



## LESSON PLAN: Symbols in Art

By Polly Blair, December 2015

Learn about symbols and patterns in art and explore printmaking processes.

**Key Concepts:** What is a pattern? Why would an artist use patterns in their work? What are some symbols you know? (Dollar sign, golden arches, etc.)



**Prep:** Instructor and assistants will cut paper to fit in frames - paper will need to be slightly bigger than frame opening. Six sheets of tin foil will be cut to fit the paper size and taped down on the back tables (one on the teacher demo table). Paint/ink and brayers will be waiting on tables when students arrive.

**Objectives:** Until the whole class has arrived, students will use markers to decorate paper frames.

Instructor will discuss patterns and symbols:

What is your special flower and birthstone? Look at the images of flowers and stones by birth month.

Colors have symbolic meaning, too. Look at the colors of the rainbow, and the meanings people associate with each one. Practice writing your name using dots from the Braille alphabet. At the end of class, write a message using Braille dots, and see if one of your friends can read the message.

Instructor will discuss printmaking and talk about monoprinting. Students will print and make stamps before the museum tour so that their prints can start drying during the tour. Instructor will demonstrate how students will create a monoprinted background for their artwork:

1. Students will pick two colors (acrylic paint or printmaking ink). Teacher will squeeze them onto the foil.
2. Teacher/assistants will assist students as they roll the color on the foil with brayers.
3. Students will use fingers or cotton swabs to create a design in the paint.
4. Students will press paper on to paint and pull their print off.

While half the students are printing, the other table will be creating their stamps:

5. Using foam stickers, students will cut the foam into a shape and stick it to a foam "T." Two stamps will be assembled. (Each stamp may have multiple stickers.)
6. After the museum tour, using the stamps they made, students will make a design on their print with acrylic paint or ink. Students will dip foam stamps in a thin layer of paint/ink and print on their monoprint.
7. Students will frame their prints, attaching printed paper to the frame with tape.

Activity will conclude fifteen minutes prior to pick-up to allow discussion/ critique time.

### Vocabulary:

Pattern, repetition  
prints/printmaking

monoprints  
stamps

symmetry  
symbols

### Materials:

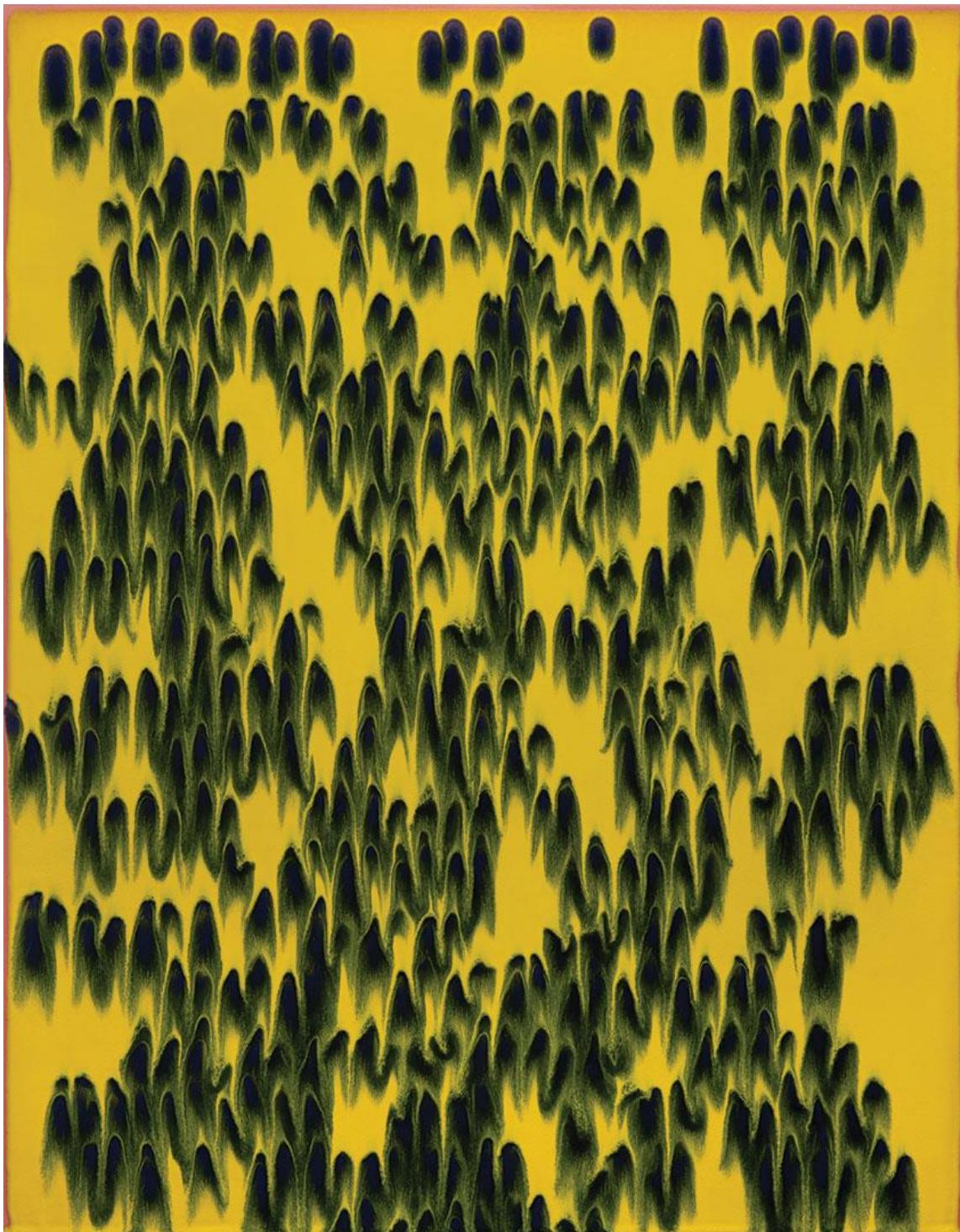
white, pre-cut frames (or tag board)

Sharpies  
acrylic paint/printmaking ink  
brayers  
Scissors  
tin foil

painter's tape  
white printmaking paper  
foam sticker sheets  
hot glue gun/hot glue sticks  
foam core (precut into "T" shapes)



Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art



**Bobby Silverman** (American, b. 1956)

*Metric Figure #2*, 2007

Porcelain and glaze

Collection Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, 2009.33

Gift of Marti and Tony Oppenheimer



Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art



**Kevin Pourier** (American Indian, Oglala/Lakota, b. 1958)

*Swallowtail Horn Cup*, 2007

Buffalo horn, gold mother of pearl and lapis

Collection Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, 2007.59



Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art



**Thomas "Red Owl" Haukaas** (American Indian, Lakota, b. 1950)

*Economic Conundrum*, 2010

Brain tanned Elk hide, antique and contemporary glass beads, Nymo thread, cotton cloth and Hawk bells

Collection Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, 2010.10

Gift of Barton P. and Mary D. Cohen Charitable Trust