

# Learning from Permaculture Design Principles

By [Mostyn de Beer](#)

Mostyn de Beer is an experienced artist educator based in Sweden. Mostyn is especially interested in environmental art; his practice investigates links between creating art and environmental education. Mostyn reflects on ways of using materials in an environmentally friendly way during art lessons, inspired by principles of permaculture design.



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# **Design Through Making**

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Curriculum: Additional  
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# **AccessArt Primary Art Curriculum: Additional Pathways: Disciplines, Sequencing & Artists**

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# **AccessArt Primary Art Curriculum: Additional Pathways: Medium Term Plans**

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# How Do We Use Artists in Schools?

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## Drawing Source Material: Orchestras and Instruments

A collection of imagery and sources which you can use to prompt drawing in schools and community groups.

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## **Orchestras and Instruments**

Use the film below to enable children to explore orchestras and instruments. Try to create a sense of momentum – for example you might pause the video 4 times and ask the pupils to make a 1 minute, 2 minute, 3 minute and 4 minute drawing at each pause.

Encourage close and slow looking by talking as they draw – use your voice to attract their attention to different qualities.

Try the same exercise using different materials, ie handwriting pen, ink and nib, pastel, watercolour...

How might you invent your own instrument? What instruments might you combine? Is it self playing?

## This Source Material Is Used In...

Pathway: Music and art



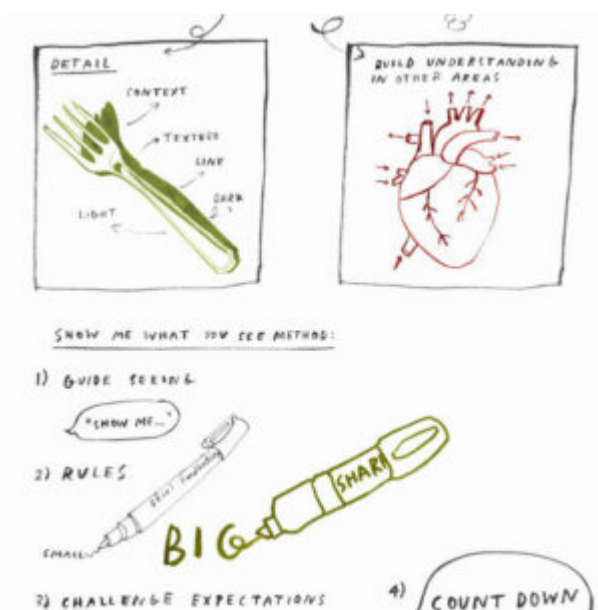


# This is featured in the 'Music and Art' pathway

using sketchbooks to make visual notes



Show me what you see



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**Show Me What You See**

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**Which Artists Should We  
Look At in Primary  
School?**

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**Talking Points: The  
Ancient Art of Drawing  
Kolam**

**A collection of sources and**

**imagery to explore the ancient tradition of drawing Kolam.**

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**AGES 5-8**

**AGES 9-11**

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**‘Every morning at sunrise all across Southern India women practice the ancient art of drawing kolam on the thresholds of their properties. A physical form of prayer and symbol of protection, a daily exercise, and a moment of intense concentration and meditation, drawing kolam is an important household ritual that has a lot more to it than may first meet the**

eye.

Two very different women living in Chennai explain their shared passion for kolam, and their involvement in the local kolam competition.' – [BBC](#)

## Questions to Ask Children

What do you like/dislike about kolam drawings?

Do they remind you of anything?

What are some of the rituals do you take part in every morning?

# This Talking Points Is Used In...

Pathway: Spirals



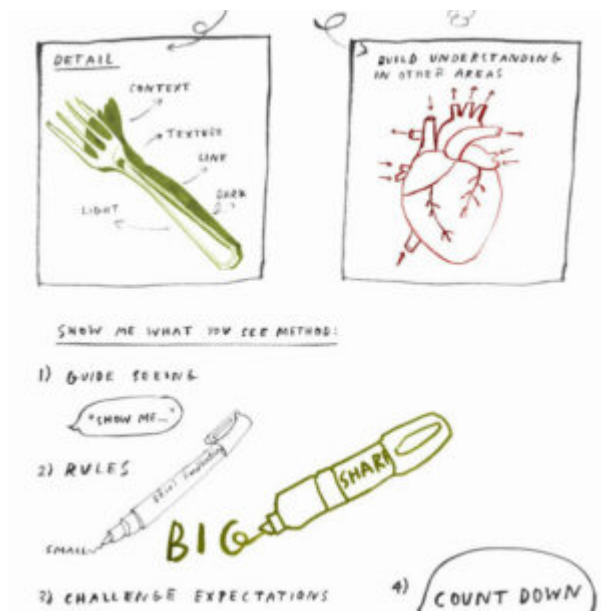
This is featured in the 'Spirals' pathway

using sketchbooks to make visual notes





# Show me what you see



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## Talking Points: What is Composition?

A collection of sources and imagery to explore the question 'what is composition?'

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Composition is the arrangement of different elements in a piece of artwork.

As well as positioning, elements like shapes, lines and colours can have an impact on composition.

Composition addresses the relationship between these different elements. Some artists aim to create a balanced

composition in their artwork whilst others may choose to bring things to the viewers attention by creating imbalance.

## Why is Composition Important?

Whether it is a painting, drawing, photograph, print or even a piece of sculpture, the way the elements are arranged impact upon how we respond to the piece of art. The artist might be trying to convey an emotion, or communicate a message, and artists use tools they have through composition to help sell those “messages”.

Throughout history, composition can be seen as an indication of the period or artistic movements that a piece of art has been created in.

## Focal Point

The focal point is the area of the artwork which your eye is drawn to. The artist might use placement to draw your eye to an object (i.e. where the object

is on the page), or they might use colour or value to draw your eye in.

How goes the artist draw your eye to a focal point in the illustration below?



Interior of the Temple of Abou Simbel  
Nubia illustration by David Roberts  
(1796–1864)

What is the focal point for you in the paintings below? You might have a different focal point to your friends, or you might even have more than one?

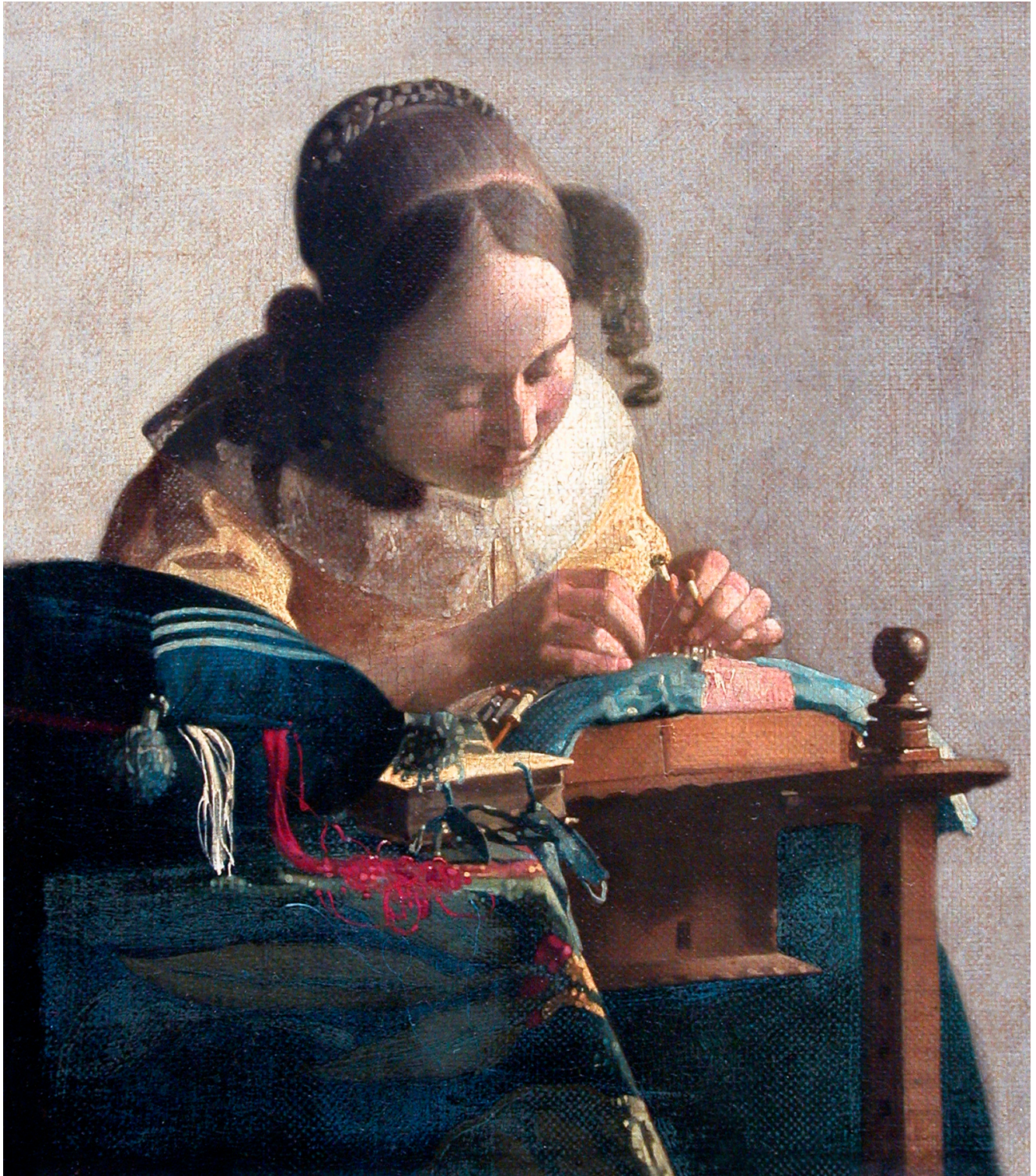


Where are your eyes drawn?



**Little Girl in a Blue Armchair (1878)**  
by [Mary Cassatt](#).





**Johannes Vermeer's The Lacemaker  
(ca.1669–1671)**

**Balance / Imbalance**



**Sometimes the elements of an artwork lend to a sense of calm. This is usually because the artist has intentionally balanced colours, shapes and values.**



**In other artwork the artist deliberately makes us feel uneasy by throwing us off balance, by creating a sense of chaos...**





**Improvisation 35 (1914) Wassily Kandinsky**

## **Rule of Thirds**

**Sometimes artists divide rectangles into a grid of 9 – 3 rows and 3 columns.**

**When working with landscape for example,**



artists might choose to place the horizon along one of the grid lines.

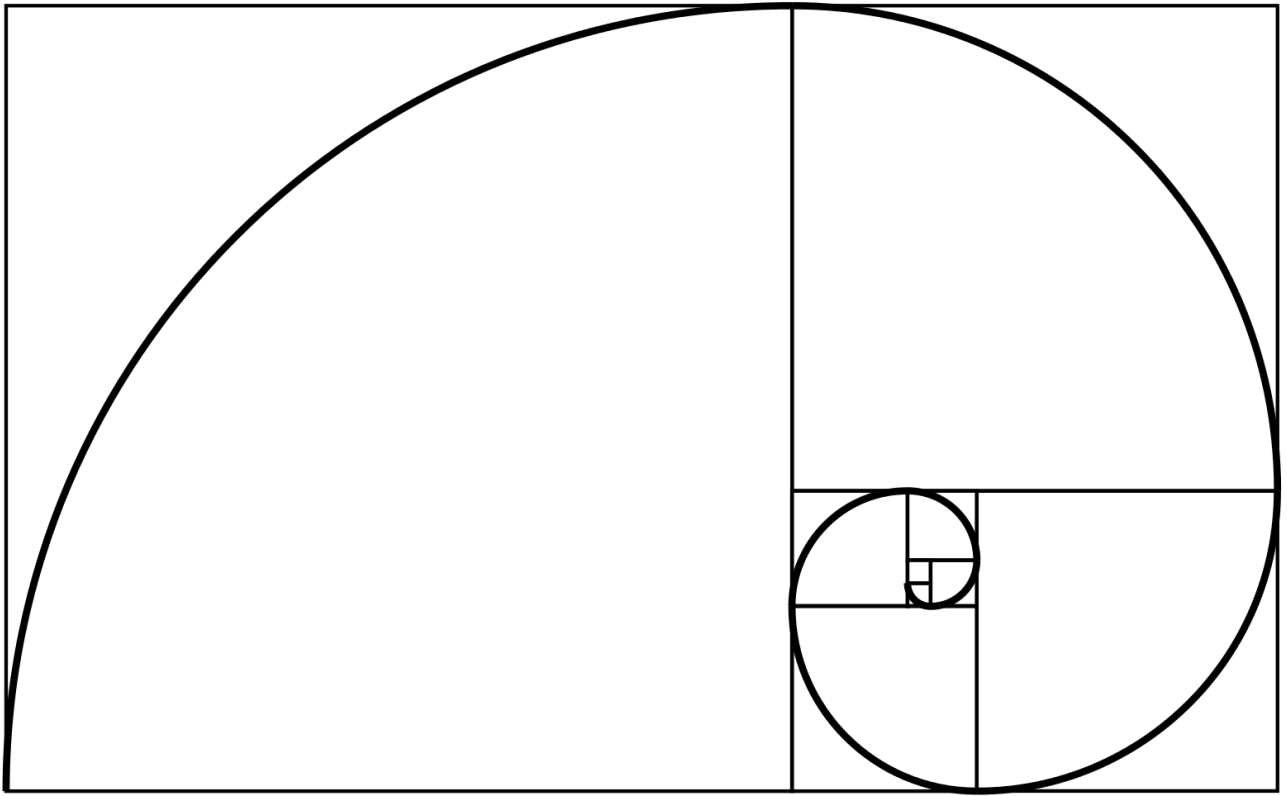


**Jalais Hill, Pontoise (1867)** by Camille Pissarro.

## Golden Ratio

The Golden Ratio is a spiral and it can be found in nature and art.





Can you spot how the Golden Ratio is used in the “Katsushika Hokusai’s The Great Wave” above?

## Classical Composition

Within the classic tradition, artists would create a sense of balance by arranging elements in geometric shapes such as triangular compositions.



Foxhound (1760) painting in high resolution by George Stubbs. Original from The Yale University Art Gallery.

# Questions to Ask Children

What can you see in the foreground/background of the painting?

How do the colours vary from the foreground to the background? Why do you think these choices were made by the artist?

Where is your eye drawn to in this painting? What do you see next?

Can you see any triangles in the composition?

## Symmetry

Can you see how symmetry has been used in the still life below by Camille Pissarro?

How does this image make you feel?

Think about the colours AND the shapes, and where they are placed.





**Still Life with Apples and Pitcher (1872) by [Camille Pissarro](#)**

## **Abstract Art**

**Art movements such as cubism and abstraction redefined the rules of composition.**

**Artists such as Jackson Pollock opted**



for 'allover composition' which considers using the whole canvas instead of top, bottom and centre.

Watch from moment 2:29 to find out how 'allover' painting differed to more classic painting styles.

## Questions to Ask Children

How does this vary to the classical way of painting?

Can you see a foreground or background?

Which part of the painting is your eye drawn to first? Where does it travel to after?

Which style of composition do you prefer and why?

## This Talking Points Is Used In...

# Pathway: Explore and Draw



This is featured in the 'Explore and Draw' pathway

using sketchbooks to make visual notes

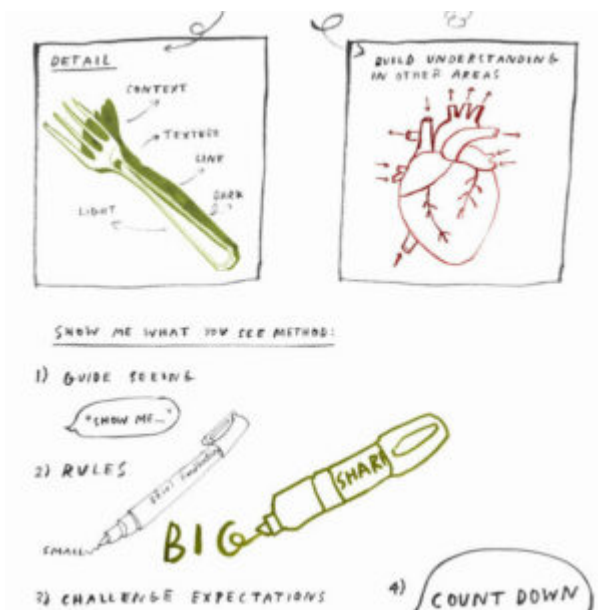


# Pathway: Exploring Still Life



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# **Making 2d & 3d Fashion Designs with Painted and Decorated Paper**

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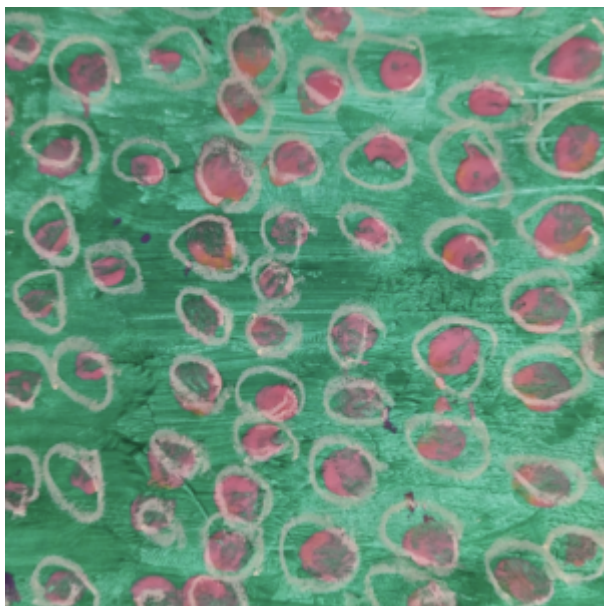






















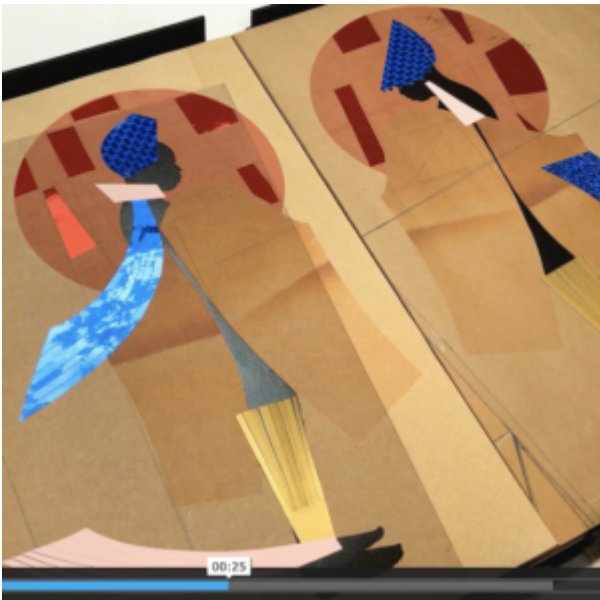
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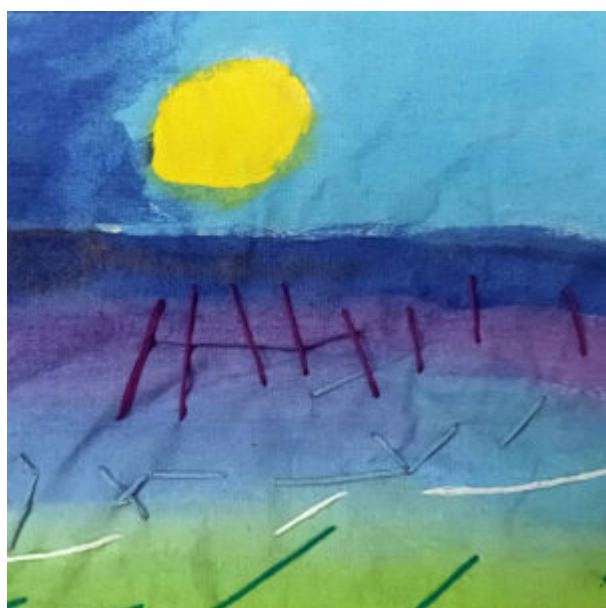


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# Landscapes

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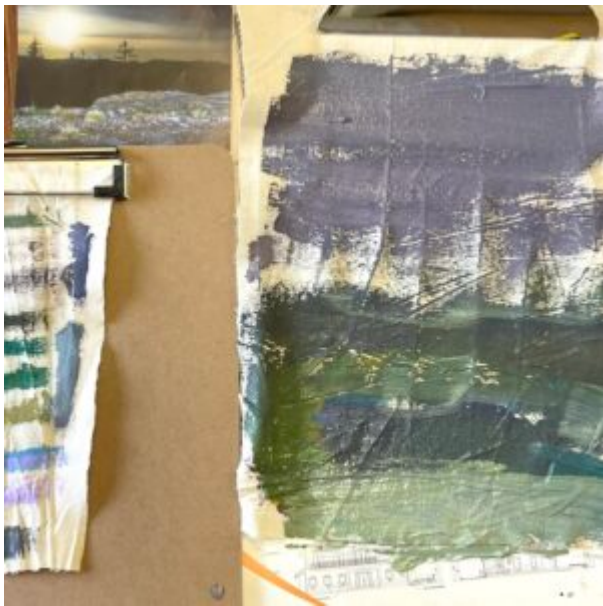




















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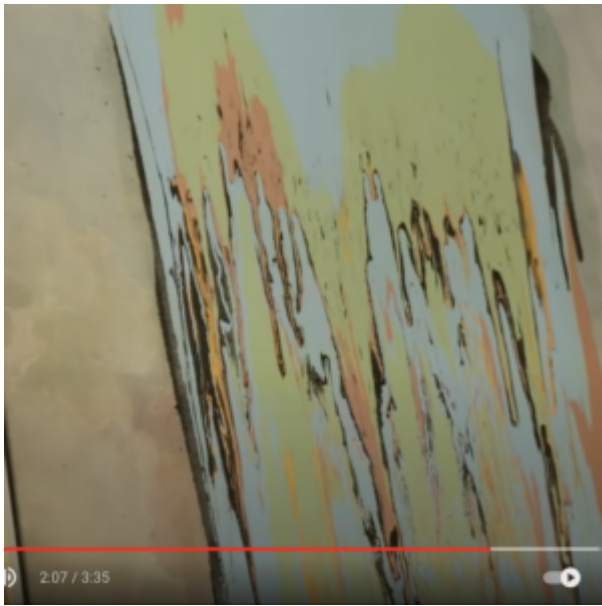
**Pathway: Cloth, thread, paint**



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## Talking Points: Frank Bowling

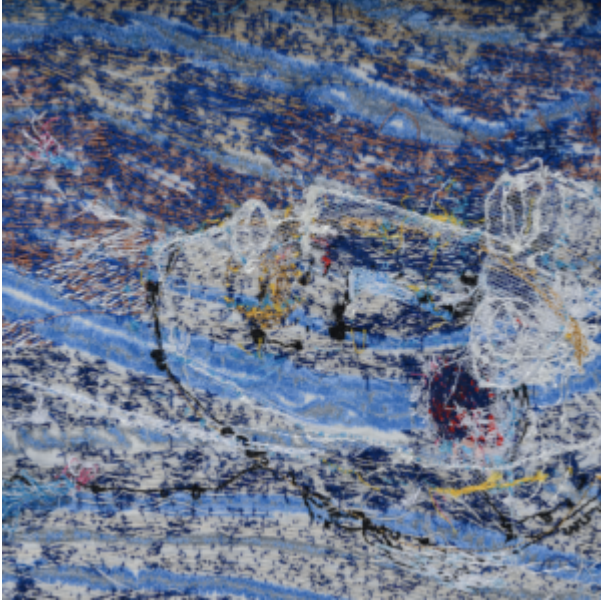


## Talking Points: Hannah Rae



## Talking Points: Alice Kettle





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# **Using Sketchbooks to Make Visual Notes**

## **See This Resource Used In Schools**























