

OFF THE GRID

Isaiah Zagar's large public murals often feature portraits that can span over 30 feet, and he has created over 125 of them in Philadelphia alone! Zagar works in an improvisational style, painting his design directly on the wall without sketches or measurements. By using the following grid technique, utilized by artists since the Renaissance, students can create their own large paper mosaic based on a Zagar mural, or the class could come up with their own collaborative design to enlarge.



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Students will observe the connections between contemporary and classical art.
- Students will observe and analyze images and make calculations to transfer images to a larger scale.
- Students will analyze and manipulate shapes and evaluate which are most useful in making a mosaic.
- Students will identify and create geometric shapes, patterns and/or tessellations.
- Students will collaborate to construct a large-scale paper mosaic.

MATERIALS

- 4 - 6 large 1/4 in sheets of 30" x 40" foam core, depending on class size
- Rulers
- Scissors, one per student
- Pencils
- Acrylic paint and markers
- Paintbrushes
- Colorful scrap paper for collaging
- Glue sticks, one per student
- Spray adhesive (optional)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What makes working on a large scale difficult? How does the grid method make it easier?
2. Which shapes were the most useful for mosaicing? Which shapes were the least useful and why?
3. Which colors contrast and stand out the most in the piece? Which blend the most or look the same?
4. How many shapes were you able to get out of one sheet of paper?
5. If you were going to make a permanent large-scale mural, what would it look like?

KEY VOCABULARY

Grid - a network of uniformly spaced horizontal and perpendicular lines

Enlarge – to make larger, expand

Contrast- differ or vary

Pattern- repeated shapes, lines or designs

ACTIVITY

1. Paint the background color of the foam core with one or two layers of acrylic, or attach large sheets of solid colored paper with spray adhesive.
2. Select a 6" x 8" (4 panels) or 8" x 9" (6 panels) image for enlarging or use one of the images provided at the end of this lesson plan.
3. Student can draw one inch grids directly onto photocopies if desired.
4. Enlarge grid onto 30" x 40" panels with a scale of 1 inch = 10 inches.
5. Enlarge image or photocopy block by block, paying close attention to line quality and observing what is in each block and the angle of the line work.
6. Paint over the design with a color that contrasts with the background.
7. Divide the boards among the students. Up to four students can work on each panel.
8. Prepare or have students cut small shapes of the collage papers.
9. Give students sheets of colorful paper and markers and have them create patterns using contrasting colors. They should then measure out several shapes- triangles, squares, rhombuses, trapezoids, and cut them out to collage.
10. Students can "mosaic" the pieces onto their panel by gluing the small paper shapes around and inside the line work. They may need to cut some of the shapes to make them fit the piece.
11. Combine all of the panels to view your completed large-scale paper mosaic.

ADAPTATIONS

Younger students can work on smaller pieces of cardboard to create their own paper collage and list the different shapes they used to collage their piece. Older students can work in groups or individually to draw or pick their own image to expand using the grid technique. They can also transform the image by purposefully reducing or enlarging the mathematical equation to distort the image and make an anamorphic piece as in "The Ambassadors," made by the German artist Hans Holbein, the Younger (1497-1543).

PA ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Mathematics

Geometry 2.9.3 A, 2.9.3 B, 2.9.3 C

Geometry 2.9.5 A, 2.9.5 D, 2.9.5 G

Geometry 2.9.8 A, 2.9.8 K

Arts & Humanities:

Production, Performance and Exhibition of Dance, Music, Theatre and Visual Arts 9.1 C

RESOURCES

<http://www.princetonol.com/groups/iad/lessons/middle/grid-drawings.htm>

<http://www.art-is-fun.com/grid-method.html>



6" x 8" Image for four panels



6" x 8" Image for four panels



8" x 9" Image for six panels



8" x 9" Image for six panels