

Abstract Art Explorations with Zara the Zebra

Learning objective: To understand the core concepts of abstract art, including shape, colour, and form, and to distinguish abstract representation from realistic depiction.

Use these flashcards to test your knowledge of abstract art. Zara the Zebra sees patterns everywhere, so think creatively as you review these terms!

What is Abstract Art?

Abstract art is a style that does not try to represent an accurate depiction of visual reality, instead using shapes, colours, and forms to achieve its effect.

Define 'Composition' in art.

Composition is the arrangement or placement of visual elements, such as shapes and lines, within an artwork to create a balanced or interesting whole.

What are Geometric shapes?

Geometric shapes are precise, mathematical shapes such as squares, triangles, and circles that often have sharp edges and symmetrical lines.

What are Organic shapes?

Organic shapes are irregular, free-flowing shapes that resemble things found in nature, such as leaves, clouds, or puddles.

Define 'Primary Colours'.

The primary colours are red, yellow, and blue; these cannot be created by mixing other colours together.

What is 'Texture' in an abstract painting?

Texture refers to the perceived quality of a surface, which can be created by the way paint is applied (thick or thin) or by using different materials to make the artwork look rough or smooth.

What is 'Contrast' in art?

Contrast is the arrangement of opposite elements, such as light versus dark colours or rough versus smooth textures, to create visual interest or excitement.

Explain 'Non-objective' art.

Non-objective art is a type of abstract art that has no recognisable subject matter from the real world; it is purely about the shapes, lines, and colours themselves.

What does 'Expressionism' focus on?

Expressionism is a style where the artist seeks to depict emotional experience rather than physical reality, often using bold colours and distorted forms.

How might an artist use 'Balance' in an abstract piece?

An artist uses balance to distribute the visual weight of colours and shapes so that one side of the artwork does not feel 'heavier' or more dominant than the other.

Justify why an artist might choose to use abstract art instead of a realistic portrait.

An artist might choose abstraction to express a specific feeling, mood, or idea that cannot be captured by drawing a realistic image, allowing the viewer to interpret the meaning in their own unique way.

Compare and contrast Geometric and Organic shapes.

Geometric shapes are man-made and predictable, whereas organic shapes are fluid and natural. Both can be used together in one composition to create contrast.