

Below: Emma, grade three, Helicopter.
Right: Jackie, grade four, Hot Air Balloon.



MODES OF TRANSPORTATION

Dawn Carson

I wanted to introduce my third- and fourth-grade Saturday morning art program students to the aviation murals created by Arshile Gorky. Creating their own murals after Gorky's Newark Airport aviation murals was a fun way to introduce students to Gorky, an artist who worked not far from where students live.

We began our project by studying Arshile Gorky's work. We talked about his use of expressive line and abstract shape, background, foreground, and overlapping. We spent some time talking about how students would create basic two-dimensional shapes from a three-dimensional model. We discussed modes of transportation and brainstormed a list divided into land, sea, and air. We also considered how a mural is created and discussed where students have seen a mural.

Creating Expressive Lines

Students began by drawing expressive lines on colored construction paper. We talked about how they could

listen to the classical music that was playing in the background for emotional inspiration to aid them in drawing their expressive lines. Students then used scissors to cut out the abstract shapes they created. Next, they applied their shapes with glue onto an 18 x 24" (46 x 61 cm) sheet of white drawing paper.

Simple Shape Construction

After students finished their backgrounds they were given a choice as to which toy vehicle they wanted to use as a model for their part of the mural. Each student had to choose a different model.

We talked about the shapes they recognized in the vehicles. The key here was to have students be able to dissect a complex shape into many basic recognizable shapes. For additional inspiration we looked at a few of Gorky's lost studies for his aviation murals from the book *Murals Without Walls: Arshile Gorky's Aviation*

Murals Rediscovered by Ruth Bowman (Newark Museum, 1978).

Creating the Finished Mural

Students glued their basic vehicle shapes onto their drawing paper in order to reconstruct their vehicles. They were encouraged to overlap their shapes as Gorky had done. When all of the students had finished creating their pieces of the mural, they were assembled as one completed mural with the theme of transportation. 🌀

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NATIONAL STANDARD

Students select and use subject matter, symbols, and ideas to communicate meaning.

WEB LINK

arshilegorkyfoundation.org