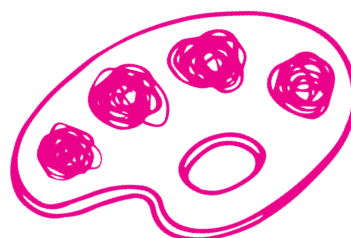


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Bringing Art to life through movement & dance

Dancing brushstrokes



KS1 & KS2

Dancing Brushstrokes

By Wendy Steatham, Trustee and Artis
Mentor Leader

An artist uses a range of different brushstrokes – sometimes dark, strong, heavy lines or perhaps light, free and indirect curves. All of these qualities can be transferred to movement/dance. Rudolf Laban, esteemed dance & movement theoretician, categorised movement into four component parts:

Space: direct / indirect

Weight: heavy (strong) / light

Speed: sudden / sustained

Flow: bound / free

A physical punching action, for example, would have the qualities: direct; heavy; sudden; and bound.

- Try moving the arms with an indirect, light, sustained and free quality, like the clouds
- Try moving the arms with a direct, heavy and bound quality
- Try moving different parts of the body, or the whole body, with a range of qualities.

Now consider the quality of the brushstrokes in a painting – do the lines look sharp and straight (direct)? Do they look light and sustained?

- Study a painting and then try moving with the same quality as different brushstrokes identified, considering the movement components above
- Think about different art movements; how do the curved brushstrokes of Rococo paintings differ from the dotted markings in Pointillism.

Studying paintings in this way and transferring the qualities identified into movement is a wonderful way of 'getting in' to the painting – it is also a lot of fun!



Analysing the quality of brushstrokes may well lead to further observations and discussions. For example, how was the artist feeling when they painted certain works? It is well known that the turbulent emotions of Van Gogh, for example, can be seen in his art. His darker days produced paintings with heavy, sharp brushstrokes, often showing twisted, distorted shapes and sometimes continuous, tormented lines.

- Ask the children to imagine they are holding a paintbrush and paint an imaginary painting in response to the mood of a specific painting. What kind of brushstrokes will they choose?
- Ask the children to paint an imaginary painting reflecting their mood today. You may see if they are calm or excited, happy or sad. Notice that lighter, smoother, continuous movements suggest a calmer mood than sharp, sudden fast movements.

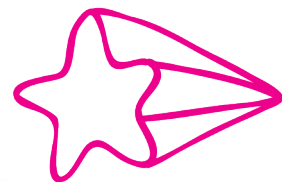
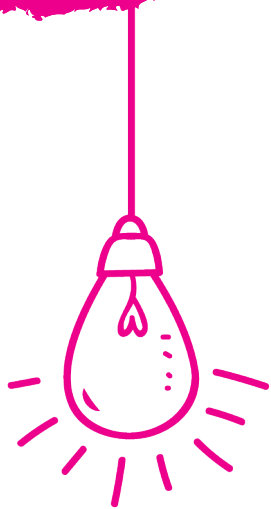
Recreating different brushstrokes can be a lot of fun and enables great expression of ideas and feelings. Don't limit this to just painting with an imaginary hand-held brush – imagine the whole body is covered in paint, then create masterpieces with the nose, elbow, knee or tummy! This can lead to the creation of some fantastic movement.

- Take 8 counts to paint the whole body in your favourite colour.
- Now draw shapes, letters and lines with all different parts of the body, from the nose to the knee!
- Consider the qualities of movement, as above, and also the size of the shapes. Are they big and bold or small and intricate?

Try linking with other areas of the curriculum, for example paint circles, squares and octagons to support maths or paint important words – big, small, fast or slow. Most of all enjoy being able to express a range of ideas and emotions though the body in response to inspiring pieces of visual art.

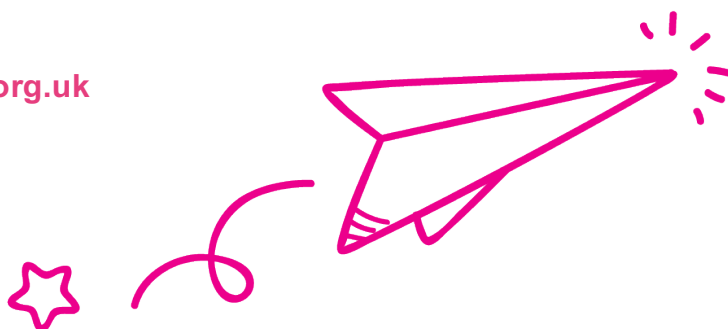
This blog has been created as part of a set in relation to a project that Artis have been running at the Guildhall Art Gallery: Off the Canvas

Supported by The City of London Corporation.



Artis is a creative learning charity who exist to ensure that every child reaps the benefits of a creative education at primary school. Artis firmly believes in the transformative power of the performing arts to change lives. We help thousands of children every week by integrating the arts throughout their learning. We believe that the most effective way to tackle cultural deprivation is through schools. Performing arts can deliver all aspects of the curriculum in a way that is inclusive of all children, regardless of their physical, mental, emotional or behavioural challenges.

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