

# Meet the Instruments:

## Make an Abstract Drawing!

For ages 3 and up

## Overview

Musicians and artists use the tools available to them to express their ideas, feelings, and stories. Musicians choose different instruments to create different sounds and moods, while artists use color, line, shapes, and textures to express themselves.

In this activity, we will explore two families of instruments used by the Minnesota Orchestra: wind instruments and brass instruments. Then we'll create our own abstract artwork inspired by the sounds we hear. While we listen to the orchestra play, we'll use colors, lines, and shapes to think about what makes different kinds of instruments special and unique!

It will take about 20-30 minutes to complete this activity.

## Connect with Art at the Walker

Look at the painting *Players, Shadows, Figments and Forms* by the artist Caroline Kent from the Walker Art Center's collection. What do you see? What does this painting remind you of? How do you feel when you look at it?

Caroline Kent's painting is an example of abstract art. In abstract artworks, artists use lines, colors, shapes, and textures to express themselves. Abstract artworks don't resemble real life, but sometimes abstract art can make us feel a certain way or remind us of something.

Artists often draw inspiration from their own lives and experiences. Caroline Kent feels inspired by language, and we are going to create our own artwork inspired by sound! Imagine each shape in Caroline Kent's painting could make a sound. What do you think each shape would sound like? What would all the shapes sound like together?

## Making!

Now we're going to create our own abstract artwork inspired by the sounds of the Minnesota Orchestra. We'll listen to music while we work to help guide our creations!



Caroline Kent, *Players, Shadows, Figments and Forms*, 2018; Acquired through Avant Garden Commission, 2019; courtesy Walker Art Center

## Materials

- Paper
- Coloring implements (markers, crayons, paint, whatever you have handy)

## Project Set-up

- Find a clear space on a table or the floor where you can work. If you are using paint, you may want to wear an apron to protect your clothes.
- Remember to clean up your workspace and wash your hands after you finish!



## Step 1

Start by listening to the wind instruments perform *Serenade No. 12 in C Minor*. What color does this music remind you of? Choose one color that you will use for the wind instruments.



## Step 2

While you listen, respond to the music by creating lines and shapes on your paper. The lines can be curvy, straight, jagged - any style that you want - but they should be inspired by the music you're hearing! Keep going until the music ends.



## Step 3

Next, listen to the brass instruments perform *Four Portraits*. Choose a new color to use for this new family of instruments. Respond to the music by creating lines and shapes on the same piece of paper. Try overlapping your new lines and shapes with the ones you created earlier! Keep working until the music ends.

## Keep Exploring

Look at the drawing you've made. Choose 1 word to describe it.

- How did you decide which color to choose for each song?
- How did you decide what lines and shapes to create? Were your drawings different for each song? How so?
- What did you notice about the different kinds of instruments as you were drawing? How are wind and brass instruments different? How are they similar?
- If you like, continue to listen to different kinds music and add new colors or textures based on the instruments you hear. Try drawing along to your favorite song!