



OGDEN MUSEUM
OF SOUTHERN ART
EDUCATION DEPT



Signs and Symbols, 1984

Ida Kohlmeyer

The Whole Drum Will Sound:

Women in Southern Abstraction

Ida Kohlmeyer Signs and Symbols Oil Pastel Activity



OGDEN MUSEUM OF SOUTHERN ART EDUCATION DEPT

ART ACTIVITY FOR GRADES 2+ Signs and Symbols Oil Pastel Activity

Students will need:

- 8x10 mixed media paper or cardstock
- oil pastels
- pencils

Ida Kohlmeyer became known for her freewheeling use of color and distinct combination of symbols and signs.

I. OBSERVE & DISCUSS

With the class, ask students to look closely at the *Signs and Symbols* by Ida Kohlmeyer. Prompt students:

- *How do you think this artist figures out what shapes and symbols she wants to use?*
- *What colors do you see? How do they make you feel?*
- *Does it look like the artist made flat, solid shapes or gestural marks that show how her hand moved while making her symbols?*

II. CREATE & CONNECT

Step 1: Have students write their name. Below their name, students can begin brainstorming symbols to use for their project. Below are some ideas you can use as prompts:

Your favorite foods
Your hobbies or things you enjoy
Music or musical instruments
About New Orleans
Houses
Random Shapes
Your favorite animals
Your favorite flowers

Step 2: In pencil, draw a large rectangle that sits close to the bottom of the page. Leave a thin border on the sides and a thicker border at the top.

Step 3: Inside the rectangle, create an array of symbols picking the images from the list you previously made. Draw these symbols in pencil, then retrace in oil pastel or skip the pencil and begin drawing the symbols in oil pastel.

Step 4: Once all symbols are completed, fill the empty space within the rectangle with black oil pastel.

Step 4: Add additional color to the blank space outside the rectangle.

IV. EXPAND & EXPLAIN

Prompt Students:

- *What is one thing you'd like people to know about what you created?*

Help students connect with each other by prompting for pair share or classroom conversation. Encourage active listening and appreciation/applause:

- *Show your piece(s) to a partner or the class.*
- *Share why you chose the colors and shapes that you used.*
- *Share what you were thinking about when you made it.*
- *Share what you like the most about the work you've created.*

Help students connect with their school community by creating an exhibition. Hanging up works of art in the classroom or common area at school is a great way to showcase creativity and start conversations about art and experiences.

Students may make museum labels on small pieces of paper to hang with their work. Labels may include:

- Artist Name
- Title of Work
- Medium (material used to make the piece)
- Date created

Connect student learning to other institutions by documenting and uploading images of their pieces to the online **Educator Resource Center**, along with any notes or suggestions on the above lesson plan at ogdenmuseum.org/erc.

Educators may also access artist information and interviews, explore and upload and store lesson plans, and create galleries of images for classroom use.

V. ABOUT THE ARTIST - IDA KOHLMAYER

Born in 1912, Ida Kohlmeyer was raised and spent most of her life in New Orleans. She received her bachelor's degree in English literature at Sophie Newcomb College before marrying and raising two daughters.

In her 30's she became interested in painting and returned to Newcomb in 1950, where she earned a master's in painting. During the height and popularity of Abstract Expressionism, Kohlmeyer studied with Hans Hofmann, a New York painter known for his use of saturated color. Ida Kohlmeyer gained recognition and has many works featured prominently around New Orleans.