

## Sonia Delaunay



## Artist Study: Sonia Delaunay

Sonia Delaunay was born November 14, 1885 in Gradizhsk, Ukraine. Delaunay's **abstract** compositions were directly inspired by the traditional quilts she saw during her childhood in Russia. Both **prolific** and innovative, she also extended her artistic talents to fashion, interior design, graphics, collage, book illustration and binding, and other decorative arts.

Sonia Delaunay was born Sarah Stern (nicknamed Sonia) in Ukraine, where her father was a factory worker. At five she went to live with a wealthy uncle in St. Petersburg and took his surname, Terk. She knew that she was an artist when she was a child and studied art in Karlsruhe, Germany. Beginning in 1905 she studied in Paris, France where she spent most of the rest of her life.

In 1910 she married the French painter Robert Delaunay. Together, husband and wife, developed **Orphism** also called Simultaneism, an artistic style that prized color over form.

When Sonia Delaunay moved to the city of Paris she was influenced by the artists Paul Gauguin, Vincent Van Gogh and the Fauves. The Fauves were a group of artists who used colors and shapes in the compositions of their paintings. Delaunay's paintings also used colors and light to depict movement and strong **geometric** shapes are seen in her compositions. She doesn't paint things as they really look but paints in a new modern style called Geometric Abstraction.

Delaunay didn't just paint but also made designs for fabrics, as well as, costumes and sets for plays and the ballet. In addition, she and her husband decorated a pavilion at the World Exhibition (Paris World's Fair) in 1937; that was a joint highlight in their artistic careers.

Sonia Delaunay was highly successful and had numerous solo and group exhibitions during her lifetime. She was the first living female artist to have a **retrospective** show in the Louvre museum. Delaunay was also honored with many awards, such as the French Légion d'Honneur (1975), Chevalier des Arts et Lettres (1958), and a gold medal for her two murals at the Paris World's Fair (1937).

Delaunay died in 1979 in Paris at the age of 94.



[Click here to enjoy a video of her works](#)



[Story Time: Sonia Delaunay: A Life of Color](#)

## What did you learn about the artist?

1 Delaunay was born in Ukraine but where and when did she move to become an artist?

2 What artistic talents does Delaunay have besides painting?

3 What style of painting is Delaunay known for?

4 List Delaunay's awards.

5 What did Delaunay and her husband paint in 1937 which awarded her two gold medals?

## Vocabulary:

**Abstract -**

**Prolific -**

**Orphism (art) -**

**Geometric -**

**Retrospective -**

## Art Lesson 1- Orphism Art

Orphism was a movement of abstract art developed in the early 1900s by Sonia and Robert Delaunay. It was influenced by the cubist style. Patches of subtle and vibrant colors are brought together focusing on form and color. You will create your own abstract art!

### Materials:

**Watercolor paper**, pencil, watercolors with paintbrush and circular shaped objects.  
(items in bold are included in Art Pack)

### TK-4th Steps:

1. Find circular objects of different sizes around your house, such as cans, cups or jars.
2. With a pencil trace the circular objects on the paper with some circles overlapping and some off of the paper.
3. Use watercolors to fill in the individual circular shapes with bright colors. See Image 1.

### 5th-8th Steps:

1. Find circular objects of different sizes around your house.
2. With a pencil trace the circular objects on the paper with some circles overlapping and some off of the paper.
3. Use watercolors to fill in the individual circular shapes with bright colors. Follow the style of Image 2.



Image 1

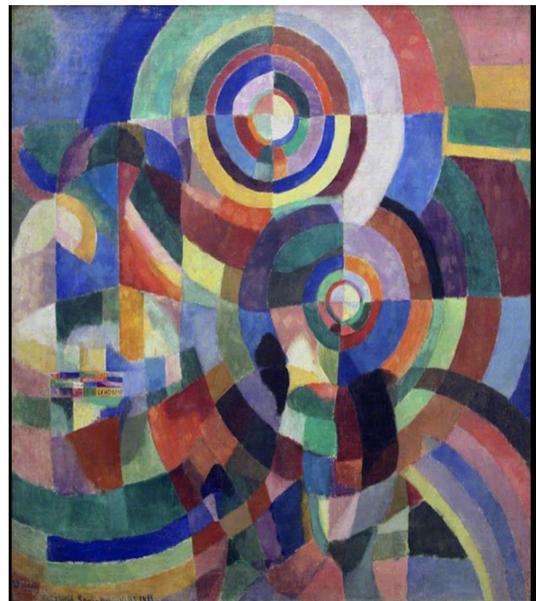


Image 2

## Art Lesson 2 - Color Moves (Textiles and Fashion)

Sonia Delaunay was well known for her fabric design. She created art with fabric and she created designs that were printed onto fabric. Her designs used bold colors and shapes. You will use fabric to create your own brightly colored geometric art.

### Materials:

**Cardstock or Construction paper**, multiple colors fabric strips, scissors and glue.  
(items in bold are included in Art Pack)

### TK-4th Steps:

1. Find scrap fabric at home using old clothes or scrap fabric. Parents help cut fabric into strips.
2. Cut fabric strips into squares and rectangles.
3. Using your fabric shapes create your own patterns and design by gluing fabric onto your paper. See Image 1.

### 5th-8th Steps:

1. Find scrap fabric at home using old clothes or scrap fabric.
2. Cut the fabric into several triangle shapes.
3. Use at least four different fabric colors.
4. Glue the fabric to the paper by creating a pattern of your choice. You can follow the style in Image 2 or create your own such as a flower, animal, dress, shirt etc.

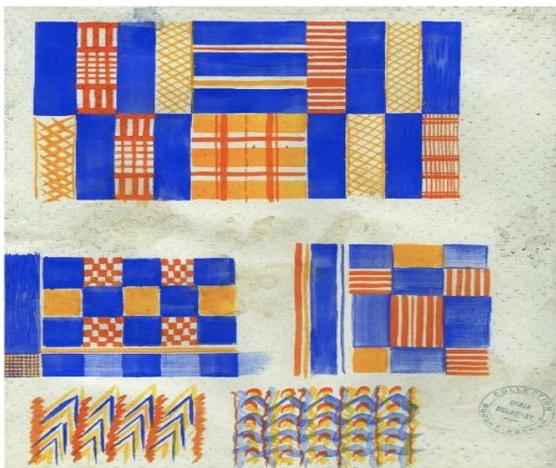


Image 1



Image 2

## Art Lesson 3 - Zenith Swiss Watch (Poster)

Sonia Delaunay created art that was used as advertisements to sell products. Using vibrant colors she incorporated the company or product name into a layered graphic. You will create your own graphic Name art.

### Materials:

**Cardstock paper, multiple tissue paper strips**, scissors and glue. Optional: black marker.  
(items in bold are included in Art Pack)

### TK-4th Steps:

1. You can either create your name by cutting the letters of your name out of tissue paper to incorporate into your design (Example 1) or write box letters (or have parent help) of your name on your paper and fill in the letters of your name with tissue paper. (Example 2)
2. Cut your tissue paper into different shapes: squares, rectangles, circles.
3. Glue your tissue paper shapes onto your cardstock and add your tissue paper letters on top to highlight your name. Or if you wrote box letters of your name, fill in the letters of your name with your tissue paper.

### 5th-8th Steps:

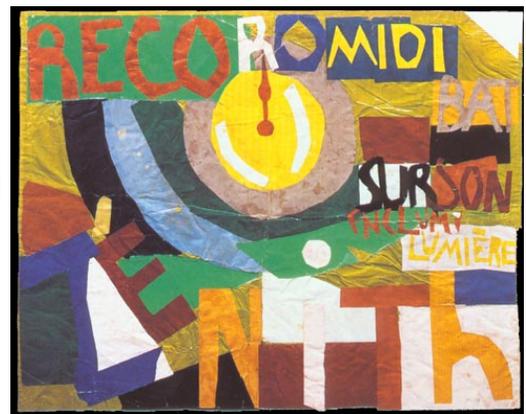
1. Start by deciding what name you want to “highlight” on your poster. It can be your first or last name, or something you like for example: ice-cream.
2. Cut the name you selected by using multiple tissue paper colors.
3. Cut the tissue paper into several shapes. You should include multiple shapes and sizes as shown in Image 1.
4. Develop a poster collage by gluing the selected name and shapes to the cardstock paper.



Example 1



Example 2



Delaunay's Art: Image 1

## Extension Activities:

### 1. A Poem in Five Lines - (Grades K-8th)

A five-line poem is also called a cinquain. Look closely at one of Sonia Delaunay's works or a work you just created based on Delaunay's artistic style and respond to the following prompts to write your own cinquain.

(K-4th Parents - please have younger students tell you their cinquain as you write it down for them if they need extra assistance.)

Line #1: Choose one noun to identify the subject of the artwork.

Line #2: Pick two adjectives describing the subject of the artwork.

Line #3: Write three verbs ending in -ing that detail the action in the artwork.

Line #4: Select four individual words or a four-word phrase to describe emotions related to the artwork.

Line #5: End with one noun that is a synonym for the subject of the artwork

### 2. Mural Painting and/or Door Decor - (Grades K-8th)

(K-4th Parents - please have younger students tell you their details and explanations as you write it down for them.)

You were asked by your Education Coordinator to paint a mural for the school and/or decorate your bedroom or classroom door.

- A) Write in detail what you would include in your mural-painting and/or door-decorating. For example: colors, shapes, graphics, texture, symmetry, highlight, etc
  
- B) Explain why you used each color, shape, graph, technique, etc

**Extra-Challenge:** Draw and color your mural or door. You can use the door on the next page or draw your own.

**\*We would love for you to bring in your completed art and writing projects to be displayed in the Annex!**

