

OPEN STUDIO ANYWHERE



The Art of Minimalism



Robert Morris, Untitled Mirror Cubes, 1965

Use this kit to learn about minimalism; the movement and the artwork. Inside you'll find prompts, projects, and more to help you create your own art!

To learn more about Artists Creating Together, visit our website at artistscreatingtogether.org



What is Minimalism?

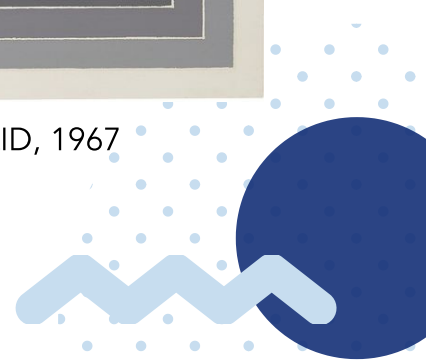
Minimalism was developed in the 1960s as a reaction to Abstract Expressionism. While Abstract Expressionism expresses emotion through many types of shapes, colors, and forms, Minimalist artists saw that style as taking away what art actually is and what it should accomplish.

Arising around the same time as Pop Art, both movements were reacting to Abstract Expressionism, which had held that painting portrayed important meaning. Pop artists portrayed recognizable images and brand names, while the Minimalists moved in the opposite direction. They created plywood boxes, florescent lights and concrete blocks and placed them directly on the floor. Minimalism is seen as representing truth (because it does not pretend to be anything other than what it is), order, simplicity and harmony.

When asked to explain his black-striped paintings of 1959, Frank Stella responded, "What you see is what you see." Stella's comment implied that, not only was there no meaning, but that none was necessary to demonstrate the object's artistic value.



Frank Stella, WLID, 1967





What does it look like?

Minimalism is characterized by simple lines and shapes. This style allowed viewers to interpret meaning from the work as a pure and true form of art.

Important characteristics of Minimalism include the repetition of simple geometric forms, like lines or squares. Early works tended to be one color, or a limited palette of one or a few closely related colors. Many minimalist works had sharply defined edges with clear and precise transitions between areas of color.



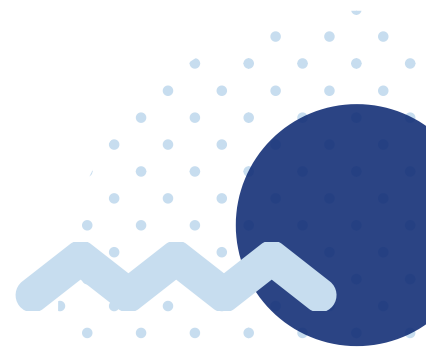
Agnes Martin, Happy Holiday, 1999



Donald Judd, Untitled, 1974



Carl Andre, 144 Magnesium Square, 1969





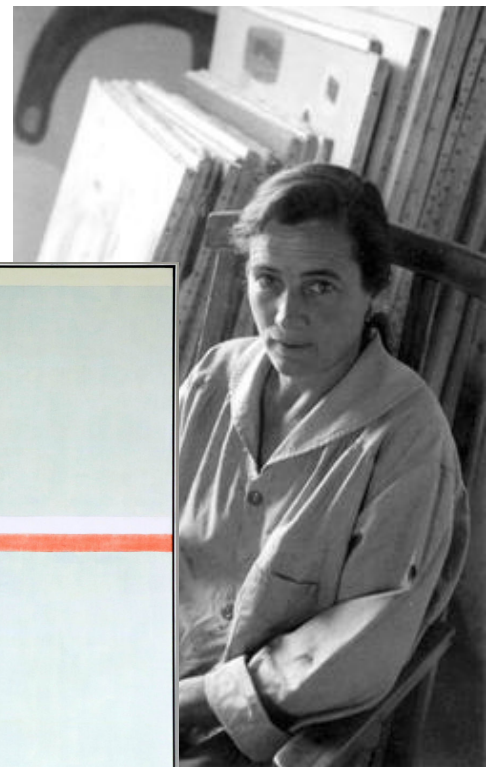
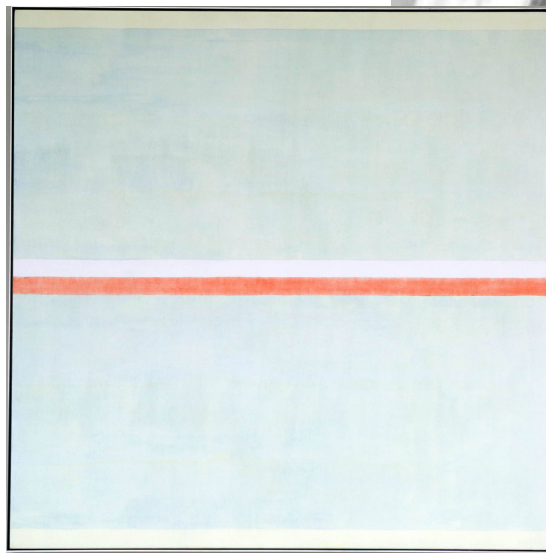
Minimalist Artists



Donald Judd was an important thinker for Minimalism. He was also one of the leaders in changing gallery spaces to bring them new life, doing things like hanging art vertically on the wall.

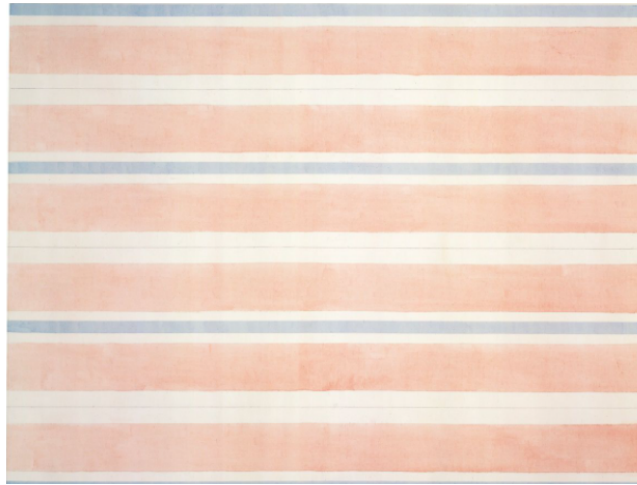
Agnes Martin was influenced by different cultures that contributed to her interest in nature.

She used art techniques that allowed her canvases to be awash with color. This blended two different art styles: Minimalism and Color Field.





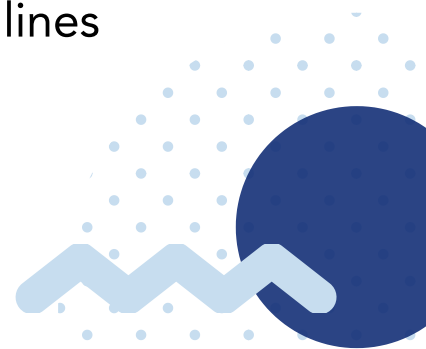
Create like a Minimalist Artist



Remember, Minimalist artists would portray simple lines and shapes throughout their paintings. Which allowed viewers to interpret meaning from the work as a pure and true form of art.

So, to create like a Minimalist artist you will need a few things:

- Canvas, cardboard, cardstock, or any paper you have --thicker paper is better, but if you don't have that, any kind will work.
- Paint-- acrylic or watercolor--if you don't have those then markers, color pencils, crayons, etc. can work.
- Paint brushes
- A ruler to help with creating the straight lines



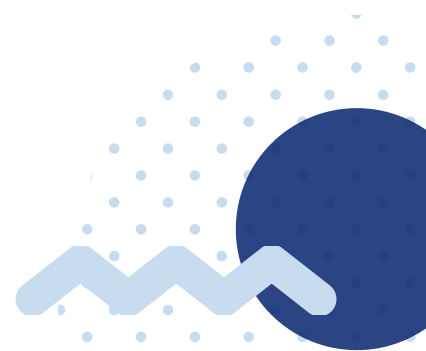
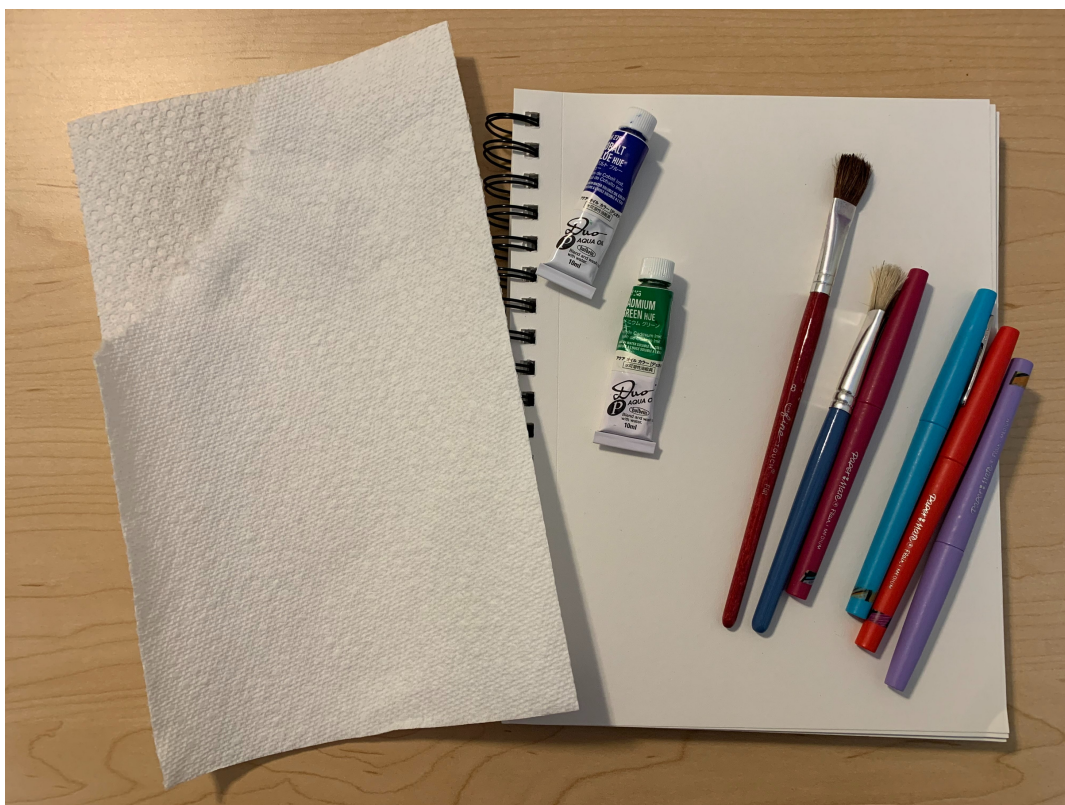


Step 1: Set Up

Grab your all the materials you want to use and lay them out on the table

Then place your canvas, cardboard, cardstock, or paper on the table.

To keep the area clean, place some old newspapers or paper towel onto the table.





Step 2: Pick your colors & design

Minimalist artist would choose colors very selectively, using only one color or used a limited palette of one or a few closely related colors.

Minimalist art included simple geometric shapes such as lines or squares.

Pick some of your favorite colors and think about what design you want.

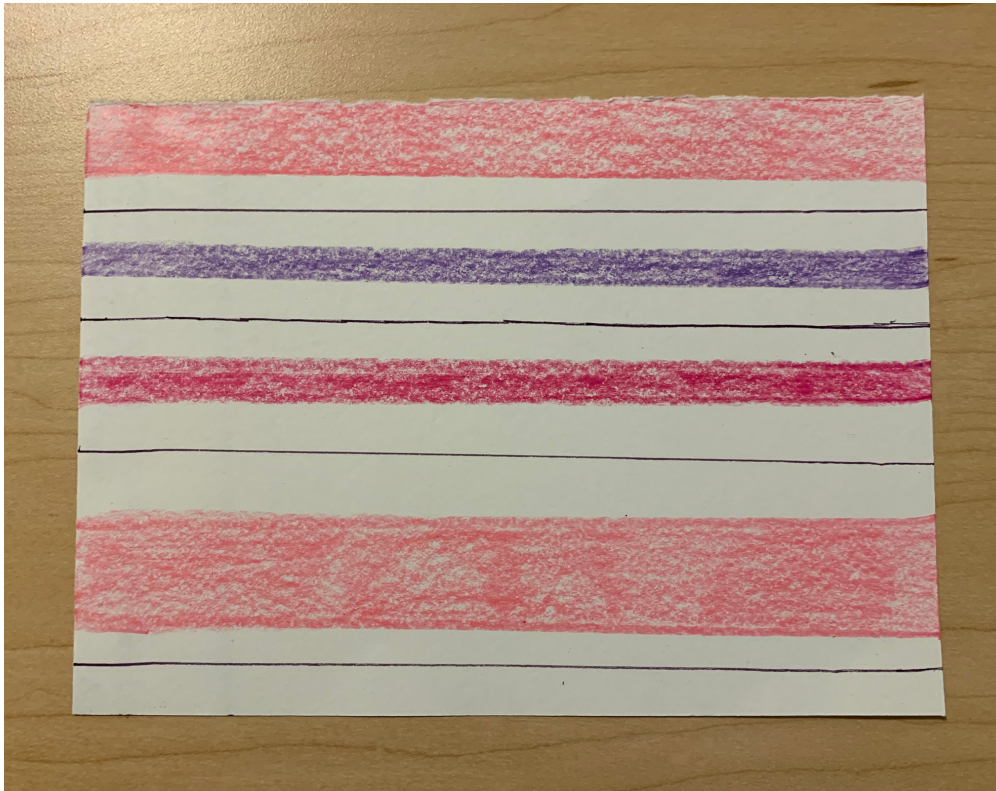
How many lines --thick or thin?

What kinds of shapes?





Step 3: Start creating!



Created by an Art Programs Intern, 2021

Now that you have your canvas, cardboard, or paper all set up, and you have chosen your colors and designs you want, you can begin creating just like an Minimalist artist!

Have fun and be creative!

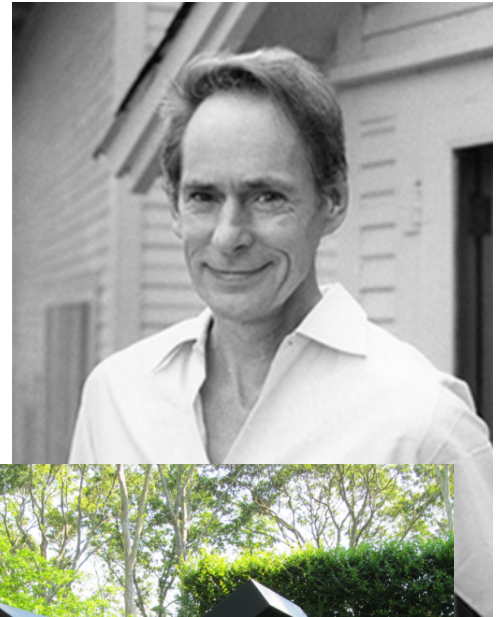
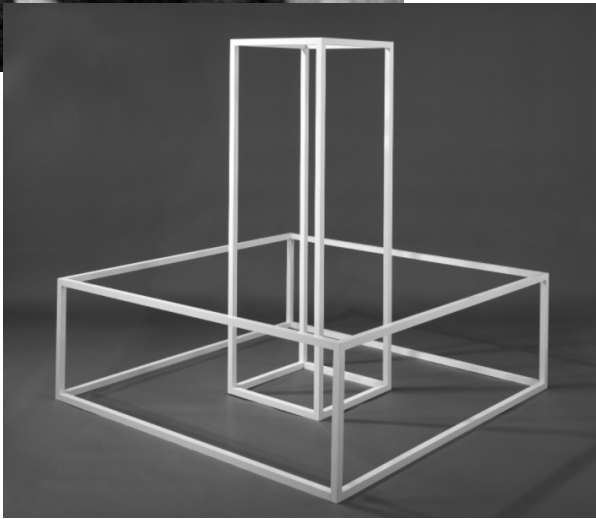


Minimalist Sculptors

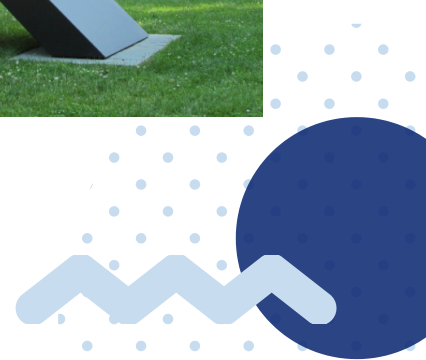


Sol LeWitt was a key thinker of the Minimalist group. He is most known for his open-air, modular structures. LeWitt once wrote "the most interesting characteristic of the cube is that it is relatively uninteresting".

However, despite claiming the cube is uninteresting he often uses this form as a starting point for his works.



Ronald Bladen was older than other Minimalists and he is sometimes considered a father figure in the Minimalist movement. His work is characterized by large-scale sculptures that are often made up of simple shapes.





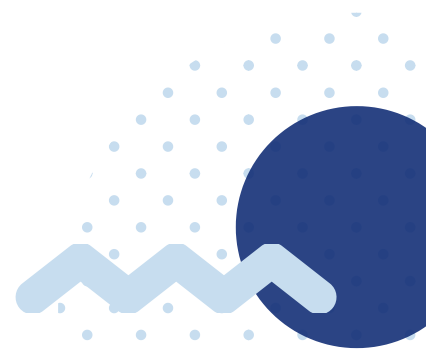
Design like a Minimalist Sculptor



Minimalist sculptors were focused on creating three-dimensional objects. They used geometric forms and the use of industrial materials led to works that resembled simple objects rather than traditional sculpture.

So, to create like a Minimalist sculptor you will need a few things:

- Cardboard, old egg or milk cartons, old boxes, paper--any materials you don't really use around the house can help build your sculpture.
- Scissors
- Tape or glue





Step 1: Set Up

Place your cardboard, old egg or milk carton, old boxes, or paper on the table.

Have your scissors, tape or glue ready





Step 2: Create Your Design



Think of a three-dimensional object that you would like to create.

How big or small do you want your sculpture?

Choose what materials you want use to create the geometric shapes.

Do you want to use paper, cardboard, old milk or egg carton to build your sculpture?

Think about what geometric shape you want to create

Do you want create a square or rectangle sculpture? Or even a round, circular sculpture?

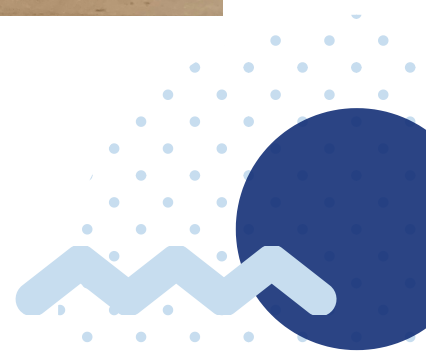




Step 3: Prepare Materials

Now that you have chosen your materials and design begin the cutting process!

Depending on how your three-dimensional design is, you will need to cut your material into either squares, rectangles, circles, strips, etc.





Step 4: Build your sculpture!



Created by an Art Programs Intern, Cube, 2021

Grab your tape or glue and begin putting your pieces together!

Have fun and be creative!





Learn more about Minimalism

<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/m/minimalism>

<https://chinati.org/>

<https://www.theartstory.org/movement/minimalism/>

<https://theartling.com/en/artzine/minimalism-art-guide/>

<https://www.theartstory.org/artist/martin-agnes/>

<https://www.theartstory.org/movement/minimalism/artworks/>

<https://www.phillips.com/article/54327926/frank-stella-the-drive-to-make-art>

<https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-11-female-minimalists-you-should-know>

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2020/03/09/the-cold-imperious-beauty-of-donald-judd>

<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/online-features/metkids/explore/489307/Ellsworth-Kelly-Blue-Green-Red>

