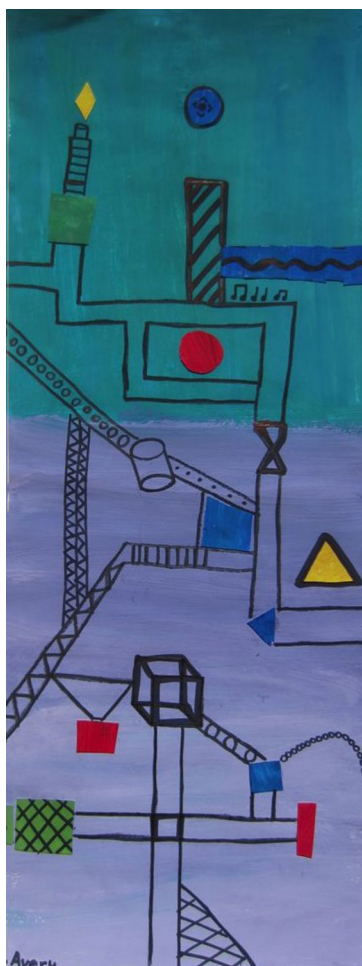


# Artwork inspired by B.C. BINNING'S *ATOMIC FOUNTAIN*



By Avery S., Cleveland Elementary, SD#44

"Atomic art" emerged from the Cold War era, when concerns about nuclear war dominated the Western world.

Submitted by Michelle Didier, SD#44

Level: Primary

### Materials and Technologies

- opaque vellum paper, tempera paint, scissors, rulers, Sharpies, glue sticks

### Pre-Class Preparation

Show students examples of Colour Field and Atomic art. My class visited an abstract exhibit at the Gordon Smith Gallery in North Vancouver.

### Resources and References

*Atomic Fountain* by B.C. Binning  
Artists for Kids Resources:

- <https://bit.ly/4vvDP7R>

### LESSON

- Look at a variety of abstract art. Look at examples of colour field art work and look at atomic art.
- To begin, students will create a colour field of 2 colours with a horizon line separating the two. The colours can be complimentary, or 2 slightly different shades. Look at a few picture books, and discuss different places to draw a horizon line. The horizon line can be drawn with a ruler or somewhat straight (free-hand).
- Paint the two spaces – let dry.

- Look at B.C. Binning's *Atomic Fountain*. Ask students to come up with a new title for the work and why they chose that title. Discuss. Tell the students that it is a fountain.

### Discussion prompts:

1. What could be spewing out of the fountain (bubbles, lava, oil, warm water, sparkles, stars, etc.)?
2. How they would turn on the fountain?
3. Is there a button that the artist included in his work?
4. What shape or colour did he use to symbolize the button?

- Discuss **symbols** : how a shape can represent something but doesn't need to look exactly like it. Ask what symbols they might know already. i.e., exclamation mark can mean loud, excitement, anger.

- Tell students that they are going to create a machine. Talk about ideas : above ground, below

*The Big Idea*

Visual arts express meaning in unique ways.

### CURRICULAR COMPETENCIES

- Create artistic works collaboratively and as an individual using ideas inspired by imagination, inquiry, experimentation, and purposeful play.

### CONCEPTS AND CONTENT

- symbolism as a means to explore specific meaning
- elements of design: line, colour, form
- principles of design: repetition, pattern

ground (what's below the surface). Ask would the machine spew out creations below ground or above ground. Where would the button be and what would it look like? Discuss ideas.

- Review geometric shapes and size – different kinds triangles, thin long rectangles, thin rectangles, small octagons, etc., and lines; thick, thin, dashed, crossing.
  - On a thin piece of paper do a rough copy of the work. Draw horizon line, include shapes and lines above and below the horizon line.
  - Provide a small piece of opaque vellum paper. Students can choose a colour and can mix colours and fill up the entire paper. Let dry.
5. Draw shapes on the small piece of painted paper, and cut out shapes. Organize the shapes by colours into piles.



By Isaak N., Cleveland Elementary, SD#44

6. Children can go “shape shopping”, and pick 10 shapes.

7. Practice placement of shapes on their big piece of paper, and discuss balance.

8. Have a gallery walk and share ideas about their machine thus far – look at rough copies and discuss more ideas.

9. Provide Sharpies, rulers, glue sticks. They can glue down their shapes painted and connect shapes with different lines and shapes.

10. Gallery walk: Students can present their machine. They also can write about how their machine works – in my class, they wrote in French.

### Assessment/Evaluation

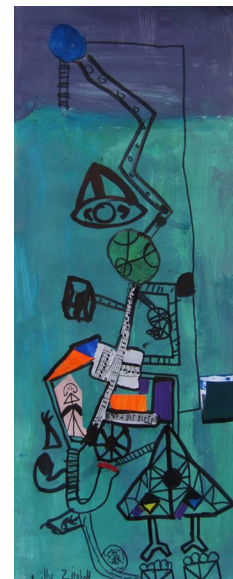
- use of imagination/creative thinking
- willingness to experiment and play with ideas
- use of symbols to express ideas
- collaboration (sharing ideas)
- use of horizon lines, placement of shapes, and colour mixing

### Extension – print making

1. Look at organic shapes, and then create a rough copy - Draw a wobbly horizon line.
2. Talk about ideas of what could be above ground or below ground. Talk about symbolism, so that students don't end up drawing a leaf that looks

realistic.

3. Provide a lot of imagery of organic forms, and have students practice drawing.
4. Provide a small piece of foam. Then, with a pencil make an imprint the of idea in the foam.
5. Set up a print making station – teach how to put on ink with brayer and how to make a print.
6. Students can contribute to a collaborative piece (with black ink). Have different colour stations set up. Students can then do individual prints on their own with different colours.



By Lilly Z., Cleveland Elementary, SD#44

### Teacher Reflection

We prepared for this session by exploring the differences between organic and geometric shapes and lines. Then, to seek inspiration and to expand our understanding of abstract art we viewed B.C. Binning's Atomic Fountain found in the Gordon Smith Art Gallery. Looking at this work one can easily imagine an unlimited array of things it could be; from a space ship, to a floor plan, to a strange machine that sprays out bubbles. After exploring this work at length and discussing its artistic components (horizon line, types of lines, spaces, shapes and perspective) the students were then told to create a machine of their own imagining. Most of the thinking and creative process happened during the actual making; the drawing of lines, the arranging of shapes, the finding of form. Interaction between the students often proved to be a catalyst, which influenced the direction the individual artworks took. To further explore the creations each student wrote about their own machine, showing a wonderful diversity; from diamond making machines to those that produce tasty cakes!



By Tyler B., Cleveland Elementary, SD#44