

# Looking at Contemporary Abstract Art

What do you think of the paintings on display in this gallery? Before you judge these paintings too quickly, use your imagination. 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?
- Now go look at the title the artist has given his or her work and see if it matches your own ideas.

Perhaps these paintings don't look like any other artwork you've seen before – and that's the point! Sometimes artists want to break away from older, more traditional styles of creating art. They want to try new methods, materials and techniques. Museum visitors have to think differently with the artwork displayed in this gallery because the work may not depict objects they can recognize. This gallery shows a variety of **abstract** works of art.

The term abstract art is a style of art and it comes from the artist "abstracting" or selecting a special view of his or her subject to focus on. Perhaps the artist will paint from a new angle; perhaps he or she will pick out or "abstract" the dominant colors or shapes to emphasize those aspects in the work.

A good example of this style is the painting, *Upriver from Lumberville Walking Bridge II* by Alan Goldstein.

Here's a painting of something many of us familiar with Bucks County may have seen.



Alan Goldstein, *Upriver from Lumberville Walking Bridge II*, 1984, oil on canvas, James A. Michener Art Museum, purchased with funds provided by Anne and Joseph Gardocki

The artwork is not as easy to create as it seems. Pick your favorite painting or the most unusual work in the museum and try to recreate the design on the other side of this sheet.