

# HIRSHHORN KIDS AT HOME

**Time:** 60 minutes plus drying time

**Skill Level:** Intermediate

**Topic:** Nature and art

## This One is for the Birds

Transform an empty milk carton into a bird feeder that doubles as a work of art inspired by Joan Mitchell's paintings.



Joan Mitchell sits in front of her painting *Untitled*, 1951.

### LOOK CLOSELY

Look closely at *Giboulée* by Joan Mitchell.

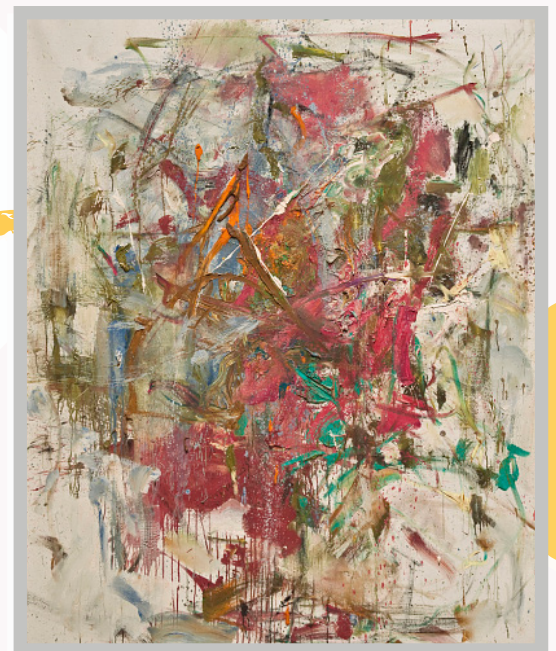
Let your eyes wander across the canvas.

What do you see? Describe the colors, lines, and textures.

What do you think about this painting?

Does it remind you of anything? The artist titled it *Giboulée*, which means “sudden shower” in French.

Joan Mitchell (1925–1992) was an American painter who painted in a style called Abstract Expressionism. Instead of painting in a way that looked like a real place or person, she painted colorful gestures on large canvases to express her feelings. Joan Mitchell's paintings were often inspired by her memories of places in nature.



*Giboulée (Sudden Shower)* by Joan Mitchell, 1962.

# HIRSHHORN KIDS AT HOME

“My paintings repeat a feeling about Lake Michigan, or water, or fields ... It’s more like a poem ... and that’s what I want to paint.” - Joan Mitchell

## MAKE IT!

Take inspiration from Joan Mitchell and paint the “feeling” of a place, and try to make your brush strokes “like a poem.” Then, share your creation with the birds!



**1. Gather your materials.** You’ll need an empty milk carton, paint, a bird perch (such as kabob skewers, popsicle sticks, or a straw), a cutting tool (X-acto knife, scissors), and strong glue (optional).

**2. Prime your canvas.**  
Paint the milk carton white.

### 3. Choose your color palette.

Stroll around the house or yard for inspiration. Joan Mitchell used what she saw in nature to inspire her paintings. For this example, we picked flowers and used their colors as our palette.





# HIRSHHORN KIDS AT HOME

**4. Paint it.** Use big expressive brush strokes. Don't worry about making it look like the place. Instead, try to get the feeling of the place using colors and lines.



**5. Add a hole** (or two) for the bird's food. Use a pencil to sketch where you'd like the perch and hole(s) to be. **Have an adult help cut the holes using a cutting tool.**

**6. Attach the perch.** The most sturdy option is to spear your perch all the way through the milk carton, directly under each feeding hole. If you have a strong, waterproof glue, you can glue the perch on instead.

**7. Add bird seed and hang outdoors.**

Enjoy artful birdwatching!

**Share what you created:**  
**@hirshhorn**  
**#hirshhorninsideout**

