



Painting Techniques - Faded Edges

Use the work of Georgia O'Keefe to learn ways to manipulate paint.

Materials

Images of Georgia O'Keefe's flower paintings.
Sketchbook.
Ready-mixed paint.
Paintbrushes - various sizes.

Clean water in pot.
Pale coloured sugar paper.
Viewfinder.
Fresh flowers or photos.
Chalk or pencil.

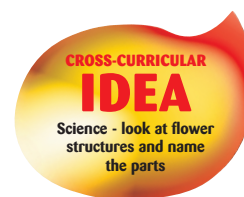
Method

PREPARATORY EXERCISE

- Look at the images of Georgia O'Keefe's flower paints and encourage the children to talk about them in general terms. Direct their attention to the way a dark colour fades into a lighter tone of the same colour in places.
- Model how to use a thin brush to paint a line of colour onto paper.
- Rinse the brush in clean water and show the children how to brush along the edge of the wet paint with clean water to move the colour across the page. This produces an area of paint that starts dark and fades out along the edge.
- Ask the children to experiment with this technique in their sketchbooks.

MAIN ACTIVITY

- Show the Georgia O'Keefe paintings to the children again, this time focussing their attention on the way O'Keefe seems to zoom in on specific areas of the flowers rather than painting the whole flower head. Also point out how many of Georgia O'Keefe's paintings are done in a very limited colour range e.g. shades of yellow and orange.
- The aim is for children to produce an image of a fantasy flower that is influenced by the work of Georgia O'Keefe but without copying her work.
- Use chalk or a pencil to draw their flower on to paper. This works best if the drawings are large, but A4 works well if small brushes are used. Using chalk gives the children confidence as they can easily rub it off or paint over it.
- Remind the children of the technique practised earlier and encourage them to use it when painting their flowers.
- It may be easier to do the main parts of the flower in one lesson then go back to add more detail in a second session e.g. stamens could be added when the rest of the painting is dry.
- When the paint is dry further layers of faded colour can be added over the top if desired.



Taking it Further

Work smaller to paint complete flowers instead of centres, cut out and display together. Compare with the way other artists paint flowers and learn their painting techniques. Restrict the colour range to add another challenge e.g. flowers in reds and oranges only.

The aim is to learn from the artist rather than simply copy which can leave children feeling that their own work doesn't measure up. By painting fantasy flowers they can use their imagination and focus on technique.