

Looking at Abstract Art

Does abstract art intimidate you? Before you judge these paintings too quickly, use your imagination a little. Viewing abstract art can be like playing a game. Here's how you play:

- Look for special shapes, lines and patterns.
- Notice the colors and the size of each work.
- Think about what the picture could possibly be. What does it remind you of?
- Does the painting seem to relate to a particular mood?



Franz Jozef Ponstingl (1927-2004), *Untitled*, ca. 1970-72, Oil on canvas, 42 x 50 inches, Collection of John Munice

The term **abstract art** is a style of modern art and it comes from the artist “abstracting” or selecting a special view of his or her subject to

focus on. Abstract artwork doesn't look realistic but may have objects that you can recognize. Abstract artists use shapes, colors, forms, and textures to express their ideas and emotions.

A good example of this style is the painting, *Untitled*, by Franz Josef Ponstingl. In this unfinished **still life**, Ponstingl transformed a traditional still life arrangement into something strange and unsettling.

At Home: Draw a Still Life

Create a still life of your own! A still life is a composition featuring inanimate objects such as flowers, food or vases. Select some objects found in your home and arrange them on a table. Draw them using materials of your choice. Will you arrange them in an abstract way like Ponstingl? You are the artist, so it's up to you!

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The Art Chart

Look around the exhibit, *Ponstingl: Dreams of Past Futures*, and note carefully the details of each painting. Pick several paintings and complete the chart to help you focus and observe the artists' detailed work.

Title	Colors	Shapes and Patterns	Materials used	This Reminds me of ...