The Reason for Painting

Activity Pack

Lorsen Camps
Betsy Bradley
This resource is for pupils and teachers to explore themes in the art show *The Reason for Painting*, at Warwick Arts Centre. At the front there is some information about the artists in the show, and some questions for you to think about when looking at art.

Then there are some fun, hands-on activities, which you can try. These have been made by our artists, Betsy and Lorsen. At the back and just below, there’s some information for teachers about the show and this resource.

Following consultation with teachers this resource prioritises:

- Learning outside of the classroom
- Wellbeing through creativity
- Collaboration with others
- Developing vocabulary

Made with support of:
Rebekah Cornell of Alderman’s Green Community Primary,
Nicola Swain of Cannon Park Primary School,
Bindiya Chauli of Courthouse Green Primary School,
Anna Swallow and Anna Fitzpatrick of Holbrook Primary School,
and Jessica Roberts of Templars Primary School.
All in Coventry.
This art show is about **abstract painting**. It is called *The Reason for Painting*. **Abstract**: something that you would not see in the real world—like these squiggles or these blobs.

- What are some of the reasons that you paint or make art?
- What do you like about it?
- How does it make you feel?
Hello, my name is Betsy Bradley. I am a painter who lives in the East Midlands. Painting is a way for me to escape ordinary thought. I feel what is going on in my body more than my mind when I am painting. I make art about the world and the magic that lies in it. My paintings make things that you cannot see—like energy, visible.

Look at the mark making in the different artworks in this pack.

- Describe different types of marks.
- Are they *FAST* or *slow*?
- Are they *controlled* or unpredictable?
- What is their texture?
- How do they make you feel?
- How do you think the marks were made?
- With a brush, sponge or something else?
- Count how many different types of marks you can see.

_visible_: Something you can see.
Activity 1

Collect lots of different objects like pipe cleaners, card, string, sticks and rollers.

1. Make your own mark making tool! You can use as many or as little objects as you like.
   
   It doesn’t have to look like a paint brush or a pencil - the whole point of your mark making tool is that it will create surprise marks!

2. Paint with your mark making tool - first explore your tool on individual sheets of paper.
   
   Then make a collaborative collection of marks on a large roll of paper—explore what kind of marks it can create, have fun and make discoveries—there is no right or wrong!

Activity 2

As a group, make a giant mark making tool together using lots of different objects and materials.

1. Think about how this tool might also be an abstract sculpture.
   
   Can it stand up on its own?
   
   Does it lean, or lie on the floor?

2. Together, try painting with the tool on one large roll of paper, explore the surprising marks it creates, how it traces your movement and becomes an extension of your body. Think about the movement of your body and how you can express energy through mark making—the marks don’t have to resemble anything.

Individual: On your own.  
Collaborative: With others.  
Discoveries: Finding out new things.  

Sculpture: A piece of art that is not flat on a piece of paper or fabric.  
Extension: Something added on.  
Express: Show.  
Resemble: Looks like.
Hello, my name is Lorsen Camps. I make art using things that have been thrown away or overlooked. I collect objects found on the street, pick up unusual items in charity shops, and reuse things that no longer seem useful.

Spend one minute looking really closely at one of the images in the exhibition. (Feels like a long time doesn’t it?!)

- What do you see?
- What colours have been used?
- What does it make you think of? Does it remind you of anything?
- How does it make you feel? Happy, sad, confused, excited? Thinking of an emoji might help!
- Look at the title of the artwork. If you were to give it a name or title, what would you call it?
Activity 3

Collect washi tape, coloured paper, old wrappers, magazines, scissors, glue and fabric.

1. Pick one of the artworks you've seen in the exhibition. Try to recreate it using the materials you have, for example; cutting them and sticking them on to a blank piece of card or cardboard. It doesn't matter if the colours and shapes don't match perfectly. The important bit is to look closely and have fun!

2. Now take a new piece of card. Copy a part of what you have just created—it could be a shape or a colour, using paints and a brush.

That's the start of your own abstract painting. Add further lines, shapes, colours to finish.

Activity 4

Collect a found object or piece of rubbish with an interesting shape—maybe from your recycling bin. This could be a small box that's been unfolded, plastic packaging, or anything that can be used as a stencil. Ask an adult to help make sure it isn't sharp or dirty.

1. Draw round the item with a felt-tip or a paint pen. Move it and turn it then draw round it again using a different colour. Try not to smudge your work as you do. Then do the same again as many times as you want to!

2. You might want to leave this as a picture with just the different lines or you can fill in the shapes with colour like I have here.

Acrylic, ink, paper, cotton and Bolognese plaster on linen
Private Collection, London
What themes and ideas in the show would you work with in the classroom and beyond?

I have enjoyed discussing the different works of art from the exhibition and listening to the different interpretations and ways of seeing a painting. It has been interesting to discover the different influences for an artist and their different reasons for painting. —Jess

Children need more opportunities to be creative and have experiences, without worrying about what the end product will look like. The children do need the opportunities to explore materials and textures and to see the effects they create. Some children will need this modelling to them. This may be by creating a picture using natural resources, Mark making with everyday items in the house - whisk, cotton buds, kitchen equipment, cotton wool, bottles and cutting up images from magazines to create an image. —Anna

Looking forward to the children experiencing different art work with local artists, whilst developing vocabulary to describe what they see. Collaborative art using found objects and creating tools offers a great starting point for children to explore artwork in a way that replicates feelings and texture. It is a nice change for children to not be given an end product, but the tools and freedom to express themselves and compositions. —Rebekah

What have you found out about abstract painting?

I have discovered new artists, such as Francis Offman, which I have shared with children in the classroom. —Jess

Children need more opportunities to meet artists and more time to be creative. It is up to us to engage their creative minds. Abstract art allows children to be inspired, let go of their perfectionism and explore how an artist plays with a variety of mediums. The end product is based on so much more then the final product. I never knew that there was so much artwork to see at Warwick University! We are so lucky to be so local! —Rebekah

I can’t wait to introduce the children to an actual Andy Warhol as its an artist they have just studied. It’s accessible to everyone at all times on the campus, not just for this show. —Nicola

Pam Evelyn
Routine Escape, 2022
Oil on linen
Courtesy Pace Gallery

Betsy Bradley
Celestial Origin, 2023
Acrylic, sea water and spray paint on dust sheet
Courtesy the artist and Vardaxoglou
Jadé Fadojutimi, *There exists no such thing as a spoiled dress*, 2021
Oil, oil stick and acrylic
Photo: Luke Pickering

Oscar Murillo, *(untitled) news*, 2021–2022
Oil, oil stick and graphite on canvas and linen
Courtesy the artist
Photo: Luke Pickering
Melike Kara, *khorasan II*, 2022
Oil stick and acrylic on canvas
 Courtesy Arcadia Missa, London
 Photo: Luke Pickering

Francis Offman, *Untitled*, 2022–2023
Acrylic, ink, paper, cotton, Bolognese plaster on linen
 Private Collection, London
 Photo: Luke Pickering
Warwick Arts Centre
University of Warwick
Coventry CV4 7AL

Box Office: +44 (0) 24 7649 6000
warwickartscentre.co.uk

Stay in touch

@warwickarts
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To sign up or find out more email: creativelearning@warwick.ac.uk

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