. It might play strange music.)



This is a photograph of the Morris sculpture *Untitled* in one of the galleries at the DMA. In the background is the painting *Red Panel* by Ellsworth Kelly.

2. Compared to *Red Panel*, which appears above the sculpture, how important do you think **color** is to Morris? (The sculpture is not nearly as colorful, so color may not be as important to Morris.) Morris feels that color has no place in sculpture. He believes that the addition of color might have an emotional and spiritual impact on the viewer that would take away from his emphasis on form, which would in turn destroy the gestalt of the work.

3. This sculpture is actually made up of two semi-circular pieces. When you first began to look at this work, did you think of it as being one or two sculptures? Explain your answer. (It appeared to be one sculpture. The pieces are placed so near to one another that they almost look to be connected by the light. It seemed to be one sculpture, but with two parts.) **Think back on the idea of gestalt.** What role does the light coming from inside the sculpture play in forming the gestalt of this work? (It looks as if the light is the energy source that connects the two pieces, yet it also makes the separation of the two pieces more noticeable.)

4. **Picture yourself** in a room with a person who sits alone and does not speak. If you were assigned to learn about this person, how would you go about doing it? (I might walk around them, look at them, or wait for them to do something.) One person compared Minimalist sculpture with just such a silent person. Visual information concerning the Morris sculpture can be gathered by walking around the piece, and looking at it from close up and far away.

5. When you come to the Museum, the light in the room, the walls around you, everything in your sight, all are meant to affect the experience you have with Robert Morris' sculpture. The artist does not intend to set up the surroundings in which you will view the work, but he does hope that the environment in which the piece is placed will be altered in certain ways by his work. Do you think works of art should be dependent on their surroundings? Why or why not?

Dan Flavin  
(American, 1933-1996)

Page 1 of 2

*alternate diagonals of March 2, 1964 (to Don Judd)*, 1964

Fluorescent tubing and metal, 144 x 12 in.  
Dallas Museum of Art, Gift of Janie C. Lee, 1976.74,a-g



Just as Abstract Expressionism dominated the 1950s, Minimalism dominated the art world of the late 1960s. The influential critic Barbara Rose referred to this later movement as an art that was pared down to the "minimum," and the name stuck. Minimalism continued the goal of much modern art, reducing works to their barest, geometric essentials.

1. Flavin uses two different standardized fluorescent units. One of the units has four light tubes, each four foot long. The other has one light tube eight feet long. **Can you discover a mathematical relationship here?** (A number of relationships are possible. For example, two of the four-foot units add up to the eight-foot one. The four four-foot units add up to sixteen, which is twice the eight-foot unit.) The parts of this object seem both closely entwined and separate.
2. Fluorescent fixtures have become so common that they are practically unnoticeable. We see them in schools, in businesses, in factories, in hospitals, in the garage. **How is this fluorescent fixture different from those?** (This one is hung on the wall. This one is hung in a museum. This one is meant to be art. The other ones are used just for lighting a space, but this one isn't necessary for lighting this room.) What is it about a museum space that changes the way we look at things? (A museum makes things special. A museum is a place where lots of people come together to see art.)
3. Paintings are made of oil paints or acrylics. Sculptures are made of stone or metal or wood. Traditionally, these materials are expensive and difficult to use. How is Dan Flavin's **choice of materials** different from traditional ones? (Flavin's work is composed of the light-making object and the light itself. His material isn't a material; it's fluorescent light. Fluorescent light fixtures aren't that expensive. There is nothing difficult about using a light fixture.) When speaking about art, the word *medium* refers to the material or process that the artist uses to make the work of art.
4. Investigate how fluorescent light makes you feel. Start by comparing the light from a fluorescent tube with light from a screw-in, incandescent bulb. How are they different? (The fluorescent light is sometimes a bluish tone, while the incandescent bulb is more natural. The fluorescent light is weird because it drains the color out of people. The incandescent bulb is one spot of light. The fluorescent tube is a line of light.) Because it is a line of light, a fluorescent tube wipes out shadows. Now, think about the placement of this light-beam on the wall. It could have been vertical or horizontal, but the artist chose to set it at an angle. What feelings or reactions are special about diagonal lines? (Diagonal lines are active, and they seem to move. Diagonal lines show energy, where horizontal lines seem at rest or asleep. Diagonal lines seem more dramatic because they don't fit into the rectangular grid of verticals and horizontals.)
5. *Alternate diagonals of March 2, 1964* is composed of an industrially-made, light-making object, the fluorescent light, the museum space, and you. **Why would an artist want to reduce his/her creation**

Dan Flavin, *alternate diagonals of March 2, 1964*

Page 2 of 2

**to so few ingredients?** (Maybe the artist wants us to concentrate on the way we experience something that we usually overlook. Perhaps the artist wants to shock us. Maybe the artist wants to get to the essence of "experiencing.")

Carl Andre  
(American, born 1936)

Page 1 of 1

*Pyramid (Square Plan)*, 1959 (destroyed); 1970 (remade)

Wood (fir)

68 7/8 x 31 x 31 in.

Dallas Museum of Art, General Acquisitions Fund and matching funds from  
The 500, Inc., 1979.44

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Minimalist sculptors have made a point of excluding certain things: no precious materials, no elaborate narratives, no idealizing qualities, no virtuoso techniques, no emotional displays, no recycling of old forms, no representational imagery, and no pedestals. Although it was originally created much earlier, this sculpture satisfies a number of Minimalist characteristics.

1. Traditionally, artists carve or chisel wood when they use it for sculpture. An artist will choose a block of wood, imagine a figure "inside" the block, and then carve or chisel away all the excess wood. **How is this wooden sculpture different from traditional ones?** (This sculpture is made of commercially available two-by-fours. The artist may have sawn notches in the blocks, but he didn't carve or chisel the wood. This is not a figure. The artist didn't start with one large block of wood. This sculpture is made of lots of parts that are stacked together. This sculpture could be taken apart and re-assembled somewhere else.) What is the advantage of using two-by-fours? (You don't have to shape the wood. All the pieces will be the same size. You can easily buy it.)

2. Is there a front or back to this piece? Explain your answer. (No, all the sides are the same. You could have a "front," if the sculpture was placed close to the wall.) How can you tell all sides are the same? (You could look at each one and compare them. Because of the design, the sides have to be the same.) Symmetry is defined as a similarity of form or arrangement on either side of an imaginary line, or axis. Where do you see examples of "symmetry" in this work? (There is symmetry from side to side and top to bottom.)

3. Which of the following adjectives could be used to describe this work? Explain your decision.

geometric

irregular

precise

unplanned

mathematical

clean

impressive

accidental

emotional

Can you think of other adjectives?

4. Sometimes one part of a work of art is more important than another. **If you removed any one piece of this sculpture, would it be the same?** Explain why it would or would not. (If you took out one of the pieces, you might still be able to figure out how it was supposed to look, but it would look "broken." It wouldn't be the same because the point of this sculpture is to look complete. We know where all the parts go, so you can't take one out.) Suppose I called this is "single, unified image." Discuss what this means.

Christopher Wool  
(American, born 1955)

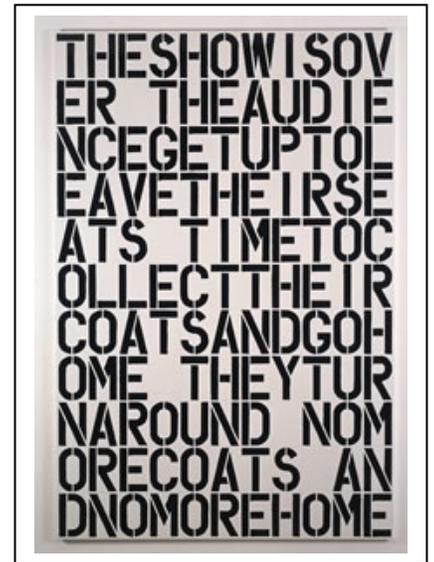
Page 1 of 1

*Untitled*, 1990

Enamel and aluminum; 108 x 72 in.

Dallas Museum of Art, gift of the Friends of Contemporary Art, 1991.25

At first glance, Wool's painting may look like a *Conceptual Art* piece; after all, it uses words and emphasizes ideas. However, there is quite a lot going on here visually as well. In fact, one critic even compared Wool's look of "overallness" and visual uniformity to those same qualities in Jackson Pollock's abstract paintings.



1. There are a number of important features to this work by Christopher Wool. First, do the letters actually make sentences? See if you can translate the letters into thoughts.

**THE SHOW IS OVER  
THE AUDIENCE GET UP TO LEAVE THEIR SEATS  
TIME TO COLLECT THEIR COATS AND GO HOME  
THEY TURN AROUND  
NO MORE COATS  
AND NO MORE HOME**

2. Set aside the meaning of the letters and turn your attention to the visual order of this piece. How have the letters been arranged and painted? (The white background is divided into rectangles. There are eleven rectangles across and eleven up and down. The shape of each small rectangle is similar to the rectangle formed by all the rectangles. There are no empty spaces on the edge. The letters are all painted in the same color. The letters look like they were made with a stencil.) What adjectives would you use to describe the way this painting looks? (It might look orderly, logical, machine-made, impersonal, mathematical.) When you get to the Museum, look at the shiny, appliance-like surface of the paint.

3. For a moment, think about this object as a sign. If a manager were buying a sign for a business, he/she would not accept a print job like this. **Why wouldn't this style be acceptable for a business?** (There are no spaces between individual words. There are no periods at the ends of the sentences. Everything is capitalized. Instead of going to the next line, words that are too long break in the middle. These words don't break according to syllables.) Christopher Wool seems to break a lot of writing rules. How does this make you feel? (It might be annoying, irritating, funny, challenging, enjoyable.) How did you feel when you realized you could decode/read this painting? How did you feel when you realized what you had read? (You might feel sad, let down, scared, displeased, uncomfortable.) Explain why you felt this way. (The story isn't nice. Something seems to have gone wrong at the end. Maybe an accident or a catastrophe occurred.)

4. There seem to be two parts to this work, the visual look of the painting and the meaning of the words. Each part has a very different feel to it. Why do you think an artist would do this? (It makes the painting more interesting. It surprises you once you think about it. It makes the work of art more complex.) On another level, the use of words to describe an emotional event is also an abstraction.

*LCW Chair (Low Chair Wood)* Page 1 of 1  
Charles Eames (American, 1907-1978) and Ray Eames  
(American, 1912-1988), designers  
Henry Miller, Inc., manufacturer  
Zeeland, Michigan, designed 1946  
Walnut, plywood, and rubber; 26 1/4 x 22 x 23 1/2 in.  
Dallas Museum of Art, General Acquisitions Fund, 1988.48



Ray Kaiser studied painting with the Abstract Expressionist painter Hans Hofmann in the late thirties. In 1940, she attended the Cranbrook Academy, an important American design center, and collaborated with Charles Eames on design projects. The two were married the following year. After that point, they worked so closely together (from 1941 to Charles' death in 1978) that most of their creations are best considered a joint effort.

1. From looking at the image, can you tell what material was used to make this chair? Be prepared to support your guess. (Because of the woodgrain on the surface, it looks like it's made of wood. Because of the free-form shape, it looks like it's made of plastic or metal.) It is made of wood. How could the manufacturers get wood to take a shape that we usually associate with materials, like plastic or metal, that can be molded? (They could get a big block of wood and carve it in the shape of this chair. They could cut the wood in these shapes and then mold them. They could cut the shapes from plywood that has been curved this way.) The chair is assembled of pieces that have been molded into compound curves. Each piece is made by laminating thin veneers of wood to layers of glue. Once the mold was made, how many LCW Chairs would it be possible to make? (As many as they could sell. As many as they wanted.) How is the production of this chair typical of the way things are made in industrialized countries? (It is mass-produced. You depend on the market, so you only make as many as you can sell.)

2. In 1946, the Museum of Modern Art in New York City presented an exhibition entitled "New Furniture Designed by Charles Eames." **Why do you think an art museum would display contemporary furniture?** (Because it is beautiful. Because it is designed well. Because the chair is a part of a "new look" that has become fashionable. Because it is very commercially successful.) The Eameses wanted their designs to be beautiful as well as serviceable. Do you think this chair looks like art? Try two things. First, turn the image upside down so that you forget that it's a chair and take a moment to look at it in terms of pleasing shape; you may want to blur the focus. Second, look through the other images and see if the LCW Chair looks like the shapes in any of the abstract paintings.

3. An important motto of many modern designers is "**Form follows function.**" Discuss this motto among yourselves and decide what it means. How does "honesty" relate to this motto? When you have finished discussing this, look again at the paintings in these Teaching Materials. Have any of these artists tried to be "honest" with their works? (The Pop artists have made an effort to capture the true look of America. Many of the artists make their paintings look flat; they don't try to make them look like windows onto imaginary reality. Depending on how you think of it, the drips of paint actually could be the subjects of Pollock's painting.)

## ART

1. Abstract Expressionism combined ideas and innovations from Europeans and Americans.

A. The Surrealists were fascinated by the effects of accident. Some of these artists developed a game that utilized "chance" for creative interest.

Assign a section of a body to each of four players. Each of the players will draw his/her assigned body part.

- a. The Head
- b. From the Neck to the Waist
- c. From the Waist to the Knees
- d. From the Knees to the Ground

When the first person finishes, he/she folds the paper to conceal all but the bottom points of the drawing and passes it to the next person. That person makes his/her addition, conceals the work, and passes it on. When the drawing is finished, have the group choose a title.

B. Artists like Jackson Pollock were much admired for their confident approach to making art and their willingness to take chances. When Jackson Pollock painted *Cathedral*, he spread out the canvas on the ground and moved all around the painting. As he moved, he dripped his colors in response to an inner feeling of creative release.

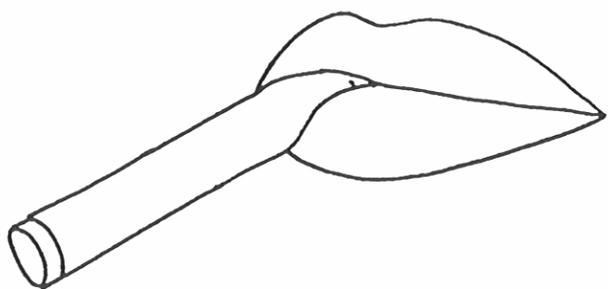
Using water-based tempera and a large piece of brown paper spread on the ground outdoors, try to recreate what you think Pollock's gestures might have been as he painted. Before you begin painting, try to clear your mind of rational control, much like you would if you were doodling.

2. VISUALLY COMPARE AND VISUALLY CONTRAST. Divide your class into two groups. Have one group list as many points of similarity as possible between David Smith's *Cubi XVII* and Franz Kline's *Slate Cross*. Have the second group list as many dissimilarities as they can find. Have a representative from each group present their findings.

3. Draw a face that might match Tom Wesselmann's *Mouth # 11*. Use the outline of the mouth provided.

# ART ACTIVITY #3:

"Finish" Tom Wesselmann's *Mouth # 11*



## ACTIVITIES

4. A **MODULE** is a basic unit. Many artists create works of art using modules. When they do, the dimensions of the major parts of the work are multiples of the basic module.

Using crayons, markers, or colored pencils, apply your own colors to the duplicated image of Frank Stella's *Factory Sketch # 1*. Cut the different colored sections apart and then arrange them to form a new work of art with a "shaped-canvas." You may want to glue your arrangement to a rigid piece of cardboard to make it more permanent. Or you may want to attempt putting the sections back together in order to reform a rectangle.

As you rework Stella's painting, see if he has used a module. If so, use that basic unit to enlarge, elaborate, or envelope his work.

5. Here is a list of popular American songs with the years they were released:

**"Almost Like Being in Love"** 1947,

**"Exodus"** 1961,

**"Blowin' in the Wind"** 1962,

**"From Russia with Love"** 1964,

**"Born Free"** 1966.

Find the paintings in the teaching materials that were made in the same years. Perhaps you can find recordings of these hits. As you listen, see if the songs connect to the paintings.

Instead of using music from the period, make a selection of your own choice. Play the music while the class looks at the slides and decide which selections go together best.

## LANGUAGE ARTS

1. Think of Lee Bontecou's *assemblage* as a passageway. Imagine how you would be drawn into this passage, what life would be like on the other side, and what might happen to you once you got there. Write a short story for each of the three episodes. Think of each of these episodes as a chapter in a book. You may want to add a final chapter that tells how everything turns out. Be sure to choose a title for your book.

2. Write a poem relating to Ellsworth Kelly's *Red Panel* without using the words red or shape. You might begin by making a list of the feelings you have when you look at the painting. Your feelings may even suggest memories that you want to include.

3. Mark Rothko described the colors that appear within his paintings as characters that might act in a drama. A producer has just asked you to write a play with the characters from *Orange, Red, and Red*. But before you can do this, you must define the characters. What are these colors' personalities like? What kind of people would they be? What would they look like?

## ACTIVITIES

4. You have just been commissioned to write a dictionary of art styles. Write your definition of Pop Art. You will want to include:
- who was involved,
  - what the goals or characteristics of the style were,
  - when they made their art,
  - where they made their art,
  - how Pop Art compares to other styles.
5. Imagine that Jasper Johns' *Device* painting and Robert Morris' *Untitled* sculpture could talk to one another. Write the conversation that might take place between them.
6. Some artworks, such as Christopher Wool's *Untitled*, use narratives or stories. Write out the text of Christopher Wool's painting. The text almost tells a miniature story with a kind of surprise ending. Using Wool's limitations, create your own story. Your story can only be six sentences long, and it has to have a surprise ending.

When you have finished, see if you can arrange your story in such a way that it is visually interesting as well.

## SOCIAL STUDIES

- James Rosenquist's *Paper Clip* mixes images from advertising with images of common objects to communicate a message about the state of affairs in the 1970s. Using magazines, newspapers, and other sources of advertisements and images, create a collage that represents the 2000s.
- As a class, you looked at Robert Rauschenberg's painting *Skyway*, and talked about how it reflected history. Be an historian and investigate the connections more closely.
  - Make a list of the recognizable elements within the painting.
  - Connect each of these elements to actual historical events or movements.
  - Determine how useful *Skyway* is to an understanding of the history of the period.
  - Write up your findings.

Finally, discuss the following question among yourselves: "How do works of art bring different times to life?"

- Robert Motherwell's painting *Elegy to the Spanish Republic* is in some way connected Pablo Picasso's *Guernica*. By using the encyclopedia, the dictionary, and other reference materials, find out more about the subject of each of these paintings and then decide how they relate. You can find an image of *Guernica* on the web at <http://www.guernica.swinternet.co.uk> or ask your librarian for assistance.

4. James Rosenquist and other Pop artists explored and used the imagery of advertising. People who create advertising affect most of us on a daily basis. We see their work on television, in newspapers, on product packaging, and on billboards. They hope to influence us to buy whatever it is they are selling.

Divide the class into two groups. Assign each group to take part in one side of a debate. Here is the question:

"Is advertising good or bad?"

## SCIENCE AND MATH

1. Look again at the definition of "gestalt" and the example of melody/notes. Robert Morris hopes to create a gestalt relationship within much of his sculpture. The solar system could be thought of as a natural gestalt. To what other natural or scientific systems can this idea of gestalt be applied? What about other man-made systems?

2. When one side of a thing is exactly the same as another we say the two are equal (ex.  $2 + 2 = 4$ ). When this happens with a shape, we say the shape is symmetrical. In the slide of Carl Andre's *Pyramid*, the part of the sculpture that is not visible is exactly the same as the part that is; it is symmetrical. With this information and based on what you can see, try to add up how many triangular surfaces there are in the entire work.

3. As you have seen, Christopher Wool's *Untitled* is very carefully arranged. Each of the small rectangles measures 6 inches x 15 inches.

What is the perimeter of each small rectangle?

What is the area of each small rectangle?

What is the perimeter of the whole piece?

What is the area of the whole piece?

4. Technology is both a subject and a component in modern art.

a. Discuss the technological aspects of modern art by looking at the Rauschenberg, Bontecou, the Smith, the Flavin, and the Morris. Concentrate on the processes or pieces of equipment that were involved in making these works of art, and talk about where else these processes or pieces of equipment are used in our society.

b. Look up the words "fluorescent," "fiberglass," and "welding." See if you can guess which words apply to which works.

# QUOTATIONS

" I had nothing for them (shapes and colors) to do, so I wasn't going to hire them."

**Robert Rauschenberg**

"The modern artist is working with space and time, and expressing his feelings rather than illustrating."

**Jackson Pollock**

"It seems to be possible to control the flow of paint, to a great extent, and I don't use...the accident: I deny the accident."

**Jackson Pollock**

" Simplicity of shape does not necessarily equate with simplicity of experience."

**Morris Louis**

"All I want anyone to get out of my paintings, and all I ever get out of them, is the fact that you can see the whole idea without any confusion."

**Frank Stella**

" A large picture is an immediate transaction, it takes you into it."

**Mark Rothko**

"When I begin a sculpture I am not always sure how it will end."

**David Smith**

"New demands need new techniques."

**Jackson Pollock**

"The canvas appeared as an arena in which to act...what was to go on the canvas was not a picture, but an event."

**Harold Rosenberg**, art critic

" I don't decide in advance that I'm going to paint a definite experience, but in the act of painting, it becomes a genuine experience for me... I'm not painting bridge constructions, sky scrapers or laundry tickets."

**Franz Kline**

"The Spanish Elegies are not political but my private insistence that a terrible death happened that should not be forgotten...The pictures are a general metaphor of the contrast between life and death, and their interrelation."

**Robert Motherwell**

# TIME-LINE

## 1940s Abstract Expressionism

- 1945 First atomic bomb detonated in New Mexico
- 1945 WWII ends
- 1945 The FCC sets aside 12 channels for commercial television
- 1946 First electronic computer
- 1947 First U.S. plane to break the sound barrier
- 1948 Invention of the transistor
- 1948 Marshall Plan provides \$17 billion in aid for Europe
- 1949 North Atlantic Treaty Organization is established
- 1949 USSR tests its first atomic bomb

## 1950s

- 1950 Korean war begins
- 1951 First color TV broadcast
- 1952 Dwight D. Eisenhower elected U.S. President
- 1953 Soviet leader Stalin dies, Khrushchev begins rise to power
- 1954 Segregation outlawed by the Supreme Court
- 1954 I Love Lucy begins
- 1956 Elvis Presley sings Rock and Roll
- 1958 Xerox produces 1st commercial copying machine
- 1959 Castro comes to power in Cuba

## 1960s Colorfield and Pop

- 1961 Berlin wall built
- 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis
- 1962 Chubby Checkers sings "Let's Do the Twist"
- 1963 John F. Kennedy assassinated
- 1965 Viet Nam War begins
- 1966 The Cultural Revolution begins in China
- 1968 Martin Luther King assassinated
- 1969 First man lands on the moon
- 1969 Woodstock music festival

## 1970s Minimalism

- 1970 Earth day launches the environmental movement
- 1970 National Guard kills 4 students at Kent State
- 1972 Cowboys win the Super Bowl
- 1973 Vietnam war ends
- 1976 America celebrates the Bicentennial
- 1976 Elvis dies
- 1977 *Star Wars* premieres
- 1977 First manned shuttle flight
- 1979 American hostages held in revolutionary Iran
- 1979 Compact disc developed

**ABSTRACT ART** - Abstract works of art can be either non-representational, or can be derived from the real world. In the first case, the work of art is completely invented by the artist, and does not directly reproduce anything in the real world. In the second case, the artist may start with an observation in the real world and then transform that image into a pattern-like shape or form.

**ALL-OVER** (composition) - First used in connection with the "drip" paintings of Jackson Pollock, the term describes a style of painting in which the whole surface of the canvas is used in a somewhat uniform manner.

**ASSEMBLAGE** - The technique of creating three-dimensional works of art by combining a variety of material- including "found objects"- into new aesthetic objects.

**AUTOMATIC** or **AUTOMATISM** - The practice of automatic drawing, painting, or writing, made in a state of unconscious free association. This was an important method of working for the Surrealist artists.

**AVANT-GARDE** - A French term meaning "advanced guard," used since the mid-19th century to describe artists, art movements, or ideas that are ahead of their time.

**CONCEPTUAL ART**- An art form in which the idea or concept and the process by which it is achieved are more important than any touchable product.

**EXPRESSIONIST ART** - Painting, sculpting, drawing, etc., in which natural forms and colors are distorted or exaggerated to create a personal treatment of thematic material.

**FIGURE-GROUND** - In a painting, the way in which an object or shape is related to the background against which we see it. Human perception normally operates in such a way that the `figure' seems to advance, and lie in front of the background. In abstract art, this relationship is less clear.

**MEDIUM** - Generally, the physical substance the artist chooses to use for his/her work of art is the medium. For example, marble is a medium of sculptors.

**NON-REPRESENTATIONAL** or **NON-OBJECTIVE WORKS** - Abstract works that make no reference whatsoever to the world of people, places, and the objects associated with them; art from which all identifiable subject matter has been eliminated.

**PAINTERLY**- A term that describes a painting in which the tactile, fluid quality of the paint and the movement involved in its application become a principal quality of the work.

**PRIMARY/SECONDARY COLORS** - For paints (as opposed to theater lights), the hues red, yellow, and blue are the primary colors. These building blocks of color are often arranged on a **color wheel**. From these three colors, with the addition of white or black, it is theoretically possible to mix the full range of colors in the spectrum. Orange, green, and violet are the secondary colors, or those colors that stand mid-way between the primary colors.

**RHYTHM** - For the visual arts, the regular repetition of a color, shape, or form.

**SHAPED CANVAS** - A development in painting that enabled artists to depart from the traditional parallelogram canvas and to explore the canvas as a form.

**SILKSCREENING** - A printing method in which the image is transferred to a surface by forcing ink through a fine mesh screen on which non-printing areas are "blocked out" to prevent ink penetration.

**SURREALIST ART** - An art style of the early 20th century that focused on fantasy, dream-world imagery, and the irrational juxtaposition of images, words, and things. Surrealists wanted to liberate the riches of the subconscious mind from the "prison" of the rational mind.

**UNPRIMED CANVAS** - Canvas is traditionally sealed with a primer paint before a painting is made. Sealing the canvas creates an even surface and protects the canvas. Unprimed canvas is not sealed.

**WARM/ COOL COLORS** - Warm colors are red, orange, or yellow, and cool colors are blue, green, or blue-violet. Psychologically, warm colors tend to be exciting, emphatic, and affirmative; optically, warm colors seem to advance or to project forward to the viewer. Psychologically, cool colors are calming, unemphatic, depressive; optically, they generally appear to recede.

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# Evaluation Sheet for Dallas Museum of Art Teaching Materials on **CONTEMPORARY ART & DESIGN**

We would appreciate your taking a moment to fill out the upper portion of this form and to check appropriate responses below. Please send the form to:

**Teaching Resources**  
**The Dallas Museum of Art**  
**1717 North Harwood**  
**Dallas, Texas 75201**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of School: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade Level: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

## Opening Comments:

1. Was the manipulation of text (*italics*, **BOLD**, scale) helpful? Y\_\_N\_\_

2. Was it helpful to include the TEKS? Y\_\_N\_\_

## Introductory Text:

3. Did the introduction explain what you would see? Y\_\_N\_\_

4. Was the vocabulary appropriate? Y\_\_N\_\_

## Artworks:

5. Did you like the choice of artworks and images? Y\_\_N\_\_

6. Were there others you would like to see included? Y\_\_N\_\_

## Object Sheets - Introduction and Questions:

7. Were the introductions helpful? Y\_\_N\_\_

8. Were the questions open-ended? Y\_\_N\_\_

9. Did the questions encourage discussion? Y\_\_N\_\_

10. Did the questions challenge the student to further inquiry? Y\_\_N\_\_

## Activities:

11. Did they effectively involve the students? Y\_\_N\_\_

12. Did they encourage interaction with the art works? Y\_\_N\_\_

13. Did they stimulate further inquiry? Y\_\_N\_\_

## Glossary, Quotations, Time-Line:

14. Was the glossary helpful? Y\_\_N\_\_

15. Did the sheet of quotations and dates provide context? Y\_\_N\_\_

## Bibliography:

16. Were there enough entries on the bibliography? Y\_\_N\_\_

17. Was the bibliography used for further research? Y\_\_N\_\_

**COMMENTS** (Use the numbers to refer to particular topics, and use the back of this sheet if necessary.)

**THANK YOU!!**

# Evaluation Sheet for Dallas Museum of Art Docent Tour on

## ***CONTEMPORARY ART & DESIGN***

We are interested in your response to our docent guided tours. The time you take to complete this form will enhance our efforts to offer educational experiences of consistently high quality at the Dallas Museum of Art. Fill out the upper portion of this form and check appropriate responses below. Please send the form to:

**Teaching Programs  
The Dallas Museum of Art  
1717 North Harwood  
Dallas, Texas 75201**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of School and District: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade Level: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Docent: \_\_\_\_\_

### CIRCLE ONE:

- |  |     |          |    |
|--|-----|----------|----|
| 1. Did a docent make telephone contact with you?   | Yes | No       |    |
| 2. Did you access the Teaching Materials on the Dallas Museum of Art web site?                                       | Yes | No       |    |
| 3. Did you use these materials to prepare your students for their tour or to extend their experience after the tour? | Yes | No       |    |
| 4. Did your students feel welcome and comfortable at the museum during their tour?                                   | Yes | No       |    |
| 5. Was your docent on time and well-organized?   | Yes | No       |    |
| 6. Did your docent relate well to the group?   | Yes | No       |    |
| 7. Was the information given on the tour clear?  | Yes | No       |    |
| 8. Was the information and vocabulary used appropriate to the level of the group?                                    | Yes | No       |    |
| 9. Were students encouraged to look carefully and to think critically?   | Yes | Somewhat | No |
| 10. Was the docent successful at encouraging participation from students?  | Yes | Somewhat | No |
| 11. Did your students enjoy their visit to the Dallas Museum of Art?   | Yes | No       |    |
| 12. Will the information and looking skills introduced at the museum be applicable to your classroom work?           | Yes | No       |    |
| 13. Did the tour meet your expectations?   | Yes | No       |    |
| 14. Based on this visit will you plan another docent tour for your students?   | Yes | No       |    |

**COMMENTS** (Use the numbers to refer to particular topics, and use the back of this sheet if necessary.)

**THANK YOU!!**

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