

The background is a solid red color. Scattered across it are various abstract geometric shapes in yellow and blue. These include a large yellow 'RA' in the top left, a blue triangle, a blue circle, a yellow circle, a blue spiral, a yellow rectangle, a blue zigzag line, and several blue and yellow lines and shapes that look like they were drawn with a pencil or crayon. The shapes have a slightly textured, hand-drawn appearance.

Royal Academy of Arts

Art Detectives

A guide for
young visitors

Art Detectives are supported
by the Flow Foundation

Radical Geometry

You will need
a pencil to
write and draw

Introduction

Radical Geometry: Modern Art of South America from the Patricia Phelps de Cisneros Collection

The exhibition you are about to enter looks at the art produced over a fifty-year period in South America (which you can see on the big green map as you enter the first gallery). This style of artwork was called 'radical', which means something that is very new and different from what is traditional or ordinary. In the galleries, you will find exciting, bright colours, artworks that break out of their frames and into the air and sculptures that can be interacted with (hands off for now though)!

Let's explore...

Section 1. Uruguay, Argentina



Find numbers 1, 2, 3 and 4:
Joaquín Torres-García

The artist Joaquín Torres-García lived in Europe for a long time before returning to his home country of Uruguay, and the city Montevideo. He created paintings structured by grids, in which he painted 'pictographs' or icons, drawn very simply.

In these four paintings by Torres-García, can you spot:

A bottle?

A fish?

A clock?

An anchor?

A guitar?

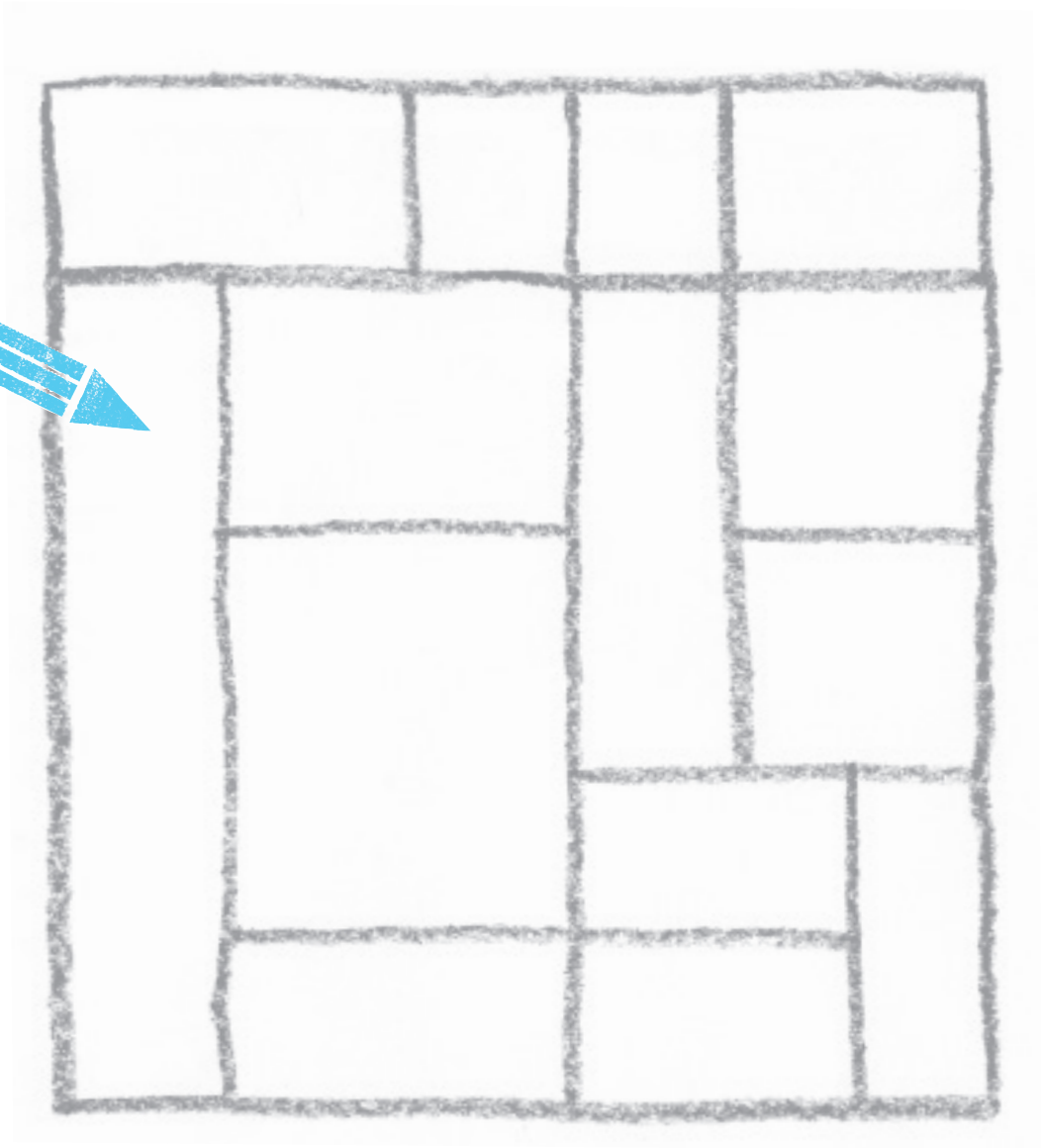
A train?

What other symbols can you see?

Think about the colours the artist has used for these works – shades of brown, cream and grey. Do they remind you of anything? What?

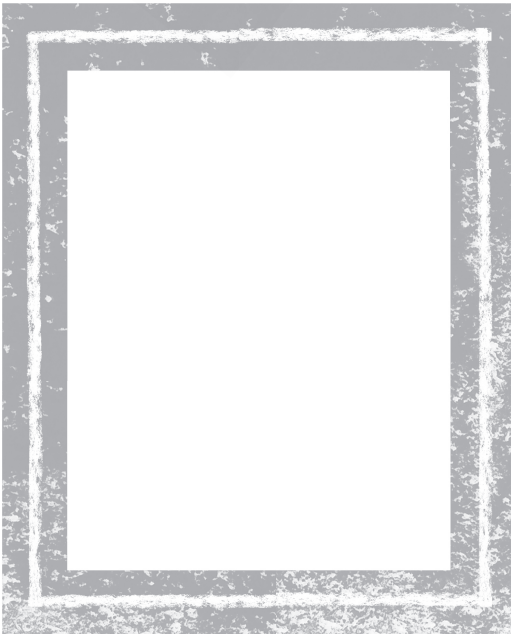
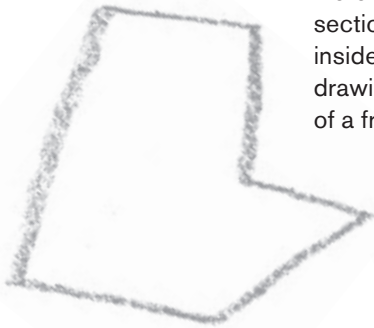
Section 1. (continued)

In the grid below, draw in your own 'pictographs'.
You might want to choose symbols from your own life,
like a pet or the name of your street!



Some of the artists in this exhibition have broken free from the frame, so that nothing separates their art from the world around it. This was really radical – a rectangular or square frame around a painting had been the traditional way of showing art for centuries.

Here are some shapes that look similar to those in this section of the gallery. In the space below, draw them inside the frame we have provided. Then, next to that, try drawing them any way you want, arranged without the box of a frame. Which do you prefer? Why?



Section 2. Brazil



Find number 40:

Willys de Castro, *Active Object*, 1961

Oil on canvas

Following on from the idea of taking a painting out of its frame, this artist went one step further! Willys de Castro painted a simple red and white pattern onto a canvas, and then wrapped the canvas around a tall piece of wood.

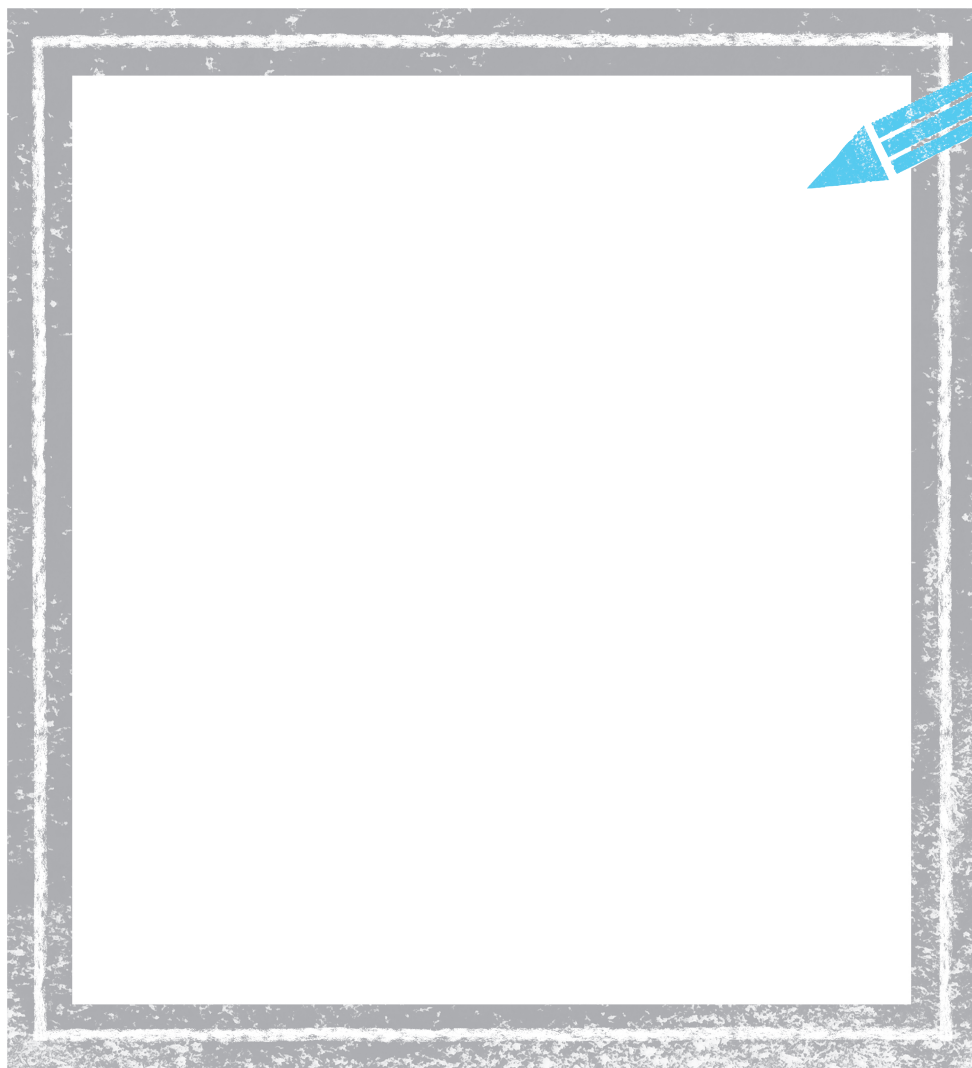
If you walk around this artwork, does it look different? Describe how your view changes.

Is this a different experience to looking at a flat canvas on a wall in a frame? How?

A lot of works in this gallery are very 'geometric', a style that can be identified by simple, regular lines or shapes.

Do these artworks look like they were painted by hand to you, or by a machine? Why?

There are so many shapes and patterns in this room!
What kinds of shapes do you see?
Draw some of your favourite examples below.



Section 2. (continued)



Find numbers 31, 32 and 34:
Lygia Clark

Lygia Clark was a very experimental artist. She wanted her works to be played with and handled, so that instead of just looking at her art, we (the viewer) become part of it.

Unfortunately, these works are so delicate now that we can't touch them anymore. Imagine how it would feel to move these sculptures. Describe it below. You might want to think about the feel of the metal, is it hot or cold? Smooth or rough?

What shapes could you make if you could move these pieces?

Lygia Clark called these pieces '*Bichos*', which means 'bug' or 'creature'. Can you imagine why she would have called them that?

Section 3. Venezuela



Find number 59:

Jesús Soto, *Nylon Cube*, 1990

Painted nylon

The artist Jesús Soto liked to create optical illusions in his work. Like Lygia Clark, the involvement of the viewer is very important to this art.

Choose some works from the selection below that best describe how this sculpture looks to you:

Imposing Soft Peaceful Solid
Hard Still Space-Age Different
Moving Scary

You can also add some suggestions of your own...

Section 3. (continued)



Find numbers 71–78:

Gego

The artist Gego worked on a series called 'Drawing without Paper'. She liked to think of her work as drawings, not sculpture.

Do you agree or disagree with Gego's descriptions of her artwork as 'drawing without paper'?

Why or why not?

How are these pieces different to a more traditional style of sculpture, like a marble figure?

Don't forget to look down at the floor as well as up at the roof where these pieces hang from! There are beautiful shadows cast by the artworks. Could these shadows be thought of as a form of drawing, or markmaking?

Why or why not?



Find number 51:

Carlos Cruz-Diez, *Physichromie No. 500*
1970, casein paint on PVC and acrylic

This amazing artwork is another optical illusion. Carlos Cruz-Diez loves to play with vibrant colours in his work, challenging how we look at and understand his images.

Stand at one end of the artwork, looking down the length of it. What colour do you mostly see?

Now walk past the piece slowly. Does it change? How? What colours can you see now?

How do you think the artist has achieved this effect?

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If you would like to see your drawings on the RA website, please hand in your completed Art Detective at the Reception Desk. Alternatively, if you would like to work on your picture at home and send it to us later, you can post it to:

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#RadicalGeometry