

A JOURNEY THROUGH ABSTRACTION



By Dawn Lees Reyes

LESSON PLAN AND VIDEO NARRATIVES

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Dawn Reyes

Lesson Plan: Synthetic Cubism

Description:

Students will create a synthetic cubist artwork in the manner of Pablo Picasso, based on the video A Journey Through Abstraction (see link below)

<https://youtu.be/yH4oGYY4Mp4>

Vocabulary:

Elements of Art

- Principles of Design
- Composition
- Analogous and Complimentary colors
- Abstraction
- Realism
- Synthetic Cubism
- Analytical Cubism
- Collage

Art History:

Every Student will:

- Understand the definition of Abstraction
- Explain the purpose and/or intention of the cubist movement
- Identify, discuss, and describe connections between synthetic cubist approach to painting and other art movements leading up to cubism
- Describe how other cultures influenced cubist approaches to painting
- Provide a short description of who Pablo Picasso was and why he was so important to contemporary art movements

Art Criticism:

Every student will:

- Employ critical evaluation skills orally and in writing
 - ✓ Use expanded art vocabulary when evaluating and interpreting art
 - ✓ Reference elements of art and principals of design
 - ✓ Differentiate between personal preference and informed judgement
 - ✓ Explain the artistic process
- Describe, analyze, interpret and judge works of art
- Participate in student and teacher led critiques

Aesthetics:

Every student will:

- Discuss how aesthetics are:
 - ✓ Reflected in everyday life
 - ✓ Different from judgements
 - ✓ Reflections of intension and choices of an artist
- Support personal aesthetic judgements in writing
- Discuss current issues and interests in the art world
- Study and describe ideas about the aesthetic properties in art

Production:

In the production of a synthetic cubist artwork, every student will:

- Understand and use the elements of art and principles of design
- Use elements in their work that are peculiar to synthetic cubism
- Demonstrate an understanding of the creative elements that are peculiar to synthetic cubism
- Localize or infuse cultural connections to make the work uniquely their own
- Follow all guidelines and parameters provided in the production of the art piece

Instructor's Activities	Student's Activities	Materials Needed
Present Video: A Journey Through Abstraction	Watch and listen to video	
Review and discuss Learning objectives of video	Engage in discussion	
Review Cubism	Using classroom resources, students will identify cubist art works	Images of 20 th Century art
	Using classroom resources, students will differentiate between analytical and synthetic cubism	Images of Cubist art
Provide inspirational images to students to work from	Identify inspirational image	Xerox copies of plants, animals, people, etc.
Guide students through a large sketch of image	Sketching	Butcher paper cut to the size of the finished work, pencils, erasers
Guide students through an abstraction of the sketch	Sketching, analyzing images, eliminating details	Pencils, erasers, markers
Guide students through cutting out shapes	Cutting, storing shapes	Scissors, envelope to hold shapes
Guide students in the creation of a new composition. Discuss what elements the student likes, what is to be emphasized, how the elements of art and design are used.	Lay shapes on to the final paper. Use blue tack to secure	Watercolor paper 18x24, blu tack
	Transfer the new composition onto paper with pencil	
Instruct students through demonstration on the use of, tools, the medium, and color mixing	Attend to the demonstration	Tempera paint, mixing cups, brushes
Guide students in the planning of the painting	Discuss with instructor plans for painting and begin!	

Supplemental Discussion items:

- Artists like to break the “rules” of previous movements. Why? What do they get out of being a rebel?
- Give specific examples of the following statement:
Artists of the 20th century were influenced by spiritualism, philosophy, psychology, science, and other cultures. They learned from each other and from art from the past. They stood up against war, oppressive governments, restrictive social constructs, and hoped to change society for the better by making people think about other realities.
- Of the movements and ways of working presented in the video, which do you like the most and why?
Symbolism/Mysticism, Impressionism, Pointillism, Fauvism, Cubism, Surrealism, Biomorphc Abstraction, Abstract Expressionism, Post-Painterly Abstraction, Figurative Abstraction, Minimalism, Post- Modernism.

Grading Rubric

	Exceptional- 100pts	Commendable - 80 pts	Well done- 70 pts	Good- 60 pts	Poor- 50 pts	Total
Meets definition of Synthetic Cubism						
Unique Subject/ Composition						
Use of Elements						
Use of Principles						
Presentation						
Totals						
Average Grade (total /5)						

YouTube link to Video:

<https://youtu.be/yH4oGYY4Mp4>

Slide Narratives and Sources:

Slide 3

Hafa Adai! I'm Dawn Reyes and welcome to this video presentation of "A Journey Through Abstraction".

A little about my background:

I obtained an undergraduate degree in art from San Francisco State University, but I believe my real education in art occurred while I lived in Western Europe for 10 years, where I saw in real life, the work that I had only experienced in a text book. After experiencing the CHamoru culture for more than 30 years, my work has become a fusion of Western and local culture. I work in a wide variety of media and move back and forth from realism to abstraction.

Despite my years of experience, I believe it is important to revisit the basics now and then, to re-affirm what I know and make a stronger connection with what seems forgotten. My most recent self-imposed learning experience was on Western Abstraction.

In this reconnection I wanted to do more than just look at work artists of the 20th century have done. I wanted to understand what they thought about and what they were influenced by, and how Western Abstraction developed. Initially it's an academic understanding, but then when I tried to apply the various styles to my own work, I came to a deeper understanding, and I believe my work will be stronger going forward.

Slide 4

In this learning process, I localized my work by linking each piece to textures of Guam, which to me are the small things that make our island beautiful. Such as, noticing and appreciating the way water sculpts the sand, the various colors and shapes of Guam soil, the way calm water reflects its surroundings, and the wet goiness of a footprint in mud. These are just a few examples of what inspired me for this series.

Slide 5

Learning Objectives

In my mind, there is little point in learning something if you don't share it, which is what I plan to do with this presentation- share with you what I learned and hope it will inspire you to go out and try new things.

1. Understand the definition of abstraction
2. Understand the difference between western abstraction and the work of native peoples
3. Obtain some knowledge of the various ways of working and movements during the 20th century
4. Be aware that there was purpose and/or intention to various Modern art movements.
5. Consider the "rules" of art- are there any rules for modern art?
6. Acknowledge that artists have, and always will, learn from each other.

Slide 6

OK. Abstraction.

First of all- what is it?

Websters gives this definition:

(see slide)

Clearly the 4th point applies to us. But when we are through here, I bet you'll be able to apply several other points as well!

A simplistic way to look at the definition of abstract art is to say that the subject matter is reduced to the basic elements of art; that is: line, shape, space, color, and texture. In other words, abstract artists are painting about the basic elements of art instead of painting about persons, places, or things.

Slide 7

Visually it looks like this:

Here is a detail of a painting done by Sandro Botticelli in 1478, in which he is illustrating an allegory of spring. All the details are there. You can tell in an instant what's going on in this painting and your focus is immediately drawn to the three women dancing in a forest.

Slide 8

But take away the details, exaggerate the shapes, change up the colors, place an emphasis on line, and you get a nicely composed abstraction like this. This abstraction is still figurative enough that you can still see the three women dancing, but there is an entirely different feel to the work. It invites you to think a bit more about what is happening, and maybe even wonder why the artist chose those particular colors.

Slide 9

However, as we go through the 20th century together, I hope you'll get the idea that abstraction is hardly simple at all. Modern artists were thinking about some pretty difficult concepts and did their best to engage viewers in a conversation about them. Here's what I like: Artists are Rebels and Rule-Breakers. In almost every case in the history of art, the movement that is popular at one moment is intent on breaking the "rules" of art from the movement that preceded it. Artists of the 20th century were influenced by spiritualism, philosophy, psychology, science, and other cultures. They learned from each other and from art from the past. They stood up against war, oppressive governments, restrictive social constructs, and hoped to change society for the better by making people think about other realities.

Think about that.

No easy task!

Before continuing, I also want to make one clarification:

When we talk about the study of Abstract art, it is generally understood that we are talking about Western Art- that which developed in Europe and America, and to some extent, South America.

Slide 10

But what about the work of native peoples? Are they not, by our definition, abstractions?

Technically yes, but the distinction I want to make is in the *intention* behind the work.

Although there is no way of knowing why ancient people did cave drawings, I believe it is safe to assume that there was no intention to change the direction of society, to change rules of art, and certainly no intention of making money from the work. Generally speaking, native peoples

created or performed as part of a ritual or ceremony for the good of their people and for the perpetuation of their culture.

Slide 11

Navajo sand paintings, for example, were done for healing purposes. Through chanting and gestures, the ancestors came through the painting and helped to heal the sick person sitting on the painting. Once this ceremony was completed the sand painting was considered toxic and destroyed.

Slide 12

Traditional aboriginal dot paintings represent a story, usually about hunting or food gathering. Only artists from certain tribes are allowed to use the dot technique. Different regions employ different techniques. It is considered both disrespectful and unacceptable to paint on behalf of someone else's culture and is not permitted.

Slide 13

A mandala is used as a spiritual and ritual symbol in Asian cultures. In Hinduism and Buddhism, the belief is that by meditating on the mandala from the outer edges to the center, you are guided through the cosmic process of transforming the universe from one of suffering into one of joy and happiness.

Slide 14

African masks are important in this presentation because 20th century artists were highly influenced by them. Historically masks have a spiritual and religious meaning and are used in ritual dances and social and religious events.

Some combine human and animal features to unite man with his natural environment. This bond with nature and the spirit world is of great importance to many tribal cultures and masks are used to express this relationship. In most traditional African cultures, the person who wears a ritual mask conceptually loses his or her human life and turns into the spirit represented by the mask itself. In most cases, mask-making is an art that is passed on from father to son, along with the knowledge of the symbolic meanings conveyed by these masks.

Slide 15

The trouble with Western Abstract art is that it has been and remains so cerebral that if you are not in the middle of it, or not willing to follow each movement and try to understand the approach, you get left behind. And when that happens, we are left with this kind of response: I don't get it.

Slide 16

I could do that!

Slide 17

I've seen elephants do better paintings than that!

Slide 18

My child could do that.

Slide 19

And my all-time favorite- I don't know much about art, but I know what I like.

So- let's take this Journey together and see if we can dispel the strength of some of those statements. In any case, when we are through here and you still don't have an appreciation for abstract art, then at least you will be making a somewhat educated decision, which is the most anyone can hope for!

Slide 20

The modern abstraction movement is rooted in Symbolism & Mysticism. Odilon Redon was the leading artist of the French Symbolist movement. During his early years as an artist, Redon created a series of predominantly black artworks referred to as "Noirs", representing an exploration of his internal feelings and psyche. His works were described as "a synthesis of nightmares and dreams". Redon's assertion that black is the most important color is rooted in a powerful attraction to the world of the night which he said was filled with "phantoms, dreams, and obscure fantasies of the indeterminate". His figures were often hybrid creatures mixing human, animal and plant elements. In the early 1900's Redon switched to the use of pastels, and like most symbolist artists, was highly influenced by different religions and philosophies.

Sources:

1. *Odilon Redon 1840-1916; Published in conjunction with exhibits in Chicago, Amsterdam, and London 1994-1995*
2. *A Concise History of Modern Painting (World of Art Series); Herbert Reed; 1974 Thames and Hudson*
3. *Movements in Art Since 1945 (World of Art Series); Edward Lucie-Smith; 1984 Thames and Hudson;*
4. *Blogs.getty.edu/iris; Art & Archives; "Black is the most essential color": Odilon Redon's Noirs; Alessandra Nardi, March 5, 2016*
5. *Wikipedia; Odilon Redon, Biography*

Slide 21

One day after a storm I was walking on the beach and I saw these Pogo leaves, burned by salt air, dancing in the wind- and it made me think of ballerinas. So- for this piece, Les Danseuses, you can see that I applied Redon's use of hybrid creatures by turning the leaves into ballerinas and using the dying Pogo buds for their heads.

Slide 22

The great power of nature, I think, is the way she unselfishly presents her beauty and mystery to us. Even in death, there is beauty. The natural mystery of the Pogo flower is that it blooms, changes color a few times, and dies all in one day. I took this photo of the Pogo blossom on the ground for all the interesting shapes and colors that were presented. It was the perfect subject, I thought, to apply a mystical sensibility to my work in the manner of Odilon Redon.

Slide 23

Before we leave this discussion on Symbolism and Mysticism, I want you to take a look at the work of a more modern artist, Susan Seddon Boulet (1941 – 1997). Originally from Brazil, Boulet grew up on a farm, where animals and nature were a big part of her life. Later she immigrated to the United States and settled in California where she continued to work in her unique style, which evolved into a complex layering of images that mixed human, plant and animals, creating a Shamanic and Goddess feel to her work. She drew her inspiration from a wide variety of sources: mythology and poetry, Jungian psychology, and worldwide spiritual traditions, as well as a deep love of animal and the natural world.

Sources:

1. *Susan Seddon Boulet: A Retrospective*
2. *Susanseddonboulet.com*
3. *Wikipedia; Susan Seddon Boulet, Biography*

Slide 24

For this piece titled Niyok, I applied some of the same ideas as Boulet as I combined plant elements (the base of a palm frond), with human and animal images. The human is wearing the palm frond as a mask and has a clear connection to this plant and also her wild self, as represented by the wolf elements in the painting.

Slide 25

Skipping over Impressionism and Pointillism, I wanted to spend some of my study time on Fauvism. The leaders of the Fauvist movement were André Derain and Henri Matisse, who worked together during the summer of 1905 to create a body of work shown at the Salon d'Automne. The term Fauvism comes from the French word for wild beasts, a term coined by critic Louis Vauxcelles after viewing the boldly colored canvases of Derain and Matisse for the first time.

This is an extreme development of Post-Impressionist art. Fauvist paintings are characterized by bright colors and very loose brush work. Fauvist painting techniques also draw on elements from pointillism and Neo-Impressionism. Important artists influencing this movement were Paul Cézanne and Paul Gauguin.

Sources:

1. *A Concise History of Modern Painting (World of Art Series); Herbert Read; 1974 Thames and Hudson*
2. *Modern European Art (World of Art Series); Alan Bowness; 1985 Thames and Hudson*
3. *Wikipedia; Fauvism, Artists & Style, Origins, Salon d'Automne 1905*
4. *Wikipedia; Andre Derain, Early Years, Fauvism*
5. *Musée d'Orsay Impressionist and Post-Impressionist Masterpieces; Thames and Hudson, 1984*
6. *Paul Gauguin 1848-1903 The Primitive Sophisticate; Ingo F. Walther; Benedikt Taschen, 1988*
7. *Musée d'Orsay Impressionist and Post-Impressionist Masterpieces; Thames and Hudson, 1984*

Slide 26

The Guam textures inspiration for this painting are these ironwood tree roots found at the base of Tarzan Falls. I think its easy to see how I applied Fauvist techniques by choosing bright colors that are not part of the natural world of tree roots and by using loose brush strokes. I enjoyed the free-flowing sensibility of the roots themselves and tried to express that idea in the composition.

Slide 27

We're moving into Cubism now, but before we go there, I want you to take a look at this messy timeline which depicts all the influences for and because of Cubism.

It's so complicated and just looks like a lot of spaghetti, really!

By looking at this I hope you get the sense that 20th century developments in art were many and varied, to say the least!

It's important to see this because Cubism has been considered the most influential art movement of the 20th Century, revolutionizing European painting and sculpture.

Sources:

1. *Museum of Modern Art (New York, NY); 1936; www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/2748*

Slide 28

In the early 20th Century, artists like Pablo Picasso and Andre Derain were inspired by the bold abstract designs that they discovered in African tribal masks. They collected and used these works of art to influence their own styles of Cubism and Fauvism. In effect, they used African culture to refresh the tired tradition of figure painting in Western Art.

Sources:

1. *Museum of Modern Art (New York, NY); 1936; www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/2748; Inside cover flap of the catalogue*

Slide 29

The primary influence of Cubism was Paul Cezanne's late work, where objects in nature was painted with flat color blocks that left out all details like the examples you see here. Seeing his work, Cubist artists started thinking about this new reality that Cezanne presented, and began to break objects down into squares, triangles, circles and other geometric shapes. But because the approach was to look at objects from multiple viewpoints, squares became cubes- thus the name cubism

Sources:

1. *A Concise History of Modern Painting (World of Art Series); Herbert Read; 1974 Thames and Hudson*
2. *Modern European Art (World of Art Series); Alan Bowness; 1985 Thames and Hudson*
3. *Wikipedia; Cubism*
4. *Paul Cezanne; internet search for images- paintings of 1904 to 1906*

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The Cubist movement was pioneered by Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque, later to be joined by Jean Metzinger, Robert Delauney, Fernand Leger and many others.

The history of Cubism is divided into two phases: Analytical and Synthetic. Analytical Cubism was a short, but highly influential movement occurring between 1910 and 1912, which presents objects from multiple viewpoints to convey a physical and psychological sense of the fluidity of consciousness. Analytical cubists tended toward muted earth-tones and often allowed the composition to move out beyond the boundaries of the canvas.

Sources:

1. *Wikipedia; Cubism*
2. *A Concise History of Modern Painting (World of Art Series); Herbert Read; 1974 Thames and Hudson*
3. *Modern European Art (World of Art Series); Alan Bowness; 1985 Thames and Hudson*
4. *Jean Metzinger; internet search for images- Analytical cubism*
5. *Georges Braque; internet search for images- analytical cubism*
6. *Pablo Picasso: internet search for images- analytical cubism*
7. *Pablo Picasso 1881-1973 (Volume 1); Carsten-peter Warncke &Ingo F. Walther; Benedikt Taschen 1995*
8. *Picasso (Library of Great Painters); Hans L.C. Jaffé; Harry N. Abrams, Inc.*

Slide 31

The Guam Textures inspiration for Pånglao was this land crab who tried to attack my camera in the boonies! In Pånglao, I broke up the image of the land crab into geometric shapes with some organic shapes included in the manner of Jean Metzinger. I also followed his color choices somewhat. My work is very simplified compared to his, but it was really fun to do and I highly recommend you try it!

Slide 32

Synthetic Cubism was developed between 1912 and 1920 and remained a vital movement until Surrealism gained popularity. Compared to Analytical Cubism, Synthetic Cubism was more detail oriented and focused more on texture, color and shapes to build new images. Synthetic Cubism tends toward brighter colors, a flatter surface, and also introduced collage elements as an integral part of the subject matter. Pablo Picasso, Juan Gris, and Georges Braque all produced Synthetic Cubist pieces.

Sources

1. *Wikipedia; Cubism*
2. *A Concise History of Modern Painting (World of Art Series); Herbert Read; 1974 Thames and Hudson*
3. *Modern European Art (World of Art Series); Alan Bowness; 1985 Thames and Hudson*
4. *Georges Braque; internet search for images- synthetic cubism*
5. *Juan Gris; internet search for images- synthetic cubism*
6. *Pablo Picasso: internet search for images- synthetic cubism*
7. *Pablo Picasso 1881-1973 (Volume 1); Carsten-peter Warncke &Ingo F. Walther; Benedikt Taschen 1995*
8. *Picasso (Library of Great Painters); Hans L.C. Jaffé; Harry N. Abrams, Inc*

Slide 33

In keeping with the concept of building new images, I did a line drawing of the photo of Langasat buds you see here. Then I cut it apart into shapes and reconstructed the pieces into a new composition. The collage elements are rubbings from trees and leaves. I also put a real Langasat leaf, that had been chewed on by insects, into the composition. I have to say that I never connected with cubism much before, but after applying these techniques to my own work, I find I really enjoy the playfulness and strength of Cubist work

Slide 34

Surrealism developed in Europe in the aftermath of WWI and was officially established in 1924 when French poet André Breton published the Surrealist Manifesto. The aim of Surrealism is to allow the unconscious the freedom to express itself and is best known for associations with the dream-state, illogical scenes, and creatures created from random objects. Surrealist artists wanted to revolutionize human experience, freeing people from false rationality and restrictive social customs and structures.

Sources

1. *Wikipedia; Surrealism, André Breton*
2. *A Concise History of Modern Painting (World of Art Series); Herbert Read; 1974 Thames and Hudson*
3. *Magritte- Ideas and Images; Harry Torczyner; Harry N. Abrams, Inc. 1977*

Slide 35

Other well-known Surrealists include Leonor Fini, Frida Kahlo, and Méret Oppenheim. Fini's paintings often featured women in positions of power, while Kahlo's paintings often presented herself as a strong figure, despite her painful psychic or physical state. Méret Oppenheim created her best-known piece, "Object", following a conversation she had with Pablo Picasso about a fur bracelet she was wearing. In this piece, Oppenheim sought to liberate the saucer, spoon, and teacup from the original functions as consumer objects, inviting the viewer to dwell in the presentation of a new reality while questioning the functionality of ordinary objects.

Sources

1. *Wikipedia; Surrealism, Leonor Fini*
2. *Wikipedia; Surrealism, Méret Oppenheim*
3. *Women Artists- An Illustrated History 4th Edition; Nancy G. Heller; 2003 Abbeville Press, Ltd.*
4. *Frida Kahlo- The Brush of Anguish; Martha Zamora; Chronicle Books 1990*

Slide 36

Spirit Guide III is influenced by Oppenheim, Kahlo and Fini. Based on a karabao foot print in the mud, my work is a reference to our deep attachment to mother earth, despite how transient our existence may be.

Slide 37

Black Water is a piece that developed as a result of a trance-like dream state that was induced by the meditative practice of deep breathing. I placed it here with Surrealism, but it clearly has Mystical and as you will see Abstract Expressionist elements. Such is art- it often does not easily fit neatly into any one category, which keeps things interesting!

Slide 38

The term Biomorphing Abstraction refers to the use of rounded forms based on those found in nature. Biomorphing abstraction is not so much a movement, as it is a way of presenting forms in art. Joan Miro was a Spanish painter, sculptor, and ceramicist, and generally considered a surrealist artist. His painting Harlequinade is a good example of biomorphing forms in a composition. Wassily Kandinsky, Russian Artist & Theorist, was initially trained in law and economics and

didn't start painting until the age of 30. As an art theorist, Kandinsky determined that it was the artists' mission in life to lead humanity to a spiritual pinnacle. He published a number of books in which he developed a complex theory about how colors and shapes affect humans emotionally. His color theories are still used in art education today. Kandinski is generally credited as the pioneer of abstract art.

Sources

1. *Wikipedia; Biomorphic Abstraction*
2. *A Concise History of Modern Painting (World of Art Series); Herbert Read; 1974 Thames and Hudson*
3. *Wassily Kandinsky 1866-1944 A Revolution in Painting; Hajo Düchting; 1991 Benedikt Taschen*
4. *The Rules of Abstraction with Matthew Collings on YouTube*

Slide 39

Having said all that, let's take a look at the work of Hilma af Klint, a Swedish artist and Mystic, as well as a mathematician and botanist. Klint's interest in abstraction and symbolism began in the 1880's with a study of theosophical and philosophical thinking of the times. She often met with a group of women who called themselves "The Five" and used seances to make contact with the "High Masters", believing that her paintings were visual diagrams designed to help humanity find its way. Pre-dating Kandinsky's work by 30 years, her paintings are now considered among the first representations of western abstract art.

Sources

1. *Wikipedia; Hilma af Klint*
2. *The Rules of Abstraction with Matthew Collings on YouTube*

Slide 40

In *Sandscape*, I wanted to represent shapes made in the sand by receding water in the same free-flowing and organic manner as Kandinsky's compositions. Even though the source photo is monochromatic, I was thinking about Kandinsky's color theories on how color and shape affect human emotion. As I developed my composition, I wanted to express happy and stimulated emotions, which are feelings I often associate with being on the beach.

Slide 41

Collage and Decorative art are also not really movements of the 20th century, but because Henri Matisse is well known as one of the artists defining the revolutionary development of 20th Century art, I wanted his Cut-Outs represented in my journey through abstraction. Toward the end of Matisse's life, a severe illness and confinement to a wheelchair made it difficult for him to create art in traditional ways. For his Cut Outs, Matisse used his father's tailoring shears and some pre-painted sheets of paper to cut shapes that were then used to make large, highly distinctive compositions.

Important to point out here is that the act of cutting out shapes and making designs with them is something women have been doing for ages in quilting. This process was relegated to the world of "craft" by art historians, and therefore not as important as the fine art as created by Matisse. Feminist artist Miriam Schapiro attempted to rectify this under-valuation of women's traditional work by presenting strong feminine images and using fabrics that were typically associated with women. Schapiro, along with Judy Chicago were responsible for establishing the CalArts Feminist Art Program and the ground-breaking installation project "Womanhouse" in the early 1970's.

Sources

1. *Wikipedia; Henri Matisse- cutouts*
2. *Artnet.com- Miriam Schapiro*
3. *The Power of Feminist Art- The American Movement of the 1970's, History and Impact, Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard; Harry N. Abrams. Inc. 1994*
4. *Women and Art- Contested Territory; Judy Chicago and Edward Lucie-Smith; The Ivy Press Limited, 1990*

Slide 42

In my piece *Jewels of the Sea*, I followed the examples of Matisse and Shapiro using fabrics that had some special significance to me. I stuffed the pieces for the squid forms as quilters might do and used beads as decorative elements to create a composition about how soft and hard surfaces can co-mingle in the ocean.

Slide 43

Considered the first of the great post-war art movements with roots in Surrealism, Abstract Expressionism was a response to the psychological impact of genocide and the atom bomb. This movement combined the cerebral elements of abstraction with the emotive and evocative elements of expressionism. Historians break the movement into two types. The first, typified by Jackson Pollock and Willem de Kooning, is gestural, energetic, and often figurative.

Sources

1. *Abstract Expressionism (World of Art Series); David Anfam; 1990 Thames and Hudson*
2. *Wikipedia; Internet search for images- Jackson Pollock*
3. *Wikipedia; Internet search for images- Willem de Kooning*
4. *Movements in Art Since 1945 (World of Art Series); Edward Lucie-Smith; 1984 Thames and Hudson*
5. *Jackson-pollock.org*

Slide 44

By the 1950's the figurative element dissolved into more fluid shapes that are more purely abstract and tranquil, such as the work of Elaine de Kooning and Helen Frankenthaler. Helen Frankenthaler's work is identified with fluid shapes, abstract masses and lyrical gestures, and is considered to be an important contribution to post-war American painting. Artists who influenced her work were Rufino Tamayo, Paul Feely, Hans Hoffman, and Jackson Pollock.

Sources

1. *Abstract Expressionism (World of Art Series); David Anfam; 1990 Thames and Hudson*
2. *Wikipedia; Helen Frankenthaler*
3. *Movements in Art Since 1945 (World of Art Series); Edward Lucie-Smith; 1984 Thames and Hudson*
4. *Women Artists An Illustrated History 4th Edition; Nancy G. Heller; 2003 Abbeville Press Ltd.*

Slide 45

I want to take some time here to talk about time. When people view my work, one of the first questions often asked is "how long did it take to do that?" Although I recognize that we are conditioned to equate value to time spent, this question associated with my artwork is always a bit disturbing. My first impulse is to quip "My whole life!" Though seemingly sarcastic, it's a true statement. I actually did my first watercolor when I was 12 and everything I've done since then is part of my development as an artist. So, to apply an hourly wage value to artwork really is irrelevant. This piece *Reflecting Pool* didn't take long by itself, but I had several disasters that immediately preceded it. Then- add in all the study time, plus my years of experience with the medium and you can see the "Whole life" response is appropriate. Abstract expressionists of the 20th century did their work without plans and without preliminary drawings. Helen Frankenthaler has said that it often took 10 or more tries before she "got a good one". This way of working is not for the faint of heart or for someone with strong desires to control the outcome. I love this piece, largely because it was so difficult, and I would challenge you to try painting in this way yourself.

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Post-Painterly Abstraction is a broad term that encompasses a variety of styles that evolved in reaction to the painterly and gestural approaches of abstract expressionism. This movement was a rejection of the inwardness and mysticism prevalent in abstract expressionism, and instead embraced a brutally factual kind of art that focused solely on the basic elements of form, color, texture, scale and composition.

Frank Stella is a key figure in Modernism. His work focused on minimalism, post-painterly abstraction and field color painting. Other artists in the movement include Kenneth Noland and Ellsworth Kelly. I've also included a work by Bridget Riley for the sake of comparison. You'll note that her painting was done 30 years after the piece by Ellsworth Kelly, but they are very similar. Her work is categorized as Op Art, or art that elicits an optical illusion. This is just one more example of how artists learn from one another.

Sources

1. *Theartstory.org/movement/post-painterly-abstraction*
2. www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/p/post-painterly-abstraction
3. *Wikipedia; Post-Painterly Abstraction*
4. *Movements in art since 1945(World of Art Series); Edward Lucie-Smith; 1984 Thames and Hudson*
5. *A Concise History of Modern Painting (World of Art Series); Herbert Read; 1974 Thames and Hudson*
6. *Wikipedia; Images search- Frank Stella, Ellsworth Kelly, and Kenneth Noland*
7. *Women and Art- Contested Territory; Judy Chicago and Edward Lucie-Smith; The Ivy Press Ltd.*

Slide 47

Of all the work I did for this Guam Textures series, this one was the most difficult. The first challenge was in overcoming my dislike of un-painterly paintings. I LIKE all the brush strokes and complications that happen when paint mixes and blends on a surface. Such is not the case for Post Painterly abstraction. The second challenge was finding a Guam Texture subject that I wanted to paint in a style that eliminates all texture. The third challenge was in the execution. It is not easy at all to paint straight lines and eliminate all texture, including brush strokes, without using other tools. Each shape needed several layers of paint in order to obtain a certain density in the spaces. And lastly, making sure the color composition worked took some thought.

Slide 48

Figuration is also a category that is not a movement per se, but more a way of working. Figuration describes any form of modern art that retains strong references to the real world and in particular the human figure. From 1920 forward, Pablo Picasso and Alberto Giacometti were the great exemplars of figurative art.

Rufino Tamayo, Mexican painter, printmaker, and sculptor, is known for his figurative abstractions with surrealist influences. Instead of the ideological subject matter presented by his peers Diego Rivera, David Siqueiros, and Jose Orozco, Tamayo chose a more intimate focus on tradition and the indigenous groups of his hometown, Oaxaca de Juarez. Historians note that Tamayo is one of the great colorists, favoring a limited palette that through layering, results in rich textural surfaces that glow as though the sun were shining through his work.

Sources

1. *Rufino Tamayo; Octavio Paz / Jaques Lassaigne; 1994 Editorial Patria*
2. *Wikipedia; Rufino del Carmen Arellanes Tamayo*
3. *All-art.org*
4. *Jeancharlot.org Magazine of Art, A National Magazine Relating the Arts to Contemporary Life; Vol. 38; April 1945; No. 4*

Slide 49

While walking my dog at the University of Guam I came across this amazing Daok tree, with complex roots pushing up through the earth, looking very strong, yet willing to sit quietly with all the debris dropped from the tree. And I especially liked the very feminine looking figure that appeared in this root grouping. For this piece, I worked with a bright acrylic wash for an underpainting and then used layers and layers of pastels to achieve a dense yet luminous color palette in the manner of Rufino Tamayo. This piece is one of my favorites of the series!

Slide 50

And now we have reached the end of this presentation with a few samples of artwork from the 1970's forward. The 100 years encompassing artwork from the late 1870's to the 1970's is called Modernism, with all the movements and ways of painting that we have reviewed and then some. From the 1970's forward we witness what historians call Post-Modernism and Post-Postmodernism.

Slide 51

Artists in this era, including myself, continue to perform their craft by defining the "rules of art" that work for them. It is often thought about as the "Anything Goes" era. There are so many artists working that it is impossible to represent them all in this presentation.

Slide 52

For my project though, I looked at the work of Nancy Graves.

Nancy Graves is an American artist, known mostly for her multi-media pieces and large sculptures. She has also worked in painting, drawing, printmaking, and film. Though most known for her life-sized camel sculptures shown during a solo exhibit at the Whitney Museum, her mature work was often based on aerial views of mapping data, the moon, sea floors, and information provided by NASA. Graves has always been willing to try new things and did not allow the fact that the art world was, and remains predominantly male, stop her from doing what she wanted.

Sources

1. *Theartstory.org Biography of Nancy Graves*
2. *Wikipedia; Nancy Graves*
3. *Nancy Graves- Excavations in Print; Thomas Padon; Harry N. Abrams, 1996*

Slide 53

For Alternate Universe, I was looking at the print by Nancy Graves called Vertigo. Her print was influenced by images of space. My work is influenced by the small mounds crabs make in the sandy part of the reef. I thought the comparison was pretty cool, since Nancy Graves piece was about other worlds in a giant outer space, and my piece is about a smaller, but no less significant, world that is made by tiny creatures.

Slide 54

The final 3 slides are additional work I completed for the Guam Textures series. This one, Seaweeds II, is in my opinion abstract expressionist in nature, but more controlled in execution. I spent time looking at the source photo and trying to get a psychic understanding about how those seaweeds feel as the water moves in and out and around. Pushing the seaweeds this way and that. There is some controlled energy there that seemed important to me to express.

Slide 55

For Morning Lights, my intention was to really focus on the light that was bouncing off of the wet sand and also imagining the energy of the water, the pulling and sucking of the tide that would make those strong shapes in the sand. Of all the styles we have looked at in this presentation, which ones would you apply to this piece?

Slide 56

Morning Lights II was inspired by the beautiful colors and shapes found in Guam soil after a rainstorm. While looking at the source photo, I could get a feel of how fast water was rushing down the hill and how it pulled the soil with it. The colors and shapes seemed so soft to me, even after such violence. It was that softness that I wanted to emphasize in this painting, and so I purposely left out the grainy pebbles you can see in the source photo.

Slide 57

In the past half hour we have reviewed several different movements and ways of working for modern art and have seen that what artists really like to do is challenge the currently accepted way of doing things with new ways of thinking. For me, the “rules” for my work change with the specific requirements of the work, but when I’m painting for myself, I find the most satisfaction in abstracted forms found in nature. Guam has inspired me for more than 30 years, and I believe she will continue to do so as time goes on.

Thank you for attending! I’ve enjoyed sharing what I learned and my work with you. I hope you’ve learned something, have a better appreciation for abstraction, and most of all I hope you are inspired!