

Title Code Blue

Accession No.

Artist Helen Frankenthaler

Type of Work Acrylic on Canvas

Brief biography of artist:

Born in New York City in 1928. Daughter of a State Supreme Court Justice. Studied at Bennington College, VT. Additional art studies with Ruffino Taniayo, Sallace Harrison, and Hans Hoffman. Impressed by Jackson Pollock's style and mode of rendition. One of the foremost practitioners of the Abstract Expressionist style of painting.

Background information and facts to bring out:

Two major aspects of her work are her contributions to modernism and her allusion to naturalism. She became famous for the process known as stain painting. She consistently used nature as a theme for her abstractions, and utilized color in a masterful way to evoke emotion.

Formal Qualities (art elements & design principles) observed in the work:

She experimented in the use of acrylics. In this particular work, she uses many shades of blue to draw the viewer into the picture. Her style shows itself in a sensitive and lyrical treatment of color which she uses in broad, thick strokes.

Expressive qualities felt in the work:

This painting invokes to the viewer a feeling of calm, serenity, and introspection. The artist makes us call upon ourselves to decide what might be depicted. This painting is very atmospheric.

Questions to ask:

Is this a painting you would stop by and study, or just pass to see what's next? Why or why not? Do you sense that this is a depiction of some aspect of nature? What? Would you rather see a picture that is complete realism or a picture wherein you have to read into it what you think the artist was conveying?

Using the work in a tour:

I would point out that this is an example of Abstract Expressionism. I would say what color is used the most and that there are different shades of that color to add to the dynamics of the painting. The lines are mainly straight, but indistinct, adding the atmospheric quality.