

## LESSON PLAN: Abstract Art

By Amy Wunsch and Cynthia Wood, July 2008

### Key Idea

Artists do not always depict persons and objects like we see them. Rather than imitating their subject's natural appearance, some artists purposefully change it. They stretch or bend forms, break up shapes, and give objects unlikely textures or colors. Artists make these transformations in an effort to communicate something they cannot convey through life-like treatment. Works of art that reframe or redefine nature for expressive effect are called abstract.



### Objectives

1. The students will learn about the definition of **abstraction** and the two types of abstract art work they will be seeing on the tour (abstract art with no recognizable images and designs or patterns are emphasized, and abstract art with a recognizable subject matter that has been distorted or exaggerated) in a discussion led by the instructor.
2. Students will brainstorm ideas for the abstract paper sculpture they will create during studio time. Students will record on their review sheet three ideas, concepts or subject matter as possible themes.
3. Students will go on an instructor-led tour of the museum and campus to view and discuss art works that exemplify the two types of abstraction previously discussed in the classroom.
4. Students will be asked to choose one of the three ideas they recorded on their take home sheet as the theme for creating a three-dimensional paper sculpture, utilizing a variety of paper media and at least three paper forming techniques following a demonstration (accordion fold, cutting fringe, rolling, spiraling, layering, cross slits, base tabs, etc). At this time, each student will decide what type of abstraction their piece will investigate: no recognizable images OR a recognizable image that has been distorted. Emphasis will be placed on repeated shapes, forms, lines, color, etc. and the use of personal symbols to convey meaning about the chosen theme.

### Vocabulary

Abstract: non-representational art, not based on external appearances; abstract may describe simplified or modified natural forms, non-objective and decorative artworks are based on geometric patterns or motifs

### Materials

Various papers (2-tone poster board)  
Glue sticks, Double stick tape  
Scissors

Paper hole punchers  
Markers, glitter gel pens  
Straws, other mixed media

### Evaluation:

Each student will present his/her work before the class following these questions:

- a. What subject matter did you choose to abstract?
- b. What shapes, forms, colors, etc. did you use to give meaning to your art work?
- c. What paper forming techniques did you use in your sculpture?
- d. What technical challenges did you have using a 2-D material to make a sculpture?

### Tour Artwork Images:



**Elizabeth Murray** (American, b. 1940, d. 2007)

*Landing*, 1999

Oil on four canvases

Collection Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, 1999.06

Gift of JCCC Gallery Associates



**Louise Bourgeois** (French American, b. 1911- d.2010)

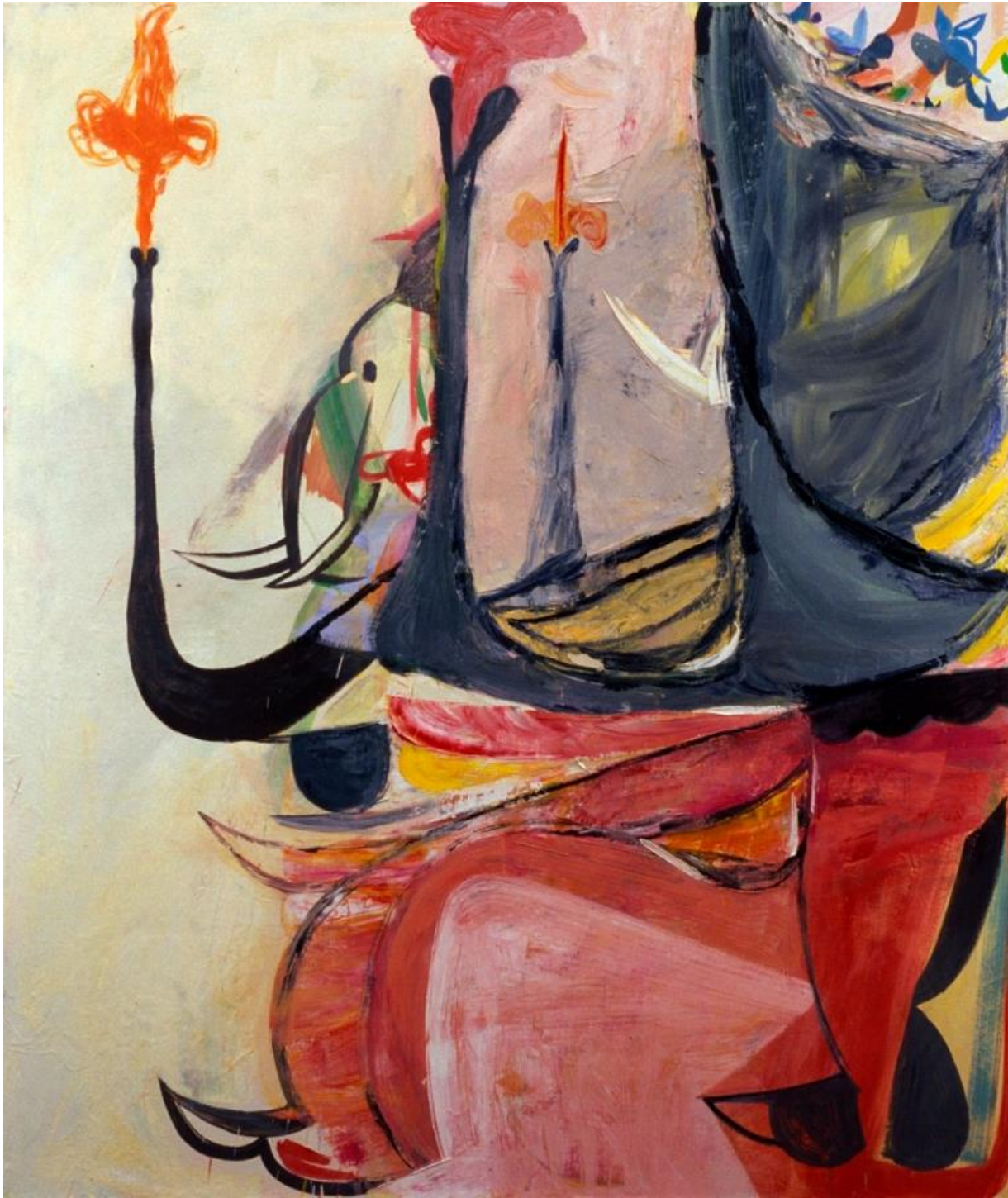
*Woman with Packages*, 1949 (cast 1996)

Bronze, no. 6/6

Collection Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, 1996.02

Gift of Marti and Tony Oppenheimer and the Jules and Doris Stein Foundation





**Amy Sillman** (American, b. 1966)

*Elephant*, 2005

Oil on canvas

Collection Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, 2005.30

Gift of Marti and Tony Oppenheimer and the Oppenheimer Brothers Foundation



**Amy Myers** (American, b. 1965)

*Chroma Zoma Bubble Chamber*, 2006

Graphite, colored pencil, pastel on paper

Collection Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, 2006.43

Acquired with funds provided by JCCC and Marti and Tony Oppenheimer and the Oppenheimer Brothers Foundation





**Marc Handelman** (American, b. 1975)

*Miasma (2)*, 2006

Oil on canvas

Collection Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, 2006.66

Gift of Marti and Tony Oppenheimer and the Oppenheimer Brothers Foundation





**Angel Otero** (American, b. 1981)

*Let Water Run*, 2010

Oil skins on canvas

Collection Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, 2011.01

Gift of Marti and Tony Oppenheimer and the Oppenheimer Brothers Foundation





**Andrzej Zielinski** (American, b. 1976)  
*Yellow Industrial Paper Shredder*, 2009-2010  
Acrylic on panel  
Collection Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, 2010.47