

BUFFALO AKG ART MUSEUM

Lesson: Op Art



Felipe Pantone's *Optichromie—BUF*, 2019, on Washington Street between East Tupper and East Chippewa Streets (back of Town Ballroom) in Buffalo. Photo: Amanda Smith for Buffalo AKG Art Museum

Artists: Felipe Pantone

Artwork: *Optichromie—BUF*, 2019

Period/Movement: Op Art/
Public art

Enduring Understandings:

People gain insight into meanings of artwork by engaging in a process of art criticism.

Essential Questions:

What is the value of engaging in a process of art criticism?

How can the viewer 'read' a work of art as text?

How does knowing and using visual art vocabularies help us understand and interpret works of art?

LESSON

Conceptual Basis:

Felipe Pantone is an Argentinian-Spanish artist who started doing graffiti at the age of 12. He uses a prism of neon gradients, geometric shapes, optical patterns, and jagged grids to create works that feel like a collision between an analog past and a digitized future. His mural in Buffalo, *Optichromie—BUF*, 2019, showcases his signature fusion of mesmerizing black-and-white patterns with bold prismatic forms and oversized fluorescent pixels.

Pantone sees the computer modeling programs he uses in developing his designs as part of a continuum of image-making innovations alongside the pencil and oil paint of his studio practice and street art creations. From this vantage point, the artist is, at heart, an optimist about the positive potential of a digital future to make the world a more dynamic and connected place.

Materials:

- Drawing paper (two sheets for the project)
- Scrap paper (for practice)
- Marker (permanent marker, if available)
- Colored pencils
- Scissors
- Glue
- Computer with a drawing program (MS Paint, Paintbrush, etc.) (optional)

Vocabulary:

Op art: a type of art that uses optical illusions, often giving the impression that something is moving or sticking out from the wall/paper

Concentric shapes: when two or more of the same shape share the same center point

Value: the relative lightness or darkness of a color

Artmaking Activity:

Overview: In this project, students will make a drawing inspired by Felipe Pantone’s mural *Optichromie—BUF*, 2019. They will explore different ways of creating a work of art that has aspects of optical illusions and have the option of using technology.

1. Show students how to draw concentric designs. Pantone used diamonds and partial circles in his work, but students can use any geometric shape.
2. On one piece of paper, students will draw the first shape, small, in the center of their paper. Then draw the same shape in a concentric design until their page is full. Encourage them to leave space in between the shapes, so that they can play with the thickness of the lines.

3. Demonstrate how to draw a cylinder. Explain that they are to use value, specifically with shading, to make it look three-dimensional. Ask them to practice a couple of times on a scrap sheet of paper. Once they have the technique down, they can draw multiple cylinders on their second sheet of paper, playing with length, thickness, etc.
4. Using colored pencils, add color to one of their sheets (either sheet one with the concentric shapes, or sheet two with the cylinders).
5. Once they have added color, ask students to cut out the cylinders and glue them down on top of their first sheet. They can reference Pantone's mural for inspiration.

Optional:

1. To add in a technology element, students may scan or take a photo of their work and open it up in a drawing program such as Microsoft Paint. Before they manipulate their work, have them use the zoom function to see how pixelated they can make it look. Ask them to compare their work to the pixelated part of Pantone's mural. Then let them decide if they want to leave it zoomed-in or go back to their original image.
2. Next, show your students how they can use the tools available in the program to add shapes, colors, lines, etc.
3. You can encourage them to play around with duplicating, mirroring, and rotating their image. They can see what it might look like to try to add in more three-dimensional elements to their design. (This part of the project can introduce quite a few of the tools available to the students and add in a sense of play.)
4. If students have access to a printer, they can print out their design.

Reflection:

Lead students in a reflection about the project. Some prompts might include the following questions:

- How do the techniques you used make your work look three-dimensional?
- What is the effect of putting black and white designs next to colored ones? Would you rather have everything in color or left in black and white?
- If you included the digital aspect: Did you like using technology as part of your work? Do you think it added to the piece or took away from it? Why?

New York State Standards:

Anchor Standard 8: Interpret meaning in artwork.

Artistic Process: Responding

Process Component: Interpret

Standards:

Grade	Code	Standard
K	VA:Re8.1.K	With guidance, share observations comparing artworks.
1	VA:Re8.1.1	With guidance, compare and contrast, subject matter and works of art.
2	VA:Re8.1.2	With guidance, categorize subject matter and identify common themes and works of art.
3	VA:Re8.1.3	Interpret mood and artwork by analyzing subject matter and characteristics of form.
4	VA:Re8.1.4	Interpret art by analyzing relevant subject matter, characteristics of form, and use of media.
5	VA:Re8.1.5	Interpret art by referring to contextual information and analyzing subject matter, characteristics of form, and use of media.
6	VA:Re8.1.6	Interpret art by distinguishing between relevant and non-relevant contextual information and analyzing subject matter, characteristics of form and structure, and use of media.
7	VA:Re8.1.7	Interpret ideas and mood in art. by analyzing art making approaches, characteristics of form and structure, relevant contextual information, subject matter, and use of media.
8	VA:Re8.1.8	How the interaction of subject matter, characteristics of form and structure, and use of media, art making approaches, and relevant contextual information contributes to understanding messages or ideas and mood conveyed.

Grade Level 9-12	Code	Standard
Proficient	VA:Re8.1.HSI	Construct interpretations of artwork, supported by relevant and sufficient evidence, found both in the work and in surrounding context.
Accomplished	VA:Re8.1.HSII	With guidance, compare and contrast, subject matter and works of art.
Advanced	VA:Re8.1.HSIII	Analyze differing interpretations of an artwork or collection of works in order to select and defend A plausible critical analysis.

Teacher Example:

