

Talking Points: Paul Klee

How can abstract artwork help us use our imagination?

Paul Klee was one of the most influential artists of the 20th century, celebrated for his distinctive abstract and childlike style. His work was deeply influenced by poetry, colour theory, and music, as well as by major artistic movements such as Surrealism, Cubism, and Expressionism.

Explore his paintings using the sources below, then discuss the questions provided.

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AGES 5-8

AGES 9-11

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Watercolour Paintings by Paul Klee

Klee was born in 1879 in Switzerland. When he was 35 he visited Tunisia in Africa, where his experience of the light and colours of the landscapes and architecture helped awaken his interest in colour.

He became less interested in painting exactly what he saw and in fact from 1915 onwards he never again worked from a model. Instead, he became interested in painting the colours around him, letting them detach themselves from the objects the colours were on. In this way his work moved towards Abstraction.

He became interested in creating fantastical worlds, full of symbols, shapes, colour and line.

He took his inspiration from the world around him, and his imaginative response to the world, and also from poetry, music and literature.

Sometimes his work was serious and meditative, other times it was full of humour. He also loved the sounds of words and phrases and the titles of works were often very important to Klee.



Battle scene from the funny and fantastic opera "The Seafarers" (1923). Painting by Paul Klee. Original from the Kunstmuseum Basel Museum

Questions to Ask Children

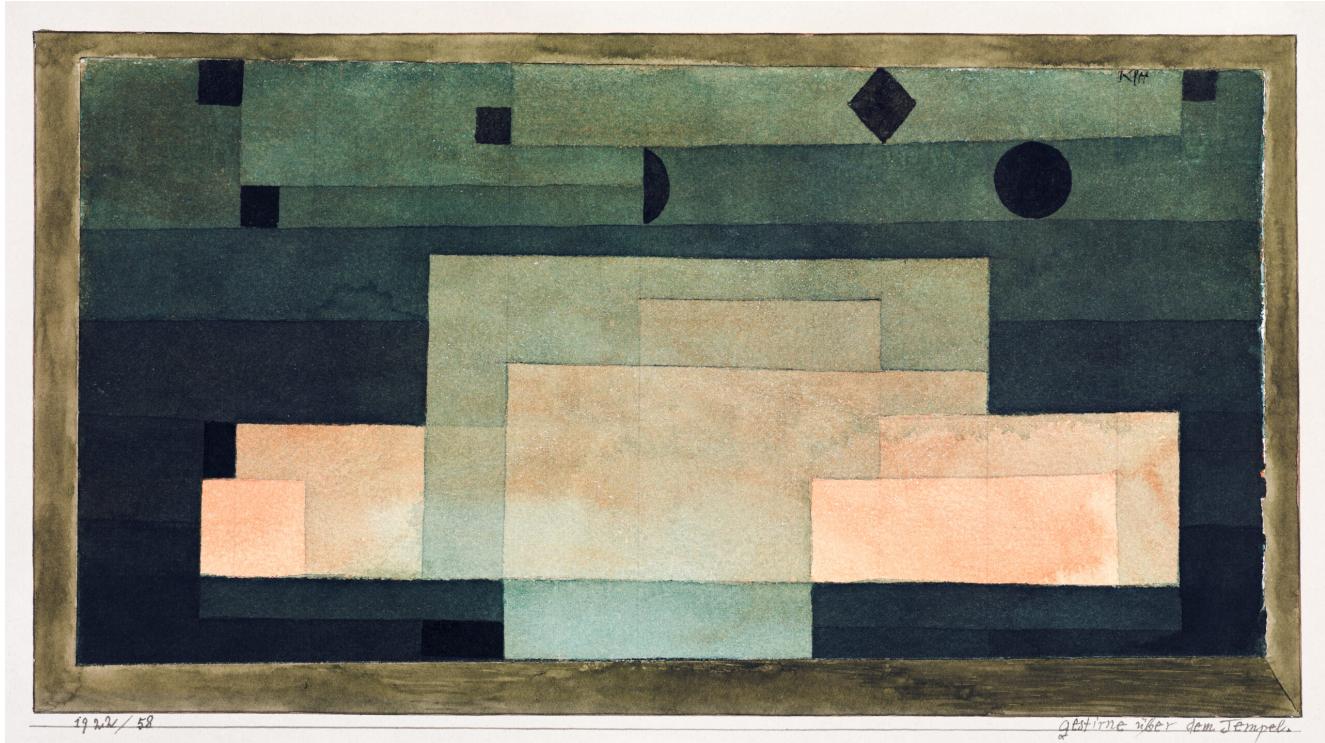
Describe what you see.

What do you think is happening?

How does the title change the painting?

Why do you think Klee painted in blocks of colour?

How does the painting make you feel?



The Firmament Above the Temple (1922) by Paul Klee. Original from The MET Museum

Questions to Ask Children

Describe what you see.

Can you see the landscape and the sky? How has Klee painted them?

How does the painting make you feel?



Temple Gardens (1920) by Paul Klee. Original from The MET Museum

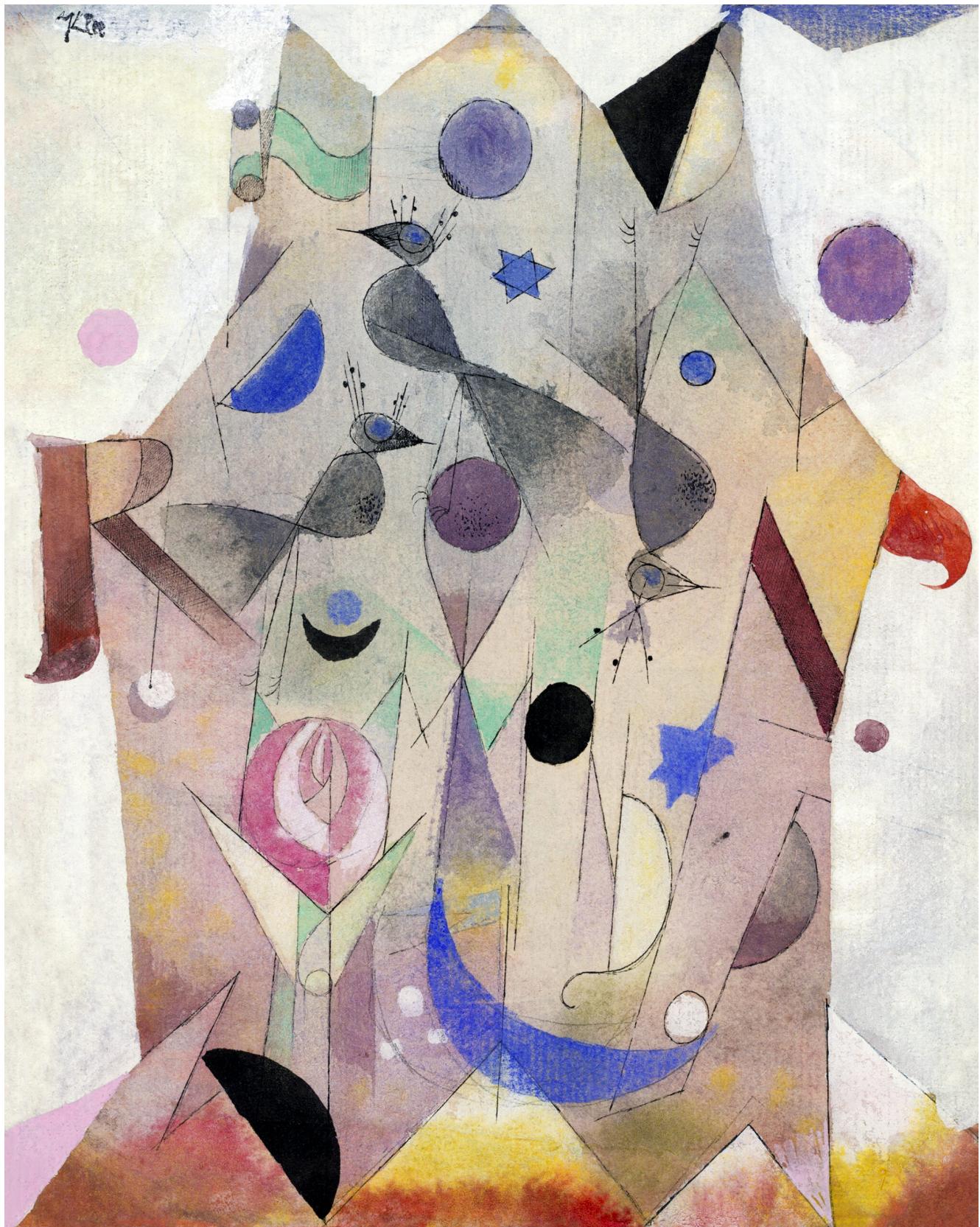
Questions to Ask Children

Describe what you see.

How does this landscape make you feel?

If you were there, in the painting, how would you feel?

Tell me about the colours. Why do you think Klee choose these colours?



Persian Nightingales (1917) by Paul Klee. Original portrait painting from The Art Institute of Chicago.

Questions to Ask Children

Describe what you see.

What materials do you think Klee used?

Can you see two letters?

**The R and the N stand for Rose and Nightingale.
Can you spot the rose and the Nightingales in the painting?**

How does this painting make you feel?

How do you think the painter felt when he painted it?

Watch this animation of one of Klee's paintings.

Questions to Ask Children

How do you feel watching the animation?

What kind of world has Klee/the animator created?

If you could animate one of the paintings above, how would you bring it to life? What would you make it do?

In this video, Klee's paintings are shown alongside music.

Questions to Ask Children

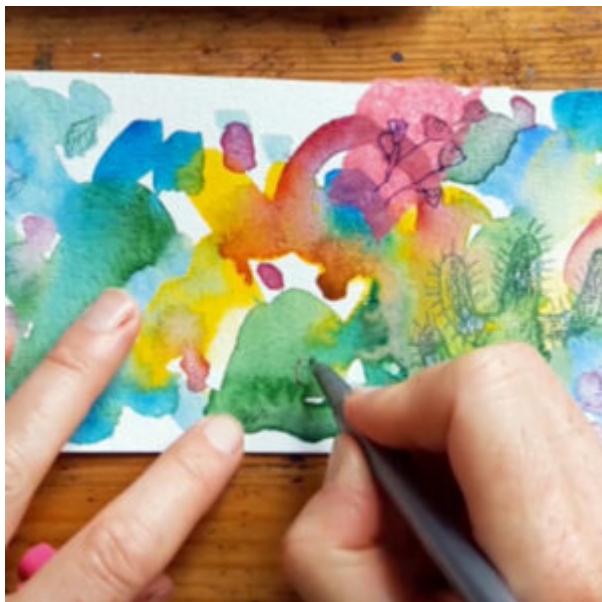
How does the music change the way you look at the

paintings?

Do you think Klee would have liked this video (remember Klee made his paintings at a time when there were very few films).

This Talking Points Is Used In...

Pathway: Exploring Watercolour

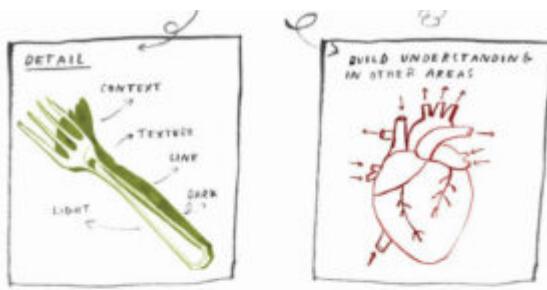


Featured in the 'Exploring Watercolour' pathway

using sketchbooks to make visual notes



Show me what you see



SHOW ME WHAT YOU SEE METHOD:

- 1) **GUIDE FEELING**
"SHOW ME..."
- 2) **RULES**
EMAIL
- 3) **CHALLENGE EXPECTATIONS**
BIG
- 4) **COUNT DOWN**

How Do Non-Specialist Teachers Teach Art?

Talking Points: What Is A Plinth?

A collection of imagery and sources designed to encourage children to consider what role a plinth may play in creating or displaying artwork.

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AGES 9-11

AGES 11-14

FREE TO ACCESS

What Is A Plinth?



“Limestone plinth with the feet of a male statuette” Licensed under CC0 1.0

In the traditional sculptural sense, plinths are usually heavy boxes or bases made from stone, wood or metal, which raise a sculpture above the ground.

Plinths sometimes protect the sculpture from the

elements, such as a sculpture raised out of the way of puddles of rain in the street.

More often, the role of a plinth is to give the sculpture some kind of status. By raising the sculpture to a certain level, the sculptor can decide how the viewer interacts with the artwork.

Plinths also help create a separation between the ordinary everyday world around us and the art "object".

Seeing an object on a plinth might encourage us to view that object as an artwork – as something special.

Questions to Ask Children

Have you seen any sculpture on a plinth in and around the place where you live?

Why do you think those sculptures are on plinths? How does the way the sculpture is displayed affect how you think about the sculpture?

Imagine two peas. One is on the kitchen floor, but an identical pea is on a plinth in a gallery. How does it change how you think about the pea?

The Fourth Plinth



Photo of “Nelson’s Ship in a Bottle,” by Yinka Shonibare, Fourth Plinth, Trafalgar Square, London by Andy Hay

What is The Fourth Plinth?

The Fourth Plinth is considered to be one of the world’s largest ongoing public art commissions. Its main aim is to bring contemporary art to the public and to encourage debate about what art is.



The “fourth plinth” was originally intended to hold a sculpture of a horse belonging to William IV, but the sculpture was never displayed due to lack of money. For over 150 years the plinth remained empty, until in 1998, the Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (RSA) commissioned three contemporary sculptures to be displayed temporarily on the plinth. The legacy of those three sculptures was a rolling programme called the Fourth Plinth.

[Take a look at the Fourth Plinth website](#) to explore some recent commissions and explore the work of one Fourth Plinth artist, Antony Gormley

below.

Antony Gormley, The Fourth Plinth



“One and Other” by Antony Gormley, Image by Feggy Art

Whilst [Antony Gormley](#) usually makes sculpture out of more traditional materials like steel, he was commissioned as part of the Fourth Plinth to produce a rather different kind of art.

Instead of working in traditional materials, Gormley used the plinth as a focus for creating an artwork which “became a portrait of the UK, now”. For 100 days in 2009, 24 hours a day, Gormley and the team coordinated members of the public to take stage on the plinth for an hour at a time. They could do whatever they liked, using the plinth to give their expression a literal and metaphorical platform.

Through “One & Other”, Gormley hoped that by giving the public free will to express their hopes and fears for what might be, a “portrait of the nation” would be revealed.

Questions to Ask Children

How would you use your time if you were given an hour on the plinth?

The Fourth Plinth Challenge

Can you find a “plinth” at school and coordinate a similar project?

How would children and teachers “apply” for a slot on your plinth?

Who would decide who gets a slot and what would your criteria be?

How long would each slot last?

How would you encourage an audience?

How would you document the event?

This Talking Points Is Used In...

Pathway: The Art of Display

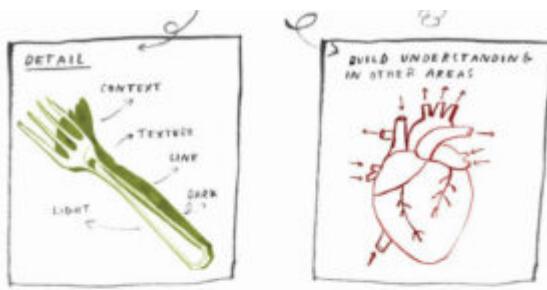


This is featured in the 'The Art of Display' pathway

using sketchbooks to make visual notes



Show me what you see



SHOW ME WHAT YOU SEE METHOD:

- 1) **DEFINE SEEING**
"SHOW ME..."
- 2) **RULES**
SHAR
BIG
EMAIL
- 3) **CHALLENGE EXPECTATIONS**
- 4) **COUNT DOWN**

Talking Points: Introduction to Sculpture

A collection of imagery and sources designed to introduce children to different types of sculpture.

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AGES 9-11

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What is Sculpture?

Interactive Cloud Sculpture by Caitlind r.c. Brown & Wayne Garrett

“Interactive Cloud Sculpture” made of 6000 lightbulbs by Canadian artists Caitlind r.c. Brown & Wayne Garrett

This sculpture is made of 6000 lightbulbs which can be switched on and off by the audience. [Find out more about Interactive Cloud Sculpture here.](#)

Questions to Ask Children

Describe what you see. Think about the gallery space as well as the sculpture itself.

How would it feel to be in that space, interacting with the sculpture?

What do you think the artists are trying to say through the artwork?

Why do you think two sculptors collaborated on this piece?

How does it make you feel? What does it make you

think?

Floating Piers by Christo and Jeanne-Claude

Floating Piers by Christo and Jeanne-Claude, Italy, 2016



L'Arc De Triomphe Wrapped by Christo and Jeanne-Claude, Paris, 1961

Christo and Jeanne-Claude are artists who have become known for wrapping large objects/buildings/environments.

Christo started out wrapping objects like chairs and books, interested in how the wrapping changed the meaning. More recently the large projects, which can take years of planning, are often made just for the purpose of enabling us to look at the world in new ways.

Christo says: “We make beautiful things, unbelievably useless, totally unnecessary.”

[See more work by Christo, and Christo and Jeanne-Claude here.](#)

Questions to Ask Children

What have the artists done here?

How many people do you think were involved in making this artwork? What jobs did they have to do?

How long do you think this artwork will last? Do you think the artists minded making an artwork which won't last forever?

How do you think the visitors feel? How would you feel if you were there? What would the yellow bouncy path make you want to do?

How do you think the people felt when they returned to the “normal” landscape around them? Would they have been changed by the artwork?

How do you think it looks from above?

What do you think the artists were trying to say through the artwork?

Dev Harlan

“Parmenides I”, Dev Harlan, 2011

Parmenides I is a light sculpture exhibited at Christopher Henry Gallery, New York.

www.devharlan.com/

Questions to Ask Children

What can you see in the video above?

Can you imagine how the artwork is made?

How does it make you feel?

How long do you have to look at the sculpture before it has an affect on you? If you saw a still image of the sculpture would you feel the same way?

Food Sculptures by Nicole Dyer



Food Sculptures by Nicole Dyer

Nicole Dyer makes sculptures inspired by food. See more of their work here "[Talking Points: Nicole Dyer](#)".

Questions to Ask Children

Describe what you see.

How do the sculptures make you feel?

How do you think the artist made the sculptures?

Faith Bebbington



Sculptures by Faith Bebbington

Faith Bebbington is best known for her sustainable practise; her large sculptures utilise lots of waste materials, with her biggest sculpture to date re-using over 2500 deconstructed plastic milk bottles!

[See sculptures by Faith Bebbington and read more about her approach here.](#)

Questions to Ask Children

Describe what you see.

How do the sculptures make you feel?

What do you think the artist is trying to say through her work?

What other recycled or waste materials could we use to make sculpture?

This Talking Points Is Used In...

Pathway: Playful Making

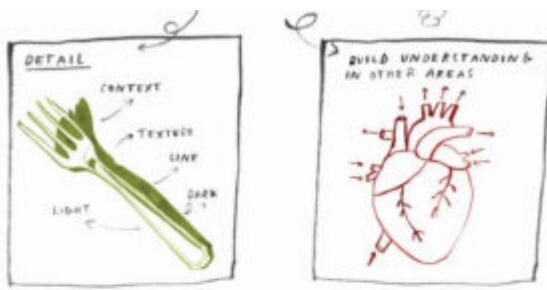


This resource is features in the 'Playful Making' pathway

using sketchbooks to make visual notes



Show me what you see



SHOW ME WHAT YOU SEE METHOD:

- 1) **SHARE FEELING**
"SHOW ME..."
- 2) **RULES**
EMAIL: **BIG**
- 3) **CHALLENGE EXPECTATIONS**
- 4) **COUNT DOWN**

Talking Points: Sculpture To Help Us Remember

A collection of imagery and sources designed to stimulate conversation around the idea of sculpture used to help us remember.

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Cretto di Burri by Italian Sculptor Alberto Burri



Alberto Burri – *Cretto di Burri* (*Crack of Burri*), 1984–2015, concrete, 1.50 x 350 x 280 m (4.9 x 1,150 x 920 ft), Gibellina, Sicily, Italy, photo: [CC BY-NC-SA 2.0](#) by [Luca Di Ciaccio](#)

The *Cretto di Burri* alias Crack of Burri is a landscape artwork by Italian visual artist, painter, sculptor, and physician [Alberto Burri](#)

Located in Sicily, Italy, the project began in 1984, only to stall in 1989 when funds ran out. It was finally completed 30 years later in 2015.

This piece of land art sculpture, made from cast

concrete, commemorated the destruction of the city of Gibellina in 1968 by the Belice earthquake.

The quake destroyed the landscape and left thousands of families homeless.



Alberto Burri – *Cretto di Burri* (*Crack of Burri*), 1984–2015, concrete, 1.50 x 350 x 280 m (4.9 x 1,150 x 920 ft), Gibellina, Sicily, Italy, photo: [CC BY-NC-ND 2.0](#) by [Michele Cannone](#)

Alberto Burri was an artist involved in the creation of a new town, 20 km to the west of the destroyed town. [This article](#) describes how the mayor was so impressed with Burri that he invited him to make a piece of art to commemorate the catastrophic event. At first Burri wasn't sure,

but after he visited the destroyed area he said:

I almost felt like crying and immediately the idea came to me: here, here I feel that I could do something. I would do this: we compact the rubble that is so much a problem for everyone, we arm it well, and with the concrete, we make an immense white crack, so that it remains a perennial memory of this event.

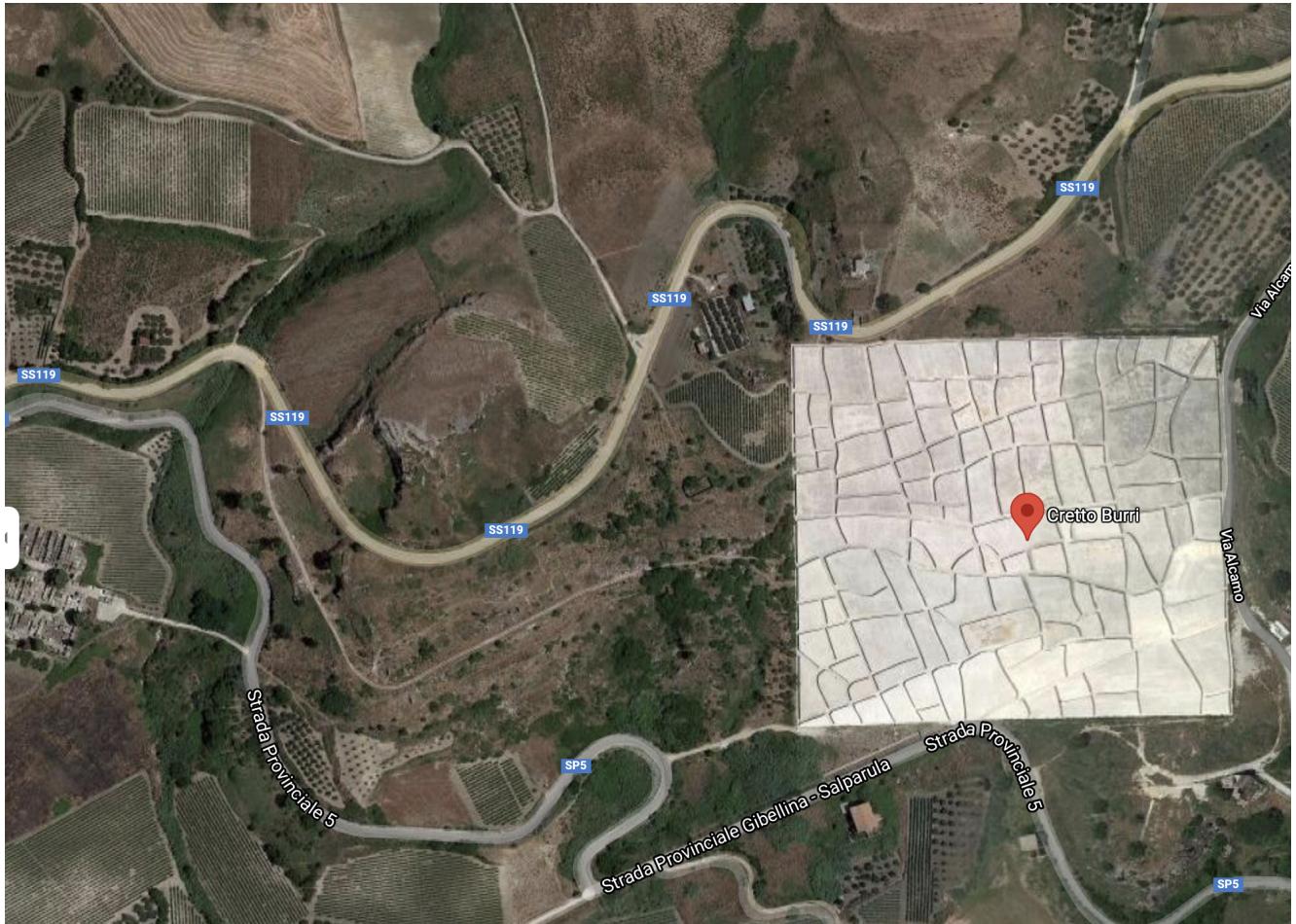
Burri and his workers collected the rubble and redistributed it, casting it into huge cement blocks to recreate the old streets.

“The cracked white concrete of this monument memorializes and conceptualizes the ordeal and suffering of the Belice earthquake, with the slits marking not just the literal streets and corridors of the old town but also the violence done to the land, people, as well as profoundly to the cultural memory of the site.”

<https://publicdelivery.org/cretto-di-burri/>



Alberto Burri – *Cretto di Burri (Crack of Burri)*, 1984–2015, concrete, 1.50 x 350 x 280 m (4.9 x 1,150 x 920 ft), Gibellina, Sicily, Italy, photo: [CC BY-NC-SA 2.0](#) by [Luca Di Ciaccio](#)



Questions to Ask Children

Describe what you see.

Which words would you use to describe the whole piece?

**Can you imagine walking through the structure?
Flying over it? What would it smell like? Feel like?**

What do you think the artist is trying to say with this artwork?

How does it make you feel?

What is the environmental impact of the piece?

Talking Points: Inspired by Birds

A collection of imagery and sources designed to encourage children to consider how artists are inspired by birds.

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AGES 5-8

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FREE TO ACCESS

Ernst Haekel



Trochilidae. — *Colibris.*

Trochilidae–Kolibris from *Kunstformen der Natur* (1904) by [Ernst Haeckel](#). Original from Library of Congress. Ernst Haeckel was a German zoologist, naturalist, eugenicist, philosopher, physician, professor, marine biologist and artist.

[Wiki](#)

Questions to Ask Children

Describe what you see.

Look at the artwork as a whole – which words would you use to describe the whole piece?

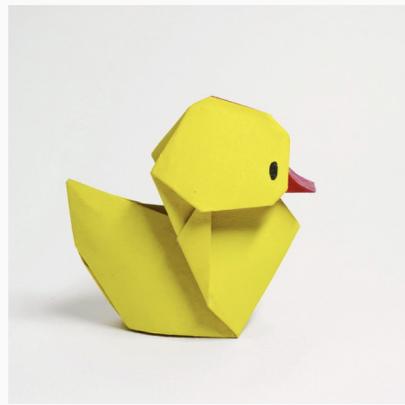
Tell me about the details you like.

What do you think the artist is trying to say with this artwork?

How does it make you feel?

Hoang Tien Quyet





Hoang Tien Quyet, Origami artist, Vietnam. Hoang uses wet paper to make his origami creations. See his work at <https://htquyet.origami.vn/tagged/designs>

Questions to Ask Children

What do you think the sculptures by Hoang are made out of ?

How do you think he made them?

How do you think he decides how much detail to include or leave out?

How do they make you feel?

What do you think the artist is trying to say with

this artwork?

John James Audubon

John James Audubon was an American self-trained artist, naturalist, and ornithologist. His combined interests in art and ornithology turned into a plan to make a complete pictorial record of all the bird species of North America. [Wiki](#)



Pied oyster-catcher from Birds of America (1827) by John James Audubon, etched by William Home Lizars. Original from University of Pittsburgh.

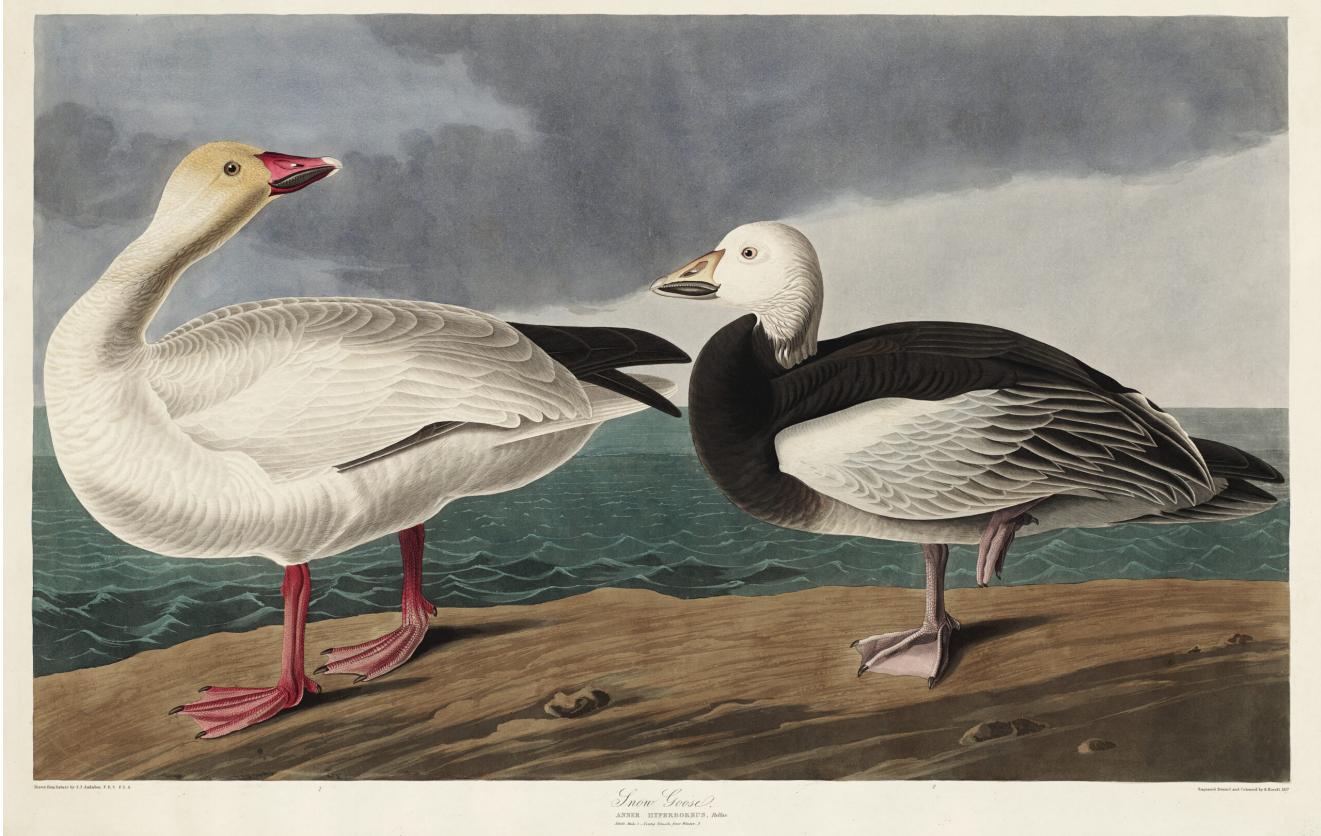


Drawn from Nature by J.J. Audubon F.R.S. F.L.S.

Engraved, Printed, & Coloured, by R. Havell, J.R.

Fulmar Petrel.
PROCELLARIA GLACIALIS, L.
Male adult Summer plumage.

Fulmar Petrel from Birds of America (1827) by John James Audubon, etched by William Home Lizars. Original from University of Pittsburg.



Snow Goose from Birds of America (1827) by John James Audubon, etched by William Home Lizars. Original from University of Pittsburg.

Questions to Ask Children

Describe what you see.

Look at the artwork as a whole – which words would you use to describe the whole piece?

Tell me about the details you like.

What materials has the artist used?

What do you think the artist is trying to say with this artwork?

Can you describe the nature/personality of the bird? Why do you think that? How has the artist made you think that?

Pejac



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Birds in Flight Emerge from the Negative Space of Broken Windows

By Jessica Stewart on October 27, 2016



Camoflage by Pejac. Silvestre Santiago, better known as Pejac, is a Spanish painter and street artist. He was born in 1977 in Santander, Cantabria, Spain. He studied Fine Arts in Salamanca and then Barcelona. In 2001, Santiago continued his studies in Italy at the Accademia di Belle Arti di Milano. Today the artist lives in

Santander.

Inspired by the work of Belgian Surrealist [Rene Magritte](#), Pejac plays with the idea of negative space in this installation piece. Explore images of the piece via the [My Modern Met article](#)

Questions to Ask Children

What do you see?

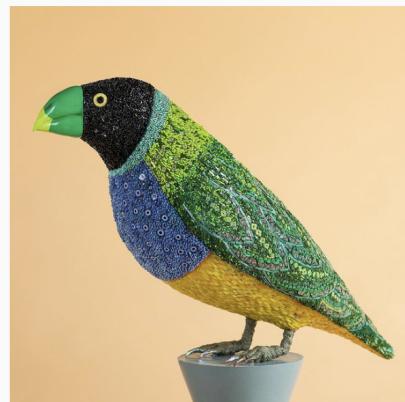
What has the artist done in this piece?

How does this piece of art make you feel?

What do you think the artist is trying to say?

Dusciana Bravura





Dusciana Bravura is an Italian Sculptor and Interior Designer.

Dusciana makes beautiful birds out of beads. See her work at www.duscianabравуra.com/en/sculptures

Questions to Ask Children

What words would you use to describe these sculptures?

Can you imagine how Dusciana makes her work?

How do they make you feel?

What do you think the artist is trying to say?

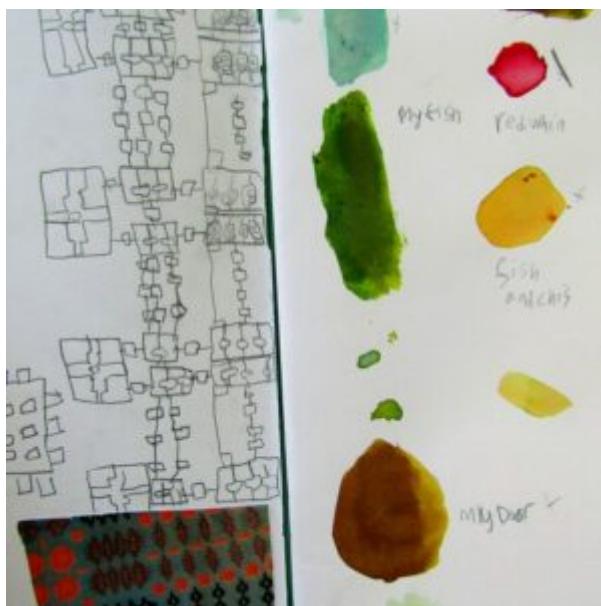
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Pathway: Making Birds

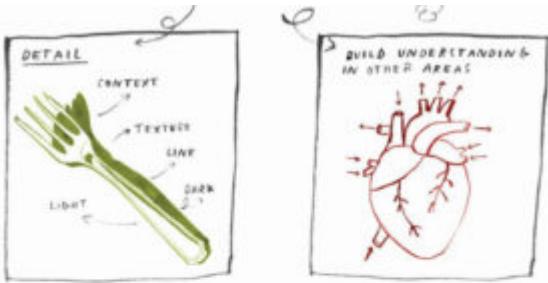


This is featured in the 'Making Birds' pathway

using sketchbooks to make visual notes



Show me what you see



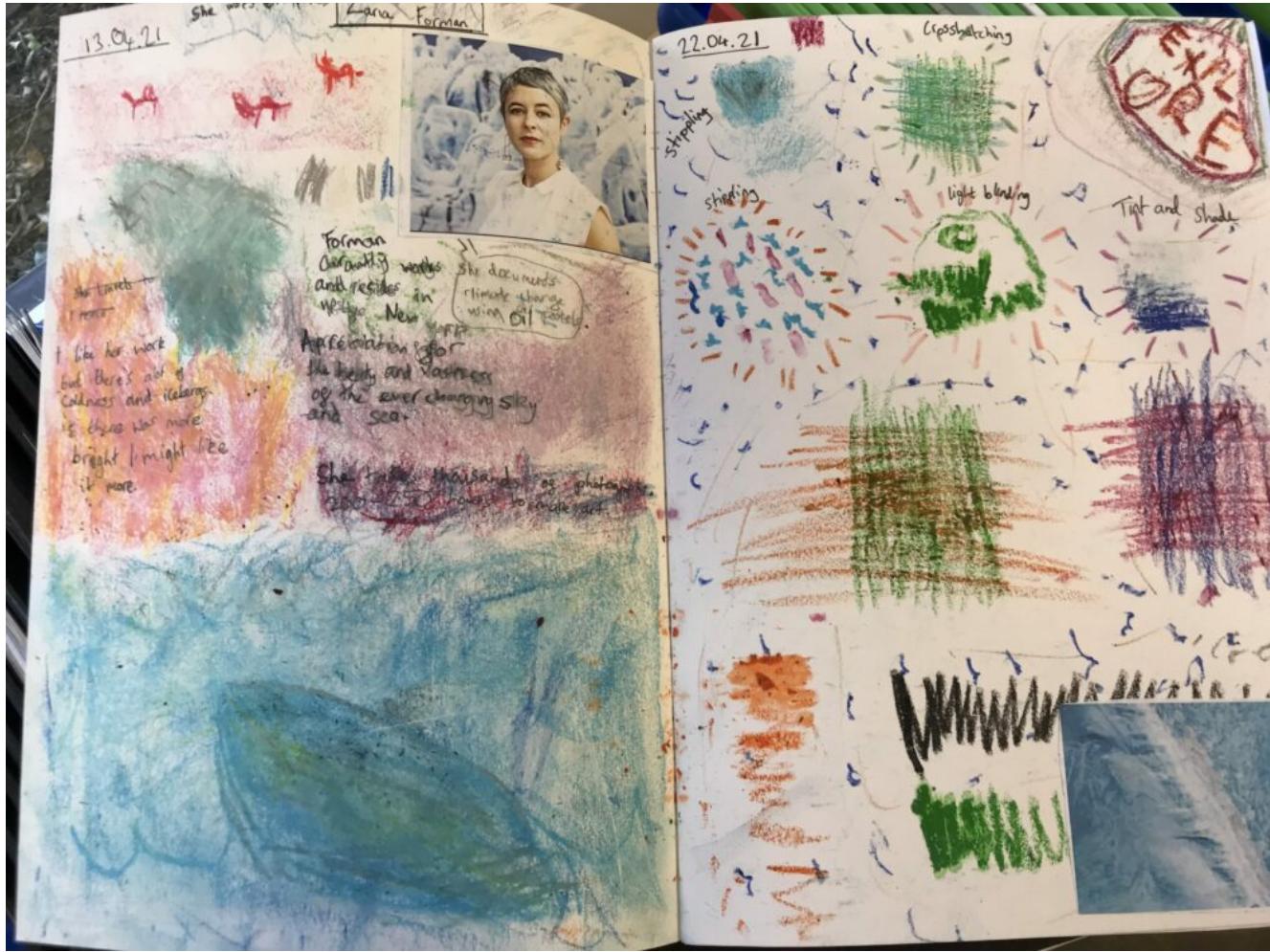
SHOW ME WHAT YOU SEE METHODS:

- 1) GUIDE FEELING
SHOW ME...
- 2) RULES
SHARP
BIG
EMAIL
- 3) CHALLENGE EXPECTATIONS
- 4) COUNT DOWN

Exploring, Associating & Connecting – a Sketchbook Exercise

Sketchbooks Should Be...

You Might Also Like...



The Sketchbook Journey

Explore the [AccessArt Sketchbook Journey](#) to grow your understanding about what sketchbooks are and how they might be used.



The AccessArt Network

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Taking Stock: What a Game of

Snakes & Ladders Made Me Think About Art Education

Ethos: Learning From Participants

Searching for the Opposite of Fragmentation & Contraction

DrawAble: The Secret Powers of Sketchbooks

[By Jo Blaker](#)

Sketchbooks are powerful tools. Enjoy these three videos in which Jo Blaker shares why sketchbooks have secret powers.

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Sketchbook Powers Number 1 & 2

Secret powers numbers 1 and 2: Jo describes how sketchbooks can be a door into a hidden world, and a place to explore what you feel like as a person.

Sketchbook Power Number 3

Secret power number 2: Sketchbooks can be a weapon; a weapon you can use to fight boredom, ease anxiety, and find gratitude.

Sketchbook Power Number 4

Secret power numbers 4: Sketchbooks can be a laboratory – a safe place to experiment, test and discover.

A Sketchbook Pathway Step 5:

Keep The Sketchbook Handy

**A Sketchbook Pathway Step 4:
Celebrate Individual Journey
& Personal Discovery**

**A Sketchbook Pathway 3: Let
Go Of Expectations & Let
Things Collide**

**Sketchbook Pathway Step 2:
Energy of the Group**

A Sketchbook Pathway Step 1: Open Out & Give Permission

**Pupil Led Arts Council At
Gomersal Primary School**

**Messages From Creative
Adults: How Does Creativity
Make You Feel?**