The Color Mix-Up

Featured Story:
by Drew Daywalt, pictures by Oliver Jeffers:
The Day the Crayons Quit

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Inspiration from WAM’s Collection

Sunset
about 1937, Georges Rouault, oil and related media on wood pulp board, 1965.396 (eMuseum Link)

The artist, Georges Rouault, originally worked in stained glass, and many of his later paintings and artworks--like this one--have details that remind us of stained glass, like the thick black outlines and the bright, bold colors. This painting uses colors both in usual and original ways. In the detail below we can see that Georges Rouault used yellows and oranges for the sun, and blue for a watery background; but he also used green in the sky and blue and purple on the ground.

Standing Woman with Orange Face
late 20th century, Laxma Goud, pen and black ink with watercolor on creme wove paper, 2002.434 (eMuseum Link)

Sometimes, an artist chooses to draw with precise and accurate lines, but fills this in with abstract colors. Here, the artist uses a few carefully-placed lines to build up the details of the woman’s features, but paints her face (detail below) with bold orange and yellow.

Woman in Striped Dress
1949, Seymour Tubis, color etching and aquatint on white wove paper, 1988.167 (eMuseum Link)

Both the shapes and colors are mixed-up here. The artist chose a specific palette--or set of colors--for this artwork. Almost everything has been portrayed in reds and pinks, with some golden yellow and black. Instead of including all the details in the woman’s dress, the artist has chosen simple tube and cone shapes to give the dress its form.
Color Fun

Supplies

• Drawing Paper
• Pencil
• Eraser
• Crayons

Create

1. This project encourages you to use your imagination! You can choose whatever you want to draw, but then you mix-up the colors!

2. Just like at the end of the book “The Day the Crayons Quit,” you get to change how you use colors in your art. In the last artwork by “Duncan,” there was an orange whale, a pink dinosaur, green water, a black rainbow, and more fun-colored stuff!

3. If you need help to get your creative juices going, write the letters of your name, one letter per line on a piece of paper. Then, come up with something that starts with each letter. Include each of those items in your crazy crayon artwork! Example to the right.

Example

E - Elephant
L - Light bulb
I - Igloo
Z - Zebra
A - Airplane
B - Balloons
E - Engine
T - Tree
H - Hovercraft
“Stained Glass” Portrait

Supplies

- Black construction or card stock paper, or any other dark paper
- Pencil
- Eraser
- Crayons

Create

Inspired by the switch-up of colors and the white crayon’s writing on black paper in the book “The Day the Crayons Quit”, we will create a “stained glass” abstract self portrait! There is an example of a person’s face made in stained glass to the left, and the piece “Sunset” on the inspiration artwork page is a good example of a painting inspired by stained glass.

1. First, get a small mirror or a picture of yourself.
2. Next, lightly draw out your face—including details—in pencil on the black or dark colored paper. Keep checking your photo or mirror to make sure you draw the correct details.
3. Now, imagine this image as part of a stained glass window, with large pieces of one color, divided by black or dark lines. Divide your face to make a glass window.
4. Start to color in your face with crayon on the dark paper.
   - To get lighter crayon colors like yellow or pink to show up well on the darker paper, you may need to color with a white or lighter crayon first, and then layer the light color over the white.
   - You can use a black crayon to “erase” accidental crayon marks!
5. When you are finished, you will have a bold and colorful self-portrait.