PAPER NEIGHBORHOODS

by Andy Jones

PMA CLASSROOM

BEST FOR

3rd to 5th Grade
(late elementary)

THEMES

- The World Around Us: Neighborhoods and Architecture
- Build and Play
- Shape
- Line

Collaborator note: this lesson was created in collaboration with Andy Jones and the Portland Museum of Art.

Stuart Davis (United States, 1892–1964), *New York—Paris No. 2*, 1931, oil on canvas, 30 1/4 x 40 1/4 inches. Portland Museum of Art, Maine. Hamilton Easter Field Art Foundation Collection, Gift of Barn Gallery Associates, Inc., Ogunquit, Maine, 1979.13.10.
Image courtesy Peter Siegel

CONTENT AREAS AND STANDARDS MET

www.Maine.gov/doe/learning/content

VISUAL ARTS

D. A2. 5C. ORGANIZE AND DEVELOP ARTISTIC IDEAS AND WORK

Identify, describe, and visually document places and/or objects of personal significance

D. C2. 5. INTERPRET INTENT AND MEANING IN ARTISTIC WORK

Interpret art by referring to contextual information and analyzing subject matter, characteristics of form, and use of media

D. D1. 3.SYTHESIZE AND RELATE KNOWLEDGE AND PERSONAL EXPERIENCES TO MAKE ART

Develop a work of art based on observations of surroundings

D. A3. 3. REFINE AND COMPLETE ARTISTIC WORK

Discuss, reflect, and add details to enhance an artwork's emerging meaning

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING COMPETENCIES

RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING

Demonstrating curiosity and open-mindedness

RELATIONSHIP SKILLS

Communicating effectively

OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Analyze the visual choices the artist made in the painting, focusing on shape, line, and color
- Compare and contrast the buildings in the painting to those in their own neighborhood/town
- Recall visuals from their neighborhood and simplify them into shape and line imagery

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- When we look at art, how can we see pieces of our own lives in it?
- How do we relate to environments other than our own?
- How do we visually represent what is important to us in simple materials/ approaches?

MATERIALS NEEDED

COLORED PAPER (8.5x11" ideal but any size works) or colored-on white paper

GLUE (stick ideal but liquid works) or tape

SCISSORS

DARK COLORED PENCIL (*or* marker/crayon)

SHEET OF WHITE PAPER AS A BACKGROUND
This is where the colored pieces will be glued or taped

INSTRUCTIONS

LOOK & RESPOND

LOOK

Look at *New York—Paris No. 2* and notice what solid shapes you see. Notice how thick or thin the lines are. See where there is just shape and where there is just line.

RESPOND

Think about and respond to these questions:

What do you think happens in these buildings? Do you think they could be apartments, stores, or restaurants, or are they other buildings within the community?

What draws your eye? What do you notice about the way this artwork is painted? Are the lines simple or complex?

Where do you think this is and why? Is it a city or the countryside?

Do the buildings remind you of any you have seen before? What are the similarities you notice? What are the differences?

How does this scene look different from where you live?

LEARN

Use this section to learn more about the artist, subject, and context of the artworks & objects.

STUART DAVIS WAS A RENOWNED PAINTER WHOSE CAREER SPANNED MULTIPLE DECADES. His work often depicted the same imagery at different times and in different contexts and media. Some of this imagery includes buildings, people, and signs. Originally immersed in the world of realism with its focus on natural colors and subject matters, Davis later drifted into the uncharted waters of cubism and modernism. Cubism takes a different approach to objects by trying to show all sides of something at once. This leads to lots of angles and shapes, and to an image that looks different from reality. Pablo Picasso is perhaps best known for this signature cubist look. Modernism, in turn, let Davis experiment with the style of his art without worrying about the "rules."

Both of these approaches can be seen in *New York–Paris No. 2*, where his buildings are not realistic but instead reflect a more creative interpretation of what he saw through the use of abstraction and simplification, so that a complicated scene turns into solid shapes, simple but careful lines, and bold colors.

Davis was also inspired by the energy and improvisation he heard in jazz and swing music, which inspired some of his bold shapes, colors, and movements as well.

The influence of commercial graphics led him to the work he created in the 1920s and 1930s ahead of the Great Depression. During this time, Davis's two worlds of American realism and European modernism began to collide. In particular, he became very interested in Paris, which is part of the inspiration behind *New York—Paris No. 2*. In this painting, which features angular and solid buildings adorned with neat, thin detailing lines, the two major cities in his life—New York and Paris—meet.

In the following activity, we will mimic Davis's solid-colored buildings with cut colored paper and his neat, thinly painted lines with pencil drawing. Like Davis, we will focus on representing the world around us by focusing on three major elements of art: shape, line, and color.

SOURCE: https://www.nytimes.com/2016/06/10/arts/design/stuart-davis-heady-abstract-realist-at-the-whitney.html

ACT

* Before beginning the activity, pre-cut shapes out of colored paper for the child, such as rectangles, other quadrilaterals, and triangles. The shapes should be sized so that several of them can fit on the background paper.

1. PICTURE YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD OR TOWN in your head, bring up a photo of your neighborhood/town, or take a walk around your neighborhood/town. Overlap them and rearrange them until they make an interesting composition. Play with your ideas.

2. USING THE PRE-CUT SHAPES, ARRANGE THEM ON YOUR BACKGROUND PAPER. How canyou use what is in front of you to build your neighborhood? How can you combine shapes to create something new?

3. REARRANGE THE SHAPES UNTIL YOU DECIDE WHERE EVERYTHING GOES. Making art takes time and needs room for change!

4. GLUE OR TAPE DOWN YOUR PIECES WHERE YOU WOULD LIKE THEM.

5. USING A DARK COLORED PENCIL, DRAW DETAILS ON TOP OF THE PAPER CUTOUTS. Think about the smaller details of your neighborhood buildings. Are there windows? Signs? Buildings in the background?

REFLECT AND SHARE

HANG THE WORK UP ON THE WALL (if possible) and take a few steps back to admire your paper neighborhood.

IMAGINE SOMEONE ELSE LOOKING AT IT —what details would allow them to recognize your neighborhood from this art (by its landmarks, for example)?

HOW DID YOUR SCENE CHANGE after you added the pencil lines?

HOW DID YOU KNOW YOU WERE READY to glue down the pieces after arranging them?

FURTHER EXPLORE

HOW DOES THIS SKETCH DIFFER FROM THE PAINTING? How does each one make you feel?

RESOURCES

https://collections.portlandmuseum.org/objects-1/info?query=Disp_Title%20has%20words%20%22paris%22&sort=9&page=33

30 MINUTE DOCUMENTARY

https://www.nga.gov/audio-video/video/stuart-davis.html

https://www.theartstory.org/artist/davis-stuart/

https://kids.britannica.com/students/article/Davis-Stuart/310942

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x0wSK0lJMS0