

# POSTCARDS FROM UTAH ARTISTS

## Formalist Dance

Just as in the visual arts, dance approaches vary widely. This dance lesson is based on the formalist idea that lines, shapes, colors, etc., are what is most important. The lesson will be most effective if used after one of the art lessons on formalist art.

## Materials

Posters: *Chelsea VI*, Don Olsen SMA Elementary Poster Set

Postcards: *Chelsea VI*, other formalist artworks such as *La Semilla Brota*, Allen Bishop; *Sentinel*, Frank Riggs; *Marine #2*, George Dibble from sma.nebo.edu  
drum (optional)

**Process:** Warm up by stretching gently in every direction and then shaking each body part, then the whole body.

Show the students the poster of *Chelsea VI* and have the students identify the kind of artwork it is: a painting, a formalist artwork—emphasis is on shapes and color and line. Have the students name some of the lines and shapes they see. Have them stand and make those lines and shapes with their bodies.

Divide students into groups and pass out a set of postcards to each group. Each group will spend about 5 minutes exploring some individual shapes and lines their bodies can make, looking at the artworks for inspiration. Then have students work on putting those shapes together to make a group design. Students should choose a beginning shape, a shape as part of the group shape, and a way to get from the beginning shape to the group shape. The moving part should take 4 counts.

The whole pattern will be as follows:

Beginning shape: hold 4 counts

Moving: 4 counts

Group shape: 8 counts

Each group should practice the pattern. Using the drum or clapping your hands, give the students the beat. Explain how you will count and how the students will move.



George Dibble, *Marine #2*

Give the directions below:

*Ready*

*Beginning shape: 1, 2, 3, 4,*

*Hold, 2, 3, 4.*

*Move, 2, 3, 4.*

*Hold, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.*

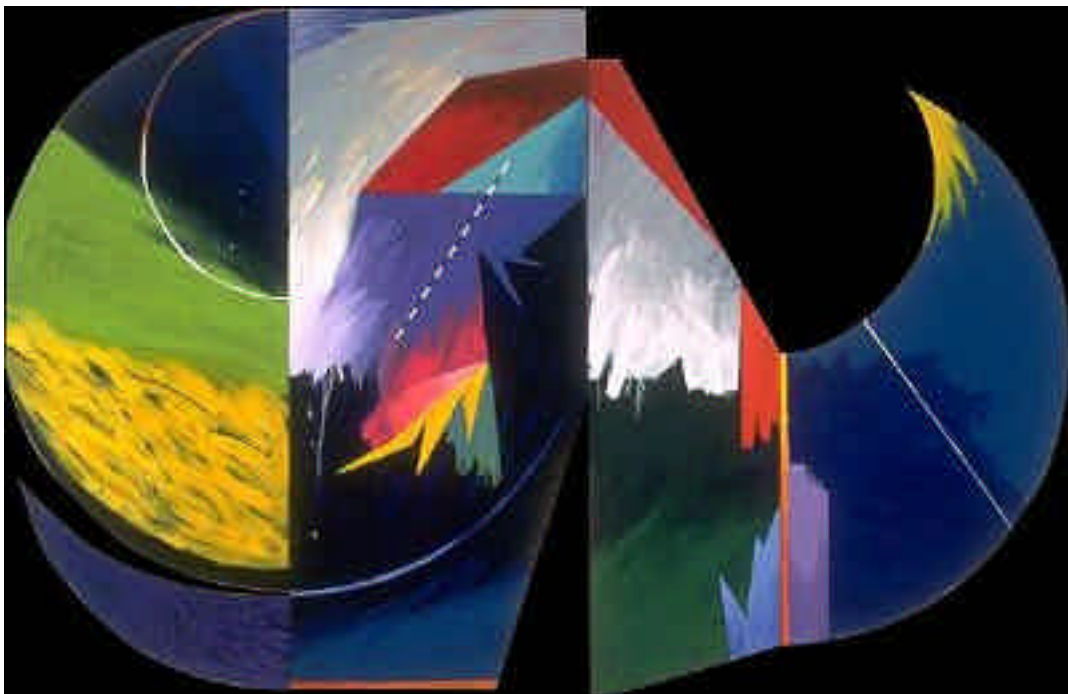
(Say the words in italics and clap or beat on *Hold, Move,* and *Hold*; they are beat one of the measures.)

Have each group of students perform their patterns for the class. If they can count to themselves, use just Ready and then the beats. Otherwise, continue to provide directions and the beats.

**Extension:** Add the dimension of movement and time to the lesson.



Frank Riggs, *Sentinel*



Allen Bishop, *La Semilla Brota*

## Dance/Movement

**Objective:** Students will demonstrate their awareness of body position and posture by walking in different styles.

**Materials:**

Postcards: Cyrus Dallin, *John Hancock*, *Sacajawea*, *Paul Revere, Massasoit*; Mahonri Young: *Factory Worker*  
Photographs of famous people

If used with the fifth grade lesson on famous people, use only that part of the introduction

**Warm up:** Have students spread out at least an arm's width from any other student. Tell the students you are all marionettes and demonstrate to the students: bend your knees slightly, bend your arms and hold them out to the sides as if they had strings attached at the elbows, and bob your head slightly. Call out instructions to the students and demonstrate the movement for them. Right elbow up then down, left knee up then down, head to the left and to the right, etc. Have the students go through a range of motion. Then, say "all the strings let go!" and collapse to the floor. Then slowly, curl up to standing.

Now have the students divide into five groups and form five lines on one side of the space. Explain that today, the class is going to explore one of the simplest movements we make—walking. Ask students to continue to imagine they are pulled upward by a string out of the top of their head, not so they're looking up, just standing tall. Now have the students walk across the floor, a row at a time, a new row every 8 beats. Clap your hands or beat a drum (a large plastic ice cream bucket with its lid on works fine).

When all the students have walked across the room and back, ask them to walk across the room as if they were a king or queen. Now ask them to walk like an athlete; then like a movie star, etc. Then give each group a postcard, a photograph, or a slip of paper with a famous person's name on it. The group should discuss for a moment how that individual would walk. Each group should have a chance to walk across and back as their person. Then have each group show the walk to the rest of the class. They can try to get the rest of the class to guess who they are, or they can have an announcer.

After each group has demonstrated the person's walk, allow the children to discuss what they saw and did. Ask the students to identify as many ways as they can how each walk was different—what made the walks expressive of individual characteristics.

