

Color Block Collage Portrait



John Graham was born in Kiev in 1886 and studied painting in New York. Later, he became a teacher to many artists in New York. Graham explored painting people with his own unique style.

In this activity, you will create a portrait using large colorful shapes and collage techniques inspired by John Graham's portrait of his wife, Elinor Graham.

Materials:

- Colorful collage paper, found and scrap paper, colorful paper you create (optional)
- Markers, colored pencils, and/or paint to create colorful paper (optional)
- Found collage papers or construction paper
- Scissors
- Glue

Look:

- Where do you notice big areas of color in this painting?
- Where do you see shadows, and where do you see light?
- How do the colors create shapes or parts of the face?

Process:

- Gather a variety of colorful paper to use as collage material. This could be construction paper, cutouts from magazines, newspapers, old letters, or old packaging. You may also apply markers, colored pencils, or paint to paper in order to create your own colorful collage paper.
- Begin by choosing a color for the background of your collage.
- Create a portrait by cutting out shapes to use for the features of a face. Think about how the colors you use for your portrait stand out from the background.
- Think about how you might include shadows and light areas using blocks of contrasting color.
- Glue your cut pieces down to the background sheet of paper.
- Add smaller details using different shapes and colors.

