Richard Nash: Consonance

October 22, 2022 - February 5, 2023

Interactive Gallery Guide
Visual Thinking Strategies

Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) is a research-based teaching method that promotes aesthetic development including critical thinking and communication skills. Here at 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. VTS teaches participants 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.

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.
VTS provides a structure with simple rules that open a world of possibility. Three VTS questions initiate an active process of discovery when looking at art. Listen carefully to and acknowledge every answer while looking at the image, pointing to details they mention and paraphrasing what is said. Facilitate the discussion as it progresses, linking converging and diverging opinions to help synthesize a variety of viewpoints. Encourage inquiry by keeping the process open-ended to stretch and search for information beyond first impressions.

These three VTS questions ask everyone to focus, become reflective, and to question - the basis for critical thinking. Answering the questions is engaging and fun because no one is going to be wrong.

What’s going on in this picture?
What do you see that makes you say...?
What more can you find?

For more information about Visual Thinking Strategies, visit www.vtshome.org or scan this QR code!
Richard Nash: Consonance presents a selection of large Corten steel, non-representational sculptures in conversation with the artist's more intimate, abstract paintings. Inspired by the work of Abstract Expressionist artists such as Hans Hofmann and Robert Motherwell, and committed to the expressive possibilities of the muted palette of the Northwest School masters, Nash's work is as distinctive as it is sophisticated. As the title of the exhibition suggests, Consonance emphasizes Nash's interest in working with a controlled repertoire of compositional elements such as form, shape, line, light and shadow to generate—through their recurrence, variation and visual relationships — a sense of movement, engagement, discovery and emotion.

Images: Process photos from the artist's studio.

This visual strategy is particularly evident in the sculptures of the Conical Consonance series as well as his Segmented Prism, both featured in the exhibition: as in music where, through a simple combinatorial system, a finite number of sounds generates infinite harmonies and a range of emotions.
“PUSH/PULL” SURFACE

“Carefully controlled edges and thoughtful use of dark and light values demonstrate effective application of pictorial depth, or what Richard Nash refers to as Hans Hoffman’s “push/pull concept” that is described as “pushing a plane in the surface or pulling it from the surface”. Pictorial space is created with elements like line, value, and layers of color to create tension between the shapes and forms.

Let's explore this painting together!

Which causes shapes to advance or recede?

- dark/light
- warm/cool
- dull/ bright

How many levels can you find?

Image: Richard Nash, Transition, 2016, Acrylic on Museum Board, 16" x 24".

This perspective provides a third dimension through which to appreciate the layers and nuances in Nash paintings that engage the “mind’s eye” of viewers. Inspiration comes from the light and shadow from multiple sources used to create multiple levels that can be understood both emotionally and intellectually.
ABSTRACT ART AS A FORM OF VISUAL POETRY

Richard Nash describes his work as a form of visual poetry. The poet uses words not only for their meanings, but also for the sounds they make when read, or the rhythm created by new combinations of them. Poetry allows the reader to form new thoughts and emotions while gently challenging the intellect. For Nash, shapes, lines, values and colors provide his vocabulary. His observations are often assembled into nonrepresentational interpretations allowing composition to be the main focus—not nostalgia. Abstract art is often expressive of something felt more than perceived.

Image: Richard Nash, Search, 2008, Acrylic on Museum Board, 18" x 10"

"My paintings are a form of Non-objective Abstract Expressionism. It is one of the "purest" forms of the visual arts. The lack of reference to recognizable subject matter allows manipulation of the art elements with a focus on control of space, line, shape, and color. Although there are significant elements of spontaneity, the process requires careful selection to complete the composition. The inspiration for much of my work comes from the "play" of light and shadows from and on architectural forms in relationship to natural forms. The northwest coastal environment provides much of my palette." -Richard Nash
Richard Nash

is a native-born Pacific NW painter and sculptor. Foundational to Richard Nash's artistic practice is his 30-year career as an art educator at Oak Harbor High School, his travels to study art and architecture in Europe, Russia, Japan, Israel, and New York City as well as his exposure to the abstract expressionism of the artists of the New York School and the artists of the Bauhaus during his MFA studies in Painting and Printmaking at Washington State University.

“To make it “art” there are compositional elements like a thoughtful use of space or a conscious effort to manipulate a medium transforming the work into something meaningful and often aesthetically pleasing. My students learned that art is both intellectual and spiritual and that without the spiritual it has no soul, no depth.”

- Richard Nash

Image: Process photos from the artist’s studio.

Among his goals as a non-representational abstract artist is the focus on the compositional elements of the work while linking them with more “poetic” components. The play of light and shadow on architectural and organic forms often guide the inspiration in his work. A subdued “Northwest” palette encourages the design components to be complex, thoughtful, and well composed, all supported with an oriental sense of space. Successful outcomes depend on making deliberate choices while embracing the unexpected opportunities that support the art. His artwork is designed to engage its audience, much like a good piece of poetry or jazz—with a sense of discovery and emotion.

www.RJNashArt.com
Consonance - harmony of parts or elements

Nash's paintings require deliberate time to be explored and absorbed. As in his sculptures, Nash's paintings develop in series, each building upon the previous. Starting with the elements of composition, like a diagonal line or a frame, the artist painstakingly layers the acrylic paint to create blended, mesmerizing variations of architectural or formal elements. Characterized a strong play of light and shadow, his paintings are suggestive of liminal visions of interiors enshrouded in a pensive and ponderous atmosphere.

How is a sculpture made?

Sculpture is about form, tension, movement, and the material in which the piece is made.

Look at a sculpture by walking around it, look up and down, and through.

Look at what the sculptor is talking about with the language of shapes.

Image: Richard Nash, Reciprocity 3, 2022, Corten Steel, 78" x 72" x 24", Height includes Base, Base: 48" x 48", 450 lbs.

Image: Process photo from the artist's studio.

A work of art is an event that goes on and on. The sculpture of today will continue to speak to people born in the next century - and the next - who know how to listen.
Art in the Community

Image credit: Pam Headridge Photography

Scan the QR code to watch a video about the Founders Sculpture installation in Oak Harbor, WA.
On the following forms, show the light source by using value and shade in the image. The light source is on the:

**LEFT SIDE**

![Left Side Examples](image)

**RIGHT SIDE**

![Right Side Examples](image)

**BACK**

![Back Examples](image)

**What is a shadow?**

Shadow is the darkness cast onto the ground. In art, it is created by shading.

Shading is the darkness added to a form on the side opposite from the light source. The darkness blends from dark to light, defining the form.

"Although my acrylic paintings and Corten steel sculpture are abstract, the inspiration for much of it comes from the play of light (often from multiple sources) and shadow."

-Richard Nash
What's happening at MoNA?
Scan this QR code to visit our Event Calendar!

Teen Art Club is a free program for youth in Grades 6-12, where you can bring friends and your creativity to make art together. Pizza, snacks, and art supplies will be provided. See you there!

Early Enrichment is a free program for parents, caregivers or adult collaborators and children ages 2-5 years old. Join us for fun mornings of art and stories at the Museum! Hope to see you there!

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