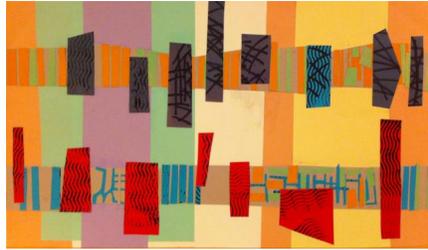


BALBOA PARK  
THE SAN DIEGO  
MUSEUM OF ART



**Lesson: Rhythm in Color-form Vibrations**

**Inspiration: Synchroformic #18-Horizontal Duo, 1951. John Sennhauser**

**Grade Level: 3<sup>rd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>**

**Time: 1.5 - 2hr**

**Author: Rogelio Casas, Museum Educator**

Arriving at an abstract style in the latter half of the 1930s, John Sennhauser was one of a select group of American abstract painters to come into the circle of Hilla Rebay, the influential director of the Museum of Non-objective Painting (Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation). Born in Switzerland, Sennhauser was raised in Italy and studied art at the Royal Academy in Venice between 1926 and 1927.

Sennhauser writes of his method: "... no particular color, idea or subject is in my mind at the time of execution. My brush moves intuitively ... slowly attuning itself to the rhythm of the feeling that permeates my whole being. Of course, this feeling does come from somewhere. It may be some music that I have heard or I am listening to ... a charming remark from my little girl ... a description of the constellations as related by my young son after a visit to the Planetarium. ... It might even be the emaciated faces of Korean refugees ... the dreadful thought of the atomic bomb. It may be anything. ... What is important is ... its crystallization in color-form vibrations." -Sennhauser Papers, Archives of American Art, roll N70-33: 58.

**Project objective:** Sennhauser was heavily influenced by jazz music and his architectural background inspired his forms. His shapes are angular and geometric, with organic interludes. For this lesson, it is encouraged to play bebop or jazz of the 40s and 50s in the background. The students will work with familiar elements—construction paper, glue, and scissors—but the initial printmaking aspect adds textures and processes that may be a new experience. In layering and selecting the shapes and sizes of the colored papers, the students improvise and play with Sennhauser's elements and style, but are encouraged to develop their own, and learn about how music and rhythm translates to the visual arts.

**Materials:**

9"x12" multicolor construction paper  
Glue sticks, scissors, texture rollers, texture stamps, plastic trays,  
black block print ink, black markers, jazz music  
80lb or better paper 12" x 18" or cut 18" x 24" lengthwise



**Approximate cost per student:** \$3.00-\$4.00 (approximately for 30 students)

**Prep:** Cut the 18" x 24" sheet in half lengthwise, this will serve as a base.

Take 5 sheets of various colors and cut random 2-3" strips; these will be used for the background colors. You can have one printing station or supply each table group with its own printing set-up. For lower grades you can pre-cut small strips 1/4" - 1" x 1/2" - 2" long and have them in different containers for them to use. For the upper grades, students can cut all of their shapes.

**Lesson:**

1. Cut half sheets of three bold colors—these will be textured with the texture roller and texture stamps. Set aside to dry and later cut.
2. Have students arrange the long strips of varying width to cover the 12"x18" white base paper. Glue those down to the base.
3. Next, lay the horizontal bands of rectangles and wedges of a muted color across the top and one on the lower half. These can be spaced evenly. Glue down.
4. Cut strips of neutral colors, tans, grays, beige, orange 2" long by 1/8", 1/4", 1/2" wide. Create separate color piles. Glue those to the pair of horizontal bands lengthwise, allowing for the color of the horizontal bands to peek through in places. These can be cut in odd shapes and composed in different spots along the horizontal bands.
5. Cut unique shapes from texture printed bold colors that were created and set out to dry in step one. Place them along the horizontal bands. Students should keep in mind shapes and placement to emulate the rhythm and flow of Jazz music. Improvisation is encouraged by playing with elements of a Sennhauser piece, but taking it in their own direction.
6. Once finished (optional), varnish with Modge Podge semi gloss.

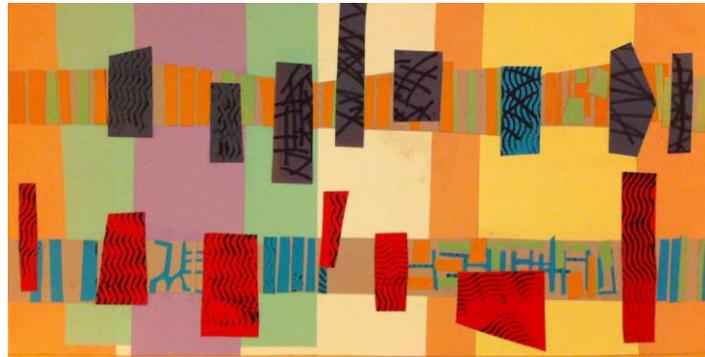
**Supply List:**

SB43191 Nasco Paint ink clay rollers \$6.50 set of 4

SB41712 Nasco Texture stamps. \$9.85 set of 6

9715509 Nasco 50 sheets 9x12" const paper (colors, B, F, J, V, H, R, N, W, AD, AH) \$1.10 each

9722405 6x9" trays packs of 10 \$13.25



<http://www.sdsmart.org/collections/americas/item/1998.80>

