

## >> *Wallace Owens, Jr.*

Wallace Owens, Jr. had his first formal art lesson at Langston University. This led him to a rich life in the arts as artist, educator, and life-long student. After attending Langston University, Owens served the United States Army from 1953 to 1955. He then began teaching in Greenville, South Carolina where one of his students was Rev. Jesse Jackson. After two years, Owens left South Carolina for California where he studied electronics at night and found employment in aerospace engineering at The Lockheed Corporation where he worked on rockets and the Gemini capsule. He then returned to Oklahoma and earned his Master of Education from Central State University (now the University of Central Oklahoma). Owens continued his education at the Instituto Allende on San Miguel de Allende in Guanajuato, Mexico where he earned his Master of Fine Arts in 1966. That same year he returned to Oklahoma and began teaching art at Langston University.

While teaching at Langston University, Owens continued his studies at the American Center for Artists in Paris in 1969, at the University of Rome in 1970 as a Fulbright scholar, and then began doctoral studies at North Texas University. In 1974, he participated in a study tour of West Africa through Howard University. In 1980, Owens joined the art department faculty at Central State University. He still continued his own education during this time, studying art history at the University of Oklahoma and participating in a Middle East Study Tour with Central State University. In 1988, Owens retired as an art professor and focused on supporting his community. He founded Owens Place in Guthrie to exhibit art and encourage cultural and educational experiences.

In addition to a celebrated career in art education, Owens has had a prolific career as an artist. In 1996, Owens was commissioned to create a twenty-two foot metal sculpture for the centennial celebration of Langston University. His artwork has been included in group and solo exhibitions at the Oklahoma University Art Museum (now the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art), Kirkpatrick Galleries at Omniplex (now Science Museum Oklahoma), and the Melvin B. Tolson Black Heritage Center at Langston University. His painting, *The Creeper* is included in the Oklahoma State Art Collection at the State Capitol.



***The Creeper***  
by Wallace  
Owens, Jr.  
(1971)

### >> **Activity: Create like Wallace Owens**

#### **Supplies Needed**

- Pencil • Paintbrushes • Watercolor paints • Tissue paper
- Glue • Heavy paper (butcher paper works well)
- Small paper cups for water • Dark colored marker

#### **Instructions**

1. With your pencil, lightly sketch a series of overlapping curving lines.
2. Using your watercolors, choose three analogous (colors which are next to each other on the color wheel) colors for your painting. Paint most of your shapes with these colors. Wash your brush out between colors.
3. Tear small pieces of tissue paper. Using a small amount of glue, attach the tissue paper to your painting to add texture. Again using analogous colors, paint the tissue paper similarly to the colors beneath.
4. Using a complementary color (a color located directly across from a color on the color wheel) paint the remaining shapes.
5. Using your dark colored marker, draw curving lines and details that you want the viewer to notice.
6. Complete your painting by signing your name with your pencil.

**Further Knowledge:** Wallace Owens, Jr. paintings were informed by his travels and experiences. Use the internet or library to research more paintings by Wallace Owens as well as artwork from Mexico, Rome, and West Africa. Find the similarities between paintings of these locations and the work of Mr. Owens. Maybe you will find inspiration for your own future paintings.

**Key Words:** Analogous, Complementary and Texture.

