

HIRSHHORN

Artist at Work with Youth with DC-based artist Zoe Charlton

*Josef Albers: Innovation and Inspiration
and
Colorforms*

Lesson Packet

Spring 2010

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Smithsonian
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden

Artist at Work with Youth

Lesson Plan: *Josef Albers: Innovation and Inspiration*

Date: March 13, 2010

Grade Level: 1st-3rd; 4th-6th

Subject: Graphic Portraits

Theme: What does a portrait say about person? Does it describe her mood, her interests, or her personality? How can the medium contribute to the way we may 'read' a portrait?

An artist may decide to create a portrait of someone in a painting, drawing, sculpture, photography, or even video. Throughout history, various cultures have produced portraits for different reasons. Sometimes portraits commemorate a special event in the life of the sitter, like a wedding, or sometimes portraits memorialize a leader. Examples of this are presidential portraits and busts—a sculpture of a figure showing only the head and shoulders.

You most likely have portraits of yourself or family members in your home. What does the portrait say about you? Does it mark a special occasion?

At the Hirshhorn, you'll see four early self portrait prints that Josef Albers made between 1917 and 1923. Albers made his self portraits dramatic by using contrast to emphasize his features. Using these prints as inspiration, we will create a portrait of another person in class.



Description: This lesson introduces young artists to the work and teachings of Josef Albers, an artist, designer, and educator who explored the connections between fine art and applied arts.

Goals/Objectives:

To use contour line to draw a portrait of a model.

To consider how the character and value of a line changes the way we may interpret a portrait.

Materials: 3 sheets of 18" x 24" drawing paper
Black marker
Litho crayon
1 sable paint brush
black ink

We will need a model for this project. Students may pose for each other if one is not available.



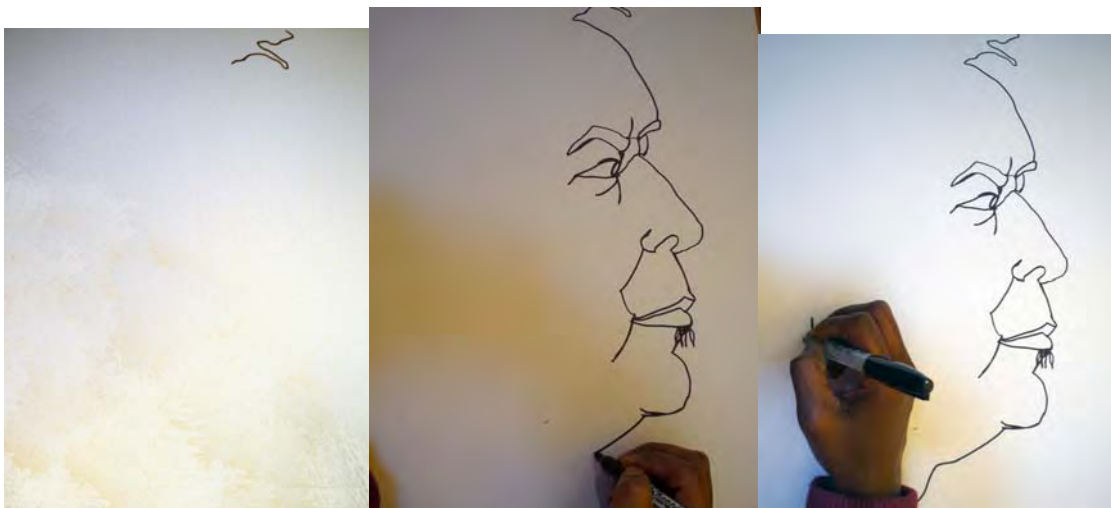
Duration: 1 hour

Methodology:

1. Pose your model so that his/her face is in profile. Your model may be your classmate, your friend, or a relative.



2. The first drawing that we will make is a **contour line** drawing. A **contour line** drawing is one in which your subject is drawn with a line that describes both the inside planes and the outer edges of your subject. The line will vary in width- it may be thinner or thicker depending on the area you are drawing.
3. Please make your drawing larger than life-size, so that your portrait is larger than the model's head. Use the entire page, from top to bottom.
4. Start your drawing at the top of the paper with the top of the model's head. Imagine that your pen is gradually tracing the contours of your model's features. Try to make a continuous line; never lifting your pen from the paper. If you work slowly, you'll find that it will be easier to describe your model's head.



5. If you are at a place in your drawing where you need to move from one area to another, for example, drawing your model's nose and then the ear, draw a line across the page. This line might look out of place, but remember, we're not supposed to lift our pen from the paper.

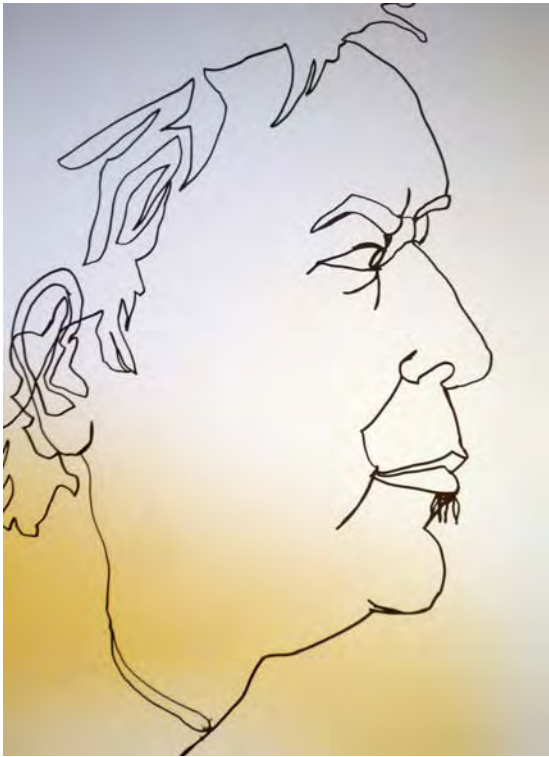


6. Remember to work slowly as you move across the page.



7. When you are finished, hang your drawing on the bulletin board and begin on your next one.
8. For your 2nd drawing, you'll use a litho crayon.
9. You can also try a third drawing, using black ink and a sable paint brush.
10. Finished Portraits:

Let's talk about the differences between your two drawings. How does the medium change the way your drawing looks? Does one drawing use more values than the other? Is it because of the texture, character or size of the line?



Artist at Work with Youth

Lesson Plan: *Josef Albers: Innovation and Inspiration*

Date: April 10, 2010

Grade Level: 1st-3rd; 4th-6th

Subject: Material Studies, Assemblages

Theme: What makes a particular material interesting to you? Is it its texture, color, or shape? Is it opaque or transparent?

Josef Albers encouraged his students to consider how everyday materials could be transformed into works of art. This required his students to look beyond the material's everyday function, and to pay close attention to its physical qualities instead— its color, shape, and surface, especially its relationship to other objects. This juxtaposition amplified the inherent character of a material.

Albers named this process *Materie* studies. He noticed that through combining different materials, their individual properties and character would become more readily apparent. Albers states:

"Just as colors enter into relationships with each other.... the surfaces we note with our fingertips and with our eyes enter into relationships with each other... materials such as brick and burlap, glass and stearin, wire mesh and wool, "stand" in the same relationship."

Description: This lesson introduces young artists to the work and teachings of Josef Albers, an artist, designer, and educator who explored the connections between fine art and applied arts.

Goals/Objectives:

To create assemblages using a variety of materials.

To discover the fundamental properties, possibilities, and limitations of materials.

Materials: A variety of materials and objects with different textures and surfaces (shiny, rough, metal, smooth, printed, natural, thin, fluffy, synthetic)
Glue or Rubber Cement
Hot Glue Gun (please help students with hot glue gun)
¼" Plywood 1' x 1'
Scissors



Duration: 1 hour

Methodology:

1. Have a variety of materials and objects available for your students to use. The materials should be commonplace. You may also have text torn from magazines and newspapers. Try and select contrasting surfaces: hard/soft, smooth/rough, transparent/opaque. Also have materials available that have similar characteristics: cotton batting/faux fur/hair, metal wire/foil/tinsel.
2. Select at least 5 objects to use. You may want to work with surfaces that have similar or contrasting textures. For my project, I'm using objects that are natural and synthetic: wood/paper versus polyester/plastic.

electrical tape

flooring

hemp rope

paint stirring stick

skewers

chopsticks

toilet paper tube

polyester fabric

wood

printed paper

You'll be gluing your objects on a 1' x 1' wood plank.



3. What are the relationships between the objects? How are the objects that are made of the same material different?

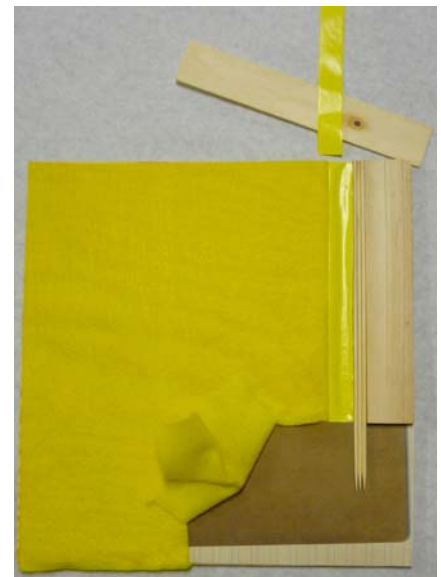
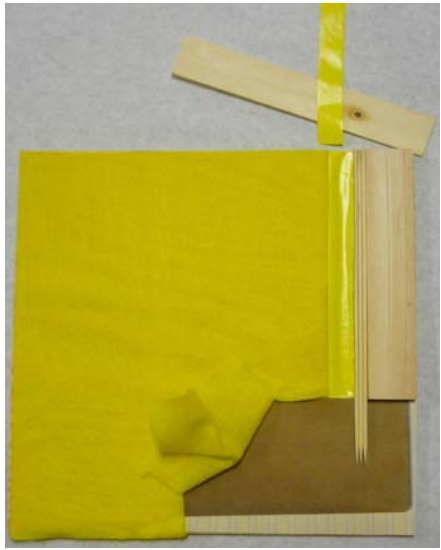
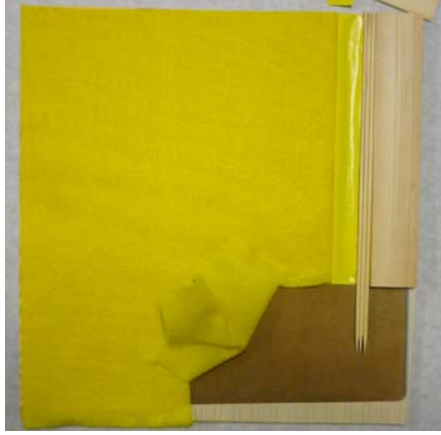
4. Begin slowly and consider where you'd like to place each object. The relationships that you make may be formal—you can look at shape, color, texture, value and line to make decisions about where to place each material on the wood plank.



I've decided to cut and fold a section of the yellow fabric to create the illusion of volume.



5. Your goal is to use all of your materials and to have every element in your composition contribute to the whole—no part of your composition should be unnecessary.



6. Do you think you need more objects? Different textures or shapes? Are there parts of your assemblage that you'd like to remove?

7. Finished Project

Let's discuss your assemblage. What are the relationships between all of your objects and materials? How did you decide on the placement of each element? Did you base your decisions on color, shape, or texture?



Other examples by students:



Artist at Work with Youth
Lesson Plan: Fred Sandback
Date: May 15, 2010
Grade Level: 1st-3rd; 4th-6th

Subject: Line and Space: Mini Installation

Theme: If you have one large room, how would you divide the space? How does dividing up the space change your perception and experience of the room?

Using yarn, rope, wire, and elastic cord, Fred Sandback defines and alters space. In a sense, he creates sculptures without mass. His minimalist sculptures describe the contours of imaginary geometric shapes. His yarn sculptures are dependent on the architecture of a room; the yarn is attached to multiple walls, the ceiling and floor. The areas defined in Sandback's work fluctuate between positive and negative space. Because his work is large and includes the space in and around it, Sandback's work is often referred to as installation.

In this Sandback-inspired project, we will make miniature versions of a string sculpture/installation, using a shoebox as a substitute for a room. Then, we will make a line drawing of our sculpture to talk about characteristics of line and how we can use line to create an illusion of space.

Example: Untitled (Sculptural Study, Twelve-Part Vertical Construction), 1990 (09.5)



Description: This lesson introduces young artists to the work of Fred Sandback, an artist who uses yarn, wire, and other materials to create virtual sculptures and define space.

Goals/Objectives:

To create a miniature architectural installation using yarn.

To create the illusion of space by varying the measure of a line.

Materials: a sturdy Shoe Box
yarn in multiple colors and yarn cut into

- two 10' lengths per student
- additional yarn, rope and yarn—all uncut

scissors
scotch tape
a large finishing nail (or tool to punch holes in the shoe box)
paper—9" x 12"
charcoal pencil



Duration: 1 hour

Methodology:

Part 1

1. Draw 15 small circles on 2 opposite sides of your shoebox. The circles should not be in an even line; they should be randomly placed on each side.
2. With a screwdriver, nail, or other object, poke holes in the sides of your shoebox where you drew your circles.



3. Be careful not to poke yourself—make sure you don't have your fingers where the screwdriver will come through the box.



4. Continue to poke all of the circles on both sides of the box.



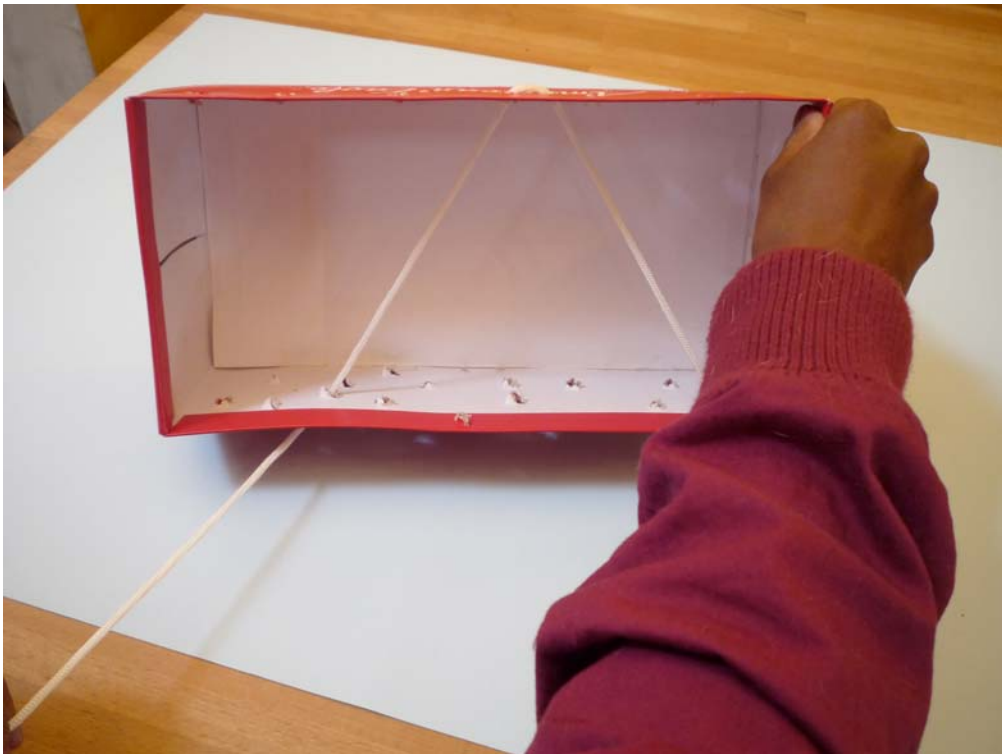
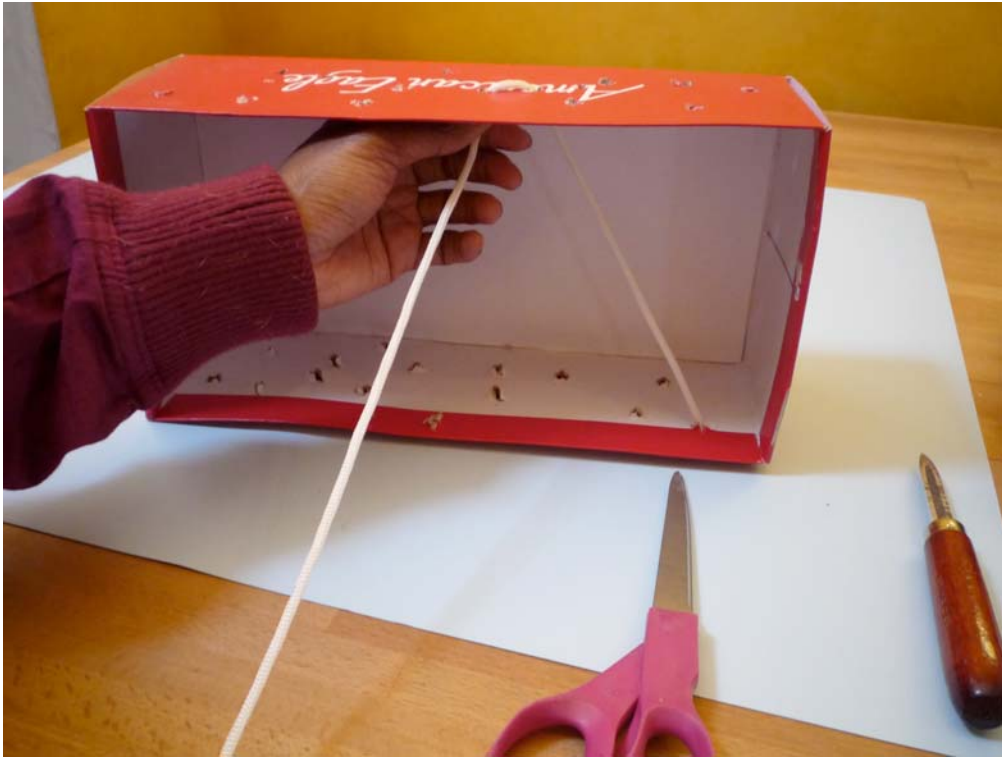
5. Tape the end of a 10' section of yarn to keep the frayed ends together.
It's very similar to a shoestring.



6. Pull the yarn all of the way through one side of the box to the other side. Make a knot at the end of the yarn that is not taped.



7. Continue threading the yarn through all of the holes.



8. Make sure to pull the yarn taught (tightly), but be careful not to warp your cardboard box.



8. Remember to thread the yarn in a random order.



9. Also, remember to pull the yarn tightly.



10. When you are at the end of the yarn, or when you have threaded the last hole in your shoebox, tie a knot at the end of the yarn. Then tape over the knot and trim the excess yarn.

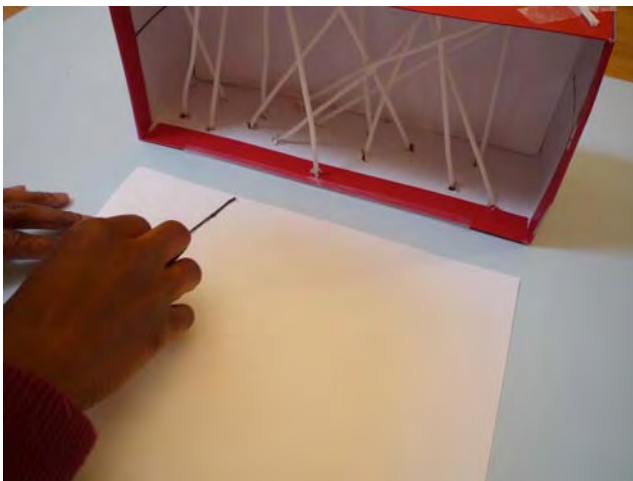


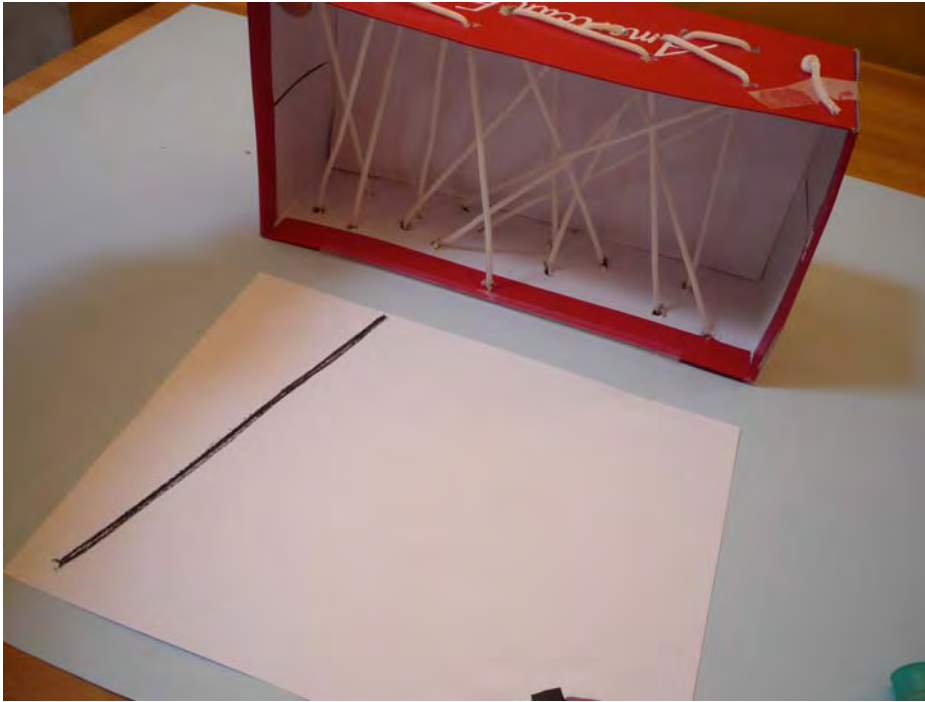
11. Finished Project



Part 2

1. Using the yarn/yarn in your box as guides, you'll make a drawing of the inside of your sculpture.
2. Draw the parts of the yarn that are closest to you with a darker or heavier and thicker line. The parts of the yarn that are farther away from you will be drawn with a lighter and thinner line.

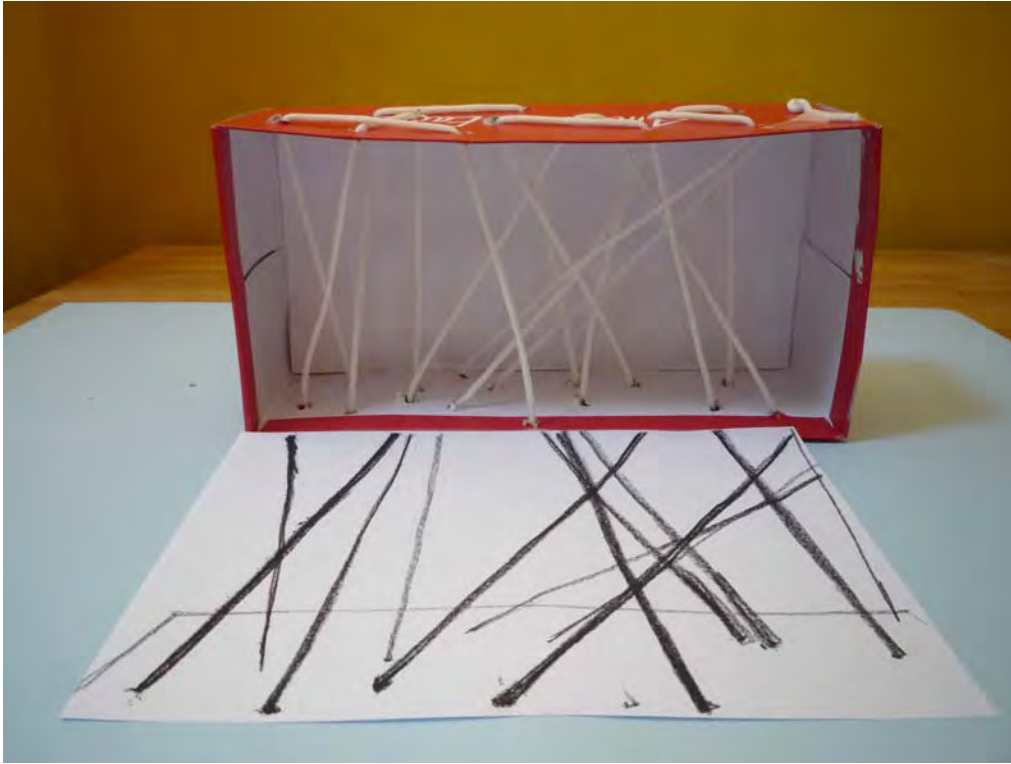




3. Look carefully. Consider the direction that the line is moving in space. Is it a vertical or diagonal line? Does it slightly more to the left than the line next to it? Is it overlapping another line?



4. What can you tell me about creating an illusion of space? Is this space shallow or deep?
5. Finished Project



Part 3

If there's time, try creating a collaborative installation with yarn in your classroom!