

# *ENTANGLED:* *Two Views on Contemporary Canadian Painting*



John Kissick  
*burning the houses of cool man, yeah no. 5*  
oil and acrylic on canvas  
Courtesy of Katzman Contemporary

TEACHER'S STUDY GUIDE  
FALL 2017

**Vancouver**  
Artgallery

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# Vancouver Art Gallery

## Teacher's Guide for School Programs

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The exhibition *Entangled: Two Views on Contemporary Canadian Painting* explores two distinctly different modes of painting that have come to dominate contemporary painting in Canada: conceptual and performative painting. The exhibition traces the legacy of these different approaches and documents the work of thirty-one artists who have been largely responsible for the strong revival that painting now enjoys in this country. With work by artists from Halifax to Victoria and many places in between, this exhibition offers a convincing survey of the lively debate that makes painting relevant and meaningful today.

### DEAR TEACHER:

This guide will assist you in preparing for your tour of the exhibition *Entangled: Two Views on Contemporary Canadian Painting*. It also provides follow-up activities to facilitate discussion after your Gallery visit. Engaging in the suggested activities before and after your visit will reinforce ideas generated by the tour and build continuity between the Gallery experience and your ongoing work in the classroom. Most activities require few materials and can be adapted easily to the age, grade level and needs of your students. Underlined words in this guide are defined in the Vocabulary section.

The tour of *Entangled* has three main goals:

- to introduce students to a variety of Canadian contemporary painters,
- to consider diverse artistic traditions and disciplines,
- to explore individual artworks in terms of ideas, materials, techniques and inspiration.

## THE EXHIBITION:

### *Entangled: Two Views on Contemporary Canadian Painting*

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The exhibition *Entangled: Two Views on Contemporary Canadian Painting* offers insights into two distinctly different modes that have come to dominate contemporary painting in Canada. The origins of both can be effectively traced back to the 1970s, to a moment when the continued existence of painting was hotly debated. Within that debate two new strategies were devised: one proposed the possibility of conceptual painting—painting that emerged from and returned to the idea; the other was a proposition that valued actions and materials in adopting a performative way of working.

These views are explored in the two distinct selections of works by curators David MacWilliam and Bruce Grenville. Tracing the legacy of that debate through the practices of more than thirty artists from across Canada, *Entangled* provides an overview of the ways and means with which our artists continue to make painting resonate today.

Organized by the Vancouver Art Gallery and co-curated by Bruce Grenville, Senior Curator, and David MacWilliam, Emily Carr University of Art + Design professor.

## ARTISTS' BACKGROUND

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The following background information highlights some of the artists whose work may be explored in the school tour.

### **Tammi Campbell (b. 1974)**

Born in Calgary in 1974, Tammi Campbell earned her BFA from the University of Saskatchewan in 1999 and continues to live and work in Saskatoon. Campbell is known for works that look like Modernist hard-edge paintings in progress, with particular focus on the Modernists' use of tape. Her most recent body of work consists of stretched linen canvas wrapped in packing materials such as bubble wrap. Campbell has participated in a number of artist residencies including the Banff Centre, Plug In Institute of Contemporary Art in Winnipeg and the Emma Lake Artists' Workshops. Campbell's work has been included in solo and group exhibitions across Canada, including the MacKenzie Art Gallery in Regina, Mercer Union in Toronto and National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa.

### **Colleen Heslin (b. 1976)**

Born in Toronto in 1976, Colleen Heslin is a mixed-media artist and independent curator based in Vancouver. She works predominantly with textiles and quilting to create abstract compositions, which she calls paintings. Heslin sews abstract fabric shapes together in a process similar to quilting and then stretches the "abstract collage of cottons and linens" together around a frame. She completed her BFA at Emily Carr University of Art + Design in Vancouver and her MFA at Concordia University in Montreal. Heslin founded the Crying Room Projects (1999–2014), where she facilitated independent exhibition and public mural space for emerging artists in Vancouver. In 2013 Heslin won the RBC Canadian Painting Competition. She has exhibited her work at the Charles H. Scott Gallery at Emily Carr University of Art + Design, Esker Foundation in Calgary, McMichael Canadian Art Collection in Kleinburg, Ontario, and Leonard & Bina Ellen Art Gallery at Concordia University in Montreal.

### **John Heward (b. 1934)**

John Heward was born in 1934 in Montreal, where he continues to live and work. A primarily self-taught artist and a talented avant-garde jazz percussionist, he became a highly influential figure in the development of abstraction in Quebec. Painting primarily on fabric, Heward displays his paintings by hanging them from a ceiling or from the corners of a gallery so that the viewer can perceive the piece from various angles. Heward's work has been exhibited throughout Canada and internationally, including in the major retrospective *John Heward: A Trajectory / A Collection (John Heward: Un parcours / Une collection)*, organized by the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec and presented at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Toronto in 2009.

### **Jeremy Hof (b. 1977)**

Jeremy Hof was born in Grand Prairie, Alberta, in 1977 and lives and works in Vancouver. In his work, Hof introduces Minimalist forms into his paintings, sculptures and monochromes. He often applies hundreds of layers of coloured latex and acrylic onto panels, creating hypnotic, interlocking circles. He studied visual art at Langara College and holds a BFA from Emily Carr University of Art + Design. Recently, Hof's work has been featured in solo exhibitions at Malaspina Printmakers and the Art Gallery of Grand Prairie, as well as in group shows at Richmond Art Gallery and Ottawa Art Gallery. In 2008 Hof was the winner of the RBC Canadian Painting Competition.

### **Garry Neill Kennedy (b. 1935)**

With a career spanning five decades, Garry Neill Kennedy is recognized as one of Canada's foremost conceptual artists. Born in St. Catharines, Ontario, in 1935, he now lives and works in Vancouver. Kennedy studied art as an undergraduate at the Ontario College of Art and Design (now OCAD University) and the University of Buffalo, and he received his MFA from Ohio University in 1965. His extensive national and international exhibition history includes shows at the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia and the Museum of Contemporary Art in Toronto, and a major retrospective at the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa in 2000. In addition to his extensive career as an artist, Kennedy was president of the Nova Scotia College of Art for twenty-three years, playing a pivotal role in the school's

transformation into an internationally recognized art college. Kennedy has been recognized with many awards, including the Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts and the Order of Canada.

**Elizabeth McIntosh (b. 1967)**

In her painting, Elizabeth McIntosh explores abstraction through processes of collage, where elements of composition and colour are continuously negotiated. Recent work produced during a six-month residency at the International Studio & Curatorial Program in New York features the emergence of abstracted human figures drawn from art history and reimagined within vividly coloured geometries and abstractions. McIntosh was born in Simcoe, Ontario, and lives in Vancouver. She holds a BFA from York University, Toronto, and an MFA from Chelsea College of Arts, London. Her work has been included in exhibitions at CANADA, New York; VENUS, Los Angeles; the Logan Center, Chicago; MOCCA, Toronto; and Vancouver Art Gallery. Her work has also been included in *Vitamin P3: New Perspectives In Painting*, and a monograph was published by ECU Press. McIntosh was the recipient of the 2013 VIVA Award and has been granted a 2017 Fogo Island Artist Residency. Her works are held in the collections of the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa; Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal; the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, and the Vancouver Art Gallery. McIntosh is an associate professor at Emily Carr University of Art + Design, Vancouver.

**Jeanie Riddle (b. 1967)**

Jeanie Riddle was born in 1969 in Montreal, where she continues to live and work. Trained as a painter with a tendency toward Minimalist abstraction, Riddle has also developed a sculptural installation practice. She holds a BFA and an MFA from Concordia University in Montreal and attended the Alter Studio summer academy at École nationale supérieure des Beaux-arts in Paris. Her work has been exhibited frequently in Montreal, Toronto and Europe, including a 2013 installation at Sur La Montagne art space in Berlin. Riddle was selected for artist residencies at Triangle Arts in Brooklyn, Cité internationale des arts in Paris and the Vermont Studio Center. In 2008 she was a finalist in the RBC Canadian Painting Competition.

**Ron Terada (b. 1969)**

Born in Vancouver in 1969, Ron Terada is a graduate of Emily Carr University of Art + Design. He works in various media, including painting, photography, video, sound, books and graphic design. In his art practice, Terada engages with themes of signage and text-based artworks in public spaces. Other works have adapted gallery signage, posters and brochures. Terada has exhibited internationally, including solo shows at Chicago's Museum of Contemporary Art and London's Hayward Gallery Project Space, and group exhibitions at the Kunsthalle Wien in Vienna, Witte de With in Rotterdam and Kadist Art Foundation in Paris, to name a few. Terada lives and works in Vancouver.

# Information Sheet: Abstraction

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## **Abstract Expressionism**

- Artists painted spontaneously, without planning or consciously thinking about it.
- It is sometimes called action painting because the artists energetically smeared, poured, dripped and splattered paint thickly across the canvas.
- Today artists experiment with unusual materials, using them expressively to construct abstract artworks.

## **Geometric Abstraction**

- Artists carefully planned their simple and often repeating shapes, lines and colours.
- They often used masking tape to paint clear, defined hard edges.
- They applied their paint smoothly and thinly, using flat, bold colours,

## **Op Art**

- Artists used simple repeating lines and forms to create optical illusions.
- Static colours and shapes seem to bounce and flicker across the surface.
- Viewers can experience physical, psychological and retinal responses.

## **Minimalism**

- Artists used very simple repeated shapes, forms and colours.
- They often created smooth sculptural objects with clean lines, using high-tech materials.
- They thought art should not refer to or copy anything outside of itself.

## **Conceptualism**

- The ideas behind the artwork are more important than the actual piece of art.
- Talent and good craftsmanship are not valued or seen as necessary.
- The artist might follow a set of rules to create the work, or provide instructions for someone else to make it.

## PRE-VISIT ACTIVITY: About the Artists (intermediate and secondary students)

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### Objective:

Students read, research and share information about some of the artists represented in *Entangled: Two Views on Contemporary Canadian Painting*.

### Materials:

- ❑ writing materials
- ❑ access to the Internet
- Some useful websites:
  - <http://canadianart.ca>
  - [www.wikipedia.com](http://www.wikipedia.com)
- ❑ Artist Information Sheet (p. 9), Student Worksheet (p. 10)

### Process:

1. Divide the students into seven groups. Cut up the Artist Information Sheet (p. 9) and assign one artist to each group.
2. Give each group a copy of the Student Worksheet (p. 10), and ask them to transfer the information about their artist to the appropriate box. Use the Information Sheet: Abstraction on p. 7 to assist with filling in the Type of Art box.
3. Have students figure out what they need to know to complete the section on their artist, and find it on the Internet, either at home or at school. Older students can find more information; younger students, just the basics.
4. Ask each group to find/copy/sketch a piece of work by their artist on a separate piece of paper. Do not label with the artist's name or any other information.
5. Have each group present the information on their artist while the rest of the class adds the information to their worksheets.
6. After the presentations, lay out the images, and have the class guess which image is by which artist.

### Conclusion:

#### Discuss:

- What were some of the most interesting things that students learned or discovered?
- Which artists and/or kinds of artwork made students curious about seeing the actual work in the exhibition?
- Are there any artists, ways of working or ideas that the students would like to know more about?



# Artist Information Sheet

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## **Tammi Campbell**

- Born in Calgary, lives and works in Saskatoon
- Known for works using tape and packaging materials
- Has participated in several artist residencies
- Her work has been included in numerous exhibitions, including at the National Gallery of Canada

## **Colleen Heslin**

- Born in Toronto, currently lives in Vancouver
- Is a mixed-media artist and independent curator
- Works predominantly with textiles and quilting to create abstract compositions
- Won the RBC Canadian Painting Competition in 2013; work included in numerous exhibitions

## **John Heward**

- Born in Montreal, where he continues to live and work
- Primarily a self-taught artist and talented musician
- Paints on fabric and suspends paintings from the ceiling
- His work has been exhibited throughout Canada and internationally

## **Jeremy Hof**

- Born in Grand Prairie, Alberta, lives and works in Vancouver
- Creates paintings with hypnotic circles using hundreds of layers of paint
- His work has been included in various exhibitions throughout Canada
- Won the RBC Canadian Painting Competition in 2008

## **Garry Neill Kennedy**

- Born in St. Catharines, Ontario, currently lives in Vancouver
- One of Canada's most important conceptual artists
- Taught art in universities in Nova Scotia, California, Paris and Vancouver
- Creates conceptual art, drawings and installations
- Has received numerous awards, including the Order of Canada and the Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts

## **Elizabeth McIntosh**

- Born in Simcoe, Ontario, currently lives in Vancouver
- Explores abstraction in painting and collage using bright colours
- Her work has been included in numerous exhibitions in Canada and the United States
- Her work is held in collections of the National Gallery of Canada and the Vancouver Art Gallery

## **Jeanie Riddle**

- Born in Montreal, where she continues to live and work
- Was trained as a painter with a tendency toward Minimalist abstraction
- Has also developed a sculptural installation practice
- Her work has been exhibited throughout Canada
- In 2008 she was a finalist in the RBC Canadian Painting Competition

## **Ron Terada**

- Born in Vancouver, where he continues to live and work
- Works in various media, including painting, photography, video, sound, books and graphic design
- Engages with themes of signage and text-based artworks in public spaces
- His work has been exhibited in Canada and internationally in Chicago, London, Paris and Vienna

## Student Worksheet

	Personal Information	Type of Art	Materials Used	An Artwork
Tammi Campbell				
Colleen Heslin				
John Heward				
Jeremy Hof				
Garry Neill Kennedy				
Elizabeth McIntosh				
Jeanie Riddle				
Ron Terada				

## PRE-VISIT ACTIVITY: Edges, Lines and Angles (all levels)

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### Objective:

Students create a work in the style of hard-edge Geometric Abstraction.

### Discussion:

Many of the artists included in the exhibition *Entangled: Two Views on Contemporary Canadian Painting* incorporate straight and angular lines in their paintings. Frequently used in Geometric Abstraction, hard-edge painting became popular in the '60s, emphasizing the use of strong colour, well-defined outlines and clear, precise compositions.

### Materials:

- ❑ watercolour or tempera puck paints
- ❑ paintbrushes
- ❑ white painting paper or watercolour paper
- ❑ tape (painter's tape or masking tape works best)

### Process:

1. In small groups, have the students look at some images of hard-edge paintings on p. 12 and talk about what they see.

Questions to guide them could include:

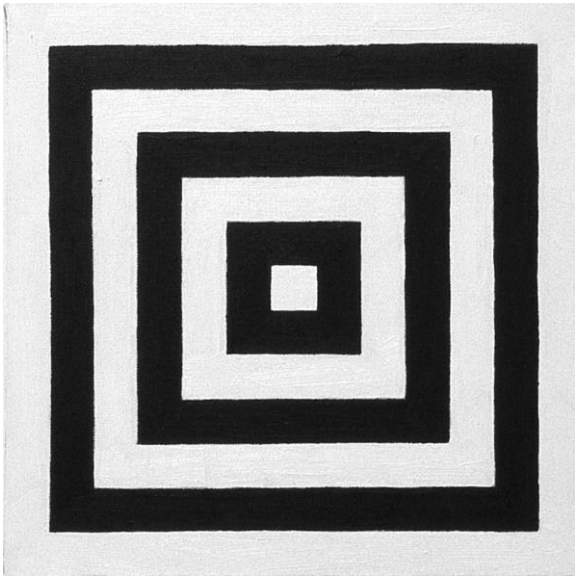
- What kind of shapes have the artists used?
- Have they created a pattern or rhythm through repetition?
- What is interesting or eye-catching about the image?

2. Give each student a sheet of paper and tape as needed.
3. Tell students they will each create an artwork using hard-edge geometric abstraction. Ask them to think about line, colour, shape, scale and repetition.
4. Have them apply smooth, straight lines of tape right across the paper. They can create straight lines, diagonals and geometric shapes such as triangles and squares. Tuck and stick the edges of the tape to the back of the paper.
5. Have them smoothly paint one colour in each area defined by the tape, creating patterns by repeating or alternating colours in adjacent areas. The work will consist of white (under the tape) and other colours.
6. When all the areas are filled, set out the completed works to dry.
7. When the works are dry, have students carefully remove the tape.
8. Display the students' work and have them discuss it as a class.

### Conclusion:

- Discuss the work in terms of colours, shapes and compositions.
- What role does repetition play? Is a rhythm created through colour or shape?
- Have students look at the works and talk about similarities and differences in patterns, styles, colours and composition.
- Ask them why they chose their patterns.
- Was the painting easier or more difficult than they expected?
- Discuss the process. What are some things they had to take into consideration while planning and creating their work?

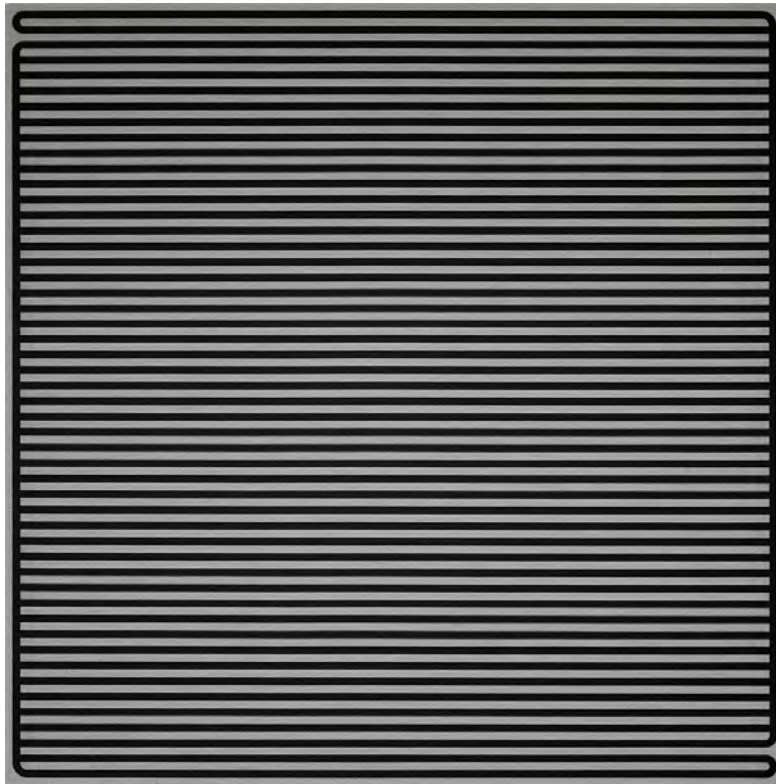
Works in Exhibition



Alyson Clay

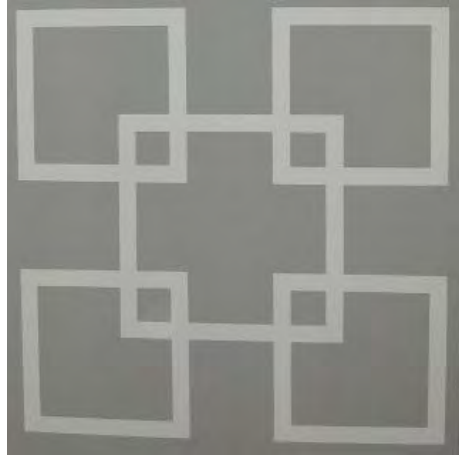
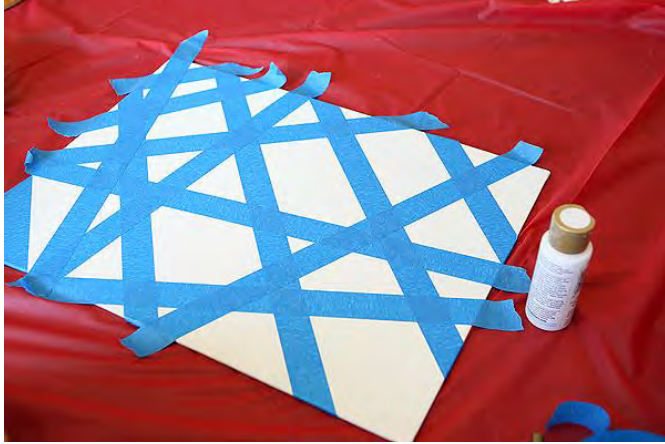


Garry Neill Kennedy



Neil Harrison

Examples of Student Work



## PRE- or POST-VISIT ACTIVITY: Package Paintings (all levels)

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### **Objective:**

Students create “paintings” using packing and everyday materials.

### **Discussion:**

Tammi Campbell’s most recent body of work consists of stretched linen canvas wrapped in packing materials. Using bubble wrap, cardboard, packing tape and plastic sheeting, which she applies to a stretched support, Campbell creates “paintings” that become meticulously crafted sculptural works made from everyday materials.

### **Materials:**

- cardboard (cut into 11” x 17” pieces or a good working size)
- scissors
- white glue
- tape (a variety of packing tapes, electrical tapes, painter’s tape)
- popsicle sticks or small glue spatulas
- bubble wrap
- miscellaneous everyday packing materials

### **Process:**

1. Discuss Tammi Campbell’s work. Have students look at the images on p. 15 or on the internet. What materials does she use? How is using packing material to “paint” different from traditional painting?
2. Provide each student with piece of cardboard as a base for the work.
3. Have them start by planning their composition using cut pieces of different materials. These can include bubble wrap, newspaper, corrugated cardboard, etc. See ideas and examples on pp. 15–16. For elementary students, some materials should be pre-cut. For intermediate and high school students, scissors can be provided.
4. Once students have planned their “paintings,” have them tape or glue their materials onto cardboard to finish the work.
5. Display student work.

### **Conclusion:**

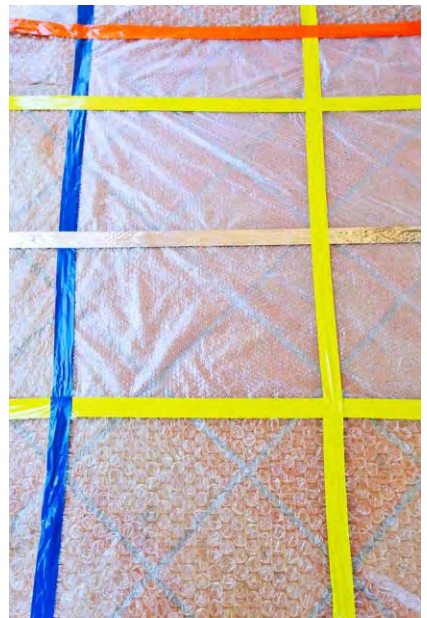
#### **Discuss:**

- How are the students’ works similar, and how are they different?
- How is using everyday packing material different from using paint or cut paper?
- Why would an artist use these types of materials?

Works by Tammi Campbell



## Examples of Student Work





## PRE- or POST-VISIT ACTIVITY: Circle Round (all levels)

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### Objective:

Students create circle pattern paintings using tempera or watercolour paints on paper.

### Discussion:

In the exhibition *Entangled*, artists such as Jeremy Hof, Jeanie Riddle and Jessica Groome include the abundant use of the circular form in many of their paintings. Abstract art based on the use of circles and other geometric forms is commonly referred to as Geometric Abstraction. Popularized by avant-garde artists in the early twentieth century, these and similar motifs have been used in art since ancient times.

### Materials:

- watercolour puck paints or thick tempera paints
- paintbrushes
- black sharpies (optional)
- white painting paper or watercolour paper
- circle stencils
- paper plates (if using thick tempera paints)
- plastic cups, used jars and bottles

### Process:

1. Have students look at the images of work on p. 18. How are the artists using the circle form in different ways? What are some things they have taken into consideration when painting?
2. Provide each student with a piece of white watercolour or thick painting paper.
3. Provide students with either circular stencils or cups, bottles and jars of varying sizes.
4. If using thick tempera paints, have students choose a few colours and place small blobs of paint on their plates. This can be used for painting. Also, edges of cups and bottles can be dipped in the paint, then stamped onto paper. See p. 19.
5. If using stencils, have students trace circle shapes with sharpies, then fill them in with watercolour puck paints or tempera. See p. 19.
6. More circles can be added using brushes and a variety of colours.
7. Place completed works in a drying area.
8. Display the students' work.

### Conclusion:

#### Discuss:

- Have students look at the works and talk about similarities and differences in patterns, styles, colours and composition.
- Ask them why they chose their particular composition.
- Was the painting easier or more difficult than they expected?
- Discuss the process. What are some things they had to take into consideration while planning and creating their work?

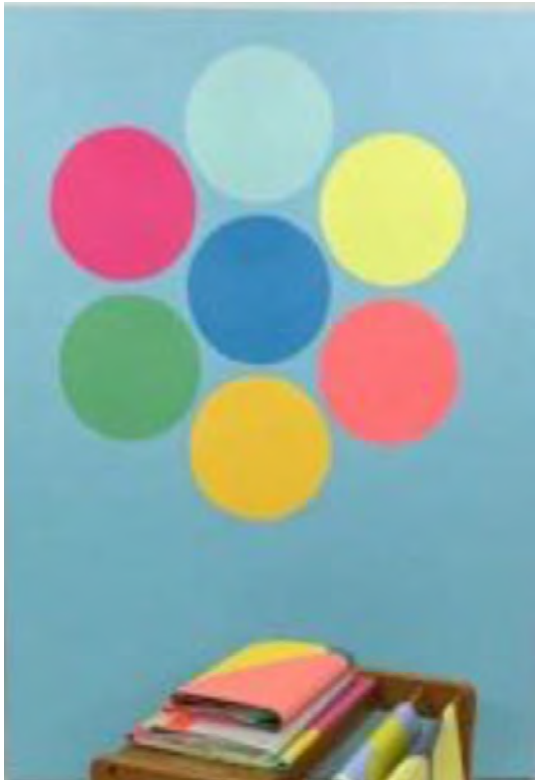
Works in Exhibition



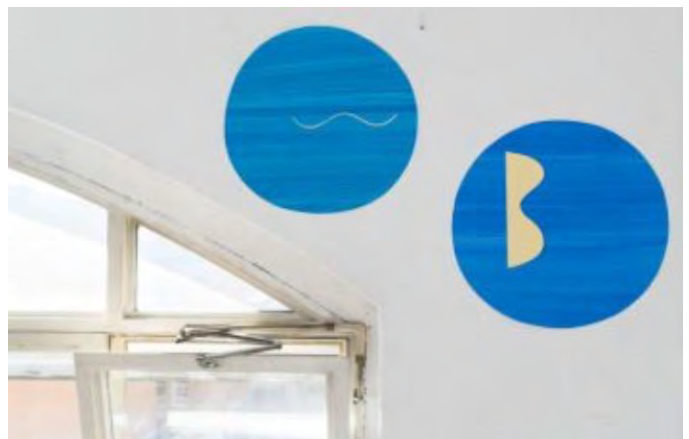
Jeremy Hof



Jeremy Hof

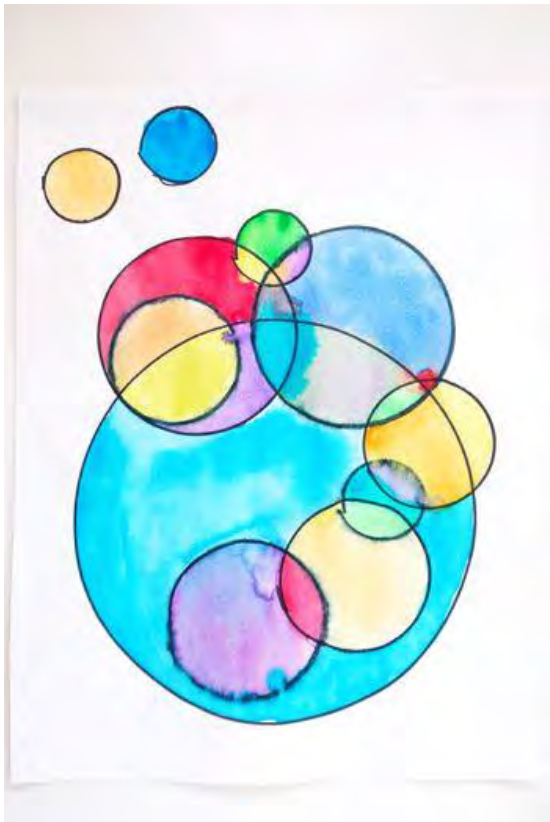


Jeanie Riddle



Jessica Groome

Examples of Student Work



## VOCABULARY

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**abstract/abstraction:** a style of art that can be thought of in two ways:

- a) the artist begins with a recognizable subject and alters, distorts, manipulates or simplifies elements of it;
- b) the artist creates purely abstract forms that are unrecognizable and have no direct reference to external reality (also called non-representational art).

**avant-garde:** people or works that are experimental, radical or unorthodox with respect to art, culture or society. The avant-garde pushes the boundaries of what is accepted as the norm or the status quo, primarily in the cultural realm.

**conceptual art:** art in which the concept(s) or idea(s) involved in the work take precedence over traditional aesthetic and material concerns. Also called conceptualism.

**contemporary:** created in the last thirty years. Most contemporary artists are living artists.

**hard-edge:** a style of painting, usually used in conjunction with the term Geometric Abstraction in the 1950s; characterized by the use of precise geometric shapes, intense colour and repeating lines. Colours were usually limited and paint was applied thinly and smoothly.

**installation:** art that is created from a wide range of materials and installed in a specific environment. An installation may be temporary or permanent.

**Minimalism/Minimalist:** In visual arts, music and other mediums, Minimalism is a style that uses pared-down design elements. Minimalism began in post-World War II Western art, most strongly with American visual arts in the 1960s and early 1970s.

**Modern/Modernist:** a historical period of art practice—from 1850 to 1970—during which approaches to art embraced new ideas in science, political thought and many other areas. The Modernists rejected the restrictions of past art traditions and stressed innovation over all other values.

**Performative painting:** a style of painting in which paint is spontaneously dribbled, splashed or smeared onto the canvas, rather than being carefully applied. The resulting work often emphasizes the physical act of painting itself as an essential aspect of the finished work or concern of its artist. The canvas is seen as “an arena in which to act,” thereby rendering the paintings as traces of the artist’s performance in his/her studio.

## RESOURCES

### Print:

Murray, Joan. *Canadian Art in the Twentieth Century*. Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1999.

Vancouver Art Gallery. *Vancouver Special: Ambivalent Pleasures*. London: Black Dog Publishing, 2016.

### Online:

[www.artcyclopedia.com](http://www.artcyclopedia.com)

<http://canadianart.ca>

[www.contemporaryartgallery.ca](http://www.contemporaryartgallery.ca)

[www.crafthubs.com](http://www.crafthubs.com)

[www.pbs.com](http://www.pbs.com)

[www.pinterest.com](http://www.pinterest.com)

[www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca](http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca)

[www.thesmarterteacher.com](http://www.thesmarterteacher.com)

[www.wikipedia.com](http://www.wikipedia.com)

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