



## EXPRESSING FEELINGS

Abstract art can express various feelings. Abstract Expressionism was an American art movement that developed in the 1940s and 1950s, the period just after World War II. The artists mostly used bold color and dynamic application of paint to convey strong emotion and content. After discussing abstract paintings with your classmates, you will have the chance to create your own abstract artwork.

### Are you doing this activity at school or at home?

Follow these suggestions to make your experience fun and successful.

- Search for images of artworks on the Art Institute of Chicago's website: [www.artic.edu/collection](http://www.artic.edu/collection) or look for other objects around you that could help you complete the activity.
- Work together with classmates, family members, or friends to complete the activity and share what you create.

**To start**, look at two or three Abstract Expressionist artworks, such as paintings by Joan Mitchell and Ed Clark. Give yourself plenty of time to look and talk about what you see.

- What types of colors, lines, and shapes do you see?
- How are they arranged?
- How do you think the paint was applied—fast or slow? Energetically or carefully?
- What does the painting remind you of?
- How do you feel looking at the painting?
- What do you think the artist was feeling as he made it? Why?

**Divide into groups** and have each group choose an emotion, such as happy, frightened, or sad.

**Familiarize yourself** with the materials for this activity: a large piece of white paper, a bag full of various types of yarn and string, and pieces of cut paper or felt of different sizes, colors, and thicknesses.

**Move the yarn and cut paper** around on your large sheet of paper to create a composition that expresses your group's chosen emotion. Try not to include recognizable objects in your composition. Each of you will have a different idea about how to go about this—work it out as a group and remember to be accepting of all ideas.

**Afterwards**, look at and discuss each group's creation. Can you determine which one expresses which emotion?

### SUGGESTED ARTWORKS

Joan Mitchell, (America, 1925–1992)  
*City Landscape*, 1955  
1958.193

Ed Clark, (American, 1926–2019)  
*Untitled*, 1957  
1999.243