

# MoNA

Museum of Northwest Art

Age: K - Fourth Grade

Lesson Duration: 45-60 Minutes

Subjects: Visual Literacy and Writing

## Signs of Life Inspired by Ed Kamuda

A HANDS-ON ART ACTIVITY  
DESIGNED BY MONA  
EDUCATION

### Description

Students will engage in writing and drawing activities to learn about several universal shapes found in art, experiment with personal meaning making, and be introduced to the works of Pacific Northwest artist Ed Kamuda.



*Student Example*

*Image credit: MoNA Education*

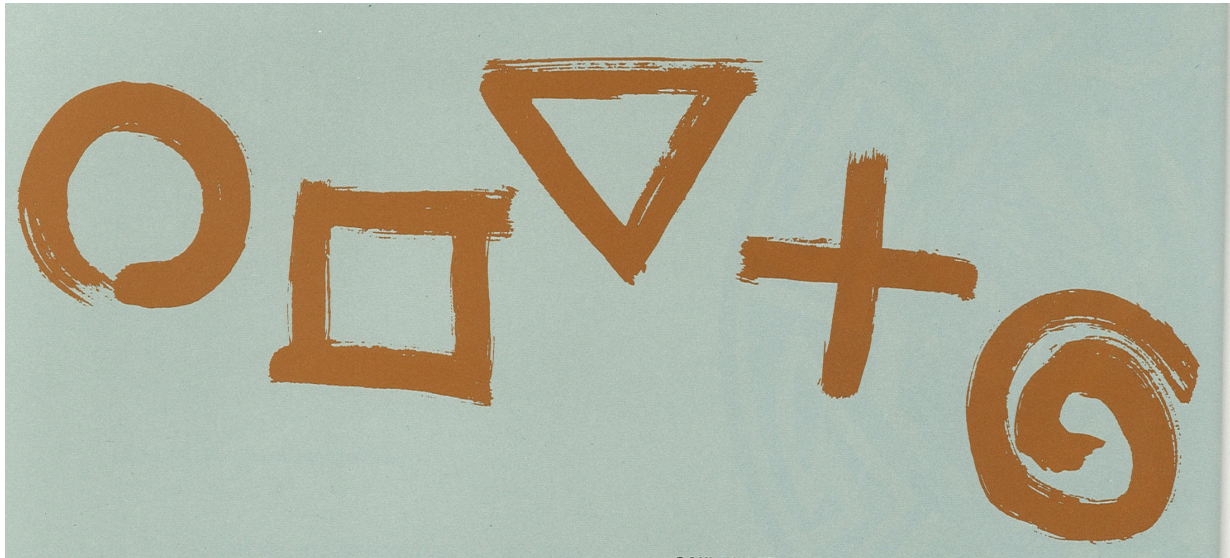
### Materials

- Artist information & images (included)
- Writing paper
- Heavy drawing paper
- Pencils
- Markers, crayons, paints, watercolors or any preferred mark-making tools

## Writing Activity Instructions

- 1) Introduce students to the five universal shapes and ask them to draw them on the writing paper using pencil. The shapes are: circle, square, triangle, cross, and spiral.
- 2) Then ask students to write words under each shape and list things each shape suggests or brings to mind.
- 3) Share ideas on the whiteboard and let students add to their personal lists if they like another student's ideas.

### Examples:



no end  
cycle  
unity  
one  
hole  
sun  
moon  
seed

box  
trap  
window  
shelter  
corners  
cracker  
present

recycle  
warning  
fire  
strong  
three  
skirt  
arrow  
sharp

cross  
plus  
first aid  
hope  
church  
meeting

galaxy  
shell  
tie-dye  
whirlpool  
growing  
dizzy  
dancing  
energy

## Art Activity Instructions

- 1) Using the full-size images included at the end of this lesson, lead an observational discussion using VTS (Visual Thinking Strategies). VTS tips and resources can be found in the included VTS appendix.
- 2) Share some information about Ed Kamuda's work with the students (included on the next page) and let students discuss his art and the symbols he uses.
- 3) Pass out drawing paper and any mark-making materials you'd like to use (oil crayons, paints, markers, etc.) to invite students to make art using their favorite symbols, ideas and meanings that emerged from the writing and sharing activity.

### Additional Discussion Questions:

Ed Kamuda did not give this oil painting a title.

- Why do you think he did this?
- Can you think of a name for the artwork?
- Write down a title on your art to share with others.



*Untitled*, Ed Kamuda

Image credit: Museum of Northwest Art

# About the Artist: Ed Kamuda

Ed Kamuda (1943-2020) was born in New York, but found his roots in the Pacific Northwest in the 1970's. Kamuda chose to paint using a palette knife instead of a paintbrush, methodically building up layers of color on top of one another. This effect created the artworks that Kamuda was best known for: landscapes or scenes using simplified shapes, symbols and bold outlines. Kamuda also finished many of his paintings with wax varnish, which gave a unique texture and finish to each artwork.

To learn more about Ed Kamuda and explore more artworks, click [here](#).



Artist Ed Kamuda

Image credit: La Conner Weekly News



*Autumn*, Ed Kamuda

Image credit: Harris/Harvey Gallery

**How many shapes and symbols can you find in Kamuda's artworks? What do you think they mean?**

## Learning and State Standards

Fulfills **Washington State Arts Learning Standards:**

- **VA:Cr2.1.4** Explore and invent art-making techniques and approaches.
- **VA:Cr3.1.4** Revise artwork in progress on the basis of insights gained through peer discussion.
- **VA:R37.1.4** Compare responses to a work of art before and after working in a similar media.



### Student Examples:



### Extension questions:

Recalling the VTS skill practiced in class discussion, invite students to VTS students' artwork. You can also ask:

- Do simple symbols have a special meaning?
- Did students assign similar meanings to each shape?
- How are these shapes universal?
- How are these shapes used artistically by different cultures and different times in history?

# Visual Thinking Strategies

MoNA's Education programs utilize Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS), which is a research-based teaching method that promotes aesthetic development including critical thinking and communication skills. Here in the MoNA, we use VTS to engage students and general visitors with art encouraging them to observe closely, think critically and discuss respectfully; however, VTS can be effectively used across curricula. This approach teaches its participants how to take the time to observe closely, describe what they see in detail and provide evidence for their observations. Students learn that their reflections and thoughts are valued and appreciated in this inclusive teaching method.

In order to facilitate a VTS discussion, you first encourage viewers to take a quiet moment to observe the work you are going to explore. Then you ask the following questions and paraphrase the responses without adding any of your own judgements. You can insert additional vocabulary and point to specific parts of the artwork.

*What's going on in this picture?*  
*What do you see that makes you say that...?*  
*What more can you find?*

## Visual Thinking Strategy Links

If you are interested in learning more about VTS, [here is their website](#). If you already know and love VTS, but want help finding great images to VTS in your classroom, here is a [fantastic gallery](#). You can also visit this website for additional resources: <https://www.monamuseum.org/resources-for-educators>



*Untitled Landscape with Symbols*, Ed Kamuda  
Image credit: Harris/Harvey Gallery



*Autumn*, Ed Kamuda  
Image credit: Harris/Harvey Gallery





*Untitled*, Ed Kamuda  
Image credit: Museum of Northwest Art



*Ancient Score/Crystalline Shore*, Ed Kamuda  
Image credit: Harris/Harvey Gallery