# Shapes All Around Us

Grade 3 – Lesson 4

(Art Connections, Level 3, pgs. 36-39)

Big Idea

Contour lines show the inside and outside of form. Gestures can

express something about the character of the subject.

Learning Targets and Assessment Criteria

Target 1: Observes and draws organic (free-form) form of a hand (Arts EALR 1.1

Elements of Art: Organic (free-form) shapes, 1.2 Skills and Techniques: Observational

drawing)

Criteria 1: Approximates the proportions and shapes of the human hand.

Target 2: Uses expressive gesture (Arts EALR 3.1 Art Express Meaning)

Criteria 2: Poses and draws own hand in a gesture that suggests something

important about self (explains meaning in writing).

Target 3: Uses contour line (Arts EALR 1.2 Skills and Techniques: Contour line

drawing)

Criteria 3: Draws a continuous line to show the inside and outside edges of the

form.

Local Art References

Contour Line Drawing of a Hand, 2008 Miniature: Line Drawing of Artist

Beverly Harding Buehler at Work, ca. 1600

Persian

62.205

Seattle Art Museum

Looking at Art Questions

(Note to Teacher: Show the two contour line drawings above as well as the two portraits

from Art Connections, Level 3, pgs. 36-37.)

1. A portrait is a picture of a person. The three portraits all have both organic

and geometric forms in them. Can you find an example of each kind of form

in each image?

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2. Let’s compare and contrast these portraits. The oldest is the contour line

drawing of an artist, made by a Persian artist (present day Iran) about 400

years ago. Next oldest is the portrait of the little boy by American portrait

painter, John Singleton Copley; it was made around the time of the American

Revolution. The portrait of the man in the chair is a tinted photograph made

by the African American artist, Allen E. Cole, about 80 years ago. What

similarities can you find between the three portraits? What differences can

you find?

3. The way a person holds his or her hands is called gesture. What are each

person’s hands doing? What do the gestures of these people tell you about

who they are?

4. The portrait of the Persian artist is a contour drawing. A contour is the

outside and inside edges of a form. Who can come up and trace the contours

of the artist’s turban, arm, pants?

5. Today we are going to make our own contour line drawings of the organic

shapes of our hands.

Art Making Activity

(See the Create section Art Connections, Level 3, pg. 39)

Make a Contour Line Drawing of Your Hand

What do you want your hand to say about who you are?

1. In your sketchbook, let’s practice drawing hands. Look

carefully at your hand before you start to draw it. Notice the

different parts and where they are connected to each other.

2. NOTE to Teacher: Use hand mannequin to introduce the

proportions of the hand: the palm is approximately as long as

the middle finger; each of the fingers has two joints, making

three parts; the thumb has one joint, making two parts; the

thumb comes out approximately half-way up the palm.

3. Remember, to trick your brain into drawing what you are

really seeing, try to move your eye slowly around each part

of your hand while you move your pencil at the same speed.

4. Also remember to look WAY more at the hand you are

drawing than at your page.

5. Try placing your hand in several different gestures, or poses.

Which one says something about you?

6. Choose the gesture you want for your hand in your finished

drawing, and then do a contour line drawing of it on the nice

paper. Go over your lines with fine line marker.

7. Finally, use chalk pastel to fill your hand and the background

with color.

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Each Student Needs

• A sketch book

• Sketching pencil (HB)

• Thin black markers

• An 8x11 sheet of watercolor paper

• Tissue

Every Pair of Students Needs

• A Staedtler eraser

• A set of chalk pastels

Self-Assessment

Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

After you finish your image, pretend that you are in a café and the only thing

you can see about the person behind the corner from you is his or her hand.

What does his or her gesture suggest about the mystery person?...

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Reflecting on Our Art (from Art Connections, Level 3, pg. 27)

Vocabulary

Organic shape Portrait

Contour line Gesture

Tips for Teachers

Before class

• Set each place with sketchbook and

sketching pencils

During Class

• Ask students to consider both what

gesture they want to place their hand in,

and where they want to place their

drawing on the page (center? from the

left? from the top? etc.)

After class

• To preserve the chalk pastel

drawings, take them outside and

spray them with spray fixative (or

hairspray), so they won’t smear.

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• Describe: Where did you place your hand in the composition? What kinds of

geometric shapes did you use in the background?

• Analyze: How do the contour lines of your hand and the lines of your geometric

shapes contrast?

• Interpret: What does the gesture you placed your hand in say about who you are?

• Decide: Did your drawing turn out the way you wanted? If you did it over again, how

would you change it?

Art Background (for Miniature: Line Drawing of Artist at Work, ca. 1600, by

an anonymous Persian artist)

Some Islamic manuscripts feature members of the court at work. A royal court was filled

with a variety of people, including soldiers, scribes, doctors, magicians, entertainers,

artists, cooks and pages. Artists such as the one depicted here in great detail played

important roles in court life. Through their work, artists entertained and amused the ruler

and his entourage and demonstrated the ruler's worldliness and sophistication as a

supporter of the arts. The importance of painters, particularly those who created

illustrations for books, can be seen in the large number of illuminations that exist to this

day.

In this image, we see a contour line drawing artist at work in a landscape setting. The

artist copies the work of another master, with the original propped up before him.

Copying works by others was not considered derivative or unimaginative in the Islamic

world. Aspiring painters were required to perfectly copy the works of known masters

before they were allowed to branch out and develop their own styles.

Excerpted from the Seattle Art Museum Close-Ups online at:

http://www.seattleartmuseum.org/emuseum/code/emuseum.asp?style=single&currentreco

rd=55&page=collection&profile=objExplores&searchdesc=WEB:CloseUps&newvalues

=1&newprofile=objects

Cross-Curricular Connections

Science – Botanical illustration

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Assessment Checklist

Student Approximates the

proportions and

shapes of the human

hand

Poses and draws own

hand in a gesture that

suggests something

important about self

(explains meaning in

writing)

Draws a

continuous line to

show the inside and

outside edges of

the form.

TOTAL

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31.

Total Points

Percent Comprehension

Teacher Notes:

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Letter Home

Dear Family,

Today we learned that 3-D shapes are called forms in art. Forms

with names – like spheres, cones, rectangular prisms – that are

made according to math rules are called geometric forms. We

learned that free-form forms are called organic forms. We noticed

that an artist can overlap forms in a composition to make it look

like it has depth.

We looked at still lifes (by 18th century Dutch painters Rachel

Ruysch and Abraham van Beheren, and 20th century American

painters Janet Fish and Guy Anderson). In all of the paintings, the

artists used organic and geometric forms as well as overlapping to

suggest the things in the still life. We arranged and drew our own

still lifes with geometric and organic forms and overlapping.

At home, your child could practice drawing what s/he sees by

setting up small still lifes of fruit, plants or a few favorite toys and

looking for organic and geometric forms in them. Ask your child to

show you how s/he can trick his/her mind into drawing just what

s/he sees by moving his/her eye at the same speed as his/her

drawing hand.