

LESSON PLAN

AT-HOME ART PROJECT: **Abstract Compositions Inspired by Guatemalan Textiles** **INSTRUCTIONS**



INSPIRATION ARTIST:

Margarita Azurdia (born 1931 Antigua, Guatemala- 1998)

Margarita Azurdia was a painter, sculptor, poet, dancer, performance artist who was a lifelong experimenter. Azurdia's art often reflected the Guatemalan culture, was critically acclaimed, and is in museums and private collections throughout the world. The paintings from the series "Geometric Abstractions" are a clear reference to the way in which Azurdia approached life and art, with honesty and sensitivity, with an infinite curiosity and a profound connection to Guatemala. She is known by several additional names in the artworld: Margot Fanjul and Margarita Rita Rica Dinamita.

Her artwork was inspired by the exquisite, multi-colored textiles from Guatemala that are a fundamental part of Mayan culture. During the 1960s Margarita Azurdia produced large-scale abstract paintings, some composed of rhythmic arrangements of parallel lines, others consisting of large, flat fields with geometric and linear patterns in unusual color combinations reflecting indigenous textile designs. A very influential art critic extolled Azurdia's paintings as among the most emblematic examples of art from Central America.



Margarita Azurdia, *Untitled works from the series "Geometric Abstractions"*, ca. 1968 and 1967, acrylic on canvas

LESSON PLAN

MAYAN INFLUENCE:

From around 250 AD Guatemala was home to the Maya people, one of the largest and most sophisticated civilizations of the ancient western hemisphere. One of their most revered artistic traditions is the production of complex and colorful textiles. For around 2000 years weaving has been an important part of Maya culture, a vital part of their identity and central to their traditions.

The vibrant textiles became useful status symbols and were often given as tribute to rulers and nobles. The textiles also played a vital role in cultural traditions and certain fabrics were used for different Mayan ceremonies. Maya communities often developed their own preferred style of weaving, demonstrating specific patterns and colors. Thus, the fabrics became an 'identity' for the community identifying the wearer's status and their origin to all.

Contemporary Guatemalan weavers are descendants of the ancient Maya, practicing a time-honored tradition passed on from generation to generation. Even after centuries, the techniques for weaving the traditional Mayan fabric remain relatively unchanged. Examples of Guatemalan textiles:



MATERIALS NEEDED FROM HOME:

- Pencil and Eraser
- Ruler or Straight Edge (Box, Book, etc.)
- White Paper (any size)
- Scratch Paper
- Crayons, Colored Pencils, Colored Markers (any can be used or combined)
- Large Scrap Paper (to put underneath the blank papers while creating your art - not part of the art project)

ART PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Participants will create a work of art inspired by Margarita Azurdia's "*Geometric Abstractions*" series, connecting similarities between her work and Guatemalan Textiles. Artists will consider how to include something special about themselves in their abstract work of art as well as how color choices might represent their own culture and nationality when creating their art piece.

PROMPT QUESTIONS:

1. What similarities do you notice between Azurdia's work and Guatemalan Textile designs?
2. Why do you think Azurdia chose this source of inspiration?
3. How can you include something about yourself in an abstract work of art? What would it be?

ART MAKING PROCESS:

Step 1:

Take a moment to look at Margarita Azurdia's works of art. Notice the straight lines, the use of large geometric shapes and bold colors. Azurdia's art was influenced by her Guatemalan Culture. Think about your own culture and life, what colors relate to it? Challenge yourself to include these colors in your work of art. The design you will be creating will be abstract (based on Azurdia's work and Guatemalan textiles) and will include a part of yourself as well through your color choices.

Step 2:

Begin with your scratch paper to experiment practicing different design ideas. Draw a small rectangle, in the rectangle sketch a line idea for your final artwork using Guatemalan textiles and Margarita Azurdia's art for inspiration (FIG. 1). Draw as many small sketches to experiment with different line compositions as needed. When you are content with one of your ideas and sketch, move on to the next step.

Step 3:

Decide if you want your artwork to be horizontal or vertical. Use your blank white paper, pencil, eraser, and ruler (straight edge) to continue. Put a larger scrap paper under the blank white paper so that the lines you draw can extend off the edge of the paper. Looking at your chosen sketch, use your ruler and pencil to lightly re-draw the lines from your sketched design onto the larger paper as neatly as possible (FIG. 2). Erase any pencil lines that are not needed.

Step 4:

Once you are finished adding all the lines onto the art paper with your pencil, think about what colors you will be using and if you will be adding color on top of your lines or coloring the shapes between the lines. Consider how colors contrast when placed next to each other. The ruler can be used again when adding color to the lines to keep them straight and neat.

Step 5:

Using your coloring tools (colored pencils, markers, crayons) add color to your entire composition (FIG. 3).

Step 6:

When you are finished adding color, sign your name in the bottom right corner of your completed artwork.

POST PROMPT QUESTIONS:

1. How did you like creating an abstract work of art that relates to your identity?
2. Why did you choose the lines and shapes that you did?
3. How do your color choices reflect your culture or something special about your life?

LESSON PLAN

EXAMPLES:

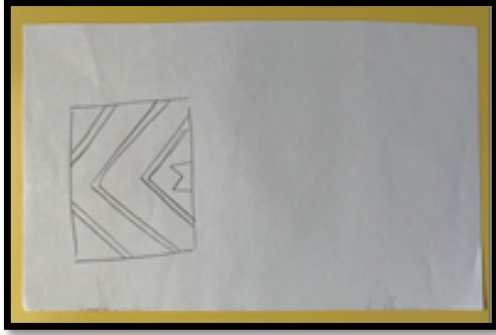


FIG. 1



FIG. 2

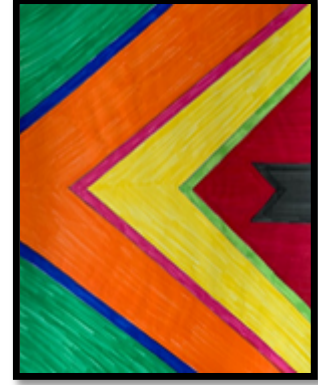


FIG. 3

SOURCES:

- <https://awarewomenartists.com/en/artiste/margarita-azurdia/>
- <https://hammer.ucla.edu/radical-women/artists/margarita-azurdia>
- <https://www.gounesco.com/guatemalas-beautiful-vibrant-textiles/>
- <https://www.britannica.com/place/Guatemala>
- https://www.ancient.eu/Maya_Civilization/
- <https://www.elnumu.org/margarita-azurdia-english>