

CURRICULUM THEMES

Elements of Art; Principles of Design;
Saskatchewan Voices; Abstraction

CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

GRADE 11 | CP 20.1- Students will create an abstract work to depict a story, exploring risk-taking in technical choices around the elements of art and principles of design.

MARIE LANNOO: *WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE GOEBBELS' FAMILY?*

This artwork includes content with mature themes. We encourage classes to read and discuss together, using the ideas in the 'to think about' section and the hands-on activity as a way to explore difficult themes.

Prior to painting *Whatever Happened to the Goebbels' Family?*, Lannoo had been exploring her own personal history in a series of figurative paintings called *The Academy*. In the painting *Whatever Happened to the Goebbel's Family*, Lannoo was inspired by her reading and research to paint about a World War II historical event. Paul Joseph Goebbels was a German Nazi soldier and the Minister of Propaganda and Enlightenment for Hitler in 1933-45 Germany. Through the combination of his ambition and his expert oratory skills he was responsible for influencing the German population's thinking towards Nazism and specifically the extermination of the Jewish population. After Hitler was defeated and committed suicide, Goebbels and his wife took their own lives as well as the lives of their six children.

Lannoo, being a mother herself, was appalled to discover that the Goebbels' made an ideological choice for the lives of their children and she wanted to use their story in her work. The image depicted reflects a transitional period between exploring figurative imagery and returning to her abstract painting roots.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

How could this work be considered both a figurative painting and abstraction?

Is art more about the actual image you are seeing or the meaning and story behind it?

After reading about this artwork and learning the history behind it, do you think it is important for viewers to research art before or after viewing? If you learned the history after viewing would you have the same understanding of the artwork as you do now?



Marie Lannoo, *Whatever Happened to the Goebbels' Family?*, 1994, acrylic on canvas. Collection of the MacKenzie Art Gallery, gift of the artist.

[CLICK HERE TO DOWNLOAD THE IMAGE](#)

ACTIVITY

Think about a story (real or fictional). Create an abstract artwork to illustrate the story, while thinking about how artists portray stories.

- Choose an event from a storybook or a novel that you were very interested in. Or an event from real life.
- Draw your own depiction of this moment.
- Think about how you can make this image more abstract as you layer paint over your original drawing. You could:
 - Reduce the image to more basic shapes.
 - Use colours to represent emotions.
 - Add elements to the image, such as lines connecting parts of it, circles showing things being brought together, or textural elements that evoke feelings to you.
 - Make parts of the image larger or smaller to create emphasis
- Share your artwork with someone. Ask them what story they think is being told by your abstract painting. How much of the story was conveyed through your artistic choices?

WHAT YOU NEED

- A book (optional)
- Paper
- Paint/paintbrushes
- Drawing materials

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Marie Lannoo was born in Delhi, Ontario and now lives in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. She has developed a reputation as an outstanding abstract painter whose work explores ideas of surface, reflection, depth and colour. Her painting *Whatever Happened to the Goebbels' Family?* was one of her last works in a series of work in which she explored figurative imagery and narrative. She is a prolific artist who exhibits locally, nationally and internationally and her paintings are represented in many collections.

Lannoo's interest in investigating abstract art practices and exploring colour began in 1984, when she established her full-time career as an artist. Since that time, she has examined a variety of themes and processes. Her abstract work explores the magical effect of layering colour to produce a variety of colours and create the illusion of depth. As the viewer interacts with the surface of the painting and is reflected in it, the surfaces change and provide totally new or unexpected reflections of colour. What appears simple on the surface becomes more complex as you spend time experiencing her work.

Lannoo is always open to her environment and finds inspiration in everything she sees and experiences. She is captivated by a variety of stimuli such as magazine articles, books on string theory, the Aurora Borealis and popular television programs. The vast open spaces of the prairie landscape and the clarity of light also have influenced Lannoo and her work. Some of her greatest artistic influences are Otto Rogers, Eli Bornstein, Mark Rothko and Zaha Hadid, as well as the artists of the "Regina Five": Arthur MacKay, Kenneth Lochhead, Ted Godwin, Ronald Bloore and Douglas Morton.