

# Studio Workshop Activity

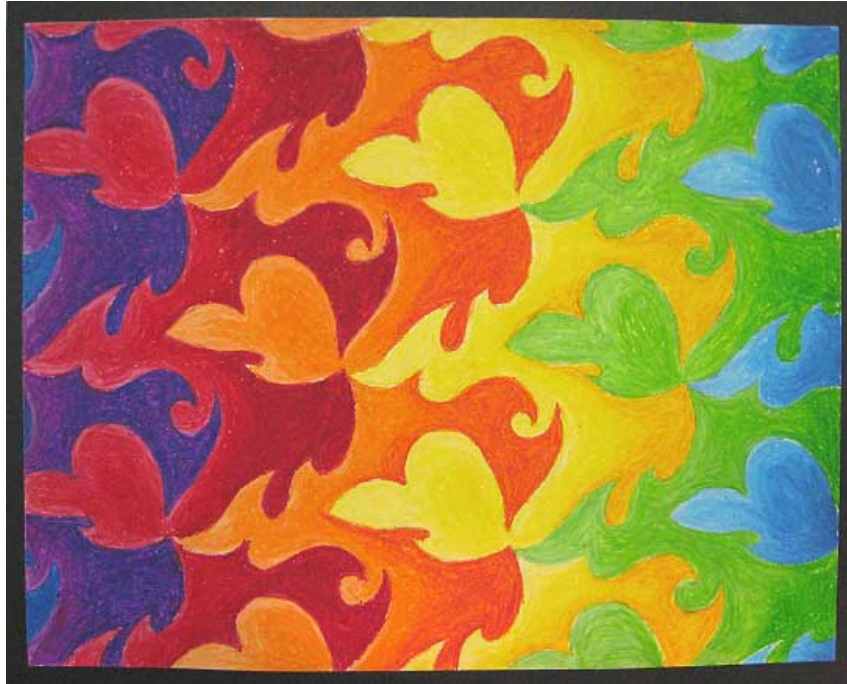
## Fall 2011

kw|ag

KITCHENER - WATERLOO  
ART GALLERY

### Tumbling Tessellations

Use tessellations to create a drawing with no beginning and no end



### **The Exhibition:**

Our tessellation project was designed to complement the show, "The Limits", on display at the gallery from September 16, 2011 to January 8, 2012. Organized by KW|AG's curator, Crystal Mowry, "this exhibition explores how art can help us understand time and space in new ways".

Students visiting this show participated in animated discussions about how artists depict intangible and limitless subjects. Several of the pieces were created specifically for this show, and our visitors had the privilege of being the first to view them.

Participating artists: Kristan Horton, David Spriggs, Alyson Shotz, Spring Hurlbut, Lani Maestro, Kerrie Tribe, and Jani Ruscica. An exhibition catalogue will be available in early 2012.

## Project Description:

These tessellated drawings have no real beginning or end; the image could theoretically extend past the edges of the paper into infinity. The boundary of one shape is the beginning of the next, creating a limitless pattern.

Students will begin with a square piece of card stock. Each edge of this square will be altered by cutting into it or adding on to it. As they trim pieces away from one side of the square they must add that piece to the opposite edge in the exact location from which it was removed. (a translation) Once complete, the altered square will be used as a stencil to create the tessellated pattern. Students will trace the stencil onto their drawing paper and will then fill in the resulting shapes using oil pastel.

## Materials

Card stock, 4 x 4 inches

Pencils

Erasers

Scissors

Tape, masking or scotch

Oil pastels

Cartridge paper, 9 x 12 inches

## Procedures:

### Introduce the project...

- Define tessellation (a repeating design or pattern where the individual pieces fit together exactly) and show them the example
- Ask if anyone has seen an example of tessellations before. If so, where? We visited [www.mcescher.com](http://www.mcescher.com) for inspiration when developing this project.
- Ask them to predict how they will create their own tessellation.

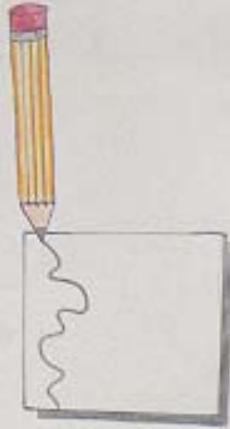
### Explain the steps...

- Demonstrate how they will construct the stencil: with a pencil they will draw an interesting line transforming one edge of the square; they will cut along that line and then "translate" that piece to the opposite edge, taping it in place; they will continue this process for at least one other edge of the square. Note: create the stencils one step at a time as a class so that you can assess their understanding of the translation. (otherwise they'll struggle to get a repeating pattern)
- The completed stencils will be traced onto the cartridge paper; demonstrate how to align the stencil so that there are no gaps between the tessellations.
- Students will then complete the drawings with oil pastel; there are several options for adding colour: using a different colour for every shape, alternating colours, or blending colours within each shape to create depth... assess the skill level of your group and make suggestions accordingly.



KITCHENER - WATERLOO  
ART GALLERY

**1.**



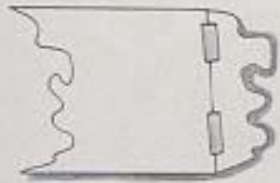
Draw an interesting  
line along one edge  
of your square

Cut along this  
line

**2.**



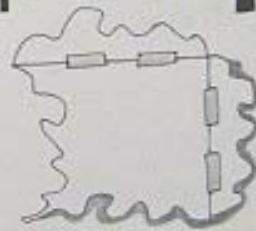
**3.**



Repeat on one  
Other edge of your  
Square

Translate or slide that  
piece to the opposite  
edge of your square and  
tape it in place

**4.**



Instruction poster drawn by Larissa Scholtis, grade 11, St. Mary's



KITCHENER - WATERLOO  
ART GALLERY