

PONSYINGL

DREAMS OF PAST FUTURES



Family Activity Guide

Look

Learn

Discover

Connect

This guide belongs to:

Use this guide to explore the artwork in the exhibition. *Have fun!*

? Tips For Your Visit

- Talk about the art. Look closely to see what you can discover.
- Read the guide aloud. Discuss responses to questions and ideas posed in the guide.
- Help protect the art! Look with your eyes and not with your hands. Grown-ups too!
- Draw or write with a pencil only. If you don't have a pencil, ask for one at the front desk or borrow one from the Family Education Center.

WORDS TO KNOW



Abstract Art: artwork that 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. They do not represent people, objects, or places realistically.

Archaeology: the scientific study of past human cultures by analyzing the sites and artifacts that people left behind.

Asymmetrical: different on either side of a central axis; not the same on both sides.

Civilization: The type of culture and society developed by a particular nation or region or in a particular era or time period; for example, Mayans and ancient Romans.

Focal Point: the area of an artwork which draws the viewer's attention and has the most emphasis.

Geometric: a precise shape or a shape formed by geometry, such as an oval, circle, or square.

Hieroglyphs: the formal writing system used in ancient Egypt.

Interior Designer: is a person who specializes in designing architectural interiors and their furnishings.

Landscape: a painting, photograph or other work of art that depicts scenery such as mountains, valleys, trees, rivers and forests.

Line: an element of art that refers to the continuous mark made on a surface by a moving point. Types include vertical, horizontal, diagonal, straight or curved.

Mural: a painting that is applied to and made integral with the surface of a wall or ceiling.

Organic: free-form or natural shapes having no resemblance to geometry-based forms.

Pattern: the repetition of shapes, lines, or colors in a design; also called a motif.

Pictograph: an ancient or prehistoric drawing or painting often done on a rock wall.

Still-life: a composition featuring inanimate objects such as flowers, food or vases. Objects in a still life cannot get up and walk away by themselves.

Surrealism: an art movement started by French poet André Breton in the 1920s. It is a style of modern art in which images are based on the world of dreams, unconscious thoughts and fantasy. It flourished from the mid-1920s through World War II, primarily in Europe, but also in Latin America and the United States.

Symbol: something that stands for or represents something else. For example, a red octagon can be a symbol for "stop," an arrow can be a symbol for "one way," and a tear can be a symbol for sadness.

Symmetrical: the same on both sides of a central axis; balanced.

Relief sculpture: a sculpture that is only meant to be seen from one side; it is a sculpture with a flat surface on one side and a raised surface on the other side.

Rhythm: a visual tempo or beat to an artwork. It is the regular repetition of elements of art to produce the look and feel of movement. These repeated elements guide the viewer's eye to travel through the composition rapidly or smoothly.

Ready to get started? 

Meet the Artist: Who was Franz Jozef Ponstingl?

Franz Jozef Ponstingl was born in 1927 in Allentown, Pennsylvania. He grew up on a 60-acre farm in Coopersburg which grew wheat and corn along with raising cows and pigs. Ponstingl did not go to art school or receive formal training as an artist. After his sophomore year at Coopersburg High School, he stopped his education and focused on farming. It was during these years that he found his love of art. He worked on his family's farm until he joined the Air Force during World War II and lived in Nagoya, Japan. He served again during the Korean War. The experience of serving in the military impacted him greatly in his life and in his artwork.



When he returned to the farm in 1959 after the Korean War, he spent six months painting religious murals on his bedroom walls. In the 1960s, Ponstingl earned money by working as an interior designer and mural painter in Washington D.C.. During this time, he visited many museums, and studied and copied the works of famous artists including Italian Renaissance artist Raphael, Dutch painters Johannes Vermeer and Rembrandt van Rijn, and Spanish Surrealist artist Salvador Dali.

In the late 1960s, Ponstingl traveled to countries in Europe, South America and the Middle East. Among the places he visited were Austria, Greece, Israel, Egypt, France, Spain, Portugal, Columbia, Peru, Chile and Mexico. All of his travels deeply inspired him and his artwork. Ponstingl was also fascinated with archeology and architecture. During the day, he visited ancient and historic places, like Cusco and Machu Picchu in Peru, and at night, he made drawings of everything he saw. His artworks were imaginary visions of surreal landscapes, future civilizations, and abstract networks. He frequently returned to the Coopersburg farm to paint, until the death of his father in 1967 forced him to sell the property and give away much of his artwork. His life was difficult and it was hard for him to succeed as an artist. During the 1970s, Ponstingl lived alone and with his sister in Pennsylvania. He also moved between Portland, Oregon, and Los Angeles, California where he settled in 1982 until his death in 2004.

Photograph of the artist, Franz Jozef Ponstingl (1927–2004), with his work, *Wall Art*, ca. 1968–72, wood, 24 ¾ x 36 ¾ inches, Collection of John Munice.

LEARN: What is Abstract Art?

Ponstingl was an artist who created **abstract** works of art. This is a type of artwork that doesn't look **realistic**. You might be able to find objects that you can recognize in an abstract work of art, but not all the time. Everyone sees something different when looking at abstract art, and that's part of what makes looking at artwork fun!

Choose an artwork from the exhibit. Write the title here:



Finish the following statements:

1. If this painting could talk, it would say...
2. If this painting could make a sound, it would sound like...
3. If you could taste this painting, it would taste like...
4. If this painting would have a smell, it would smell like...
5. If you could touch the work, it would feel like...



Share your writing with a friend or family member. Think about what elements in the artwork led you to the answers!



LOOK: Abstract Art Hunt

Explore the rest of the Museum to see how many more abstract artworks you can find during your visit today. Pick one to compare to the one you wrote about on [page 5](#). How is it similar? Different? **Write about it below.**

All About Abstraction

Abstract art can be many different styles! It can be:

- Based on **geometry** (lines, squares, circles, triangles, etc.) or forms that appear to have volume (like cubes or pyramids)
- Based on free flowing and irregular **organic** shapes (which may suggest things we recognize in nature like plants or leaves)
- About **patterns** or how different colors and shapes relate to each other
- Inspired by emotions or mood
- Inspired by music
- Inspired by real objects set in unrealistic environments, perspectives, or compositional arrangements

What else can you add to this list? Can you find an artwork in the exhibit or in the Museum that matches the type of abstract artwork described above?

Did you know?



As an artist, Ponstingl used different materials in creating his abstract artwork. He created wooden **relief sculptures** that feature the same abstract forms seen in his paintings. He called these "wall furniture". Be sure to see one of his examples in the exhibit called, *Wall Art*. Can you find any other relief sculptures in the Museum? **Draw one below!** How is it similar or different to Ponstingl's work?

Sensational Surrealism



Ponstingl created artworks that were surrealistic. Surrealist artists often created playful and sometimes scary artworks by putting objects next to each other that you wouldn't expect! He was influenced by the work of surrealist artist Salvador Dali.

Occasionally, Ponstingl would make notes about what he dreamt the night before and then turned his ideas into artwork, calling them "dreamscapes". He eventually became

so skilled at remembering his dreams that he no longer needed to wake up to document them and fill his notebooks. In this work, *An Archaeological Find*, 1962, Ponstingl has created a **surrealistic landscape**. It features a dragon-like creature set in a desert-like setting.

1. Describe what you see in this painting. Give as many details as possible.
2. Is this an abstract or realistic painting? Explain.
3. When you look at this painting, where does your eye go to first? Why? This is the **focal point** of the work.
4. Is there any action or **movement** in this landscape? Explain your answer.
5. If you were walking in this landscape, how would you feel? Why?
6. If this painting was illustrating a story, what would the story be?

CREATE

Imagine your own **surrealistic landscape**. What would it include? Remember, surrealist artwork includes real objects in unlikely settings...like a squirrel driving a car! If you could add your own imaginary creature to it, what would be it be? **Draw your landscape below.**

Did you know?



Ponstingl was very interested in science, technology, space travel, aliens and flying saucers! When he was featured in the local newspaper in 1975, the reporter described his paintings as if they were showing areas found on other planets. "Landings on Mars and the Moon, tourist centers as they will look on planets of outer space as well as intergalactic space labs are painted on the canvases with meticulous attention to detail..."

Are you interested in science or space travel?

AT HOME: Draw Your Own Surreal Creature!

In this game, brainstorm with a friend to create your own imaginary surreal creature! First, write down five different examples in each category below:

Object:
(for example: car, fork, lamp, necklace...)

Animal:

Plant:

Color:

Required Materials:

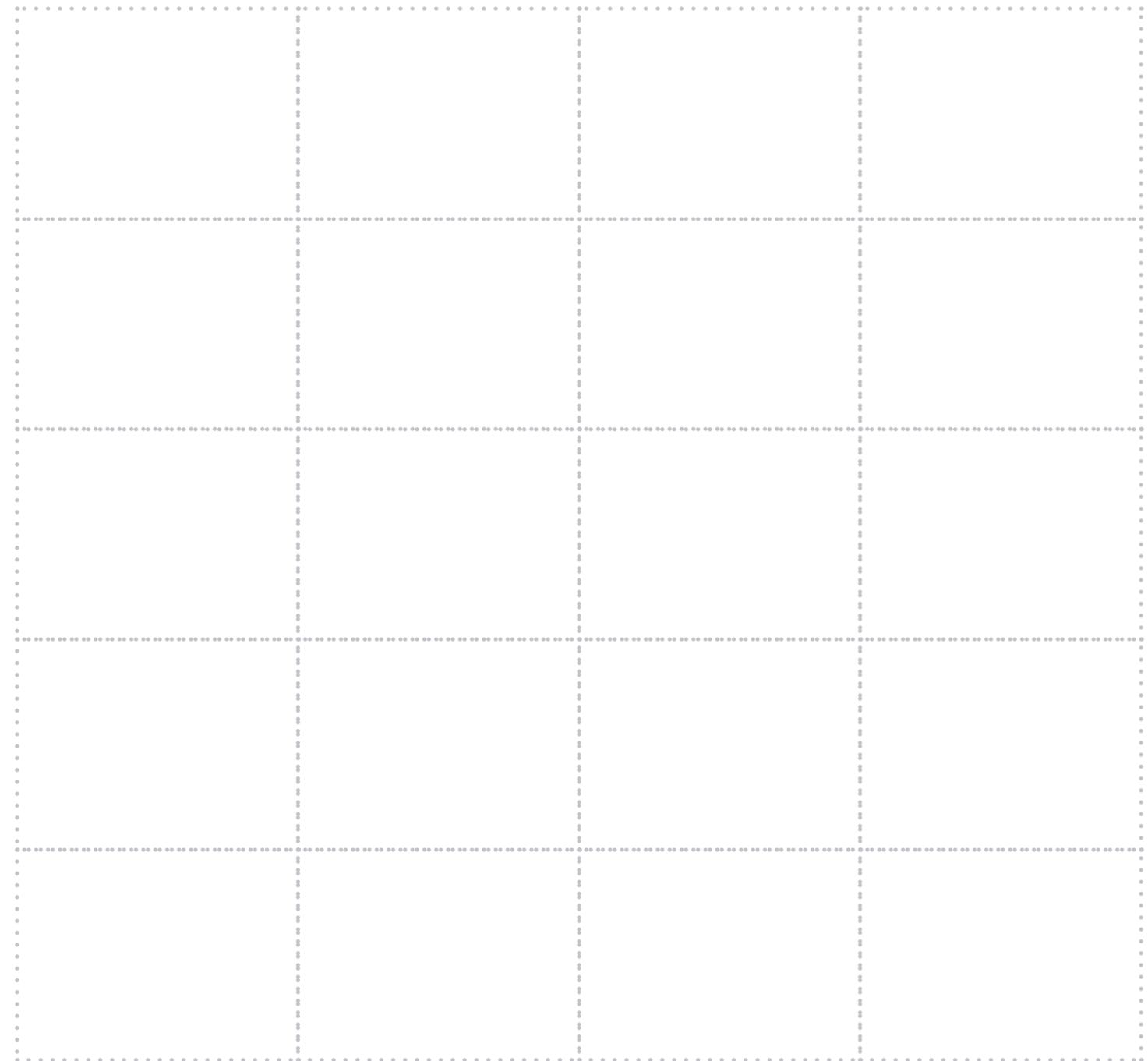
 Pair of scissors  Blank sheet of paper  Pen or pencil  Your imagination

Follow these steps:

1. Take your paper and carefully cut out twenty 2" x 1" squares. Tip: try laying your paper over the page to the right to trace your boxes.
2. Draw a picture of your objects on the squares or write the word in the square.
3. Put the cards into a bag or a basket and mix them up.
4. Next, pick four cards from the bag or basket. Based on your cards, create a made-up character by drawing a combination of what you have picked.
5. Pick more cards, draw more and color in! See what crazy creature combinations you can create!



At Home: Go online and visit some museum websites to see the work of Salvador Dali, Rene Magritte and Joan Miro. How do they compare to the work of Ponstingl?



Did you know?



The goal of **Surrealism** was to reveal elements of the "unconscious," a deep layer of the human mind that holds memories and basic instincts and combine them with subject matter from real life. Surrealism was influenced by the theories of Sigmund Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis. Two broad types of Surrealist art existed, one style similar to the dream-like works of **Salvador Dali** and **Rene Magritte**, and the other including the **automatism** or free association style of **Joan Miro** and **André Masson**. These artists minimized their control and concerns regarding beauty and used instinct and chance to create their work. Do you let your mind wander and doodle? If you do, then you are drawing like a surrealist!

Sensory Poetry

Describing a work of art using your **five senses** can be a lot of fun! Create a sensory poem based on a work of art in the exhibit. Follow the format below with the example provided.

Example: Walking Bridge

Feel the cool fall air against my cheek

See the brightly colored leaves peeking through the haze

Hear the water as it flows across the rocks

Smell the earthy leaves as they start to decompose

Taste the mist from the fog as it rolls in

Title of Artwork _____

Feel _____

See _____

Hear _____

Smell _____

Taste _____

Did you know?



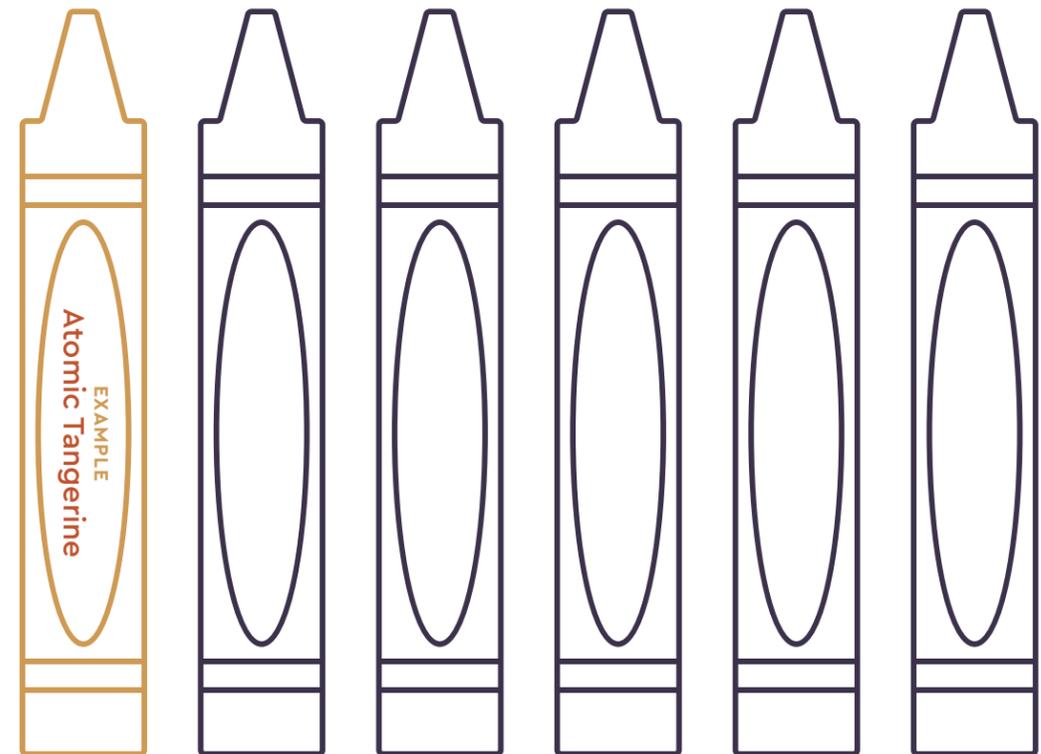
Ponstingl was born as Frank Ponstingl, but also used the name "Franz Jozef," the initials "F.P.," and the title Kaiser. He took the name "Franz Jozef" after the Austro-Hungarian emperor Franz Josef I, to recognize his Austrian heritage. He would often sign his name this way on his paintings. What is your heritage? Do you have any nicknames? If you could give yourself a nickname, what would it be?

Creative Color Names

Ponstingl used a lot of bold and imaginative colors in his paintings. Choose a painting from the exhibit. Pretend as though you were a crayon designer creating a new line of crayon colors inspired by your chosen painting.

Use creative names like *Razzle Dazzle Rose* or *Atomic Tangerine* to describe the colors in the painting. Label the crayons below with your creative color names!

Write the title of your chosen artwork here:



Did you know?



Ponstingl created **murals** for his own bedroom as well as for a restaurant in Washington D.C.. Can you find another mural in the Museum? *Hint:* it is in the shape of a half circle! **Write the name of it here:**

Surrealist Still Life

Artists sometimes create drawings first before they create their final work. Ponstingl sketched what he observed in order to later combine his drawings in his paintings. He also created drawings when he didn't have money or space to create larger paintings.



- Look closer at this painting, *Untitled*, ca. 1970–72. What do you notice? List all of the details you find.
- Describe the colors, lines, and patterns in this work. Do they remind you of anything?
- Which parts of the painting look flat? Three-dimensional? Point to some shadows, highlights, outlines, and parallel lines.
- Is there movement in this work? Explain your answer.
- Do you think this painting is a **still life**? Why or why not?
- Do you think Ponstingl finished this work? Why or why not? Discuss your ideas with a friend or family member.

I SPY A STILL LIFE

Visit the Michener Art Museum online at Google Arts and Culture, artsandculture.google.com, to see if you can find an example of a **still life** painting in the Michener's collection. How is it similar or different to this work by Ponstingl? Draw it below!

Hint: you can find white flowers in it!

Did you know?



Ponstingl worked hard at his artwork during his lifetime. Sometimes he painted 16–18 hours a day! Have you ever worked really hard on something? Why?

Playful Patterns



Ponstingl was able to travel to many different parts of the world during his lifetime, like Europe, the Middle East, and South America. These experiences inspired him and had a large impact on his work. He was fascinated by **archeology**. He visited the archaeological ruins of Inca, Maya, and Aymara. The geometric designs and earthy tones of *Untitled*, ca. 1970–72, are similar to those used in Inca textiles or fabrics.

CREATE YOUR OWN FABRIC DESIGN

Create your own fabric design using an element from one of the artworks on display. First, find an element in a work of art that you will use. Then, use this element to turn it into a fabric or a full garment design.

Write the title of your chosen artwork here:

Draw the element in the space below that you have chosen.

Experiment with scale (size) of the element.

- Would it look better in a small size, repeated all over? Or larger to cover lots of area?

Play with the placement of the element.

- Does the way the element is placed on the fabric make a difference?
- How interesting is it to turn it upside down? Sideways?
- Does the amount of space between repeated elements make a difference?

Think about color.

- Try drawing the element in different colors. What changes?
- How will the color choices affect the look of the final design?

Think about what type of material you will use to execute this design.

- Perhaps you want to knit the design into a sweater or use it to make a T-Shirt. Different types of materials will give you a different look.

Now, think of a garment that you would use this fabric design for. Sketch your design idea below and share it with your friends or family members!

Did you know?



In 1972, after being discovered by Bert Baum, a gallery owner and son of painter and educator **Walter Baum** (1884–1956), Ponstingl's work was exhibited with Mayan artifacts at the Walter Baum gallery in Sellersville, PA in an exhibition called *500 B.C. to Utopia 1984*. His work was also exhibited with Native American, Aztec and Zapotec artifacts the following year.

During your visit, be sure to look for the work of Walter Baum, one of Bucks County's well-known Pennsylvania Impressionist painters. How is his work similar and different to Ponstingl?

Movie Review

Imagine you're making a movie based on a work on display in the exhibit. Select a work of art and write the title below. Use your imagination to answer the questions. Be sure to use clues from the art!

Title of the artwork:

Movie Title: What would the title of this movie be based on this artwork?

Character(s): What people do you see? Who are they? Imagine what other characters might also be in this film.

Setting: Describe the place and time period.

Genre: Would it be a comedy, horror, drama, sci-fiction, etc.? Explain your answer.

Plot Summary: What would this movie be about? Describe some events that might happen.

Review: How many stars would you rate this movie? Why?



Did you know?



During his career, Ponstingl's artworks were compared to the films of *Federico Fellini* and to the movie *Star Wars*! Do you know the movie *Star Wars*? Do the works of Ponstingl remind you of the movie? Why or why not?

Movie Poster: Use the space below to draw a poster design for your movie.

Did you know?



When Ponstingl exhibited his work in 1971, he was called a "shock painter". Why do you think he was called this? Do you agree or disagree?

A Language of Symbols

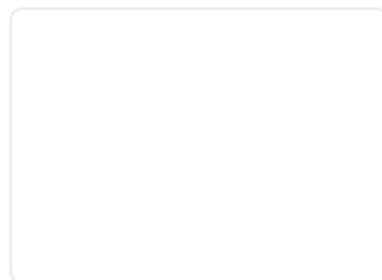
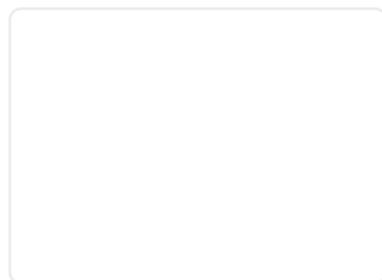


Ponstingl was inspired by Inca **pictographs** and Egyptian **hieroglyphs** to create an original written language in his work. You can find an example of this in *Untitled*, 1966.

- Look closer at this work. What do you see? Explain all the details you can find.
- What lines, colors, shapes and patterns do you notice?
- Identify the **focal point** of the work. What draws your eye to this location?
- How has the artist created **rhythm** and **movement** in the work?
- Ponstingl has created his own **symbols** in this work. What objects do you see in this work that could be symbols? What do you think they mean?
- What do you think the artist is trying to say with this work? Explain.
- Explain how you feel when you look at this painting. What makes you feel this way?

CREATE: DESIGN YOUR OWN SYMBOL

Draw one of the symbols you find in Ponstingl's work below. Create your own symbol to match. What would it look like?



Walk This Way: Playing with Line

Artists can use lines to convey movement or texture. Smooth, straight, and wavy lines can make something appear soft or calm. Jagged lines have a lot of energy.



Look closer at the work of Ponstingl and discuss the types of **lines** you can find. **Draw them below.**

Now that you have drawn these various types of lines, try walking them! Walk in a smooth, wavy line. Now walk in a jagged line. **How do you feel when you walk in these different ways?**

Now, use your arms to make a new kind of line. **What does it look like?**

Did you know?



During his career, Ponstingl exhibited his work with other famous artists including Jackson Pollock, Salvador Dali, Marc Chagall, Georgia O'Keeffe, and Rene Magritte. He also exhibited with **Helen Frankenthaler** and **Clarence Carter**, two artists that are found in the Michener Art Museum's collection. See the work of Carter and Frankenthaler on display in the Byers Gallery. **Hint:** Look for a painting of a large bird and a painting with lots of large splotches of red, yellow and blue paint! If you were a **curator**, would you exhibit these works with the work of Ponstingl? Why or why not?

Artful Adjectives

Find an artwork in the exhibit. Describe the artwork you see using **adjectives**. An adjective is a word that describes a noun (person, place, or thing). Adjectives can tell how something looks, tastes, feels or sounds.

The title of the work you have chosen is:

 _____

Dark	Light	Bright	Colorful	Gloomy
Cold	Warm	Fun	Lonely	Happy
Enjoyable	Simple	Boring	Funny	Sad
Loud	Old	Calm	Friendly	Busy
Wild	Soft	Hard	Inspiring	Disturbing
Confusing	Clear	Bumpy	Weird	Repetitive

Discuss why you think each word or words fit with the artwork you chose. Are there any other words that you can think of that are not part of the list above? Write them below. There is no wrong answer— each person sees an artwork in their own unique way. Share your list with someone and see if they agree or disagree!

 _____

My **favorite** work of art I saw today was:

 _____ *Draw it below!*



Discover More With Your Family

There are more fun things to see and do at the Michener Art Museum!

- Create art in the Family Education Center or pick up materials to sketch in the galleries
- Listen to the Michener's Permanent Collection Youth Audio Tour at <http://spts.us/mam>
- Watch the Michener's Art Talk Video Teen Program on YouTube at goo.gl/DBU9LV or by scanning the QR code below
- Visit the Education Gallery to see artwork by students
- Register for a family tour or program on the Museum's website, www.MichenerArtMuseum.org
- Download this guide and other gallery activities to do at the Museum at *Learn with the Michener*: LearnMichener.org

FRONT: Franz Jozef Ponstingl (1927–2004), *Isotopes of Furniture* (detail), 1971, Oil on canvas. 36 × 52 inches. Collection of Amy and Eric Huck.

BACK: Franz Jozef Ponstingl (1927–2004), *Untitled* (detail), 1966. Oil on canvas. 50 × 68 inches. Collection of Tom Miller.

