

*Explore form, shape and space and help children to engage with their artwork, whatever media they use*

More often than not, we tend to describe artworks in terms of their content, whether it's Monet's field covered in poppies or Damien Hirst's shark suspended in a tank. What unites these diverse artists, however, is the concern that each has with the formal elements of art and design, and of these elements shape, form and space are the ones that all artists, working in all media, engage with through their work.

The same is true for children making art in school. Whatever process they are engaged in, form and space is a challenge that they will frequently face. On these pages you will find activities that will support children as they determine shape, form and space through using drawing, painting, ICT, wire and clay modelling, casting and collage.

### Key vocabulary

#### Shape

- Regular/irregular
- Geometric/organic

#### Form

- 2D/3D
- Malleable/rigid
- Liquid/solid

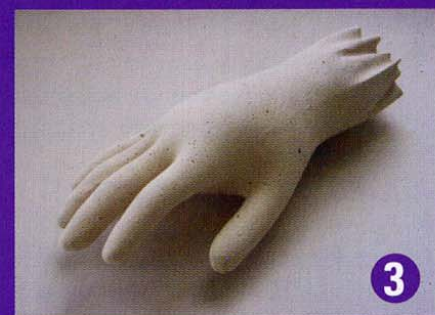
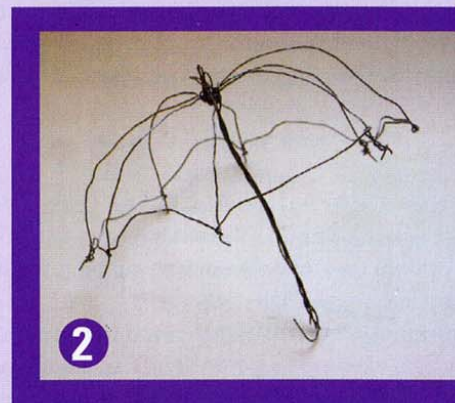
#### Space

- 'Flat' space on the page
- 'Created' space within a picture

### Form

#### 1 Dimensional

Work in three dimensions is often under-represented in schools. Teachers can lack confidence with sculpture processes and the practical demands of making and storing work can be problematic. However, many children respond positively and creatively to the challenge of working with clay, plaster, papier mâché and other materials, each of which has its own unique qualities. The starting point for this sculpture was a detail of a Renoir painting, although using observational drawings to inform sculptures is an ideal starting point. When using clay, always provide children with opportunities to experiment and play with the material before making anything specific. Then encourage them to look closely at their source material before moulding the essential forms of their sculpture. Details can be added at a later stage – remind children to cross-hatch surfaces before joining them, as wet clay will strengthen the join.



#### 2 Sculpture

Sculptor Henry Moore talked about the importance of 'truth to materials' and, when using a material such as modelling wire, it is important to focus on its strengths rather than to try and persuade it to do a job it's not qualified to do. This sculpture of an umbrella shows sensitivity to the structure of the object and its linear form. The wire has been twisted along the handle to increase its thickness and knotted at the joins around the edge. Try experimenting with developing wire sculptures by combining other materials, such as tissue paper or Mod-Roc.

#### 3 Casting

Plaster is a great material for children to work with. It also provides opportunities for them to link their work in art with their learning in science, specifically about how materials can change. In its liquid form, plaster can be poured into a container and allowed to set, before the container is removed to reveal the solid plaster cast of the inside of the shape. For the above example, a rubber glove was filled with plaster and left suspended vertically for an hour before the glove was peeled away to reveal a perfect – if somewhat ghostly – hand! Casts can be taken from children's hands too – press the hand into clay, then remove and fill the cavity with plaster.

# Form, shape





## Shape

### 4 Zigzag

As children progress through Key Stage 2, many grow less confident in their ability to make representational works of art. Providing opportunities for children to experiment with shape and pattern, with no pressure to make a recognisable image, is one way of encouraging them to realise their creative potential. Painting 4 is a good example of an activity accessible to all children – a single zigzag line was drawn in pencil across the whole surface and only two colours were used to complete the painting. Note that the colours chosen are complementary (opposite on the spectrum) and that a range of tones of each has been used.

### 5 ICT

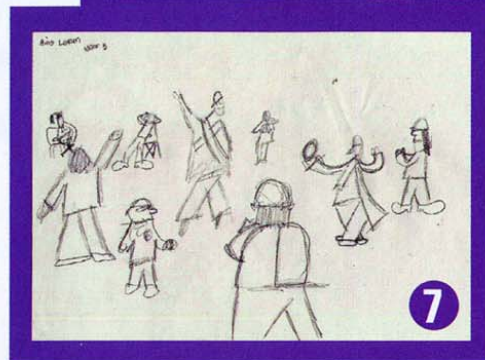
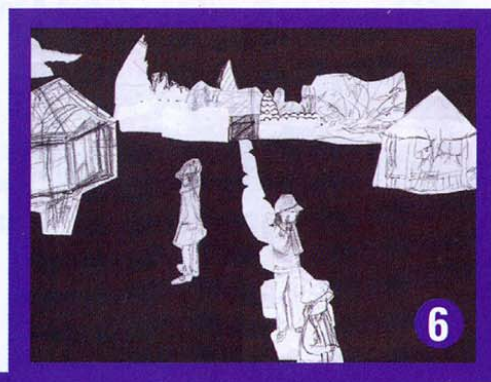
Image 5 was created using ICT software for a cross-curricular project that linked art with geography. The project aimed to emphasise the abstract qualities of maps and aerial photographs. Image searches on the internet revealed hundreds of maps and photographs, that inspired paintings and prints. For this piece, a small section of a map of the local area was chosen as a starting point for the composition, with various brushes and luminous colours being used to transform the grids of streets into a collection of dynamic abstract shapes.



## Space

### 6 Real space

Representing 'real' space in their drawings can be a real challenge for children. This collage (right) was made following lessons in which children made two sets of observational drawings, first of each other, and second of different 'backgrounds' from around the school. The drawings were photocopied – some enlarged, some reduced – and for the third lesson children made collages using the photocopies, concentrating on placing the larger figures in the foreground and the smaller ones in the background, thereby creating a sense of space in their collages. In Nina's collage you can see that she has also made sophisticated use of the horizon as a further device for creating a convincing representation of space on the page.



### 7 Drawing

Having completed their collages, children then made drawings based upon them. Most included detail in their backgrounds, and created a sense of space through establishing a foreground, middle ground and background. However, Billy's drawing is particularly impressive – it is evident that he does not even need to include any background detail in order to convince us that his people are existing in 'real' space. Through careful positioning of the figures in

relation to one another – once again, larger figures in the foreground and smaller ones in the background – he enables us to 'read' the space between the figures and to create real space by leaving out detail rather than including it. ■

# e and space