

PAUL KLEE

Lesson For Ages 10 - Adult



Step 1 - Introducing the Paul Klee Slideshow Guide

BEGIN READING HERE

MOTIVATION

Have you ever had to make a difficult choice -- like deciding between who is your best friend or if you should change schools? Today's artist had to make a very important decision. He had to choose between art and music as his job. He was an excellent musician. He started playing when he was only seven years old and was performing with an orchestra by age eleven. Can you guess what instrument he played? Listen carefully to some music by his favorite composer, Mozart.

ASSEMBLY AUDIO
(MOZART'S CASSATION ALLEGRO)

Click Audio to play music

Can you tell what instrument we heard? **(VIOLIN)** Yes, he was a very good violin player. His name is Paul Klee, and he was surrounded by music as a child. His father was a music teacher, and his mother was a singer. Klee loved music, but he also enjoyed art as a child. His grandmother gave him a gift of a box of colored chalk. She would read him fairy tales and have him draw pictures of the stories with chalk. He decided he loved art more and became an artist, but music was always an important part of his life.

Click Start Lesson To Begin

DEVELOPMENT

1. EYE OF BEETHOVEN NOTEBOOK

Paul Klee was a very good student in school. On this math homework page, he drew this funny looking man and, above, another famous music composer, Beethoven. Do you think his teacher liked seeing these drawings? Can you recognize what signs are right below Beethoven's face? **(MUSICAL NOTES)** Yes, they are musical notes.

When learning how to play an instrument, you learn to read music just like you learn to read words in a book. These four musical notes written by Beethoven are very famous. You will hear them in Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. Listen for "da, da, da, DAH" at the beginning and repeated a few times. I will signal with my hand each time those notes are played. Have you heard this music before?

Click Next To Change Slide

ASSEMBLY AUDIO

(PLAY OPENING OF BEETHOVEN'S FIFTH SYMPHONY AND SIGNAL WHEN FOUR NOTES ARE PLAYED.)

[Click Audio to play music](#)

Have you heard this music before? **(YES)**

As a young man, Paul Klee was required to serve in the German military. He was given a desk job at an air force base, which had a flying school, but in his free time, he painted.

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2. BIRDS SWOOPING DOWN AND ARROWS

What was Klee thinking of when he painted this? **(AIRPLANES AND/OR BIRDS FLYING)**
Klee witnessed several plane crashes while pilots were learning to land their planes at the airport. Instead of showing realistic planes in tragic accidents, he painted birds and arrows swooping down from the sky. It was his way of showing MOVEMENT, and he used them in many of his paintings, as you will see today.

In this work, Klee experimented with a new painting technique. He was always trying new materials and methods to create his paintings. He covered the back of a sheet of paper with black oil paint and then placed a drawing on top and a blank sheet of paper underneath. With a pointed tool, he retraced the outlines of the drawing that he wanted to transfer onto the sheet of paper. The transferred drawing has soft, blurred lines, and through the pressure of his hand, we see blots and traces of black oil paint. Can you point out things in his painting? Next, he added color and more details.

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3. PHOTO OF ARTIST IN STUDIO

Paul Klee was very busy as a painter, often working on more than one canvas at a time. He completed nearly 8,000 paintings in his life! He taught art at a number of art schools in Europe and was friends with many other famous artists. Notice the four paintings on the easels behind him. Can you guess which of these paintings I'm going to show next?

[Click Next To Change Slide](#)

4. SENECIO, HEAD OF A MAN

Did you guess this one? Klee loved circus clowns and painted them often. Does the face look realistic, like a real clown? **(NO)** Klee painted in his own special way. He used color, shape and line to make the clown's face look different. What do we call art that doesn't look like the real thing? **(ABSTRACT)** Yes, Klee's artwork is ABSTRACT.

Do you notice that his eyebrows don't match? Klee painted the dark eyebrow on the right like an arrow pointing our eyes in a circle around the face. **(INDICATE CLOCKWISE AROUND THE FACE)** Klee makes our eyes travel as we look at the painting.

Klee married Lily, a piano teacher. They would invite friends over in the evening and entertain them with their musical performances. She would play the piano while he accompanied her on the violin. They had a son named Felix.

Klee's wife worked outside of the house as a piano teacher while he stayed at home painting and taking care of Felix. While the baby was napping, Klee would paint in the kitchen of their small home and also do all the cleaning and cooking. Can you guess one of his favorite dishes to cook?

Click Next To Change Slide

5. AROUND THE FISH

Did you guess fish? Klee liked to fish in his spare time and would cook the fish he caught. Klee titled this *Around the Fish*, because he wants our eyes to travel in a circle around the fish on the blue plate. Can you guess where he wanted our eyes to start traveling after looking at the fish? **(AT THE ARROW)** He even added an exclamation point for emphasis. Moving counter clockwise as the arrow tells us to, can you recognize some of the things around the fish? **(TAKE SEVERAL ANSWERS)** Klee painted from his imagination, so we might not be able to recognize everything he painted.

Klee was able to travel with some other artists to North Africa to countries like Tunisia and Egypt. He was fascinated with the bright desert light and colors.

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6. HAMMAMET WITH MOSQUE

Can you tell what art MEDIUM he used to paint this desert town? **(WATERCOLOR)** Do you know what is special about the tallest building in the town? It's the mosque, which is the Muslim place of worship. Traditionally, it is the tallest building in the town. The leaders climb to the top of the tower several times a day to call the people to prayer.

Did Klee use more warm colors or cool colors? **(WARM)** Why? **(DESERT CLIMATE OF NORTH AFRICA)** When we look at a painting our eyes usually notice warm colors first. Klee did something very clever to make our eyes travel all around the painting. After finishing the painting, he cut off a few inches from the bottom of the canvas. Can you see where he reglued that piece he cut off? **(AT THE TOP)** Yes, he added the warm color section to the top of the canvas to make our eye follow the warm colors to the cool color sky.

Now let's travel to a magical forest where Klee used his cutting technique again.

[Click Next To Change Slide](#)

7. LANDSCAPE WITH YELLOW BIRDS

What did Klee want you to notice first? **(YELLOW BIRDS)** Yes, he painted them in a bright color to get your attention. Notice that most of the lines and shapes in this painting are curved.

This time when Klee cut his canvas, he put pieces back together in a topsy-turvy way. Originally, the red tree was in the middle. Klee cut the picture in half right down the middle of the tree and reversed the pieces. Now the tree halves are on the outside of the composition. He reglued the pieces of canvas onto cardboard but left a space between them, which he colored in to match the background. He added the yellow birds in a circle, so our eyes will make the journey around the forest. He even cut a bird in half and added the pieces to the middle. Can you point that out?

Now, let's take a look at a tree house that we might find in this imaginary magical forest.

[Click Next To Change Slide](#)

8. TREE OF HOUSES

Wouldn't it be fun to have this tree house in your backyard? Let's have our eyes take a walk up this big tree by joining the child at the bottom ready to climb the ladder. Where do you want to stop on the way up the tree? **(SEVERAL RESPONSES)** Now that we are already up at the top, how does Klee get our eyes to move down again? **(BIRD POINTING DOWN)**

In this painting titled, *Tree of Houses*, he glued two pieces of fabric to a board, leaving a border all around. **(HOLD UP PIECE OF BURLAP)** He liked the TEXTURE and rough feel of the fabric. He didn't want it to be perfectly smooth as he painted right on the fabric. If you look closely, you can see the fabric in the background.

Klee was always trying new things. He painted on burlap, gauze, silk, cardboard, and glass. He would sometimes use both oil paints and watercolor in the same painting. He even added crayons to some paintings. We call this kind of painting MIXED MEDIA, because the artist uses more than one kind of art material or MEDIUM.

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9. AD PARNASSUM

Of what does this triangle shape remind you? **(PYRAMIDS)** After traveling to Egypt where he must have seen the great pyramids, he began doing paintings with repeating shapes. This is an oil painting that he covered with hundreds of tiny squares of color. It reminds us of an ancient art that uses small pieces of colored glass, stone, or tile that are glued to a flat surface. Do you know what that art is called? **(MOSAIC)** People have been doing MOSAIC art for many centuries. It is still popular today.

Do you think it took him a long time to paint this MOSAIC pyramid? Let's see a close-up.

[Click Next To Change Slide](#)

10. AD PARNASSUM - DETAIL

Klee planned the colors he used very carefully. He painted the background first in large blocks of different colors. Then he began painting the small MOSAIC shapes. He used white paint first for each shape, let it dry, and then did a top layer of color. Can you see the white paint showing through on some of the shapes? **(YES)** The last step was adding the bold, dark lines. He called these shapes magic squares.

[Click Next To Change Slide](#)

11. INSULA DULCAMARA

So far we have traveled to a desert mosque, a magical forest, a tree house, and an Egyptian pyramid. Where do you think we are now? **(TAKE SEVERAL RESPONSES)** This painting is titled *The Bittersweet Island*. Can you see an island in the painting? The dark black lines are the coastline of the island. Let's follow the coastline around. **(POINT OUT THE OUTLINE)** Are the lines always the same width? **(NO)** What do you think some of the other black lines represent? **(CAVE, PLANT, TREE, SNAKE, HOUSE, SKULL, WHALE)** Those are good guesses. Can you find the sun or moon rising and then going down? **(SEMI CIRCLES AT TOP)** Can you point out the ship that will take us to this island? **(UPPER RIGHT)**

Klee liked having people come up with their own ideas about what his lines and symbols meant. For Paul Klee, this island represented the world and all of life. Why do you think he called it a bitter and a sweet island? **(TAKE SEVERAL RESPONSES)** Klee is telling us that life could be bitter/sad and sweet/happy at the same time.

Life had become happy and sad for Paul Klee. He was successful as an artist, but he became quite ill during the last five years of his life. It caused his hands to become very painful and twisted out of shape. It became difficult for him to hold a paintbrush, and he was only able to paint heavy black lines.

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12. HEROIC STROKES OF THE BOW

There was something else he could no longer do as a result of his illness. Let me give you a clue.

ASSEMBLY AUDIO

(BEETHOVEN VIOLIN CONCERTO IN D MAJOR OP 61)

[Click Audio to play music](#)

Can you guess what he had to give up? **(PLAYING THE VIOLIN)** Yes, he had to give up playing his beloved violin, and he shows us his feelings in this painting. Does the music we just listened to sound happy like the music we heard at the beginning of today's discussion? **(NO)** How does the music sound different? **(SLOW, SAD)**

Look at the black lines going back and forth in this painting. What do we call the long piece, which is used to strike the strings of a violin and create the sound? **(BOW)** Yes, these black lines represent the bow going back and forth. Klee's hands could no longer hold the bow and make beautiful music on the violin. In between the strokes of the bow, Klee painted more of his symbols. What could they be? **(MUSICAL NOTES; PART OF THE VIOLIN ITSELF)**

Have you ever heard of the expression: "I'm feeling blue today." How are you feeling? **(SAD)** Klee used the color blue to show his feelings about not being able to play the violin anymore. He could no longer play music, but he continued to paint pictures about music.

[Click Next To Change Slide](#)

13. KETTLEDRUMMER

In this painting, he features a different musical instrument. To figure out this new instrument listen carefully to this next music. I will signal every time the instrument is played.

ASSEMBLY AUDIO

(AS THE ENDING OF TCHAIKOVSKY'S 1812 OVERTURE PLAYS,
PANTOMIME PLAYING OF INSTRUMENT WHEN DRUM IS HEARD.)

Click Audio to play music

Have you figured out the instrument? **(DRUM)** Klee called this painting *Kettledrummer*. We see only a few simple lines that show a musician with drumstick arms. One arm is raised high before making the booming sound on the kettledrum like in the music that we just heard.

Did Klee paint the color neatly inside the lines? **(NO)** It is almost messy in the way the red and black are applied.

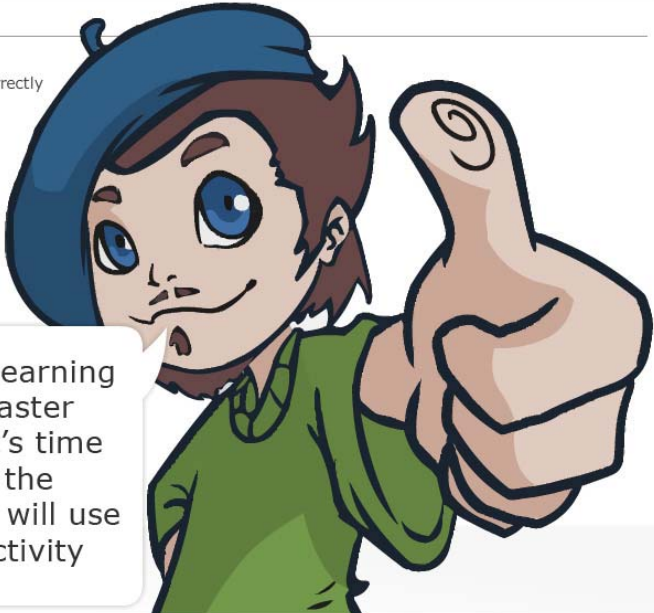
CONCLUSION

As Klee's illness got worse, holding a paintbrush became even more difficult. But that didn't stop him from painting pictures like *Kettledrummer*. And so he was still able to be a part of what he loved so much: art and music.


Click Next To Finish Lesson

Lesson Finished

You have answered
10 out of **10** questions correctly



Did you enjoy learning about our Master Artist? Now it's time to practice the techniques you will use in your art activity

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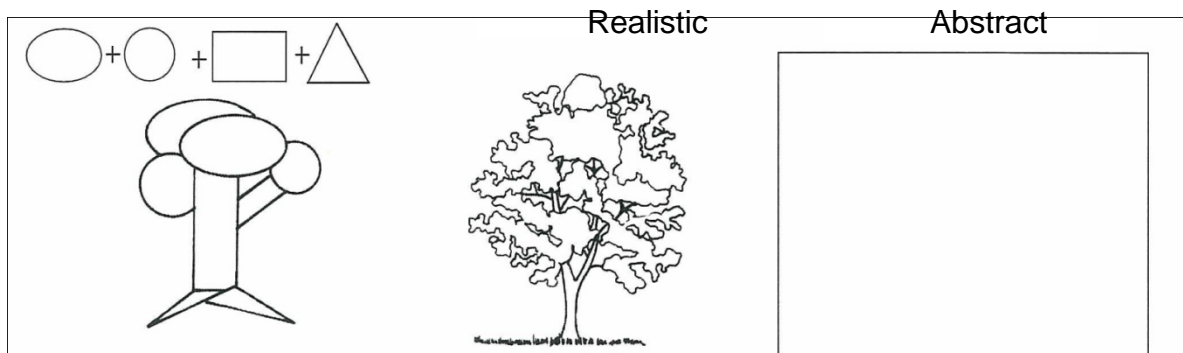
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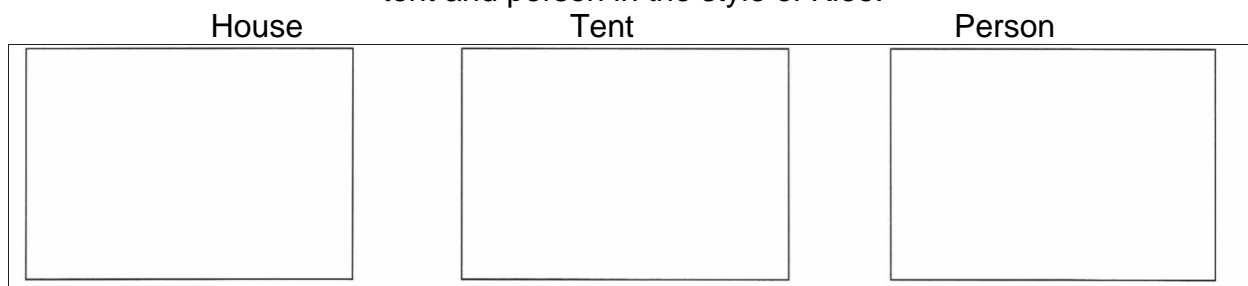
Step 2 - Learning From: Paul Klee

Abstract Shape

Klee used his imagination to draw his ideas.
His work does not look real, so we call it abstract. Abstract is simple shape and line.
Geometric shapes can make an abstract tree. Draw your own tree that is abstract.



Using simple geometric shapes, abstract a house,
tent and person in the style of Klee.

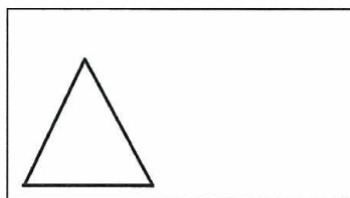


Movement

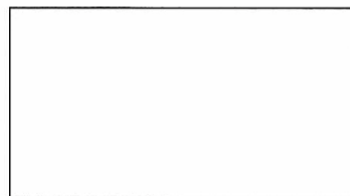
Klee used shape, line and color to make our eyes move around his compositions.
Repeating a shape can make our eyes move.

Use a shape of
your own to first
look still, and
then repeat it
to make your
eyes move.

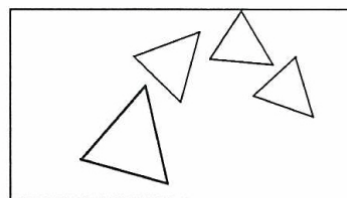
Still



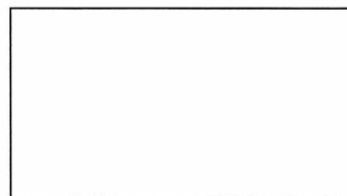
Still



Moving



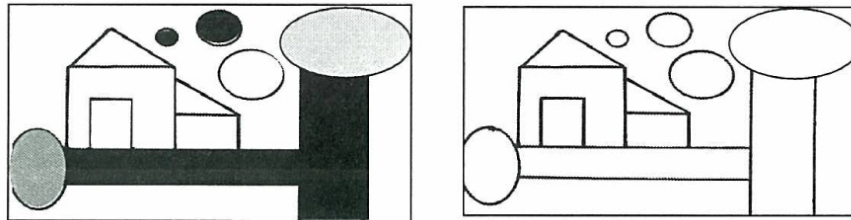
Moving





Movement

Klee used color to make our eyes move. Balancing color makes our eyes move around the composition. The first treehouse is balanced by repeating color. The Second treehouse is still. In the second rectangle balance the colors. Try to make your eyes move around the composition.

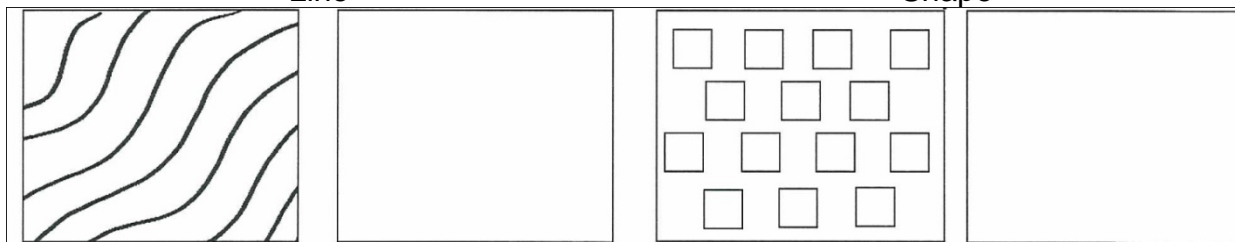


Patterns

Repeating lines, shapes and colors can create patterns. Patterns also added movement to Klee's work. Using an interesting line, create a pattern with line and color. Next create a pattern with shape and color.

Line

Shape

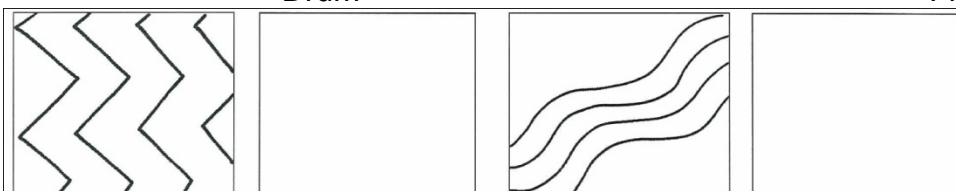


Making Sound Visual

Klee often painted sound. Use lines to make a bold pattern a loud drum might make. Draw a gentle line pattern of a soft flute.

Drum

Flute



Think of another interesting sound, and write it in the blank below. Draw it as a visual pattern we can see in the rectangle at right.

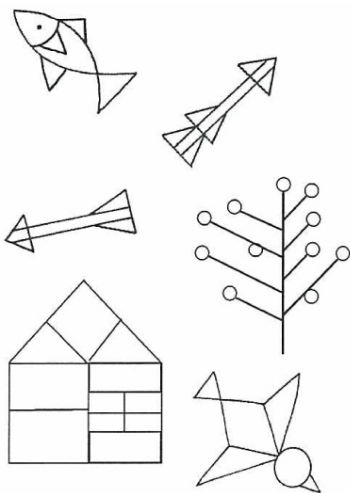
Your sound _____



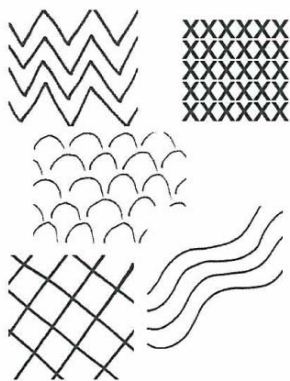


Abstract Tree House With Movement

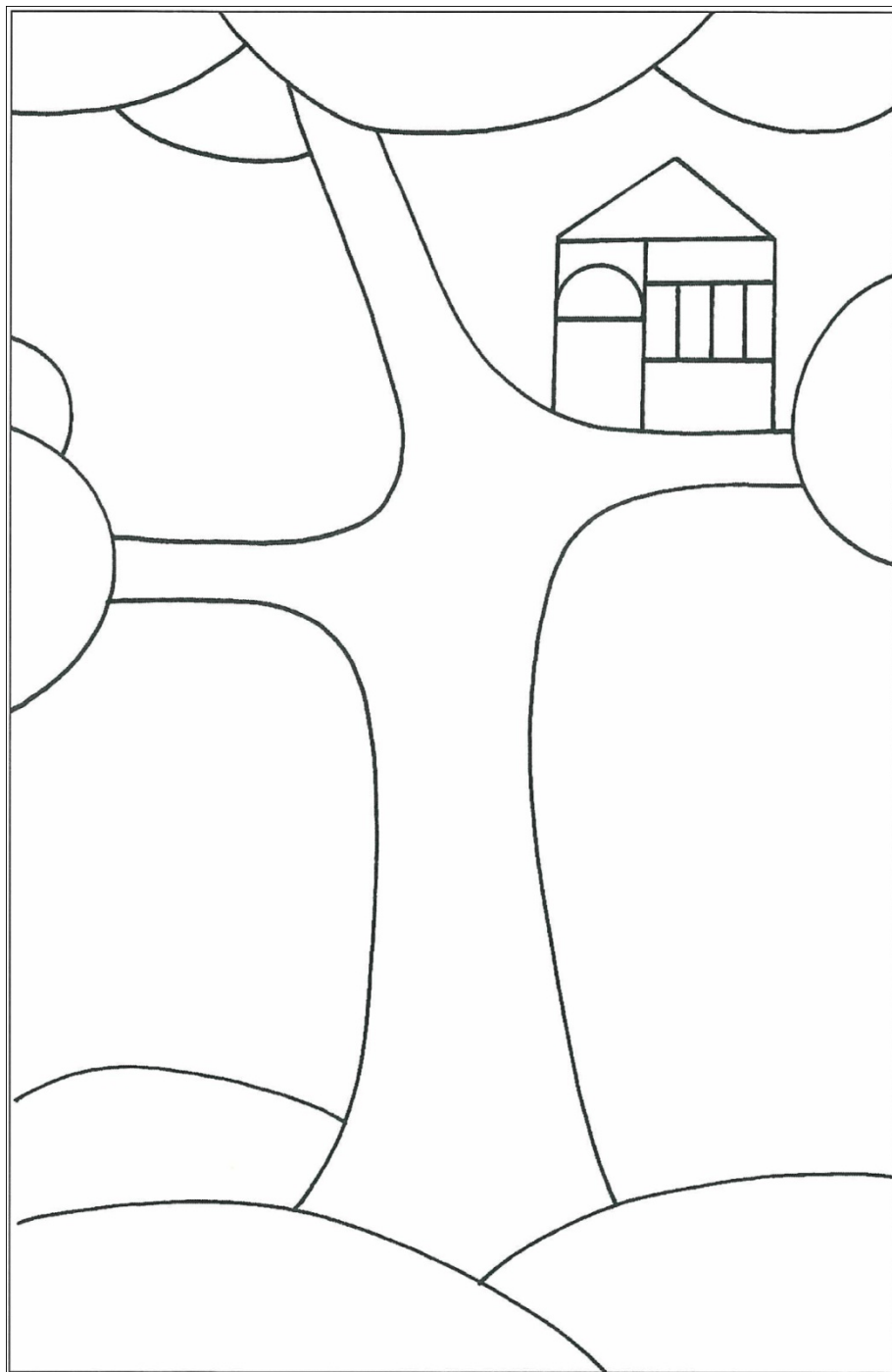
We have learned several ways that Klee moved our eyes with lines, shapes and colors. Add a few abstract arrows, birds or fish to the composition to make our eyes move. Now add a ladder, sun or moon, a person or a small tent.



Add patterns to two or three shapes to add interest and more movement.



Color your composition keeping in mind that warm colors come forward and cool colors move back. Balance the colors so your



eyes move
around the tree.



The last few pages of this section contain the Art Activity for Paul Klee. This step-by-step outline will be a guide for instructing your child(ren) through the activity. The parent/instructor should review all steps necessary to complete this project before beginning any work.

Cut out the Artist Profile Slip below and attach it to the back of the completed art project.

PAUL KLEE (Klay)
Swiss 1879-1940

Swiss artist, Paul Klee's inspiration came from nature, music, and a wonderful imagination. The children built on his themes and their imaginations to create a fanciful composition full of movement, color, and texture.

ART ACTIVITY EMPHASIS: Abstract Compositions

MEDIA: Paper, Black Crayon, Tempera Wash

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Step 3 - Working With: Art Activity Instructions

ARTIST

Paul Klee (*Klay*)
(1879-1940)
Swiss

LEVEL

Advanced

ART ELEMENTS

Line, color and texture

EMPHASIS

Abstract composition with
line, texture and color

MEDIA

Paper, black crayon resist, and
tempera wash

VOCABULARY

Abstract, movement, technique, texture,
line, secondary, warm and cool colors

PRINT

Tree of Houses

SUGGESTED MUSIC

Music of the 1900s

MATERIALS FOR INSTRUCTOR AND STUDENTS

One 12" x 18" light blue, light lavender, pale green, or pale yellow construction paper
(NOT bright) (Example: 8 lt. blue + 8 lavender + 8 pale green + 8 pale yellow = 32 total)

Paper towel

Artist profile slip

One 8½" x 14" TAG board to trace for framing edge
(One set of 40, to use and return to tote)

Black crayons

9" Paper plates

4 dabs (nickel size) of tempera paint - magenta, yellow, turquoise, white

Watercolor paintbrushes (rounded and soft)

Water cups

Water pitcher (for instructor only)

Pencil

PREPARATION

Display the Klee print in front of the room. Tape your 12" x 18" colored construction paper to the board, vertically. Have 8½" x 14" TAG board, pencil, black crayon, prepared paper plate palette with the four tempera colors, paintbrush and water cup close by.

SET-UP [5 minutes]

Distribute the materials:

SUPPLIES: [3] Paint brush, black crayon, and water container to each student

PAPER: [4] One 12" x 18" construction paper, one 8½" x 14" TAG board (to be collected), paper towel, and artist profile slip

Teacher needs to help with: Preparing and distributing paint PALETTES, and distributing and pouring WATER when needed

ORIENTATION [5 minutes]

Our master artist Paul Klee came from what country? **(SWITZERLAND)** Is his artwork realistic or abstract? **(ABSTRACT)** What do we mean when we say Klee's art is abstract? **(DOES NOT LOOK REAL)** What kinds of things inspired Klee to paint? **(IMAGINATION, NATURE, AND MUSIC)** Klee's work has lots of movement. How does he make our eyes move around his paintings? **(WITH LINES, COLORS, TEXTURES, AND SHAPES - THE ART ELEMENTS!)** We will use black crayon and a tempera paint wash to re-create Klee's style. Let's get ready to draw and paint an abstract tree house with movement just like Klee's.

Demonstration AND ACTIVITY

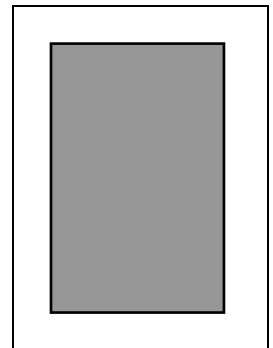
Have the students repeat each step immediately with their materials:

ORGANIZE YOUR WORK AREA [3 minutes]

Using your pencil print your name on the back of your 12" x 18" colored paper. Arrange it *vertically* on your desk. Center the smaller rectangle of TAG board on top of your construction paper. Put your brush and water cup on your paper towel in the upper corner of your desk. Put your black crayon, pencil, and artist profile slip in the other corner.

DRAWING THE FRAMING EDGE [3 minutes]

Students center the TAG board on the 12" x 18" construction paper so that it has equal space all the way around. Carefully and slowly outline the TAG board with your pencil. Remove the TAG board. These can be collected now and stored in tote. Your design will be within this framing edge to give it a finished look.



CREATE AN ABSTRACT TREE HOUSE [15 minutes]

(Demonstrate all drawing within the framing edge with black crayon for visibility. Drawing examples on next page.)

Using pencils, have the students draw two or three curving lines, to look like ground. Keep them close to the bottom of the page.

Starting at the top of the ground, draw two dots a hand's width apart. Draw two lines from these points that first narrow and then widen to form a tree trunk and the bottom of the two main branches. Let the branches widen out horizontally to leave flat spots for the tree houses.

Draw two more curving lines to give the branches width, and continue your tree up to the top of the framing edge.

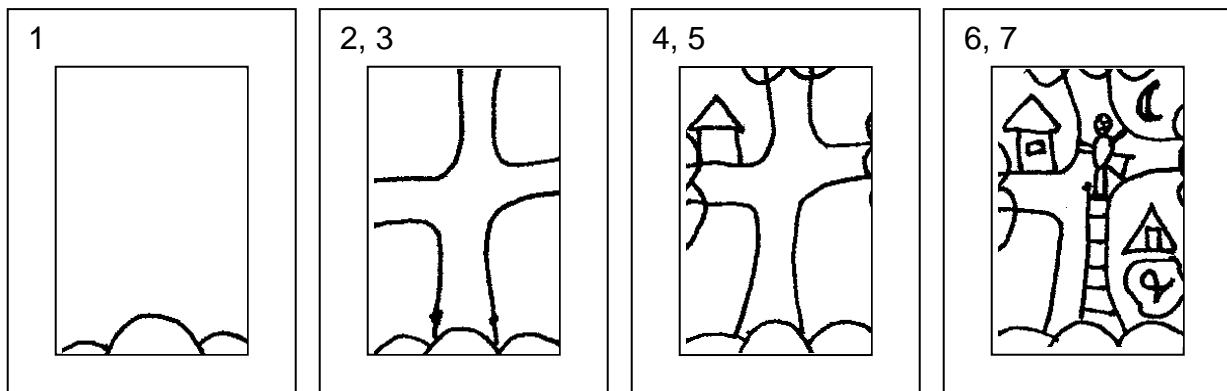
Create one or two abstract tree houses. Use squares or rectangles with triangle shapes on top for roofs. Draw on the flat branches. Draw on the flat branches.

Add some simple curving lines to resemble abstract foliage to the top of the tree and the ends of the branches.

Add a few simple geometric shapes for windows and doors.

Consider adding an abstract ladder, person, bird, fish, tent, arrow, moon, sun or smaller trees in the style of Klee. These help move your eyes around the composition. Refer to the *Learning Packet* to recall simple abstraction and movement. Avoid detail!

Trace all your best lines with your black crayon pressing hard to make thick, dark lines.



ADDING COLOR WITH WATERCOLOR WASH [15 minutes]

Review color mixing by having each student mix a small spot of each secondary color on his or her palette. Take lightest color first (yellow + magenta = orange, yellow + turquoise = green, turquoise + magenta = violet).

White can be added to create tints of colors.

Demonstrate the use of lots of water and a soft brush to gently wash in color to each defined shape. Apply water to one shape at a time. Mix a color on the palette, dip brush in water, and then apply to the shape. Refer to the *Learning Packet* for the way color can move our eyes around the composition, by balancing and contrasting colors.

The black crayon defines the shapes and resists the paint.

Stress painting light shapes first to dark shapes last, so that palette and paints stay clean.

Mix a little paint at a time and apply with lots of water.



MOUNTING THE ARTIST PROFILE SLIP [2 minutes]

(Profile slips for each artist are provided. They give a brief description of the artist, the technique, and the media used in the art activity. They should be mounted on the back of each art project after it is completed.)

1. Write your name on the front of the artist profile slip.
2. Using glue, mount the profile slip on the back of your artwork.
3. Encourage students to discuss their artwork at home using this artist slip of information.

CONCLUSION

Paul Klee had a vivid imagination to create his abstract paintings. Let's take a look at your abstract paintings to see how you used your imaginations. (Comment on compositions emphasizing vocabulary: movement, warm, cool, texture, line.) Your tree houses make me want to enter your imaginary worlds!

THIS CONCLUDES THE PAUL KLEE UNIT.