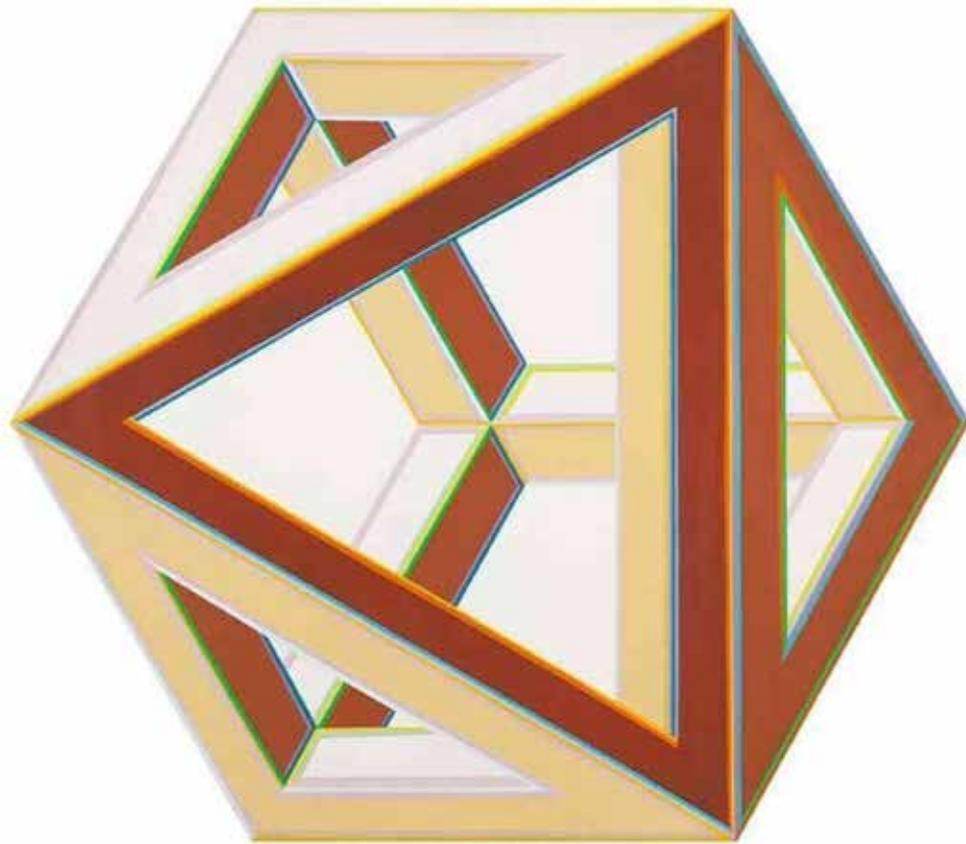


Studio Saturdays: Impossible Triangle Pyramid

Rollins
Museum
of Art

Untitled by Al Loving



Al Loving

Untitled

1969

Acrylic on canvas

40 x 35 in.

LIST OF MATERIALS

- White paper
- Black paper
- Colored pencils
- Pencil
- Ruler
- Glue

Alvin D. Loving, known as Al Loving, was an American artist born in Detroit, Michigan in 1935. After studying art at the University of Michigan, Loving moved to New York in 1968. One year later, in 1969, he became the first African-American artist to have a one-person show at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York City.

This untitled artwork from that same year is a good example of the paintings from Loving's early career. He created large, geometric paintings of multi-sided objects that look 3D. Paintings like this artwork are examples of geometric abstraction, a style of art that focuses only on sharp, geometric shapes and lines, rather than soft, natural ones. In his geometric abstraction artworks, Loving mainly used the square as his base shape. He stated that, to him, a square is "pure energy and focus." If you look closely at this painting, you can see that it is made up of squares and triangles.

Geometric abstraction is a form of Abstract art, a larger category of art. In abstract art, the artist uses shapes to form an image instead of trying to recreate a real-life object. The goal of an abstract artwork is often to communicate a feeling or emotion rather than create a recognizable picture.

For today's activity, we will learn how to create an optical illusion inspired by Loving's geometric shapes in the form of a 3D paper pyramid, made up of impossible triangles. An impossible triangle, also called a Penrose triangle, is a shape that appears to be solid, made up of three "bars" that connect to one another in a way that, in a real physical object, wouldn't be possible. This is an optical illusion. Just as Al Loving combines different shapes into one painting that looks 3D, we will create four impossible triangle drawings that, when combined, create one impossible pyramid. You can use the same colors for your drawings, or create a complementary color scheme, like we learned about last week with Andrew Masullo.

THINK LIKE AN ARTIST

- 1) Do you prefer looking at realistic or abstract artworks? Why?
- 2) Do you prefer creating realistic or abstract artworks? Why?

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Measure the bottom of the long side of the paper with a ruler and draw a short line at 4 and 8 inches. Repeat at the top of the paper.
2. Measure $\frac{1}{2}$ an inch on the short side of the paper and draw a line connecting to the 8-inch line. Repeat on the top of the paper and erase any extra lines.
3. Use a ruler to connect the middle mark from the top of the paper to the bottom left corner of the page and draw a diagonal line. Line up the ruler to the middle mark again and the bottom right corner and draw another diagonal line to create a triangle.
4. Measure the diagonal line, it should be about $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches and then mark with a dot in the center of it at $4\frac{1}{4}$ inches. Repeat on the other side and then connect the dots with a horizontal line.
5. Line up the ruler to one of the dots and the middle mark on the bottom of the paper. Connect with a diagonal line. Repeat on the other side to create another triangle.
6. On the bottom right side of the triangle draw two lines $\frac{1}{2}$ inches long and then connect with another line. Repeat these steps on the top left triangle.
7. Mark the top left, bottom left, and right tabs with an X, these will stay connected to the triangle. Cut out around the shapes to create the pyramid outline.

INSTRUCTIONS

8. Use the ruler to draw a triangle in the center of one section. Draw three longer lines extending from each corner. Draw a line from each corner to the edge of the paper, this will create the illusion of an impossible triangle. Repeat steps on all other sides.
9. Color in the sections, use shading to enhance the illusion of the impossible triangle.
10. Glue the cut out triangle to the black paper, cut off extra black paper and cut out the holes in the center of each section.
11. Fold over each line of the pyramid and bend the tabs inwards. Apply glue on each tab and fold it over to create the 3D pyramid.