



## Op Art: Bridget Riley Valentine Op Art Heart

- How do 2D geometric shapes invoke movement?
- How can the manipulation of geometric shapes and patterns create dimension in 2D art?

### LESSON OVERVIEW/OBJECTIVES

Students will learn about the artist Bridget Riley and her work in Optical Art (Op Art). Riley (1931-present) is a British artist known for bringing about the Op Art movement. Op Art is a style of visual art that uses precise patterns and color to create optical illusions. Op art works are abstract, with many better known pieces created in black and white. Typically, they give the viewer the impression of movement, hidden images, flashing and vibrating patterns, or of swelling or warping. After learning about Bridget Riley and the Op Art movement, students will create an Op Art heart and background for Valentine's Day.

### KEY IDEAS THAT CONNECT TO VISUAL ARTS CORE CURRICULUM:

Based on Utah State Visual Arts Core Curriculum Requirements (3rd Grade)

**Strand: CREATE (3.V.CR.) Students will generate artistic work by conceptualizing, organizing, and completing their artistic ideas. They will refine original work through persistence, reflection, and evaluation.**

**Standard 3.V.CR.1:** Elaborate on an imaginative idea and apply knowledge of available resources, tools, and technologies to investigate personal ideas through the art-making process.

**Standard 3.V.CR.2:** Create a personally satisfying artwork using a variety of artistic processes and materials.

**Standard 3.V.CR.3:** Demonstrate an understanding of the safe and proficient use of materials, tools and equipment for a variety of artistic processes.

**Standard 3.V.CR.5:** Elaborate visual information by adding details in an artwork to enhance meaning.

**Strand: RESPOND (3.V.R.) Students will understand, evaluate, and articulate how works of art convey meaning for the observer as well as the creator.**

**Standard 3.V.R.1:** Contemplate about the processes an artist uses to create a work of art, and determine messages communicated by an image.

**Standard 3.V.R.2:** Analyze use of media to create subject matter, characteristics of form and mood.

**Standard 3.V.R.3:** Evaluate an artwork based on given criteria.

**Strand: CONNECT (3.V.CO.) Students will relate artistic skills, ideas and work with personal meaning and external context.**

**Standard 3.V.CO.2:** Recognize that responses to art change, depending on knowledge of the time and place in which it was made.

## INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES:

Students will:

- Learn about the artist Bridget Riley, and her work that helped bring about the Op-Art movement.
- Learn about Op-Art.
- Understand how geometric shapes and patterns can create optical illusions of movement and/or dimension.
- Create an Op-Art Heart and background.

## SUPPLIES

- Images and art samples of the work of Bridget Riley.
- Images and samples of Op-Art artists and Op-Art art.
- Art pencils, erasers, markers and sharpies of varying colors and sizes.
- White paper to sketch out ideas.
- White art paper.
- Rulers.
- Geometric colored paper such as squares (optional).

## VOCABULARY

**Op-Art** - Op art, short for optical art, is a style of visual art that uses precise patterns and color to create optical illusions. Op art works are abstract, with many better known pieces created in black and white. Typically, they give the viewer the impression of movement, hidden images, flashing and vibrating patterns, or of swelling or warping.

**Abstract** - Art that does not attempt to represent external reality, but seeks to achieve its effect using shapes, forms, colors, and textures.

**Optical-Illusion** - Art that is a picture or drawing done in such a way that it deceives one's visual perception; it tricks one into thinking it sees an image that was not originally seen. Artwork that utilizes the concept of optical illusion appears in a 3D view generally. The vision does not perceive it as a flat picture, it appears to have a three-dimensional effect. For example, a block can be drawn as a simple, two-dimensional flat object, however, with the additional line and coloring this same block appears as a block sitting on a flat surface. This gives the effect that it can be picked up physically.

## INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN

### Introduction

Before beginning the lesson, introduce students to Optical Art i.e. Op Art. Around 1965 the term 'Op Art' entered the public consciousness. Op Art captured the imagination of the public and became part of the swinging sixties. The fashion, design and advertising industries fell in love with its graphic, sign-like patterns and decorative value. Op Art was cool, and Bridget Riley became Great Britain's number one art celebrity.

The basis of the Op Art movement was a form of geometric abstraction, which was in a way impersonal and not obviously related to the real world. Show images of Op Art and talk about how optical illusions can trick the eye and brain to see things that may or may not be there. Point out how lines close together can create a vibrating, moving feeling. Also, curved lines and pattern can create dimension on a two dimensional surface (see vocabulary for more detailed description).

Then move to the work of Bridget Riley and introduce her work and how it helped to found the Op Art movement. Her piece *Responsive Eye* corresponds to the onset of the Op Art movement for which she is famous. Give students a few minutes to respond to the images. Encourage comparisons and contrasting statements as well as descriptions of what they see. Tell students that they will be creating an Op Art heart and background.

## INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN CONTINUED

### About the Artist

**Bridget Riley (1931 - present)** was born in Lincolnshire, England, and is a British artist known for bringing about the Op Art movement. In 1939, when war broke out her father was drafted into the armed services. Bridget, along with her sister, mother and aunt went to live in Cornwall away from the dangers of the blitz.

In Cornwall, Riley had great freedom as a child and spent a lot of her time playing on the cliffs and beaches near Padstow where she lived. She spent hours watching the changing light, colour and cloud formations and stored away what she saw in memory. She has later said that these early memories have had a big impact on her visual awareness throughout her life.

Drawing and painting became the center of Riley's life from an early age. Her art studies in university were difficult. While she worked primarily in black and white, she sought to create her own style but found it difficult to do within an institutional structure.

In the early 1960's Bridget was influenced by modern artists such as her mentor Maurice de Sausmarez who examined organic form, color, form progression and spatial investigations. Seurat also played a large role in her artistic development. Here she began her first Op Art paintings, working in black and white and using simple geometric shapes - squares, lines and ovals. She investigated perception with an emphasis on optical effects. While this was instinctive, she never intended for Op Art to be her defining style.

Bridget Riley's paintings came to International notice when she exhibited along with Victor Vasarely and others in the Museum of Modern Art in New York at an exhibition called "The Responsive Eye" in 1965. It was one of Riley's paintings that was featured on the cover to the exhibition catalogue. "The Responsive Eye" was a huge hit with the public but proved to be less popular with the critics, who dismissed the works as trompe l'oeil (literally 'tricks of the eye').

It was around this time that the term 'Op Art' entered the public consciousness. Op Art captured the imagination of the public and became part of the swinging sixties. The fashion, design and advertising industries fell in love with its graphic, sign-like patterns and decorative value. Op Art was cool, and Bridget Riley became Great Britain's number one art celebrity.

The basis of the Op Art movement was a form of geometric abstraction, which was in a way impersonal and not obviously related to the real world. "I couldn't get near what I wanted through seeing, recognizing and recreating, so I stood the problem on its head. I started studying squares, rectangles, triangles and the sensations they give rise to... It is untrue that my work depends on any literary impulse or has any illustrative intention. The marks on the canvas are sole and essential agents in a series of relationships which form the structure of the painting." (Bridget Riley)

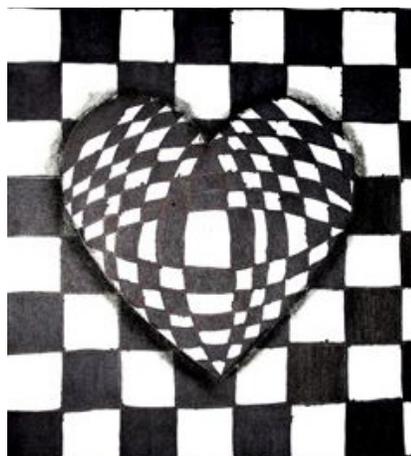
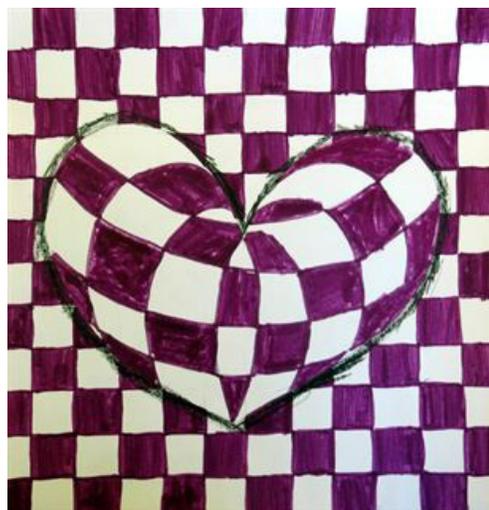
### Lesson:

#### Create: Your own Op Art heart and background

1. Creating the background (see samples on next page)  
Options
  - a. Take a blank piece of paper and have students grid it out into 1/2" or 1" squares and color in squares in alternating sequence
  - b. Take square gridded scrapbooking paper
  - c. Take gridded paper and have students color in squares in alternating sequence
2. Have students practice drawing a large heart on scratch paper. When satisfied have them draw the heart on art paper with pencil.
3. Then demonstrate how curved lines can create dimension and movement by drawing lines horizontally across the heart in a curved fashion.

## INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN CONTINUED

4. Once horizontal lines are drawn, add vertical lines to make squares like the background.



5. Students will then color in the squares in alternating sequence in the same color and pattern as their background. Cut this heart out.

6. Glue the heart onto the background paper. To add depth, outline the heart in black and/or use back pencil or pastel to shade/smudge a shadow around the heart.

7. There you have your Valentine's Op Art! <http://www.artsonia.com/search/?q=op+art+heart+6>

8. Alternative option is to make a heart and background in horizontal lines only using 2-3 colors. Curve lines on heart.



## INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN CONTINUED

9. Second option for lesson for older elementary kids:

- a. Very lightly trace your hand with pencil, then draw a heart in the open space between your thumb and first finger.
- b. Now, put your pencil away! You'll be using Sharpie only for the rest of your drawing.
- c. First, cover your wrist and hand with curved lines. Start about an inch from the bottom, and draw curved lines from one side of your wrist to the other. Keep them as close together as you can. The wrist is a great section to practice on, to get the feel for drawing the curved lines. You can go back and finish the wrist after you get the hang of it.
- d. Now, work your way up the hand and out each individual finger, covering the whole hand with curved lines packed closely together. The more curved you make your lines, and the closer together they are, the better 3D effect you'll get!
- e. Then, cover the heart with curved lines, just like you did for the hand.
- f. Next, fill in all the open spaces with lines that are parallel to the top and bottom edges of your paper. Wherever possible, try to make these straight lines connect with the curved lines you drew. Turn your paper any way you need to as you draw so that your drawing feels comfortable and natural.
- g. Finally, erase your original pencil lines.
- h. Add some color if desired. Voila! An Op Art Valentine!

- Lesson by Cheryl Trowbridge on February 10, 2012 <http://www.teachkidsart.net/valentine-op-art/>



## INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN CONTINUED

### Additional Resources:

<http://www.artsonia.com/search/?q=op+art+heart+6>

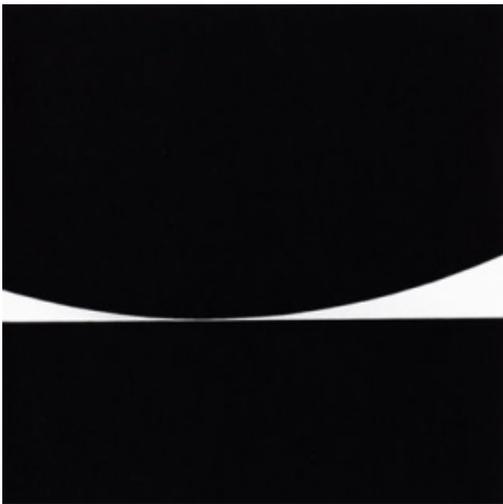
<http://www.op-art.co.uk/bridget-riley/>

<http://www.teachkidsart.net/valentine-op-art/>

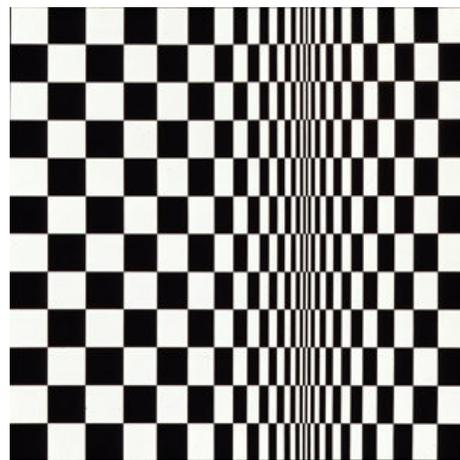
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Op\\_art](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Op_art)

<http://www.op-art.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/kiss.jpg>

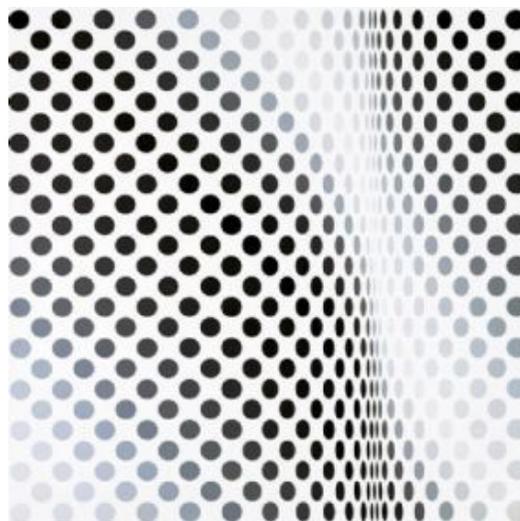
## VISUALS



Kiss - Bridget Riley 1961



Movement in Squares - Bridget Riley, 1961



Pause - Bridget Riley 1964