Elements of Art & Design: Colour and Shape

TASK: Look through the following slides and consider how colour and shape are used by artists in different ways.

Use the examples as a starting point for your own creations. Make any artwork, but you must consider your use of colour and shapes. Your work can be figurative/realistic or abstract in appearance. For any artist you draw inspiration from, try to find other examples of work by them and possibly a quote by the artist about their work.
Colour and Shape

All art makes use of shape and colour in some way. Your eyes can be drawn to certain parts of an artwork when shape and colour is used correctly. Artists use colour to express themselves and aim to make you feel something when you look at it.
“Purer colours... have in themselves, independently of the objects they serve to express, a significant action on the feelings of those who look at them.”

Matisse
"What you see, your visual field, consists of one thing only: colour. Colour is light and sight. That is what sight makes available to you. And that colour has a million varieties and variations. The art of painting, is evoking space through colour."

Patrick Heron
COLOUR

How is colour used in art?
Frank Bowling is an artist who believes that colour is as important in telling a story as the subject he paints. Bowling layers colours and uses splashes, drips and smudges to create different effects. His mainly uses colours, as opposed to objects and figures, to create emotion.

Arthur Hughes, who was part of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, used colour in a different way to Bowling. The Pre-Raphaelites believed the object was as important as colour. They used colour to reflect the world around them as closely as possible.

Frank Bowling
Who’s Afraid of Barney Newman 1968

Arthur Hughes
Aurora Leigh’s Dismissal of Romney (‘The Tryst’) 1860
Kim Lim
*Red Aquatint* 1972

Sam Taylor-Johnson OBE
*Red* 2000

Michael Craig-Martin
*Knowing* 1996
GREEN

Sandra Blow
*Green and White* 1969

Pauline Boty
*The Only Blonde in the World* 1963

Nicholas Monro
*Green Figures* 1970
Roger Hiorns
*Untitled* 2006

Saloua Raouda Choucair
*Composition in Blue Module* 1947–51

Paula Rego
*The Dance* 1988
Patrick Heron
*Yellow Painting: October 1958 May/June 1959* 1958–9

Catherine Yass
*Corridors* 1994

John Piper
*Petit Palais: Yellow and Yellow* 1972
Bridget Riley
*Nataraja* 1993

Liam Gillick
*Returning to an Abandoned Plant* 2007

Roger Fry
*River with Poplars* c.1912
MULTI-COLOUR

Lubaina Himid
*The Carrot Piece* 1985

Sir Eduardo Paolozzi
*Bash* 1971

Fiona Rae
*Untitled (yellow)* 1990
SHAPE
From sharp corners, curved edges and towering sculptures, shape is used throughout art.

Geometric shapes, like squares and triangles, are mainly found in objects made by humans, like houses, cars and factories.

Irregular shapes are more likely to come from nature. Imagine a leaf or a shell. How do you think artists could use them differently to tell a story?
Berenice Sydney
*Little Squares* 1969

Sol LeWitt
*A Square Divided Horizontally and Vertically into Four Equal Parts, Each with a Different Direction of Alternating Parallel Bands of Lines* 1982

Frank Stella
*Hyena Stomp* 1962
Richard Smith
*Triangles* 1978

Benode Behari Mukherjee
*Two Triangles* 1957

Lygia Clark
*Planes on Modulated Surface (Study)*
[61] 1957
Richard Long
*Small White Pebble Circles* 1987

Dame Barbara Hepworth
*Two Forms (Divided Circle)* 1969

Herbert Bayer
*Four Segmented Circles* 1970
THREE-DIMENSIONAL SHAPES

Rasheed Araeen
*Rang Baranga* 1969

Rebecca Horn
*In the Triangle* 1973–4

Sol LeWitt
*Five Open Geometric Structures* 1979

Mary Martin
*Perspex Group on Orange (B)* 1969
THREE-DIMENSIONAL SHAPES

Ben Nicholson OM
*circa 1936 (sculpture)* c.1936

Liliane Lijn
*Space Displace Koan* 1969

Parviz Tanavoli
*The Poet and the Beloved of the King* 1964–6