



**Project:** MuseumTxtMssgng      **Age Groups:** Late Elementary - High School  
**Goal:** Sharpen powers of observation and written description.  
**Timing:** 1 session

### Project Outline

This is a fun project that asks students to both look carefully at an image and distill what they see into a contemporary medium of communication. In an imaginary scenario, students are asked to describe a painting they encounter in a museum to a friend using text messaging. (Museums do not generally allow photographing of artwork.) After exchanging their text message descriptions, students are asked to identify the correct painting from the description they have been handed.

### Materials

Quarter-page color reproductions of paintings from **Art in the Abstract**, cut on dotted lines and folded in half  
 Enough copies of the text message template for students in class  
 Thumbnail-sized color images of paintings from **Art in the Abstract** - one for each student

### Procedure

1. Hand out the blank text message sheets.
2. The teacher sets the scene:  
*"You are an advertising executive visiting the Illinois State Museum and come upon a painting that you realize would create the perfect background for an upcoming campaign. You realize you can't take a photograph, even with your cell phone, since museums don't allow photography of their art objects. This painting is so fabulous you feel as though you must send a description to your boss. You get out your cell phone and begin to text message."*
3. *"Cell phones allow only 300 characters and spaces in any one text message, and you have an important appointment coming up so you have time to send only one message. Looking carefully at the image, describe it to your boss in a way that she will recognize it when she visits later the same day for a special reception the company is holding at the museum."*
4. Before you hand out the single painting images, tell the students they are not to show it to anyone. Give each student a single painting image.
5. Students have five minutes to put together the text message. Once they have completed their message, they will take it, along with their picture, up to the teacher.
6. *Some hints:* Look at the image carefully. Consider describing the facts of what you see. Is there a dominant color? Is there a secondary color? How is line used? What sort of quality does the line have – is it jagged, smooth, lazy, energetic? Are there shapes that remind you of something else? Avoid making value judgements (It hs a prtty colr of grn) in favor of more descriptive phrases (Grn looks lk moss).
7. Once the students have completed the sheets and returned them to the teacher, he/she will distribute the text messages to other students along with the thumbnail images of the paintings. Students will read the description and try to guess which painting is being described. Once they have made their decision, students fill in the number at the bottom of the text message page.
8. *Follow up discussion:* What did the successful descriptions have in common? Was it easy to understand the abbreviated words that were used? How does shortening words make you aware of spelling and word choice?

### Extra Credit

Have students visit the **Art in the Abstract** website. Ask them to find their painting and read the accompanying text. Ask them to write a paragraph indicating how or if their opinion of the painting was changed after reading more about it and the artist.



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**Project:** Text Messaging - Illinois State Board of Education Goals and Standards

### Illinois State Board of Education Goals and Standards

Students completing this project will address elements of the following I.S.B.E. Goals and Standards for the **FINE ARTS**:

#### Late Elementary

25.A.2d *Identify and describe the elements of 2 and 3 dimensional space, figure ground, value and form, the principles of rhythm, size, proportion and composition, and the expressive qualities of symbol and story.*

#### Middle/Junior High School

25.A.3d *Identify and describe the elements of value, perspective and color schemes; the principles of contrast, emphasis and unity; and the expressive qualities of thematic development and sequence.*

25.A.3e *Analyze how the elements and principles can be organized to convey meaning through a variety of media and technology.*

#### Early High School

25.A.4 *Analyze and evaluate the effective use of elements, principles and expressive qualities in a composition/performance in dance, drama, music and visual arts.*

#### Late High School

25.A.5 *Analyze and evaluate student and professional works for how aesthetic qualities are used to convey intent, expressive ideas and/or meaning*

Students will be encouraged by the limited time frame to analyze, evaluate, and respond to the essential elements of visual expression used by the artists in conveying their intent, expressive ideas and/or meaning.

In addition, students who complete this project will address elements of the following **English Language** Goals and Standards:

#### All Levels

3B *Compose well-organized and coherent writing for specific purposes and audiences.*

3C *Communicate ideas in writing to accomplish a variety of purposes.*

5B *Analyze and evaluate information acquired from various sources.*

5C *Apply acquired information, concepts, and ideas to communicate in a variety of format.*





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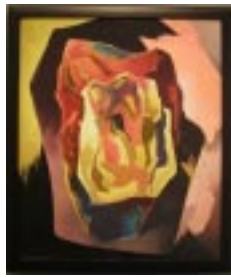
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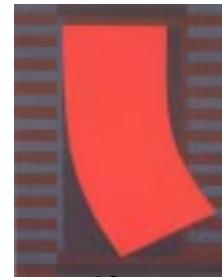
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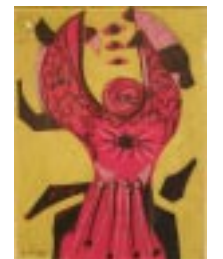
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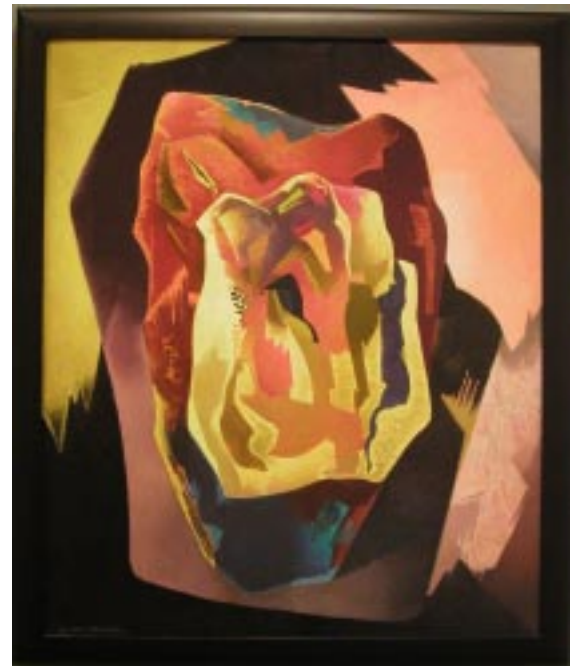
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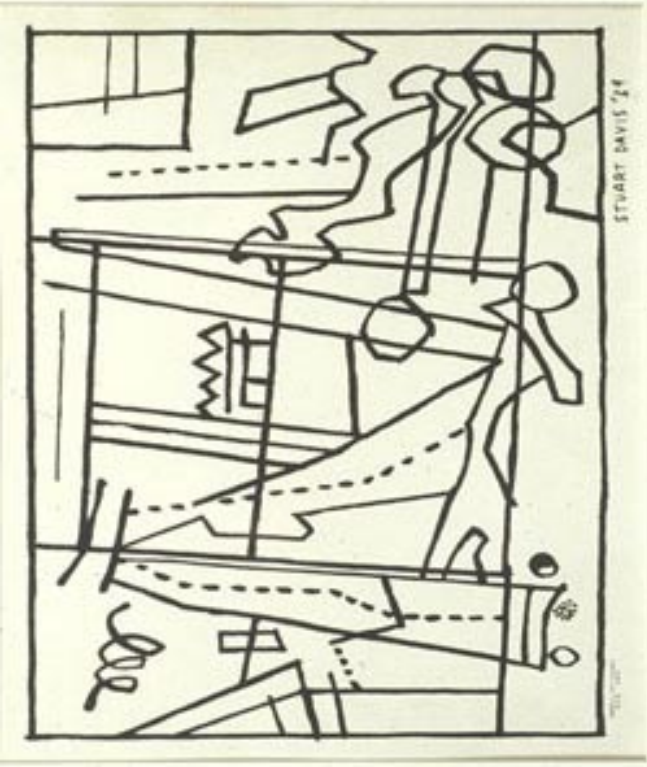


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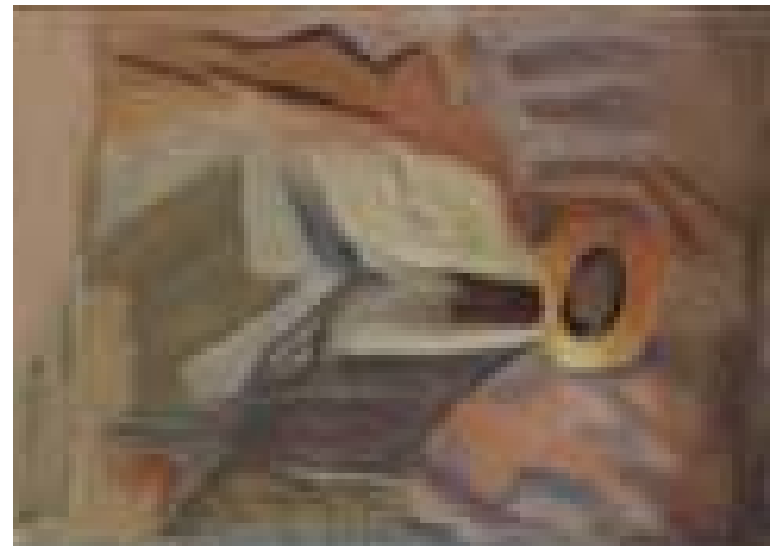
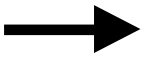
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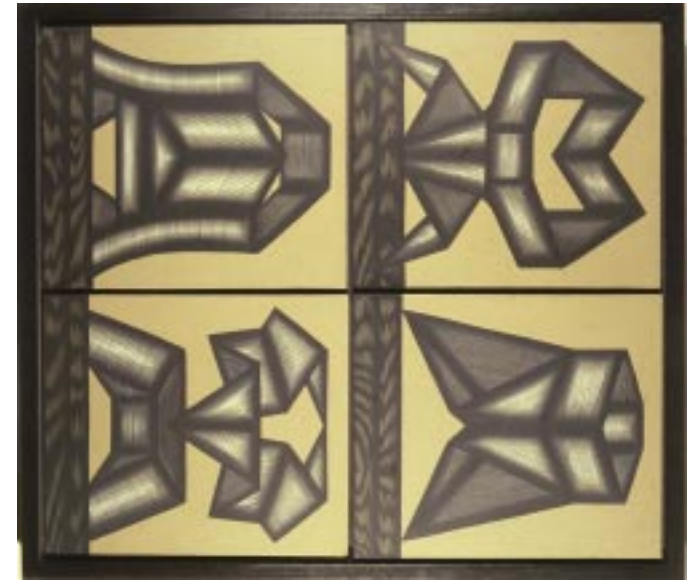


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