

Symmetry with Shapes

Essential Question How do artists use shape and symmetry to create art?

Grade Kindergarten

Time 30–60 minutes

Art Concepts Symmetry, geometric shapes (circle, triangle, square, rectangle), vertical lines, horizontal lines

Materials 8½-by-11-inch copy paper, a black oil pastel or pencil, colored pencils, oil pastels, or crayons

Artwork in Focus [*Mola \(Textile Panel\) with Mirror Image of Parrots*](#), 20th century by Artist Unknown

Talking about Art *Molas*, meaning “cloth” in Kuna (the language of Panama and Colombia Kunas), are beautiful works of art created by hand-sewing many layers of colorful fabric together. Kuna women have been creating these *molas* since the eighteenth century and pass this art form down from generation to generation. *Mola* designs are often **symmetrical** (meaning images are like mirror images of each other) and feature animals, plants, and mythical imagery, as well as abstract shapes and lines in bright colors.

Describe what you see in this *mola*. What colors and **geometric shapes (circles, triangles, squares,**

rectangles, etc.) can you find? Notice the two birds. How many birds are there? What direction are they looking in? Do they look similar or different? Is the design symmetrical?

Making Art

Today, we are going to make our own symmetrical artworks that are inspired by *molas*!

1. First, fold a sheet of paper hamburger style (connecting top to bottom) and keep the paper folded (we will unfold it later in the lesson).
2. Next, we are going to draw shapes and lines on the side of the paper facing up. You can use a black oil pastel, a black crayon, or a soft pencil. Draw these shapes anywhere:
 - a. One circle
 - b. One triangle
 - c. One square
 - d. One rectangle
 - e. One **vertical line** (that goes from the top of the paper to the bottom)
 - f. One **horizontal line** (that goes from one side of the paper to the other)
3. Now, unfold your paper and then refold it—on the same fold but in the other direction, so that your drawing is inside.
4. Then, using the side of your pencil, rub the folded piece of paper. Press hard and move the pencil up and down the page.
5. After you've done that, open the paper. What do you see?

6. Trace over the shapes so that both sides look the same. Is your picture the same on both sides? Is it symmetrical?
7. Keeping the design symmetrical (that is, pairs of shapes need to be the same color), color your picture.

Reflection

Let's look again at the *mola* with the symmetrical birds. Can you think of other examples of symmetry in nature? Many flowers, leaves, and insects, such as butterflies, are symmetrical. With an adult, come up with a list of as many things as you can think of that have symmetry.

What was your favorite part of this activity?

Compare the *mola* we saw at the beginning with your artwork: What is similar about them and what is different? What shapes did you use? What shapes does the *mola* use?

Curriculum Connections California Arts Standards for Public Schools—Visual Arts

K.VA:Cr2.3: Create art that represents natural and constructed environments. 1.VA:Cr3: Use art vocabulary to describe choices while creating art.

Common Core State Standards Math

K.G.A.1: Describe objects in the environment using names of shapes, and describe the relative positions of these objects using terms such as *above*, *below*, *in front of*, *behind*, and *next to*. K.G.A.2: Correctly name shapes regardless of their orientations or overall size.

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