STEAM LESSON PLAN

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Grade Level Middle school (adaptable for lower and higher grades)

THEME Place
INSPIRED BY Frank Stella, Nogaro

PROJECT TITLE: IT IS WHAT IT IS

DRIVING QUESTION
Is a title necessary to communicate an artwork's meaning?

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES: Put these on the board or have students write them in a notebook/journal.
- I will create drawings and relief sculpture.
- I will respond to how Frank Stella titles his works.
- I will present my work to my peers.
- I will connect my artworks' titles to current topics.

CONTENT STANDARDS
NEBRASKA CONTENT AREA STANDARDS
IOWA CORE STANDARDS

THE FOUR C’S FOR STEAM CAREER READINESS SKILLS
- Critical Thinking: Students will consider how an artwork gets a title and craft them for their art.
- Creativity: Students will produce works inspired by Frank Stella.
- Collaboration: Students will work together to create an artwork.
- Communication: Students will use their works’ titles to express something deeper.

VOCABULARY: Abstract Expressionism, composition, curvilinear, Flexicurve, form, geometric, lexicon, maquette, Minimalism, movement (both art period and motion), organic, relief sculpture, scale, series, shape, title

RESOURCES: Stella Teaching Poster; Stella Pinterest board; Nelson Teacher Resource Center
- Video – “Frank Stella on shaping the canvas,” San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, YouTube
- Video Lesson – “Frank Stella, Part 1,” artful squid, YouTube
- Video Lesson – “Frank Stella, Part 2,” artful squid, YouTube
- Video – “How It’s Made - House Paint,” How It’s Made, YouTube
  ➢ Preview all videos before sharing with students.
- Lesson Plan – Activities Shape the Composition, Whitney Museum of American Art
- Resource & Lesson Plan - Frank Stella’s Sinjerli Variation IV, Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art

Image is not available online due to copyright restrictions.
Contact Joslyn at (402) 342-3300 to borrow this teaching poster.

Frank Stella (American b. 1936), Nogaro, 1982, mixed media on aluminum, 115x120x24 in., Joslyn Art Museum, Gift of the Phillip Schrager Collection of Contemporary Art from Terri, Harley and Beth Schrager, 2014.2
SUGGESTED MATERIALS: cardboard, acrylic paint, brushes, glue (tacky or hot), metal foil, rulers, scissors, box cutters (depending on age level or precut cardboard shapes), crayons, drawing paper, colored pencils, markers, acrylic paint, brushes, house paint

PROCEDURE
Overview: Students will be challenged to create artworks inspired by Frank Stella’s body of work from the 1960s to mid-1980s. They will delve into the writing process to give their works an evocative title and collaborate with their classmates on a sculpture.

Engage: Show students a detail of Stella’s Nogaro. Ask them what they think it is. Zoom out to show more of the artwork, and ask students what they see. Continue doing this until you’ve revealed the entire work.

Together, brainstorm some ideas about the inspiration for this artwork. If racetrack is not guessed, then reveal that it is named Nogaro and part of the Circuit series where Stella created works like this based on cities with automobile racetracks. Share images of the racetrack in Nogaro, France.

Ask students...

- What shapes do you see? Explain the difference between shape (2-D) and form (3-D).
- How many colors do you see?
- Can you list them all?
- How big do you think this work is? Help them understand its massiveness.
- Why do you think the artist titled it after a city with a racetrack?
- What similarities does this work have with a racetrack?
- Can you see movement in the shapes? In the colors? Why or why not?

Deliverables: Tell students they will...

- Create an original “minimalist” drawing and then a “maximalist” work.
- Develop titles with deep meaning for their works and be prepared to explain them.
- Collaborate on a class project.

Art Talk: Stella was often called the “Father of Minimalism.” Explain the movement and study some of his works, like those in the Protractor series. Discuss his quote: All I want anyone to get out of my paintings, and all I ever get out of them, is the fact that you can see the whole idea without any confusion...What you see is what you see. How does his transition from this type of work in the 1960s to his more sculptural work he called “maximalist” painting of the 1970s–1980s.
Ask students...

- What is Minimalism?
- In addition to Stella, who were some of the artists who were part of this movement?
- Why do you think the artists
- What do you think he means by “What you see is what you see?”
- Why do you think the artist transitioned from his “minimalist” work to “maximalist” painting?
- Why do you think Stella created drawings and scale maquettes of the works in the Circuit series before creating full-size version?

Description of Activity:

- Have students select a work from when Stella was working as a minimalist. Then using colored pencils or markers and drawing paper, see if they can re-create that painting. Share results with their classmates. Ask them if it was easier or more difficult than they expected.
  - Next have them come up with their own minimalist design inspired by Nogaro. Return to images of Stella’s minimalist work for inspiration, but they cannot copy one for this artwork. Perhaps they use the color palette of Nogaro or they simplify a shape from it and create a pattern.
  - See lessons in the Resource above for examples and inspiration.
  - Again, them if it was easier or more difficult than they expected.
- Continuing on with production, have students select an activity they like to do like play music or a sport. Without using any symbols that represent that activity, how would they create a sculptural relief to give a sense of their activity? Determine when you’ll talk to them about how artists use problem-solving skills when creating their works.
  - Advise students to think of it like the board game Taboo where certain symbols (and definitely words) are not allowed.
  - Look at Nogaro again, and ask what stands out as the one thing that relates most to a racetrack to them. Apply that to their activity—for example, if it is basketball, perhaps it's the color or texture of the ball.
  - Start this project in two-dimensions by sketching out ideas. Remind students that Stella planned out these works. What materials do they need? How big will each piece of the sculpture be? (perhaps give them some size and material parameters).
  - Discuss scale, and demonstrate how they can take their smaller drawings to make them larger using scale.
  - Provide them with a variety of art-making materials setting aside plenty of time to produce this work.
  - Have students set aside a piece or two that will reflect their sculpture, but will not be part of the final project. Save for later.

*Optional idea: rather than an activity, students could select a song and think about how it would be conveyed in a “maximalist” style. What are the colors and shapes of the song?

- Ask students when is the best time to name an artwork. Before they start? As they are sketching out ideas? Working on the final version? Or once the work is complete?
Talk about the various phases in which Stella worked, and then review the names of the works he used in each series.

Ask students...

- Are there any patterns to the names that emerge?
- What do the names tell us about the artworks?
- Do the names reflect what you see?
- Do the names influence your understanding or interpretation of about the work?
- Are there some controversial names?
- How do some connect to history?
- Why do you think he chooses evocative titles?
- Is it necessary for the title and artwork to function as a cohesive unit?
- Why do you think some artists leave their works untitled or title them “Untitled?” Is that an easy way to title them?

Writing activity. Have students look at works by Stella from any of his series before they were born, and have them retitle the artwork based on topics from today's world.

- They should explain why they selected that title for the artwork in a writing format appropriate for their grade level.
- Now it is time to turn to their original “minimalist” and “maximalist” works and give them titles.
- They should determine and describe how they came up with those titles—and for older students, explain that it needs to be evocative while relating to the activity that inspired the relief sculpture.
- Does the “minimalist” drawing connect to the “maximalist” work?
- Consider working in pairs or small groups for peer critiques to help students develop titles for their works.

Stella gave his Black Paintings evocative titles, but it is time to look at the materials he used for that body of work—black enamel house paint.

- Start from the beginning to learn how house paint is created.
- What processes occur to make it; how pigments are used.
- Find out why paint should not be put down drains.

Time to go back to those pieces from the sculpture that were set aside. Have students work together to use those pieces and create a group sculpture.

- First, the sculpture will need a common thread—perhaps that could be black enamel house paint. Have students communicate with each other about how to make their unique pieces go together.
- Like a backwards Jenga game, everyone brings a their piece to develop the sculpture.
o They will need to work together to determine how these pieces will fit together. Will they need to manipulate any parts to attach and stabilize the sculpture?

o Remind (or reveal to) students that they are using their problem-solving, communication, and collaboration skills to produce this artwork.

Closing: Set up the artworks and invite another class or families to view the works and discuss.

Assessment: Four corners. Give general statements such as "I really like Frank Stella's work," or "I think Minimalism art is easy to create." Have students go to the corner you indicated for possible choices like the following: I strongly agree; I somewhat agree; I strongly disagree; or I'm not sure.

**STEAM LESSON PLAN** Joslyn Art Museum uses the Nebraska Department of Education’s STEM Approach as a guide, but we took the liberty of adding the “A” to emphasize the ARTS.

NDE's STEM Approach reflects an integrated and interdisciplinary philosophy to teaching and learning that emphasizes collaborative school-based, work-based, family-based, and community-based experiences as a context for helping students to master key competencies within science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

Teaching and learning resources, experiences, and example activities included within NDE's STEM Approach serve as a standards-based framework for supporting the engagement of students in hands-on, authentic, and contextual learning experiences that provide students with the opportunity to learn STEM content while promoting essential career readiness skills, including communication, creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking.

NDE’s STEM Approach strives for compatibility with all content-areas, all grade levels, and all career clusters, not just those traditionally defined as STEM.
GO BIG OR GO HOME

Inspired by Frank Stella’s Nogaro
Created by Kristi Schmidt-Herrera, Art Teacher
Grade Level 3rd-8th grades (adaptable for high school)

OVERVIEW
We will analyze the art of Frank Stella and his Circuit series, which includes featured artwork, Nogaro. We will choose materials to recreate an energetic and exciting sculptural relief out of textured cardboard, metal, Sharpies, acrylic paint, and gloss medium.

ANTICIPATORY SET
Stella loved the racetrack and mimicked one in this piece. He considered this series to be ‘maximilist’ the counter to his ‘minimalist’ work due to its form, shape, texture, and layered sculptural relief qualities.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES:
• Students will learn about different ways to make art, in this case: mixed media sculptural relief
• Students will learn about different art movements at the time Stella was working: Abstract Expressionism, Minimalism, and “maximilism” (not an actual movement, but a term coined by the artist).
• Students will have to build up the plane and create movement with cardboard and metal.

RESOURCES:
• Frank Stella Teaching Poster*
• DVD - Painters Painting: The New York Art Scene, 1940–1970*
*available through the Nelson Teacher Resource Center at Joslyn Art Museum

VOCABULARY:
• Minimalism
• “maximalism”
• Abstract Expressionism
• Flexicurve
• bold
• energetic
• expressive
• flat plane
• mixed media
• sculptural relief
• maquettes

MATERIALS:
• cardboard sheets
• cardboard strips
• acrylic paint
• gloss medium
• Tacky glue
• roll of flexible metal
• scissors or box cutters
• colored sharpies
• Flexicurve
• drawing paper

Example of project from March 2018
Thursdays for Teachers
• drawing pencils

LESSON OUTLINE

1. Introduce Frank Stella’s *Nogaro* and talk about what inspired him to create this artwork.
2. Introduce the art materials and do a demonstration of how to make a mixed media sculptural relief.
3. Paint a few strips of cardboard with acrylic paint before the class comes in so you can Tacky glue the ends of those onto a sheet of Bristol board, making the cardboard strips 3-D by curving and pushing them out.
   a. For older students who may use box cutters, you may have them draw out their curves and cut the shapes from cardboard sheets. Encourage them not to waste the leftovers noting how Stella used those in his sculpture, too.
4. You can also use Sharpie on cardboard or Sharpie on flexible metal that you can cut into strips and shapes then glue the ends down with Tacky glue.
5. Also demonstrate painting onto the strips, making sure they are bold, colorful, and energetic.
6. Overlap the strips, always curving the middle and gluing ends to a cardboard base.
7. Before students create their work, have them draw their design and explain that Stella’s approach to his “maximalist” works was methodical and planned out using drawings and maquettes.

EXTENSIONS

• Art History (refer to the Frank Stella teaching poster)
• History

CONTENT STANDARDS

NEBRASKA CONTENT AREA STANDARDS
FA 5.2.1 Students will use the creative process to make works of art exploring subjects and themes with a variety of materials

FA 5.2.1.d Identify and use elements of art and principles of design to brainstorm visual possibilities (e.g., create symmetrical and asymmetrical balance using line and shape).

FA 5.2.4 Students will examine contemporary, historical, and cultural context in art and life.

FA 8.2.3.a Identify and describe themes and styles in works of art.

IOWA CORE STANDARDS