

**Museum London Art & Literacy Teacher Resource –  
Grades 9-12**

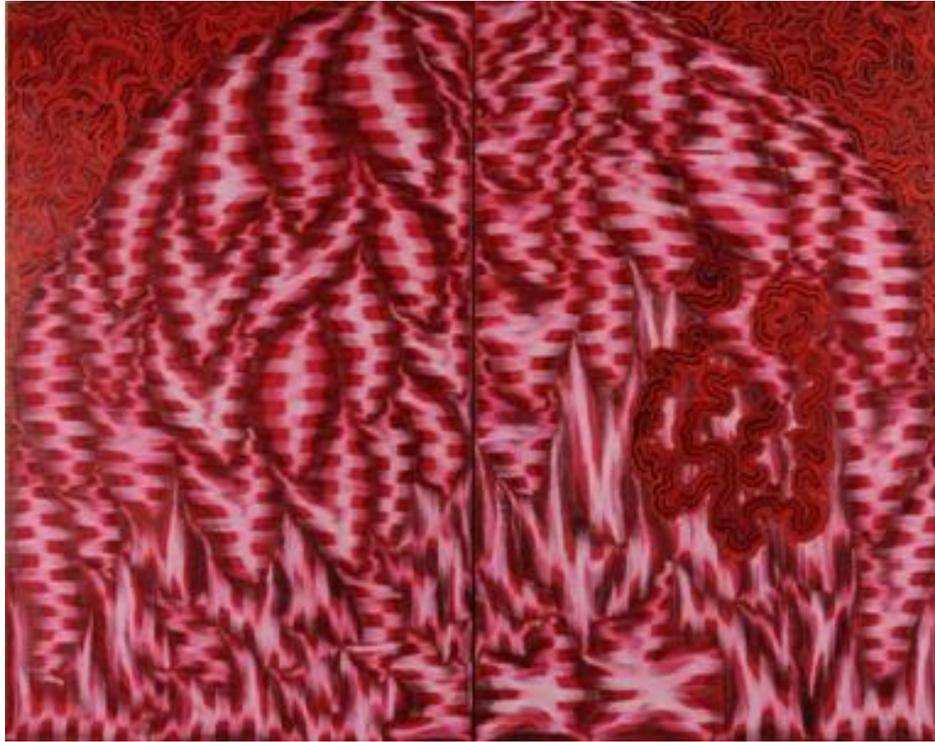


Image: Gary Spearin, *Rreddings*, 2001-2002, lead; oil on canvas, diptych, Collection of Museum London, Gift of the artist, 2011

**Talk About the Art  
Elements**

Line;  
Shape;  
Colour;  
Texture;  
Value;

**Principles:**

Contrast; Repetition and  
Rhythm  
Variety  
Emphasis  
Proportion  
Balance  
Unity and Harmony  
Movement

- The following guidelines will help you explore your initial reactions to this painting.
- What colour scheme is used? List at least 4 different ideas/themes associated with that colour.
- What is your personal association to the colour Gary Spearin chose?
- Describe how the four characteristics of colour are used (hue, value, intensity, and temperature).
- How would it make a difference if the artist had chosen to create this painting using a cool green, blue, or purple?
- What is the ambiance of this painting? (upsetting? Anxious? Disturbing? Peaceful? Tranquil? Energetic? Calming? Etc.) Support your answer.
- How would the mood change if the art work was created in a high-relief?

<p><b>Reflecting, Responding, and Analysing</b></p> <p>B1.1 identify /describe initial reactions to a variety of art works; B1.2 identify elements /principles of design and their effects; B1.3 interpret historical / contemporary art works; B1.4 identify, reflect, evaluate effectiveness of qualities;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ How does your perception change if you concentrate on just the negative spaces?</li> <li>➤ How does the flow affect your focus?</li> <li>➤ How does the artist use both repetition and proportion to guide the viewer’s eye?</li> <li>➤ How is the concept of symmetry implied but not actually used?</li> <li>➤ List the multiple steps that you think would have been involved in creating this kind of painting? What medium did Gary Spearin use? What medium do you like to work with? Why?</li> <li>➤ How does observing just the foreground, then just the background, then just the middle ground help the viewer gain a clearer understanding of the art work?</li> <li>➤ Focus on one point in the painting. Stare at it intently for one full minute. Describe the result. Back away from the art work and repeat the staring action. Describe the result. If you focus on his painting long enough will it turn into an optical illusion?</li> <li>➤ The “Rule of Thirds” involves dividing your image using 2 evenly spaced horizontal lines and 2 evenly spaced vertical lines so that there are 9 equal rectangles. The focal points and important elements of the image should be placed at the intersection of these dividing lines or along the dividing lines. Explain how Gary Spearin applied this rule to his art.</li> <li>➤ Use any two elements of design and any two principles of design to provide constructive feedback in a critique of Gary Spearin’s work. Remember that a critique can state some very positive comments as well as perhaps a suggestion or two to think about.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Who is the artist?</b> Calling his paintings “a workout for the eye, the mind, and the body,”<sup>1</sup> Plympton Wyoming, Ontario-based artist Gary Spearin acknowledges his drive to engage viewers in a process as demanding as the act of creation. Spearin sets a daunting task for himself: to complete his paintings “ninety-five percent” in one go and to create variation from just “a few painting techniques.” Given these limitations, he demonstrates considerable resourcefulness when it comes to colour. Spearin acknowledges using “50-plus colour combinations” to produce the unique optical effects he is after.</p> <p>It is precisely these rules that make Spearin’s <i>Rred</i> series such a tour de force. Here, Spearin not only limits his techniques but also his palette. Variation must be achieved in other ways: format (as in the diptych format of <i>Rreddings</i>) and in the rhythmic patterning of his ribbon-like forms. So energetic are the paintings’ optical vibrations</p>	

that standing within an installation of Spearin's *Rred* series can take viewers into a heightened state of awareness of both space and time. It is perhaps no surprise, then, that his installation *iNifiNiTi* (which appeared in several Canadian venues, including Museum London, from 2010 to 2012) took this experience one step further. In all his work, Spearin immerses the viewer in dizzying glimpses of a realm where time and space have no apparent endpoints, and where there are no limits to the interpretive act.

1. quoted in Artist Statement, <http://www.garyspearin.ca/paintings/>

2. Ibid

3. David Liss, "Picture Infinity" (exhibition essay for exhibition of *iNifiNiTi* at MoCCA, Toronto).

See [http://www.mcmaster.ca/museum/Exhibition\\_Event%20Pages/2012/spearin.html](http://www.mcmaster.ca/museum/Exhibition_Event%20Pages/2012/spearin.html) (site appears no longer to be available HOWEVER if you google Gary Spearin and go to his official site [garyspearin.ca](http://garyspearin.ca) much information can be discovered including his artist statement)

**Style of Art  
Representational**

- Representational Imagery is very similar to, but not exactly the same as, Figurative Art. It is a work of art that the viewer easily recognizes. It is not photorealism as the details do not have to be totally realistic in detail, the shape and form simply have to be recognizable to the viewer. It takes identifiable objects and gives them their physical, real-world appearance in general terms. Representational Imagery does not deal solely with figures or landscapes. It can represent objects as well. Colours do not have to be realistic.
- Research representational art to add to your knowledge of this style of art.

**Style of Art  
Abstraction**

- Abstraction art takes away many of the characteristics of an object and just the essential information is left. It does not represent specific objects or figures but rather it is about the ideas, and philosophies, of those objects or figures. There is no recognizable subject in the finished product. The elements, and principals, of design are still applied to the composition.
- Abstraction art allows the viewer to peruse the painting and allocate their own interpretation.
- Research abstraction art to add to your knowledge of this style of art.

**Dptych Format**

- The Merriam-Webster dictionary states that the meaning of diptych is, "1: a 2-leaved hinged tablet folding together to protect writing on its waxed

	<p><i>surfaces. 2: a picture or series of pictures (such as an altarpiece) painted or carved on two hinged tablets."</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Google search, "How to Create a Diptych With Photoshop CS6" to further your computer skills and to further understand the meaning of a diptych format.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Famous Representational Artists</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ For further research consider the paintings of</li> <li>➤ Wassily Kandinsky, Paul Cézanne, Claude Monet, Margaret Bowland, Robert Jackson.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Famous Abstract/ Abstraction Artists</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ For further research consider the paintings of Jackson Pollock, Wassily Kandinsky; Piet Mondrian, and Alexander Calder.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Art Reflecting, Responding, and Analysing</b></p> <p>B1.2 identify elements /principles of design and their effects; B1.3 interpret historical / contemporary art works; B1.4 identify, reflect, evaluate effectiveness of qualities; B2.1 identify the functions of various types of art works; B2.3 art works affect personal identity / values; B3.1 art knowledge / skills used in personal /professional life; B3.2 identify secondary / postsecondary pathways; B3.3 identify personal opportunities in the community</p> <p><b>FOUNDATIONS</b></p> <p>C1.1 use art terminology to identify / describe elements / principles of design; C1.2 use art vocabulary to describe techniques, materials, and tools; C1.3 identify stages of the creative, and critical analysis, processes; C2.1 understand techniques used to achieve specific effects; C2.2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Explain how the painting is abstract yet the viewer feels there should be a recognizable shape/form within the painting. What real-world objects come to mind when viewing Gary Spearin’s art work?</li> <li>➤ Why do you think Gary Spearin wants to create "ninety-five percent of his painting in one go"? What are the benefits of this? What are the disadvantages of this?</li> <li>➤ Clearly explain how the uses of colour, line, and shape/form are applied.</li> <li>➤ When describing art why does it make a difference who your audience is?</li> <li>➤ How would a graining comb help Gary Spearin to create his art?</li> <li>➤ Why would a cake decorator, a furniture designer, a wall designer, a mosaicist, and a plasterer use a similar kind of tool, just perhaps different sizes and called by different names? Give examples of how each profession would use a type of graining tool.</li> <li>➤ Which of the above professions would use an organic movement versus a geometric movement? What is the value of using one type of movement over the other?</li> <li>➤ State why you have, or have not, considered the above professions as an outlet for personal opportunities in the field of art.</li> <li>➤ Which type of movement did the artist use? How does the use of this multi-toothed tool help to get a sense of fluidity in their work? How does it affect the amount of time needed to paint similar paintings without the tool? Which technology computer programs could you use to replace the graining tool?</li> </ul>

<p>understand conventions used; C3.2 safe / conscientious practices; C3.3 production / presentation of art works affect the environment.</p>	<p>How would a technology produced picture be different from an oil and canvas painting?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Why is the knowledge of the availability, and uses, of various 'art' tools important to artists?</li> <li>➤ Now that you know, or have been reminded, about the styles and tools used has the number of steps, needed to create the finished produce, altered in your mind? Why?</li> <li>➤ How could an artist successfully promote their own art?</li> <li>➤ What would Gary Spearin do with the art he was unsuccessful with dispersing to others?</li> <li>➤ How would you dispose of oil paints safely while still thinking of the environment?</li> <li>➤ Use a Venn diagram to compare abstraction art and representation art? Which would traditionally take a longer time to paint? Justify your answer?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Literacy</b></p> <p><b>Oral:</b> 1. 1 identify the purpose for listening tasks 1.4 identify important information / ideas; 1.5 develop and explain interpretations; 1.6 extend understanding of oral texts; 1.7 analyse oral texts; 1.8 identify / analyse perspectives / biases 1.9 evaluate effectiveness of a variety of presentation strategies;</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> 1. 1 read texts from diverse cultures; 1.3 identify ideas /supporting details; 1.4 make inferences; 1.5 connect texts to personal knowledge / experience; 1.6 analyse for information, ideas, issues, and themes; 3.1 understand vocabulary; 3.3 expand vocabulary.</p> <p><b>Writing:</b> 1. 1 identify topic / purpose / audience; 1.2 generate ideas for potential writing tasks; 1.3 locate / select information to support ideas; 1.4 identify / sort /</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Google search "Gary Spearin: iNifiNiTi interview at the Kelowna Art Gallery"</li> <li>➤ Listen to the full interview. Listen to the interview again and jot down summaries for each of the questions asked during the interview. Why is it beneficial to listen to the full interview before stopping and starting to take notes?</li> <li>➤ Explain his comment, "Architecture has a certain demand."</li> <li>➤ Why do you think Gary Spearin now prefers oils over acrylics? What might have changed his mind to try the oil paints?</li> <li>➤ Why would a person's favourite artist or mentor change over time? Who is your favourite artist(s) or mentor(s)?</li> <li>➤ List two additional questions you would like to have answered by Gary Spearin.</li> <li>➤ How have your perspectives about art changed over time?</li> <li>➤ List five adjectives that would describe Gary Spearin's personality based on body language, oral responses, and verbal communication skills.</li> <li>➤ Evaluate the effectiveness of Gary Spearin's oral presentation.</li> <li>➤ Create a graphic organizer table 3 columns and 3 rows. In the top row, label the first column Point of View; Abstraction; Representation. In the second</li> </ul>

order main ideas / supporting details; 1.5 gather information relevant to topic 2.1 write for different purposes and audiences using various forms 2.3 use appropriate descriptive and evocative words, phrases, and expressions 2.4 write complete sentences that communicate their meaning clearly and accurately, varying sentence type, structure, and length 2.6 revise drafts to improve content / clarity / organization / style of their written work 3.1 use knowledge of spelling rules and patterns; 3.2 build vocabulary for writing; 3.3 use punctuation correctly; 3.4 use grammar conventions correctly 3.5 proofread / correct; 3.6 use several different presentation features to improve clarity / coherence of written work and engage audience; 3.7 produce published work

row, first cell, label it as positives. In the third row, first cell, label it as negatives.

- Reread the included information about abstraction art and representation art. Research additional information.
- Fill in the chart with a personal point of view of the positive and negative aspects of each of the two different styles of art. Include method, tools, results, and audience appeal etc. in your chart.
- Choose the style of art preferred: Abstraction, Representation, or a combination of both styles. Use the graphic organizer to help create either an opinion essay, which means lots of facts and little to no emotion, or a persuasive essay, which means trying to convince someone else that your opinion is the right one so lots of emotion with some facts. It must be clearly identifiable which style of essay writing is chosen.
- The essay consists of an introduction paragraph, multiple paragraphs for the body of the essay, and a closing paragraph.
- In the introduction state the topic sentence and list three to five major concepts that will be used to support your thoughts. Your conclusion sentence summarizes your topic introduction sentence.
- The body paragraphs each take their own major concept and has its own topic sentence. The body paragraph states multiple facts, examples, quotes, and detail if writing an opinion essay and some facts, examples, quotes and/or details as well as emotion if writing a persuasive essay. The concluding sentence of each body paragraph should transition smoothly to the following body paragraph.
- The concluding paragraph should summarize the points alluded to in the essay.
- Perhaps include famous artists who use the chosen style of painting.
- Cite your sources accurately.
- When you revise your essay pay close attention to your chosen verbs; are they vivid and powerful so they grab your attention immediately?
- Why is it always beneficial to read your essay out loud before saying it is completed?

## Art

### Creating and Presenting

A1.1 use a variety of strategies to generate ideas; A1.2 explore, experiment, reflect, and revise when producing a variety of art works; A1.3 document their use of the creative process; A2.1 explore / apply elements and principles of design that express personal feelings; A2.2 apply elements and principles of design to communicate ideas / information; A3.1 use a variety of media / materials and traditional / emerging technologies, tools, and techniques; A3.2 use appropriate practices to prepare for presentation; A3.3 be aware of a variety of audiences

- Multiple projects are included in this section. After the first painting project is completed it would be beneficial to continue with the other projects, however, the reader should choose whether to continue with the additional projects or not.
- *Project One:* Move from representational to abstraction. Remember that you have to know the rules before you can break the rules.
- Divide a painting surface into three, approximately equal, sections. Physical lines do not need to be placed on the painting surface just be aware that three concepts will be painted to show a movement from representational art to abstraction art.
- In section one paint an apple, orange, or pear (or another simple object) as realistically as possible, using a variety of appropriate colours. Use the elements and principles of design to make the object look as realistically as possible.
- In section two repaint the concept of section one, using somewhat realistic colours, and keep the basic shape/form of the object. While the paint is still wet push, pull, and drag the paint off the edge of the fruit. The idea is to distort and elongate the representational object and create movement and an asymmetrical balance. Make good use of the negative space and ensure that the focal point is not in the centre of that section.
- In section three ignore the shape/form of the original painting. Place five painted dots anywhere within that section. These can be starting points for painting. Try to use a variety of tools and even when using a painting brush remember that it can be used multiple ways, including using the end tip of the handle to drag and create lines.
- Consider the wide variety of line that can be used: jagged, curved, broken, dashed, spiral, radial, straight, wavy, zigzag, horizontal, vertical, diagonal, lines that show motion, thick, thin, dotted, repeated, linear and curved hatching, cross-hatching, implied, and converging).
- Consider organic and geometric, positive and negative, convex and concave, and weights of forms and shapes.
- Remember to drag, push, pull, stamp, flick the paint. Once the painting is finished put it aside.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Now that you have shown the steps to get to abstraction painting from representational painting create a painting in a diptych format.</li><li>➤ Two canvasses (or painting surfaces) are needed.</li><li>➤ Choose one colour. Be aware of hue, value, intensity and temperature as well as several elements and principles of design. Consider the "Rule of Thirds".</li><li>➤ Based on the information you have gathered throughout this study create an abstraction painting, lightly based on a representational object, on one of the painting surfaces. Use multiple techniques and tools and at least 14 colour combinations of the one chosen colour.</li><li>➤ Repeat on the second painting surface but vary the abstraction and the representational object.</li><li>➤ Place both paintings together to create a diptych. An alternative is to take photos of each painting and create the diptych through the use of a computer program.</li><li>➤ Critique your own painting and comment on what you like and what you would change if the experiment was repeated.</li></ul>
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