
Art Masterpiece: *Senecio, Head of a Man*, by Paul Klee

Keywords: Shape, color, portrait, abstract

Grade(s): Kinder – 1st

Activity: Shape collage portrait



About the Artist:

- Klee is pronounced “clay.”
- Paul Klee was born in Switzerland in 1879. (About the same time as the invention of the automobile.)
- His parents were musicians and as a boy, he played the violin. He also loved art. His grandmother taught him how to draw and paint.
- Klee married a concert pianist and while his wife worked out of the house, Paul became a “stay at home dad” and worked on his art.
- Klee’s art is very colorful and fun. He really liked art that was done by children and sometimes he tried to make his art look like it was done by a child.
- Klee went against tradition and he wasn’t afraid to paint blue cows or purple trees.

- Paul liked to paint more than one painting at a time. He could have up to 12 paintings in his studio, all halfway done. Klee has painted over 8,000 paintings in his lifetime.
- At the height of his career, Paul was a very respected artist and went on to teach art in German Universities.
- In 1933, the German government said his art was “below standards” and locked most of it away in museum cellars. Luckily, many of them were found so we can enjoy them today.

Possible Questions

1. What is a *portrait*? (A picture of a person, especially the face.)
2. What orientation is the paper in “portrait” style? (Vertical.)
3. Do your parents have a portrait of you? (School pictures, photos.)
4. Does Klee’s portrait look *realistic* or *abstract*? Realistic means the artist tried to paint things so they looked just like they do in real life, like a photograph. Abstract means that the artist didn’t paint things as they look in the real world. Abstract artwork often focuses on shape and color.
5. Why do you think the artist painted a face like this one?
6. What shapes has the artist used to create this face? How many circles can you find? Squares? Triangles?
7. What is missing from this man’s head and face? (Mouth, ears, and hair.)
8. How many different colors do you see?

Activity: Shape Collage Portraits

Materials Needed:

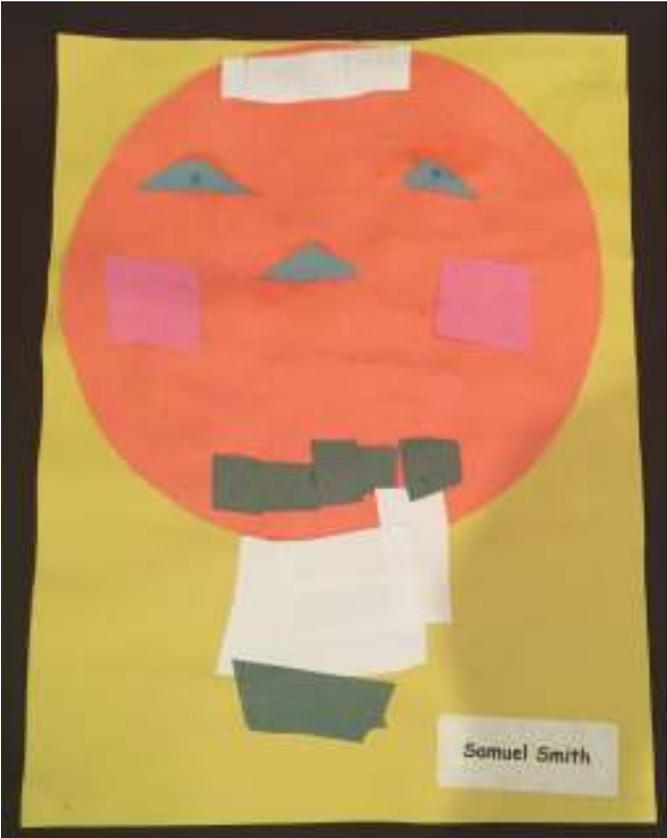
- White construction paper, 9” X 12,” one per student.
- Variety of colored construction paper (this is a great project to use scraps)
- Scissors, one per student
- Glue sticks, one per student.

Process:

1. Explain to the students that they will each create a portrait (face) using cut or torn paper. Remind them that they will do this in the style of the artist, Paul Klee. He used recognizable geometric shapes to make his portrait.

2. Talk about face shapes. Some people have oval-shaped faces, square-shaped faces, heart-shaped faces, etc. Some people have narrow chins and wide foreheads but other people have a round face like Paul Klee's painting.
3. Encourage the students to think about the colors they want to use for their collage. Colors add life and character to their portrait.
4. Distribute all the materials except the glue.
5. Students should begin by cutting or tearing a shape for their head.
6. Students will then cut or tear simple shapes for each facial feature. Eye brows, freckles, birth marks, upper/lower lips, hair and so on.
7. Have the students assemble their faces before they glue them down. Pass out the glue sticks. Remind them to have their white paper background in the portrait position (vertical.)
8. Have the students write their names at the bottom of their papers.
9. Instruct students to first glue down the face shape. Then they should glue on the nose, locating it in the center of the face.
10. If there is extra time, students can add a neck and or shoulders by using other geometric shapes. Show on the art print how Paul Klee used stacked blocks, square shapes, to create the neck.

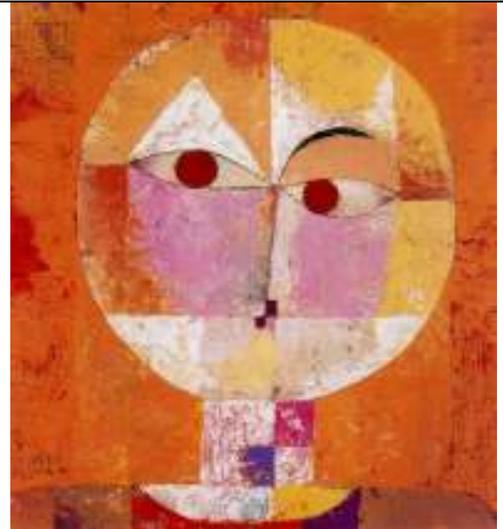
Example:



Parent Note:

Today in Art Masterpiece we discussed the artist Paul Klee who is known for his abstract art. We studied his painting titled *Senecio, Head of a Man*. Klee loved color and was often inspired by primitive art and simple drawings made by children. We discussed shape, color, portrait, and abstract art.

Students then created portraits with construction paper shapes, assembled in Klee's abstract style.



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