

# Coffee Filter Paintings

## Inspired by the work of Sam Gilliam



Sam Gilliam, *Carousel*, 1970, acrylic on unstretched canvas, 9'10" x 67'1". Purchase through funds from the Brittingham Foundation and an anonymous donor

**Sam Gilliam** was an African American color field painter and lyrical abstractionist artist. He created a series of work called "Drape Paintings" where he took unstretched canvas and painted them in unconventional ways such as soaking, dying, pouring a mix of paint and water over them, and washing the painted canvas with paint thinner. These works were then displayed by being loosely hung in a space. Gilliam's drape paintings were meant to be rearranged and hung in different ways each time they were displayed.

## VOCABULARY

**Color field painting**: a style of abstract painting that uses large fields of flat color.

**Abstract art**: artwork that is not easily recognizable and can be interpreted in various ways

**Unconventional**: not based on or not conforming to what is traditionally done

## MATERIALS

- Coffee filters
- Watercolor paints - variation: color the coffee filters with marker and add water afterwards for the same effect.
- Cup of water
- Paint brushes
- A paper plate (or a surface on which the coffee filter can be painted on)
- Paper towels
- Rubber bands or clothes pins
- String

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1.) Gather your materials. Have paper towels ready for any messes. Set your coffee filter on top of a paper plate to avoid getting paint on the table.
- 2.) Prepare your watercolors. Add a little bit of water to each pan of color using a paint brush to activate the watercolor.
- 3.) Dip your paintbrush into the color of your choice and add paint to the coffee filter. Notice how the color expands on the material. Add various colors and notice how they interact. Do you see any new colors being created on the surface?
- 4.) Once you are satisfied with your piece, set it aside to dry,
- 5.) Once dry, take your coffee filter and consider ways that you can hang the piece, inspired by Gilliam's drape paintings. You can use rubber bands or clothes pins as well as string to hang the piece. You could also alter the coffee filter by cutting the edges or cutting out shapes.