







# Mary Blair

*“You get an education in school and in college, and then you start to work– and that’s when you really learn!”*

*– Mary Blair 1911-1978*

***A lesson plan in cut paper collage for grades 2nd - 12th, completed in 3 45 minute class periods.***

## ***Objective:***

Students learn about the life and career of the famous Disney artist Mary Blair, and create a cut paper collage of their own home/castle inspired by her work.

## ***Materials:***

*Pacon Art1st Mixed Media Paper 18 x 24 in. white, pack of 500*

*FC Construction Paper Pad and other colored paper*

*painted paper scraps (FC Tempera Paint)*

*Colored straws, brads (fasteners)*

*paper cutter (for teacher prep)*

*glue and scissors*

*rulers, triangles and Exacto knives (for older more advanced students)*

## ***Vocabulary:***

*cut paper collage, craftsmanship, diluted glue, foundation, dynamic, geometric, pattern, motifs, contrast, accent, finials, typography, irregular*

## **National Core Art Standards—Visual**

**Creating** – #1: *Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work*

*#3: Refine and complete artistic work*

**Presenting** – #5: *Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation*

**Responding** – #9: *Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work*

**Connecting** – #11: *Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural and historical context to deepen understanding*



Presented here is an exciting **cut paper collage** inspired by the creative *It's A Small World* concept design by Mary Blair. It is an easily adaptable project offering different ways to approach it for both older and younger students, along with a lot of room for individual expression and creativity.

### **Approach for younger students: (2nd - 5th grade)**

Begin by sharing the book *Pocket Full Of Colors* with your students. Follow the basic steps presented here for building a home/castle without expecting too much of the craftsmanship pictured. You could provide templates of small design motifs for students to trace around and cut, or have them design with markers or crayons. For the windmill, you could offer pre-cut straws to size along with the slit ends, and even attach them with the brads ahead of time. But as you probably know, some kids will want to do it themselves— let them! You will have very charming and creative results by allowing students the freedom to express their own ideas and do their best using scissors and glue. Keep things simple and fun!

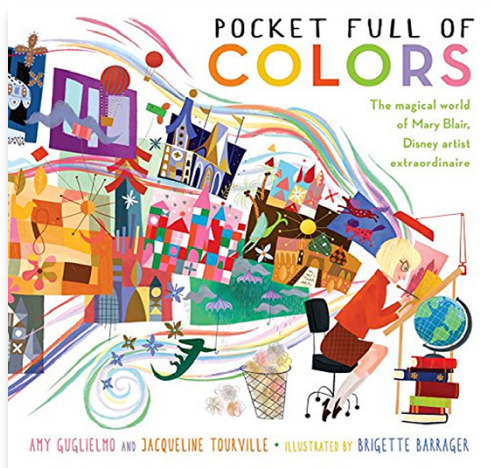
### **Approach for older students: (6th - 12th grade)**

Skip the picture book reading, and create a presentation of Mary Blair using online resources. There is a wealth of info including her biography, contributions to the art world, and visual examples of her art and ideas.

Here, students could learn **craftsmanship** skills, such as how to create clean, precise edges and angles by using a ruler, T- square and Exacto knife. You could show them how to cleanly apply **diluted glue** with an old brush, and talk about color, contrast and balance. Welcome your student's own ideas for configurations of the castle; you may be very impressed! It is often the building and design art projects in the classroom that reveal tomorrow's most talented and imaginative designers and engineers!

# POCKET FULL OF COLORS

By Amy Guglielmo and Jacqueline Tourville,  
Illustrated by Brigette Barrager



***Pocket Full Of Colors*** is a charming account of the imaginative childhood and later successful career of the very creative and passionate artist Mary Blair.

Mary Blair (1911-1978) was a trailblazer for women artists in animation and design. She was most known for her original modern art and creative contributions to the Walt Disney Company, producing the enchanting art for the animated classics such as *Alice in Wonderland*, *Peter Pan* and *Cinderella*. Blair was also the visionary behind the facade and interior world of Disneyland's *It's A Small World* ride attraction, contributing with her striking and magical concept art and design.

In this lesson plan, students of all ages will explore designing with geometric shapes, patterning, and vibrant color, along with graphic design concepts in the creation of their own home/castle inspired by Mary Blair.



## To begin

Jump start this project by providing lots of pre-cut (use a paper cutter) strips of colored paper to serve as a foundation for the basic design of your student's home/castle. This simplifies the project a bit, and gives students a quick head start beginning to build with at least *some* straight edges.

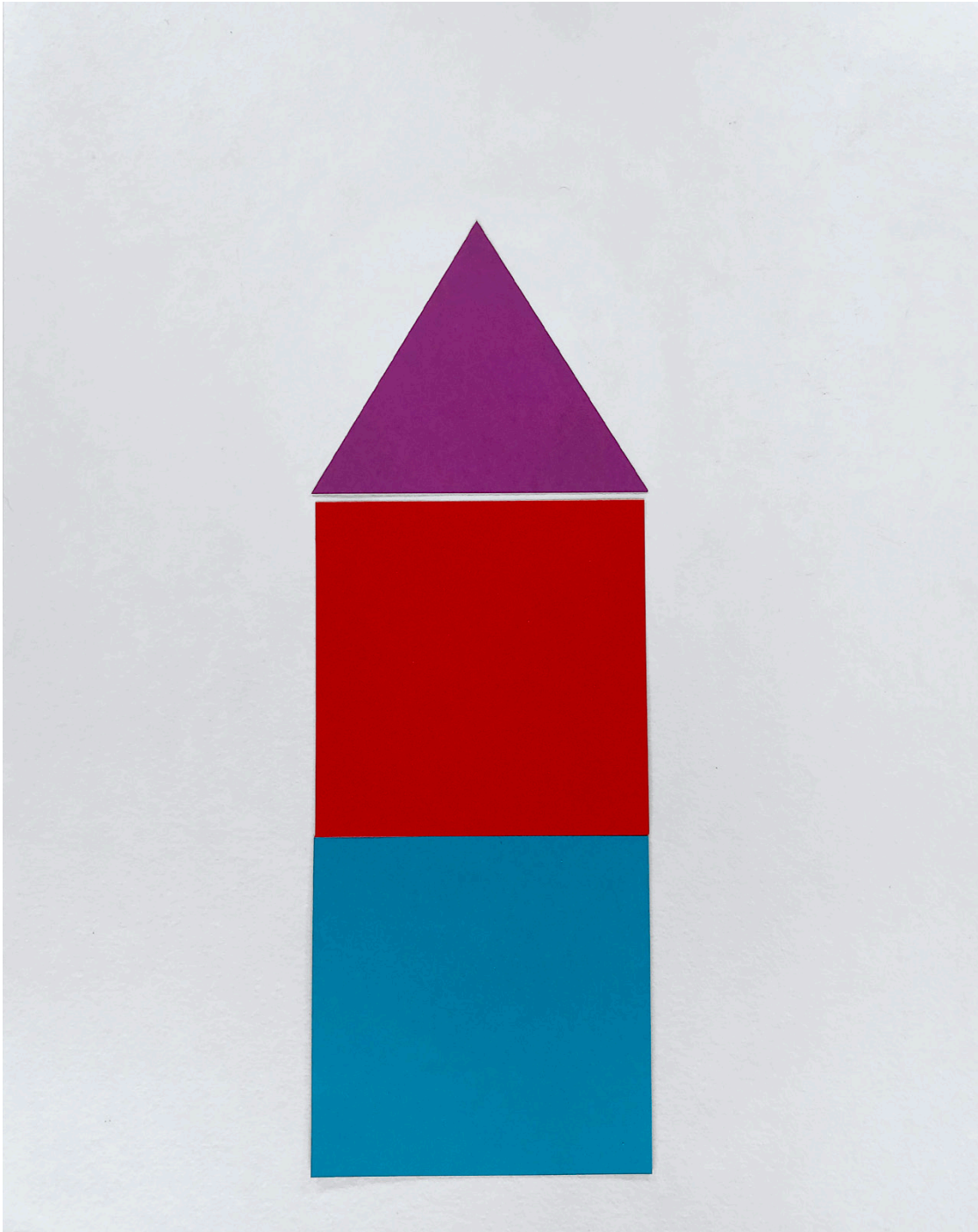




## **Painted paper scraps**

Do you have a prized collection of painted paper scraps in your classroom? If you don't, you should! Spending a class period of simply having your students create colorful painted paper is not only really fun, but will provide wonderful material to use for collage projects for years to come. You can find much online about how to go about making painted paper.

In this project, we add colorful painted paper accents to the castle's windmill and playful border.

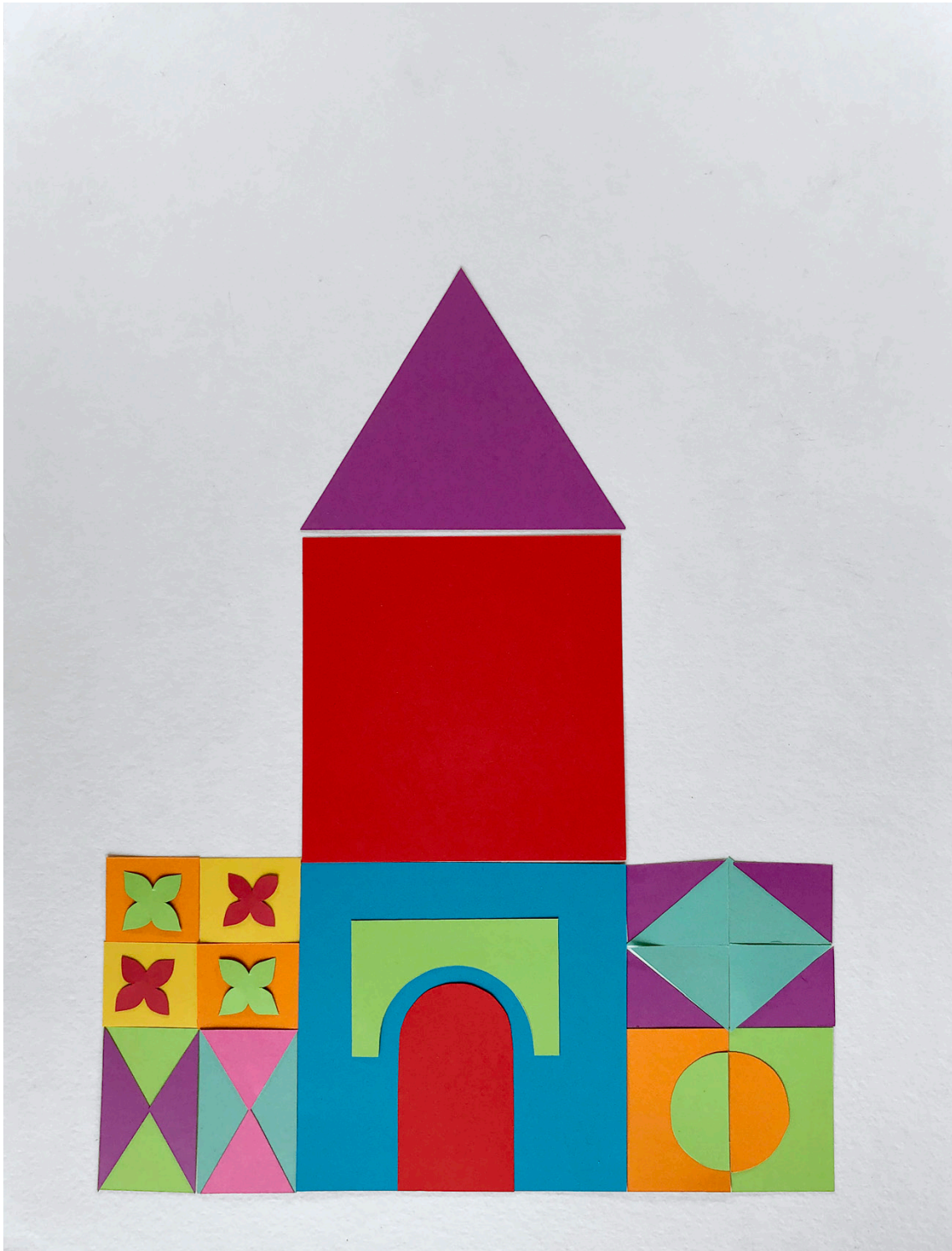


## Begin to build

Demonstrate how to build the **foundation** of the castle in simple steps, beginning in the center. Center column could be made out of 1 or 2 pieces of paper. Tops could be a dome or different types of triangles.

Encourage students to experiment with color, determining the most exciting color combinations throughout the project. Glue pieces in place.





Show students how to thoughtfully build their castle. Discuss the use of pattern using simple design **motifs**, and discuss how to create **dynamic** color contrast; dark on light, light on dark.

Show students how to keep the pieces loose (unglued) while they experiment and move things around to find the design they want before gluing pieces down.





Encourage students to continue building upward, adding their own original designs. Have fun with the rooftops and **finials**!

Show students how to create an open window with just 2 pieces of paper as shown above, or how about making a large clock face in this space!

Show students how to be creative with **typography** using their own home address numbers to design and display outside their front door.

***“A man’s home is his castle,”*** right?



## The windmill

1. Cut 2 plastic straws to size and carefully snip small slits on the ends.
2. Cut fan shapes out of painted paper and insert into slits.
3. Crisscross straws and connect them by making a small slit in the center of each, for the brad to fit through.
4. Add another small slit to the background paper for connecting the crisscrossed straws and brad to poke through, and fasten from the back.





## Sun and border

Encourage students to make their own original sun with an expressive face. You are sure to see some really fun ideas!

The final touch is to make a playful **irregular** border, mixing flat color and painted paper accent pieces. Have fun!