

## Still Life Shapes

Grade 1 – Lesson 5

(*Art Connections*, Level 1, pgs. 40-41A)

### Big Idea

*A still life is a picture of things that don't move. Repeating shapes in a picture can unify the composition.*

### Learning Targets and Assessment Criteria

**Target 1:** Distinguishes between geometric and organic shapes. (*Arts GLE 1.1.2 Elements of Art: Geometric and Organic shape*)

**Criteria 1:** Draws both geometric and organic shapes.

**Target 2:** Identifies and uses outline. (*Arts GLE 1.1.1 Elements of Art: Outline*)

**Criteria 2:** Draws a line around the outside edges of observed forms.

**Target 3:** Creates unity in a composition. (*Arts GLE 1.1.7 Principles of Design: Unity*)

**Criteria 3:** Repeats at least one shape in the composition to unify it.

### Local Art Reference



**Still Life with Persimmons and Knife**, 19th century

*Japanese*

39.160

Seattle Art Museum

(NOTE to Teacher: See **Art Background** section at end of lesson for more information about this work of art.)

### Looking at Art Questions

(Note to Teacher: Show both *Still Life with Persimmons and Knife* from SAM and *Cubist Still Life* by Roy Lichtenstein from *Art Connections*, Level 1, pg. 40.)

1. Last time we made art we learned that math shapes – like circles, squares, and triangles, – are called **geometric shapes**. Which geometric shapes can you find in these two works of art?
2. What did we call irregular shapes that are mostly found in nature? (**Organic shapes**). Where do you see organic shapes in these two works of art? Both Roy Lichtenstein and the anonymous Japanese artist use organic and geometric shapes to make their pictures.
3. Can you find any shapes that repeat in either picture? Sometimes artists repeat shapes to **unify** a picture, make it look like it all belongs together.

4. A picture of things that stay still is called a **still life**. What would you include in a still life of your own?
5. The artists show us the outside edges of the shapes in their paintings by drawing a line all the way around the shapes. This is called an **outline**. Who can trace their finger around an outline in this still life?

## **Art Making Activity**

(See the **Create** section *Art Connections*, Level 1, pg. 40)

### **My Own Still Life**

*How can you unify a still life of geometric and organic shapes?*

1. With your seatmates, choose three or four different objects you would like in your still life. Make sure you have some geometric and some organic shapes.
2. Figure out how you want to arrange them so that everyone can see them.
3. What shapes will you repeat in your picture to make it look unified?
4. Steps for Teacher:
  - a. In their sketchbooks, have students practice sketching the outlines of the shapes they selected for their still lifes.
  - b. Facilitate students in small groups selecting and arranging their still lifes. Make sure at least one shape is repeated for unity.
  - c. Remind students of the “tricks” they know for drawing from observation:
    - i. Stare at the thing from which you are drawing WAY more than at your paper, and
    - ii. Draw slowly. Move your eye slowly around the edges of the form, and move your drawing hand at the same speed.
  - d. On good paper, have students sketch their still lifes. Encourage students to make each shape at least as large as his/her hand (to avoid shapes too tiny to fill with color).
  - e. After the sketches are completed, have students go over the outlines of the forms with fine line marker.
  - f. Have students fill both the forms in their still life and the background with chalk pastel.

### Each Student Needs

- Sketchbook
- Sketching pencil
- 8x11 piece of watercolor paper
- Laminated art mats
- Blue tape
- Fine line marker
- Tissue for blending chalk pastels

### Every Two Students Need:

- Wooden blocks and stuffed animals from which to draw
- A set of chalk pastels

### Vocabulary

Geometric shape	Unify
Organic shape	Outline
Still life	

### Tips for Teachers

#### *Before class*

- Gather simple forms that students relate to for still life – balls, books, blocks, flowers, simple-shaped toys or stuffed animals. You could ask each student to bring in one item, making sure you have some geometric and some organic shapes that can be repeated.
- Pre-tape with blue tape the watercolor paper to art mats.

#### *During class*

- Demonstrate drawing from observation, noting where simple geometric shapes are combined in more complex ones (e.g. ovals and circles in a stuffed animal's limbs or head).
- Demonstrate going over initial sketching lines with a continuous outline around the outer edges of the form.
- Before handing out chalk pastels, remind by demonstrating different ways to use chalk pastels – long marks, short marks, marks in one direction, marks in different directions, and softening and blending colors with a “finger ghost” out of tissue.

### Reflecting on Our Art (from *Art Connections*, Level 1, pg. 41A)

- **Describe:** Describe what is in your still life. Which are geometric shapes and which are organic?
- **Analyze:** What did you repeat to unify your picture?
- **Interpret:** What could someone guess about you by looking at your still life?
- **Decide:** What do you like best about your still life?

## Self Assessment

Name _____
I used geometric shapes to make _____ _____
I used organic shapes to make _____ _____
I unified my picture by repeating _____ _____

## RE-Teach Suggestions

1. You may want to break the lesson in two parts, with Day 1 looking at art examples, selecting and arranging still lifes, and sketching still lifes both in sketchbook and on good paper. Day 2 could be doing outlines and filling the compositions with color.
2. In a different lesson, to re-teach the concepts of outlining and repetition to unify a composition, students could trace the shape of their hand (make an outline around their hand), then turn their paper and trace their hand again and again, as many times as needed to complete a radial design with their hands.
3. Then students could color their hand designs, repeating colors/patterns in a radially symmetrical way (e.g., color all their thumbs red, and all their pinkies blue, etc.)

## Art Background (Still Life with Persimmons and Knife, by an anonymous 19th century Japanese artist)

Unlike the popular *ukiyo-e* prints and paintings of 19<sup>th</sup> century Japan, this subtle painting of persimmons and a knife recall earlier traditions of ink painting. A carefully observed, partially peeled persimmon and two whole ones are arranged on a tray which is portrayed with a traditional bird's-eye perspective. The geometric forms of the knife and the tray are contrasted by the soft organic forms of the three persimmons. The artist repeats the shapes of persimmons

as well as the rectangular shape of the tray in a rough cloth under the tray to unify the elegantly simple composition.

The Japanese hand-dried persimmon, also known in Japan as “*hoshigaki*,” is a traditional Asian high quality dried fruit food product. Japanese immigrants brought the Oriental persimmon and the traditional drying technique to California in the late 1800s, but today only a handful of artisans in California, most of whom reside in Placer County, still practice the drying method. Producers peel each persimmon by hand, hang the fruits in the sun, and periodically massage each fruit by hand for several weeks to ensure even drying. Because the drying technique is both time and labor intensive, both the product and traditional processing method have become endangered not only in California, but throughout the world.

*Hoshigaki* has a long history in Placer County and is intimately associated with Japanese immigrants, their culture, and values. Because the drying process is deeply influenced by Japanese values of hard work, perfection, and dedication, the resulting product is distinct from dehydrated and oven-dried fruit products.

**Information on Japanese persimmons, excerpted from:**

<http://www.sarep.ucdavis.edu/cdpp/foodsystems/executivesummary.pdf>

## Assessment Checklist

Student	Draws both geometric and organic shapes	Draws a line around the outside edges of observed forms	Repeats at least one shape in the composition to unify it	TOTAL 3
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30.				
31.				
<b>Total Points</b>				
<b>Percent Comprehension</b>				

*Teacher Notes:*

## Letter Home

*Dear Family,*

*Today we learned that a picture of things that don't move is called a **still life**. We also learned that repeating shapes in a composition is a way to **unify** it, or make it look like it all goes together. We looked at two different still lifes, one by the 20<sup>th</sup> century American Pop Art artist, Roy Lichtenstein, and the other by an anonymous 19<sup>th</sup> century artist from Japan. Both artists repeated geometric and organic shapes in their still lifes to make them look unified.*

*At home, you could look for unity in all sorts of designed things – fabric patterns, packaging on food boxes, ads in magazines. Besides repeated shapes, can you find repeated colors, lines, or textures? You could help your child set up a still life of some of his/her favorite foods, with a few pieces of the same kind of food to unify the drawing.*