

Artwork Focus

Willem de Kooning
Seated Woman, 1969
(enlargement 1980)

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Create a list of words that you think of when you hear the word “abstract.”

An abstract artwork is based on a thought or idea. It may not look like something recognizable that we have seen before. Abstract art can be loose and organic, structured and geometric or somewhere in between.

Artist Willem de Kooning was known for his abstract paintings and did not begin to create sculptures until later in his life. He approached his work in sculpture the same way as his paintings and thought of clay only as thick paint. Like his paintings, de Kooning created his sculptures spontaneously and did not sketch or plan out what he was going to make in advance. Because of this, many of his paintings and sculptures have the playful quality of quick sketches.



Make a quick sketch of this sculpture. See if you can create an outline of the overall shape.

The title of this sculpture is *Seated Woman*. Can you see the figure of a woman? What about this sculpture reminds you of a person sitting down?

Now, imagine what else sculpture could be. Think of an animal, a person, or an object. It could also be of two things put together.

Add to your sketch to turn it into what you imagine it could be.

You can try this activity whenever you see an abstract work of art and you do not know what it represents. With a pencil and a piece of paper, you have the power to turn it in to whatever you want it to be!

Willem de Kooning, *Seated Woman*, 1969 (enlargement 1980). Bronze, 113 x 147 x 94 in. (287 x 373.4 x 238.8 cm.). Raymond and Patsy Nasher Collection, Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas, Texas.

Nasher Sculpture Center