

# WIDE RAINBOW LESSONS: Artist Helen Frankenthaler

## ARTIST INTRO:

Helen Frankenthaler (1928-2011) was an Abstract Expressionist and Color Field painter from NYC. She began exhibiting her artwork in the early 1950s with a career spanning over the next six decades. Frankenthaler was known for her lyrically abstract paintings and technique of staining pigment into raw canvas. She helped shape an influential art movement known as Color Field painting and was one of the most admired artists of her generation.

## HELEN FRANKENTHALER ARTWORKS (EXAMPLES):



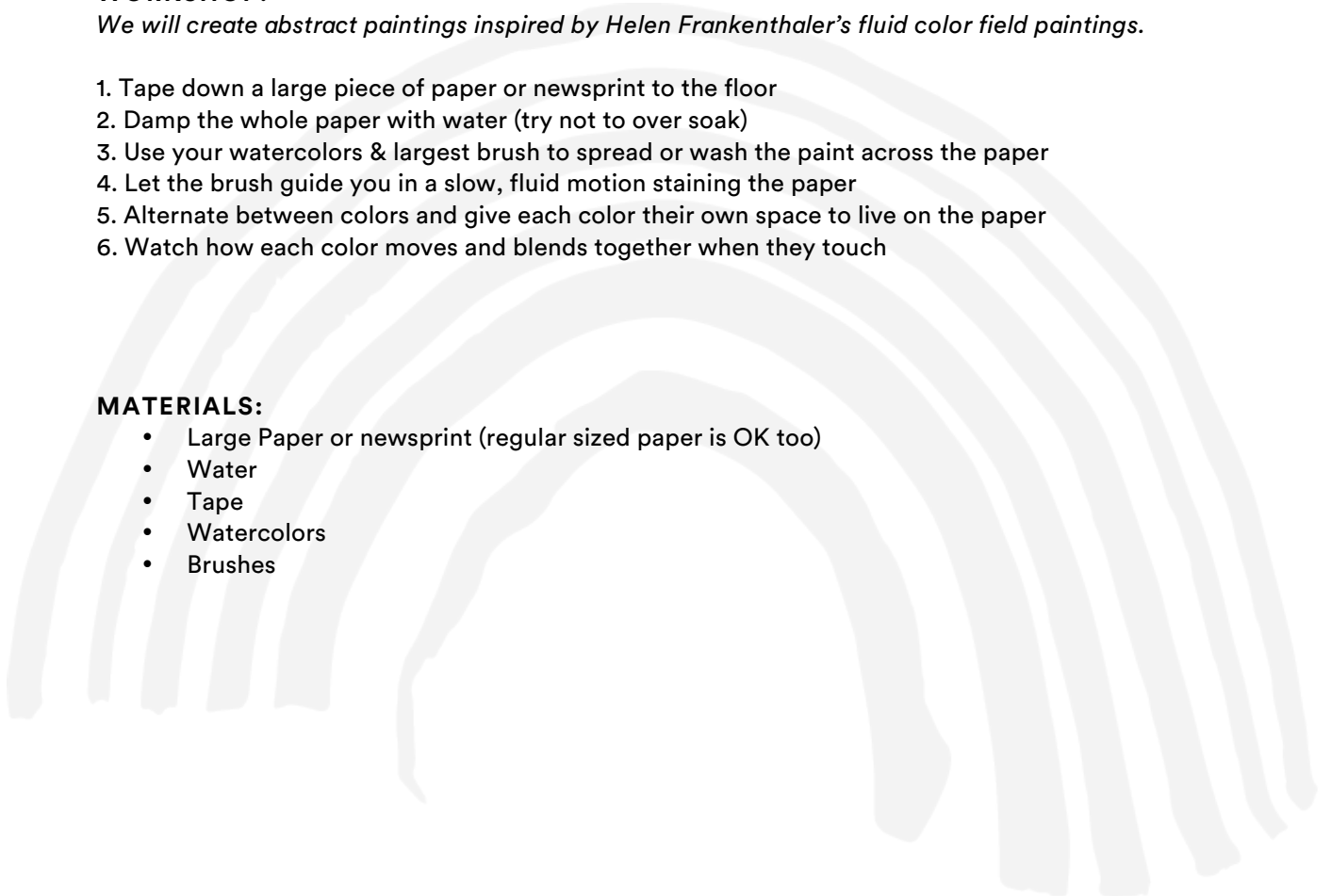
**WORKSHOP:**

*We will create abstract paintings inspired by Helen Frankenthaler's fluid color field paintings.*

1. Tape down a large piece of paper or newsprint to the floor
2. Damp the whole paper with water (try not to over soak)
3. Use your watercolors & largest brush to spread or wash the paint across the paper
4. Let the brush guide you in a slow, fluid motion staining the paper
5. Alternate between colors and give each color their own space to live on the paper
6. Watch how each color moves and blends together when they touch

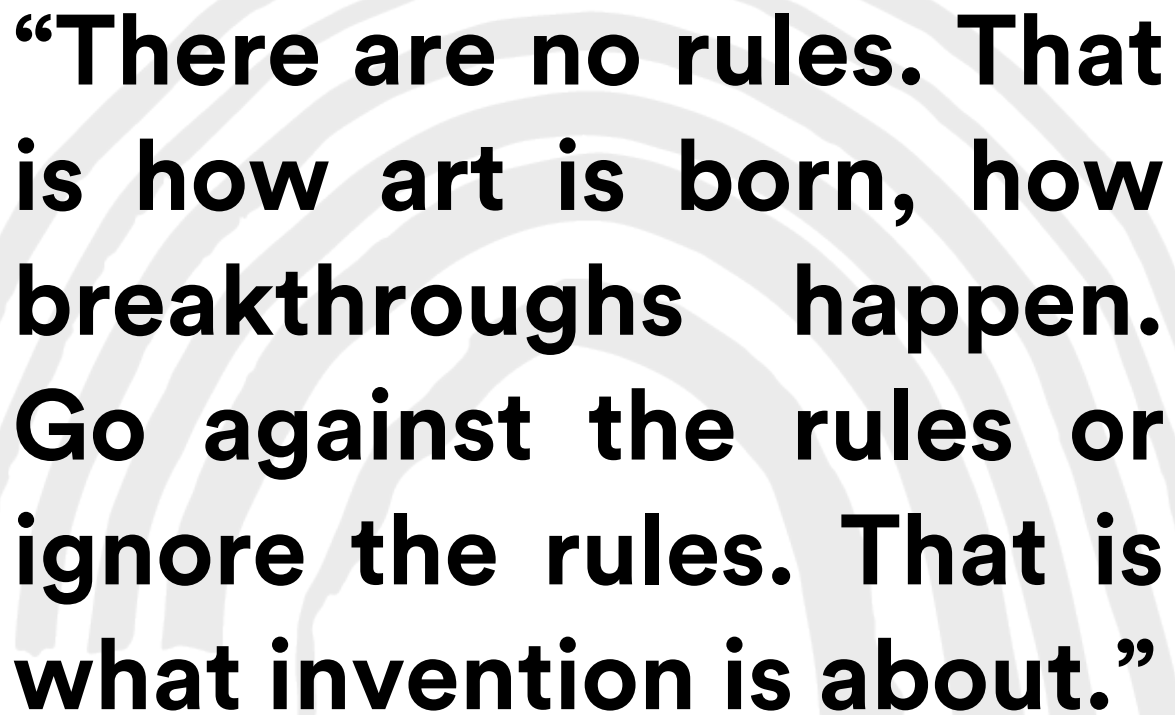
**MATERIALS:**

- Large Paper or newsprint (regular sized paper is OK too)
- Water
- Tape
- Watercolors
- Brushes






**Helen Frankenthaler**  
***Tutti-Fruitti*, 1966**  
**Acrylic on canvas**  
**116 3/4 x 69 inches**  
**Collection Albright-Knox Art Gallery**  
**Buffalo, New York**



**“There are no rules. That is how art is born, how breakthroughs happen. Go against the rules or ignore the rules. That is what invention is about.”**

**-Helen Frankenthaler**



A young woman with dark hair, wearing a pinkish-red short-sleeved blouse and a light-colored skirt, sits cross-legged on a floor covered in abstract, colorful paint splatters and washes. The walls behind her are also covered in similar abstract paint applications, creating a vibrant, multi-colored environment. The overall style is reminiscent of color field painting or abstract expressionism.

**FOLLOW UP:**

What colors seem to fit together naturally?

How did more or less water change the effect?

How did you feel when the paint began to soak in to the paper?

Does color create a mood? What was the mood of your painting?

What do you think color field painting is? Means?

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