

Fantasy Paintings Inspired by Tamara B. Charles

A HANDS-ON ART ACTIVITY
DESIGNED BY JACKIE FORD

Materials

- *The Purple Leaves* by Tamara B. Charles (included at the end of the lesson)
- [Video on organic shapes](#)
- Scratch paper
- 12X18" heavy white drawing paper
- Pencils
- Watercolor crayons or paints
- Markers
- Brushes
- Water containers
- Paper towels

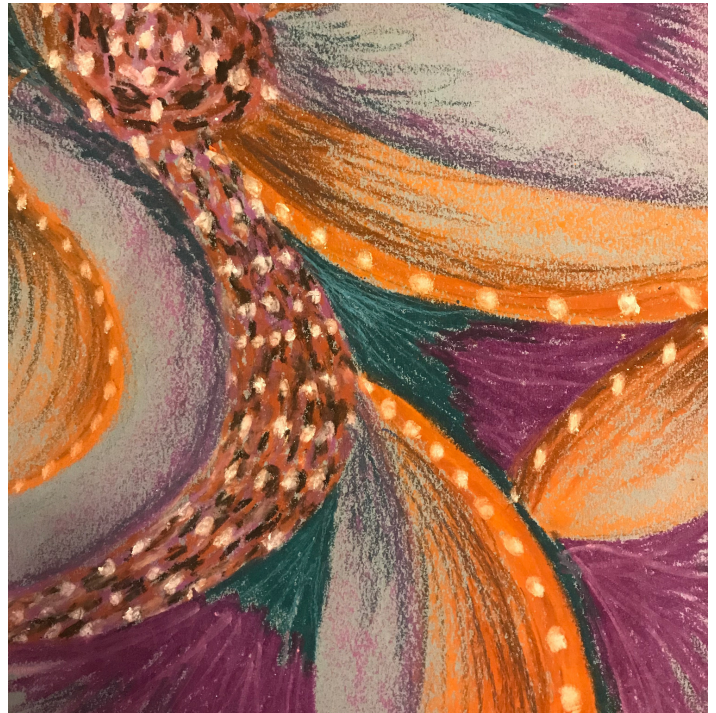


Image: Student Example
Image Source: Museum of Northwest Art

Description

During this activity, students will learn to differentiate organic shapes from geometric shapes. After observing a selected work by Tamara B. Charles, students will then create their own "fantasy paintings" using organic shapes.

Instructions

- 1)** Introduce students to free form/organic shapes by sharing this short video on organic shapes.
- 2)** Show students *The Purple Leaves* by Tamara B. Charles and use Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) techniques to further explore the painting.
 - VTS is an inquiry-based method of facilitating discussion. Tips and resources on VTS are included at the end of this lesson.
 - Identify the organic shapes Charles uses to create this image of flowers.
- 3)** Pass out supplies and instruct students to sketch out their "fantasy paintings" first on scratch paper, then transfer their final decisions onto heavy drawing paper.
 - If students are having trouble thinking of things to use in their paintings, encourage them to turn objects from everyday life into organic shapes.
- 4)** Once the final sketch is complete, fill the drawing with watercolor paints or crayons and add whatever details the students desire.
- 5)** Once students have finished their "fantasy paintings," allow them time to share their completed works with the class and talk about the activity. How was this experience? Were there any challenges in this activity?

Relevant Vocabulary

- ✓ Geometric shapes
- ✓ Organic or free form shapes
- ✓ Silhouette



Learning and State Standards

Fulfills [Washington State Arts Learning Standards](#):

- **VA:Cr1.2.4** (Collaboratively set goals and create artwork that is meaningful and has purpose to the markers)
- **VA:Cr2.1.4** (Explore and invent art-making techniques and approaches)
- **VA:Cr2.2.4** (When making works of art, utilize and care for materials, tools, and equipment in a manner that prevents danger to oneself and others)

Visual Thinking Strategies

MoNA's Education programs utilize Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS), which is a research-based teaching method that promotes aesthetic development including critical thinking and communication skills. Here in the MoNA, we use VTS to engage students and general visitors with art encouraging them to observe closely, think critically and discuss respectfully; however, VTS can be effectively used across curricula. This approach teaches its participants how to take the time to observe closely, describe what they see in detail and provide evidence for their observations. Students learn that their reflections and thoughts are valued and appreciated in this inclusive teaching method.

In order to facilitate a VTS discussion, you first encourage viewers to take a quiet moment to observe the work you are going to explore. Then you ask the following questions and paraphrase the responses without adding any of your own judgements. You can insert additional vocabulary and point to specific parts of the artwork.

What's going on in this picture?

What do you see that makes you say...?

What more can you find?

Visual Thinking Strategy Links

If you are interested in learning more about VTS, [here is their website](#). If you already know and love VTS, but want help finding great images to use in your classroom, here is a [fantastic gallery](#). You can also visit this website for additional resources: www.monamuseum.org/resources-for-educators

About the Artist: Tamara B. Charles



Image Credit: Northwest Pastel Society

Tamara Charles is a pastel artist working in Yakima, Washington. She has traveled all across the United States in her art education, studying briefly at the Art Students League in New York, studying under artist Linus Chao in Hilo, Hawaii, and finally graduating from the Colorado Institute of Art. Charles does not make her living as an artist, and creates art purely for enjoyment of the medium.

**"I AM JUST A REGULAR PERSON,
WITH AN ARTISTIC SENSIBILITY. I
SEE BEAUTY EVERYWHERE"
-TAMARA B. CHARLES**



The Purple Leaves, Tamara B. Charles
Image Credit: Northwest Pastel Society