

# Talking Points: An Introduction to Shape

A collection of sources and imagery to introduce shape.

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## An Introduction to Shape

Shape is used throughout art for lots of reasons; shapes can be vehicles for colour, convey emotion, and lead the eye on a journey around the page.

Different types of shapes can be categorised as 'geometric', 'organic' and 'intuitive'.

Geometric shapes, like squares and triangles, are mainly found in manmade objects, for example, houses. You would often find 'organic' shapes in nature, for example, in leaves or shells. In 2-dimensional artwork, artists also create shapes 'intuitively' to represent a 'thing'.

Artists use shapes to communicate a certain message or convey an emotion.

- What emotion do you associate with certain shapes, for example, a triangle, circle or square?
- Do you feel different when you look at

**organic shapes compared to geometric shapes?**

**Artworks consist of lines and shapes built together with colour in a certain composition, whether it's an abstract or figurative piece.**

- Some people would define shape through line. What do you think?**
- When does a line become a shape?**

**When you look at an artwork, consider the shape and also the space around the shape (negative and positive space). These are shapes in themselves.**

- How do the shapes sit in the composition?**
- What is your eye drawn to? Why do you think this is?**

**Discuss the artwork below, considering some of the statements and questions above.**

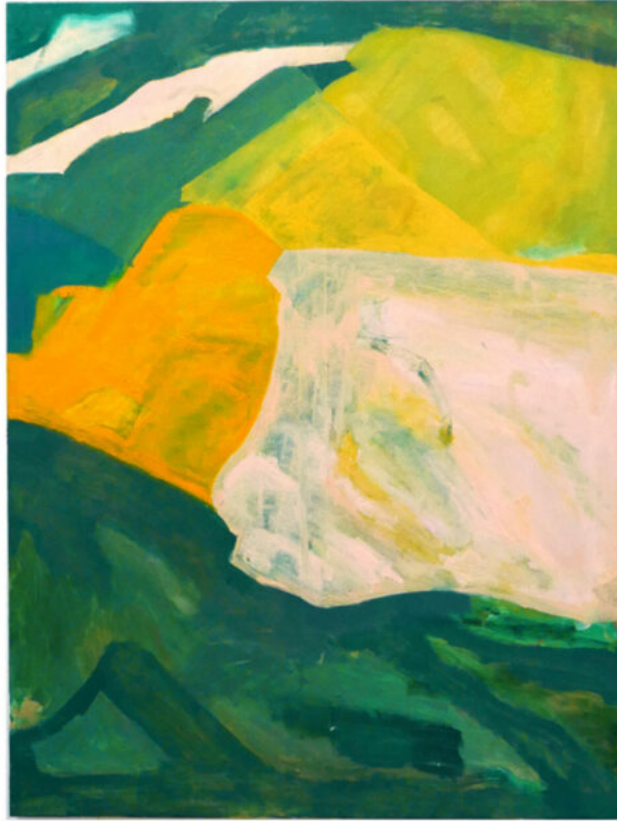


**Abstract Landscape (1915- 1916) painting in high resolution by Henry Lyman Sayen. Original from the Smithsonian Institution.**





Artist Unkown, Still Life with Guitar, Original  
public domain image from Saint Louis Art Museum

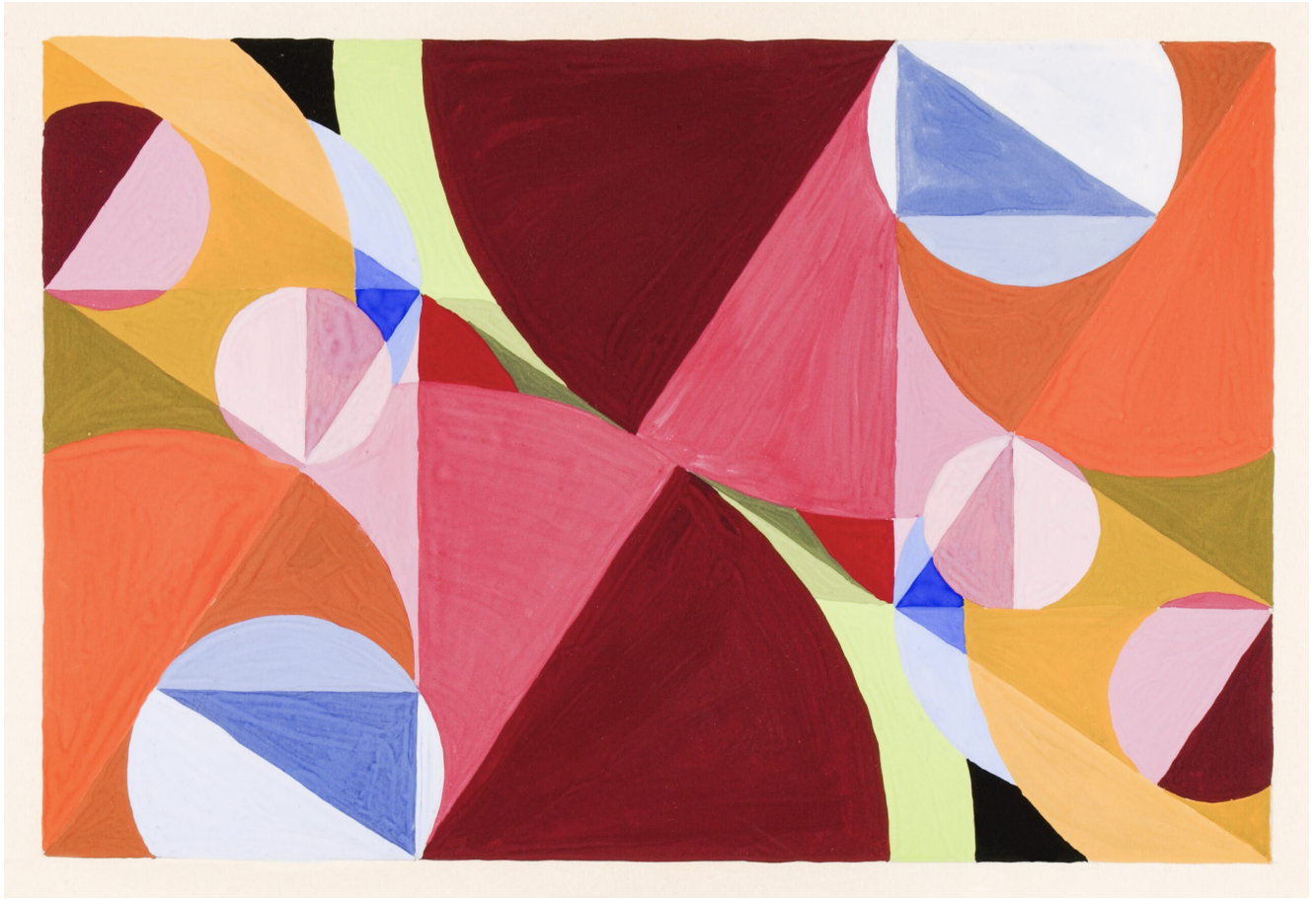


**Landscape by Joe Gamble**





**Polypodium vulgare, British by Anna Atkins and Anne Dixon, Original public domain image from Getty Museum**



**Area Broken by Perpendiculars (ca.1934) painting in high resolution by Joseph Schillinger. Original from The Smithsonian Institution.**





**Monoprint by Claire Harrup**

## Questions to Ask Children

Describe the shapes you can see? Consider the edges, angles, colours etc.

How do the shapes connect with each other?

Do any of these artworks use negative space? What shapes can you spot?

Shapes can give the illusion of something being there. In Claire Harrup's monoprint, what can you see?

Where is your eye drawn to? What journey does it take and do you think it's intentional?

What do you notice about the overall composition of the piece? How do the shapes and colours impact your opinion and overall feeling?