Reality to Abstract
What is *Abstract Art*...?

How can you create an *Abstraction* of something?
Tree series - 1911-14, Piet Mondrian
Abstract Art:
Characterized by simplified the general shapes, lines, and colors suggested by the world around us.
In art, an **Abstraction** is a departure from realistic depictions of visual imagery. This departure from realistic representation can be slight, partial, or complete.
Abstract Art... can be...

- **Representational**: Represents something in reality. Visibly identifiable as something you know to be real and found in nature. Examples: Cubism or Abstract Expressionism

- **Non-objective**: Total abstraction of subject matter. Original subject matter is no longer recognizable -- also not recognizable as anything from nature (or reality). Examples: Minimalism

... and anything in between
History & Misconceptions about Abstract Art
Quick Facts:

- Abstract Art is a generic term used widely, and includes the influences of a variety of art movements.
- Labeling something as being “Abstract Art” does not necessarily mean that the art is about nothing.
- Abstract art is usually derived from some element of reality.
- The word 'abstract' means to withdraw part of something in order to consider it separately.
The Abstract Art Movement
(roughly 1907-present; but more officially emerged 1940’s)

• Historically, western cultures up through the 19th century focused on logical and realistic representations of things

• The Abstract Art Movement sought to challenge these traditions by breaking things down and shifting away from such logic in visual representation
Examples of Abstract Art & Artists

Look at each artwork carefully… where on the Abstract Art scale would you place them in terms of being

Representational vs. Non-Objective…?
"For me, a landscape does not exist in its own right, since its appearance changes at every moment; but the surrounding atmosphere brings it to life - the light and the air which vary continually. For me, it is only the surrounding atmosphere which gives subjects their true value."

Claude Monet (1840-1926)

• One of the most influential artists of the Impressionist Movement, also Abstract Expressionism

• Interested in capturing moments, impressions, times of day, seasons, light and atmosphere through the use of expressive visible brush strokes and color
“Painting... in which the inner and the outer man are inseparable, transcends technique, transcends subject and moves into the realm of the inevitable.”

Lee Krasner (1908-1984)

• American female artist
• Often cut apart her own drawings and paintings to create collages— as a result her surviving body of work is relatively small.
• Used bold sweeping curves
• Married to the artist Jackson Pollock
"Every true artist has been inspired more by the beauty of lines and color and the relationships between them than by the concrete subject of the picture."

Piet Mondrian - (1872-1944)

- Abstract paintings that relied only on color, line, and geometric shape
- Pure Abstraction by reduction of shape
- Simplified compositions of vertical and horizontal directions
- Primary color, plus black and white
New York City
Ocean
“Color is the keyboard, the eyes are the harmonies, the soul is the piano with many strings. The artist is the hand that plays, touching one key or another, to cause vibrations in the soul.”

Wassily Kandinsky - (1866-1944)

- The concept that color and musical harmony are linked has a long history
- Kandinsky used color in a highly theoretical way associating tone with timbre (the sound's character), hue with pitch, and saturation with the volume of sound.
- Kandinsky claimed that when he saw color he heard music. ”
“Painting is a blind man's profession. He paints not what he sees, but what he feels, what he tells himself about what he has seen.”

Pablo Picasso - (1866-1944)

• One of the most influential artists of the Cubism Movement (20th century).
• Objects are analyzed, broken up and reassembled in an abstracted form
• Instead of depicting objects from one viewpoint, the artist depicts the subject from many viewpoints to represent the subject in a greater context.
Picasso
Picasso
Picasso
“Abstract literally means to draw from or separate. In this sense every artist is abstract... a realistic or non-objective approach makes no difference. The result is what counts.”

Richard Diebenkorn (1922-1993)

• The "Ocean Park" series, begun in 1967 and developed for over 25 years, became his most famous work and resulted in more than 140 paintings.

• Based on the aerial landscape and perhaps the view from the window of his studio, these large-scale abstract compositions are named after a community in Santa Monica, California, where he had his studio.
More Info about Abstract Expressionism:

https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/abex/hd_abex.htm
Examples

…of what you will be doing…
Reality to Abstract Project

• Find a photo image to draw from (fruit, animals, shoes, toys, insects, flowers, person...these things work best). Find something with good value, texture, line...

• In **5 steps** you are going to change a realistic drawing into an abstract drawing. The final drawing will later be transferred/copied and become your final painting.

• Start very realistic, do not use any harsh outlines, practice shading with value
1. Original object-realistic with a range of values, even gradation of value and shading
2. Wrapping of the laces: distortion and extension of line and value. Exaggeration of seams: more lines and repetition
3. Enlarging and Distorting of circles and shape of “shoe”, lines become squares, Flattening of shapes, added texture
4. More distortion/ strong value/ exaggeration of shapes
5. Fragment the objects/ lines/ strong value
6. PAINTING! Analagous Color/ Texture/ Enlarging/ opaque/ dry brush/ transparent/ scraping/ wet into wet
More Examples:
https://msmoranart.weebly.com/reality-to-abstract-project2.html