



Hovering Bowties

Project: Mobile

Alexander Calder

Volunteer:

Date:

Grade Level: Kindergarten

Artist: Alexander Calder

Print/Sculpture: Hovering Bowties

Art Vocabulary: Sculpture, Mobile, Motion, Primary (colors)

Reference: Calder, by H.H. Arnason, Riverside Public Library (730.924)

Artist and His Works:

- ◆ Alexander Calder was born 1898 (show photo of him and he and granddaughter)
- ◆ Family of artists (grandfather and father were sculptors, mother a painter)
- ◆ Example of his paintings (show photo), discuss colors (**primary**) and shapes
- ◆ Example of his **sculpture** (show photo), discuss what sculpture is
- ◆ Inventor of a new kind of art, the **mobile** (sculpture in **motion**) (show photo)
- ◆ Discuss

Painting “Hovering Bowties”

Literal Qualities

- ◆ Display painting and discuss (list what’s in it, does the name fit?)

Analysis

- ◆ Lines, shapes, colors (identify lines and shapes; which shape is “boss?”, which shapes are “helpers?” Identify colors (primary). How do the colors get along? (Quiet/noisy, friendly/fighting)

Interpretation

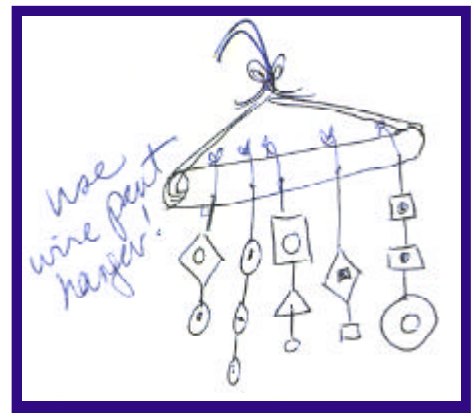
- ◆ Ideas, feelings, moods (How does the painting make you feel? Happy, sad, excited? How would it sound? Music? How would you dance to the painting?)

Judgment

- ◆ Where is a good place to put this picture? Do you like it? Which do you like most? The colors, shapes or the way it makes you feel?

Art Activity: Create Mobile

- ◆ Each table (5 of 4-5 children) can make their own work of art: Mobile!
- ◆ Bring paper towel holders (pre-painted) with yarn or ribbon attached and ready for shapes
- ◆ Shapes are various foam pieces in storeroom; they can glue smaller shapes to larger shapes to decorate
- ◆ Children use hold punch, then attach colorful yarn/ribbon to foam shapes
- ◆ Use new shoe-tying skills to tie ‘string of shapes’ to mobile.



Guided Activity: Mobiles: Orange and yellow circles suspended from black pipe cleaners (Halloween tie-ie). Pre-cut shapes of different sized black bow ties, black wavy lines, orange, yellow and white ovals, rectangles and 'gooley eyes' were provided to the children to decorate the mobiles. The shapes were put into individual envelopes for each child.

Guided Activity: "Boo Ties": The children were divided into groups of 4 or 5, with each group sitting at a table and working on one large sheet of colored paper. They were given cut outs of bowties and circles of different sizes, colors, and textures (wallpapers, styrofoam, plastic, cork, leather, fabric, etc.), and they were asked to compose a picture that related to the theme of Halloween (vampire, ghost, pumpkin, night scene). Most children chose vampires or ghosts, using small circles for eyes and bowties for ears. The most successful compositions were made out of black and white cutouts glued on a colored background (orange or pale green). The children needed assistance with pasting, and some time had to be set aside to help them clean up afterwards. Maybe stopping or taping the shapes in place would be easier another time.

Possible activities related to Calder's Bow Ties:

1. Construct a different arrangement of shapes.

This can be done as a class project, group project, or individual project. Give the children cardboard cutouts of the different shapes in the painting. The cutouts can be of the same size as the original shape, or smaller or bigger. New shapes can be added to the original ones. Let the children trace the shapes on construction paper of different colors, pieces of wallpaper, stiff fabric, etc. Let them cut out the shapes and arrange them against a background of their choice (blue, red, yellow, etc.) Vary colors and textures.

2. Build a mobile

This could be a large group project, appropriate for 3rd graders and older children. The final product could be hung in the front entry hall for all to admire. Materials used for the mobile could be lightweight cardboard, posterboard, balsa wood, etc. Use Calder's shapes and others as well.

On a smaller scale, each child could make his own mobile by hanging shapes over a shoe box. Each child might prepare the walls of the shoe box first by using different colors or gluing different pieces of wallpaper on the sides; he or she would cut out the shapes himself and string them across the top of the shoe box.

3. Make a Wire Sculpture.

Let the children experiment with wires. They might try to make bow ties or butterflies at the kindergarten level, but they could attempt something much more complex at the 4th or 5th grade levels. The most successful pieces could be strung together as a mobile.