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Unit: Matisse - collage - symbolism - Identity

Lesson: Namely Me - Matisse inspired name collage

Grade level: Middle School - upper elementary

Time: About 2 1/2 weeks



click images for larger views

Objective:

The student will refer to the artwork of Henri Matisse to create their name with shape and color representing their personality, applying symbolism in the background to represent their interests.

Materials:

7 x 17 white sulphite drawing paper

Assorted construction paper and scraps (Tru Ray or other fade resistant paper)

8 x 18 Assorted color construction paper (mat)

10 x 20 Black Tru Ray construction paper (mat)

Assorted Scissors, glue, punch

Method:

1. Read Henri Matisse, Drawing with Scissors
 - a. If you are American how would you say this name: Henri Matisse,

In the country he was born, you would say it: Aanray Matisse, what country was Aanray born in, everyone say Aanray Matisse.
 - b. *Play out Matisse being in bed sick: what did he not have (cell phone, computers, computer games, color T.V., Ipod – how boring was that?)*

- c. Mama: *My poor Henri, what shall I do, he is so sick. Mom buys him a box of paints, gives it to Henri: Here Henri a box of paints for you.*
 - d. Henri: *Thanks mom (ah mothers, I want to be a lawyer), Henri starts painting, loves to paint, discovers: Ah this is what I want to do, I want to become an artist. Henri gets better.*
 - e. Henri: *Dad I've decided to become an artist*
Dad: *Henri, you are crazy, what are you thinking, artists don't make money, you will starve*
Henri: *Dad, I'm going to be an artist, au revoir* (read select parts of story)
2. *Discuss* the history of Henri Matisse, emphasize his being bed ridden, drawing on the ceiling with charcoal at the end of a stick, having apprentices who pay him, cut and glue his designs.
 - b. Fast forward to the future, guess what, Henri is sick once again, and once again he is lying in bed bored out of his mind, he has stomach cancer, he has assistants who pay him to learn from him, what is he to do?
 - c. He is looking at the ceiling and guess what? Yes, he sees it as a place to work. He gets his assistants to bring a long stick, a piece of charcoal, tape, and he begins to draw on the ceiling (mime drawing on ceiling with stick).
 - d. Then he decides to cut paper with scissors. He gets his assistants to paint huge sheets of papers all different colors, the tells them what shapes to cut out, and where to place them.
 - e. He signs his name on all the artwork. The assistants are never acknowledged.
 3. *Demonstrate* drawing with scissors: what letter shall I cut out? (students call out letters, vote) "K" cut out K without preliminary drawing, describe cutting process. Emphasize no use of pencil, create letter into funky type animal/gargoyle creature with hair... kids like to guess what it could be turning into. Point to negative space. (Note cut any letter - be inventive with font).
 4. *List* your personality, things you like. *Sort* them into pet peeves, favorite colors, shapes, places you like to be in.
 5. *Compare* them with your partner, how are you the same/different?
 6. *Create* 2 or 3 thumbnails of your unique name, using color and shape to represent you.
 7. Refer to rubric.
 8. Background: *Apply* symbolism to the paper cuts to represent your interests and strong characteristics. Tip: Apply glue to the smaller paper. Use glue sparingly Remember elements and principles of design.
 9. Mount cut paper name collage on construction paper color to enhance design - then mount on black paper.
 10. Complete *self-evaluation* and *reflection*.
 11. Class critique/discussion

Art History:

Henri Matisse was born as the son of a grain merchant in the Picardy region of northern France. He studied law and worked as a law clerk. When Henri Matisse was 21 years old he became seriously ill. During the phase of convalescence Matisse started painting and discovered his love for art, which should become his life-long passion.

Two years later, in 1892, he gave up his career as a lawyer. He attended art classes at the *Ecole des Beaux-Arts* in Paris and dabbled in different styles. He then was influenced by the impressionist and post-impressionist painters Pissarro, Cezanne, van Gogh, Gauguin and Paul Signac and by the paintings of W. Turner.

Around the year 1905 he finally found his own style characterized by daring, bright colors executed in a broad brush stroke.

The Master of Colors

After an exhibition of their works in 1905 at the *Salon d'Automne* the group around Matisse and Andre Derain was ironically and pejoratively dubbed *Les Fauves*, which literally means *The Wild Beasts*.

From 1905 to 1906 Matisse painted one of his best paintings, *The Joy of Life*. It is considered to be one of the most important works of Twenty Century art and was bought by the famous art collector Dr. Albert C. Barnes. This painting and the whole Barnes collection was veiled from the public for 72 years. Finally the collection of the [Barnes Foundation](#) was opened to the art world again in 1993 and can be visited outside Philadelphia.

The American writer Gertrude Stein and her brother Leo were early collectors and supporters of Matisse paintings. Another admirer became [Pablo Picasso](#) with whom he exchanged paintings in 1907.

After World War I, Matisse had gained a high reputation and was an internationally recognized artist. In 1917 he left Paris and settled in Nice in the South of France where he remained until the end of his life. In 1925 he received the French Legion of Honor award.

The Late Years

In 1941 Matisse had an abdominal cancer surgery which had a devastating effect on his health and ability to paint. He was unable to stand upright in front of an easel. The artist therefore turned to another form of artistic expression. He created paper cut-outs in the same vivid, strong colors and daring compositions

known from his paintings. He had an assistant and could work lying in bed or sitting comfortably in an arm-chair.

Henri Matisse died on November 3, 1954 in Nice as an internationally well known and highly reputable artist. He had continued creating paper cutout works until the day of his death. [Pablo Picasso](#) once said about the artist: "All things considered, there is only Matisse".

Citations

"I have always tried to hide my efforts and wished my works to have the light joyousness of springtime, which never lets anyone suspect the labors it has cost me."

"In modern art, it is undoubtedly to Cezanne that I owe the most."

"A colorist makes his presence known even in a single charcoal drawing."

"The essential thing is to spring forth, to express the bolt of lightning one senses upon contact with a thing. The function of the artist is not to translate an observation but to express the shock of the object on his nature; the shock, with the original reaction."

"Henri Matisse was born in 1869, the year the *Cutty Sark* was launched. The year he died, 1954, the first hydrogen bomb exploded at Bikini Atoll. Not only did he live on, literally, from one world into another; he lived through some of the most traumatic political events in recorded history, the worst wars, the greatest slaughters, the most demented rivalries of ideology, without, it seems, turning a hair. Matisse never made a didactic painting or signed a manifesto, and there is scarcely one reference to a political event - let alone an expression of political opinion - to be found anywhere in his writings. Perhaps Matisse did suffer from fear and loathing like the rest of us, but there is no trace of them in his work. His studio was a world within the world: a place of equilibrium that, for sixty continuous years, produced images of comfort, refuge, and balanced satisfaction. Nowhere in Matisse's work does one feel a trace of the alienation and conflict which modernism, the mirror of our century, has so often reflected

As a young man, having been a student of [Odilon Redon](#)'s, he had closely studied the work of [Manet](#) and [Cézanne](#); a small Cézanne *Bathers*, which he bought in 1899, became his talisman. Then around 1904 he got interested in the coloured dots of [Seurat](#)'s Divisionism. Seurat was long dead by then, but Matisse became friends with his closest follower, Paul Signac. Signac's paintings of Saint-Tropez bay were an important influence on Matisse's work. So, perhaps, was the painting that Signac regarded as his masterpiece and exhibited at the Salon des Indépendants in 1895, *In the Time of Harmony*, a big allegorical composition setting forth his anarchist beliefs. The painting shows a Utopian

Arcadia of relaxation and farming by the sea, and it may have fused with the traditional fête champêtre in Matisse's mind to produce his own awkward but important demonstration piece, *Luxe, Calme et Volupté*, 1904-5.

"In 1905 Matisse went south again, to work with André [Derain](#) in the little coastal town of Collioure. At this point, his colour broke free

"The other side of this coin was an intense interest in civilized craft. Matisse loved pattern, and pattern within pattern: not only the suave and decorative forms of his own compositions but also the reproduction of tapestries, embroideries, silks, striped awnings, curlicues, mottles, dots, and spots, the bright clutter of over-furnished rooms, within the painting. In particular he loved Islamic art, and saw a big show of it in Munich on his way back from Moscow in 1911. Islamic pattern offers the illusion of a completely full world, where everything from far to near is pressed with equal urgency against the eye. Matisse admired that, and wanted to transpose it into terms of pure colour. One of the results was *The Red Studio*, 1911.

- Text from "[The Shock of the New](#)", by Robert Hughes

State Standards

1AV-E1. Choose the most appropriate media, techniques, and processes to enhance communication of one's own ideas and experiences

1AV-E2. Demonstrate increasing technical ability and skill to complete visual arts assignments

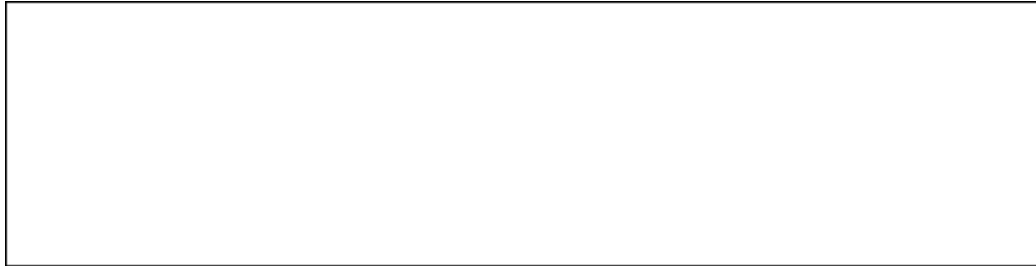
2AV-E1. Use subjects, themes and symbols that demonstrate knowledge of contexts, values and aesthetics to communicate intended meaning in their artworks

Objective:

Using color and shape express your name to represent your personality and character, and apply shapes and color to representing your interests in the background, using only cut paper.

1. **List your personality traits, likes, dislikes (turn paper over)**
2. *Compare* with your partner
3. **Your name has to:** be large, collaged, overlapping, made of shapes and colors representing you, fill the page, be unique in lettering. Have complex solutions.
4. **Your background has to:** have varied shapes and sizes representing your interests, overlap,

Thumbnails



Assessment:

Rubric

25-22 Points

Paper Cut Design: Name discernable, Fat letters, color and shapes represent personality, background representation of interests, overlapping, various sizes, open composition, filling the page, breaking the negative space, my name is the emphasis. Unique.

Technique: Crisp clean cuts, use of color and shapes to represent personality and interest, only construction paper, no evidence of pencil

Craftsmanship: Quality work, consistent, careful presentation. I was careful and respectful of my ongoing work.

Following Directions: I filled the page, followed directions, stayed respectfully on task, mentored other students where needed, wrote my full name, period, table color, and advisory teacher's name on the back of the artwork.

21-18 Points

Paper Cut Design: Name discernable, Fat letters, color and shapes represent personality, background representation of interests, overlapping, various sizes, open composition, filling the page, breaking most of the negative space, my name is the emphasis.

Technique: Clean cuts, use of color and shapes to represent personality and interest, only construction paper, no evidence of pencil

Craftsmanship: Quality work, consistent, careful presentation. I was careful and respectful of my ongoing work.

Following Directions: I filled the page, followed directions, stayed respectfully on task, mentored other students where needed, wrote my full name, period, table color, and advisory teacher's name on the back of the artwork

17-14 Points

Paper Cut Design: Name discernable, Fat letters, color and shapes represent personality, background representation of interests, overlapping, various sizes, filling the page, breaking most of the negative space. Name is large

Technique: Clean cuts, use of color and shapes to represent personality and interest, only construction paper. Erased pencil.

Craftsmanship: Quality work, consistent, careful presentation. I was careful and respectful of my ongoing work.

Following Directions: I filled the page, followed directions, stayed respectfully on task, mentored other students where needed, wrote my full name, period, table color, and advisory teacher's name on the back of the artwork

13-10 Points

Paper Cut Design: My name is somewhere on the paper, and it mostly has colors and shapes that represent my personality. You can see hints of my interest in some of the shapes and colors in the background.

Technique: I used the scissors to cut around the shapes, they are mostly tidy.

Craftsmanship: Somewhat careful presentation. I could have spent more time and care on my work.

Following Directions: I could have filled the page, followed directions, stayed respectfully on task. ***I might re-do this project on a smaller scale and consider this my practice assignment.***

Name/Period/Table

Color: _____

1. **My best part of my art work is:**

2. **If I were teaching this assignment I would:**

3. **Complete Self-Evaluation form.** Write one number per criteria (Paper Cut Design, Technique, Craftsmanship, Following Directions)

Project Evaluation	25-22	21-18	17-14	13-10
Paper Cut Design: Name discernable, fat letters, colors and shapes represent personality, background represents interests, overlapping, various size, open composition, fills the page, breaks negative space, name is emphasis, unique				
Technique: Crisp, clean cuts, use of color and shapes representing personality and interest, no evidence of pencil, collaged				
Craftsmanship: Shows overall quality, consistency, and careful presentation, I worked carefully and consistently.				
Following Directions: Did I fill the page? Did I put my name, period, table color, advisory teacher on the back of art work. Did I stay respectfully on task?				

What grade do you think you have earned? Why?

The overall grade I deserve is _____ (1-4, 1 is the lowest)

Bibliography

Cowart, Jack et al. Henri Matisse Paper Cut-Outs. Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1977, New York. (Call #709.2)

Didato, Salvatore, The Big Book of Personality Tests, Black Dog & Leventhal Publishers, New York, 2003.

Johnson, Keesia and Jane O'Connor, Henri Matisse Drawing with Scissors, Grosset & Dunlap, New York, 2002.

<http://www.artchive.com/artchive/M/matisse.html>, Henri Matisse

[More Matisse Online Resources](#)

National Standards: (amount covered depends on class discussion)

1. Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes	3. Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas	4. Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures	5. Reflecting upon and assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others	6. Making connections between visual arts and other disciplines
Students select media, techniques, and processes; analyze what makes them effective or not effective in communicating ideas; and reflect upon the effectiveness of their choices	Students integrate visual, spatial, and temporal concepts with content to communicate intended meaning in their artworks			

<p>Students intentionally take advantage of the qualities and characteristics of art media, techniques, and processes to enhance communication of their experiences and ideas</p>	<p>Students use subjects, themes, and symbols that demonstrate knowledge of contexts, values, and aesthetics that communicate intended meaning in artworks</p>		<p>Students analyze contemporary and historic meanings in specific artworks through cultural and aesthetic inquiry</p>	<p>Students describe ways in which the principles and subject matter of other disciplines taught in the school are interrelated with the visual arts</p>
		<p>Students analyze, describe, and demonstrate how factors of time and place (such as climate, resources, ideas, and technology) influence visual characteristics that give meaning and value to a work of art</p>	<p>Students describe and compare a variety of individual responses to their own artworks and to artworks from various eras and cultures</p>	<p>(Optional connection to Language Arts - talk about symbolism in literature - and write about name design)</p>