

## The Art of Science. The Science of Art.

- Fluorescent lighting: an eye-opener and a pupil-shrinker. From sitting under the constant hum at school or work, to walking amongst its unforgiving harshness at the mall, we are constantly surrounded by it.
- Would you ever think to use it for art? Jane Haskell did.
- What exactly is light? Though omnipresent, its mysterious qualities leave scientists perpetually at awe. Basically, light is the product of the energy released from an atom.



### Enlighten Yourself:

- So far, nothing travels faster than the speed of light. At  $2.99 \times 10^8$  m/s, the light from the Sun can reach Earth in seven minutes. The Sun is about 92,000,000 miles away...that's fast!
- The energy released in the form of light is called a photon.
- The more photons there are, the brighter the light. The less photons there are, the dimmer the light.
- An electron becomes excited whenever an atom releases a photon.
- Fluorescent light bulbs and neon tubes are different than regular light bulbs because they are filled with gas: Argon, Phosphorous, and some Mercury (which changes from a liquid to a gas).
- Fluorescent light bulbs have a sealed glass tube that contains mercury, phosphorous, and two electrodes attached to a wired circuit.
- When the light is turned on, electricity flows through the tube and charges up the gas.
- The color of light, or of neon, depends on what type of atom is becoming excited.

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### Art terms to help you navigate specific objects:

**Abstraction** is a style of art that depicts shapes, forms, colors, and lines instead of showing recognizable or realistic objects

**Color** has three properties: Hue, the color's name; intensity or purity, as in brightness or dullness; and value, its lightness or darkness

**Composition** refers to the arrangement of an artwork

**Grid** is a network of lines that cross each other to form squares or rectangles. In art, a grid can suggest order, pattern, movement and figures without being obvious

**Medium** refers to the materials an artist uses to make a work of art

**Minimalism** is a style of art that uses reduction and simplicity made from industrial materials to emphasize the physical object and shuns expressive meaning

**Palette** means the artists' choice in colors used

**Perception** is the way we interpret information based on interaction between the eye and the brain

**Saturation**, also called intensity, refers to the dominance of hue in a color

**Space** refers to the distance or area between, around, above, or within things

## ACTIVITY GUIDE



### Jane Haskell Drawing In Light

The artwork you are looking at was made by Jane Haskell (1923–2013). She was an artist who made paintings, drawings and sculptures considered to be abstract, which explains why her artwork does not depict recognizable objects. She focused instead on exploring ways that color, form, pattern and light interact. Light is the primary connection among the objects in the exhibition. She lived by the mantra *without light there is no life*.

Haskell was interested in many aspects of light. Her *Window Series* paintings and drawings, organized in grid-like patterns, show how the quality of color alters depending on the saturation or absence of light. She was particularly curious about how these variations influence viewers' perception.

*Sunrise, Sunset* shows how simple planes of color that seem abstract depict the intensity of light as the sun rises and sets. This piece encourages us to think about nature's beauty and complexity as well as the scientific basis underlying the movement of molecules and particles in the atmosphere that make the sky look the way it does.

*Light, Light Construction I, Symmetry I* and *Symmetry II* show her exploration with the way light physically reacts with the space of a room. In an artist statement she said, "It is an exciting challenge to

paint—literally—with light, to work with neon or fluorescent light as it interacts with line, texture and canvas. I wish to create an enveloping environment of color and light.... Walls have become my canvas, colored lamps my paint." Her statement explains that she valued light as a medium like paint or pencil.

Haskell's use of commercial lighting to make objects connects her to Minimalism. A network of ideas by artists about artmaking that originated in the late 1960s, Minimalism emphasizes an artwork's surface and the material an object is made from. Importantly, Minimalism rejects that artwork contains complex meaning. Frank Stella, an artist associated with Minimalism, reinforces this explanation in a compelling statement: "what you see is what you see." As you explore Haskell's methods of incorporating lines and shapes and consider the ways she tinkered with minute distinctions of color, you will notice her genuine affinity for those formal elements that you can observe with your naked eye.

Haskell found it exciting that light generates so many artistic possibilities, and she challenged herself by making objects that reinvent space, provoke sensations for viewers and challenge notions of what constitutes an art object.



## Look around the gallery

- Do you see objects that relate to Haskell's statement that she "paints with light?"
- List the objects you see that relate to her statement.

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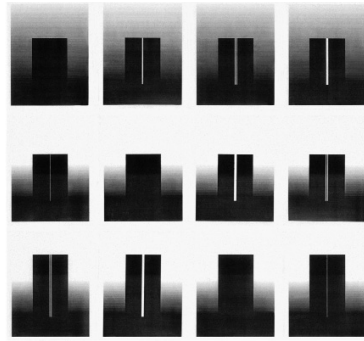
- What does painting with light mean to you?

## FIND Symmetry



- Does the title influence your way of thinking about it? How so?
  - What do you think the connection is between the title and the artwork?
  - Are the shapes recognizable? What do they resemble to you?
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- Would you call this something different? What title would you give it?
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- Imagine unplugging this. How does thinking about this being unlit make you think about light's importance?
  - How is this different from a painting?

## FIND Millennium Drawing



- Describe the way Haskell uses light.
- What do you think the main focus of this drawing is?
- Do you think her use of light emphasizes or plays down the rectangular shapes?
- Do the rectangles look like recognizable objects? If so, what do they look like to you?
- This is a good example of ways simple shapes and contrasting color make a powerful image that brings about feelings and associations. Does this drawing create associations for you? How so?

If you could create an art object using neon lights, what would you create? Think about what your inspiration would be and draw a sketch below.

## FIND White Window



- Do you think the composition resembles a window?
- How does this work differ from what you're used to seeing when you look a window?
- How do the colors she used make you feel?
- Instead of depicting a view of what one sees when looking out of a window, Haskell focused on the windows' panes to emphasize the way light reflects. Does this surprise you?
- Haskell's passion was light. If you were an artist, would your artwork revolve around a common theme? What are you passionate about that might appear frequently in your artwork?

Make a drawing of what you see when you look out of a window at your house.

Draw a sketch of a person, place, or thing that you are passionate about.