

Active Lines

Grade 2 – Lesson 3

(*Art Connections*, Level 2, pgs. 20-21A)

Big Idea

Artists can use active lines – curved, diagonal, zigzag – to give a painting of feeling of energy and movement.

Learning Targets

Target 1: Selects specific line directions (Arts EALR 1.1 *Elements of Art: Line direction*)

Criteria 1: Uses primarily curved, diagonal and zigzag lines.

Target 2: Interprets expressive use of line direction. (Arts EALR 3.1 *Arts as Communication: Expressive line*)

Criteria 2: Describes and explains (verbally and in writing) how curved, diagonal and zigzag lines can create a sense of energy in a composition.

Target 3: Connects movement in music to active lines in a work of art. (Arts EARL 4.1 *Connections across arts disciplines: Visual art and music*)

Criteria 3: Paints curves, diagonal and zigzag lines to express changes (tempo, pitch, volume) in the energy of a piece of music.

Local Art References



How My Mother's Embroidered Apron Unfolds in My Life, 1944

Arshile Gorky

74.40

Seattle Art Museum

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



Anooralya (Wild Yam Dreaming), 1995

Emily Kame Kngwarreye

2000.157

Seattle Art Museum

Looking at Art Questions

(Note to Teacher: First show Kandinsky's, *Composition IV* from *Art Connections*, Level 2, pg. 20, and then show the two abstract paintings above in facilitating the following discussion.)

1. What **directions of lines** do you see in these paintings?
2. Where do you see **curved, diagonal, and zigzag** lines?

3. When we made our playground designs, we combined lots of different directions of line to create an excited feeling. What words would you use to describe the mood of these paintings? Why do you think so?
4. Artists often use curved, diagonal, and zigzag lines to create a sense of **movement** or energy in their pictures. How do the lines in these paintings move? (Use your arms to show me). Which lines do you think give a feeling of movement?
5. When an artist changes something from the way it looks in real life, we call it **abstract** art. Wassily Kandinsky made many abstract paintings which were inspired by music. What kind of music could you imagine might have inspired this painting? Why do you think so?

Art Making Activity

(See the **Create** section *Art Connections*, Level 2, pg. 21)

Lines Can Dance Too

How can you make a painting that looks like a piece of music?

1. I'm going to play a piece of music. First I want you to just listen to the music. Then I want you to draw lines in your sketchbook that remind you of the energy in the music. Is it fast and crazy? Or slow and calm?
2. Steps for the Teacher:
 - a. Play a piece of music for the students that is energetic, e.g. Rachmaninoff's Prelude in G Minor, Opus 23, Number 5,
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9idfQVlkqKyw&feature=related>
 - b. Ask the students first to just listen to the music, then to listen a second time and draw lines in their sketchbooks to express the energy of music they heard. Remind students that curved, diagonal, and zigzag lines can suggest high energy.
 - c. Have students brainstorm with a partner words to describe their lines and the music.
 - d. Review (by demonstrating) ways to make different kinds of lines with brush and ink, then have students practice.
 - e. Have students tape down all four sides of a piece of watercolor paper to an art mat.
 - f. As you are playing each of the pieces of music, ask students to make lines with their brush and ink that mirror the energy they hear in the music.

- g. While ink is drying, demonstrate various watercolor techniques: how to make a soft wet wash, how to make a crisp edge, how to blend colors on the paper with wet on wet techniques, lightening color and adding textures by dabbing wet areas of paint with a crumpled paper towel.
- h. Let students practice watercolor techniques on a separate piece of watercolor paper before adding it to their ink drawings.
- i. Then have students fill in the empty spaces in their compositions with watercolor paint.
- j. Close by asking students to write and then share a description of the lines they used to create the energy of the music they heard.

Each Student Needs

- A sketchbook
- A soft drawing pencil (4B-6B)
- Three pieces of watercolor paper (two 6x9 practice pieces, and one 8x11 finished piece)
- Blue tape to tape down four edges of final paper to art mat
- A small bottle with black India ink (opaque)
- A laminated art mat
- Blue tape
- A paper towel

Every Pair of Students Needs

- An assortment of water media brushes
- A set of watercolor paints
- A container of water

Classroom Needs

- CD with musical selection
- CD player or computer with speakers

Tips for Teachers

Before Class

- Tape down all four sides of a 8x11 piece of watercolor paper to a laminated art mat.
- Fill water containers approximately ½ full, ready to distribute.

During Class

- Always remember to give students an opportunity to practice with a medium (ink, and then watercolor) before they have to commit to it on their final piece.

Vocabulary

| | |
|----------|------------------|
| Diagonal | Implied movement |
| Curved | Abstract |
| Zigzag | |

RE-Teach Suggestions

1. Play a very different piece of music, e.g. *Claire de Lune*, by Claude Debussy, and repeat the lesson, having students first draw lines in their sketchbooks, then create India ink drawings while listening to the piece.
2. As before, students may want to practice different watercolor techniques before they fill the negative spaces in their ink drawings with watercolor washes.
3. Ask students again to describe the energy of the music and the choices they made in terms of line and color to express the music best.
4. Display each student's two different dancing lines compositions, with labels for which kind of music each represents.

Self-Assessment

Name _____

What words would you use to describe the piece of music we listened to?

What kinds of lines did you use to express the energy of the music?

Reflecting on Our Art

 (from *Art Connections*, Level 2, pg. 21A)

- **Describe:** What kind of music does your painting show? Describe the kinds of lines you used. In which directions do they move?
- **Analyze:** Which lines look most active in your picture? How do the colors you chose make your picture look even more active?
- **Interpret:** What is the mood of your painting? What title would you like to give it?
- **Decide:** Did you use a variety of lines and colors to show fast music, or similar ones? Why did you make that artistic choice?

Art Background (for **How My Mother's Embroidered Apron Unfolds in My Life**, by *Arshile Gorky*)

Arshile Gorky was a pivotal figure in the development of modern art in America. An immigrant from Armenia, Gorky processed avant-garde ideas and movements such as impressionism, cubism, and surrealism, often following closely on the heels of masters such as Paul Cezanne, Joan Miro, and Pablo Picasso, while at other times finding original pathways out from their shadows. By the late 1930s and up until his untimely death in 1948, Gorky mastered an original and groundbreaking style that paved the way for younger artists such as Jackson Pollock and Willem de Kooning, who fomented the now-famous movement of abstract expressionism. *How My Mother's Embroidered Apron Unfolds in My Life* often poses more questions than it answers, serving as an eloquent touchstone for many of the pressing issues that shaped art at the time of its making.

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

<http://www.seattleartmuseum.org/SAMcollection/code/emuseum.asp?style=browse¤trecord=28&page=collection&profile=objects&searchdesc=WEB:CloseUps&newvalues=1&newstyle=single&newcurrentrecord=35>

Art Background (for **Anooralya (Wild Yam Dreaming)**, by *Emily Kame Kngwarreye*)

Through this painting, we are transported to the center of Australia, to a flat, windswept settlement where outsiders might see only an expanse of red dirt. Our guide is an eighty-five-year-old woman whose eyes are full of observations and who has years of experience painting bodies for ceremonies. Emily Kame Kngwarreye discovered the lush fluidity of acrylics in 1988, launching her extraordinarily prolific career that is full of bravado in handling paint. The swirling network in this painting directs us underground to explore a maze of roots produced by an anooralya, the name of the yam plant whose vigorous growth is evident here. Kngwarreye was a custodian of knowledge of this resourceful plant.

For thousands of years, Aboriginal painting appeared primarily on the human body, on the ground, on trees or rock walls or on ceremonial objects. Such art conveyed sacred laws derived from Dreamings, when ancestral beings animated the world. This artistic legacy is the longest continuing artistic tradition on Earth, twice as old as the cave paintings of Lascaux.

In the latest generation, Australian Aboriginal artists have contributed significantly to world art by adapting their knowledge and applying it to painted canvases. These paintings offer a new look at life on the vast stretches of the Australian continent. It also brings viewers closer to a coded system of beliefs, where some of the smallest creatures might have the biggest stories, as seen in paintings by other Utopian artists. This new episode in art history also explores the parameters of abstraction in a way that can be compared to other paintings in SAM's collection.

Excerpted from Seattle Art Museum's *Close-Ups* online at:

<http://www.seattleartmuseum.org/emuseum/code/emuseum.asp?collection=5618&collectionname=WEB:CloseUps&style=browse¤trecord=1&page=collection&profile=objects&searchdesc=WEB:CloseUps&newvalues=1&newstyle=single&newcurrentrecord=9>

Assessment Checklist

| Student | Uses primarily diagonal, curved, and zigzag lines | Describes and explains (verbally and in writing) how curved, diagonal and zigzag lines can create a sense of energy in a composition | Paints curves, diagonal and zigzag lines to express changes (tempo, pitch, volume) in the energy of a piece of music | TOTAL 3 |
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| Total Points | | | | |
| Percent Comprehension | | | | |

Teacher Notes:

Letter Home

Dear Family,

*Today we learned that artists can use **diagonal, curved and zigzag lines** to create a sense of **high energy** in a work of art. We looked at **abstract** paintings by 20th century European painters Wassily Kandinsky, and Arshile Gorky, and contemporary Aboriginal Australian artist Emily Kame Kngwarreye. All three artists used active diagonal, curved, or zigzag lines to create a sense of energy and movement in their compositions.*

We listened to a piece of energetic music and used active lines to make ink drawings that expressed the energy we heard. Finally, we painted watercolor in the spaces between our lines to finish our dancing lines compositions.

At home you could listen to different types of music and make dancing line compositions with any kind of paint. If more than one person makes a dancing line picture, compare your pictures when you are done to see if you chose similar kinds of lines to express the music!