

## Illinois State Museum – MuseumLink Art Heartfelt/Handmade Activities: Theorem Painting

**Purpose:** To help the students understand the style and techniques of self-taught artists such as those who made theorem paintings.

### Illinois State Museum Web site used:

<http://www.museum.state.il.us/vrmuseum/muslink/art/htmls/hh.html>

(Corbeile de Fruitire)

**Objective:** After viewing the theorem painting section of Folk Art, the students will create a theorem painting by following specified steps and discuss how painting techniques and styles have changed in still-life painting for students.



**Grade Level:** K-6, adapting the choice of materials and techniques

**Time Required:** one to two 50-minute periods

**Materials:** painting paper and pencil

a set of tempera or acrylic paints for

stamping (or stencil paints if affordable)

brushes (stencil or other stiff)

either purchased sponge shapes, Fomcore®

shapes, pre-cut stencils (depending on

age)

(Alternatively, a collection of pictures of fruit, foods, flowers, objects, could be cut out and arranged and glued onto a drawing paper, using acrylic paint to modify the motifs and add details and background.)

**Motivation:** Discuss with students the characteristics of theorem painting as they look at examples of theorem still lifes. Brainstorm to compile a list of fruits, flowers, and types of containers to use for a still life. The display of fruit, flowers, or food symbolizes abundance. What symbolizes abundance today? Students may want to choose objects or natural forms from modern life for their subject matter. Demonstrate the stencil technique (or stamping technique). Students can work from the model of another theorem painting or print, or from the instructions and example.

### Procedure:

- Choose the still life you want to make (a print, online printout, drawing of an original).
- Play with the arrangement of the fruit or other forms.
- Choose colors for each motif.
  - Using your original sketch as a guide, place each stencil or paint-loaded stamp in turn onto its location on your painting paper.
- Paint in the stencil in dry-brush technique (or press the stamp firmly down).

- Let each painted area dry before touching it with the next stencil. Speed up the process with a fan, hair dryer, or the blowing technique.
- After practicing on scratch paper, try shading the same side of some of the motifs with a darker shade of the same color to show the volume or roundness of the object. (Dip the stamp into two shades of paint, one from each edge)

**Publication and Closure:** Make a paper mat or frame around your finished drawing. Hang it up with others as an exhibit with labels telling your title, your name, the technique, and the date.

Make a label to place on the wall next to the work. The label should describe to your viewers the steps of making stenciled or stamped theorem paintings.

**Assessment:** student paintings should reflect the placement of stencils or stamps in position, rather than a drawing and painting technique. The written label should reflect a correct sequence of steps and tools needed to make a theorem painting.

**Illinois State Board of Education Goals and Standards addressed:**

**Visual Art:** (see grade levels for specific standards)

**26.A:** Understand the processes, traditional tools used in the arts.

**26.B:** Apply skills and knowledge necessary to create art.

**27.A:** Understand the role of the arts in civilizations, past and present.