

Shapes Are Everywhere

Grade 1 – Lesson 4
(*Art Connections*, Level 1, pgs. 32-33A)

Big Idea

*A shape can be either a geometric or an organic shape.
Combining geometric and organic shapes in one composition shows
variety, which can be visually interesting.*

Learning Targets and Assessment Criteria

Target 1: Distinguishes between geometric and organic shapes. (Arts EALR 1.1 *Elements of Art: Geometric and organic shape*)

Criteria 1: Names geometric shapes in work of art.

Criteria 2: Describes organic shapes in work of art.

Target 2: Uses variety for visual interest. (Arts EALR 1.1.2 *Principles of Organization: Variety*)

Criteria 3: Combines geometric and organic shapes in one composition for visual variety

Local Art Reference



Sylvia Plath Quilt, 1980

Ross Palmer Beecher

98.86

Seattle Art Museum

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

Looking at Art Questions

(Note to Teacher: Show both Ross Palmer Beecher's *Sylvia Plath Quilt* from SAM and *Caswell Rug* by Zeruah Higley Guernsey Caswell from *Art Connections*, Level 1, pg. 32.)

1. In both math and art we call shapes that have names – like circle, square, triangle, etc. – **geometric shapes**. Which geometric shapes can you find in these two works of art?
2. Irregular shapes – like leaves, puddles, branches, people and animal shapes – are called **organic shapes**, because they are mostly found in nature. Organic means from nature. Which organic shapes can you find in these two works of art?

3. Both Ross Palmer Beecher and Zeruah Higley Guernsey Caswell used geometric shapes together with organic shapes. Putting organic and geometric shapes next to each other creates **variety** in a composition, which is **visually exciting!**
4. The hooked rug by Zeruah Higley Guernsey Caswell shows many of her favorite things – cats, puppies, flowers, going for walks. We’re going to make our own “Favorite Things” quilts today using both organic and geometric shapes for variety and visual excitement.

Art Making Activity

(See the **Create** section *Art Connections*, Level 1, pg. 33)

Make Your Favorite Things Quilt

How can you use both geometric and organic shapes to make a visually exciting design?

1. On one page in your sketchbook, write “Geometric shapes,” and draw as many different geometric shapes as you know – circles, squares, rectangles, triangles, ovals).
2. On another page, write “Organic shapes,” and draw some interesting organic shapes.
3. Also, in your sketchbook, draw or write some of your favorite things. Try to think of at least three. Which of these can you make with geometric shapes and which will you use organic shapes to show?
4. Steps for Teacher:
 - a. Have students practice drawing geometric and organic shapes in their sketchbooks.
 - b. Facilitate visual brainstorming, asking students for ideas of their favorite things, and whether they are geometric or organic shapes. Have students make some sketches of their favorite things in their sketchbooks.
 - c. Demonstrate cutting out shapes from fun foam and attaching them to wooden print blocks or corrugated cardboard, then facilitate students doing this. (Students can share print blocks if a friend makes an image that is one of his/her favorite things.)
 - d. Demonstrate inking the print block, and printing the image on individual squares of origami paper. Print by placing paper over the print block (print block ink side up, paper colored side down), and then rubbing gently in little circles on the back of the piece of paper. Peel each print off the print

block, starting at a corner. Each student should make four prints.

- e. After the prints are dry (the next day), students can glue them on a piece of 9x9 black construction paper.

Day 1

Each Student Needs

- Sketchbook
- Sketching pencil
- One or two pieces of 3x3 adhesive fun foam
- Scissors
- One or two 4x4x3/4 pieces of wood
OR
Two pieces of 4x4 corrugated cardboard
- Four pieces of 3x3 solid colored unryu paper
- One 9x9 piece of black construction paper
- Glue stick to attach prints to construction paper

Day 2

At each printing station (4-6 for room):

- Styrofoam inking palette taped down to table
- A brayer (roller) for each printing station
- Newsprint or recycled magazines to protect table
- Baby wipes (for hands)
- A slightly damp sponge
- Black block printing ink

Vocabulary

Geometric shape	Variety
Organic shape	Visual interest
Printmaking	
Brayer	

Tips for Teachers

Before class

- Have lumber yard pre-cut 100 – 4x4x3/4 (Cut four 8-foot 1x4's into 24 pieces/each) pieces of wood. Sand ends.
OR
Pre-cut 4x4 pieces of corrugated cardboard (2 per student)
- Pre-cut adhesive fun foam into 3x3 squares
- Pre-cut a variety of solid colored origami papers into 3x3 pieces
- Pre-cut one 9x9 piece of black construction paper for each student

During class

- To prepare the inking palette, put about 2-3 tablespoons of ink at one end of the inking palette. Roll the brayer over the ink several times until you have an even coat of ink that makes a “sticky” sound. You might also roll the brayer from side-to-side on the palette to spread out the ink more evenly. You want a thin, even layer of ink on the palette.
- To ink the print block, place it on its back with the design facing up. Roll the inked-up brayer over the surface of the design 2-3 times until the whole design is covered, but not so much that ink is oozing off the edges of fun foam. Try to avoid getting ink on the surface of the wooden block. If you do get some ink on the print block, you can gently wipe it off with a damp sponge before the students print.
- To make the print, just lay a square of origami paper colored side down on top of the inked print block. Then, holding the paper in place, make small circles with your finger on the back of

Reflecting on Our Art (from *Art Connections*, Level 1, pg. 33A)

- **Describe:** How many geometric and organic shapes did you put in your design? Where did you place them?
- **Analyze:** Are any of your shapes repeated? How do the shapes look different when they are printed on different colors?
- **Interpret:** What does your “Favorite Things” quilt say about you?
- **Decide:** Where did you show the most variety in your composition?

Self Assessment

Name _____

I used geometric shapes to make _____

I used organic shapes to make _____

I showed the most variety (where?) _____

Art Background (for **Sylvia Plath Quilt**, 1980, by *Ross Palmer Beecher*)

“I am the magician's girl who does not flinch.” – Sylvia Plath, from *The Bee Meeting* 1962

Irreverent and observant, Ross Palmer Beecher gravitated toward the poetry of Sylvia Plath because, as she says, "She's dark and I'm dark." A contemporary artist living in Seattle, Beecher spent two years composing and hand stitching a quilt to honor this American poet. At the center are two lines from the poem "Lady Lazarus": "Dying is an art. Like everything else, I do it exceptionally well." The stitching and patches are loaded with references--to bees, to dying, to graveyards and to another woman's compulsive behavior. Since making this quilt, Beecher has gone on to create quilts from unconventional materials to commemorate many different heroes and sheroes and offer her own version of American history. Beecher combines both geometric and organic shapes in an intentionally fluid design to engage the viewer in buzzing around and around the composition like bee. She repeats shapes, colors and patterns to unify the composition, while simultaneously varying certain elements to keep the quilt visually dynamic.

Excerpted from Seattle Art Museum *Close Ups* online at:

<http://www.seattleartmuseum.org/emuseum/code/emuseum.asp?style=single¤trecord=3&page=collection&profile=objResources&searchdesc=WEB:CloseUps&newvalues=1&newprofile=objects>

Assessment Checklist

Student	Names geometric shapes in work of art	Describes organic shapes in work of art	Combines organic and geometric shapes for visual interest	TOTAL 3
1.				
2.				
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30.				
31.				
Total Points				
Percent Comprehension				

Teacher Notes:

Letter Home

Dear Family,

*Today we learned to the difference between **geometric** and **organic shapes**. Geometric shapes are made the same way every time and have math names – like circle, square, rectangle, triangle. Organic shapes come from nature – like leaves, puddles, people and animal shapes. When you put organic and geometric shapes together in the same picture that shows **variety**, which is **visually interesting**. We looked at two different works of art that both geometric and organic shapes, a hooked rug by a 19th century American artist named Zeruah Higley Guernsey Caswell and a quilt by a contemporary artist from Seattle named Ross Palmer Beecher. Then, we made prints of some of our favorite things out of both geometric and organic shapes.*

At home, you could go on a shape hunt, looking for interesting geometric and organic shapes. When you find a cool shape, you could make a rubbing of it with thin paper and a soft black crayon, used on its side. See whether other people can figure out which thing each of your rubbings shows!