

Our River – Year Five Pupils Build a Communal Drawing in Four Steps

By [Sheila Ceccarelli](#)

In this session we approached creating a layered drawing and 'wax resist' on a massive scale and pupils loved it!

I was invited to lead the year 5 class at [Ridgefield Primary, Cambridge](#) in a manic, one hour session as part of their Art Week and exploration of Georges Seurat [Bathers at Asnières](#), 1884, [National Gallery](#), London.



This gave pupils a sense of immediate interaction, ownership and excitement at working on a large scale



Detail of masking tape - pupils enjoyed working together



To get a sense of the length of the paper, and prevent the youngsters feeling confined to one part of the sheet, they walked in procession mark making along the length and breadth of it using permanent markers and graphite



They were encouraged to experiment with their marks and imagine the sounds and feeling of water whilst working



Pupils build the drawing with oil pastels



Oil pastels and permanent marker marks over masking tape



Then the real fun began! Pupils were given paint and coloured Indian ink and encouraged to respond to the existing marks on the paper with strong strokes



Pupils seemed to love this process and enjoy the freedom of experimenting with how to apply paint



And for some a fully immersive experience!



There are moments of sheer joy!



And absolute engagement



Layers of paint over masking tape, oil pastel and permanent marker



To reveal the original design with masking tape



Finished work - Pupils marvel at their creation!

Pupils voiced many wonderful ideas including populating the river banks with a class picnic or making it into a three dimensional sculpture. I eagerly await news from Ridgefield Primary School as to what happened next!

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