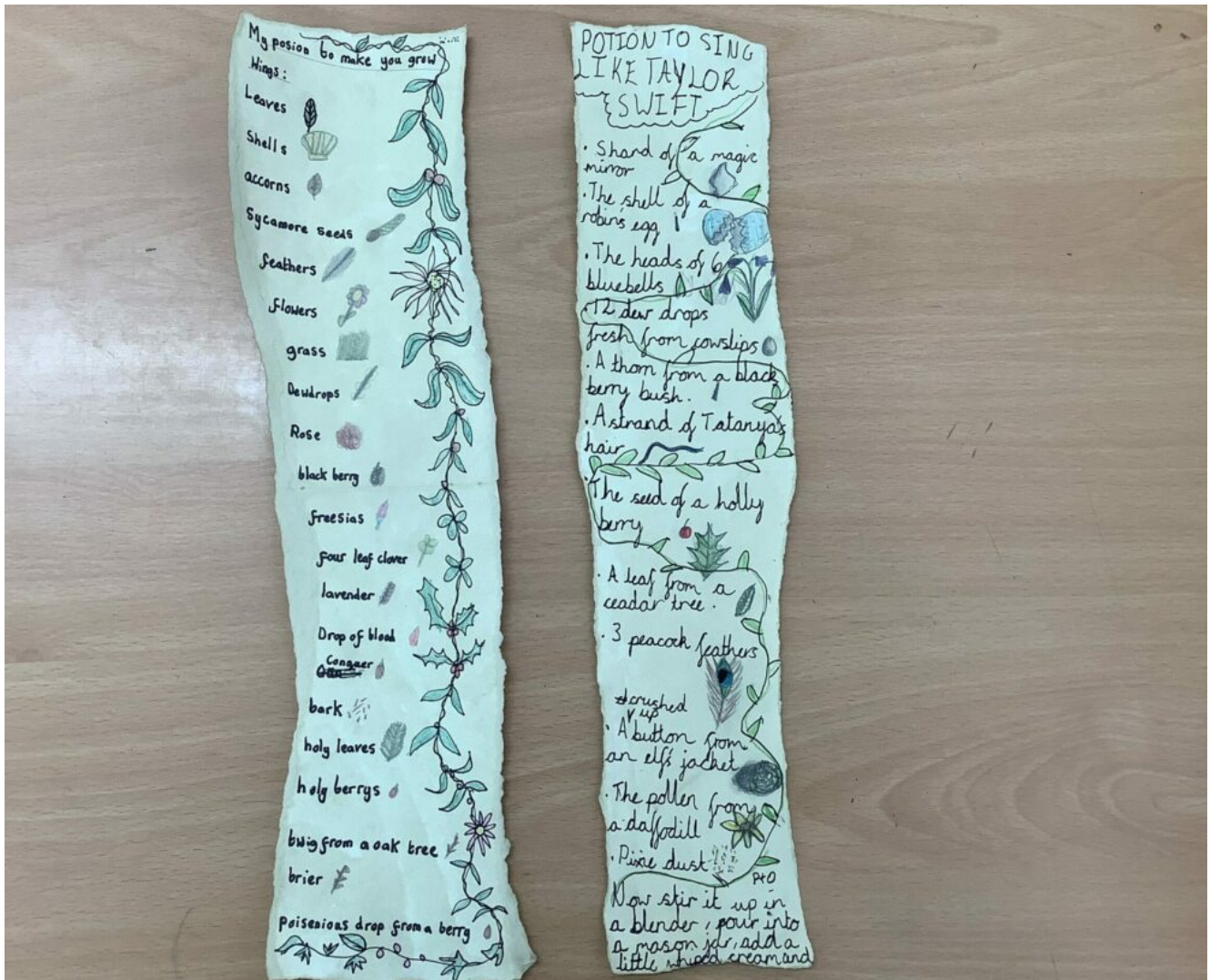


Exploring A Midsummer Night's Dream: Making Magic Spells

By [Rachel Thompson](#)



This series of six sessions explores Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream through art and is aimed at upper KS2 children (Years 5 and 6) although could be delivered to younger age groups with some simplification in terms of the use of text. The aim of the series is to introduce children to the work of Shakespeare in a fun and creative way.

In this fifth of six sessions inspired by A Midsummer Night's Dream, we explore the role of magic in the play. Beginning with close observational drawing of small objects, the

children move towards creating their own magic spell onto rolled scrolls of paper.

The aim of this session is for the children to look closely at some of the language and imagery used by the fairies and use creative writing skills to see how this imagery can be linked.

Go back to session four [here](#).

Session Five: Making Magic Spells

Warm up: 15 minutes

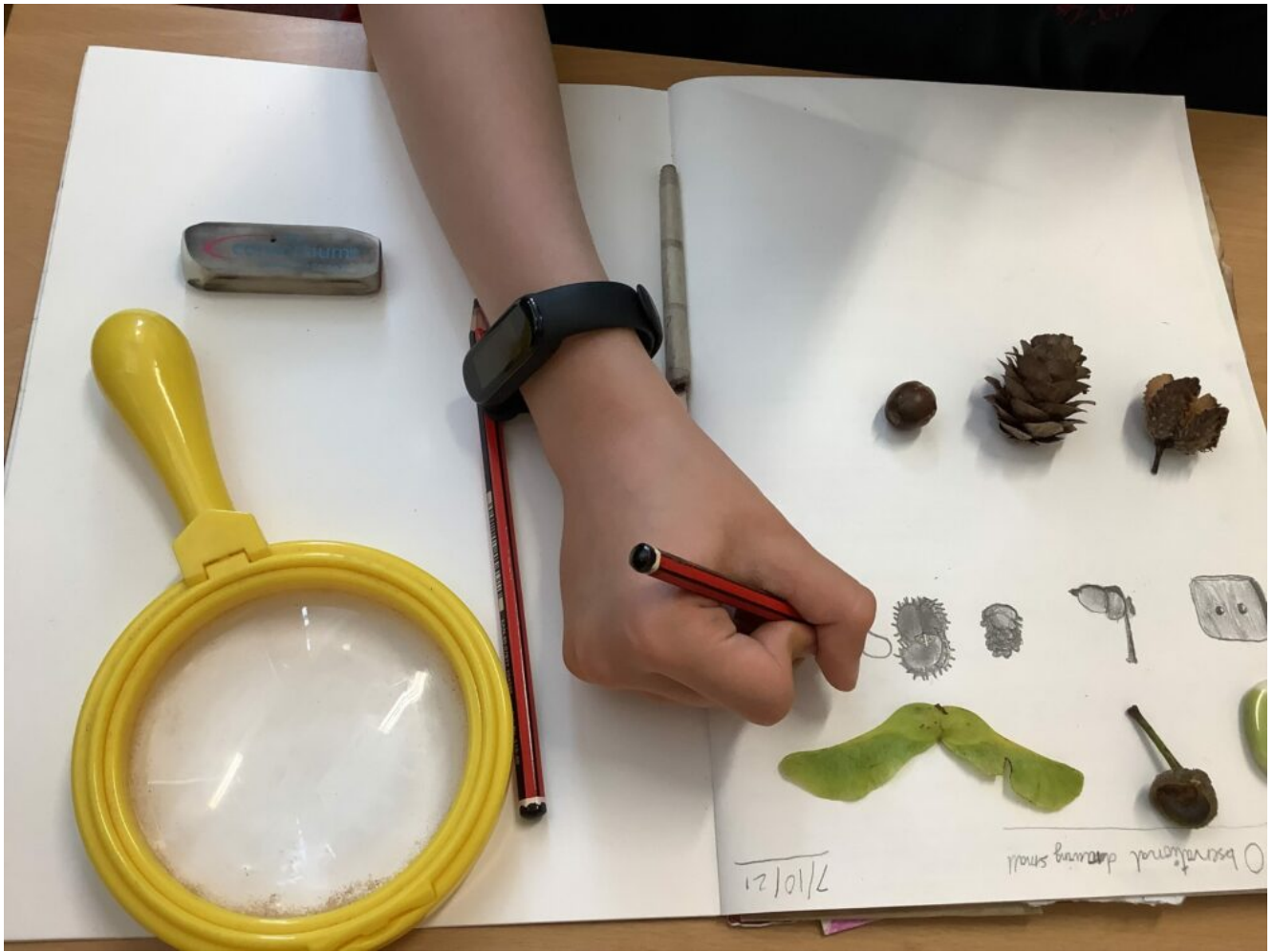
Main Activity: 45 Minutes

Materials Needed: A3 cartridge paper, sketchbooks, drawing pencils, coloured pencils, pastels, charcoal, a range of small objects such as shells, pebbles, feathers, broken crockery, small toys, pencil sharpeners, twigs, bark etc, garden twine or string.

Focus Theme/s: Magic, The Fairies

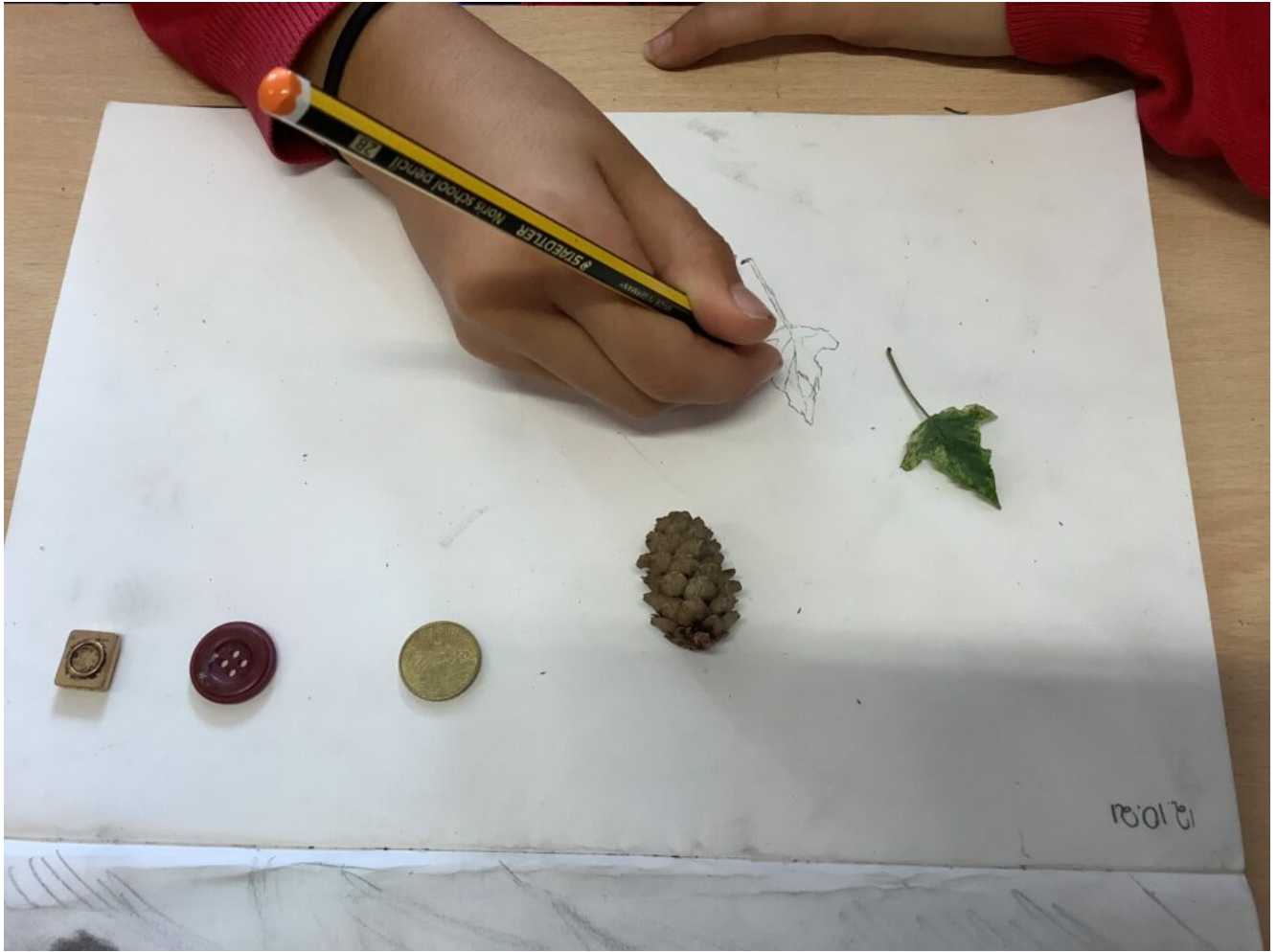
Time to Warm Up! Practice drawing small.

Choose 3 or 4 small objects from a collection available in the classroom. Choose what appeals to you and aim for contrasting objects where possible, eg a shell and a metal pencil sharpener. The objects should all be approximately 5cm in diameter – so very small!

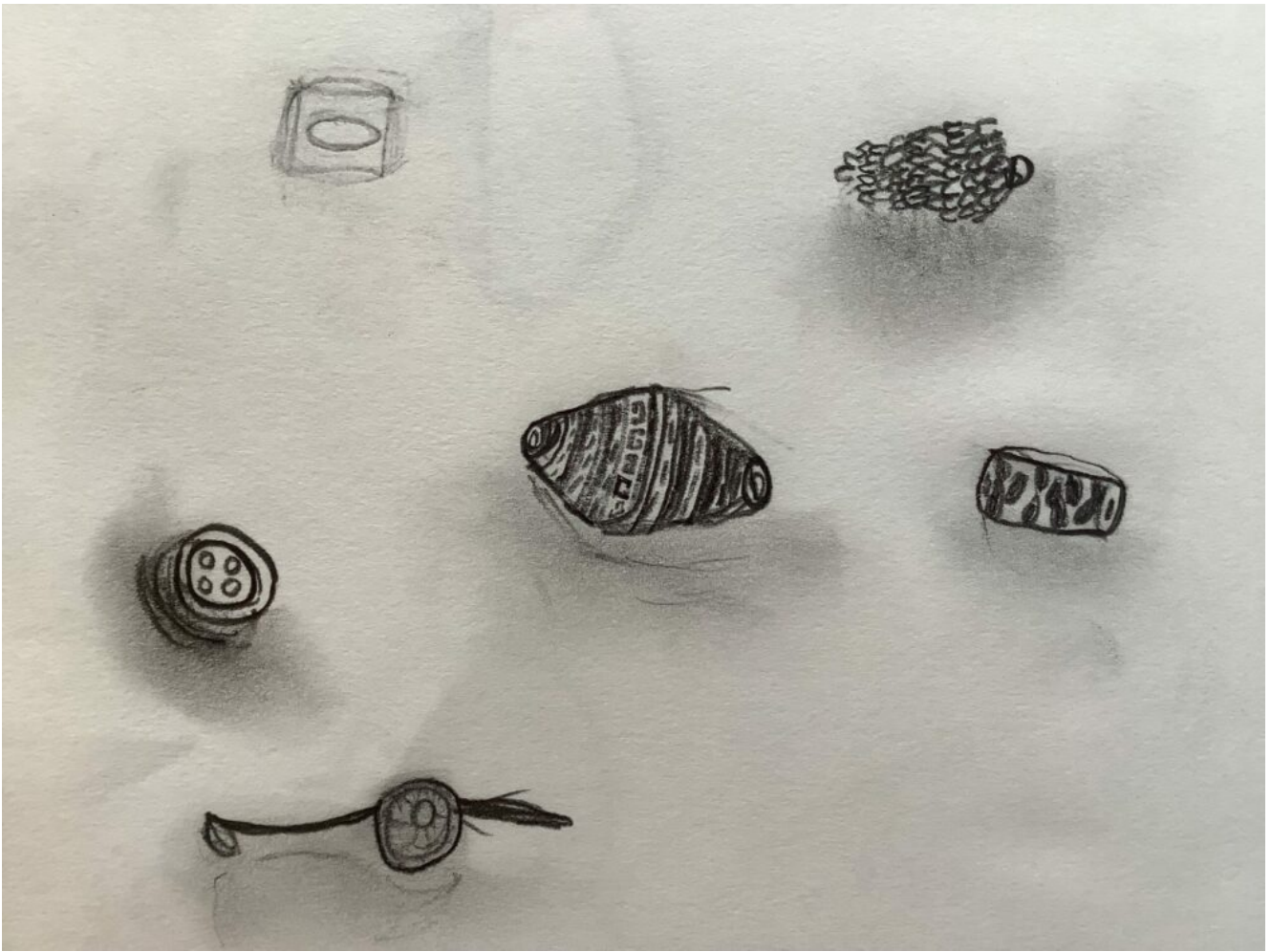


This activity aims to help you focus and relax, and to tune into the 'small world' in front of you. Don't put pressure on yourself to draw perfectly – this is about developing skills in careful looking and observation and it takes time to practice this.

Arrange your objects in front of you on some paper and begin drawing them on the same paper. Your hand movement should be slow and small, and you should try and keep your eye on the objects more than the paper, so you are really looking at their texture, form and tonal value.







You may want to refer to the resource online [here](#):

Starter Discussion:

The magic spell that Oberon casts on Titania and that Puck also gives to Lysander (thinking he is Demetrius) is central to the plot of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. It is this moment that propels the action forward and begins the chain of confusion that follows.

Oberon tells Puck where he discovered the magic potion: when he witnessed Cupid misfire an arrow into a small flower instead of his intended target of a young woman:

'Yet marked I where the bolt of Cupid fell.

*It fell upon a little western flower. The herb I showed thee
once.*

The juice of it on sleeping eyelids laid

Will make or man or woman madly dote

Upon the next live creature that it sees.

Fetch me this herb, and be thou here again

Ere the leviathan can swim a league'

How is the feeling of magic enhanced by the way Oberon speaks here? He is speaking almost as if reciting a poem. The words are lyrical and evocative – would you say they are almost like a spell?

Context: In Elizabethan England lots of people were farm workers or lived in the countryside. Stories that revolved around folklore, fairies, witches and other supernatural beings were commonly believed and spoken about. To a Shakespearean audience, a story that featured fairies in the way that *A Midsummer Night's Dream* does would not have seemed strange.

Main Activity: Spells on Scrolls

Take a piece of A3 cartridge paper and gently tear a strip down its length, approx 8cm wide. One piece of A3 should be enough for about 3 children to end up with a strip. Those with the straight edge will need to tear down the length of their paper twice so you end up with two torn edges.

You are going to imagine you are drawing an ingredient list

for your own magic spell. Oberon's is a love spell - what will your spell be for? Perhaps to make someone grow wings and fly? To be invisible? To be able to travel in time?

Instead of writing out your spell, you're going to draw it - but you may want to use some words and phrases too.

Begin by selecting 5-6 small objects. These can be from the same collection you used in the warm up (NB teachers: Try and edit this collection to only include natural forms, adding a few more into the collection items for interest!)

Oberon talks about using the nectar from a particular flower and squeezing in into Titania's eyes. How could the objects you've chosen be used to make a magic potion? Perhaps a pebble could be ground up and mixed with some dried leaves? This could then be mixed with raindrops and taken as a drink. Keep these ideas flowing as you work and maybe note a few down.

Using the narrow strip of paper as your guide, begin to draw one object at one end. Use the skills of careful looking used in the warm up to help you. By this point you should understand what certain drawing materials do and the different effects they make on paper. Choose the ones you like best and explore them further. You may like to use colour or you may prefer to stick with pencils and charcoal.



You may need to share some of the items so sit together in groups if need be.

Take a moment to observe and think about the objects. Can you see any connections between them or how they might align in an interesting way? For example, a small feather next to a bit of cracked eggshell or a shell next to a beach pebble. Find relationships between the objects and discuss these.



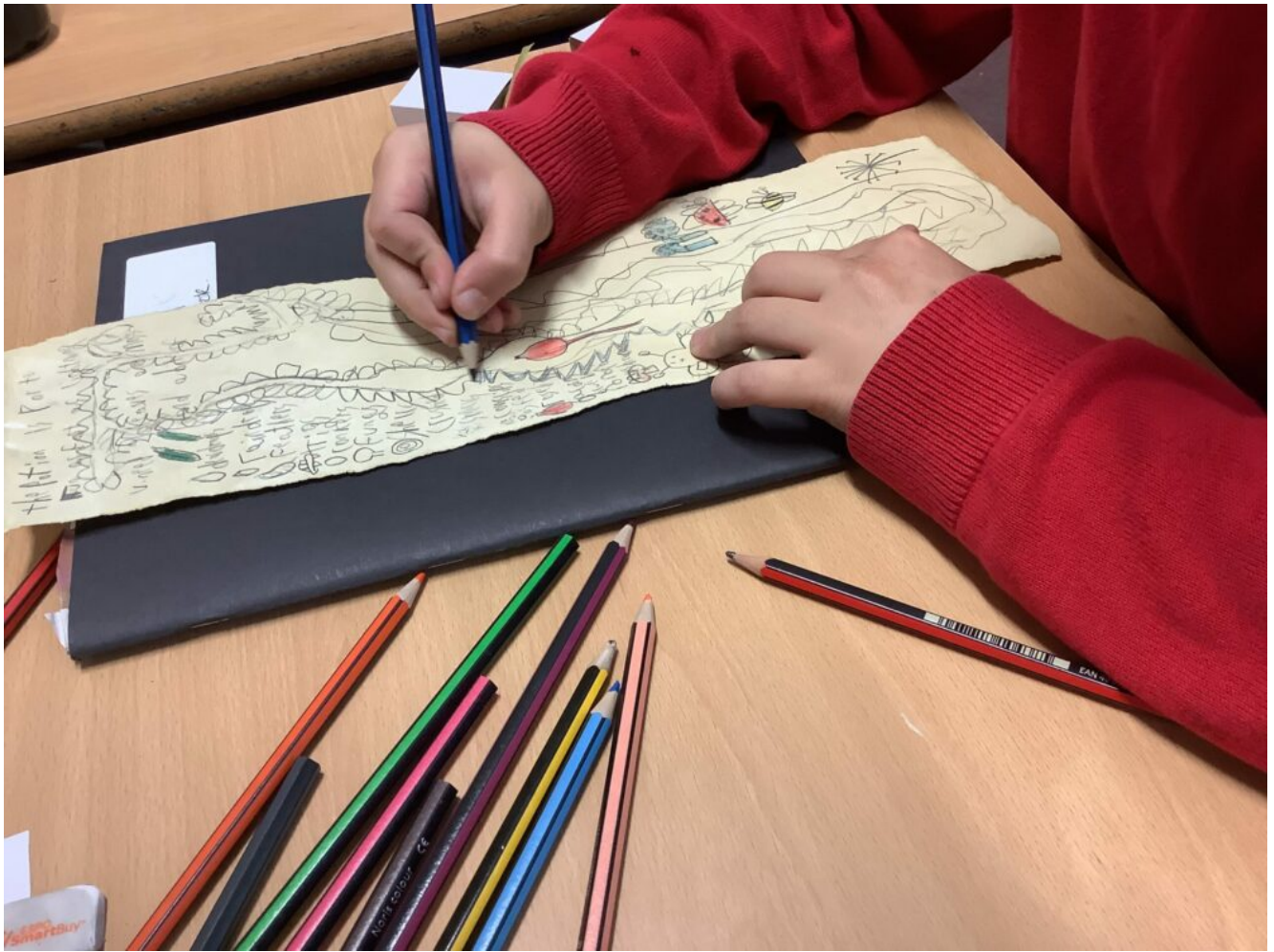
When you're happy with your first object, begin drawing the next. What lines or marks can you use to connect them together as if by a plant shoot or vine? Try and make the objects connect in a way that mirrors all the natural forms mentioned in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Continue drawing your objects until you have filled the scroll of paper.



Next, have another think about any words or phrases you could annotate your drawings with. Look back over Oberon's words and how rich and poetic they are? Can you think of your own that relate to your chosen objects, keeping in mind what your potion is for?





My potion to become invisible

- 4 dew drops
- A drop of thyme
- Juice of a dead leaf
- 2 acorns
- 10 grains of grass
- a couple ruby diamonds
- 5 spikes from a cactus
- 1 conch shell
- 6 drops of blackberry juice
- A couple of real leaves
- 3 cowslips
- 1 rosehip
- 2 bad stools
- a Sunflower

Then blend it but not least drink it!

My Potion to grow scales

- Water-gall water
- The spolest Thorn
- A rounded mistletoe
- an acorn cup
- 3 dew drops
- 5 sand stools
- 1 conch shell
- Stack barrie Doss
- a Pine cone
- 7 cowslip petals
- an eye of a dragon
- 2 lady bug wings
- 1 briar
- 1 peach
- 1 feather
- A blade of grass
- 4 conch shells
- meshed berries
- Flug Juice
- Pixie dust
- some pollen from a daisy

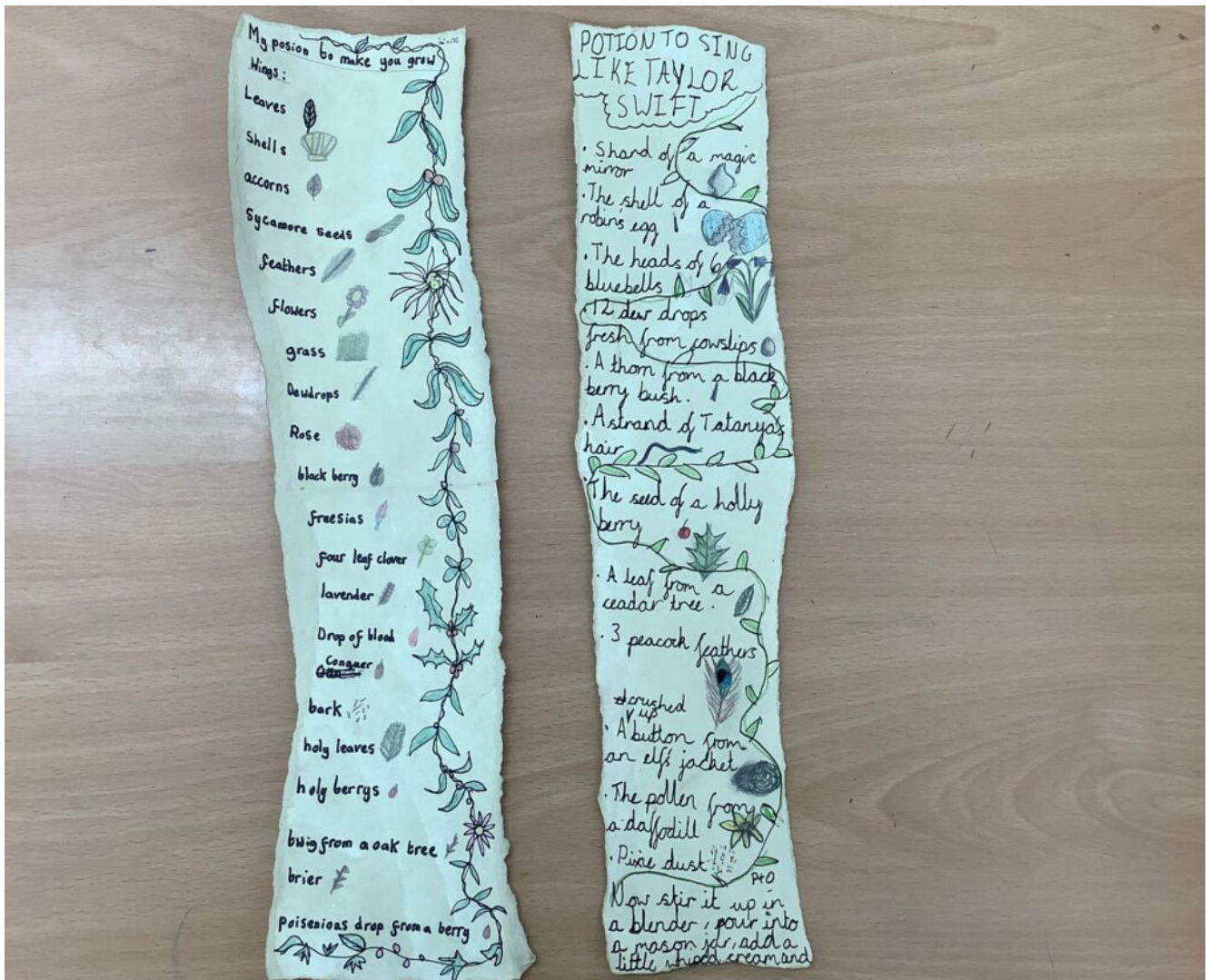
Now put it in a blender
heat it in a cauldron for 24 hrs
let it sit and wait
Here is your potion

Grow lady bug things-Potion you need to brew...

- A spike from a rose stem
- 10 dandruffs from a cow
- 2 Peony seeds
- Crushed basil
- The end of a cow leg
- The tallest blade of grass you can see
- Squashed vole
- The biggest blackberry you can find
- 6 strawberry seeds
- A mushroom (check if its Poison)
- 4 petals from a daisy
- Boo id

Stir it up for half an hour then...

DRINK



When you are finished you can roll up your scroll spells and secure them with some garden twine or string!

Reflection:

Would anyone like to share their spell? Can you practice reading or describing the 'recipe' for your spells altogether as if you were Oberon?!

What imagery did you choose from the text? How did thinking of these images help you imagine your spell?

Move onto session six [here](#).

This is a sample of a resource created by UK Charity AccessArt. We have over 1500 resources to help develop and inspire your creative thinking, practice and teaching.

AccessArt welcomes artists, educators, teachers and parents both in the UK and overseas.

We believe everyone has the right to be creative and by working together and sharing ideas we can enable everyone to reach their creative potential.

Exploring Macbeth Through Art: Out Damn Spot!

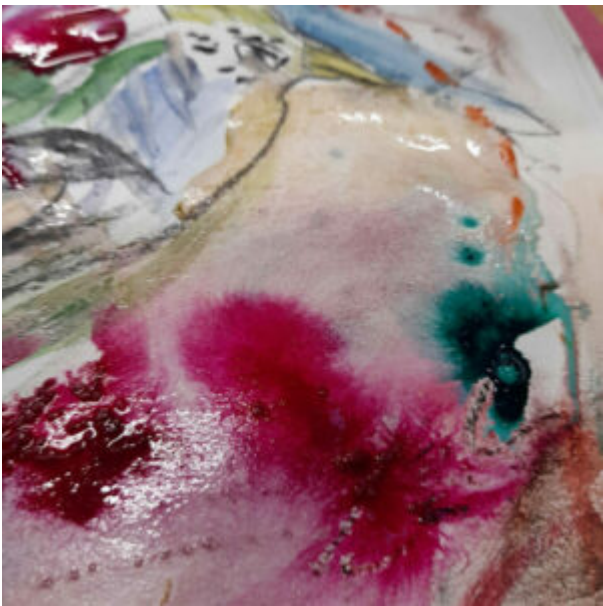
Exploring Macbeth Through Art: Light and Dark Posters

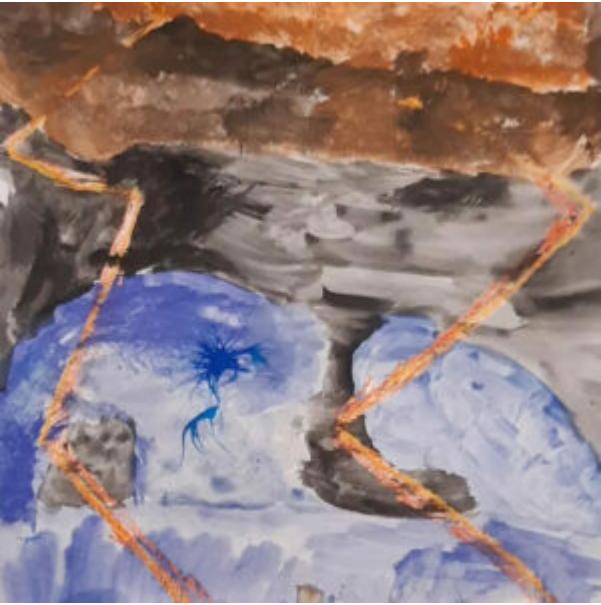
Mixed Media Landscape Challenges

See This Resource Used In Schools...













You May Also Like...

Pathway: Mixed Media Land and city scapes



[This is featured in the 'Mixed Media Land and City Scapes' pathway](#)

Talking Points: Vanessa Gardiner



Talking Points: The Shoreditch Sketcher



Talking Points: Kittie Jones



Expressive Painting & Colour Mixing

What We Like About This Post: "I love that this activity introduces students to colour mixing in a fun and interactive

way, steering away from the more formal colour wheel and promoting a more intuitive way of colour mixing. The use of sketchbooks also gives students the opportunity to curate their work, nurturing the individuals creative decision making.’ – Tobi, AccessArt

Osakana

Paint Your Corner Shop

See This Resource Used in Schools...





You May Also Like...

Pathway: Festival Feasts



[This is featured in the 'Festival Feasts' pathway](#)

Talking Points: Claes Oldenburg



Talking Points: Nicole Dyer



Talking Points: Lucia Hierro



Drawing source material: Food



Light-field Monotype

Light-field Monotype with Acrylic Paint

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.

Please Note:

This page includes links and videos from external sites, verified at publication but subject to change.

Teachers should review all content for classroom suitability.

[Report any issues](#), and check school firewall settings if videos don't play.

AGES 5-8

AGES 9-11

FREE TO ACCESS

Watercolour Paintings by Paul Klee

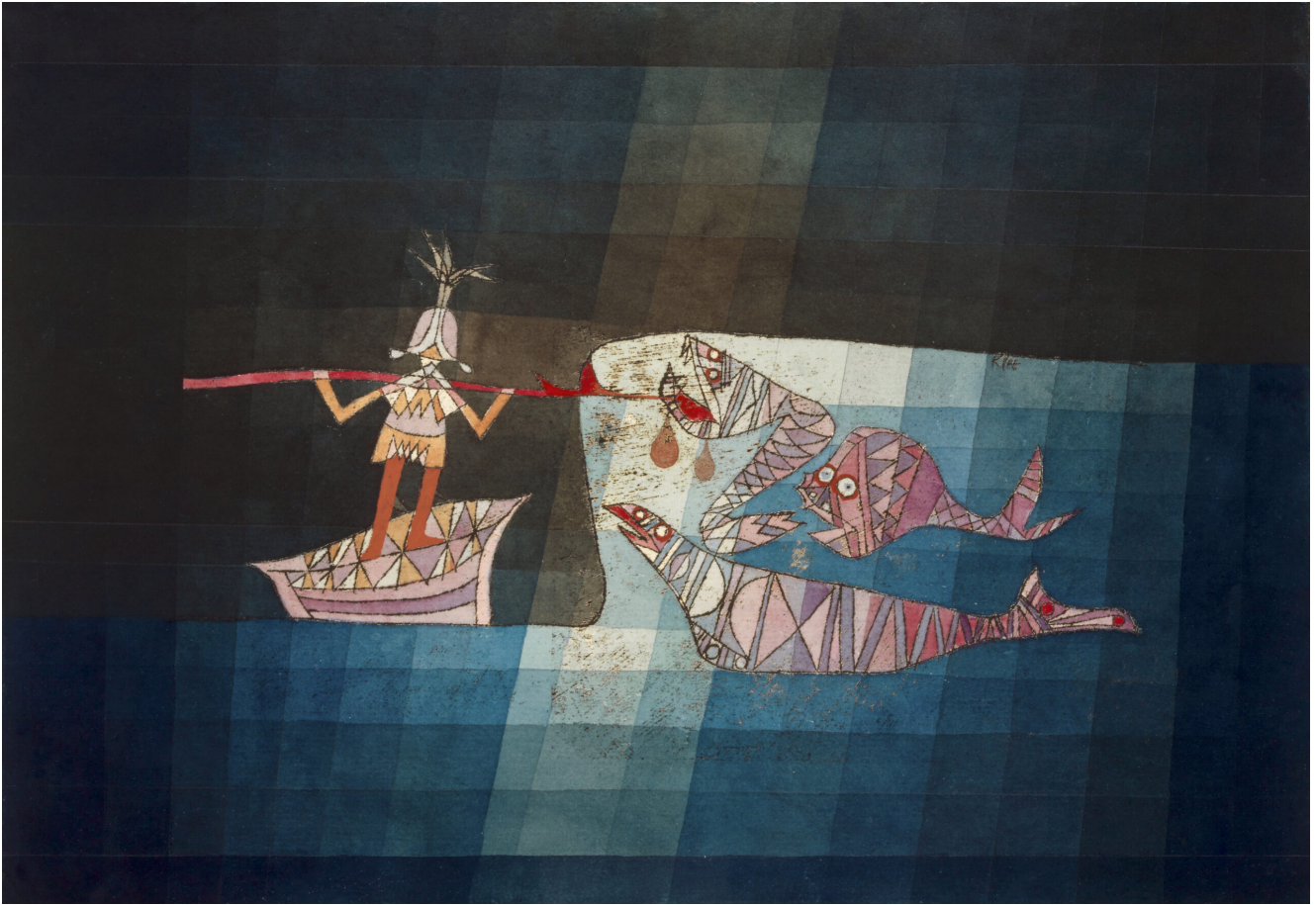
Klee was born in 1879 in Switzerland. When he was 35 he visited Tunisia in Africa, where his experience of the light and colours of the landscapes and architecture helped awaken his interest in colour.

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

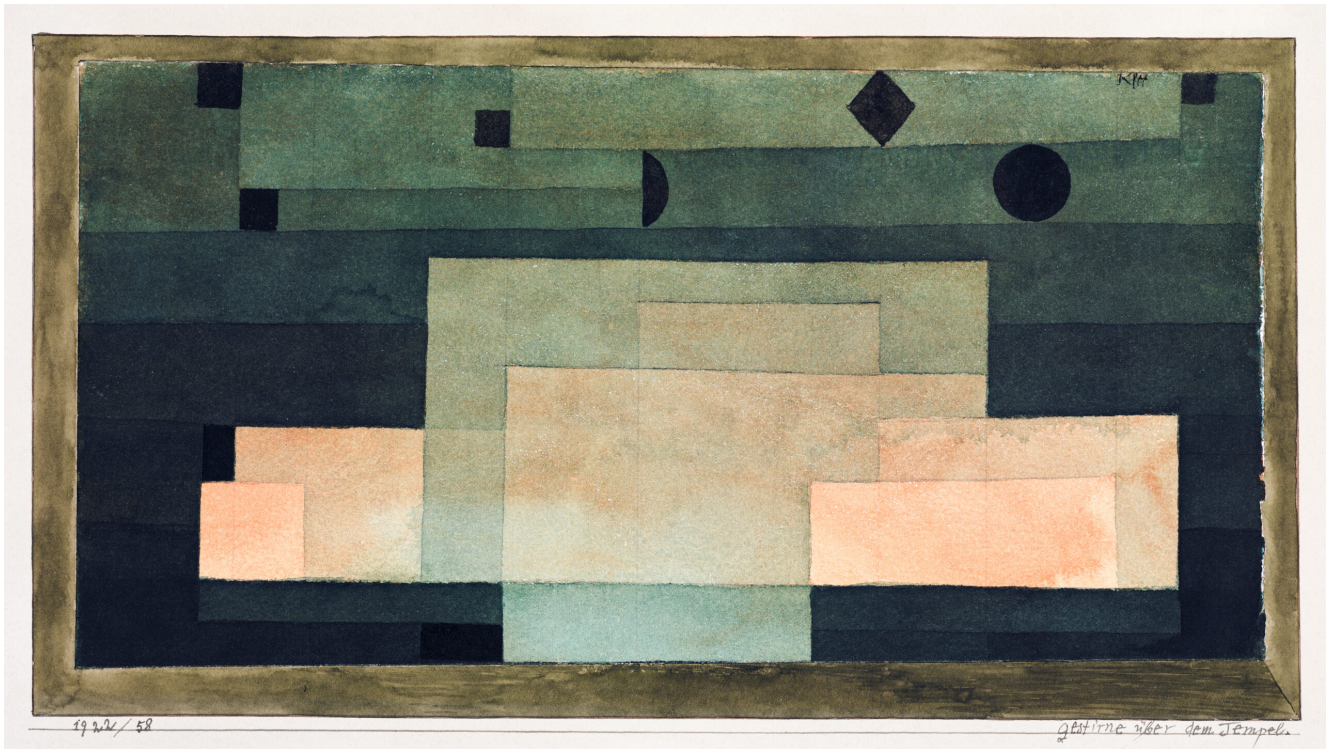
Describe what you see.

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

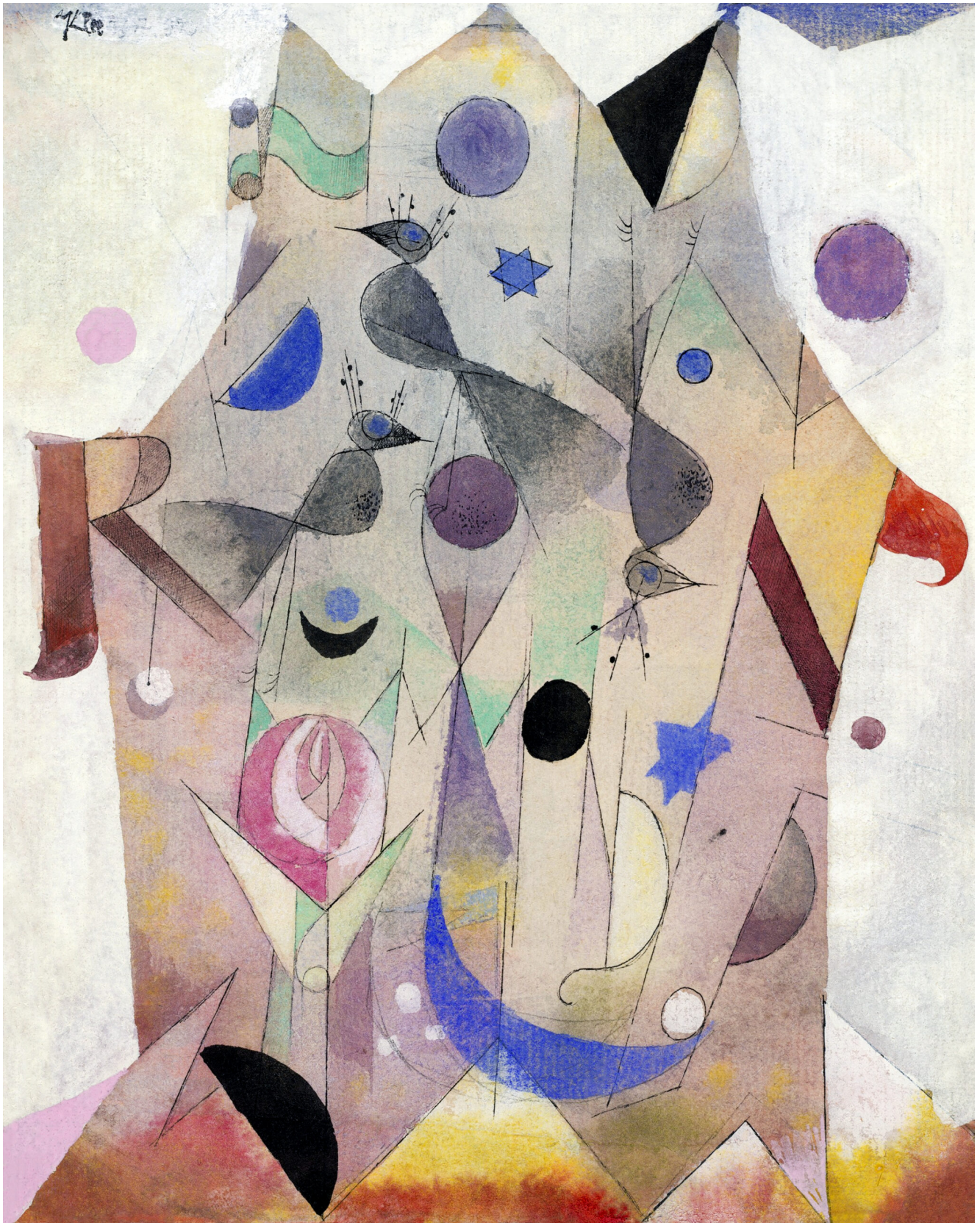
Questions to Ask Children

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

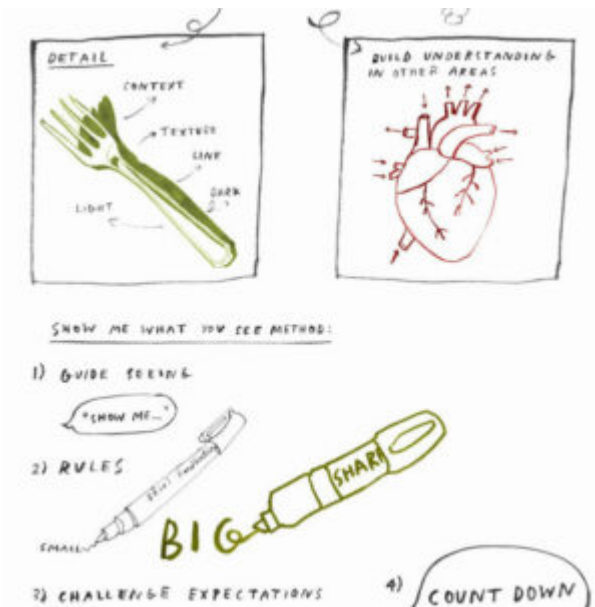


[Featured in the 'Exploring Watercolour' pathway](#)

using sketchbooks to make visual notes



Show me what you see



Basic and Budget Friendly Art Materials for Primary Schools

Still Life Compositions: Inspired by Cezanne

What We Like About This Resource...

“This activity walks through a number of different processes and taps into multiple skills. This provides a rich exploratory project for children to fully immerse themselves in. Cezanne was the focus artist for this project, but other contemporary still life painters could be used as starter inspiration. We actually advocate showing the work of more than one artist as this builds knowledge of how approaches to painting, drawing etc differ. This also helps children move towards a personal response rather than creating a ‘copy’ of one particular artist’s work” – Rachel, AccessArt

You Might Also Like...

Pathway: Exploring Still Life



[This is featured in the 'Explore Still Life' pathway](#)

Talking Points: Paul Cezanne



talking points: Contemporary still life



talking points: Flemish and Dutch Still Life Painters



Which Artists: Jason Line

What We Like About This Resource...

“It’s always so inspiring to hear how different artists work and we particularly like the detailed references Jake makes to his process – marking out the composition using neutral tones; adding and taking away compositional elements and gradually building in more colour and detail. Delivering a still life session in a classroom could begin with this process and encourage the practice of looking at positive and negative space. Some suggested resources below also touch on this”. – *Rachel, AccessArt*

You Might Also Like...



[Tackling Still Life for Children](#)



Drawing Negative Space



Visual Arts Planning: Still Life

Volcano Painting inspired by

Frank Bowling

See This Resource Used In Schools...

















What We Like About This Resource...

“We love how this activity provides an opportunity to explore a well known Artist’s work, through focussing on their materials and techniques. The children looked at Frank Bowling’s work before creating their own individual responses that retained individual ownership – something we advocate as part of a rich and balanced visual arts education. It was also great to see how a professional artist visited the school to further enhance the children’s experience.” – *Rachel, AccessArt*

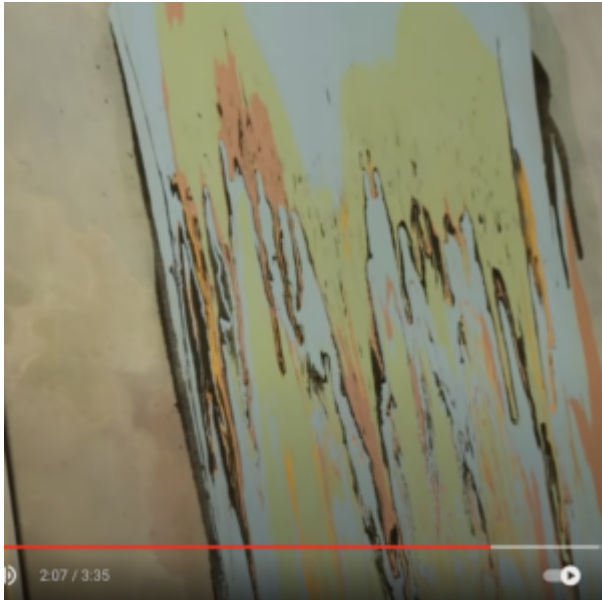
You May Also Like...

Pathway: Cloth, thread, paint



[This is featured in the 'Cloth, Thread, Paint' pathway](#)

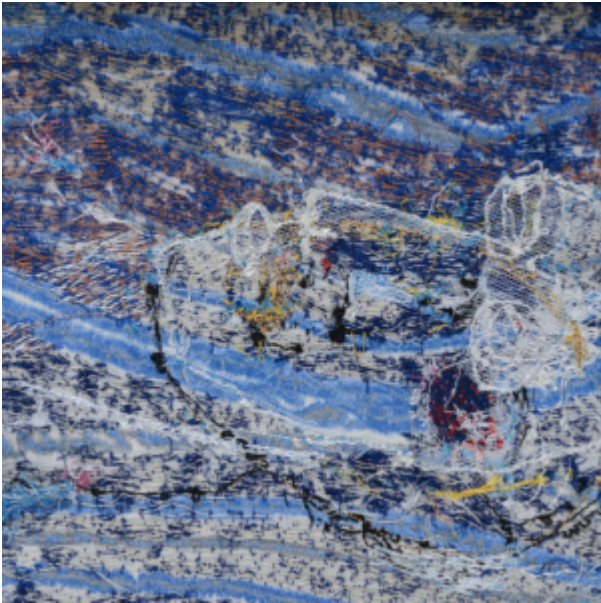
Talking Points: Frank Bowling



Talking Points: Hannah Rae



Talking Points: Alice Kettle



**Ethos: Learning From
Participants**

**Let Me Inspire You: Emma
Burleigh**

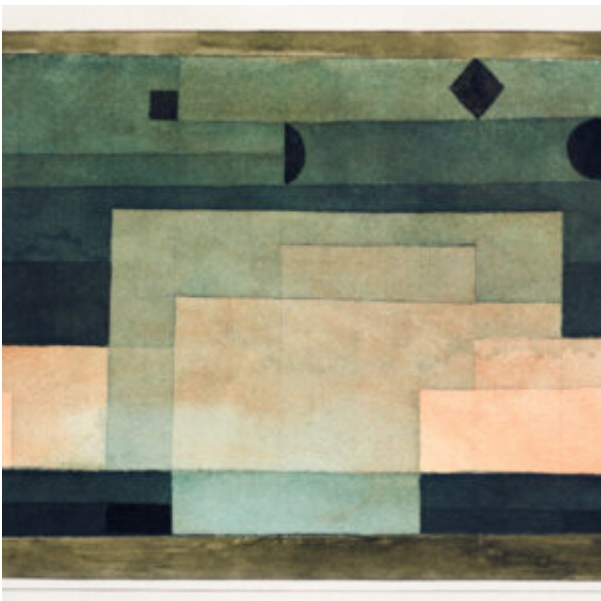
You May Also Like...

Pathway: Exploring Watercolour



[Featured in the 'Exploring Watercolour' pathway](#)

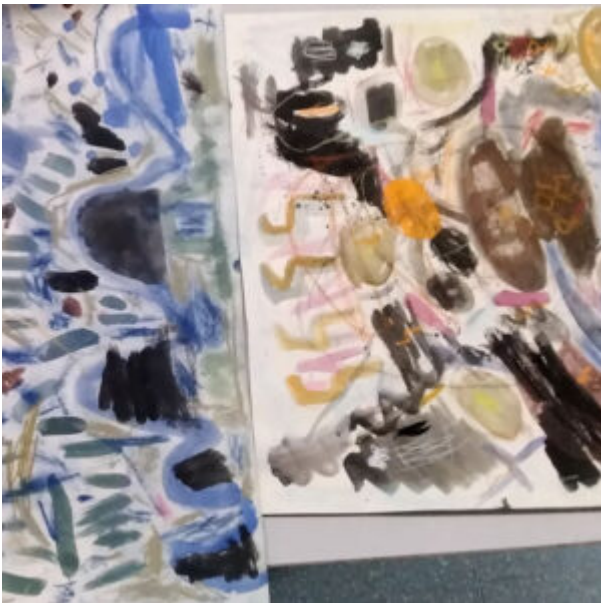
Talking Points: Paul Klee



[Explore the work of Paul Klee](#)

DrawAble: Exploring Through Watercolour by Emma Burleigh Part Three

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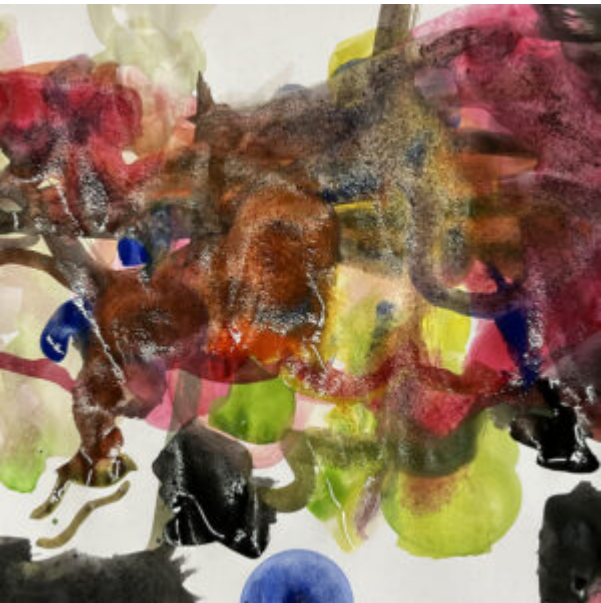




DrawAble: Exploring Through Watercolour by Emma Burleigh Part Two

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DrawAble: Exploring Through Watercolour by Emma Burleigh Part One

Drawable: Globe Paintings by Stephanie Cubbin