Drawing Like a Caveman – Handprint Art

This session explores how we can remind ourselves of the beginnings of drawing and inspire simple mark-making through the medium of charcoal and handprint art. The session is ideally suited to young children aged 4 and upwards, though we have used this workshop as a warm-up with adults too, who have loved it!

Notes for Teachers

- **What is the aims and objectives of this exercise in terms of process and skill?**

  The aim of this exercise is to encourage children to begin their understanding of what the act of drawing can be: at its simplest a connection between hand and body, drawing material and drawing surface.

  It also provides an opportunity for children to directly experience the physicality of drawing, the messiness of drawing, and the fun of drawing.

  The exercise is inclusive and empowering.

  Consider the following questions:

  - How involved are the children? How much ownership of the exercise did they experience? How proud of the finished result?
  - How far did they push their mark making? Did they manage to make dark darks and light lights?
  - Did the children consider the composition (placement of marks on paper)?
  - After the exercise, were the children able to talk about their experience, and reflect upon the marks they made and the outcomes? Were they able to draw parallels with other experiences?

- **What age range is this activity suitable for?**

  The exercise can be used with ages 4 through to adult.

- **What materials will we need?**

  - Sugar paper (at least A3 – ideally A2) for the drawings
  - Smaller sheets of paper for the palettes

- Willow charcoal sticks
- Erasers
- Fixative (hairspray)
- Newspaper to cover tabletops

- **How long does this activity take?**

  The activity takes between 20 and 30 minutes.

- **What can we do after the activity or what can we do to extend our learning**

  See the suggested activities at the end of this resource.

- **Which artists might we look at to inform and inspire us?**

  Cave art found in European caves dating back between 40,000 and 14,000 years ago.

  Explore "Talking Points: Cave Art"

  Handprints in Rock art from around the world: http://www.bradshawfoundation.com/hands/index.php

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The resource shares how to set up and run the session, and how to enable the pupils to push their exploration of charcoal.

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