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The elements of art

Colour



Colour is learned most effectively by having the opportunity to name and to mix different colours in paint, to sort and select them using collage and textiles, and to manipulate them for a variety of purposes with pastels, crayons, pencils and felt-tip pens. The works of Miró, Matisse, Kandinsky, O'Keeffe and Van Gogh are all good references when talking to children about colour.

- Talk about, recognise and name colours.
- Sort for colour variety, for example, all the blues etc.
- Recognise colours in a range of different media.
- Mix, blend and experiment to create new colours.
- Look at and talk about the works of artists who use colour as their primary concern.

Line



Line generally refers to the thickness and continuous quality made by any material that can make marks in 2-D, wire and wood in 3-D, and paper strip, string, wool and ribbons in textiles. Lines can be made in a variety of ways that encourage the use of specific words – straight, curved, jagged, heavy, light, wide, thick, etc. Line defines the subject of a picture. Line drawing is a drawing using only lines. Most artists use line drawing at the first stage of their idea's development. The works of Giacometti, Matisse and Klee all have good examples of line.

- Make marks into sand, mud, and paint and onto paper or fabric.
- Use fingers, brushes, pencils, crayons, sticks or other objects to make lines.
- Recognise lines in the environment and in objects such as a bicycle.
- Make patterns and pictures using lines in different materials.

Shape



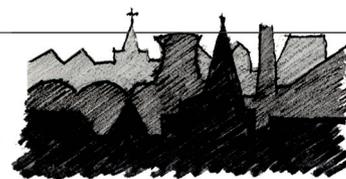
Shape refers to the recognisable outline of any object that we see. This is often recorded by direct observation of things like leaves and shells, people and animals etc. A 2-D shape, when made, say, in clay, then becomes a 3-D form. The recognition and application of mathematical shapes are extremely important. All of the techniques used in art can be associated with exploring shape. Artists such as Matisse, Picasso, O'Keeffe, Hepworth, Miro, and Kandinsky all use shape as key elements in their work.

- Sort and begin to recognise shapes.
- Observe different shapes through drawing, painting, and printing.
- Arrange shapes to create patterns and relief tiles.
- Begin to compose pictures with mathematical shapes.
- Look at the works of artists with strong evidence of shapes in their work.

The elements of art cont.

Space

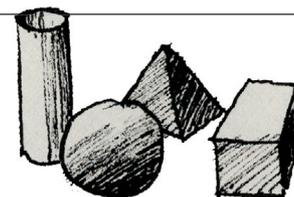
This generally refers to how things appear to get smaller – for instance in a landscape, where distant houses or people appear to get smaller the further away they are from you. Artists who concentrate on the landscape provide good references to qualities of space, such as Constable, Turner, Monet and Van Gogh.



- Place objects within a given space, for example, in the landscape.
- Show an understanding of spatial awareness, under and over, inside and outside, big and small.
- Explore arranging things from small to large, and the notion of overlapping to create a sense of space.

Form

Usually a 3-D outcome through working in clay, plasticine, play dough, and also in card and wire and wood. 3-D works tend to be models, carvings or constructions. The illusion created by some painters where a portrait, figure or still life looks as if it could be picked off the flat surface is also an expression of form. This is done by the strong use of tones and shadows. A wide variety of sculptors and craftworkers can be seen to explore form in different styles, such as Michelangelo, Rodin, Moore, Hepworth, Oldenberg and Clarice Cliff.



- Manipulate clay, dough, and plasticine.
- Use malleable materials to model 3-D animals and people.
- Use malleable materials to make things in relief.
- Use recycled materials to build models.
- Look at the work of sculptors and potters and talk about their subjects and materials.

Pattern

Usually a series of repeated shapes and colours. They are most often used in tessellations, symmetry, rotation and mirror images with both regular and irregular shapes from mathematics and from nature. They can be seen in paintings, in textiles, in wallpaper, in ceramic work and in body decoration from other cultures. Look at some contemporary textile prints, Turkish carpets, beadwork from North America, wallpapers and ceramic decoration. William Morris, Clarice Cliff and Gustav Klimt will also make good reference points for talking about pattern.

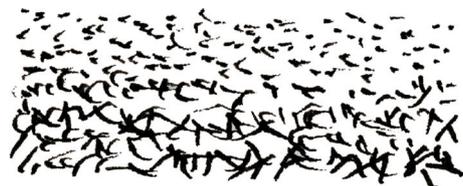


- Make random patterns.
- Recognise repeating patterns and patterns in the environment.
- Create repeating patterns with different shapes and colours.
- Talk about objects and articles with strong patterns on them.

The elements of art cont.

Texture

This is the surface quality of materials that we can see and touch. Most objects have recognisable textures on their surfaces. Most materials used in the making of art will also create surface textures that are particular to them. Paint can create different surfaces simply by the way in which we use the brushes – it can also be changed by adding things, such as sand and glue. Other examples of texture include thin washes of paint on top of wax crayon work, different materials used on a weaving panel, and marks made by different modelling tools into the soft surfaces of clay. Different papers for drawing and collage, and different fabrics for textile appliqué can all develop an understanding of texture.

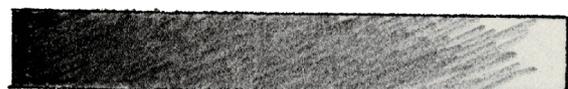


Artists such as Rembrandt, Giacometti, Van Gogh and Auerbach make good reference points to different paint applications, and the sculptures of Elisabeth Frink and Henry Moore have strong surface marks on them. Picasso's relief works also have lots of different textures.

- Distinguish between hard and soft, rough and smooth.
- Explore the textures of a variety of papers and cards: tissue, sugar, wrapping, cellophane, corrugated, and reflective card.
- Experience working with natural materials: snow, pebbles, water, wood, wet and dry sand, sawdust and sand and shavings added to paint, leaves and twigs.
- Talk about the works of artists where texture is very strong.

Tone

This is generally the degrees of light and dark seen in a work, usually the effects of light and shadow. Tones can make a flat shape take on a 3-D illusion. Making a side-light on an object will give it a strong tonal contrast. Artists from the past such as Caravaggio, Rembrandt and Dutch still-life masters are all good points of reference.



- Look at objects and articles with clear evidence of darks and lights in them.
- Name the colours that could be described as having dark, medium and light tones.
- Use just black and white paint to make a picture or a pattern.
- How have the artists used dark and light tones?

Technical glossary

abstract art

patterns and shapes and colours which don't represent known things

appliqué

made with pieces of fabric sewn (or stuck) onto a fabric or paper background

artefacts

objects, usually three dimensional but can refer generally to anything, both natural and manufactured

collage

made up with cut or torn papers and pasted onto a background paper, sometimes utilises other materials

constructing

using materials (card, wood, plastic etc.), which need to be joined to each other by some fixing method. This is often done with recycled materials but can be done with malleable material

craft

one-off artefacts, often made in clay, fabric, glass and wood

crayon

a wax-based material, water resistant, for drawing and applying colour

design

usually to do with commercial production of articles in ceramic, fashion textiles, illustration, etc. also a preliminary sketch or plan

elements of art

visual and tactile components applied to all works – see appendix 'The elements of art'

enclosed (shapes)

where lines join to form a shape

extruding

forcing clay through a sieve (a garlic crusher or a purpose-made small metal extruder) to make thin strings of clay

graphite

the 'lead' in a pencil, produced in a variety of hard/soft consistencies, with the soft ones (2B, 4B, 6B) being the recommended ones for drawing

ground or background

the surface on which to draw, paint, print and make collages etc.

imagination

using things we have experienced in new and unusual ways

indenting/impressing

making marks into a surface with different objects and tools

inscribing

drawing into a soft surface with a suitable tool, usually pointed

media/medium

the practical materials used for any task in making works of art and design

memory

the use of our powers of recalling events

mobile

where shapes are suspended and will change with the wind

modelling

using malleable materials such as clay, plasticine and dough to make a 3-D or relief shape

mood

how a picture or object makes you feel

mosaic

made up of small pieces of ceramic and glass

observation

whatever we see in front of us, often referred to as 'direct observation'

open (shapes)

where lines do not meet to form a shape

pastel

a dry chalk-based material for drawing and applying colour

relief

a sculpture where the shapes are raised from a flat surface or ground

representational art

where objects or events can be recognised in a picture

sculpture

a 3-D piece of work, or a work in relief

surfaces

the 'ground' on which we work, such as card, paper, a slab of clay, etc.

three dimensional (3-D)

an object that can be viewed from different angles, front, back, side, top

Our vocabulary for art*

Names of colours

| | |
|--------|--------|
| black | pink |
| blue | purple |
| brown | red |
| green | silver |
| gold | white |
| orange | yellow |

Activities

| | |
|-----------|-----------|
| collage | sculpture |
| drawing | sewing |
| ICT | stitching |
| modelling | textiles |
| painting | weaving |
| printing | |

Tools, materials and equipment

| | |
|---------------|--------------|
| boards | paper types |
| brushes | paste |
| chalks | pastels |
| clay | pencils |
| crayons | plasticine |
| dough | rags |
| fabric | ribbons |
| felt | rollers |
| glue | rolling pins |
| glue spreader | scissors |
| hessian | sponges |
| knives | threads |
| paint pot | tools |
| paint types | water pot |

Things that I can do

| | |
|---------------|---------|
| attach | poke |
| bend | press |
| blend | print |
| build | roll |
| choose/select | rub |
| cut | shape |
| draw | sort |
| feel/touch | spread |
| fix | squash |
| fold | squeeze |
| glue | stick |
| join | tear |
| mix | thread |
| paint | weave |

I can use these descriptive words

| | |
|-----------|---------|
| bold | pale |
| bright | rough |
| bumpy | shiny |
| colourful | smooth |
| creamy | soft |
| dark | sparkly |
| dry | spiky |
| dull | sticky |
| furry | thick |
| hard | wet |
| light | |

* This is a basic vocabulary only. Additional words are listed in individual session plans and other terms will be employed depending on the colours, processes and reference materials used.

Recommended materials and resources*

Drawing

- soft pencils – graphite and coloured
- chalks and pastels
- water-soluble felt-tip pens
- A2, A3 and A4 cartridge paper
- coloured sugar paper

Painting

- paints – water-based ready-mixed, poster, powder colour
Essential colours – brilliant yellow, brilliant red, brilliant blue, black, white
Optional colours – orange, purple, green
- coloured inks (best ordered in 500 ml bottles) or Brusho dyes to make your own
colours – yellow, green, blue, purple, red, black
- brushes - range of flat and round, nylon or hog bristle, in different sizes (2, 4, 6, 8), with long and short handles
- mixing palettes or trays
- stable water pots

Textiles

- range of fabrics, plain, patterned and textured
- selection of ribbons, strings, wool, tape, raffia, felt and net
- selection of decorative items – sequins, beads, buttons, braids, foil, feathers, glitter powder, coloured sand, bottle tops, sweet wrappers
- PVA glue and brushes/spreaders, and/or sticks
- scissors – sharp but safe
- frames for weaving – card, wood, tree branches (or willow 'withies'), peg loom, cycle wheels
- coloured cold-water dyes and inks – red, yellow, green, blue, purple and orange

Collage materials

- range of coloured papers – matt, glossy, metallic, patterned, textured
- range of card – black, white, coloured and corrugated
- tissue papers in a variety of colours
- wallpaper swatches
- art straws
- PVA glue and brushes/spreaders, and/or sticks
- scissors, sharp but safe

Printing

- water-based inks and/or paints – black, yellow, red, blue, green, purple, white
- rollers, assorted widths
- thick card – 6 sheet plus
- cartridge paper
- newsprint paper
- objects for relief printing – net, string, corrugated card, tissue paper, pieces of textured fabric and wallpaper
- wax crayons
- thick polythene
- if possible, some Indian woodblocks

Other resources

- range of dried items – grasses, reeds, leaves, seeds, raffia
- where appropriate – twigs, branches, creepers, flowers, rocks, sand and pebbles
- range of made items – plastic packing chips, plastic sheet and bags

* This is a basic list of resources. Specific items are listed in each session plan.

Looking at works of art

It is important to encourage children to look at and respond to works of art, and to provide the opportunities for them to express ideas and feelings about what they see.

Large-scale posters are an ideal way of managing this with large and small groups of children.

You are not expected to be knowledgeable about art works in order to provide your children with the chance to respond to them.

Try to select an area to display a 'picture of the month', perhaps with an explanation if possible, and keep the language simple. Most art galleries do this.

Many of the pictures mentioned can have links with other aspects of children's learning, but this is not a prerequisite for the activity. Some of the units within this file will direct you to looking at certain works of art.

The questions that follow are designed to help practitioners, especially those who lack confidence and knowledge about works of art, to encourage the children to engage with the pictures. They are generally about the visible content of the works, the mood created, and the colours used.

Not all of the questions will be appropriate to all of the works suggested.

In **representational works**, ask:

- What kind of story do you think this picture tells?
- What do you think is happening?
- Can you describe what sort of day it is?
- Is it indoors or outdoors?
- What objects can you see in the picture?
- Are the people rich or poor?
- What colours has the artist used?

- What sort of pictures do you have in your house?
- How does our picture make you feel?
- What could we give as a title to this picture?
- How do you think the artist made this picture?
- What materials is it made from?
- If you had this picture in your house, where would you put it?
- If you could be in this picture where would you like to be?
- Do you think this picture was made a long time ago?
- Why do you think the artist made this picture?
- What size do you think the actual picture may have been?

In **abstract works**, ask:

- What title would you give this picture?
- Do you know the names of any of the shapes?
- Can you name the colours that have been used?
- If you could touch the painting, how do you think it would feel to touch it?
- Would you like to change any of the colours in the picture? What sort of difference would that make if we did this?
- What kind of lines can you see?
- Can you describe the lines?
- What are the lines used for?
- How does the picture make you feel?
- How was it made?
- If you had this picture in your house, where would you put it?

Looking at works of art cont.

- Do you think this picture was made a long time ago?
- Why do you think the artist made this picture?
- What size do you think the actual picture may have been?

Use any pictures that you are familiar with, and you think will interest the children.

The list below highlights some popular works of art from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that you may be able to obtain, as many shops now sell reproductions fairly cheaply. They can also be ordered from Mainstone Publications, Sparham, Norfolk. They have a comprehensive catalogue, which is well-illustrated to help you to make choices.

- *Tiger in the Forest* by Henri Rousseau
- *Self Portrait with Bandaged Ear* by Vincent van Gogh
- *Starry Night* by Vincent van Gogh
- *Beasts of the Sea* and *The Snail* by Henri Matisse
- *Broadway Boogie-Woogie* by Piet Mondrian
- *The White Spot* by Wassily Kandinsky
- *People, Dog and Sun* by Joan Miró
- Any flower paintings by Georgia O'Keeffe, but try to get *Red Canna* or *Cactus Flowers*
- *Weeping Woman* by Pablo Picasso
- *Water Lilies* by Claude Monet
- *Mulholland Drive* or *Salts Mill* by David Hockney
- A painting that tells a story by an Aboriginal artist
- A mosaic reproduction from Ravenna (Italy) or Kykkos (Cyprus)

Notes

The artists

Giuseppe Arcimboldo c.1530–1593

An Italian painter, born in Milan, mostly known for his fantasy portraits, where the faces are made up from flower heads, fruit, vegetables, books, birds, weaponry, etc. His odd works were very collectable at the time. Many people feel that he was the forerunner of the twentieth-century Surrealist movement.

www.wwar.com/masters/a/arcimboldo-giuseppe.html

Jean Arp 1887–1966

A painter, sculptor and collagist from the Alsace region of France. He often made painted relief panels and 3-D sculpture. He is generally known as a Surrealist artist. His work is usually abstract, with rounded rather than angular edges in the shapes he uses, but in some pieces it is possible to recognise figures and natural forms in his work. Many of his works can be seen in La Fondation Arp in Clamart, and in the Kunsthaus in Basle.

www.wwar.com/masters/a/arp-jean.html

Pierre Dunoyer 1949–

A French artist who was born in Marseille in 1949. He lives and works in Paris. He has a large painting in the Pompidou Centre in Paris.

Andy Goldsworthy 1956–

Born in Cheshire, living and working in Scotland, although his work has taken him all over the world. His main sculptural concern is to use natural materials to explore movement, rhythm, pattern and texture. He has used materials as diverse as water, sand, snow, ice, leaves, slate, pebbles and rocks. As you would expect with such materials, his work cannot be removed from the site where it was made, so he has to use photography to record the works or 'events'. His many books tend to be based on his explorations of one particular material and the photographs he has taken of it.

d-sites.net/English/Goldsworthy.htm

www.sculpture.org.uk/artists/AndyGoldsworthy

Jan Davidsz. de Heem 1606–1683

A Dutch still-life painter who worked mainly in Antwerp. His pictures are meticulously painted arrangements of objects and artefacts on a theme. Painters at that time in the Netherlands loved to paint textures of glass, wood, metal, cloth, food and flowers in a way that made them look real enough to pick up off the canvas. Such pictures were very popular with middle-class merchants who used them to show off their wealth. De Heem's works and those of the Dutch genre painters are well represented in galleries and museums throughout Europe.

www.wga.hu/html/h/heem/jan

The artists cont.

Wassily Kandinsky 1866–1944

Born in Russia, he is best known as the first truly abstract painter. His abstract works use mathematical shapes, strong colours and surface textures. His earlier works (especially landscapes and reflections on war images) were very expressive in their bold application of paint. His work can be seen in many museums displaying European art, in particular the Pompidou Centre in Paris and the MoMA in New York.

www.ibiblio.org/wm/paint/auth/kandinsky

Henri Matisse 1869–1954

A French artist, known for a huge variety of works in painting, drawing, collage and sculpture. He is generally acknowledged as the great colourist of the twentieth century, but excelled in all of the techniques that he worked in. He was the founder of the 'Fauve' movement, a group of artists who used vibrant colours to express themselves. He had an influence on the German Expressionist movement, and was reputedly a great rival of Picasso. His work is displayed in the major European and American art galleries. There is a foundation dedicated to his work in Nice.

www.artcyclopedia.com/artists/matisse_henri.html

Lesley Miller 1946–

An English artist-teacher specialising in textiles and painting. Much of her textile work is abstract, using decorative threads to describe patterns and movements often derived from landscape studies. Her paintings and drawings are mainly from direct observation of flowers and vases, and are very strong in their surface marks and tonal qualities. Her work is mostly in private collections.

Piet Mondrian 1872–1944

A Dutchman from Amsterdam. Originally a landscape painter who used very broad brushwork and strong colours. Like many artists of the day he was influenced by the Cubism of Picasso and Braque, and the Fauvism of Matisse. He developed these early influences into his own highly recognisable style of square and rectangular shapes in primary colours usually bordered by black lines. He moved to the USA and his works began to reflect the jazz music of the time. Mondrian's work can be seen in all of its styles in the Gemeentemuseum in The Hague.

www.finesite.webart.ru/greatest/Default.htm

www.artchive.com/artchive/M/mondrian.html

The artists cont.

Claude Monet 1840–1926

A French painter best known for his garden and water-lily paintings at Giverny. He was a leading practitioner in the Impressionist movement in Paris; in fact it was one of his works that gave rise to the name of Impressionism. He tended to paint in series, such as haystacks, Rouen Cathedral, water-lilies, investing them all in the play of light that he found so fascinating. He was a very prolific artist and so his works can be seen in many art galleries, but especially in the Musée d'Orsay and the Musée Orangerie in Paris (where he made some huge paintings to fit the circular galleries).

www.intermonet.com

William Morris 1834–1896

An English designer and craftsman. Much of his work was made in response to the deadening effect of industrialism. He firmly believed that the working classes should derive pleasure from art, and designed fabric, furniture, tiles and wallpaper to reflect these ideals. His subjects were from direct observational drawings of plants and animals, arranged in a dense fashion, and are still produced today. His ideas and ideals were the basis for the formation of the Arts and Crafts Movement.

www.lbwf.gov.uk/wmg

Georgia O'Keeffe 1887–1986

An American painter, best known for her 'bee's-eye view' close-up paintings of beautifully coloured flowers, each petal delicately modulated from dark to light. The petals appear to go beyond the edges of her canvases, so even small details appear to be large. Her pictures are difficult to find in Europe, as they tend to be distributed throughout the major cities of the USA.

ellensplace.net/okeeffe1.html

www.artchive.com/artchive/O/okeeffe.html

Pablo Picasso 1881–1973

A Spanish artist, known for his paintings, drawings, sculptures, ceramics, etchings and lino prints. He was perhaps the most prolific artist ever – he has two major museums dedicated to his work in Barcelona and Paris, and he is probably represented in every major art gallery in the western world. With Georges Braque he was the founder of Cubism and was also known for his Rose Period and his Blue Period, which expressed his feelings of optimism and despair. His work was influenced by Paul Cézanne and by ethnic sculptures and in turn he has probably influenced all the artists who have followed him.

www.artcyclopedia.com/artists/picasso_pablo.html

www.artchive.com/artchive/P/picasso.html

The artists cont.

Gerhard Richter 1932–

A German artist from Dresden who started his artistic career designing stage sets and working in advertising. It was not until he was 30 years old that he started painting seriously, and was initially inspired by blurry photography. He tends to work in series that explore the difference between figurative and abstract forms of art. He is a very versatile artist. His latest works are very large-scale abstract paintings, which explore colour, texture and expressive movement. A good collection of his work can be seen at the Guggenheim in Berlin.

www.war.com/masters/r/richter-gerhard.html

www.artchive.com/artchive/R/richter.html

Vincent Van Gogh 1853–1890

A Dutchman, who not only had a short and tragic life, but a very short and incredibly productive artistic career. He was virtually self-taught, but became influenced by many of the major painters working at that time in Paris – Degas, Seurat and Gauguin in particular. He moved in 1888 to the South of France, where his own individual style developed. His portraits and landscapes of that period are highly coloured, the paint applied with strong expressive brush strokes. He is reputed to have sold only one painting in his lifetime, and was largely kept going by financial support from his brother, Theo. Unfortunately he eventually went mad and tragically shot himself. The 'Fauve' and the 'Expressionist' painters were deeply influenced by his work. His work is well represented in the National Gallery, London, the Musée d'Orsay in Paris, and the Van Gogh Foundation in Amsterdam.

www.vangoghmuseum.nl

www.artchive.com/artchive/V/vangogh.html

Victor Vasarély 1908–1997

A French painter of Hungarian birth who lived in Paris and is generally thought to be the founder of Op Art (optical art). His work has a visual ambiguity, which poses questions for the eye-brain co-ordination. The works depend upon contrasting tones and colours that are meticulously painted in clear lines and shapes, which create an apparent movement on the surface of them, some seeming to advance and recede in space. Reproductions of his work are very popular, but it is more difficult to find them in galleries. There is a large collection of his work on display at the Musée Vasarély near Aix-en-Provence, France.

www.vasarely.org

Useful websites

| | |
|---|--|
| National Gallery | www.nationalgallery.org.uk |
| Tate Britain | www.tate.org.uk/britain |
| Pompidou Centre | www.centrepompidou.fr/musee |
| Musée d'Orsay | www.paris.org/Musees/Orsay |
| Musée Orangerie | www.paris.org/Musees/Orange |
| Musée Louvre | www.paris.org/Musees/Louvre |
| Museum of Modern Art | www.moma.org |
| Metropolitan Museum of Art | www.metmuseum.org |
| Whitworth, Manchester – good for textiles | www.whitworth.man.ac.uk |
| Victoria and Albert Museum | www.vam.ac.uk |
| Shamiana webpage (or go to the V & A website and search for 'Shamiana') | www.vam.ac.uk/vastatic/microsites/shamiana/voice.htm |
| Aboriginal Art | www.aboriginalartonline.com |
| 3-D work in schools | www.accessart.org.uk |

Note It is not unknown for unscrupulous individuals or organisations to place highly unsuitable material on websites to which children might have access. It is essential that teachers check the contents of websites before allowing the children access to them. Although we have tried to suggest reliable sources, websites can sometimes be removed or have their addresses changed. **LCP** cannot be held responsible for websites which are removed, or change their addresses, nor for the content of websites.