

VISUAL ARTS – ABSTRACTABLE ME UNIT OF WORK

Year level: 5/6

Duration: 9 weeks – 9 lessons

Rationale

Unit aim

Students will create their own abstract artwork in either 2D or 3D in response to their lived experience through experimentation with media and form. Throughout the unit students will be engaged in both making and responding as required by the Australian Curriculum: The Arts Foundation – Year 10.

Synopsis

In this unit, the students will develop a visual response to a question, namely: how would you visually represent what it is like to live in this current age.

The unit is focused on how artists draw inspiration from what is around them and how that inspiration influences the way they make work, what they think about and how they develop as artists. The unit also introduces students to the principles of abstraction. In this unit, the life and work of Pablo Picasso is used as a story-telling device. The early part of the unit involves students in explicit skill development, before moving into open-ended creative responses to the stimulus question.

The unit focuses on the general capability of Critical and creative thinking. Students will investigate selected techniques, styles and a range of influences used by Picasso to create his artwork. Students will appropriate the explicitly taught techniques and media to create their own artwork in either 2D or 3D. Each lesson is approximately 60 – 90 minutes in duration.

This unit can be connected to learning experiences in mathematics around three-

dimensional forms such as cubes, pyramids, cylinders, spheres, cones and prisms that can be developed into both artistic and functional forms.

Art elements

Line, shape/form, colour, space, size, scale

Art principles

Composition, proportion/scale, pattern, repetition

Art history

Abstraction, appropriation, fragmentation, multiple points of view, assemblage

Assessment

Apart from Lesson 1, in each lesson students will create an artwork that can be used as an assessment piece for this unit.

Please note

Content descriptions used in this unit are drawn from the Draft Australian Curriculum: The Arts as at 23 September, 2012.

WALT – We Are Learning To

The lesson aims are expressed as **We Are Learning To (WALT)**. These aims are written in student-friendly language to explicitly outline the learning that students will engage in during each lesson, and are discussed with students in the orientating phase of each lesson. While WALT is explicit in terms of student outcomes on completion of the lesson, it is not didactic and does not inhibit the processes of experimentation, enquiry,

and open-ended problem solving used to generate artworks. This is a teaching strategy used for all subjects and lessons at Kingston State School to focus student learning.

Extension activities

Extension activities are located at the end of the lesson sequences.

Lesson 1

Lesson phase (P)	Learning activity sequence	Resources required
	Lesson focus (F) responding We Are Learning To (WALT): examine the life and artwork of Pablo Picasso. We will explore some of his most famous artworks and his techniques.	

Lesson phase (P)	Learning activity sequence	Resources required
Orientating	<p>Students enter room and move to tables with four in a group. Once students are seated at tables, draw their attention to WALT written on a whiteboard and explain the WALT to students in terms of what they will have achieved by the end of the lesson.</p> <p>In the classroom, a variety of Picasso's work is on display. Multiple copies of <i>Girl before a mirror</i> (1932); <i>Three musicians</i> (1921); <i>Dora Maar in an armchair</i> (1939); and <i>Harlequin</i> (1915) are available on each of the tables for the groups.</p> <p>Ask the students to sort the images into categories according to attributes determined by the students. For example: sculptures, faces, real-life pictures, art media (such as pastels or oil paint). The categories do not need to be limited to art elements or principles.</p>	<p>Sets of colour photocopies of a variety of Picasso's artworks available from The Museum of Modern Art (New York) online collection</p> <p><i>Girl before a mirror</i> (1932)</p> <p><i>Three musicians</i> (1921)</p> <p><i>Dora Maar in an armchair</i> (1939)</p> <p><i>Harlequin</i> (1915)</p>

Lesson phase (P)	Learning activity sequence	Resources required
Enhancing	<p>Groups report back to class about choice of attributes and organisation of images.</p> <p>Students are then guided through a discussion of each of the artworks, paying particular attention to choice of media, use of colour, use of line, shape and composition. Students are encouraged to discuss what they can see and suggest why Picasso may have chosen to represent the person or object using selected elements of art and composition.</p> <p>Show the class a video about Picasso and his artwork.</p> <p>Students return to the tables and record in their art journals adjectives to describe Picasso's artwork and how the images made them feel.</p>	<p>Video: <i>Great artists: Pablo Picasso</i></p> <p>Spanish Painter (1881–1973)</p> <p>4.49 minutes</p> <p>Available on YouTube</p>

Lesson phase (P)	Learning activity sequence	Resources required
Synthesising	To conclude the lesson, each student shares one of their adjectives, paying attention not to repeat an adjective previously stated. These adjectives are then created into a word list and displayed in the classroom next to Picasso's four artworks investigated during this lesson. This display can then form a reference point for future lessons or can be extended into writing activities, such as poetry.	Individual student art journals

Lesson 2

Lesson phase (P)	Learning activity sequence	Resources required
	<p>Lesson focus: (F) Making and responding</p> <p>WALT: create a portrait so that you can see two sides of the face (profile view and frontal view) at the same time. Each view will portray a contrasting emotional state.</p>	

Lesson phase (P)	Learning activity sequence	Resources required
Orientating	<p>Once students are seated at tables, draw their attention to WALT written on a whiteboard and explain the WALT to students in terms of what they will have achieved by the end of the lesson. Begin by revisiting the portraits <i>Girl before a mirror</i> (1932) and <i>Dora Maar in an armchair</i> (1939). Ask the students to look at each image carefully and describe what they see in terms of the angle of view. The terminology profile view and frontal view may need to be provided (see Glossary). Elicit responses to the questions below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why do you think Picasso used both profile view and frontal view? • What does this approach allow the artist to do? • How does Picasso use multiple views, colour and pattern to show us an emotion or feeling? 	<p>Colour photocopies of <i>Girl before a mirror</i> (1932) and <i>Dora Maar in an armchair</i> (1939)</p>

Lesson phase (P)	Learning activity sequence	Resources required
<p>Enhancing</p>	<p>Provide each student with either a portrait photograph of themselves or a hand mirror.</p> <p>Provide each student with a piece of black construction paper. Have them fold the paper in half vertically so they have a middle line.</p> <p>Using white oil pastel, encourage students to draw their facial features in profile view on one half of the paper and in frontal view on the other side. Students should consider portraying themselves in two different emotional states (e.g. happy/angry, tired/excited, sad/amused, etc).</p> <p>Encourage students to use appropriate lines and shapes to convey their selected emotions and to form the two views of their face. Once students have completed their line drawing, gather them around <i>Girl before a mirror</i> (1932) and <i>Dora Maar in an armchair</i> (1939) again. This time ask students to look carefully at the use of line, colour and pattern to define shapes. Encourage discussion about how Picasso has used these elements to develop his composition.</p> <p>Have students return to their self-portraits and use the oil pastels to complete the artwork.</p>	<p>Portrait photograph of individual student or hand mirrors (photograph could be taken by students on iPads at the commencement of the lesson or students could source one from home)</p> <p>Black construction paper</p> <p>Oil pastels</p>

Lesson phase (P)	Learning activity sequence	Resources required
Synthesising	<p>Selected portraits are shown to the class, and students are asked to identify the contrasting emotions portrayed in each work.</p> <p>Once completed, students write a didactic panel on white card (sample in resources) for their self-portraits to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the artist's name • <i>the title of the work</i>, and the year • the medium of the work • the size of the work. <p>Self-portraits are displayed either in the classroom or other school space.</p>	<p>White card (playing card size)</p> <p>Black pen, or a word processing program for students to type panels and print out</p> <p>Sample below For example Pablo Picasso <i>Girl before a mirror</i>, 1932 Oil on canvas 162.3 × 130.2 cm</p>

Lessons 3 and 4

Lesson phase	Learning activity sequence	Resources required
	<p>Lesson focus: Making and responding WALT: transform a 2D portrait into a 3D artwork.</p>	
<p>Orientating</p>	<p>Once students are seated at tables, draw their attention to WALT written on a whiteboard and explain the WALT to students in terms of what they will have achieved by the end of the lesson. Using a slab roller or rolling pins, students roll out a slab of White Art clay or plasticine into approximately 30 cm x 30 cm square and approximately 0.5 cm thick.</p>	

Lesson phase	Learning activity sequence	Resources required
Enhancing	<p>Have the students lay the drawing of their individual features created in Lesson 2 on top of the slab of clay and trace each shape onto the clay with a pencil. The pressure from the pencil will transfer the outline onto the slab. Next, have them remove the paper and cut out each individual shape with a clay knife.</p> <p>Have the students reassemble all of the individual clay features back into a new portrait composition that differs from their original sketch.</p> <p>Once all of the pieces are reassembled, each student should have an abstract portrait that resembles their original portrait on paper, but is fundamentally different due to its new 3D form and material.</p> <p>When dry, the clay can be painted or sealed with PVA or acrylic lacquer.</p>	<p>Paper</p> <p>Pencil</p> <p>Clay tools</p> <p>Rubbing boards</p> <p>Texture moulds</p>

Lesson phase	Learning activity sequence	Resources required
Synthesising	<p>Students could be encouraged to photograph their 3D work and compare different 2D approaches to portraiture, considering how the differing media in each step alters the abstract effect. This would be particularly instructive if the original portrait were drawn from a photograph. To conclude, students examine their original design and compare it to the final 3D piece. Students then explain why changes were made and what effect they were aiming to achieve. How has the emotional state of the work altered through this new process? This response to their artwork could be conducted in either written or oral form.</p>	Digital camera or iPad

Lessons 5 and 6

Lesson phase	Lesson focus: Making and responding	
	<p>WALT: to make a 3D still life using the medium of collage.</p>	

Lesson phase	Lesson focus: Making and responding	
Orientating	<p>Prior to lesson, set up a still life of objects in the centre of the room. In another part of the room have large colour photocopies or images on classroom Smartboard of <i>Still life with chair caning</i> (1912) and <i>Still life with violin and fruit</i> (1912–13). These should be set up gallery style (framed and with didactic panel).</p> <p>Draw students' attention to WALT written on a whiteboard and explain the WALT to students in terms of what they will have achieved by the end of the lesson.</p> <p>Ask students to sit in pairs facing the two artworks. Provide each pair with a question card and ask them to discuss possible answers to each of the questions below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What materials has Picasso used in these artworks? • Several different processes have been used to make this work: can you identify them? (Note: for example, drawing, shading, rubbing, painting, cutting, gluing, etc.) • What objects can you identify in these works? • Does the work remind you of other images, objects or artworks you have seen? (Note: this could include magazine, book, or CD covers, etc as well as previous artworks discussed in class.) 	<p>Multiple colour photocopies or image on classroom Smartboard of <i>Still life with chair caning</i> (1912) and <i>Still life with violin and fruit</i> (1912–13), available from Masterpieces of Western Art Database.</p> <p>Question cards</p>

Lesson phase	Lesson focus: Making and responding	
	Draw class together and have a whole-class discussion based around the four questions. If students do not provide answers that involve the name Pablo Picasso or collage, these can be offered in the discussion.	

Lesson phase	Lesson focus: Making and responding	
<p>Enhancing</p>	<p>Move students from the 'gallery' to sit in a large circle around the still life in the centre of the classroom and reveal still-life composition to students. Discuss what students can see in terms of line, colour, texture, shape and composition from their point of view.</p> <p>Explain to students that they are going to create a collage representation of the still life they are viewing in a style similar to Picasso's. Ask the students to brainstorm a list of attributes they should include in an abstract still life and generate a list on the whiteboard. Examples could include angular lines, distortion of shape, fragmented views, overlapping, negative space and combination of 2D and 3D objects in the same artwork.</p> <p>Talk through the materials and the possibilities for manipulation to change the shape and texture of the material that students can use to render their artwork. Ask students to explore and manipulate materials. For example, paper can be scrunched, torn, or cut, and pipe cleaners can be twisted or twirled. Draw the class back together to share ideas for the manipulation of materials. A record of the type of manipulation can be generated on the whiteboard for students to refer back to throughout the activity.</p>	<p>Cardboard boxes – flattened and cut into large, non-uniform pieces</p> <p>Paper</p> <p>Magazines and newspapers</p> <p>Glue (PVA preferable)</p> <p>Material scraps</p> <p>Pipe cleaners</p> <p>Any other recyclable materials available</p> <p>Scissors</p>

Lesson phase	Lesson focus: Making and responding	
	<p>Emphasise that each artwork must begin from a cardboard base (from the cardboard boxes). Students select materials for their composition. Ask the students to work on the arrangement of the composition by placing materials on the cardboard before they glue them into place. Students should be encouraged to notice the way that the texture and colour of the materials – as well as their form – can be used to represent aspects of the subject of the still life. Move around the space to assist and occasionally stop activity in the classroom to draw attention to students' work as examples, paying attention to the manipulation of the materials.</p>	
Synthesising	<p>Once the students have completed their still life, ask them to write a short artistic statement outlining what they are communicating to the audience, and how the choice of materials has enabled this.</p>	

Lesson 7

Visit to the Gallery of Modern Art (GOMA), Brisbane *Sculpture is Everything* Exhibition. This whole-day activity is an extension to classroom-based experiences.

Lesson phase	Learning activity sequence	Resources required
	<p>Lesson focus: responding</p>	<p>Please note: most national and state galleries have education resources for touring and non-permanent exhibitions to support student visits.</p>
	<p>WALT: investigate how artists have captured and represented their experience of the world through 2D and 3D artworks. By pre-arrangement, students are taken to the <i>Sculpture is Everything</i> exhibition at the Gallery of Modern Art (GOMA), Brisbane.</p>	<p>These resources provide valuable information about the artist, the artwork and learning contexts for students. Contact the gallery for further details.</p>

Lesson phase	Learning activity sequence	Resources required
<p>Orientating</p>	<p>Students begin their experience of the exhibition with a guided tour of selected artworks conducted by one of the exhibition curators. The exhibition tour is one hour in duration.</p> <p>After the guided tour, students are broken up into small groups lead by an adult (teacher, teacher aide, school administrator, parent helper) to return to artworks of interest.</p> <p>Suggested artworks for discussion can be found on the Gallery of Modern Art (GOMA), Brisbane online education resource for <i>Sculpture is Everything</i>. These works include Rachel Whiteread's <i>Twenty-five spaces</i>, 1995; Michael Sailstorfer's <i>Wolken (Clouds)</i>, 2010; and Zilvinas Kempinas's <i>Columns</i>, 2006.</p>	<p>Please note: <i>Sculpture is Everything</i> was a non-permanent exhibition at the Gallery of Modern Art (GOMA), Brisbane in 2012.</p> <p>For the purpose of this activity, teachers could access their state art gallery or a local gallery available to them.</p>

Lesson phase	Learning activity sequence	Resources required
Enhancing	<p>Discuss the following ideas with the students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What message might the artist want to convey in this artwork? • Is there an element of surprise in this artwork? Can you describe what surprised you and why? • Think about the titles of each the artworks. What alternative titles would you give to each the artworks and why? 	<p>Gallery of Modern Art (GOMA), Brisbane online education resource <i>Sculpture is Everything</i> (see also support materials for this unit).</p>

Lesson phase	Learning activity sequence	Resources required
	<p>Move from the exhibition space into a work space in the gallery. This next section could also be undertaken in a classroom.</p> <p>Draw students' attention to WALT written on a whiteboard and explain the WALT to students in terms of what they will have achieved by the end of the lesson. For example, 'You will make an artwork that is a visual response to a work in the exhibition you have just seen. This could be one you liked or really hated, one that made you feel calm, or one that confused you!'</p> <p>Students are provided with a choice of physical and digital media (iPad and pre-loaded Brushes app). Both media can be used in combination; that is, students can take a photograph through the Brushes app on the iPad and then apply layers digitally over the top, or they can work on paper, photograph the paper-based work, and then manipulate the image digitally through the Brushes app.</p> <p>To assist student in developing a response to one artwork in the exhibition, ask students to think about these questions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did your chosen the artwork make you feel? 	<p>A3 paper</p> <p>Pencils (lead and colour)</p> <p>Charcoal pencils</p> <p>Coloured card</p> <p>iPads with</p> <p>Brushes app pre-loaded</p>

Lesson phase	Learning activity sequence	Resources required
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How could you use your art-making skills to show us that feeling? <p>Students individually select the media that they wish to use to create a response to the artwork that they have seen in the exhibition. They could appropriate ideas and forms seen in the artworks in the exhibition as a point of departure to answer the questions.</p> <p>Students independently develop their creative response. Teacher assists only when invited by students to assist with ideas and techniques.</p>	

Lesson phase	Learning activity sequence	Resources required
<p>Synthesising</p>	<p>Once complete, students share their artworks in small groups. The following questions could be used to facilitate student discussion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What feelings does this artwork convey? • Are these the same as the artist's intentions? • What processes did the artist use to create the work? • Was the artist happy with the outcome? • What would they do differently next time? <p>Note: by making an artwork of an artwork these students are practising a form of conceptual abstraction that builds on their previous understanding of this term. Encouraging students to offer their opinions and suggestions for others' work allows them to practise one of the foundational processes of creative visual development known as the 'studio critique' [see Glossary].</p>	

Lessons 8 and 9

Lesson phase	Learning activity sequence	Resources required
	<p>Lesson focus: Making and responding WALT: to create a personal visual statement about what it means to them to live in the 21st century</p>	

Lesson phase	Learning activity sequence	Resources required
Orientating	<p>For this lesson, students will select a 2D, 3D or 4D form as well as selecting their medium, or combination of both, that they have encountered in previous lessons. Students will take an open-ended problem solving approach in this lesson. Draw students' attention to WALT written on a whiteboard and explain the WALT to students in terms of what they will have achieved by the end of the lesson.</p> <p>Ask students to think about designing a response by anchoring it in a personal statement about what it means to them to live in the 21st century. That is, through their chosen form and media, students communicate their ideas about living in this current age.</p> <p>Begin with a discussion about how different media and form (2D, 3D, and 4D) help to construct the communication of an idea, point of view, or thought of an artist. Ask students to compare the meaning conveyed by a drawing on rough paper, as opposed to drawing on an iPad. For example, rough paper conveys more of a sense of texture and history –it preserves marks and mistakes; by contrast, the iPad is more fluid and clinical – it produces crisper, more decisive forms.</p> <p>Point out how Picasso used different materials</p>	

Lesson phase	Learning activity sequence	Resources required
	and approaches to capture his time, such as painting, drawing, sculpture and collage.	

Lesson phase	Learning activity sequence	Resources required
<p>Enhancing</p>	<p>Ask students how they might best convey their experience of the world in which they live in both form and media. Encourage them to see this as an abstract process rather than literal representation (e.g. rather than drawing or photographing their computer, ask them what their computer does, means to them, or makes them feel, and what colours, shapes or patterns might convey this).</p> <p>Transferring 2D and 3D ideas into time-based media (4D) could be incorporated here, such as stop-motion animation of the artwork being made.</p> <p>In this phase, students will be engaged in experimental making that is best initiated by direct and spontaneous handling of the materials or media and seeing what eventuates. Given that students have experienced a variety of media up to this point, this is a good stage to let them perform their own synthesis and experimentation rather than replicating a design. Changes and erasures should be seen as a potentially rich part of the activity and the final work.</p>	<p>Plasticine or clay Clay tools Rubbing boards Black card White card (playing card size) Oil pastels Lead pencils Cardboard boxes – flattened and cut into large, non-uniform pieces Paper Magazines and newspapers Glue (PVA preferable) Material scraps Pipe cleaners Any other recyclable materials available Scissors</p>

Lesson phase	Learning activity sequence	Resources required
	<p>To provide visual stimulus and ideas about the choice of media, students might also be engaged in open-ended research on the internet for images and ideas from other artists, including Pablo Picasso and the artists that they encountered in the exhibition at the gallery. They may also like to revisit the gallery exhibition through the online resources.</p> <p>In this phase, the teacher should operate as a facilitator and catalyst, asking questions and promoting creative and critical thinking with the students.</p> <p>Allow students to independently explore a range of media to create a 2D or 3D representation of what it means to live in the 21st century. Again, the teacher should operate as a facilitator and catalyst, asking questions and promoting creative and critical thinking with the students. Allow students to modify their designs as they find solutions to ideas that do not translate well from the design to the making phase. Throughout this process students should be encouraged to appraise their developing artwork in terms of communicating the intended message, composition and form. Students should be allowed to experiment with materials available to them.</p>	<p>Charcoal pencils Coloured card iPads with Brushes app pre-loaded Other digital devices, such as digital cameras, photocopier, scanners and printers, game consoles.</p>

Lesson phase	Learning activity sequence	Resources required
<p>Synthesising</p>	<p>Once students have completed their artworks, encourage them to investigate values and meanings in their own and others' works. This may need to be supported with guiding questions such as the following.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do we see in this artwork? (Both literal and abstract e.g. my computer, my favourite music, speed, communication, excitement etc.) • How do these compare to the artist's intentions? • What processes did the artist use to create the work? • What changes did the artist make to the work as they went along? Why did they make these changes? • Does the piece remind you of other artworks you have seen? • Was the artist happy with the outcome? What would they do differently next time? <p>To complete the lesson sequence, the teacher and students collaborate to display the artworks for other students and parents/carers to view. This exhibition could be done at school or in partnership with a local gallery.</p>	

Extension ideas for the arts

Retrospective exhibition

Students select one or two artworks made during the unit to contribute to a retrospective exhibition. The exhibition could be shown in the classroom or a school space (such as school hall, school administration block, multi-purpose space). If the school is in proximity to a local art gallery, the teacher may like to negotiate the use of the gallery space for an afternoon or evening. Wherever the exhibition occurs, allowing the students to be involved in the curation of the display is important. The exhibition could be supported by a catalogue written and laid out by students using a publishing program, which would then support the Australian Curriculum general capability of Information and communication technology.

Cultural influence

Many of Picasso's stylistic traits were drawn from his encounters with African masks in the ethnographic museum in the Palais du Trocadéro in Paris. The lesson sequence in this unit could be extended to create opportunities for students to explore the exchange of ideas and visual languages between Indigenous, Asian and Pacific cultures. This exploration could be moved into drama through engagement with mask drama from Indigenous, Asian and Pacific cultures.

4D extension ideas

Show the students Viking Eggeling's abstract film *Diagonal Symphony* (1924) or Fernand Léger's *Ballet Mécanique* (1924), and play sound works such as Luigi Russolo's *Risveglio Di Una Città*, (1913) for inspiration regarding abstraction and differing approaches to portraying an era in time-based media.

Ask the students to capture their contemporary world by making a short, stop-motion animation, using lines, shapes and collage pieces moving around a surface, with a soundtrack.

English

Students could be placed in the role as art critic and write a review of the exhibition of still-life collages (Lessons 4 and 5) or the retrospective exhibition. This activity would support the Literacy strand of the English curriculum, in which students explore the narrative, expository and persuasive potential of written and spoken language for different purposes.

Mathematics

The investigation of shape and form could be extended into mathematics in the content strand of Measurement and Geometry, with particular emphasis on shape, and location and properties of shapes.

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