

# Abstract Portraits

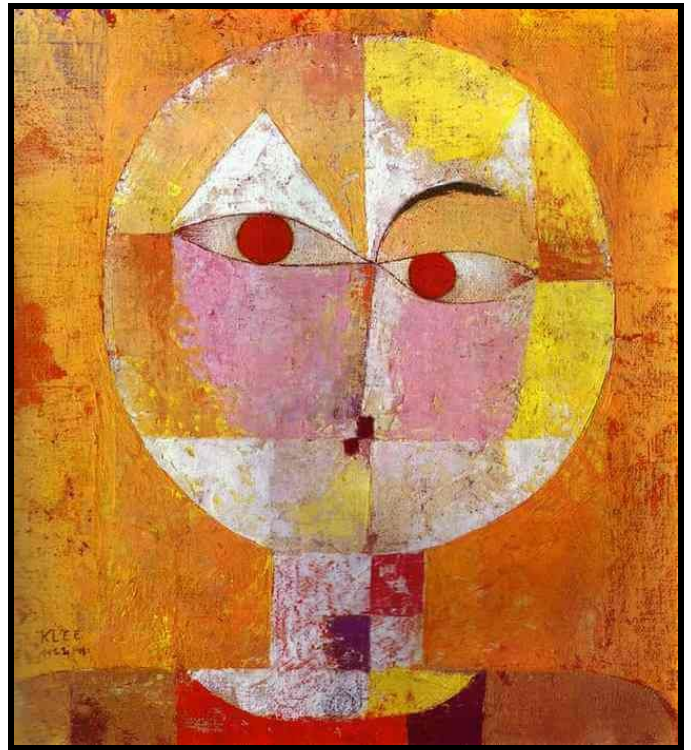
**Learning Goals:** Students will explore how to use art from history to inspire their own original art.

**Assignment:** Create an abstract portrait using the artist Paul Klee as inspiration

## What is Abstract Art?

**Abstract art is when an artist creates art that would not exist in real life! Sometimes artists use real subjects and make them abstract.**

**Paul Klee**, a painter, is an example of an artist that takes a subject from “real life” and makes it abstract. The painting to the right, *Senecio*, is an **ABSTRACT portrait**. Klee simplified the face into simple shapes and used blocks of colors.



Paul Klee, *Senecio*, 1922

### Activity:

1. Observe the painting, *Senecio*, by Paul Klee. **Write or discuss 2 or 3 things you notice about the painting.** Try to focus on things you notice about color, shape and size. For example, I notice that there is a white triangle on top of the left eye.
2. Think about what you observed. What do you like about Klee’s painting? What techniques do you want to borrow from him to use for your own art? What do you want to change?
2. Start drawing your abstract portrait. Start with the head, neck, and shoulder shapes. I recommend starting with a large simple shape for the head towards the top of the paper. Draw the neck and shoulders next.



Lesson Example, Oil Pastel

3. Draw the **facial features**, (eyes, nose, lips, ears) using simplified shapes you’d like to use. Paul Klee generally put the facial features in the “correct” spot, but that doesn’t mean you have to! Remember we are being **INSPIRED** by Paul Klee and not copying him. Feel free to explore placing the eye as a nose, stretch out the nose all the way down to the chin or adding hair!

4. Add color! Paul Klee used warm colors that are bright and playful. How do you want your abstract portrait to feel? Do you want to use cheery colors or calming colors? Use the material of your choice that is available at home.

### Post Art Reflection:

Take some time to reflect on your artmaking by talking to a family member or writing a short reflection. Did you enjoy making an abstract portrait? What is your favorite part of your artwork? Is this a style of art you would like to do again?