

The Conceptual Art Game

A coloring game inspired by the ideas of postmodern artist Sol LeWitt.

Solomon (Sol) LeWitt (1928-2007), one of the key pioneers of conceptual art, noted that, "Each person draws a line differently and each person understands words differently."

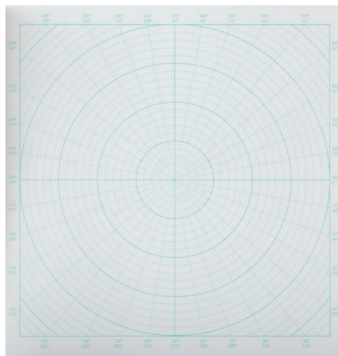
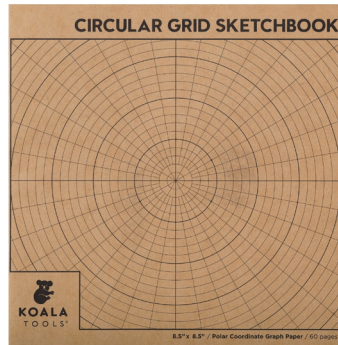
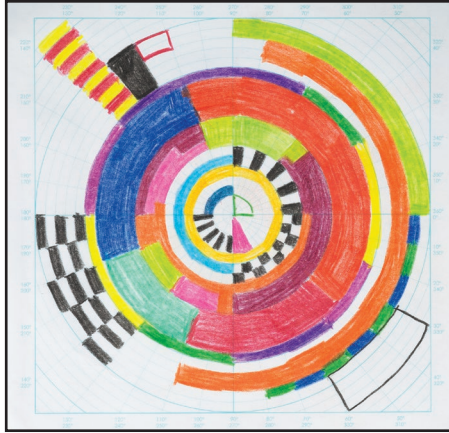
When he was working for architect I.M. Pei, LeWitt noted that an architect doesn't build his own design, yet he is still considered an artist. A composer requires musicians to make his creation a reality. He deduced that art happens before it becomes something viewable, when it is conceived in the mind of the artist.

He said, "When an artist uses a conceptual form of art, it means that all of the planning and decisions are made beforehand and the execution is a perfunctory affair. The idea becomes a machine that makes the art."

Over the course of his career, LeWitt produced approximately 1,350 designs known as "Wall Drawings" to be completed at specific sites. The unusual thing is that he rarely painted one himself. He provided the concept, usually in the form of written instruction for a geometric piece that included a balance of mathematics, architecture, and design, then collaborated with other artists and non-artists to actually produce the work. He purposefully left elements of the instructions open to interpretation by the creators and no two are exactly the same.

This collaborative method of producing art was controversial, but not entirely new. Since the days of Leonardo DaVinci, there have been studios and schools with a master designer and a team of apprentices to do the actual production work. What was perhaps most ground-breaking in the modern art world was that LeWitt was continually taking the focus off himself, sharing the experience of creating art and allowing others the spotlight. Even after his death, his wall drawings are still being executed.

To help students understand the principle behind the work of Sol LeWitt and other conceptual artists, a simple coloring game allows the student to receive a set of simple instructions and execute them according to their own interpretations. Much in the



Materials (required)

Graph or Grid paper, recommend choice of:

[Koala Sketchbook](#), Circular Grid, 8.5" x 8.5", 30 sheets (13848-1085); share two across class

[Canson Foundation Graph Pad](#), 8" x 8" grid, 8.5" x 11" pad, 40 sheets, (10636-2885); share two across class

Choice of color materials, recommend:

[Blick Studio Artists' Colored Pencils](#), set of 12 (22063-0129); share one set between two students

[Faber-Castell DuoTip Washable Markers](#), set of 12 (22314-0129); share one set between two students

[Sargent Art Dual Tip Markers](#), set of 24 (00876-1024); share one set between two students

Materials (optional):

[AC Cardstock Paper Packs](#), 60 sheets, assorted color selections, 12" x 12", 8 lb (12764-)

[Blick Glue Sticks](#), assorted sizes (23895-)

way LeWitt would have passed his own ideas and concepts to his team, each artist will receive the same words and materials, but each artwork will be different.

GRADES 3-12 Note: Instructions and materials are based upon a class size of 24 students. Adjust as needed.

Preparation

1. Provide each student with a sheet of graph paper or a grid design from a Koala sketchbook (see materials list) for description or click the link to visit the product page and view options.
2. Provide colored pencils and/or markers for students to share. Some of the spaces are small and some are large, so providing fine tip, broad tip, or a duo tip marker works best.

Process

1. Preface the game by stating:
 - 1) There are no winners and no losers.
 - 2) There is no "wrong" way to interpret given instructions.
 - 3) Students are encouraged to think "outside the box." Try to think of a unique way to complete an instruction that probably won't be the same way everyone else is doing it.
 - 4) Allow some comments and sharing to take place during game time. Students will naturally want to share their feelings about some of the steps!
2. Provide a list of instructions. Use the list to the right or adjust for the age level and ability of the class. Instructions may be copied and given to each student individually or read one step at a time to the class. Giving out copies of the instructions allows students to work at their own pace, but may seem like more of a test than a game. Reading each instruction step one at a time will require allowing varying time in between steps for students to complete each step.
3. When finished, have students hang their work together to view the artwork altogether. Some ideas for discussion (corresponding standard in parenthesis):
 - Did this activity make you feel more or less creative? Why or why not? (#VA:Cr1.1)
 - Was it difficult to do this activity in a group, or did it make it more enjoyable to hear what other people were thinking and feeling? (#VA:Cr1.1)
 - Do you feel like you followed rules or broke them? (#VA:Cr1.2)
 - Did you look around and get inspired by someone else? (#VA:Cr2.1)
 - Would you choose different art supplies if you were going to do this activity again? (#VA:Cr2.2)
 - Which one of these stands out to you most? Why? (#VA:Re9.1)
4. Repeat the game, only this time have students submit directions. Discuss the differences between being given someone else's concept to interpret and coming up with concepts by themselves to share with their peers.

Options

- Using a glue stick, attach the sheets to cardstock to give them strength.

Instructions for making artwork on a Circular Grid:

- 1) Color one ring gold.
- 2) Color one half ring blue.
- 3) Color one half ring orange.
- 4) Make a black and white checkerboard on one section.
- 5) Make a striped ring.
- 6) Make a fat ring.
- 7) Make a skinny ring.
- 8) Make zebra stripes in one section.
- 9) Color a quarter ring with a dark color.
- 10) Color a quarter ring with a light color.
- 11) Color a pink piece that looks like a slice of pizza.
- 12) Make a section that is blue and green striped.
- 13) Make a section that is red and yellow striped.
- 14) Outline a section with black.
- 15) Outline a section with red.
- 16) Outline a section with green.
- 17) Make another checkerboard section.
- 18) Make another zebra striped section.

Note: if using graph paper, substitute "square" for the word "ring."

National Core Arts Standards - Visual Arts

Creating

Anchor Standard 1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

Anchor Standard 2: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

Responding

Anchor Standard 9.1: Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.

