Holidays

In this painting, there is a bold use of the primary colors (red, blue and yellow). If you look closely, you can see different shapes and objects buried in the painting. What objects can you identify in the painting? What do you think they symbolize?

Sometimes it can feel like the holidays are here and then gone in the blink of an eye. Grace Hartigan wanted to capture this feeling in the painting *Holidays*. All of the colors cram together and the shapes clash just like the sudden arrival of the holidays.

The style of the painting is abstract expressionism but it uses complex figuration. Figuration means blending classic artistic elements with the powerful emotion of abstract painting. Grace Hartigan commonly used figuration in her art.

What is your favorite holiday? What colors do you think about with that holiday?


Why is this in a museum?

Abstract art looks simple, in fact, it looks so simple a 5 year old could do it! But there is more skill than meets the eye. Grace Hartigan painted in a style called Abstract Expressionism. Abstract expressionism is a style of art that focuses on blending gesture (visible painting strokes) with bold emotional meaning.

Grace Hartigan was a key figure in the second-generation of Abstract Expressionism. Artists of the second-generation are important because they became famous long after Abstract Expressionism was established. Some other prominent artists of the second-generation are Helen Frankenthaler and Joan Mitchell, whose work is on view in this exhibition.
**Holidays Revisited**

Grace Hartigan captured the blur of the holiday season with her bright colors and bold brush strokes. Now it’s your turn! Think of your favorite holiday and imagine the colors and images from your memories. Fill your canvas with your idea of the holiday and try to capture the feeling of Abstract Expressionism.

**Materials:**

- Canvas or blank paper
- Watercolor
- Paint brushes
- Permanent marker

**Process:**

1. Use the permanent marker to create the outline of the shapes and objects relating to your holiday. You can make your strokes big and bold like Hartigan or make them thin and delicate.
2. Allow the marker to dry then use the watercolor to paint over your design. Repeat this process to blend colors and experiment with how watercolors interact.

   If you want your colors to be bold, allow the watercolor to dry then add layers of paint. This will create depth and make your colors rich.

**Discussion:**

After learning about Hartigan and creating your own Abstract Expressionism artwork, how do you feel about paintings of this style?

Compare and contrast *Infinity Dots* by Yayoi Kusama with *Holidays* by Grace Hartigan. What elements of these paintings are similar and which are different?