

Artist Activities

Grace Crowley with Melinda Harper

Composition
and
movement
in collage



Grace Crowley is considered one of Australia's most important abstract painters. In this work on paper, the forms are slightly organic, soft and floating around the page. Grace Crowley has chosen a green background; the red and yellow forms are bright and contrast with the other colours. The forms are irregular and soft. I think this work is very experimental, the black lines or shapes are like fine brush strokes across the page.

The title of the work *Composition-movement*, gives us a lot of clues. **Composition** means put together. **Movement** in an artwork is the *sense of flow*.

Grace Crowley, *Composition - movement* 1951, drawings, stencilled and hand-painted gouache, purchased 1993 © The Estate of Grace Crowley

Materials you will need:

- Scissors
- Paper
- Glue
- Brushes
- Paint



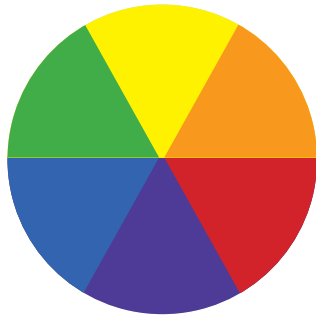
We are going to look at some elements that Grace Crowley explores in this work.

Composition. Using shapes and forms, circles, squares, lines, curved or straight edged shapes... Perhaps look for different shapes around your home and arrange them together.

Image still life. Sometimes setting up a still life to work from can help. Use objects that you like. You can use things from the kitchen like lids and bowls. Explore a different range of shapes and colours. Look out the window. Maybe you can see something useful.



Colour. Are the colours complimentary or contrasting? Do they match, or clash? Or maybe both! Sometimes a colour wheel can be helpful in thinking about colour combinations.



Movement. Use forms and directions to represent movement.

All of these elements are equally important; in making your own artwork, you may want to think about your favourite colours and shapes.

Grace Crowley used organic shapes varying in size and a **landscape** format. In my collage, I used a **portrait** format. What would you like to do for your artwork?

In this collage with the black background, I have used all sorts of squares and rectangles and tried to create movement by showing the shapes going in all directions, up and down.



This is another collage with a white background. The shapes are all going in the same direction. It's very different and feels much more still. You might also think about what colour you would like to start with as a background, maybe do a few.

Let's paint some paper, or use coloured paper and start to assemble our collage, thinking about composition, colour and movement.

Instead of cutting, you might want to tear the paper. Think about big shapes and small ones. Begin by moving the shapes around the paper. Think about movement and space.

Also think about positive and negative shapes. I always keep paper that I discard in another pile and use bits and pieces along the way. For example when I cut a circle I keep both the positive and the negative pieces. Be as experimental as possible, there are no rules.

