

## PRE-VISIT ART PACK & CURRICULUM GUIDE

### Abstract Art



Sean Kenney, **Onyx**, 2013, 45" x 60",  
ABS plastic LEGO bricks on polycarbonate substrate  
Courtesy of the artist.

Through the exhibition **Bricks + Stones**, students will explore how colors and patterns inspire artists. In the studios, students participate in activities where they plan and build their own abstract artwork.

#### CONNECTS TO

- Design
- Geometry
- Shape
- Form
- Earth Science
- Pattern

#### BAM's SCHOOL TOUR PROGRAM GOALS

- Students will actively participate by discussing the artwork, using art vocabulary, and making meaningful, personal connections. Discussions will be associated with the information in the Pre-Visit Art Pack.
- Students will experience a studio activity that reinforces the concepts and/or techniques discussed/viewed in the galleries resulting in a personally meaningful understanding of the artwork.
- Students will leave the museum knowing that it is a fun, enjoyable place to learn. The Docents will help them understand that they do not need an art authority to tell them how to enjoy and appreciate art.

*The Boise Art Museum's education philosophy encourages the examination and discussion of the visual arts through a holistic approach to art education. Programs support the development of critical thinking skills, visual analysis, exploration and understanding of art techniques as well as the investigation of cultural contexts, art as a form of communication, and multidisciplinary connections. In its touring program, BAM uses arts-based, student-centered, guided-discovery techniques and inquiry strategies that encourage teaching directly from the object and encompass aspects of many education philosophies.*

# TOUR CHECKLIST FOR TEACHERS

## ABSTRACT ART

### BEFORE YOUR TOUR

#### WITH YOUR STUDENTS:

- ☐ DO THE PRE-VISIT ART TALK and review the VOCABULARY words with your students.
- ☐ SHARE THE MUSEUM MANNERS with your students.
- ☐ MAKE LARGE NAMETAGS for students with their first names only.

#### WITH YOUR CHAPERONS:

- ☐ DESIGNATE YOUR ADULT CHAPERONS. A maximum of **four chaperons are admitted with the group for free**. Chaperons have specific responsibilities and are admitted with the students free of charge. Additional adults pay regular admission and are considered regular visitors in the Museum. (The teacher is counted as one of the four chaperons.)
- ☐ ASK CHAPERONS not to bring infants, younger children, or other siblings.
- ☐ REVIEW THE CHAPERON GUIDELINES with your designated chaperons.
- ☐ PRINT THE CHAPERON PASSES and HAVE YOUR PAYMENT PREPARED for any additional adults. Checks can be made payable to the Boise Art Museum or BAM. We are unable to make change, so please have the exact amount prepared if you are paying with cash. (Often teachers split the admission among all adults to cover the cost. Schools or individuals may pay for the additional adults.) **General admission is \$6; admission for seniors (62+) \$4, and full-time college students is \$3.**
- ☐ PREVIEW THE EXHIBITION with the *Free Teacher Preview Pass* included with your confirmation letter.

**A NOTE TO HELP WITH CHAPERON SELECTION:** All students will receive *Free Return Tickets* at the end of the visit. These tickets allow the student and two guests to return and visit the Museum for free at a later date. Parents who indicate that they would like to be chaperons after you have designated the maximum limit of four should be encouraged to return with their student at a later date using the *Free Return Ticket*.

### WHEN YOU ARRIVE

- ☐ ARRIVE AT THE REAR EDUCATION ENTRANCE facing Julia Davis Park and the Rose Garden. Do not enter through the front of the museum. Arrive no more than 5 minutes before your scheduled time, as your docents can only let you into the Museum at your indicated tour time. Do not ring the delivery buzzer.
- ☐ DIVIDE YOUR CLASS INTO TWO GROUPS (of approximately 15 students) for their tour.
- ☐ IDENTIFY YOUR CHAPERONS for the docent and MAKE THE PAYMENT for additional adults.
- ☐ LEAVE LARGE FIRST AID KITS AND BAGS at the Education Entrance. First aid kits and bags must be smaller than 11" X 15" and must be worn on the front of your body. BAM has multiple first aid kits on site.
- ☐ REMEMBER: The Museum has no indoor or outdoor lunch facilities. Tour groups may bring their lunches and enjoy Julia Davis Park or visit the restaurants in BODO or nearby Boise State University.

### AFTER YOUR TOUR

- ☐ FILL OUT THE EVALUATION CARD that you receive from your tour guides. Your feedback helps us continue to tailor our programs to suit your needs.
- ☐ DO THE MAKE IT! ACTIVITY or use related ideas listed in CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS to connect the tour to your classroom curricula.

# INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS AND CHAPERONS

## ABSTRACT ART

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### MUSEUM MANNERS FOR STUDENTS

*Please share and discuss these MUSEUM MANNERS with your students.*

*Remembering to follow these manners on your tour at the Boise Art Museum will help keep the artwork safe and make sure everyone has a good experience on the tour.*

- **Empty your mouth.** Food, drink, and gum are not allowed in the museum galleries.
  - **Stay at least 12” away** from the artwork and the walls.
  - **Keep your voices down** while discussing the artwork.
  - **Sit on the floor** during group discussions so everyone can see.
  - **Use indoor behavior**, running and jumping should be left for outdoors.
  - **Leave pens, markers, and other writing/art materials at school**, in your backpack, or on the bus.
  - **Pay attention and be a tour guide later.** At the end of the tour, your docent will give your teacher *Free Return Tickets* for each student. These tickets allow you and one guest to return and visit the Museum for free. When you return, you can take your guest on a tour using what you learned.
  - **Have fun** and enjoy your visit to the Boise Art Museum.
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### CHAPERON GUIDELINES

*Please share and discuss this information with your chaperons.*

*Agreeing to be a chaperon for the Boise Art Museum’s School Tour Program means that you understand the following policies and agree to participate when asked by the docent.*

- **Chaperons should not bring infants, younger children, or siblings** with them on the tour.
- Keep students with the group and encouraging students to **stay at least 12” away from the artwork and walls**.
- Make sure students **sit (not lie) on the floor, keep their hands and feet to themselves**.
- Help students to **pay attention and participate** by staying engaged with the group and the tour.
- **Encourage student participation.** If you feel you have a relevant response to the docent’s questions, please share, but allow your comment to complement the students’ ideas.
- The docent may call on you to **help during the studio project**. Pay attention to the instructions and help all students with the process.
- **Additional adults pay regular admission** and are considered independent visitors apart from the school tour. Additional adults are not required to participate in chaperon responsibilities.
- **Cameras, large purses, backpacks, coats, and umbrellas should be left on the bus** or stored by the back exit until the end of the visit.
- **Turn off your cell phone.** The use of cell phones is not permitted in the Museum galleries.

# CHAPERON PASSES

BAM offers FREE admission to four adult chaperons with every pre-scheduled tour group. Additional adults must pay regular admission and are considered independent visitors to the Museum. **PLEASE PRINT THIS PAGE BEFORE ARRIVING AT BAM FOR YOUR TOUR.** Designate your four chaperons and have your payment prepared. When you arrive at BAM, please identify your four designated chaperons for the docents. Chaperons must agree to help supervise groups, follow the Museum Manners, and participate in the tour activities when asked.

## TOUR CHAPERON 1 \_\_\_\_\_

(TEACHER)

The Boise Art Museum's School Tour Program provides FREE admission to 4 adult chaperons with every group of students. Accepting the responsibilities of being a tour chaperon means that you understand and agree to do the following:

- Accompany your group at all times while students are touring the Museum.
- Help the docent keep students with the group and at least 12" away from the artwork and walls.
- Assist the students and continue to supervise while in the studios.

*Please do not bring infants, siblings or younger children with you as this diverts your attention from the group.*

**Thank you for helping make BAM's School Tour Program safe and enjoyable for everyone.**

*This chaperon pass is only valid during a pre-scheduled school tour. Duplicates are not accepted.*

BAM | BOISE ART MUSEUM

## TOUR CHAPERON 2 \_\_\_\_\_

(NAME)

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## TOUR CHAPERON 3 \_\_\_\_\_

(NAME)

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## TOUR CHAPERON 4 \_\_\_\_\_

(NAME)

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# VOCABULARY AND OBJECTIVES

## ABSTRACT ART

<b>Abstract/ion</b>	The process of removing characteristics from something in order to make it more simplified, leaving only essential characteristics. In art, abstraction refers to expressing ideas by using elements such as colors and lines without attempting to create a realistic picture.
<b>Form</b>	A three-dimensional composition or object.
<b>Medium</b>	The material that artists use to create their art. One work of art could be made of one medium or several media.
<b>Minerals</b>	A naturally occurring solid substance (such as a diamond, gold, or quartz) that is not a plant or animal. Minerals can be made from a single element (for example gold or copper) or from a combination of elements.
<b>Pattern</b>	A repeated design or recurring sequence of shapes arranged according to a rule.
<b>Shape</b>	An enclosed two-dimensional space. Its boundaries are defined by other elements of art such as lines, values, colors, and textures.

### IN THIS TOUR STUDENTS WILL

- Compare and contrast the patterns found in rocks and minerals with the designs of contemporary artist Sean Kenney.
- Explore the concept of abstraction as it relates to two-dimensional and three-dimensional objects.
- Participate in gallery activities that encourage students to experiment with pattern, color, shape, and form.
- Apply what they have learned in the galleries about abstraction, pattern, and design to build their own abstract artwork.

### ABOUT THE EXHIBITIONS

#### Bricks & Stones

Sean Kenney is an artist and children's book author. He has more than five million LEGO® bricks at his studio in Brooklyn, New York, which he uses to create sculptures and wall murals. Kenney merges vintage tapestry aesthetics with op-art patterns to create abstract compositions that recall gemstones, such as jade and jasper. Accompanying Kenney's artwork are actual stones on loan from the Idaho Museum of Mining & Geology and Stewart's Gem Shop. Rich in history, these spectacular gems present many facets of a gemstone's transformation.

#### An Intentional Eye

Wilfred Davis Fletcher (1922 – 2016), a third-generation Idahoan and long-time friend and supporter of the Boise Art Museum, had an inspired collecting vision. We celebrate his life and his passion for collecting with this special exhibition, which features artworks from his recently received bequest alongside earlier gifts, all of which he lived with and loved for many years. The works in this exhibition demonstrate his commitment to supporting modern and contemporary American art and artists.

# PRE-VISIT ACTIVITY: ART TALK

## ABSTRACT ART

*Please view the two reproductions (Pre-Tour Images) with your class and lead a discussion using the following questions as guidelines. There are no “right” answers. The questions are meant to guide the group discussion. Students will revisit and discuss the original works at BAM. The vocabulary in this packet will aid discussion.*

*Research and experience have shown that students feel more comfortable when they can connect with something familiar once they arrive at the Museum. The students are excited to find “their” works of art while they are at BAM. They enjoy sharing their insights from the classroom discussion with the docent and making valuable comparisons between the textbook-like reproductions and the original works of art.*

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Wayne Thiebaud

**Bow Ties**, 1990

lithograph, color trial proof

Gift of Wilfred Davis Fletcher, Boise Art Museum Permanent Collection.

- What objects do you see in this work of art?
- What kind of patterns do you recognize?

This work of art is by an artist named Wayne Thiebaud (TEE-bow). He liked to paint groups of common things—gumballs, cakes, bow ties.

- Why do you think Thiebaud liked to paint groups of the same object?
- Why might an artist decide to make art showing common objects?
- Have you ever drawn or painted something multiple times? What was it?

Sean Kenney

**Onyx**, 2013

ABS plastic LEGO® bricks on polycarbonate substrate

Courtesy of the artist.

- What do you see when you first look at this work of art?

This is a work of art created by Sean Kenney. He is an artist from New York who creates all of his artwork from LEGO® bricks.

- Who can describe what a pattern is?
- What patterns do you see in this work of art?
- Are there irregularities to the pattern? Where?
- Why do you think Kenney wanted to use LEGO® bricks to create his artwork?
- What are things you have created out of LEGO® bricks?

***The two images may also be accessed through our website, [www.boiseartmuseum.org](http://www.boiseartmuseum.org) under Education – BAM Teachers – Pre-Visit Art Packs – [Abstract Art](#)***



# PRE-VISIT IMAGE

## ABSTRACT ART



Wayne Thiebaud  
***Bow Ties***, 1990  
lithograph, color trial proof  
Gift of Wilfred Davis Fletcher, Boise Art Museum Permanent Collection.

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## ABSTRACT ART



Sean Kenney  
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# CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

## ABSTRACT ART

### Science:

- Explore shapes and forms in the crystalline structures of minerals. Have students pick a mineral they want to study and research its crystalline structure. Then have students find similar patterns in the world around them. Can they find a sculpture that mimics their pattern or fabric that has the same design? Help students make connections between scientific diagrams and designs they encounter every day.
- Learn how the brain reasons as students translate three-dimensional objects to two-dimensional patterns and vice versa through spatial recognition tests. For easy, accessible tests visit <https://www.123test.com/spatial-reasoning-test/index.php> or <https://www.fibonacci.com/spatial-reasoning/test/>.
- Abstraction means to make something more simple or less detailed. Have students select different ways scientists display and report data. Encourage students to identify ways the data has been simplified for clarity or to highlight specific information. Then have students pick their own set of scientific data and create a way to display it with simplicity and clarity.

### Technology:

- Patterns are a series of shapes, numbers, or information that is repeated according to a set of rules. Establish a set of rules and create a “digital pattern” with shapes, numbers, or information.
- Experiment with LEGO® brick challenges. Have students explore new ways to assemble and problem solve with bricks. Check out these sites for pre-made challenges and activities: <http://thestemlaboratory.com/lego-challenge-cards/>, <http://thestemlaboratory.com/lego-stem-activities/>.
- *An Intentional Eye* features many fine art prints. Research different forms of printmaking and create your own way to make a fine art print. Whether it's a new kind of press or a different way to silk screen, try creating a work of art with your new invention.

### Arts:

- Music can be described by its patterns and structures, have students listen to music and create patterns based off of what they hear. You can expand the sounds you use by adding noises like ocean waves or traffic to see how their patterns change.
- The art you see at museums is organized, or curated, and presented in a specific manner to convey a message or tell a story. Practice curating important objects in your own life. Each student will select 5-8 objects that help to tell a story about themselves. Students will arrange their objects and create text to provide further information. Together, the class will create a museum about themselves, each student learning about their own story as well as their peers'.
- Colors can play an important role in creating designs and patterns. Gather information on color theory and experiment combining colors that appear to come forward or move backward in a painting. Learn more about color theory on this website: <https://www.colormatters.com/color-and-design/basic-color-theory>

# CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

## ABSTRACT ART

### Social Studies / History / Geography:

- Investigate how geology has shaped your community by exploring the geology of the area around your school, city, and state.
- Minerals and precious stones have many different cultural meanings. How do people in your community use minerals and gems? What do they mean to you? Select a specific mineral or precious stone and explore the different meanings it holds around the world.
- LEGO® has been a company for over 80 years! Check out the history of LEGO® on their webpage and other sources (<https://www.lego.com/en-us/aboutus/lego-group/the-lego-history>). How have LEGO® products changed over time? How has LEGO® changed to meet the needs of 21<sup>st</sup> century play and learning? Now select another toy or game and research its history and impact on society.

### Language Arts:

- Practice finding patterns in writing. Give students samples of poetry or prose by writers with distinctive styles. Have students study the samples and decipher patterns their author uses. Then put more samples out by the same authors and see if students can identify their writers by the patterns they already established.
- The patterns and shapes of the earth's natural landscape inspire many authors. Compare and contrast a selection of passages describing the natural landscape. What pattern and shape words or phrases are used to create a mental picture for the reader? How do these details impact the reader's experience? For text selections, check out the work of authors like Jean Craighead George, Robert C. O'Brien, Richard Adams, Gary Paulsen, Jack London, Kenneth Grahame, Linda Benson Kay Maguire, and Byrd Baylor.
- Practice using descriptive language. Ask students to generate descriptive words to describe a specific object. Working directly from a real object is ideal. Using words from the list, ask each student to free write for a set period of time. Share to generate more ideas. Repeat the writing and sharing stages multiple times, emphasizing experimentation and play.

### Math:

- Explore tessellations like Sean Kenney's. Using digital programs or physical shapes, design a tessellation that represents a natural form (tree eye, leaf veins, etc.) What geometric forms did you use? What angles or geometric relationships are present in your piece? What challenges came up when trying to design a continuous and repeated pattern?
- Fractals combine math, shape, pattern, and aesthetics. Follow this link to discover many hands-on fractal activities: <http://fractalfoundation.org/resources/fractivities/>.
- Give students several examples of pattern. They can be Sean Kenney's artwork, textile examples, or even rock samples. Then have students identify whether the examples exhibit asymmetry, bilateral symmetry, or even radial symmetry. They could also determine the number of lines of symmetry of their shapes. Finally, give students math problems in which they can solve the angles, circumferences, and diameters by implementing principles of symmetry.

# WEBSITES

## ABSTRACT ART

### ***For Teachers***

<https://www.seankenney.com/> Artist Sean Kenney's homepage.

<http://www.christies.com/features/Wayne-Thiebaud-Studio-visit-7643-3.aspx> A short interview with Wayne Thiebaud.

<https://www.moma.org/interactives/exhibitions/2012/inventingabstraction/?artist=62> A guide from MoMA exploring how artists using abstraction in the early twentieth century.

<https://www.wired.com/2010/09/fractal-patterns-in-nature/> View fractal patterns in nature.

<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/science-behind-natures-patterns-180959033/> Explore patterns in nature and the science driving these amazing visual displays.

### ***For Teachers and Students***

<https://www.youtube.com/user/seankenney> Check out Sean Kenney's youtube channel and watch him building with time-lapse footage.

[https://www.lego.com/en-us/aboutus/lego-group/the\\_lego\\_history](https://www.lego.com/en-us/aboutus/lego-group/the_lego_history) LEGO® History.

<http://gemexplorer.org/> This interactive map provides text and visuals on where gemstones are found around the world today.

<http://www.nga.gov/content/ngaweb/education/kids.html> - Website from the National Gallery of Art featuring information about artists and tools that children may use to make virtual works of art

<https://www.dartmouth.edu/~matc/math5.pattern/lesson8art.html> Investigate patterns in art throughout history, from the Lascaux Caves in 15,000-10,000 BC, to art of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.

<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/photography/patterns-in-nature/> Discovery patterns in nature with the National Geographic photo gallery.

<http://www.theschoolrun.com/what-are-the-names-of-2d-and-3d-shapes> Information about 2-D and 3-D shapes and forms

# BIBLIOGRAPHY

## ABSTRACT ART

### Teachers

Francoise Barbe-Gall. *How to Talk to Children About Modern Art*. Frances Lincoln, May 29, 2012. ISBN-13: 978-0711232891.

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Shirley Disseler. *Teaching Fractions Using LEGO Bricks*. Brigantine Media, March 8, 2016. ISBN-13: 978-1938406560.

### Pre-K to 3rd

Herve Tullet. *Mix It Up!* Chronicle Books, September 16, 2014. ISBN-13: 978-1452137353.

Leo Lionni. *Little Blue and Little Yellow*. Dragonfly Books, reprint January 17, 2017. ISBN-13: 978-0399555534.

Ellen Stoll Walsh. *Mouse Paint*. HMH Books for Young Readers, March 27, 2995. ISBN-13: 978-0152001186.

Garret Romaine. *Geology Lab for Kids; 52 Projects to Explore Rocks, Gems, Geodes, Crystals, Fossils, and Other Wonders of the Earth's Surface (Lab Series)*. Quarry Books, May 15, 2017. ISBN-13: 978-1631592850.

Natalie M. Rosinsky. *Rocks: Hard, Soft, Smooth, and Rough (Amazing Science)*. Picture Window Books; Amazing Science edition, Sept. 1, 2002. ISBN-13: 978-1404803343.

Sarah C. Campbell. *Mysterious Patterns: Finding Fractals in Nature*. Boyds 2014. ISBN-13: 978-1-62091-627-8.

Susan Goldman Rubin. *Counting with Wayne Thiebaud*. Chronicle Books, May 17, 2007. ISBN-13: 978-0811857208.

### 4th to 6th

Julia Rothman. *Nature Anatomy: The Curious Parts and Pieces of the Natural World*. Storey Publishing, LLC, January 27, 2015. ISBN-13: 978-1612122311.

Molly Bang. *Picture This: How Pictures Work*. North-South/SeaStar, 2000. ISBN-13: 978-1452151991.

Daniel Lipkowitz. *The Lego Ideas Book: Unlock Your Imagination*. DK Children, September 19, 2011. ISBN-13: 978-0756686062.

*LEGO Absolutely Everything You Need to Know*. DK Children, September 5, 2017. ISBN-13:978-1465464115.

### Young Adult / Adult

Kelly Bieringer. *Is Modern Art Really Art?* Heinemann, 2007. ISBN: 978-1-4329-0356-5.

Philip Ball. *Patterns in Nature: Why the Natural World Looks the Way It Does*. University of Chicago Press, April 5, 2016. ISBN-13: 978-0226332420.

John Baichtal. *The Cult of LEGO*. No Starch Press, November 1, 2011. ISBN-13: 978-1593273910.

Jinny Beyer. *Designing Tessellations: The Secrets of Interlocking Patterns*. McGraw-Hill, June 11, 1999. ISBN-13: 978-0809228669.



# MAKE-IT ACTIVITY

## ABSTRACT ART

*To extend the museum experience  
and connect the tour to your curriculum,  
consider using or adapting this lesson plan suggestion*

### LEGO® BRICK STAMPING

#### Introduction

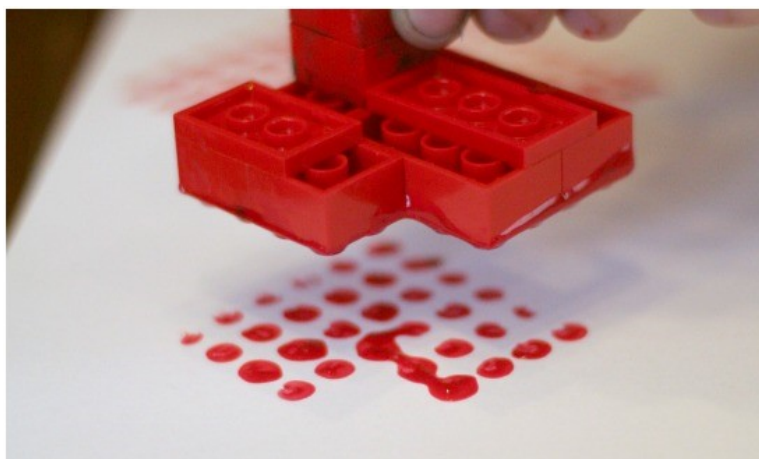
In this Make-It! Activity, students will extend what they have learned about shape, pattern, and color to create their own 2D abstract work of art using LEGO® bricks as stamps.

#### Materials

- LEGO® bricks
- Acrylic or tempera paint
- Disposable plates
- Paintbrushes
- Water cups
- Paper

#### **ADAPTATION:**

If LEGO® bricks are not available, you can use many things as stamps. ie: potatoes, apples, corks, plastic bottle caps. Also consider gluing foam shapes to the end of corks or caps for more complex shapes.



#### Instructions

- Have students discuss how patterns can be used to create interesting shapes and compositions.
- Have students then create geometric shapes out of LEGO® bricks.
- Once students have created their LEGO® brick shapes, give each student a paint tray, brush, water cup, and paint.
- Using a brush, spread the paint in a thin layer on a clean plate, just thick enough for stamping.
- Press the LEGO® brick shape into the paint and stamp it on the paper.
- Repeat this process alternating the direction of the stamp to make an interesting, colorful composition.
- Encourage students to think about how their shapes and colors connect as well as the patterns they are creating.

#### **EXTENSION:**

##### **Practice Color Theory**

Have students not only create an interesting pattern with their LEGO® brick shapes but also create patterns using principles of color theory. For example, students might only use analogous colors for their pattern, while others might choose a pattern made with complementary colors.