

Learn with MoMA



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Step 1 Look closely

1. Make a list of the colors you notice, paying attention to the various shades and hues.
2. What moods or emotions does each color and/or hue evoke for you?

Step 2 Learn more

Self-Awareness refers to the perception of one's own feelings and beliefs and the ability to understand how these affect other people. It is one of the core competencies in the [CASEL framework](#). An important part of Self-Awareness is identifying one's own emotions and how they may change moment to moment.

One way of doing this is by associating emotions with colors. However, people can react to the same color differently due to cultural norms and personal preferences. Associating colors with emotions can be a way of identifying how someone is feeling in a given moment and providing an opportunity to express themselves.

Hans Hofmann was an abstract artist whose work was known for his expressive use of color. He said, "The whole world, as we experience it visually, comes to us through the mystic realm of color. In nature, light creates the color. In the picture, color creates the light."

Step 3 Activity: Map your moods

Materials: colored pencils and a small index card (optional: string, pushpins)

1. Take a moment to check in with yourself and think of one word that expresses how you are feeling at the moment. You can refer to a [list of emotion words](#) if you would like help to find the most accurate word.
2. Look closely at the painting and identify a section where the color corresponds to your emotion.
3. On a small index card, recreate that color with the colored pencils to the best of your ability. You may need to blend and layer with the pencils to create a good match. Write your emotion word on the card.
4. Save your card, or, if you are doing this with the whole class, save all the cards.
5. Repeat this activity daily: Identify your emotion and find an existing card to match it, or create a new card to add a new color and emotion.
6. Optional: Hang a color printout of the painting in the classroom. Use pins and string to mark the area in the painting that corresponds to the color/emotion cards.

Step 4 Share!

Ask a family member to look at the painting and identify an emotion and color. Or email us a photo of your emotion cards:

schoolprograms@moma.org.



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Image: Hans Hofmann. *Flowering Desert*. 1953. Oil on canvas. Eve Clendenin Bequest. © 2022 Estate of Hans Hofmann / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.