



BOULEVARD

GRADES K-5

A Few Key Points

- Experience color, line, shape, and scale
- Explore the effects of different techniques
- Meaning and feeling can be expressed abstractly
- Each of us might see or experience something very different in the same work of art
- A painting can inspire us creatively, to write a poem or story, draw, sing, or dance
- Music might suggest visual imagery or other forms of expression

Sparking Discussion

- What do you see in the painting?
- Why do you think the picture was given this name by the artist?
- Would you give the painting a different title?

Activities

1. Focusing on the Seasons (to be used with *Lush Spring, 1975*)
Ask students to discuss how this painting expresses springtime and/or why Frankenthaler might have titled this work “Lush Spring.” Have students pick any season and make a picture about aspects of this time of year. Decide whether they should focus on changes in nature, light, weather, etc., or other aspects of the season, such as how people dress, what holidays they might celebrate, or other personal associations and memories.
2. Make Your Own Story (to be used with *Hansel and Gretel, 1975*)
The title “Hansel and Gretel” suggests that we might look at this as a picture of the children standing at the door of the witch’s home. Ask students to respond to what they see. Ask what they think the painting is about. Then, share Frankenthaler’s title. Ask them to return to their first impressions and to write a story about what is happening and what will happen next. (It should NOT be an exact retelling of *Hansel and Gretel*, but it can include some similar elements).

3. Real Science (to be used with *Saturn*, 1963)

Saturn is named for the sixth planet from the sun. Have everyone in the class do their own quick sketch of their impression of the planet. Students should then research actual scientific facts about Saturn or another planet. Everyone will make a second picture describing Saturn in more accurate terms. Have the class compare their two drawings—more researched and more imagined—and decide which they like best.

4. The Sound of Painting (to be used with *Overture*, 1992)

Overture is a musical term referring to the beginning of a symphonic piece. In the 19th century, other artists like James McNeil Whistler began to use musical names for their pictures—nocturne, symphony, harmony, composition, sketch—suggesting an equivalence between music’s ability to convey emotion abstractly and what they wanted to achieve in their art. Have students describe the sense of music or even types of sounds they feel are expressed by *Overture*. How do Frankenthaler’s gestures contribute to this sensation? Play excerpts from three orchestral pieces and take a vote to see which one students feel corresponds the most to Frankenthaler’s *Overture*.

This can be followed by playing varied types of music and having students respond with their own pictures. Draw from a jazz piece, perhaps some Spanish Guitar, hip hop, etc. Compare the drawings; ask students to guess (and identify) which musical pieces were the inspiration for each.