Music: Music, Pink and Blue, No. 1 (Grade 6–8)

Music, Pink and Blue, No. 1, 1918, Georgia O'Keeffe

Find online at: https://tinyurl.com/y8ghb2lz

LOOKING QUESTIONS
Take a minute to look at the artwork and take in everything that you see. Then think about, write down, or discuss these questions with a friend.

- What’s going on in this artwork? What do you see that makes you say that? What more can you find?
- Does this remind you of anything that you have felt or experienced before? What does it remind you of?
- If this artwork was a song, what song would it be? Why?

INFORMATION
Georgia O’Keeffe was one of the first American artists to create artwork that was abstract; or more about shape, color, and emotion than depicting something realistic. The abstract artwork that Georgia O’Keeffe made was a visual record of her inner emotions and feelings. O’Keeffe created this painting, Music, Pink and Blue, No. 1, after a time when she was experimenting in her artwork. She wanted to exert her own voice and create something that was different from what she had been taught to make in school. She made small drawings with charcoal on paper to document “the things in my head that are not like anyone has taught me.” These drawings had their own unique style and showed spiraling lines, cloud-like structures, and flower-like images that bloomed in curves and swirls, and sharp lines that created tension. Instead of realistically showing the world around her, they represented her experience of the world around her. What are some ways that you express your emotions and experience of life?

Similar to these drawings, Music, Pink and Blue, No. 1, shows O’Keeffe’s experience of music. In 1918, O’Keeffe moved to New York City. She thrived on the energy of the city and was motivated to create her first large oil painting. O’Keeffe wanted to make a painting that was based on music and explored how music could be represented in a visual form. Notice how she painted the colors pink and blue in different places in the painting, just like a note repeating in a song. Notice how she tried to express the feeling of vibration. When you look at it, does it make a sound?

LEARN MORE
- See O’Keeffe’s abstract charcoal drawings here: https://tinyurl.com/y9wbanfp
- Hear more in this Virtual Art Talk with SAM curator Dr. Theresa Papanikolas here: https://tinyurl.com/y9bj2nhc

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Learn how contemporary artists bring music into their practice in these Art 21 video clips here: https://art21.org/playlist/the-music-lovers/

VISUALIZE
Choose a song that makes you feel an emotion—whether happy, sad, calm, or energized. Play the song and close your eyes. What lines, shapes, and images appear? What colors do you see? What more can you imagine?

ART ACTIVITY
Put on your favorite tune, grab a pencil, and draw music like Georgia O’Keeffe!

Materials
Pencil and paper, (optional: colored pencils, oil pastels, or acrylic or watercolor paints).

Steps
1. Listen to your song a second time. This time, take a deep breath and let your hand move around the paper to draw lines and shapes that connect to the music. You can draw quickly or slowly, whatever feels natural to you. Try not to think too much, just draw and capture the images from your mind.

2. When the song is finished, you can add to or change the drawing that you have started. You might choose to press your pencil down to shade some areas darker and leave some areas light. You might choose to erase some sections and add additional shapes and lines. You might use other materials to add color or texture to your drawing.

3. When you have finished, display your drawing on the floor, a table, or pinned onto the wall or refrigerator. See what it looks like up close and far away. Ask people around you what looking at your drawing makes them think about or feel. Does it bring any music to their mind?

   ○ You can continue doing this for other songs! Notice how different your drawings come out depending on the music that you are listening to. Share your drawings on social media, with links to the music that inspired them, so others can enjoy both the music and visual experience.