

schoolarts

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THEME: Mood, Meaning, and Purpose



Fraction City

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The urge to build and construct is universal and natural for us all. For a child, it marks the first attempt at creative problem solving, not to mention an early encounter with the laws of science. Perhaps the best part is that it's fun and confidence building.

Fourth graders experienced a new choice of "building block" as they used the computer to design a city of shapes. This lesson grew from a desire to review color theory and focus on warm and cool color schemes. After discussions with classroom teachers, the lesson was linked to our mandated math curriculum. By linking an art component with the study of fractions, we reinforced classroom concepts and enhanced students' sense of color and design.

The Challenge

Create "Fraction City" within a 10 x 10 unit grid. The buildings should be of warm colors and should fill 75% of the grid. The remaining 25% of the units should be cool colors for the sky.

The Process

Our school's computer specialist, Frank DeCelle, showed students how to creatively use a drawing document from a word processing program to create a template for an editable grid. A copy of this grid is available to download from our website at www.herickeses.org/center/artsecrets/color.

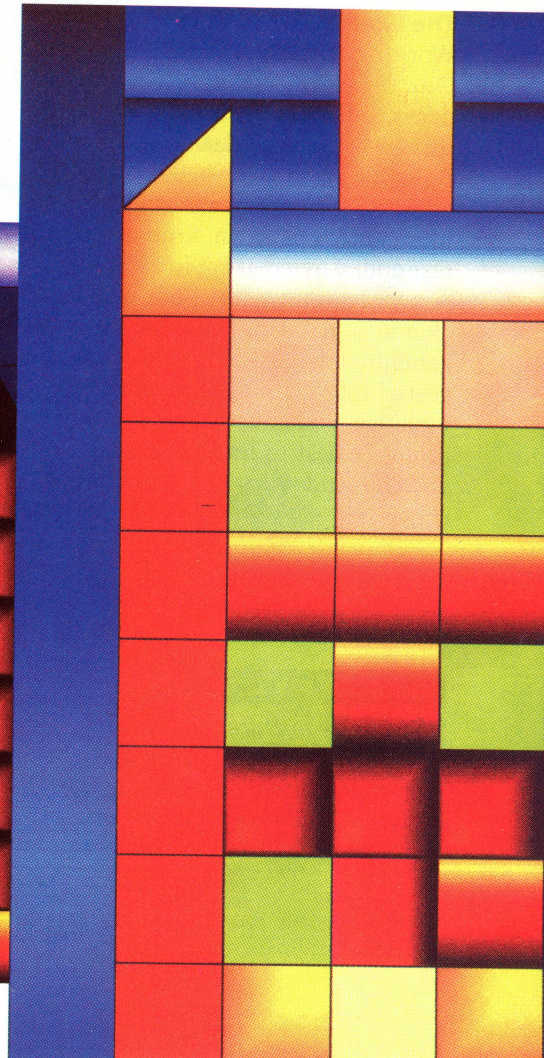
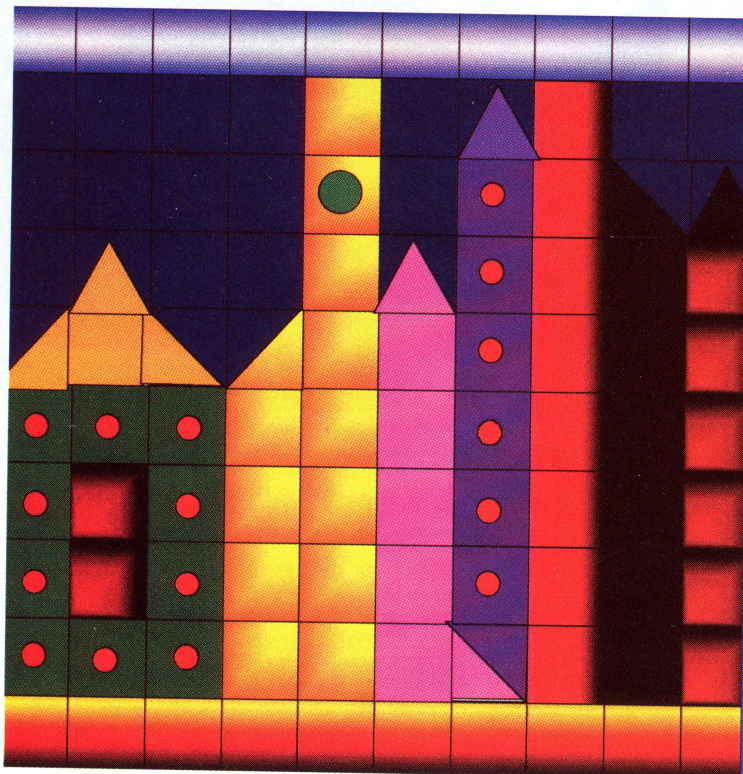
Students kept track of the warm and cool units used. To add a design element, they used the "polygon" tool to create half-boxes and triangles for visual interest. Gradients from the color picker sparked student enthusiasm as well.

The art problem required two 45-minute sessions in our computer lab which houses 30 computers. I took care to ensure that student work was saved in the proper folder. A replacement color ink cartridge was also needed for the lab as this project obviously consumed a large amount of ink. ❖

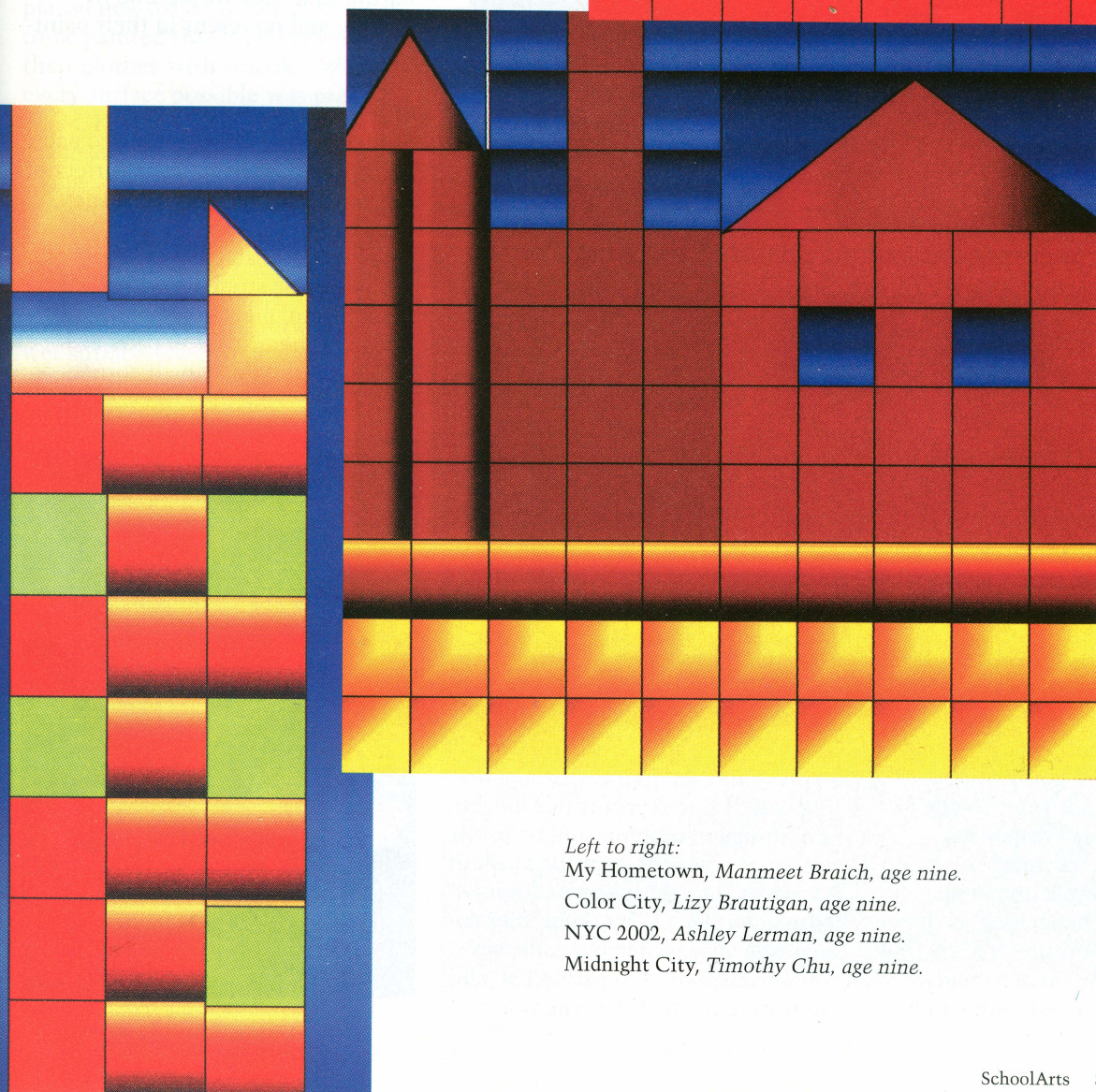
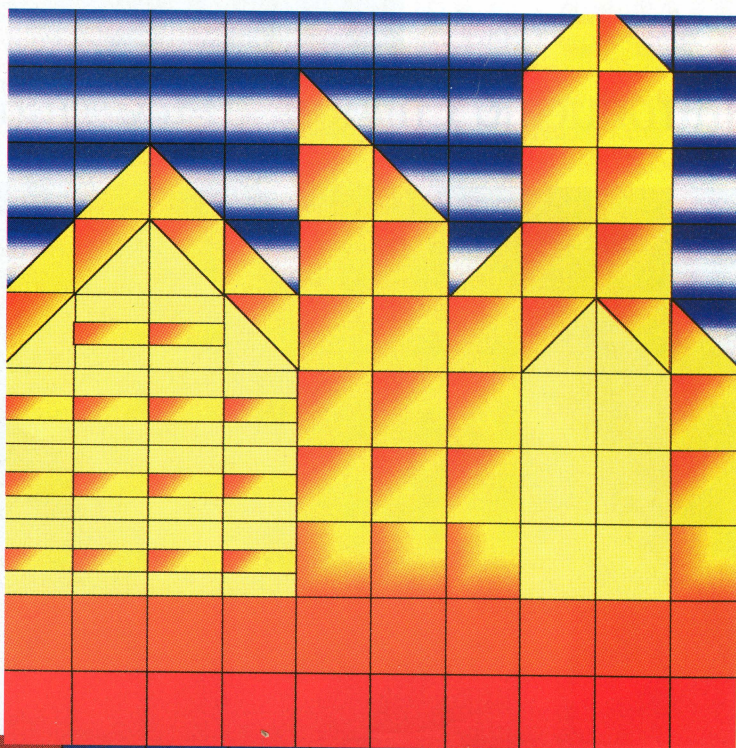
Bill Grabowski is an elementary art teacher at Center Street School in Williston Park, New York.

NATIONAL STANDARD

Students use visual structures and functions of art to communicate ideas.



Our reconstruction of a city became a timely and poignant task after the events of 9/11. Our school lies only twenty miles from Ground Zero. We smelled the smoke in our classrooms. Many of our families were uniquely touched by the event. Our school encouraged our students to express their feelings and uncertainties. Consciously or unconsciously many students chose to include tall twin buildings in their "fraction city." Not surprisingly, they all spoke about how their artwork helped the healing process. This made the final product all the more meaningful.



Left to right:
My Hometown, Manmeet Braich, age nine.
Color City, Lizy Brautigán, age nine.
NYC 2002, Ashley Lerman, age nine.
Midnight City, Timothy Chu, age nine.