

Mondrian Trees

Piet Mondrian is a Dutch artist. His name is pronounced Peet MAWN dree Ahn. (Let students pronounce it three times to help them remember.) He is best known for his later paintings, which used straight black vertical and horizontal lines. Point out horizontal and vertical lines around the room. Display his most famous line and shape paintings.

Mondrian used lots of lines in his paintings. Explain to the class that Mondrian started painting trees very “real” looking, but as he painted more, his paintings began to look less and less real. Eventually they were completely abstract and although they were called trees, they didn’t look at all like trees.

Demonstrate the following steps.

1. Paper set-up: Choose colored background paper 12” x18” and glue the white 9”x12” on top with three dots of white glue on each side. 2.

2. Draw the tree:

- Use a black oil pastel and draw the thick trunk of a tree, filling it in as you go. As you move up the trunk it should get thinner. You should draw right off the top of the paper. Half way up the trunk, you should draw another thick branch up and off the paper. Comment that you have just made the letter “Y”. Continue to ‘branch’ more and more limbs, repeating the letter “Y” until the sky is filled with branches.
- Remember that Mondrian drew his trees in many ways. Yours can be as real or as abstract as you wish.

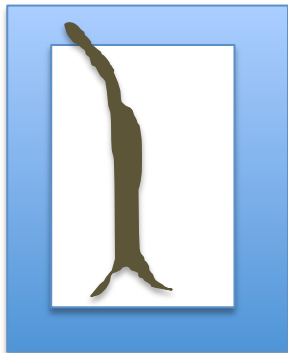
CREATE:

At this point let students draw their trees and the land line (horizon). Then demonstrate the following.

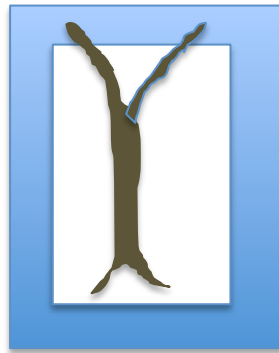
3. Use and care of brushes and watercolor paints: Demonstrate gentle use of brushes, always pulling them across the paint cakes or paper and never pushing them. Show them how to wash the brush, dab away the extra water and then fill with paint by using these words:

SWISH... WIPE... GENTLY TWIST (to fill with paint)

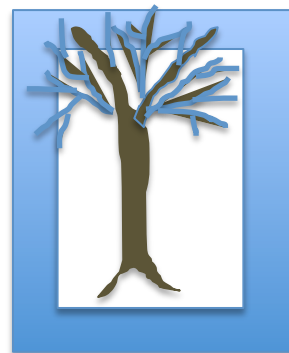
4. Painting of the many tree spaces: Begin painting with one color, filling in about 7 spaces between the branches, and also make a few brush strokes on the land. If you run out of paint, just add more water and more paint. Then clean your brush and get ready for a new color. Paint with the new color until it is evenly distributed on the sky and land. Then go on to the next color, and so on. Leave some white spaces if you wish.



Trunk



‘Y’ shape



‘V’ Branches



Horizontal Line