Gallery Inquiry & Activity
Tomm El-Saieh
ICA MIAMI
ABOUT THIS WORK

Tomm El-Saieh’s solo museum debut features a suite of new paintings that explore and probe the meanings of abstraction by invoking Haitian traditions of figurative spiritual art. El-Saieh’s colorful, maplike constellations are created through a frenetic process of all-over rubbing, a diverse application of material, and strategic erasures. The large-scale compositions are so full of information that the works themselves allude to the artist’s labored physical process, which could be seen as performative. Through this mode of facture, El-Saieh creates a subtly diverse range of surfaces that can be seen as networks, fields of data, or nodes of activity, or that can be interpreted as abrasions or micro-destructions to the paintings’ surfaces.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Students will explore how artist Tomm El-Saieh uses form, color and texture to convey a setting.
CONSTELLATION
A group of stars forming a recognizable pattern that is traditionally named after its apparent form or identified with a mythological figure.

ASTERIOD BELT
Circumstellar disc in the Solar System located roughly between the orbits of the planets Mars and Jupiter. It is occupied by numerous irregularly shaped bodies called asteroids or minor planets.

SOLAR SYSTEMS
The system containing the sun and the bodies held in its gravitational field, including the planets. (Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune), the dwarf planets (Eris, Pluto, and Ceres), the asteroids, and comets.

ABSTRACT
Of or relating to the formal aspect of art, emphasizing line, colors, generalized or geometric forms, etc., especially with reference to their relationship to one another.

TELESCOPIC
Capable if viewing objects from a distance; farseeing.

ASTRONOMER
A person who studies the sky.
1. Let’s describe this artwork in terms of texture, color, and shape?

2. List words or ideas that come to mind when you look at this artwork?

3. What is familiar or unfamiliar with these paintings?

4. If you were to recreate one of these painting, describe the first, second and third steps?

5. Imagine we are blasting off to space and these are constellations. Think about where are we going and what part of these painting makes you think of that place?

6. How does that place makes you feel? Do you want to go there?
ACTIVITY

DESIGNING A CONSTELLATION

Age Range: 6-18 years old
Activity Duration: 1 Hour 30 minutes

Prepare an open discussion in your classroom that's large enough to accommodate this group activity. A large wall space or floor space is ideal.

Activity Pre-dissusion: Begin by checking student knowledge about constellations. Review the major common characteristics of all planets and compare/contrast the properties of inner and outer planets. Discuss what are constellations, talk about the Orion constellation and other constellations in our skies and their unique outline and shape within our home the Milky Way Galaxy.

ACTIVITY MATERIALS

Tempura Paint, Yarn, Small bucket of water
Paper plates, Spray Bottle of watered down paint, Baby Wipes to clean hands
Plastic aprons, Large roll of white paper
Corrugated cardboard, Bubble wrap sheets
ACTIVITY
DESIGNING A CONSTELLATION

Tape down a large roll of paper on the floor or wall of your classroom. Set up a table of materials (Yarn, Bubble wrap sheets, Corrugated cardboard, Tempura paint, and Spray bottles of paint). Instruct students to use those materials to create different types of marks on the large roll of paper. Once the paper is full of marks, allow time to dry before instructing students to connect different points on the paper to form their own constellations.

Follow Up Activity
One useful extension of this project is to have students write a story about their constellation. Tell the students to think about the legend of Orion and the Scorpion. Have students write a short story or legend describing how their constellations got there. The length can vary from a paragraph to a few pages, depending on your preference and your students' writing abilities.

By the end of this project, students should be able to:
1. "Connect the dots" to form their constellations through mark-making and patterns.

2. Create simple stories about their constellations (follow-up activity creating constellation mythology) and work collaboratively as a group.