

Artful Activities for Early Learners



MoMA

These activities for children ages four and up can be done with teachers, parents, and caregivers at home or in a classroom.

Look closely

- What do you notice about this painting?
- Choose one shape or section. Trace the outline with your finger in the air.
- What sound might this shape make? What made you think of that sound?
- What would you name this shape?

Learn more

Elizabeth Murray titled this painting *Do the Dance*, after a song she listened to while making this artwork. It's made up of many smaller shaped canvases that are put together like a puzzle. Murray said, "For a couple of years I've been working with cutting out shapes and kind of glomming them together. You know like making a zigzag shape and sort of a rectangular shape and a circular bloopy fat cloudy shape...and they are cartoony and blumpy and rounded and sort of wacky."

Make a shape composition

Materials: several sheets of colored paper; scissors; glue or tape; colored pencils, markers, or crayons

1. Use scissors to cut out four or more unique shapes.
2. Add colors or designs to your shapes.
3. Play with joining and arranging your shapes in different ways. Once you find an arrangement you like, glue or tape your shapes onto a background paper.
4. Show your shape collage to a friend or family member (in person or virtually). Ask them what they notice about your shapes and the ways you combined them. What would they name your shapes? Can they imagine sounds your shapes might make?

Explore more

Looking for more ways to experiment with shape? Check out this video (youtu.be/JJw8N2JmZLo) for inspiration on how to make an artwork using just one shape.



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Image: Elizabeth Murray. *Do the Dance*. 2005. Oil on canvas on wood. Gift of Jo Carole and Ronald S. Lauder, Agnes Gund, and Arne Glimcher. © 2020 Estate of Elizabeth Murray/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York