

CREATIVITY WORKSHOP #1: LINE INTO LABYRINTH

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Premise: This four-hour workshop can be offered as an end in itself or as a part of the series of workshops. After exploring the basic elements and principles of visual composition, participants will construct a mural inspired by the Greek myth of the labyrinth. A willingness to experiment and explore are the only requirements: no previous art experience is needed, and all materials will be provided.



The Myth of the Labyrinth: In this story, master builder Daedalus created a complex maze in which the half-man and half-bull minotaur was housed.

Without help, Theseus (the hero sent to kill the beast) would himself become trapped in the twisting corridors even if he won the desperate battle. Unrolling a ball of golden thread, he marked his path inward and was thus able to escape.

Significance: The labyrinth symbol is widely distributed and is richly symbolic. Examples appear in ancient art across the globe and have been interpreted as a metaphor for a spiritual journey, the creative process, and even birth.

Our approach: Four qualities of creative thinking will be emphasized in this workshop:

- Producing multiple answers to any question and then selecting the best encourages creativity.
- Just as a writer produces multiple drafts, so we will create multiple versions of our designs. Known as iterations, these versions help us move from uncertain beginnings to strong results.
- A single change in a story or a design can shift balance in the entire composition.
- Collaborators can provide useful alternative perspectives and help solve the problem.

Part 1: LINE DESIGN: iteration and alternatives

The first line you draw is the fifth line in your composition. The composition is framed by the edges and moves through the space they define.

PART 1: ITERATION. Starting with a simple inventory of types of lines, gradually develop a non-representational marker design using line, shape, and texture. Start small; think big!

Basic Objectives/Assessment Targets for beginners:

- To explore a range of line types: straight, broken, jagged, etc.
- To fully engage the edges of each composition
- To demonstrate the distinctive strengths of symmetrical and asymmetrical balance

More Advanced Objectives/Assessment Targets:

- To use overlap, size variation, and location to create the illusion of space
- To combine negative and positive visual elements
- To use multiple strategies (focal point, surprise, balance) to increase visual impact



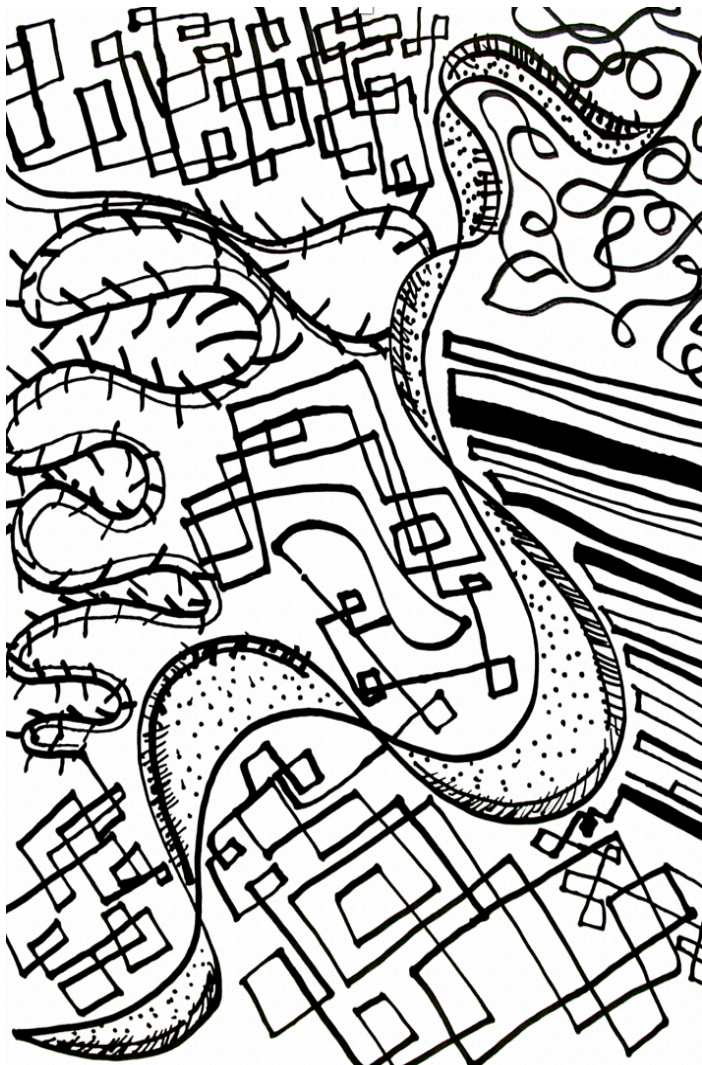
Materials: four black water-based markers, 8 sheets of 18" x 24" paper, sketchbook.

Strategy: Start by just making lines. As you build confidence, you can use small thumbnail sketches to rough draft possible compositions.

- Pay special attention to the edge of the composition. When a line or shape intersects this edge, the composition can visually extend beyond the page and into the viewer's world.
- Overlap, variations in size, and location can be used to increase the illusion of space. The illusion of space gives more room for movement, increasing the overall energy in the design.
- Experiment with forms and degrees of balance. Symmetrical balance is often used when stability is needed, while asymmetrical balance is generally more dynamic.

Part 2: LINE DESIGN: An Alternative Perspective

Students A and B trade designs. Each then creates a *new* design based on their partner's image, seeking to develop the unrealized potential to create a much stronger alternative. They then return to their own designs, using everything learned so far to create the strongest possible final design.



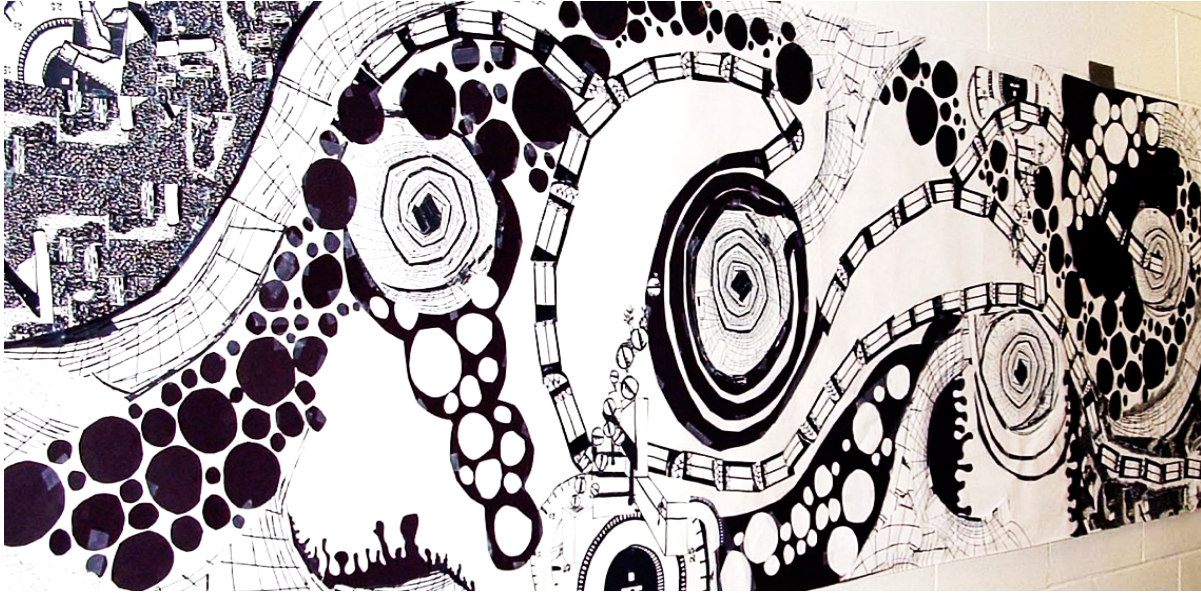
We will then take a break!

Part 3: CONSTRUCTING A LABYRINTH: Composting

The ability to see new potential in an existing design is a crucial aspect of creativity.

Keep the best study from Part 1, as evidence of your progress. Then, working with two to four partners, cut up your preliminary studies and re-construct the results into a collaborative large-scale design. Add more lines and patterns of bricks (which I will provide) to create a cohesive composition.

Key Questions:



- How does the illusion of space contribute to visual dynamism?
- Is there a dominant movement? If so, what creates this movement?
- Is anything blocking the dominant movement? Should it be removed?
- Will adding a focal point help?

LABYRINTH SELF-REFLECTION WORKSHEET

WHAT WERE YOU TRYING TO ACCOMPLISH? _____

WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER THE 3 GREATEST STRENGTHS IN YOUR DESIGN?

WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER THE 3 GREATEST STRENGTHS IN YOUR PROCESS?

WHAT WOULD YOU DO DIFFERENTLY IF YOU WERE TO DO IT AGAIN?

WHAT DID YOU LEARN ABOUT CREATIVITY THROUGH THIS ASSIGNMENT?

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO LEARN ABOUT CREATIVITY?

HOW CAN I IMPROVE THIS WORKSHOP?