

War artists: Lowry, Sutherland, Ardizzone

Lesson Objectives ~

The work of war artists.
The use of complementary actions in a duet.

Success Criteria ~

Clear observations of a painting by one of three well-known British war artists.
Contrast between sudden, jagged shapes and smooth, flowing actions.

Warm up

Ask pupils to find a space and to use one hand to draw / paint a house in the air.
Encourage them to make their actions as big as possible. Use prompts to guide them to change levels, reach and change weight from side to side - eg 'Has your building got a chimney? Does it have flowers in front? How many windows does it have?'

Ask pupils to use a different body part and draw a picture of a lighthouse, or a dog, or a tree, or a bicycle...

With each different object change to a different body part. This can be guided by you or suggestions from the group.

Flexibility

Context

Explain that during wars and battles artists are employed to record events for information, propaganda or to commemorate - often showing people preparing, waiting, fighting or celebrating.

The following notes depend upon which artist you choose to focus on:

- LS Lowry (1887 - 1976)
- Graham Sutherland (1903 - 1980)
- Edward Ardizzone (1900 - 1979)

Select one thread and follow that accordingly:

LS Lowry

Context

One of the war artists from World War 2 was LS Lowry and his painting *Blitzed Site (1942)* is probably one of his best known from this time.

Clicking on the link will display the painting in Google Arts and Culture.

Lowry

Creative Exploration

Ask pupils to look at a copy of *Blitzed Site* by Lowry and describe the image.
Guide the children to look at the use of lines at different angles and consider words that might describe this - 'angular', 'pointed', 'sharp', 'jagged', 'serrated', 'ragged', 'jumbled', 'chaotic', 'random', 'erratic', etc.

Ask pupils to make a jagged shape...and another...and another...and another...
Encourage them to change level and direction each time they change shape.

Ask pupils to spend the next 2 minutes making a sudden jagged shape, then travelling to a different place in the room and then making a different jagged shape.

Add the music and describe what you see pupils doing.

With an able group you could ask them to 'paint' their way between shapes - they could select for themselves which body part they use each time.

Angular shapes + travelling

War artists: Lowry, Sutherland, Ardizzone**Lesson Objectives ~**

The work of war artists.
The use of complementary actions in a duet.

Success Criteria ~

Clear observations of a painting by one of three well-known British war artists.
Contrast between sudden, jagged shapes and smooth, flowing actions.

Creative exploration

Ask pupils to find a partner and a space together.
Ask pupils to label themselves A and B.
Ask person A to repeat the previous task.
Ask person B to imagine that they are a war artist and when their partner makes one of their jagged shapes they should use part of their body as a brush and trace around their partner as if painting the image they are creating.
Allow the pairs approximately 1 minute before changing roles.
If time permits allow the pairs to have more than one opportunity at each role.
Encourage the 'painter' to move with their partner as they travel around the room.

Complementary shapes + actions

Creative exploration

Ask the pairs to repeat the task but now changing roles after every jagged shape.
Ask the painter to ensure that they travel over, under or around their partner as if exploring a blitzed location before selecting the image that they will paint.
It is likely that pupils will largely revert to using their hands to 'paint'. To add a greater challenge you could suggest that they are NOT allowed to use their hands.
Add the music and allow the pairs 3 minutes or so for this task.
Describe what you see pupils doing - eg 'Dominic is carefully stretching his elbow really high' or 'Cerys is painting fast, long strokes'.

Complementary shapes + actions

Performance

Team one pair with another.
Ask one pair to perform and the other pair to film or observe.
Ask the viewing pair to consider:
*** Is there a contrast of dynamic - the suddenness of the jagged shapes and the smoother painting actions?**
*** Do the shapes / actions between the pair complement each other?**
*** Does the 'painter' travel over, under or around their partner?**
After a minute or so ask the viewing / filming pair to feedback before changing over roles.
If time permits allow an extra minute or two for the groups to re-run their duets in order to apply the suggestions / comments made.

Analysis

Cool down

Ask pupils to say goodbye to their partner and find a space again.
Remind them that Lowry was famous for the way he elongated the figures in his paintings.
Ask pupils to extend their bodies in different directions - eg stretch an arm to the side, stretch a leg to the front, reach head towards the ceiling.
Encourage pupils to lengthen, twist, bend, arch or tilt.

Rhythm

Graham Sutherland

Context

Ask pupils to look at a copy of Graham Sutherland's painting *Devastation, 1941: An East End Street* and describe the image.
Clicking on the link opens an image of the painting at the Tate Gallery in London.
Guide pupils to notice how the two sides of the street appear to mirror each other.

Sutherland

Lesson Objectives ~

The work of war artists.
The use of complementary actions in a duet.

Success Criteria ~

Clear observations of a painting by one of three well-known British war artists.
Contrast between sudden, jagged shapes and smooth, flowing actions.

Creative exploration

Ask pupils to find a partner and face each other.
Ask them to label themselves A and B.
Ask them to take 1 minute for person A to lead the action and for person B to mirror them.
Since the image is very sparse and there is a sense of emptiness within it, guide pupils to move slowly and to pause occasionally.
Change over roles and allow another 1 minute or so.

Draw pupils' attention back to the painting and the clear use of horizontal and vertical lines.
Ask them to repeat the mirroring tasks, but to find different ways of making clear horizontal or vertical lines with different parts of the body and remind them of the moments of stillness.
Add the music and allow another minute or so for each pupil to lead.

Mirroring

Creative exploration

Repeat the task one more time, this time drawing pupils' attention to the use of perspective in the picture - how the houses further away are smaller.
Ask them to include actions of different sizes, as well as use of vertical and horizontal lines while mirroring.
Add the music and describe what you see pupils doing.

Mirroring

Creative exploration

Ask pupils to remain in their pairs but this time whatever person A does, person B should try to find something contrasting: eg if A reaches upwards, then B might reach down or forwards (contrasting direction); or they might turn or jump (contrasting action); if A moved quickly, B might move slowly (contrasting dynamics).
Generally it is easiest to arrange this using 'question and answer': ie A performs an action followed by a response from B.
Less experienced pupils are likely to use opposites. So add more challenge by encouraging them to consider alternatives.
Allow 1 minute or so before changing roles.

Contrast

Composition

Ask the pairs to join with another duet.
Remind them of the two tasks:
* Mirroring using line, pauses and different sizes.
* Contrasting a partner using action, space, dynamics.

Ask one pair to face each other and perform the mirroring task.
Ask the other pair to stand behind each of them and perform the 'contrast' task.
After approximately 1 minute change over roles.

Ask pupils to look at the painting once more and see how their mirroring moves echo the facades of the buildings. Then ask them to consider what their contrasting movements might reflect.
Pupils will probably refer to the ruins behind the facades which are irregular and contrasting. However, they may interpret these actions as representing the chaos that will have gone on before or the mood of the painting.

Formations

Lesson Objectives ~

The work of war artists.
The use of complementary actions in a duet.

Success Criteria ~

Clear observations of a painting by one of three well-known British war artists.
Contrast between sudden, jagged shapes and smooth, flowing actions.

Performing

Select 2 or 3 groups to show / film their work and for the others to comment upon:
* The formation and how it links to the painting.
* The use of mirroring and contrast - what these communicate.
Ask them to reflect upon whether mirroring or contrasting was harder.

Analysis**Cool down**

Ask pupils to make one large circle.
Ask them to copy the actions of yourself - or a confident performer in the group - trying to stay perfectly in time with one another.
Allow different children to take the lead as appropriate.

Mirroring / copying**Edward Ardizzone****Context**

Ask pupils to look at a copy of Edward Ardizzone's painting *With the Invasion Fleet... Dawn, July 10th 1943* and describe the image.
Clicking on the link opens an image of the painting at the Imperial War Museum. Use the '+' and '-' controls to zoom in and out of the painting.
Guide pupils to notice how the soldiers in the image are connected and why that might be.

Ardizzone**Creative exploration**

Ask pupils to find a partner and stand one behind the other.
Ask the person at the front to be the leader and the person at the back to place a hand on their shoulder in order to be guided around the space.
Encourage the lead pupil to travel at a steady pace and to allow sufficient space for themselves and their partner.
Allow 1 minute or so before changing roles.

Ask for suggestions for other ways they might be able to connect in order to lead their partner safely around the space.
With each suggestion allow 30 to 40 seconds per child.
Try three or four suggestions in total.

Ask pupils to think of their own connection and to try that. Then with each change of roles ask them to find a new connection.
If you have pupils that are uncomfortable with physical contact you can use a prop such as a length of ribbon to be the connection.

Leading and following**Creative exploration**

Remind or inform pupils of the difficulty the soldiers would have faced with the various obstacles they may have encountered.
Ask the pairs to create a still shape in which they are connected in some way - this could include a counter-balance where they are pushing together or pulling apart; a support where one person is leaning on the other; or a complementary shape where they blend together or link in some way.
Ask the pairs to find another...and another...and another...
Encourage pupils to use different levels, to consider asymmetrical shapes and to try connecting using body parts other than just hands.

Contact work

War artists: Lowry, Sutherland, Ardizzone

Lesson Objectives ~

The work of war artists.
The use of complementary actions in a duet.

Success Criteria ~

Clear observations of a painting by one of three well-known British war artists.
Contrast between sudden, jagged shapes and smooth, flowing actions.

Composition

**Organise the class so that half are making their still shapes from the previous task, while the other half are performing the leading and following work from earlier.
Encourage the leading and following group to travel over, under, around and through the still shapes.**

*Add the music and guide pupils when to change over.
Change over so that all pupils have had a minute or so at each role.
If possible film the work so that they can watch it back afterwards.*

Improvisation

Cool down

Ask pupils to get into a group of 4 and line up one behind the other and rest a hand on the shoulder of the person in front of them.

Ask the lead person to guide their group carefully around the room following an erratic pathway ensuring that the quartet remain connected.

With experienced groups you could ask the 3 followers to close their eyes or you could increase the number in the group.

Leading and following

Music