

"Dancing" Paper Vase

Inspired by Henri Matisse



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Papercut shapes float between two rings, creating visual movement and energetic spaces.

The papercutting method that dominated Henri Matisse's artwork in the late season of his life may seem simple, but it was incredibly important.

Earlier in his career, he explored painting with his most treasured muses: line and color. When he was no longer able to paint due to health issues, he combined the two by creating lines with scissors, moving through carefully selected colors of gouache-painted papers.

These images were an evolution from painting, drawing, collage, and design, melding them all into a fresh approach to making art. Matisse made precise decisions about color, quantity, size, and juxtaposition that only a seasoned artist could make.

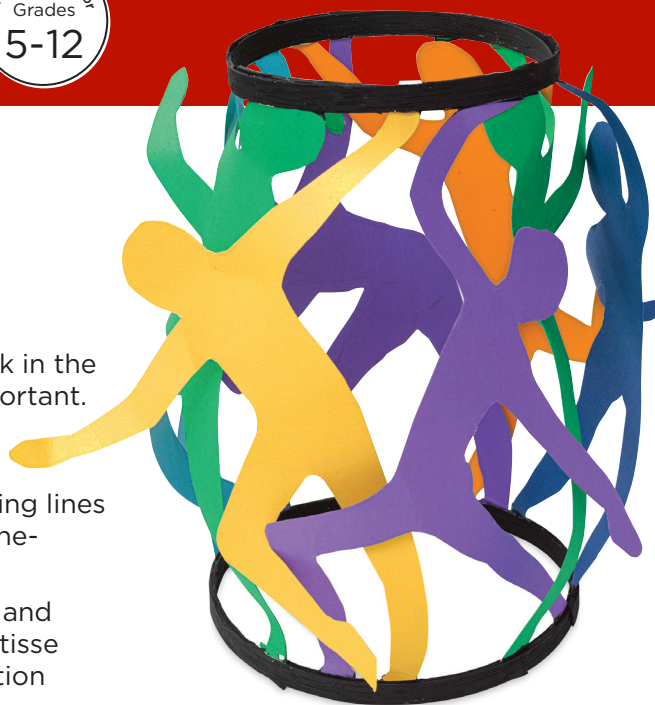
Pinned to walls rather than confined to a canvas, the shapes were movable and unconfined.

This three-dimensional form takes inspiration from Matisse's methods and concepts. Shapes are drawn and cut using freely moving linework on heavy, vibrantly colored paper. Tethered between two lightweight reed rings, the shapes overlap one another, expressing visual motion between areas of positive paper and negative space. The paper bows, creating the shape of a vase that can be used functionally with faux plants or over a battery-operated light.

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

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Materials (required)

Colorful Cardstock. Recommend:

[Blick 140-lb Premium Cardstock](#), 19.5" x 27.5", assorted colors (11408-); plan on one sheet per student and share colors

[Pacon Card Stock](#), 8.5" x 11", pkg of 100, assorted color choices (11319-); share one pkg across class

[Paper Accents Cardstock Super Value Pack](#), 8.5" x 11", pkg of 200 assorted sheets (11329-1851) share one across class

[P.L. Butte Flat Reed](#), 1/4" x 370-ft bundle (83313-1014); share one across class

[Aleene's Original Tacky Glue](#), 4 oz (23884-1004); share one between two students

[Creativity Street Wooden Spring Clothespins](#), natural, 3-3/8" long, pkg of 50 (62144-1338); share two pkgs across class

[Maped Ultimate Scissors](#), 5" Long, ambidextrous (58470-1005); one per student

[Blick Soap Eraser](#), 1" x 1", box of 24 (21519-1024); one per student

[Blick Studio Drawing Pencils](#), 6H (22220-2060); one per student

Optional Materials

[Blickrylic Student Acrylic Paint](#), pints, assorted colors (00711-)

[Blick Scholastic Golden Taklon One Stroke](#), 1/4" short handle (05567-4014)



Preparation

1. Cut reed into smaller pieces: 8" to 16" lengths. Pieces do not need to be of equal length. Each student will need 2 pieces.
2. Cut card stock into 8.5" x 11" pieces. Plan on 5-6 pieces per student

Process

1. Form rings from the reed. Overlap the ends by at least 1/2", placing glue on each end. Join and hold in place with a clip or clothespin while glue dries. Each vase will need two rings, one for the top and one for the bottom. Rings do not need to be the same size.
2. If desired, paint ring on all surfaces using acrylic colors.
3. While rings dry, draw shapes on card stock. **It is important that all shapes be the same height**, so orient the card stock in the same direction for each and fill the entire sheet from top to bottom. Draw lightly with a pencil, so lines can easily be erased. Determine a theme for the piece, for example:

Organic Shapes with freely curving outlines, resembling shapes found in nature.

Geometric Shapes with angles, straight lines, etc.

Figurative Shapes with human or animal silhouettes in various poses.

4. Cut shapes with scissors and erase pencil lines.
5. Select one ring to use as the base. Glue one shape so that the bottom is aligned with the bottom of the ring, positioned on the inside of the ring (see close-up, at right). Hold in place with tape or paper clips while the glue sets.
6. Glue a second shape on the opposite side of the base ring in the same manner. Position remaining shapes, spacing them between the first two around the ring.
7. Hold the first shape upright and glue the top of it to the inside of the second ring. Repeat with the shape on the opposite side.
8. Glue remaining shapes to the top ring, paying attention to the overall form of the vase. Shapes will likely need to be positioned in front and behind one another so that parts overlap. Portions of shapes can be bent, folded or curled inside or outside the piece to add interest and movement and to help define the overall form.



Step 1: Create rings of different sizes from flat basket reed. Glue ends together.



Step 2: Cut shapes of same height from card stock. Keep movement and motion in mind when creating shapes.



Step 3: Glue shapes to the first ring, then the second. Use clips to hold in place while glue is drying.

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Options

- Placing a battery-operated light source inside the vase or spotlighting it from above will create a fascinating circle of shadows around the piece.

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.

Presenting

Anchor Standard 5: Select, analyze and interpret artistic work for presentation.



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