



LAKEWOOD

CENTER FOR THE ARTS

IN LAKE OSWEGO, OREGON ~ THE CITY OF ARTS

A Week of Color

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Created by Angelica Stambuk and Selena Jones

EXPRESSING YOUR EMOTIONS THROUGH ART

Introduction

It is easier for all of us to understand and even manage our feelings much better if we have a way to express them. Have you ever felt so happy that you had to call a friend and tell them about it? Have you ever been sad or frustrated and felt much better after writing about it in your journal?

Talking about your emotions is the most common way of expressing them, and it certainly helps make your positive feelings (like happiness, peace, confidence) more real, and your negative feelings (like sadness, anger, fear) more manageable.

There are many other ways to express your feelings, like writing, making music, dancing and physical activity. Art gives you a form of expression that you can use in a variety of ways and can take with you anywhere.

A simple way of expressing your emotions through art is by using different colors. The color you pick to represent a particular feeling is unique to you, as it will vary from person to person, and even from day to day for the same individual. So, what is your “happy” color today? What color or colors would you use to represent the way you are feeling right now?

Youth Outreach Program Workshop

A Week of Color

Day 1: The Color of Shapes.

- Choose a piece of paper. Any kind will work.
- Choose a coloring tool that includes a variety of colors. Any kind will work, and we recommend colored pencils, markers, water colors, tempera paint, crayons, or oil pastels.
- Choose your favorite color from your coloring tools. You can even use multiple kinds of tools if you'd like! I will use watercolors, oil pastels, and colored pencils.
- On the piece of paper, draw outlines (contours) of three circles anywhere on the page.
- Close your eyes and think about how you're feeling today. Take a deep breath in and let it out slowly. What scenes are you imagining in your mind? As you think, notice some of the colors in the scene.

- Open your eyes. Look at the colors included in your coloring tools. Which colors match the way you are feeling? Does one color describe your emotions, or multiple colors?
- Choose the color(s) that match how you feel. Color each circle with those colors.
- After coloring your circles, draw three rectangles anywhere on your paper.
- Close your eyes and think about tomorrow. Take a deep breath in and let it out slowly. How would you like to feel tomorrow? What would make you feel good tomorrow?
- Open your eyes. Look at all the colors included in your coloring tools. Which colors match how you would like to feel tomorrow? Choose those colors and color each rectangle with those colors.
- Look at your drawing. Do the circles and rectangles share any of the same colors? Are they very similar or different? Do they feel like they belong together? Take a deep breath while looking at your drawing, and as you exhale slowly, think about how you feel as you look at your drawing. What colors come to mind? Choose those colors and color the rest of the paper with those colors.

Day 2: Contours and Hands

- Choose a piece of paper. Any kind, at least 6 inches in width and height.
- Choose a coloring tool that includes a variety of colors. Any kind will work, and we recommend colored pencils, markers, water colors, or tempera paint.
- On your paper, place your hand palm down and flat.
- Close your eyes. Take a deep breath in and let it out slowly. Think about your mood today and how you feel. As you think, imagine the colors of those feelings. Open your eyes and looking at your coloring tools, and choose one color that feels closest to your mood.
- Using that color, trace your entire hand on the paper. This will create a contour (outline) of your hand.
- At the first knuckle of each finger, draw a line, separating the palm from each finger (including your thumb.)
- Choose a finger. Take a deep breath and let it out slowly. As you breathe out, think about how you felt yesterday. Do any specific moments stand out in your mind? Look at your coloring tools and choose colors that reflect your feelings about yesterday. Color that first finger in with those colors.
- Choose a second finger. Take a deep breath and let it out slowly. As you breathe out, think about how you want to feel tomorrow. What would help you reach those feelings tomorrow? Look at your coloring tools and choose colors that reflect those feelings you want. Color that second finger with those colors.
- Choose a third finger. Take a deep breath and let it out slowly. As you breathe out, think about a friend of yours. How do you feel when you think about that friend? Do you miss them? What do you like to do together? Look at your coloring tools and choose colors that reflect those feelings, and color that third finger with those colors.
- Now we will color remaining fingers. Take a deep breath and let it out slowly. As you breathe out, think about a place you really love. Why do you love it? What is it like to be there? How does it make your body feel when you think about it? Look at your coloring tools and choose colors that reflect that place. Color remaining fingers with those colors.
- Now for your palm! Take a deep breath and let it out slowly. As you breathe out, think about who you are. What do you love in life? What do you think are qualities that really

describe who you are deep down? Look at your coloring tools, and choose colors that represent those feelings about yourself. Color your palm with those colors.

- Once your hand is complete, it's time to think about its environment. Close your eyes. Take a deep breath and let it out slowly. As you breathe out, think about the activities you really enjoy. What makes you like those activities? Open your eyes and look at your coloring tools and choose colors that represent those feelings. Color the environment around your hand contour with those colors.

Day 3: Objects from Home

- Choose a piece of paper. Any kind, at least 6 inches in width and height.
- Choose a coloring tool that includes a variety of colors. Any kind will work, and we recommend colored pencils, markers, water colors, or tempera paint.
- Look around your living space, inside and outside. What objects do you see? Look for smaller objects, the size of your open hand or smaller. With the permission of their owner, choose 5 of those small objects and bring them back to your artmaking space.
- Place the first object on your paper. It can be anywhere on the paper, even going off the edge of the paper.
- What is your favorite color? Choose that color from your coloring tools, and with that color, trace around the object anywhere the object touches the paper.
- Repeat this process for each object. It's ok if objects overlap—place them anywhere you want on your page.
- Once every object has been traced, look at the shapes on your paper. Do any shapes overlap, creating new shapes? Count all the shapes you now see on your paper.
- Take a deep breath and let it out slowly. As you breathe out, think about how you are feeling today. What are the first three feelings that come to mind? Picture those feelings in your mind. What colors are those feelings? Look at your paper and pick a shape into which those feelings could fit. Look at your coloring tools and choose those colors. Color that shape with those colors.
- Take a deep breath and let it out slowly. As you breathe out, think about yesterday. What feelings do you feel when you think about yesterday? Try and picture the colors of those feelings as you think of them. Look at your paper and choose a shape in which those feelings can sit. Color that shape with the colors of those feelings.
- Take a deep breath and let it out slowly. As you breathe out, think about tomorrow. Now what feelings do you feel? How does tomorrow feel like it could be different than today or yesterday? Picture the color of those feelings in your mind. Look at your paper. What shape would best suit those feelings? Choose a shape and fill it with the colors of those feelings.
- Count how many shapes remain on your paper. Close your eyes and think about things you have done or ways you have acted that make you happy or proud of yourself. What colors do you see when you think of these things? Open your eyes, and choose your favorite color from your coloring tools. Within each shape, lightly write a word or sentence describing what makes you happy or proud of yourself.
- After writing in each shape, choose colors that relate to each thing you wrote. Color each shape with the colors that best relate to the words written within them.
- By now every shape on your page should be colored. Once they are all colored, look at your paper. How does it make you feel? What thoughts come to mind as you look at it?

Choose colors that relate to those feelings, and fill any uncolored areas with those colors.

- You may now return the objects you used, or if possible, ask if you can keep them in your art space and use them again tomorrow.

Day 4: Continuous Line Drawing

- Choose a piece of paper. Any kind, at least 6 inches in width and height.
- Choose a coloring tool that includes a variety of colors. Any kind will work, and we recommend colored pencils, markers, water colors, or tempera paint.
- Do you still have the 5 objects you used yesterday? If not, or if you'd like to choose different objects, start by looking around your living space, inside and out. What objects do you see? Look for smaller objects, the size of your open hand or smaller. With the permission of their owner, choose 5 of those small objects and bring them back to your artmaking space.
- Sit in front of your paper. Directly behind your paper, arrange those 5 objects. They can be sitting separately or be touching or sitting on one another—arrange them however you choose, as long as you can see each object from where you are sitting.
- Look at your still life (the five objects you arranged.) Take a deep breath and let it out slowly. As you breathe out, think about how you feel seeing all of those objects together. What do they have in common? Think about how they make you feel, and a color that relates to that feeling.
- Choose that color from your coloring tools, and put the tip of that color to the paper. For this entire drawing, do not lift your coloring tool from the paper as you draw. This exercise is known as a Continuous Line Drawing. When you're ready, begin drawing all the objects in the arrangement you see. Only when you are completely done drawing every object can you stop and lift that tool from the paper.
- After you've drawn all the objects, look at your paper. Wow! Is it what you expected to see? Is it like anything you've seen before? Count any shapes you see. Do they look like any of the objects you have in front of you?
- Find 5 shapes in your drawing. Choose one of those shapes, and then choose one of the objects in front of you. Pick up that object and hold it in your hand. What color is that object? How does the object feel? Is it smooth or soft or hard, cold or warm, heavy or light? As you hold this object, think of someone. What is it about this object that reminds you of that person? How do you feel when you think about that person? Choose colors from your coloring tools that relate to those feelings, and color the shape you chose for that object with those colors.
- Repeat this process for each of the four other objects, but think of a new person for each object.
- Once you have colored 5 shapes, look at your paper. Are there any shapes left? If so, close your eyes and take a deep breath, letting it out slowly. As you breathe out, think about how you're feeling today. What color best describes that feeling? Open your eyes, and in all the remaining shapes, color them with that color.
- Are there any uncolored areas left on your paper? If so, close your eyes and take a deep breath, letting it out slowly. As you breathe out, think about a place that brought you a feeling of calm and comfort. Someplace that you would feel comfortable napping and relaxing. What colors do you picture when you imagine that place? Choose those colors, and use them to color any uncolored areas left on the page.

- You may now return those objects.

Day 5: Music and Color

- Choose a piece of paper. Any kind, at least 6 inches in width and height.
- Choose a coloring tool that includes a variety of colors. Any kind will work, and we recommend colored pencils, markers, water colors, or tempera paint.
- Do you like music? Do you have a favorite song? Play that song out as you sit in front of your paper, and close your eyes while you listen. If you can't play the original song, try singing or humming it. As you hear it or sing it, think about how it makes you feel to hear that song. Does it make your body feel good? Does it make you feel more energized, relaxed, excited? Once you have listened or sung/hummed the song at least once, open your eyes.
- While still thinking of that song, look around your living space, inside and out, for new objects that remind you of that song. What objects do you see? What shapes or textures or oldness or newness might remind you of your song? Look for smaller objects, the size of your open hand or smaller. With the permission of whoever owns those objects, choose 3 of those small objects and bring them back to your artmaking space.
- Sit in front of your paper. Directly behind your paper, arrange those 3 objects. They can be sitting separately or be touching or sitting on one another—arrange them however you choose, as long as you can see each object from where you are sitting.
- Look at the objects you chose and their arrangement. Why do these three objects remind you of your song? How does it feel to see all these objects together? Take a deep breath, letting it out slowly. As you breathe out, think about those objects and your song and how they make you feel. What is the main color you see when you think of all of them? Choose that color from your coloring tools.
- Place your coloring tool to the paper in front of you. For this entire drawing, you will draw for the duration of the song you chose. Do not lift your coloring tool from the paper, and do not look at the paper at all as you draw. This exercise is known as a Continuous Line Drawing. When you're ready, start your song (or start singing/humming it) and begin drawing all the objects in the arrangement you see. Once your song ends, stop drawing and look at your paper.
 - As you draw and listen to the song, think about the speed at which you are drawing. You can change the speed and pressure you use to draw. Does the song change how quickly or slowly you draw? Does it make you want to change how hard or soft you are pressing your tool to the paper?
- Look at your drawing. Wow! How does it make you feel? Have you ever seen a drawing like that before? How did the music change your drawing experience?
- Find 3 shapes in your drawing. Choose one of those shapes, and then choose one of the objects in front of you. Pick up that object and hold it in your hand. What color is that object? How does the object feel? Is it smooth or soft or hard, cold or warm, heavy or light? As you hold this object, think of a memory you love. What is it about this object that reminds you of that memory? How do you feel when you think about that memory? Choose colors that relate to that feeling, and color the shape you chose for that object with those colors.
- Repeat this process for the other two objects.
- Once you have colored 3 shapes, look at your paper. Are there any shapes left? If so, close your eyes and take a deep breath, letting it out slowly. As you breathe out, think

about how you're feeling today. What color best describes how you feel right now? Open your eyes, and in all the remaining shapes, color them with that color.

- Are there any uncolored areas left on your paper? If so, close your eyes and take a deep breath, letting it out slowly. As you breathe out, think about a place where you feel most free or that makes you feel most free. Someplace that you would feel comfortable doing all the things you love to do. What colors do you picture when you imagine that place? Choose those colors, and with those colors, color any uncolored areas left on the page.
- You may now return those 3 objects.
- On the back of your artwork, write the name of the song of which you had been thinking.

Conclusion

Now that your art projects are finished, how do you feel when you look at them? Remember that each piece is a representation of the way you were feeling when you started creating them. Did your feelings change as you were working on each one? Did you add more colors to the projects you started with? How did your emotions change by expressing them?

The pieces that you create during these projects can help you communicate your feelings. You may choose to keep them for yourself or share them with your family and friends. Art is a great way of opening a conversation.

During this time when it is hard to see people in person, your art may be a wonderful way of communicating some of your positive feelings. You could create postcards to mail to your grandparents or friends that you miss seeing. Or place it on a window to give a message of gratitude to the people that are working to keep everything going for the rest of us.

And the best thing is that once you learn to use art as a form of expression and communication you will find many other art forms and infinite ways to use your creativity!