

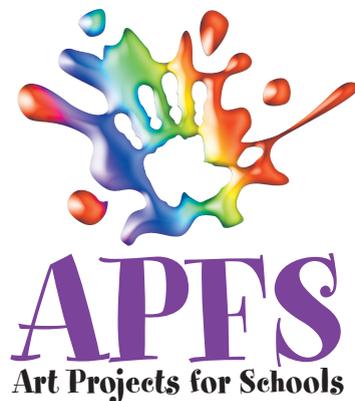
Issue 2

# Art Projects for Schools



Images may have been enlarged for photographic purposes.  
Artworks for projects must be no larger than A4.

Inspirational ideas and techniques  
for creative art projects



# Art Projects for Schools

- **Hands-on experience for children**
- **Nurture children's ability to think creatively**
- **Build self-esteem through the creation of high quality products**
- **Raise funds that can be used to invest in the school**

With the publication of The Rose Report and The Cambridge Primary Review the curriculum in primary schools is being examined and analysed more than it has been for many years. It's no wonder that many teachers feel pushed from pillar to post as one trend after another appears in the headlines. What we all seem to agree on is the need to help children develop their creative thinking and self-confidence. Armed with these and other elements, children are more likely to have the courage to experiment, explore and create.

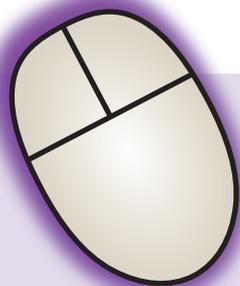
The ideas in this booklet have been written to help you and your children experiment with new designs as well as building skills in printmaking, drawing, collage and textiles. Importantly the ideas encourage children to have fun experimenting.

These ideas can be included in existing schemes of work or can be used as a discrete unit in Art or Design Technology. You will also find lots more ideas and information on our website, including National Curriculum references and clickable links to artists.

The content of this booklet has been written by Alison Couchman, a practising primary Art teacher since 1987. Alison also provides hands-on Art Inset to primary teachers. If you have any questions, suggestions or if you would like to show us how you have used these ideas with your pupils then please contact Alison on [alison@apfs.org.uk](mailto:alison@apfs.org.uk)

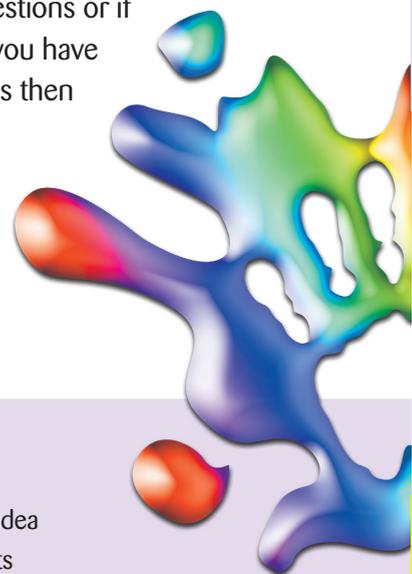


For more detailed information go to  
[www.apfs.org.uk](http://www.apfs.org.uk)



## On our website you will find:

- More detailed suggestions for cross-curricular work
- National Curriculum programme of study elements covered by each idea
- Clickable links that take you straight to images by the suggested artists
- Information to ensure the children get as much out of your involvement in the projects as possible.





# Clay Slab Printing

Combine working with clay with a light touch to make successful prints in order to develop and consolidate children's fine motor skills.

## Materials

- Ordinary school clay (not air-drying clay).
- Rolling pin.
- Variety of objects to press into the clay.
- Sponge.
- White ready-mixed paint.
- Coloured paper including tissue paper, sugar paper etc.

## Method

- Roll the clay out to produce a slab that is at least 3cm thick.
- Choose a variety of objects and press them into the clay to make patterns. If the children are unhappy with their patterns they can simply re-roll the clay.
- Use the sponge to dab some white paint all over the clay surface, covering it as evenly as possible.
- Lay a sheet of coloured paper on top of the painted clay and smooth over with a flat hand.
- Peel the paper off the clay carefully and evenly, making sure not to lift it too quickly.
- Lay the prints flat to dry. Trim if desired.
- Wipe the excess paint off the clay and it can be used again as normal. If paint has dried on the clay use a wire clay cutter to trim the paint-covered section away and throw it out before wrapping the rest of the clay up, making sure it is air-tight so that it can be used again.



## Taking it Further

Experiment with printing on different types of paper and using different colours of paint. Try allowing the first layer of paint to dry, then printing again with a different colour. Consider directing the children to use flowing patterns, angular or symmetrical patterns.



## Decisions, decisions

This activity helps improve fine motor skills and involves a lot of decision-making. Encourage the children to explain their choices to improve speaking and listening.



# Animal Inspirations

Use pictures of animals to inspire investigation into patterns and animal markings. This could be extended into learning about animal habitats.

## Materials

A4 Cartridge paper.  
Ready-mixed paint.  
Paint brushes.  
Mixing tray or palette.  
Coloured paper.  
Glue.  
Scissors.

## Method

- Look at pictures of animals that have clear markings e.g. blotchy cows, stripy zebras, scaly snakes etc. Discuss with the children, focusing on the markings on each animal.
- Ask the children to choose an animal and paint the appropriate colour all over the cartridge paper e.g. which colour is the background on a zebra - white or black?
- When the paint is dry cut or tear the coloured paper into the appropriate shapes for the chosen animal.
- Glue the coloured paper onto the painted background to create the animal skin.

## Taking it Further

Rather than paint the background, use a different coloured paper - select one colour for the background and one for the animal markings. Try adding textured material to the background, making sure to choose materials that are appropriate for the chosen animal. Use the same animal for every child and get them to look at each other's work and make some positive comments.



## Talking About the Animals

Start with the children finding ways to describe the animal skins. Focus on talking about shape and pattern as this will help them clarify what they need to do when it comes to making their own animal patterns.



# Oil Pastel Resist Strips

Experiment by making marks on strips of fabric and investigate the concept of resist.

## Materials

Cotton or polyester/cotton torn into strips approx 6cm wide.  
Oil pastels.  
Brusho® powder dye mixed with water.  
Paint brushes.  
Newspaper.

## Method

- Prepare the Brusho® by mixing it with water to the desired colour strength. Bear in mind the colour will always dry slightly lighter.
- Demonstrate the resist process to the children using the oil pastels on the fabric and then brushing over with Brusho® colour.
- Ask the children to make a variety of marks on the fabric using their choice of oil pastel colour. This could include drawing, colouring, taking rubbings etc.
- Once the marks are made the children need to add the Brusho®, choosing a colour or colours that will complement the colour of oil pastel they have used.
- Hang the fabric strips to dry.
- Once the strips are dry, discuss with the children what they could do with the strips next or how they want to display them. They can be hung individually or from a hoop, attached to a cane or stick, woven neatly together or woven in and out of some wide plastic mesh.
- There are a variety of ways to use this idea as part of one of the APFS projects. For example, weave the strips together and the resulting fabric will be scanned by APFS. Alternatively take digital photographs of the work and they can be used in the project. Remember, artwork must be max A4 size if taking part in one of the APFS projects.



## Taking it Further

Use the decorated fabric strips as part of a physical activity, maybe in PE or Dance, by attaching the strips to canes and waving them in the air. Draw shapes in the air and the fabric will make lovely movements. If this activity is done in the summer the strips could be woven into the fencing around the playground. Alternatively, they could be hung from a tree in the school grounds.

## Prepare to Investigate

This activity is all about investigating and less confident children may need more support if they are unused to working in such an experimental way. You may wish to set parameters for some elements of the activity e.g. use only warm or cool colours and make flowing marks on the fabric.



## Key Stage 1

# Collage Circles

Use the local environment and the work of British land artist Richard Long to stimulate collage work. This activity offers great opportunities for kinaesthetic learning as well as speaking and listening.

## Materials

Images of Richard Long's work, particularly his circle images.  
Information about the work of Richard Long, what he does and what inspires him.

Found materials (if you have walked outside).

Variety of materials including textured papers, fabrics, packaging materials etc.

Glue.

Scissors.

Stiff backing card.

## Method

- Show the children the work of Richard Long. Talk about the way he has walked through various landscapes and how he only uses materials in the area rather than bringing other materials in. Use an Interactive Whiteboard to show images at large scale if possible.
- Look at the materials he used, his approach to his work and his methods of making circles.
- If possible, go for a walk around the school grounds or in the local area and collect materials found on your walk. Make sure children wear gloves and/or wash hands afterwards.
- If not working outside give the children as wide a variety of materials as possible. Let the children sort through them and choose what will work well together. Ask them to describe what they have chosen and why.
- The best results are gained from using one material for each circle and by being inventive in the way that material is used.
- Ask the children to cut or tear their chosen material into pieces.
- Draw a circle on the backing card and cut it out. Different sized circles can be made by a number of children.
- Arrange the material on the circle, overlapping and manipulating it until a pleasing arrangement is achieved.
- Glue the material down and allow to dry.



## Taking it Further

Try working on a very large scale with children making circles collaboratively in groups. Work on a much smaller scale adding lots of small circles onto a backing board. Produce giant circles using children's shoes, PE equipment, jumpers or any other temporary materials. This could be done outside in dry weather or in the school hall. Take digital photographs and discuss which materials are the most effective and why. Walk in the school grounds or a local park and collect only natural materials to use. Make sure the children only pick up what is on the ground and avoid damaging plants and trees. Ensure they wear disposable gloves and wash their hands afterwards. Look at the work of other land artists such as Andy Goldsworthy, Chris Drury or Michael Heizer.

## Environmental Art

Being aware of the potential of materials in the immediate environment will help the children extend their creative thinking. It is an ideal opportunity to work collaboratively and extend social skills too.



# Skeleton Trees

Create strange and isolated landscapes in silhouette using ink and wash techniques. Ideal for illustrating creative writing or as a starting point for the use of descriptive language.

## Materials

Good quality A4 cartridge paper.  
Watercolour paints.  
Paintbrushes.  
Clean water.  
Black ink.  
Drinking straws.

## Method

- Brush across the whole page with clean water.
- Immediately put a wash of watercolour on top of the wet paper allowing the colours to bleed into each other.
- Allow the paper to dry completely.
- Paint a line of black ink along the bottom of the paper and use a drinking straw to blow the ink upwards into shapes. Aim to make the shapes look like spiky branches if possible.
- If necessary, add another line of black ink on top of the first one and continue to blow the ink up the paper into tree shapes.
- Allow to dry completely before mounting and putting on display.

## Taking it Further

After the work is dry it could be used as an illustration for a story like the work of illustrator Jan Pienkowski. Alternatively, use the finished pieces as stimulus for writing by thinking up a series of descriptive words to describe the scene. Work on a giant scale on much bigger paper and working in groups to create the trees. Look at photographs of sunsets from around the world and compare the colours to see if there are any differences - link this to work in Geography.



## Art Before Writing

This activity lends itself to links with Literacy. Try starting with the Art and using the results as stimulus for writing. Read books by Jan Pienkowski and enjoy sharing the illustrations.

# Patterned Papers

Experiment with different ways of using paint on paper to create patterns then use the papers to make a landscape collage.

## Method

- First choose your landscape e.g. deserts will need sandy colours & seascapes will need blues and greens.
- Mix the paint to the colour required then add a blob of PVA glue and stir well. This gives the paint more body and allows any textures to be retained when dry.
- Make sure the tools are at hand as they are needed as soon as the paint is applied.
- Paint the first colour over the top half of a sheet of A4 paper and then create the pattern by scraping into it immediately.
- Patterns can be created if you;
  - scrape straight lines with a piece of card
  - use the end of a paintbrush handle and scratch swirls into the paint
  - cut notches in a piece of card and drag it into waves
  - scrape plastic fork prongs through thick paint
  - make criss-cross patterns with the edge of a piece of card
- Use short brush strokes with a flat brush, placing them at many different angles - thick paint is best
- Experiment and create 6 - 8 different patterns on the A4 paper using a variety of colours appropriate to the landscape you will make.
- Leave the painted papers to dry.
- Design your landscape on a sheet of A4 paper, roughly sketching out the shapes of the hills and valleys and other features. Don't bother putting in any detail.
- Work from the background to the foreground i.e. put the sky in place first.
- Once the sky and land are glued onto the sheet of A4 paper add any other details such as hills, rivers or lakes.
- Cut out the detail from the painted papers (e.g. trees) and move these around on the picture until you are happy with their position. Glue into place.
- Allow to dry and trim the edges if necessary.

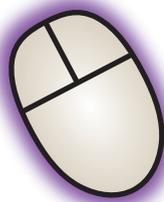
## Materials

- Cartridge paper - 3 or 4 A4 sheets per child.
- Ready-mixed paint.
- PVA glue.
- Paintbrushes - round and flat brushes.
- Clean water in pots.
- Small pieces of thick card.
- Glue spreaders.
- Other tools to create texture e.g. plastic forks.



## Taking it Further

Try a range of different pictures - the patterned papers look really good if made into big flowers. Work collaboratively in groups to make much larger pictures - you could go to larger than life size and pin to a display board. Try adding textures rather than patterns. You will need a range of tools to experiment with, making sure you have mixed some PVA glue into the paint as this helps it retain the texture.



For more detailed information go to  
[www.apfs.org.uk](http://www.apfs.org.uk)

## Patterns, Patterns and More Patterns

This activity enables children to not only explore pattern but also to experiment with the different ways that paint can be applied. This knowledge can then be applied to future pieces of work.



# Glue Pictures

Draw raised, textured pictures with PVA and finish with metallic paints and shoe polish for an antique look.

## Materials

Firm cardboard.

PVA glue in a nozzle bottle.

Pencil.

Gold paint - acrylic or water-based.

Paint brush.

Black or dark brown shoe polish.

Soft cloth.

## Method

- Draw a simple image onto the card with a pencil - make sure the pencil is used lightly.
- Test the thickness of line that can be achieved with the PVA in the nozzle bottle - test on scrap paper or newspaper. If the line is too thick either use a different bottle or try making the hole in the nozzle smaller by covering with some sticky tape.
- Draw carefully over the lines of the picture using the PVA glue. Try to keep the pressure steady on the bottle so that the line is the same thickness all round.
- Add decorative lines or dots around the picture if desired.
- Allow to dry overnight - this may take a little longer in cold weather.
- If using water-based gold paint add a blob of PVA and mix well. This will essentially turn it into an acrylic paint and help it adhere to the card and dried glue.
- Paint over the whole picture and card, making sure every part is covered right to the edges.
- Allow to dry.
- To make the picture look aged and antique put a little dark shoe polish on a soft cloth and rub lightly all over. Take a clean cloth or tissue and rub lightly again, lifting some of the shoe polish away. Leave this to dry for at least 24 hours so that the shoe polish will not come off on your hands.



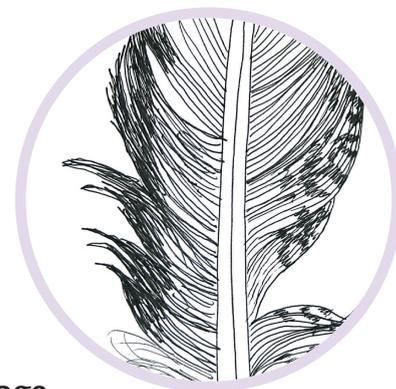
## Taking it Further

Try making picture frames with this technique - look at some of the ornate gold frames on pictures in local galleries or online for inspiration. Use this technique on circles of card to make medals or coins - this could be linked to a topic in History.

## Something Old... Something New...

The children are engaged in making something new that looks old. Encourage them to speculate about other occasions when this might be done e.g. reproduction furniture and so extend Speaking and Listening skills.

# Natural Form Line Drawings



Focus closely on a natural object and create strong, linear drawings. Develop and consolidate observation skills with this activity.

## Materials

A4 cartridge paper.  
Drawing pencils, HB or 2B grade.  
Natural objects e.g. feathers, onions, red cabbage, wood with clear grain.  
Viewfinder.

## Method

- Look closely at the natural form and select an area that has strong linear qualities - find a part that you find particularly interesting.
- Use a viewfinder to isolate the chosen area. You can make a viewfinder from paper or card by simply cutting out a square or rectangular section from the centre and laying it over whatever you are looking at.
- The viewfinder helps to isolate the interesting area so that you can concentrate on it without being distracted by other parts of the object.
- Draw the section in the viewfinder onto paper, enlarging it and focusing on using only lines. Make sure the lines go in the same direction as the object and try to make the shapes and proportions as accurate as possible.
- Sometimes it can be nice to trace the pencil drawing onto a second piece of paper and this time go over the lines with a thin black pen and fill in any areas that you feel would look better if they were more defined.
- Trim and mount the drawings. If each child has drawn the same object the finished work looks great if displayed edge to edge on the wall.



## Taking it Further

Use the finished drawings as the basis for print making - try drawing into a sheet of compressed polystyrene and print onto coloured paper. Alternatively make a print block by gluing string onto thick card. Coat lightly with PVA and allow to dry to make the print block long-lasting.

## Simplifying with Line

This exercise enables the children to really focus in on one small area of an object and to strip it back to simple linear elements. Taking away the tonal qualities makes the children look at shape, form and pattern and helps extend their observation skills. There is enormous scope to extend into other media if the children are really enjoying this work.

# Developing Visual Literacy

Children live in a very visual world and the number of ways that they are exposed to visual images seems to be increasing almost daily. Visual Literacy includes absolutely anything that we see including street signs, drawing, painting, sculpture, television, facial expressions, body language, computer images, text and images in books, adverts seen anywhere... etc. The majority of classrooms now seem to have interactive whiteboards which gives teachers access to a huge range of visual resources to add stimulus and interest to lessons.

In 2005 the DfES did a study called 'Raising Boys' Achievement' and this centred round the effective use of visual imagery and how it can improve the writing performance of boys in school. In brief their findings were that by using visual imagery:

- the quantity & quality of writing increased
- boys showed a wider use of vocabulary and greater use of imagery
- there was increased fluency
- writing became more adventurous
- boys showed an improved attitude to writing
- there was greater engagement with writing
- boys in particular had greater commitment to writing
- there was improved motivation, self-esteem and enthusiasm.

Both boys and girls benefit from developing and improving their visual literacy and it will benefit every area of their learning. The following are a few extra ideas to get you started...

## Film Clips

Use short clips to prompt discussion as well as to motivate story writing. For example you could show a short clip and the children then have to continue the story, or use a clip to discuss characters and to generate nouns and adjectives. Free film clips can be found at:  
[www.freeict.com](http://www.freeict.com)  
[www.filmeducation.org](http://www.filmeducation.org)  
[www.britishpathe.com](http://www.britishpathe.com) (film clips and stills)

## Using Real Pictures

Use pictures from real life either by collecting them from newspapers and magazines or ask the children to bring in favourite photographs of their own. These pictures can be used to stimulate speaking & listening activities or for discussion followed by writing. Give the children a picture to discuss in groups which can then be used as a starting point for collaborative writing activities.

Pictures of people make fantastic starting points for writing about characters and use of adjectives. Alternatively, you can use a picture of several people for work on direct speech by giving children a copy of the picture on which they can draw speech bubbles or use Post-it® notes on the original picture. This can later be written up with speech marks and punctuation.

## Different Viewpoints

Give children an image of a group of people. This can be a photograph, a painting or a still from a film. The children's task is to decide what the overall situation is then write about it from the viewpoint of each person in the image. This helps develop empathy with characters and also makes them look at how each person can see the same situation from a very different stance.

## Advertising

This activity is most suited for KS2 children but could be done in a simplified form with children at the top end of KS1. We are all bombarded with adverts so it is good to step back and analyse them a bit. The adverts used can be from printed media or could be excerpts from television adverts. Ask the children to look at the images that are used and also at the printed or spoken words. How do the two work together to persuade us to buy the product? How do the adverts make them feel? What do the advertisers do to make us want what they are selling?

## Illustrated Dictionaries

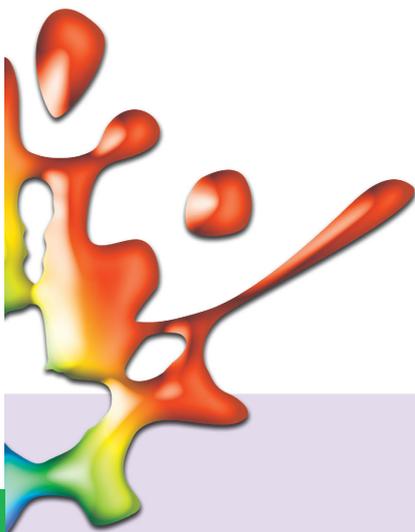
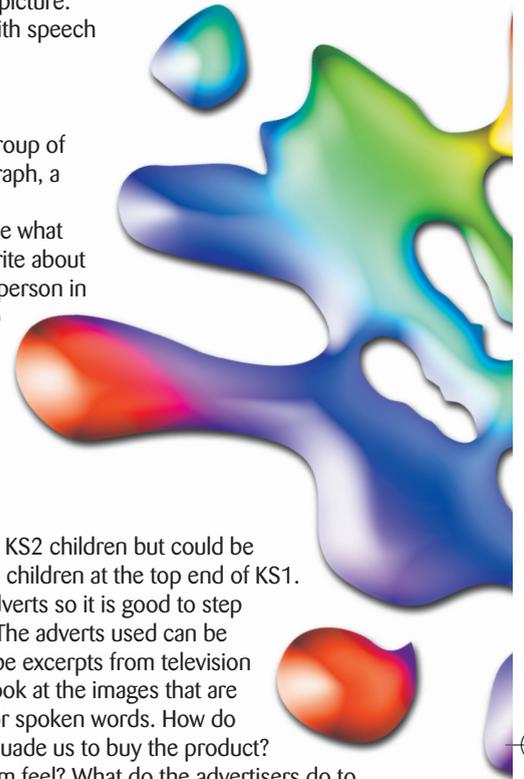
This activity can be done with any age and ability as it will be differentiated by outcome. Everyone can collaborate on creating a class dictionary that illustrates each letter. The dictionaries could be themed to suit a current topic e.g. The Victorians or Myself. You could also bring in some ICT skills by making a version with sound and movement using PowerPoint.

## Picture This!

Give the children a sheet of A4 paper and describe a picture to them in simple stages. They will need some colouring pencils or other media. For example, you could choose a still life by Paul Cezanne to describe - it will contain objects that are familiar to the children but you will need to describe the position of each object. You could get the children to sketch the picture first then give them some information about colours.

If you would like more information about Visual Literacy there is an enormous amount on the internet including books that are aimed at primary teachers. If you do try any of these ideas it would be great to send us some examples. We will put your ideas on our website to inspire other teachers. Just contact our Art teacher Alison Couchman by emailing [alison@apfs.org.uk](mailto:alison@apfs.org.uk)

For more detailed information go to  
[www.apfs.org.uk](http://www.apfs.org.uk)



Looking at the work of artists, craftspeople and designers helps children to develop their powers of observation and discrimination. It helps them to form opinions about the Art of others as well as their own work, and to exercise their creative thinking skills. It also contributes towards the development of visual literacy.

The following artists have been suggested as their work can be used as a point of reference for each of the ideas and techniques described in this booklet. There is a similarity of style or content, an illustration of technique or composition that should prove helpful when working on these projects.

Go to our website at [www.apfs.org.uk](http://www.apfs.org.uk) to find more information about the artists and clickable links that will take you straight to images of their work.

### Clay Slab Printing

Kasimir Malevich	Gustav Klimt	Graham Tjupurrula
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### Animal Inspirations

Jonathan Newey	Pip McGarry	Anne Corless
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### Oil Pastel Resist Strips

Wassily Kandinsky	Cy Twombly	Friedensreich Hundertwasser
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### Collage Circles

Richard Long	Andy Goldsworthy	Chris Drury
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### Skeleton Trees

Jan Pienkowski	Aubrey Beardsley	Ruben Toledo
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### Patterned Papers

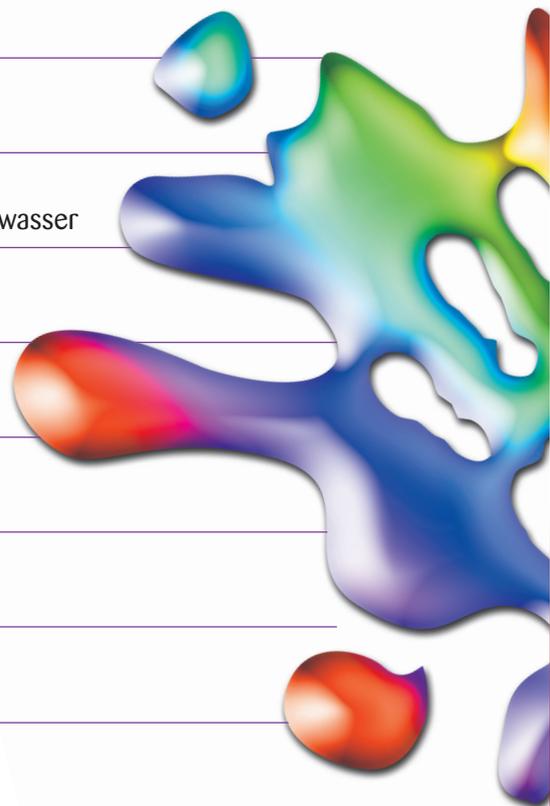
Stanley Hayter	Sam Francis	Robert Delaunay
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### Glue Pictures

Vincent van Gogh	Jackson Pollock	Keith Haring
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### Natural Form Line Drawings

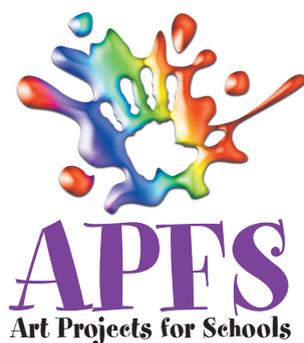
Leonardo da Vinci	Ann Swan	Botanical Art
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## APFS Projects

Art Projects for Schools offer a wide range of engaging projects which can be used to enhance cross-curricular work or can be completed as stand-alone units. For details visit [www.apfs.org.uk](http://www.apfs.org.uk) where you will also find feedback from schools that have taken part in our projects.

**The Schools Art Project, The Calendar Project, The Christmas Card Project, Children as Designers, The Design a Card Project, The Academic Year Calendar Project, Leavers' Gifts, The Art of Sport.**



For more detailed information go to  
[www.apfs.org.uk](http://www.apfs.org.uk)

Stimulation for Children : Support for Art : Funds for Schools

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