

# Studio Art 9: Narrative & Abstraction

April 27–May 1

*Time Allotment: 20 minutes per day*

**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Teacher Name: Ms. Hoelscher**

## Packet Overview

<b>Date</b>	<b>Objective(s)</b>	<b>Page Number</b>
Monday, April 27	Understand and explore visual narrative	2-5
Tuesday, April 28	Understand the difference between abstraction and representation.	5-8
Wednesday, April 29	Understand symbols in a visual narrative.	9-10
Thursday, April 30	Begin working on a book cover design with symbolism.	11
Friday, May 1	Illustrate understanding of elements of art and narrative in a final book cover design.	12

**Additional Notes:** Use a separate piece of paper, sketchbooks or the spaces provided in this packet to create your designs and images. You will need colors, (crayons, colored pencils will work best) but will accept any medium you choose to use. Examples are provided, parent involvement is okay, but students must complete minor assessments, images and design on their own.]

### **Academic Honesty**

I certify that I completed this assignment independently in accordance with the GHNO Academy Honor Code.

*Student signature:*

\_\_\_\_\_

I certify that my student completed this assignment independently in accordance with the GHNO Academy Honor Code.

*Parent signature:*

\_\_\_\_\_

## Monday, April 27

Art Unit: Narrative & Abstraction

Lesson 1: What is a narrative?

**Objective:** Understand and explore visual narrative.

### **Lesson 1: Narrative**

**Narrative** is the telling of a story, either fictitious or true and can be told either through visual means or spoken.

We often hear that a picture is worth a thousand words. Symbols, visible interactions, facial expressions, relationships of objects, cultural references, and colors are some of the various elements that can lend to a successfully expressed visual narrative, which add up to these thousand words, if not more. Understanding visual narrative and the artist's occasionally specific 'tool kit' for their visual narrative allows the viewer to more fully appreciate the image.

In the following image, *Miraculous Draught of Fish*, it is clear that *something* is happening. It isn't just a portrait. There is **action**. It is from an altarpiece that was on display behind the altar of a church in Switzerland. This is one type of visual narrative; it is describing a biblical scene when Peter jumps out of the boat to thank Jesus after the miracle of an abundant catch of fish.

1. Looking at the image of *Miraculous Draught of Fish*, do you notice anything else about the painting? What color scheme did the artist choose to use to create greater contrast in the image? How did the artist create depth (hint: recall foreground vs background)?



Konrad Witz, *Miraculous Draught of Fish*, from the *Altarpiece of Saint Peter*, from Chapel of Notre-Dame des Maccabees in the Cathedral of Saint Peter, Geneva, Switzerland, 1444. Oil on wood.

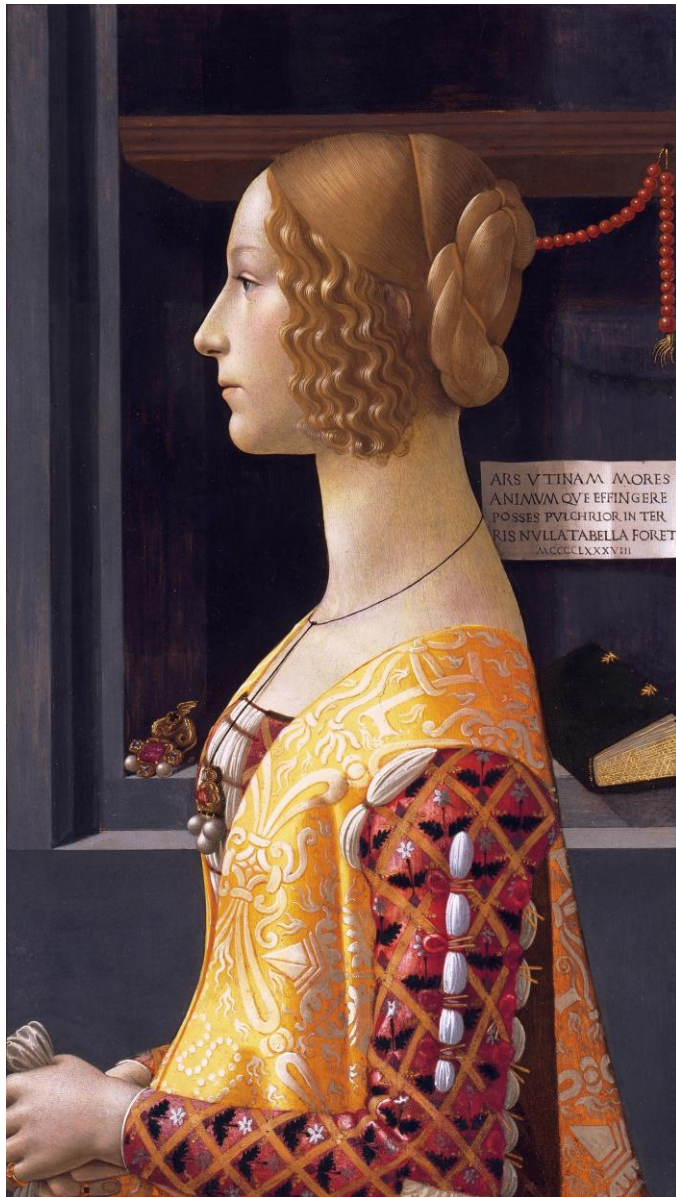
Throughout the centuries, art has been used to edify the masses, specifically the illiterate. In order to do so, the images need to tell a story and both the artist and viewer needed to have the tools to understand. It would make sense then, that in the mid 1400's, many images would be used as visual narratives.

2. Could a portrait tell a narrative? Why or why not? Write your thoughts below in 3 or more sentences.

An example of a portrait that shows a narrative is the one below. Another way of thinking of a narrative is giving the viewer hints of who the person is or was and one must become a detective to parse out the person in the painting.

3. What would indicate that this woman is wealthy?

The book would refer to her education and wealth. The beads hanging in the background could be prayer beads, showing her to be a pious woman. The epigraph behind Giovanna translates, "Art, would that you could represent character and mind! There would be no more beautiful painting on earth 1488," which would show the high regard they had for her character in addition to her beauty.



Domenico Ghirlandaio, *Giovanni Tornabuoni*, 1488. Oil and tempera on wood.

4. What symbols would you include in a picture about your favorite book or story? The symbols we just saw in the portrait were prayer beads, book, and her dress as examples.

## **Tuesday, April 28**

Art Unit: Narrative & Abstraction  
Lesson 2: Narrative Abstraction

**Objective:** Understand the difference between abstraction and representation

### **Lesson 2:** Representation VS Nonrepresentational

**Representational art** is called such when the object of the image depicts the object as it is seen or as close to how it is seen as possible. This can also be referred to as “realistic,” though we should avoid this term because the fact that there was a Realist Movement in France in the 1840’s can make using this term confusing.

Help *memorize* the definition of representational art by writing your own definition in the space below.

Representational art is \_\_\_\_\_.

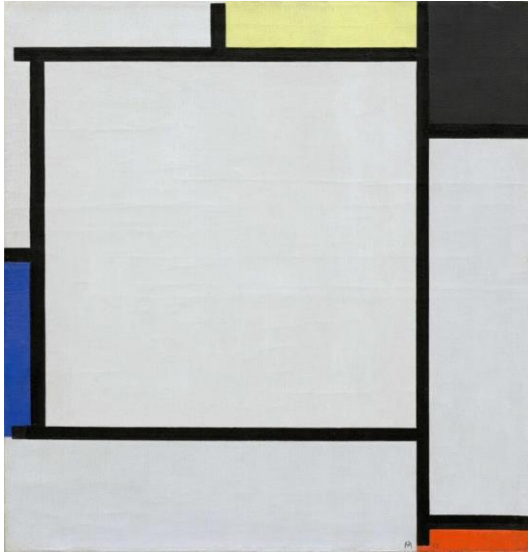
The following image is an example of representational art.



Jan Van Eyck, *Giovanni Arnolfini and His Bride*, 1434. Oil on wood.

1. What do you think this is a representation of? Please write 3 sentences on what you see using evidence from the painting by Jan Van Eyck in the space below.

**Nonrepresentational art** is a depiction that starts without an object. It focuses on the elements of art without depicting anything but still requires an interpretation from the viewer. It can be confusing but needs to be recognized as *different* from abstraction, which we will discuss in a moment. Nonrepresentational art is NOT abstraction. Tableau II is an example of nonrepresentational art on the next page.



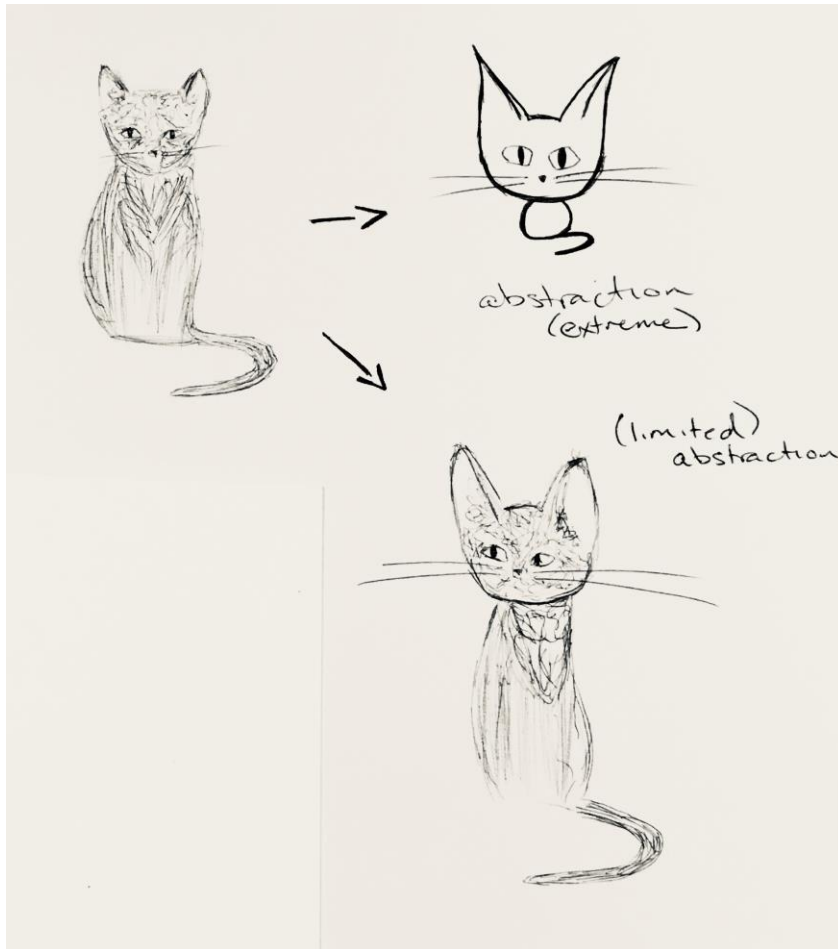
Piet Mondrian, *Tableau II*, 1922, oil on canvas.

**Abstract art** is often not what is seen but a distortion of the object or thing. It can also be what you might typically think of when you hear the terms “abstract art.” However, it often gets confused with nonrepresentational art, which does not start with the depiction of an object.

**Abstraction** can be as simple as the artist editing the background, either through the color scheme or through simplification. It can also be as complicated as cubism.

In these boxes (or on a separate page submitted on google classrooms under the Week 6 Daily Work Submission tab) please pick an object from around your house and draw it once as you see it (representational art), and then again abstracting it slightly or excessively. **TURN THE PAGE TO LOOK AT AN EXAMPLE BEFORE YOU START.**

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## Wednesday, April 29

Art Unit: Narrative & Abstraction  
Lesson 3: Symbols in a Narrative

**Objective:** Understand symbols in a visual narrative.

### **Lesson 3:**

Abstraction is done anytime an artist changes something about the object they are painting in their painting. Adding anything into a portrait or visual narrative is an abstraction. This is particularly true when symbols are added.

Symbols are part of the “tool kit” that artists use to explain the narrative in visual narrative, portraits, and other types of art. To fully understand an image, one must understand the symbols being used.



For example, the Jan Van Eyck painting we looked at yesterday, *Giovanni Arnolfini and His Bride*, is rich with symbols. It is fascinating to try to break down symbolism in a painting so let's start!



1. What do you associate with the color green?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What do you associate with dogs?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. What do you associate with fur coats?

\_\_\_\_\_

Keep asking yourself questions about various items throughout the painting and then ask what they could say about the couple depicted. On the next page, select 5 things and write what may be symbolized through the items.

5 items from the Jan Van Eyck painting and what is associated with them:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

In books we often discuss symbols and narratives and what the author could be saying through those symbols. In painting it is the same, only with visual clues we have to decipher. In Humane Letters, you all are reading *The Great Gatsby*, and have read other books too I imagine. We are going to create a book cover design in the next few days! We won't be detailing the whole book, but little clues as to what happens. Let's brainstorm!

1. Please pick a book from the list for which you will use to create your book design:

- Beowulf
- Lord of the Flies
- To Kill a Mockingbird
- Fahrenheit 451
- My Antonia
- Adventures of Huckleberry Finn

2. What parts of the story and characters would you want to put on the front cover?

3. How would you like to add symbolism to the cover?

### **Thursday, April 30**

Art Unit: Narrative & Abstraction

Lesson 4: Narrative continued

**Objective:** Prep drawings for the book cover.

#### **Lesson 4: Book Cover Design**

Creating a book cover design we need to keep in mind narrative and symbols to give clues on what the book is about without giving it all away! Have fun and makes sure to use the elements of art we've been discussing the last few weeks.

1. First, in the space provided, continue your brainstorming for symbols from the book of your choice and how you might include them. (1-2 minutes)
2. Next, before we start working on our final drawing we are going to create thumbnail sketches of three possible compositions. (3-4 minutes)
3. Choose a composition you like best and begin a quick full scale "rough draft" on a fresh sheet of paper. (14 minutes)

1. Symbol brainstorm!

2. Thumbnail sketches:

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**Friday, May 1**

Art Unit: Narrative & Abstraction

Lesson 5: Narrative continued

**Objective:** Create a final book cover design

**Lesson 5: Final Book Cover Design (Minor Assessment)**

With the thumbnail sketches, rough draft, and a fresh sheet of paper nearby begin your final book cover design!

Start with general areas first, moving to more detail. Start with light pencil marks, being intentional with the direction and line quality of your marks. Keep in mind the elements of art that we've been studying! Have fun with the symbols and designing this final draft.

Elements of art: color, depth, line, shape, form, value, and texture.