

Katelynn Noel Knick | Session 3:

Hilma af Klint – Nature-Inspired Watercolor Paintings

List of Required Supplies:

a large sheet of watercolor paper, sketchbook or piece of paper, a pencil, paint set up: water cup, paint brush, paper towel, oil pastels or crayons, circular household objects such as cups, bowls, etc.

Additional Links :

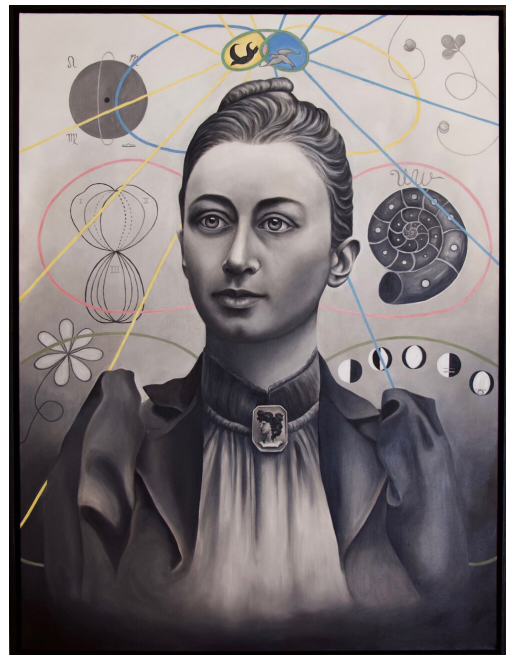
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CHdud9km7bQ> (Guggenheim video)

Space/Facility Requirements: running water, table and chair, optional: plastic sheeting to cover table surface

Student Time Required: 60 minutes

Information on the Artist:

Hilma af Klint was a Swedish artist and mystic whose paintings were considered one of the first abstract paintings in Western history. She was born in Stockholm in 1862 and later studied art at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts. Her work was deeply inspired by nature and her spirituality, often using symbols and imagery such as spirals, leaves, birds, the sun, and other elements of the earth. After many years of making art in private, Klint's first major exhibition was presented at the Guggenheim. The exhibition represented Klint's entire life's work and the impact she had as a leader in abstraction.



Tips for the Instructor:

- Pre-Lesson Activity - Consider having the students start by looking outside or at pictures of nature and sketch on a scrap piece of paper or in their sketchbooks shape and lines and colors from their observations that they are drawn to. Collect several and fill in the page to use as reference later.
- Review color as a concept and introduce the concepts of shape and line in reference to Hilma's work. Create a wax resist watercolor demo to show the process.



Example Pre-Lesson Questions:

- What shapes in nature did you find?
- Which ones were you drawn to the most?
- What colors did you see?
- How did the colors and shapes interact to create a feeling? (example: the circle shape of the sun and color yellow work together to create a feeling of joy and warmth)

Activity with Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. Using your oil pastels or crayons, draw a large shape onto your watercolor paper. If you did the sketchbook activity, use your sketches as reference. If you're not sure where to start, try drawing a spiral—Hilma created lots of spirals and used them in almost every painting she made.
2. Now add in more smaller shapes and lines around the large shape, as you start to fill the paper.
3. Try adding circles to your paper by tracing the outside of a cup or bowl.



4. Once you are done drawing and adding shapes and lines, you can begin painting. Set up your watercolor paints.
5. Choose the color scheme you would like to work with and fill in each area as you go.
6. As you add paint, you'll notice that the oil pastels or crayons stick out and show through the paint! This is a wax resist effect. Continue to paint the entire paper until it's filled with color.
7. Once you're finished, set your painting to the side to dry and clean up your area.

After Activity Review:

Consider hanging all the finished paintings on the wall and having the students view them from afar. Share and discuss as a group: How do the paintings change as you get further away? What shapes and colors pop out the most? What feeling do you get from each student's painting?