



BkM Art Hangouts
Process

Goals

In Art Hangouts, learners will:

- Look closely at a work from the collection
- Explore new artistic processes through close looking, conversation, and art-making
- Reflect on their own art-making processes

In this lesson, learners will:

- Observe Julie Mehretu's *Entropia (review)*
- Combine mark-making techniques to create a layered drawing
- Consider how marks can evoke associations with specific places

Materials

- Paper
- Vellum (optional)
- Drawing tools of your choice (e.g., colored pencils, crayons, markers)

BkM Art Hangouts are adapted from a series of virtual classes that took place in spring 2021. These thirty-minute lesson plans are designed for teachers and caregivers to engage learners with works from our collection and to explore hands-on, artistic processes. Lessons are created for ages 9–14, but can be adapted for any age group. In each lesson, participants will look closely at a work of art, consider how an artist finds inspiration, and create their own artworks inspired by these approaches. Art Hangouts are open ended, and students are invited to continue working on their projects even after the lesson ends.

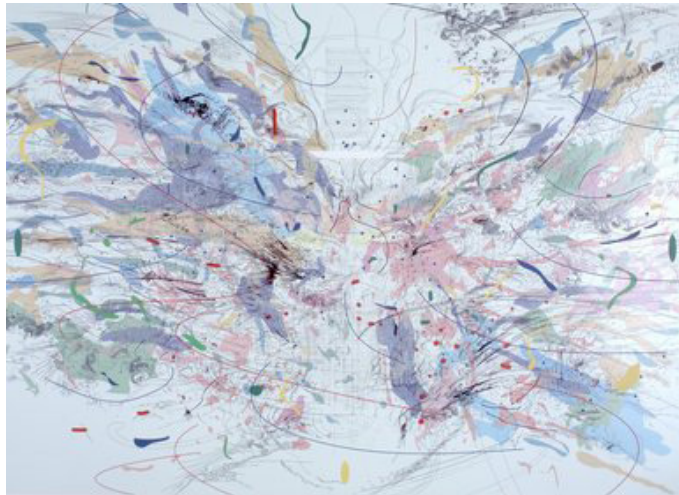
Julie Mehretu

American, born Ethiopia, 1970

Julie Mehretu is an Ethiopian-born artist based in New York City. She is best known for her large-scale abstract artworks. The artist often applies printmaking techniques, such as screenprinting and lithography, in her work: screenprinting is a stencil-based printmaking method, while in lithography, water, ink, and grease are used to transfer drawings.

Her work consists of both painting and printing layers, lines, and colors to create images that are reminiscent of cities, systems of transportation, and maps. She says: “The earlier, more analytic impulse was to use very rational but kind of absurd techniques or tendencies—mapping, charting, and architecture—to try and make sense of who I was in my time and space and political environment.”

Source: magazine.art21.org/2009/10/01/meet-the-season-5-artist-julie-mehretu/#.YXwFRxrMLIU



Julie Mehretu (American, born Ethiopia, 1970). *Entropia (review)*, 2004. 32-color lithograph and screenprint, Sheet: 33 1/2 × 44 in. (85.1 × 111.8 cm). Brooklyn Museum; Alfred T. White Fund, 2004.102. © Julie Mehretu. (Photo: Brooklyn Museum)

● Part 1: Look!

Invite students to look closely at Mehretu's [Entropia \(review\)](#).

- Pretend your finger is a brush and trace in the air the different kinds of marks you see. Invite students to describe these marks.
- Tip: You may ask students to draw specific marks, such as a straight mark, a curvy mark, a red mark, etc.
- What do these marks remind you of?

Share that Julie Mehretu is inspired by buildings, cities, maps, systems of transportation, charts, and blueprints. In an interview, she said:

“I started to be really interested in ways of transit and ways of mobility and ways of migration and movement patterns, social movement patterns, in differently interconnected reality . . . not trying to locate it in one city or one space, particularly, or even one period of time.”

Source: whitney.org/audio-guides/66?language=english&type=general&page=1&stop=3

- Can you find something in Mehretu's artwork that reminds you of a city, map, chart, or movement? Can you relate this to the city you live in?

Julie Mehretu makes paintings in layers. This particular artwork is a lithograph and screenprint. Each color is added in a separate layer, sometimes overlapping with previous marks.

- What effect do these different layers create? How does it make you feel? Do you think the painting would feel different if it had only one layer?

● Part 2: Explore!

Julie Mehretu made this lithograph by layering different-colored marks inspired by transportation, cities, and movement.

→ How can you make a layered drawing using different kinds of marks and lines?

Step 1: Find four to five inspiration images. Like Mehretu, you might be inspired by buildings, transportation systems, and maps from where you live—or maybe something different like nature or a favorite photograph.

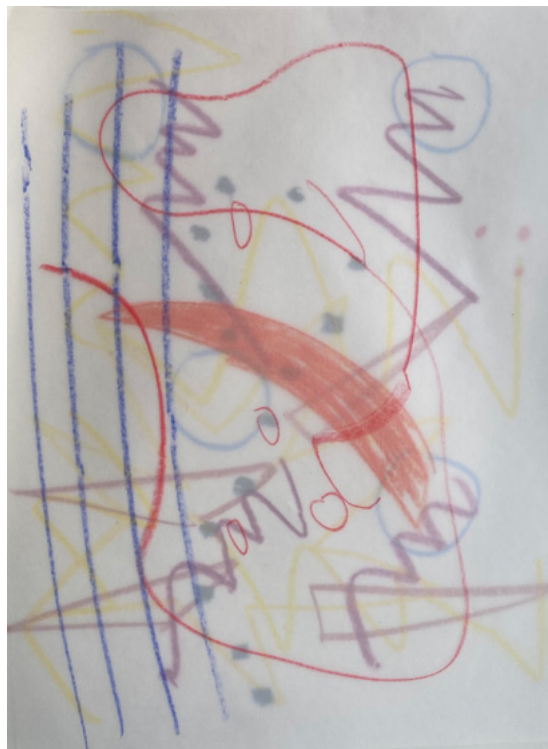
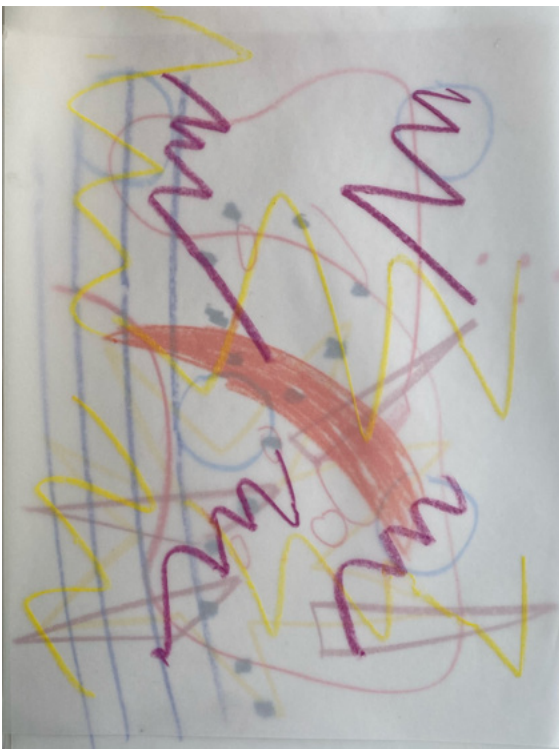
→ Tip: Find a place that is important to you on Google Maps; zoom in and out, look from above or below, and use these different views as your inspiration photos.

Step 2: Choose one inspiration image. Create the first layer on a piece of paper by making marks inspired by the lines and shapes you see in your photo. A building might become straight lines; a tree might become squiggles. Perhaps you zoom in on a pattern you see.

Step 3: Repeat! Add a new layer on the same paper. Perhaps you switch up the color or the drawing tool you're using, or you add a sheet of translucent vellum. Continue to build layers using different textures and materials.

Step 4: Repeat as many times as you like until your drawing feels complete.

Project in Progress ↓



● Part 3: Reflect!

What do the marks you've created remind you of? How do they relate to your inspiration photos?

What are some adjectives to describe the feeling of your artwork?

A Finished Project! ↓



This resource was written by Sarah Dinkelacker, Curriculum Consultant and Teaching Artist, with assistance from Stacey Kahn, School Partnerships Coordinator and coordinator of the Art Hangouts initiative. Additional assistance provided by Michael Reback, School Programs Manager.