

FORM & FUNCTION



Learn about artist Pablo Picasso and his sculpture "Wood Owl." Questions for looking and art-making projects can be adapted to suit different grade-level standards.

Engage in slow looking and art-making with these classroom resources. You can view these works of art in the museum, online or on a classroom poster.

Pablo Picasso (Spanish, 1881 - 1973), "Wood Owl," 1959. Glazed earthenware, 11 5/8 x 8 1/2 x 5 1/2 inches. Georgia Museum of Art, University of Georgia; Gift of Susan P. LaJeunesse on behalf of Dr. and Mrs. Aaron M. Josephson. 2017.308.

QUESTIONS FOR LOOKING

- Look closely at the work of art. What do you see or notice?
- How many different shapes can you find?
- This work of art is an example of abstract art, or art that doesn't show identifiable people, places or things but instead uses shapes, lines and colors to create a composition. What lines do you see in this work? How is the brown line different from the red line?
- Which colors appear to come forward? Which colors feel farther away? How does the arrangement of shapes and colors create the illusion of depth or layers? In contrast, how does this work of abstract art emphasize surface or "flatness"?
- This work is called "Composition." Does it remind you of anything that you've seen or heard before?
- Read the information about the artist and his work on the back of this resource. Look at the painting again. How have your observations and thoughts about the work of art changed?

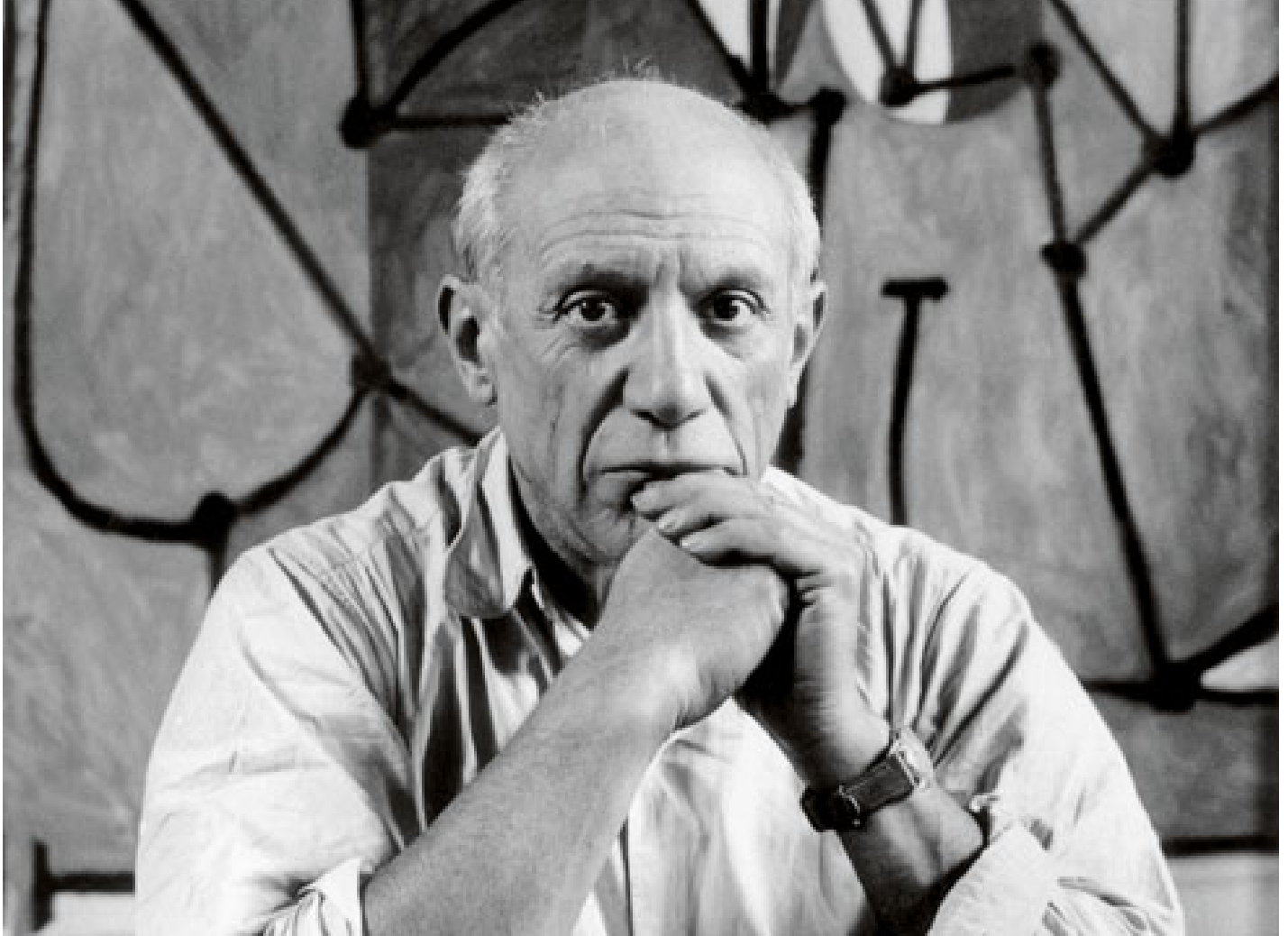
ART-MAKING: TORN PAPER LANDSCAPE

Composition is the arrangement of elements, like shapes, lines and colors, within a work of art. Artists move these different elements around to create balance and visual interest. Using construction paper and glue, tear and layer pieces of colored paper onto a larger sheet of paper, cardboard or canvas to build an abstract landscape. How can you arrange warm or cool colors to create depth? You can also tear images or text from magazines to create unexpected texture and movement in your work.

ART-MAKING: TAPE RESIST

Positive space is the area of interest in an artwork filled with color or form, while **negative space** is the background or the area surrounding the positive space. Create an abstract composition using various widths of tape and any type of paint material, representing positive space with color and negative space with the tape (which you will remove after painting). Overlap the tape to make various shapes and angles. How can the colors you choose create a sense of harmony or contrast?

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ABOUT THE ARTIST

Pablo Picasso was born in Spain in 1881. Many people know him for his cubist paintings. **Cubism** is an art style that breaks subjects into fragments and shows them from multiple angles at once. Picasso worked with pottery in his later career, producing a series of bird vases including "Wood Owl." Although these vases look different from his paintings, they highlight the experimental qualities that can be found across Picasso's work.

Georgia Standards of Excellence

Elementary: VA(K-5).CN.1, VA(K-5).CR.1, VA(K-5).CR.3, VA(K-5).RE.1, SS2G2d
Secondary: VA8.CN.1/VAHSVA.CN.1, VA8.CN.3/VAHSVA.CN.3, VA8.RE.1/VAHSVA.RE.1, VA8.CR.1/VAHSVA.CR.1, VA8.CR.3/VAHSVA.CR.3

ABOUT THE WORK

Much like Picasso's cubist paintings, his bird vases represent his interest in the ways that our eyes interpret visual cues. One way of interpreting cubism is through **semiotics**, or the study of signs and symbols. In his cubist works, Picasso reduces our visual language to very simple visual "signs" that our eyes "read." For example, three parallel lines can suggest guitar strings. His minimalist approach to sculpture relies on these simple visual cues. Picasso's bird vases are also rooted in a rich history of sculptural vases and earthenware dating back to ancient Egypt.