

Contextual Information, Piet Mondrian, Father of Neo-Plasticism: Piet Mondrian (1872-1944) was one of the founding fathers of Neo-Plasticism. Neo-Plasticism (not an official movement) began during the 19teens and was based on the belief that art should not be a mere reproduction of real objects, but the expression of absolutes of art and beauty. To artists who practiced this theory, the absolutes were vertical/horizontal lines and the primary colors (Abstract Art and Artists, 2000). Piet Mondrian began practicing Neo-Plasticism in 1917. In his early works, Mondrian used thin grey lines and flat bright colors to separate the forms. Also in his early painting, Mondrian used smaller and more numerous forms, which were all filled with primary pigment. He left a few white. After moving to New York in 1940, Mondrian began creating works which appeared to be busy with many lines arranged in a topographical manner. In New York he also began to use thick color lines to create his compositions. An unfinished painting found in New York after his death also revealed Mondrian's use of colored tape to create configurations.

Media Description, Silkscreen Printing: This printmaking technique became popular in the 20th century. The screen is made of a woven mesh and stretched over a wooden frame. A stencil is then attached to the screen to form an open area, which will later become part of the image. Then a roller or a squeegee is used to move the ink across the screen, pushing the ink through the threads of the woven mesh (exposed by the open areas of the stencil) onto the paper or cloth to create an image (Zegrer, 2004).

Title: *Untitled*

Artist: Ilya Bolotowsky (1907-1981)

Date: 1979

Size: 29 5/8 by 22 inches

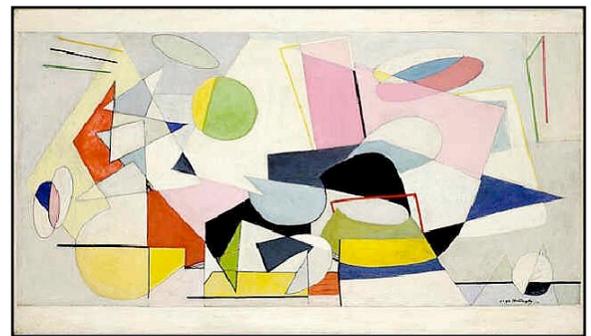
Medium: Silkscreen Print

Accession #: 93.25.2

Additional works in the collection by the artist? YES



Artist's Biography: Ilya Bolotowsky was born in St. Petersburg, Russia in 1907. His family fled Russia on the eve of the Russian Revolution of 1917 and emigrated to Constantinople (Spanierman Modern, 2011). After moving to New York in 1923, Bolotowsky received his first solo show in New York in 1930 and later became part of the group called The Ten, which included artists like Louis Schanker and Mark Rothko who were exploring abstract subject matter as an expressive medium. He was also in charge of creating and overseeing the first abstract mural for the Williamsburg Housing Project in New York which was completed under the Federal Art Project (Rehs Galleries, 2011). His early works were heavily influenced by Russian Constructivist Kasimir Malevich and characterized by the use of abstract imagery and the combination of biomorphic and geometric elements on the flat picture plane. Later in life Bolotowsky's work became more abstract and he started creating non-objective works. In his later works Bolotowsky was influenced by Piet Mondrian's Neo-Plasticism and a search for philosophical order through visual expression (Rehs Galleries, 2011).



Study for the Williamsburg Mural, Ilya Bolotowsky, 1936

References:

- Abstract Art and Artists, (2000). Neoplasticism. Retrieved from: <http://abstractart.20m.com/Neoplasticism.html>
- Hollis Taggart Galleries, (2011). *Ilya Bolotowsky (1907-1981)*. Retrieved from: www.hollistaggart.com/artists/biography/ilya_bolotowsky/
- Rehs Galleries, (2011). *Ilya Bolotowsky: (1907-1981)*. Retrieved from: www.rehs.com/Ilya_Bolotowsky_Bio.html
- Spanierman Modern, (2011). *Ilya Bolotowsky (1907-1981)*. Retrieved from: <http://www.spaniermanmodern.com/inventory/B/Ilya-Bolotowsky>
- Zegrer, M. (2004). *Silkscreen Printing*. Retrieved from: www.artelino.com

Exploring Neo-Plasticism: Grades K-5

Objectives: 1. The students will become familiar with concepts of Neo-Plasticism. They will explore the relationships between primary colors, lines, and shapes. 2. The students will be asked to create their own paintings using ideas of Neo-Plasticism and the elements presented.

Materials: Large sheets of heavy white paper or canvas paper, acrylic paint, paint brushes, water, mixing trays (can be cardboard pallets or styrofoam egg cartons), masking tape of various sizes, paper towels, newspaper, newsprint.

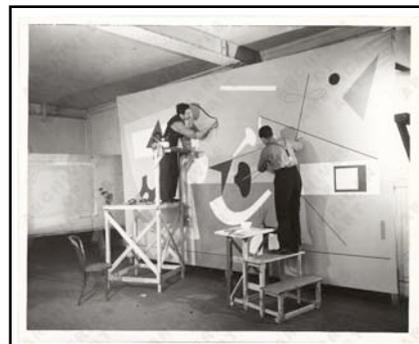
Procedures: 1. Using Ilya Bolotowsky's images, as well as examples by Piet Mondrian, the teacher will discuss the basic line, shape, and color elements and the way they are used in Neo-Plasticism paintings. The teacher will emphasize the non-objective nature of the works, that artists who were interested in Neo-Plasticism just wanted the viewer to appreciate straight lines, shapes, and colors.

2. Ask students to describe lines, shapes, and colors they see in these works and ask them to describe the similarities between the Mondrian and Bolotowsky works.

3. Ask the students to look at the image of Bolotowsky working on a mural. Discuss the way he seems to be constructing his painting. Have the students create simple compositions of lines using masking tape. Discuss with the students the importance of lines in Neo-Plasticism and the way they were used to create shapes.

4. Ask the students to describe the colors in a Bolotowsky or Mondrian painting. Without removing the masking tape line composition, instruct the students to choose similar colors and begin painting.

5. After the paintings are dry, the masking tape should be removed very carefully to reveal the hidden shapes created by the lines. Ask students to describe the shapes. The teacher will display select works by the students for a comparison and contrast with the works by Bolotowsky previously presented. Ask the students comparison and contrast questions that relate to the ideas of Neo-Plasticism as well as line and color.



Bolotowsky working on a mural for the WPA with assistant, John Joslyn.

Sunshine State Standards: Grade 6

Big Idea - Skills, Techniques, and Processes.

Enduring Understanding - Development of skills, techniques, and processes in the arts strengthens our ability to remember, focus on, process, and respond to art.

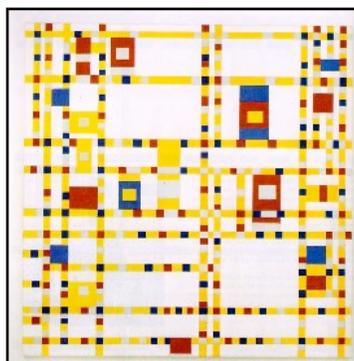
Benchmark - VA.68.S.2.2. - Create artwork requiring sequentially ordered procedures and specified media to achieve intended results.

Sunshine State Standards: Grade 4

Big Idea - Critical Thinking and Reflection.

Enduring Understanding - Cognition and reflection are required to appreciate, interpret and create with artistic intent.

Benchmark - VA.4.C.1.2. - Describe observations and apply prior knowledge to interpret visual information and reflect on works of art.



Piet Mondrian, Broadway Boogie Woogie, Oil on canvas, 1942-1943, 50 x 50 in.

Observation and Evaluation: Grades 6-12

Objectives: 1. Students will be asked to locate two Neo-Plasticism artists whose works are similar to Bolotowsky and Mondrian and select two to three works from each artist. 2. Students will engage in a critical discussion to compare and contrast works and to relate them to Neo-Plasticism theory.

Procedures:

1. The teacher will present the theory and basic elements of Neo-Plasticism to the class, including numerous examples of artwork by Bolotowsky and Mondrian and other key artists of this movement.

2. At the end of the class discussion the teacher will distribute a list of various artists who practiced Neo-Plasticism from which the students may choose.

3. Students will choose two artists from the provided list and locate two to three works by these artists, for example Theo van Doesburg and Burgoyne Diller (follow the link for more information: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/De_Stijl)

4. Students will prepare a discussion based on the following questions: Why did you select these particular artists? Why do you think they belong to the Neo-Plasticism movement? How do the works of these two artists differ from each other? Explain.

4. In class the students will break into groups of two or three and engage in a critical discussion comparing and contrasting the artists they selected. The discussion will last for approximately 25 to 30 minutes.

5. At the end of the discussion, each group will present their conclusions: why these artists were selected, the way the work relates to Neo-Plasticism, and the difference between the work of the artists.