

# SONIA DELAUNAY'S CIRCLES

by Robert Graff

The geometric abstractions of Sonia Delaunay (Ukrainian; 1885–1979) are a perfect avenue through which young artists can express themselves.

Delaunay's work can also serve to reinforce fifth-graders' math terminology, such as angles (right, acute, obtuse), arc, semi-circles, diagonals, radius, etc., in a fun and non-threatening manner. In addition, color theory can be introduced or reinforced by using a large color wheel, identifying primary, secondary and complementary colors.

Sonia Delaunay was born in Ukraine, studied art in Germany and eventually established herself as a world-renowned artist in Paris, France. Her artistic influences were van Gogh, Gauguin, Rousseau, Matisse and Derain, all of whom have been introduced prior to this project. Adding a geographical element to the lesson, we locate these artists' countries of origin on a world map, and identify the oceans, seas and continents that lie between the U.S. and those countries.

Reproductions of some of Sonia Delaunay's work are examined by the class, and we review art vocabulary, such as overlapping, perspective, depth, and the difference between two- and three-dimensional works. We are ready to begin.

Each student is given a 9" x 12" piece of 90-lb. drawing paper and several circular shapes he or she may trace. Overlapping is encouraged, as having one shape in front or behind another gives the work a sense of depth.

Lastly, students are to draw some of their circular shapes going off the edge of the paper, in order to suggest a third dimension. Rulers are also provided

so students can break up their shapes and patterns with all types of angles, creating even more interest in their compositions.

A pre-cut oaktag or cardboard ring is then given to each student, on which they draw similar shapes and patterns. These are then incorporated into the work, overlapping an existing design and partially going off the page. Each student glues the ring onto the finished project, which adds three-dimensionality to the composition. ■

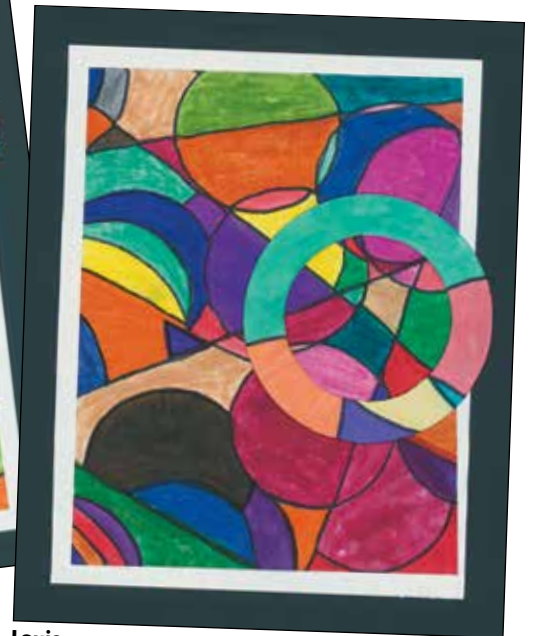
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Daniela



Jillian



Louie

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

### Upper-elementary students will ...

- use their imagination in an abstract manner.
- create a balanced composition using circular shapes, patterns, designs and color.
- contrast warm colors with cool colors to create interest in their designs.
- include lines from their math curriculum (diagonal, horizontal and vertical) in their compositions.

## NATIONAL ART STANDARDS

- Understanding and applying media, techniques and processes.
- Using knowledge of structures and functions.
- Making connections between visual arts and other disciplines.

## MATERIALS

- 9" x 12" 90-lb. white drawing paper
- Circular objects to trace (cardboard rolls, cups, plastic lids, etc.)
- Rulers
- Cardboard/oaktag rings (6-inch diameter)
- Glue
- Black permanent markers
- Water-based color markers

## VOCABULARY

- Abstract
- Diagonal, horizontal, vertical
- Overlapping
- Perspective
- Primary, secondary, complementary colors
- Two- and three-dimensional art