
Three Flags, 1958 Jasper Johns



Keywords: Pop Art, Monotype, Print, Texture

Activity: Monoprint on foil

Keywords Defined:

- **Pop Art** - Style of art made popular in late 1950's early 1960's. Much of it represented images of common commercial images and objects.
 - **Monotype** - A one-of-a-kind print made by painting on a smooth metal, glass, stone plate or other smooth surface and then printing on paper. The paper, often dampened, is placed over the image and either burnished by hand or run through an etching press. The pressure of printing creates a **texture** not possible when painting directly on paper. The process produces a single unique print, thus an edition of one, by using pressure to transfer the image onto paper. The Monotype is a mirror image of what was drawn onto the original surface.
 - **Print** - a kind of artwork in which ink or paint is put onto a block (wood, linoleum, etc.) which has a design carved into it. The block is then pressed onto paper to make a print (copy) of the design.
 - **Texture** - an element of art. The way an object looks as though it feels, such as rough or smooth.
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Meet the Artist:

- He was born in 1930 in Augusta, Georgia, but grew up in South Carolina. He had little official art education since there were no art schools nearby.
- When he moved to New York, he became friends with the prominent artists of the day.
- In 1954, he had a dream that he painted a large American Flag.
- He liked his art to be symmetrical, repetitious and minimalist. In other words, he wanted it to stand on its own and without the attachments of emotion. He liked the simple design of objects like the American Flag.
- His Flag series was what made him famous as an artist.
- Jasper Johns once guest-starred on The Simpsons as himself. In the episode "Mom and Pop Art", Homer Simpson accidentally becomes an artist, and Johns attends one of his exhibitions. Johns is amusingly portrayed as a kleptomaniac, stealing items of food, lightbulbs and other small items. This refers to Johns's art career, as most of his artwork came from everyday household objects

- In 1998, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York paid over twenty million dollars for Johns's White Flag.
 - Most artwork until this time was of something that you would recognize - a person, a place, or a thing. It was a new experience to see paintings of things like flags, numbers or words. Johns helped to lay the groundwork **for Pop Art**, a 20th century movement that used images from advertising, newspapers "things the mind already knows" and popular culture in their artwork
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Possible Questions:

- Do you see repetition in this picture?
 - Is it symmetrical-are parts arranged in the same basic way on both side?
 - Describe the lines you see?
 - Does it remind you of anything?
 - Does it make you feel anything?
 - Do you like it? Why/Why not?
 - What makes this picture different from a real American Flag?
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Activity: Monoprint on Foil

Supplies: Tin Foil (pre-cut into approx. 8"x10" pieces)
 Drawing Paper - at least 2 per student
 Die cut stars or Star Foam or Sponge Stamp -
 Tempera Paint (Red, White & Blue)
 Brushes
 Egg Cartons to be used as paint pallets (easier clean-up)
 Water bowls
 Papertowels/rags (need to bring from home)
 Desk Covers or Newspaper or Butcher Paper
 Glue

Project Description:

1. Cover each child's desk with cover or paper or newspaper to protect it from the paint
2. Distribute paints, brushes, bowls of clean water and paper towels around class.
3. Give each child one sheet of tin foil, piece of drawing paper & a parent letter.
4. Have them write their names on the back of the drawing paper and parent letter.
5. Instruct them that they are to paint a picture directly onto the foil, remembering to leave stripes blank so the white will show through, but they need to paint quickly and thickly so that the paint does not dry out. They may use a pencil to scratch lines into the paint. Be sure to remind them that their finished art work will be a mirror image of the painted foil; they will need to paint the flag backwards (hold up classroom flag to demonstrate). You may want to have them all scratch out where the BLUE will go

first, very often they place it in the wrong corner - they need to place it in the UPPER RIGHT HAND SIDE...

6. Carefully, they are to place a sheet of drawing paper (name side up) on top of the wet painting and pat it gently with one hand, while holding the paper in place with the other. They need to try not to wiggle the paper.
7. Lift the paper up straight off of the foil to see the painted picture transferred.
8. If using Paper Cut out Stars, they can now place a few die-cut stars in the appropriate spot. Paint will act as glue...
If using Foam or Sponge Stamps to create the Stars, they will now dip the Stars into the white paint and carefully stamp stars onto the blue area of the flag.
9. If time permits, they may create another masterpiece by pulling a second print off of the same tinfoil painting.
10. Attach parent letters to back of finished works and display as desired by the teacher! (Full names may go on the back only)
11. If foam or sponge stars were provided, please wash and return to supply bin - just be sure that they are in a bag so that they don't get the papers wet please....
12. Please sign the Lesson Completed Sheet found in the Lesson Binder. Thank You!!