

ANCHORAGE MUSEUM

UNTITLED
GRADES K-6



CARL SAXILD
UNTITLED, 1937

Oil paint, canvas
1986.077.007



ACTIVITY AT A GLANCE

In this activity, students will learn about basic color theory and the northern lights. Students will apply basic color theory to create an image of the northern lights.

UNTITLED



Begin by looking closely at Carl Saxild's untitled piece featuring the northern lights over the Anchorage Railroad at Nenana.

If you are investigating the artwork with another person, use the questions below to guide your discussions. If you are working alone, consider recording your thoughts on paper:

CLOSE-LOOKING

Look closely, quietly at the artwork for a few minutes.

OBSERVE

Share your observations about the artwork or record your initial thoughts

ASK

- *What do I notice about the artwork*
- *What colors and materials does the artist use?*
- *What moods do the artworks create?*
- *What does it remind you of?*
- *What more do you see?*
- *What more can you find?*

DISCUSS

USE [20 Questions Deck](#) for more group discussion questions about the artwork.

LEARN MORE

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Carl Saxild (1893-1971) was one of twelve artists commissioned to create works of art for the Works Progress Administration's Alaska Art Project in 1937. This WPA project was created to showcase the territories and possessions of the United States, organized in part by Ernest Gruening. Saxild, along with the other eleven artists sketched scenes from around Alaska and would recreate these sketches as paintings in their hotel rooms.

ABOUT THE ALASKA ART PROJECT

In 1937, the Federal Works Progress Administration organized a special project to publicize Alaska through artwork. Twelve artists from the Midwest, New York and New England were selected to create work for an exhibition. For nearly six months, they toured the state, sketching and painting as they went. The exhibition, however, never happened, and most of the artworks were sent to Mt. McKinley Park Hotel, where they were destroyed in a catastrophic fire that razed the hotel in 1972. The Anchorage Museum has the largest collection of the surviving artworks from this project.

WATCH:

[A brief overview of the Works Projects Administration](#)

[A brief overview of the Federal Art Project](#)



LEARN MORE:

[Article on the Federal Art Project](#)

[A list of projects in Anchorage from the Federal Art Project](#)

CREATING COLOR K-2

MATERIALS

Black marker/colored pencil,
Red, yellow, blue colored markers/pencils for aurora
Other colored markers/pencils

DIRECTIONS

1. Lightly shade the shape of a wave using one color such as red, blue, or yellow on a sheet of paper.
2. Repeat with the same or different color if making multiple waves.
3. Lightly shade over each wave with a different color than its original color.
4. Repeat as necessary to blend colors.
5. Draw shadows to trees and buildings with black marker/color pencil.
6. Color in the sky.

LEARN MORE ABOUT COLORS

PRIMARY, SECONDARY AND TERTIARY COLORS

Primary colors can be seen as the colors that make up almost all other colors. These are typically defined as red, yellow, and blue. Combinations of two of these colors lead to what are known as secondary colors: orange, green, and purple. Combining a secondary color, such as orange, with one of the primary colors that make it, such as yellow, make tertiary colors such as yellow-orange.

WATCH:

[A brief overview of color theory](#)

[A demonstration of mixing primary colors to make secondary colors](#)

CREATING COLOR 3-6

MATERIALS

Red, yellow, blue colored markers/pencils for aurora
Paper
Black paper/newspaper/magazine paper
Scissors
Glue
Other colored markers/pencils

DIRECTIONS

1. Lightly shade the shape of a wave using one color such as red, blue, or yellow on a sheet of paper.
2. Repeat with the same or different color if making multiple waves.



3. Lightly shade over each wave with a different color than its original color.
4. Repeat as necessary to blend colors.
5. Cut out shapes of trees and houses from black paper, newspaper, or magazine paper with scissors.
6. Glue them on the paper.
7. Color in the sky.

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE AURORA

From the University of Alaska Fairbanks:

[Kiugayat short film](#)

[Kiuguyat learning resources](#)

From NASA:

[Overview of the Aurora](#)

[Aurora Educational Resources](#)

KEY TERMS

<i>Color</i>	perceived hue of an image or object; color is made by a process of light bouncing off of the object in a reflection seen by the eye
<i>Primary Color</i>	a color belonging to a set of colors whose combinations make all other colors
<i>Secondary Color</i>	a color created by mixing equal parts of two primary colors
<i>Tertiary Color</i>	a color created by mixing a secondary color and one of its primary colors
<i>Aurora</i>	a display of lights in the night sky resulting from electrically charged particles colliding with earth's atmosphere; also known as the northern or southern lights
<i>Kiuryaq/kiuryak/ qiuryaq</i>	Central Alaskan Yup'ik terms for the northern lights
<i>Kiuguya</i>	Iñupiaq term for the northern lights

