

Different strokes: the forgotten women of abstract expressionism

Level 3: Advanced – Teacher's notes

Article summary: The article describes a new art exhibition in London, which features 80 female artists from around the world and is expanding the body of abstract expressionist artwork.

Time: 60 minutes

Skills: Reading, Speaking, Writing

Language focus: Adjectives

Materials needed: One copy of the worksheet per student

1. Warmer

- a. The purpose of this activity is to introduce the topic of art and get students thinking about their art preferences. Make sure learners give reasons for their ranking. Note that “art installations” are a kind of artwork you can walk through and experience, and “mixed media” refers to an artwork that uses many different materials in the same piece.

2. Key words

- a. Ask students to do the exercise individually and then compare their answers in pairs or small groups. Note that students may be familiar with the word *landmark* in the context of travel and sightseeing, which is different to the context in the text. The word *canon* also refers to generally accepted rules or Christian priests working in a cathedral. Remind students that words ending in *-ist*, like *feminist*, usually refer to a person.

Key:

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. <i>fundamental</i> | 8. <i>incorporate</i> |
| 2. <i>feminist</i> | 9. <i>perspective</i> |
| 3. <i>chronologically</i> | 10. <i>landmark</i> |
| 4. <i>conclude</i> | 11. <i>acknowledge</i> |
| 5. <i>masterpiece</i> | 12. <i>merit</i> |
| 6. <i>official</i> | 13. <i>canon</i> |
| 7. <i>gesture</i> | |

- b. Give the class an opportunity to personalise some of the vocabulary they have covered in the previous activity. Encourage students to choose the words they are interested in practising or unsure how to use properly. Monitor and assist students as you walk around the class. Allow time for feedback, so students can share some of the sentences they have written.

3. Comprehension check

- a. The answers given are only suggested answers, and students may correctly answer the questions in different ways, e.g., in item 1, they may say, “The article talks about women artists in abstract expressionism,” or similar.

Key:

1. *women in abstract impressionism*
2. *because it's the first to have 80 female artists*
3. *paint, colour, and gesture*
4. *Janet Sobel*
5. *their traditions and perspectives*
6. *a 2016 exhibition at the Denver Museum of Art*
7. *in five thematic groups*
8. *an advisory board of 13 people (curators, art historians, and collectors)*
9. *initiatives to rediscover and reintroduce overlooked female artists*
10. *Behjat Sadr, Wook-kyung Choi, Lee Krasner, Li Fang, Janet Sobel*

4. Key language

- a. Students could be asked to do this exercise individually, and then compare their answers in pairs or small groups. The compound adjectives can all be found in the text. As an extension activity, ask students to find and underline them.

Key:

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. <i>all-over</i> | 6. <i>best-known</i> |
| 2. <i>cut-up</i> | 7. <i>women-only</i> |
| 3. <i>all-American</i> | 8. <i>art-historical</i> |
| 4. <i>little-known</i> | 9. <i>nature-inspired</i> |
| 5. <i>male-dominated</i> | |

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5. Discussion

- a. Allow students time to note down their ideas about each statement and encourage them to say why they agree or disagree with each one.

6. In your own words

- a. The task could also be done as a homework task, and students can then present their reports to the class.