

Free-form Shapes

Grade 2 – Lesson 4

(*Art Connections*, Level 2, pgs. 24-25A)

Big Idea

Irregular shapes, like the ones we find in nature – puddle shapes, people shapes, animal shapes – are called organic or free-form shapes.

Most complex organic shapes – like people or animal shapes – have simpler organic shapes within them.

Learning Targets and Assessment Criteria

Target 1: Identifies and creates organic shapes. (Arts EALR 1.1 *Elements of Art: Organic shape*)

Criteria 1: Makes free-form shapes.

Target 2: Creates complex organic shapes. (Arts EALR 1.1 *Elements of Art: Organic shape*)

Criteria 2: Combines three or more free-form shapes to create an animal or human figure.

Target 3: Creates a pattern. (Arts EARL 1.1.2 *Principles of Organization: Repeating pattern*)

Criteria 3: Repeats at least one motif to create a pattern.

Target 4: Uses symbolism. (Arts EARL 4.2 *Connections between the arts and other curriculum areas: Visual Art and Reading*)

Criteria 4: Represent a character from a story with at least one symbolic attribute (and describe in writing).

Local Art References



Shadow Puppet

Late 19th century - early 20th century

Indonesian

95.38.62



Shadow Puppet

Late 19th century - early 20th century

Chinese

95.38.18

(NOTE to Teacher: See **Art Background** section at end of lesson for more information about these works of art.)

Looking at Art Questions

(Note to Teacher: Show the Indonesian shadow puppets first in sharing the background information on *Wayang Kulit*, the tradition of shadow puppetry in Indonesia, then share the Chinese example as another example of organic shapes while facilitating the following discussion.)

1. What kinds of shapes do you see in these shadow puppets?
2. Irregular shapes that don't have math names are called **organic** or **free-form shapes**. Organic means from nature. Puddles, leaves, animals, and people all have organic shapes.
3. Can you trace an organic shape that you see on one of these puppets?
4. How many organic shapes did the artist of this puppet combine to make the whole body?
5. How did the artist decorate the puppet? A **motif** is a design that repeats. Can you find any **motifs** that repeat to make a **pattern** on this puppet?
6. In Indonesia, puppeteers tell long stories that everyone knows, often all night long. They make the puppets with special **attributes**, or parts that tell who they are. Do you think this puppet looks like a scary or friendly character?

Art Making Activity

(See the **Create** section *Art Connections*, Level 2, pg. 25)

Make a Shadow Puppet Design

How can you make a puppet design with organic shapes and patterns?

1. Choose a character you like in the story.
2. What attribute will you make so that we know who your character is?
3. What kinds of repeating patterns will you make to decorate your puppet?
4. Steps for the teacher:

Day 1

- a. Ask students to select a character from a story (can be a book that is being read in class, or a folktale that several students agree to represent).
- b. Guide students in identifying and drawing an attribute or symbolic part of the character by which we can recognize it.
- c. Have students sketch their character in their sketchbook, and then outline the different organic shapes they will combine to create their shadow puppet designs.

- d. Have students re-draw, probably three times the size of their sketch, the parts of their puppet on the piece of watercolor paper. (Hint: Suggest students make no part of their puppet smaller than the length of their whole hand.)

Day 2

- a. Let students practice using the watercolor pencils to see what kinds of effects they can get.
- b. With watercolor pencils, have students repeat motifs to create a pattern. Students can use fine line markers to create tiny selected details like eyes, lips, a curl of hair, etc.
- c. Have students tape down all four sides of their watercolor paper to an art mat before adding water to their watercolor pencil designs.
- d. Have students complete the written self-assessment below so that you know which element of their character is its symbolic attribute.

Each Student Needs

Day 1

- Calendar pages of photos of animals for inspiration
- A sketchbook
- A sketching pencil (2H)
- A Staedtler eraser
- An 11x17 piece of watercolor paper
- Blue tape
- A laminated art mat

Each Student Needs

Day 2

- A 6x9 piece of watercolor paper on which to practice watercolor pencils
- His/her finished sketch on 11x17 watercolor paper, taped down on all four sides to an art mat

Every Small Group of Students Needs

Day 2

- A set of watercolor pencils
- Fine line markers
- Fine detail water media brushes
- A container of water
- Paper towels

Tips for Teachers

Before Class

- Fill water containers approximately ½ full, ready to distribute.
- Gather some pictures of animals for students to look at, if needed for inspiration.

During Class

- You can use watercolor pencils in several ways: Draw lines and tones onto dry paper and then add water to make softer marks and tones; OR pre-wet the paper and draw onto the wet surface, making bleedy brilliant-colored marks; OR dip the pencil into a cup of water to make the same kinds of bleedy marks.

Vocabulary

Organic shape	Attribute
Motif	Indonesia
Pattern	Shadow puppet

RE-Teach Suggestions

1. This lesson will take a full two hours. Students may want to practice patterns in their sketchbooks before applying them to their puppets.
2. You can **pre-teach** each of the concepts of organic shape, repeated pattern, or symbolic attributes individually through related curriculum (Science – organic shapes; Math – repeated patterns; Reading – character attributes) to give students two ways with which to express their understanding of the concepts.

Reflecting on Our Art (from *Art Connections*, Level 2, pg. 25A)

- **Describe:** Which character does your puppet represent? Where did you make repeated patterns on it?
- **Analyze:** Which symbolic attribute did you make to tell us who your character is?
- **Interpret:** How would you puppet move if it could? How would movement add to your character's personality?
- **Decide:** Could your character have been made with geometric shapes instead of organic ones?

Self-Assessment

Name _____

Which character did you represent?

What attribute did you give your character so that we know who s/he is?

What motifs (designs) did you repeat to make a pattern on your shadow puppet? Draw them below:

Art Background (for Indonesian Shadow Puppets)

The shadow puppets, or *wayang wong* (literally: *wayang* – shadow, *wong* – man), of Bali, are known to be the most prominent Balinese theatrical expression. Bali's culture is derived from pre-Hindu, Hindu, and Islamic influences. The *wayang kulit* (shadow, play) preserves the country's Gubdy-Buddhist heritage. The plays are usually based on stories drawn from the Ramayana and Mahabharata Hindu epics. They communicate Bali's history, religious and spiritual teachings, poetry, and philosophy. The characters are demi-gods, demons, magic men and women, and romantic lovers. There are many different stories past through generations by the puppet theatre ranging from high drama, improvisation, and slapstick comedy.

The all-night-long performances of the *wayang* are for entertainment. A translucent rice paper screen is back-lit by flickering candles or a coconut husk oil lamp. Religious performances take place during the day. Often these performances will occur during, or prior to a ceremony of religious significance.

Only one puppeteer, called a *dalang*, puts on a performance. This person, often a priest, is a person greatly respected in his community. The *dalang* must be a very well-educated and talented individual as his responsibility is vast. The rods of at least 20 *wayang* figures are manipulated as the *dalang* chants or sings his narration. He is accompanied by an orchestra of 4 metal-keyed instruments that sound like fairies (gamelan orchestra). The *dalang* cues the orchestra with his feet while he improvises a complex network of intrigues from a simple plot. He must be able to produce a different voice for each character as well as to physically endure an all-evening performance. He is a master story-teller, a philosopher, a poet, an actor, and a teacher. It is said that the *dalang* is the greatest educator of the people.

The *wayang* serves to communicate the history, ideas, and principles of their culture. It pulls the Balinese together as a community and gives people an opportunity to view themselves "through the mirror of the mystic history; to view their current situation through a timeless perspective" (Shadow Light).

Principles and Elements of Design in Shadow Puppets

Line

Sinuuous lines and angles intermingle, creating interesting puppets and shadows. Line is particularly important as it, not detail, is what catches the audience's attention.

Shape

Probably the most important element is shape. When a puppet is in use, shape is what gives the essence of the characters. Perhaps a brutish demon has a large body, a tail, and wild hair. Generally, all shapes are very organic.

Space

Negative and positive shapes work together to create intriguing silhouettes. The moveable positive shapes of the arms are defined by the negative shapes of the white screen.

Form

Forms are two-dimensional and organic.

Texture

Texture exists on the puppets through decorative techniques. Painted patterns of swirls and diamonds, as well as other details, create the illusion of physical texture. Visual texture is also emphasized by the different paint finishes.

Excerpted from:

<http://records.viu.ca/www/discover/educate/posters/noname4.htm>

Two other good sources for information on Indonesian shadow puppets are:

<http://discover-indo.tierranet.com/wayang.htm>

AND

<http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/shadowpuppets/artsedge.html>

Assessment Checklist

Student	Makes free-form shapes	Combines three or more free-form shapes to create an animal or human figure.	Repeats at least one motif to create a pattern	Represents a character from a story with at least one symbolic attribute (describes in writing)	TOTAL 4
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Total Points					
Percent Comprehension					

Teacher Notes:

Letter Home

Dear Family,

*Today we learned about shadow puppets from Indonesia. They are used to perform long stories, mostly from the Hindu religion, and the performances usually last all night long. We learned that the shadow puppets are made up from **organic shapes**, and are covered with repeating **patterns**. We learned that the designs that repeat to make a pattern are called **motifs**.*

We made our own shadow puppet designs of characters from

*Each of us made an **attribute**, or special part on our puppet that tells who it is. Then we put on a shadow play in class!*

At home you could learn more about shadow puppets at this wonderful website from the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts: <http://artsedge,kennedy-center.org/shadowpuppets/artsedge.html>. You could make your own shadow puppets with recycled file folders, a hole punch, some brads, and sticks from outside. Remember, since it's a shadow puppet, it's the shape that counts most! Have fun!