

# Letters and Numbers in Art!

Paul Keene used letters and numbers in several of his works of art. In some of the work it looks like he used old stencils and patterns to create the shapes. He never mentioned why he used numbers in his images, but they do create interesting patterns. They also give us even more to think about when we study his art.

**You can create a project that uses letters and numbers as well.**

- Draw a single number or letter on a 6 x 9 inch piece of oak tag or card stock. Make the lines of the number thick, so they are easy to cut out and trace. The letter or number you create can be any style. Look in a newspaper, magazine, or in the font listing on your computer for ideas. Here are some ideas for lettering styles:

**P A U L K E E N E**

- Carefully cut the letter or number out. Then, using your letter or number as a pattern, trace it to create a design on a 12 x 18 inch piece of paper. Overlap the shape, line it up in a pattern, or trace all or part of the letter when using the pattern. Make sure you create an interesting design when you are using the letter or number you created.
- Add color to your design by incorporating markers, colored pencils, acrylic paint and collage materials to the areas created by your design. Some letters or numbers will become hidden. Let others show clearly in your design.
- Hang up your project and share it with your classmates. How did the repetition of your shape create a unique work of art?
- As a variation, use a multi-digit number or a word. How does your design change? Does the meaning of your artwork change?

## Reference books:

*Jasper Johns: An Allegory of Painting, 1955-1965*

By Jeffrey S. Weiss, John Elderfield, Jasper Johns, National Gallery of Art (U.S.),

Published by Yale University Press, 2007

*Paul Keene: His Art and His Legacy*

By Curlee Raven Holton

Published by James A. Michener Art Museum, 2005



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