

# Art Masterpiece: Senecio: Head of a Man by Paul Klee (1879-1940)

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**Key Words:** Collage, Color, Shape, Harmony

**Grade:** 3rd

**Month:** November

**Activity:** Paper Masks

## **Meet the Artist:**

Paul Klee (pronounced "Clay") was born in Switzerland in 1879. He was born into a musical and artistic family. His mother was a singer and his father was a music teacher. His mother taught him to draw. He liked to draw cats, which were his favorite pets. His father taught him to play the violin. Klee liked both art and music and it took him a while to decide whether to become an artist or a musician. In 1898 he decided to move to Munich, Germany to study art.

In Munich, Klee became good friends with the famous artists Wassily Kandinsky, August Macke, and Franz Marc. They inspired him to paint in a new form of art called cubism. This art form created new forms and geometric shapes that had not been represented in the art world before.

Paul Klee's art is known as abstract or contemporary art due to his use of the revolutionary style of cubism. Many of his greatest paintings are just colors and shapes. He loved color and most of his paintings are filled with beautiful and exciting colors.

He traveled around the world and was influenced by primitive art, the masks of Africa and European puppet shows. Klee wanted his paintings to show worlds that had never been seen before. He was also known for working on as many as twelve paintings at one time. He worked on *Senecio: Head of a Man* for several years. He added and changed colors and shapes here and there to create the composition and color harmonies he wanted. He blended humor and wit into paintings and many of them are considered "childlike." Because of the musical background he gave some of his paintings a musical feel. Even though paintings don't have sound, Paul's patterns of color and shapes make many people imagine the rhythm of music.

Klee died in Switzerland on June 29, 1940 of a rare disease.

### **Key Points about the Painting:**

- Painted in 1922
- Senecio is a latin word that means old man. It is not known if this is a painting of an old man though.
- The colors in this painting are bright and happy and create a harmony. Many of the colors are pastel, which means that a lot of white has been added to them.
- Paul Klee has used many simple shapes to create this painting.

### **Vocabulary:**

**Collage** - work of art created by gluing bits of paper, fabric, scraps, photographs or other materials to a flat surface.

**Color** - an element of art. The hue, value and intensity of an object. The primary colors are red, blue and yellow; every color except white can be created from various blending of these three colors

**Shape** - an element of art. The outline, edge or flat surface of a form as a circle or a square.

**Harmony** - a union or blend of aesthetically compatible components. A composition is harmonious when the interrelationships between its parts fulfill aesthetic requisites or are mutually beneficial. As a principle of design, harmony refers to a way of combining elements of art to accent their similarities and bind the picture parts into a whole. It is often achieved through the use of repetition and simplicity.

### **Objective:**

- Students will create their own collage mask.

**Supplies:** 12" x 18" construction paper in assorted colors  
Assorted construction paper scraps  
Scissors (in classrooms)  
Stapler (in classrooms)  
Pencils (in classrooms)  
Glue (Tacky Glue works best)  
Other Scraps: Material, yarn, specialty papers, etc.

### **Project Description:**

1. Fold the 12" x 18" sheet of construction paper in half the tall way.

2. Starting on the fold about 4-5 inches down from the top, draw a diagonal line up to the top edge of the paper.
3. Continue down the side of the paper to draw a forehead, ear, and round off at the bottom to create a chin.
4. Cut out the shape.
5. Overlap the top two points and staple together. This will make your mask 3D.
6. Add pieces of scrap materials to the mask for the features plus any other decorations. Glue or staple into place.
7. Glue parent letters to back of Masks & be sure students write their names on the back also!
8. Display as desired.