Toledo Museum of Art

Drawn, Cut & Layered: The Art of Werner Pfeiffer

Parent and Teacher Resource: Build a Paper Sculpture

Werner Pfeiffer (German-American, born 1937), *Tick Tack* (detail). Paper and wood construction in Plexiglass box, 1988. Courtesy of the artist

About Werner Pfeiffer

For more than 50 years, Werner Pfeiffer (German-American, born 1937) has experimented with the multiple uses of paper as both a canvas and a structural material. Much of his work as a sculptor, printmaker and painter suggests a fascination with machines and machine-like constructions. His drawings are schematic, his dimensional works project into space claiming their own territory and his complex artist books have moving parts. He is fascinated by puzzles and contradictions, metaphors and wordplay, and this curiosity serves in turn to inspire works that are thought-provoking in themselves. A prodigious artist, Pfeiffer's works on paper have been shown and collected internationally.

About this resource

This resource outlines the process of creating a sculpture using recycled paper and simple organic and geometric shapes. It is inspired by *Tick Tack* (1988) by Werner Pfeiffer which is on view at the Toledo Museum of Art from February 6, 2015 - May 3, 2015 in *Drawn, Cut, & Layered: The Art of Werner Pfeiffer.*

How to use this resource:

- Print out the document for yourself.
- Gather the supplies listed below.
- Read through the document carefully then guide your students through the procedure.
- Use the questions provided at the end of this lesson to allow the students to reflect on their work.

This activity is meant for use at home or in the classroom. To see the exhibition *Drawn, Cut, & Layered: The Art of Werner Pfeiffer*, please visit the Museum Tuesday to Sunday or schedule a tour.
Visit http://www.toledomuseum.org to learn more.

Vocabulary:

Organic Shapes: Irregular or asymmetrical shapes with a natural look and a flowing and curving appearance. Organic shapes are associated with things from the natural world, like plants and animals.

Geometric Shapes: Regular shapes that have the clear edges one achieves when using tools to create them. ie: Circles, rectangles, triangles, squares etc.

Two-Dimensional: An object that only has two dimensions (such as width and height) and no thickness. Squares, Circles, Triangles, etc. are two-dimensional objects.

Three-Dimensional: An object that has height, width, and depth. Cubes, Pyramids, Spheres, etc. are three-dimensional objects.

Forms: Objects that are 3-Dimensional, or have length, width, and height.

Elements of Art

Line: A continuous mark with width and height, but no depth, made with a moving point.
Shape: An enclosed area defined by other elements of art, such as line or color.
Color: The full visible light spectrum (rainbow) and black and white, plus all possible combinations.
Space: The area around or within objects; the arrangement of components on the surface.
Texture: Refers to the tactile quality of an object, whether real or perceived.

Principles of Design

Emphasis: The point or points of focus in a composition.
Balance: Relates to the sense of visual equilibrium in a work of art; how components of an image are arranged around a focal point.
Proportion: The relative scale of objects and shapes in an image to one another and to the viewer.
Harmony: The way the elements work together to create an overall appealing effect.
Rhythm: The path along which the eye follows a regular or repeating arrangement of motifs (such as colors or shapes) around a composition.
Movement: The way shapes, lines, colors and forms direct the eye around a composition or interact with each other to suggest motion.
Variety: The use of different, often contrasting, elements that provide visual interest.
Unity: The wholeness that is achieved through the effective use of the Elements of Art and Principles of Design.

Activity

The purpose of this activity is to use **organic** and **geometric** paper shapes to create **three-dimensional** sculptures.

Supplies

- Old magazines, books or other sturdy, recycled papers
- Scissors
- Matte board to serve as a base

Step 1: Ask the students to look through the paper materials and select a few sheets they find interesting. Have them look for various colors, lines, patterns, and shapes.

Step 2: Ask the students to cut 5-10 shapes from their selected sheets of paper. Ask the students to cut a mixture of **organic** and **geometric two-dimensional** shapes.

Step 3: Once the students have selected and cut their shapes, have them cut small "slits" around the perimeter of each shape.

Step 4: Next, have them manipulate the shape cut-outs in various ways to create texture. For example: curl a piece of paper around their finger, fold the shapes back and forth in a zigzag pattern, or crinkle them. Encourage the children/students to be creative when making their textures.

Step 5: Instruct the students to use the previously cut "slits" to interlock the paper cut-outs with one another in interesting ways. Encourage them to experiment with ways of building their sculpture to make an appealing composition that stands on its own. It may be helpful to use a small rectangle of cardboard board as a base for the sculpture.

Step 6: Once the students have finished their sculptures, have them think of a title that best describes their piece.

Here are some questions to ask your students about their work:

- What is the title of your work, and why did you choose it?
- What were some of the challenges you faced when building your sculpture?
- How did you overcome those challenges?