



**CLASS**  
Community Liaison for  
Art in Stanislaus Schools

**Central California  
Art Association**

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#### **Required Materials:**

1 - 9x12" white drawing  
paper background for  
each student

2 - 6x9" or smaller  
pieces of various colors  
for students to share  
(recommend Fadeless  
art paper)  
scissors  
glue stick

#### **Resources:**

reproduction of Matisse  
cutouts

Video: [https://  
www.youtube.com/  
watch?v=hy4DUpsC22c](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hy4DUpsC22c)

Picture books:  
"Drawing with Scissors"  
by Keesia Johnson

"Matisse's Garden" by  
Samantha Friedman

"Henri's Scissors" by  
Jeanette Winter

#### **Vocabulary:**

collage  
organic shape  
geometric shapes  
(rectangle, triangle,  
square, circle)

## **Organic Shapes - the Matisse Cutouts**

**Learning Objective:** Students will understand that natural things create "organic" shapes. They will understand the terms "positive" and "negative" space. They will be able to cut simple organic shapes from paper and build a collage using both positive and negative space.

Number of Sessions: 1      Grade(s): 3-4

### **Process**

**Warm Up/Introduction:** Show the Matisse "cut out" paintings. Discuss the types of shapes used - many organic shapes inspired by natural things - and some geometric shapes. Identify places where both the positive and negative shapes were used in the composition (explain meaning of positive/negative space).

**Modeling** Show a few basis shapes and demonstrate how you might arrange them on the paper for a nice composition, using both the shape and the negative "scrap" as elements in the picture. Explain that it can look like something, or not, or may just give the impression of natural shapes.

**Independent Practice** (You do...) Give students one 9x12" white paper for background, and two or three smaller pieces of fadeless art paper -- kids can share scraps. Students can be given choices of paper colors (they can also use scraps as you accumulate them), and freedom to create various elements as they wish. Students cut out all the shapes they need, then arrange them into a composition on their background paper. Lastly, have them glue all the pieces in place. I try to emphasize that collage should not include any drawing...so no pencils, crayons, etc. this time.

**Close/Evaluation:** To wrap up the lesson, share how each student used a variety of shapes and colors to construct the composition. Students should be able to describe the shapes used.

**Tips:** Try to get them to use all their paper - leaving little or no scraps, and cut LARGE shapes which will fill up the paper.



Student example

#### **Visual Art Standards:**

Artistic Perception:

1.3 Analyze Art Elements and Principles of Design: Identify the elements of art (line, color, shape/form, texture, value, space) in the environment and in works of art, emphasizing line, color, and shape/form.

Creative Expression:

2.2 Demonstrate beginning skill in the use of tools and processes, such as the use of scissors, glue, and paper in creating a three-dimensional construction.

