



Create a Heart Collage

Shape is a basic element in many types of artwork. An artist may invent new shapes or use shapes we recognize and see everyday. Some artists focus on one shape and create different compositions with it, by doing a *series*. A series may include a large number of works; however, they all are variations on the same subject or theme. For example, look for differences in these works by the American artist, Jim Dine:

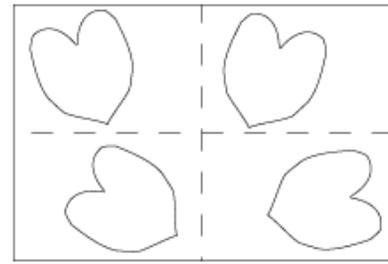
Louisiana Hearts • Four Hearts • Untitled

These are just a few works in a large series that Dine has worked on over the years that use the “heart” shape as a symbol of love for his wife, Nancy. In the following activity, you will get to create your own “heart” series.

Materials You Need: 12 x 18 inch white paper (watercolor paper works best); a set of watercolor paints (or tempera paints) along with a water container, two paint brushes (a medium and a large camel hair brush), a paint shirt; newspaper, a sponge, and a pencil. You will also need some colored construction paper (3-4 colors), a glue stick, a pair of scissors, and an assortment of crayons, cray-pas, or markers.

Getting Started: Before you begin painting, think about how you can express different emotions or ideas using the heart shape with different colors, lines, and textures. What colors and lines would you use to express a “broken heart?” What about a “wounded heart” or a “heart in love?”

To begin, put on your paint shirt and lay out newspaper, the water container, your watercolor paints, and the other materials on the table in front of you. Next, fold the 12 x18-inch sheet of white paper into four sections and then unfold it on top of the newspaper. Fold a small sheet of construction paper (6 x 9 inches) in half and cut a large heart shape out of it.



The Activity: Using a pencil, lightly trace around your heart stencil in each section of the large white paper. Try to make each section slightly different by placing the heart in different directions. Next, you’re ready to create a series of four paintings using the heart as a theme.

There are many techniques that you can use to create your series. Try different ideas in each section. In the first section, you might try “wet-on-wet” technique. With a large brush, apply water to the background around the heart. Next, using the tip of your medium brush, pick up some color from your paint tray and paint dots all over the background area. Notice how the color spreads on the wet surface. Try using other colors. Let this dry while you work on another section.

In the next section, try a crayon-resist technique. Using a light-colored crayon, outline the heart shape and quickly fill in the heart. Using other light-colored crayons, create a pattern of lines in the background. Next, paint over this section, using dark watercolors. The crayon patterns will show through the watercolors.



Experiment with different ideas, colors, and techniques in each section. For instance, try using a sponge to apply color. Once a section is dry, you can go over it with crayons, markers, or cray-pas to outline the heart or create different textural patterns in the background.

When your paintings are finished, cut or tear them apart. Pick out your favorite one and glue it on a 9 x 12 inch sheet of colored construction paper. Then, using torn and cut bits of construction paper, create a “funky” frame for your creation. Glue these pieces on the edges of your painting. Sign and title your creation.

Want To Do More? Find works by other artists that use the heart as a theme or subject.