



George Andrews

Scramble Art
Oil on canvas board

About the Artist

Born in 1911 in Plainview, Georgia, George Andrews found strength in creativity. Though classified as African American, George Andrews is of Scottish, Cherokee and African ancestry. Growing up on the grounds of his father's plantation in Georgia, he remembers creating his first work of art while in first grade; however, his mother was more interested in him learning to read and write rather than to draw. He dropped out of school to work the fields, returning home to draw with available material in the evening. Later, he would venture out late at night to paint large images of biplanes on local barns.

In the late 1950's, brightly colored, dot filled rocks began appearing around the town of Madison, Georgia, where George had retired after leaving a job as a sign painter. Gaining the nickname "the Dot Man," George, and his art, started gaining recognition and acceptance. He began painting every surface he could get his hands on, eventually filling his entire living environment with dots. Dreams provide the inspiration for many of his images, as well as the complex realities of his family's mixed racial heritage. His paintings reflect the world around him often revealing his keen sense of humor.

About the Artwork

The puzzle-like shapes in this work create a playful expression further enhanced by the title written on the work, "scramble art." As with many works created by George Andrews this work features his trademark bright colors and dot patterns. Although Andrews started painting on rocks and found objects, his son Benny Andrews began supplying him with canvas later on.

Sample Classroom Activity

Scramble Art in My Family

Grades PK-2 (Language Arts, Social Studies, Art Making)

Ask students to identify the various shapes and colors used in *Scramble Art*. Discuss how the artist used **patterns** (dots) throughout the piece. Read the title aloud to students and ask them what they think it might mean. Is the work silly- or serious-looking? Why?

Tell students that this artist is a **self-taught (or self-trained)** artist. He did not go to school to learn how to paint. That's why his work looks like someone in this classroom could create it. When he first started to paint, he used **found objects** like rocks and later all the furniture in his house. His son, Benny Andrews, is an artist too. He went to college to study art. Benny started to bring his father canvas to paint on. This artist, George Andrews, had 10 children. A number of his children became artists. Artists can be trained or untrained. List with students different kinds of artists (painters, writers, quilters, carvers, sewers...) Ask students to think of one artist in their family.

Scramble Art Making

Using paper and paint (marker, oil pastel, or crayons) ask students to pick a shape (George picked a triangle) to repeat throughout their work. Encourage students to make patterns and use bright colors.