

ARTIST PRACTITIONERS IN SCHOOLS

SUE'S BLOG



Inspiration for Creative Learning

MARK MAKING AND WORK OF ANGIE LEWIN
WITH Y1' CHILDREN

CREATIVE PRACTITIONER - SUE LOUGHLIN

MARK MAKING AND THE WORK OF ANGIE LEWIN Y1

Upon receiving this particular project outline, the artist Angie Lewin was unfamiliar to me. I therefore began the process of planning for the sessions by researching her work. I was delighted to discover that Angie Lewin creates wonderful graphic prints based upon nature. I thought the images were very inspirational in terms of the line, colour, pattern, style and process. I felt that the students would enjoy using her images as inspiration and set about breaking down the project into a variety of key areas relating the artist's work, as well as, the key objective of understanding different forms of mark making.



Unlike all the other sessions I worked on, this planning was unique in that the sessions would take place within the school's designated Art Room. Additionally, each of the two groups would only have one hour each, with these hours happening back to back. The resulting logistical issues did present some challenges, particularly relating to the amount of actual making time each group would experience and also with respect to resourcing practicalities with the very quick turn around between sessions. However, with the amazing support of the staff involved, these issues were mostly negated. Once the planning was in place the project evolved as follows:

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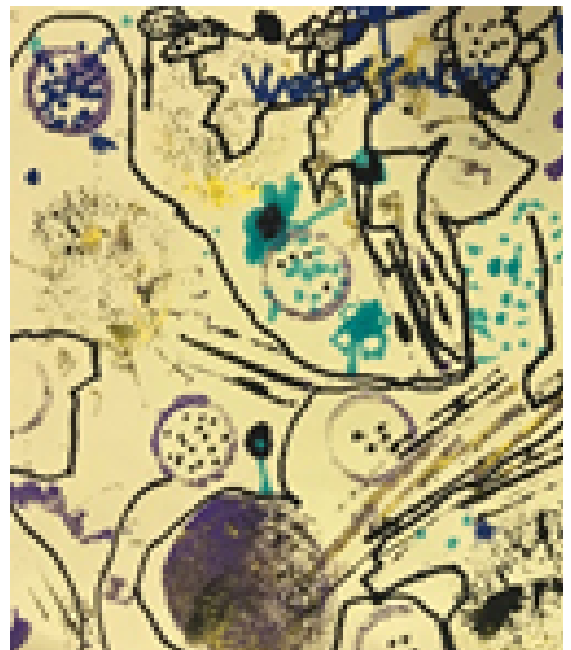
SESSION ONE

Within Angie Lewin's work line is particularly prominent and she uses linear marks in both representational and abstract formats. The aim of the first session therefore, was to help students to understand the visual language of line and how images can communicate ideas without the need for words. We started by talking about Angie Lewin and her work before commencing upon two different practical activities:

Line can Talk!

Students were given different types of drawing media and small pieces of 'test paper' on which to explore the mark making qualities of each media.

Prior to testing the media (pencil, charcoal, felt tipped pens, biro), we talked about how marks could 'say' or tell us different things, for example, if a surface was soft or sharp. The students responded to different suggestions in order to make a variety of marks. We also learned some formal techniques and vocabulary, such as cross-hatching and smudge. At the end of the activity children were asked to identify which media they preferred and why they felt that that media was preferable over the others.



Line Can Walk!

Large pieces of different coloured sugar paper were stuck to desks to form continuous sheets covering the whole surface of each of the four table groupings. Students were given a choice of thick and thin marker pens in a variety of colours (one each). The students were asked to walk around their table dragging their pens in one continuous line across the paper. Once the children were used to this 'moving drawing' process they were asked to respond to words in a story about the 'walk' their line was going on. The words such as jump, spin, swing, quickly, slowly, zig-zag, etc. encouraged the students to make a broad range of marks on the sheets. At the end of the story the children were asked to reflect upon the marks they had made and identify parts of the story via the marks.

These dynamic 'moving drawings' were saved to be used later in the project as part of the final collage work.

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SESSION TWO

Though the imagery within Angie Lewin's work is stylised and takes a graphic form, it is very easy to identify many natural forms and features. It is clear that the artist has spent a great deal of time observing the natural world in order to make her prints. Therefore, this session was dedicated to observation, looking, noticing and recording what we could see in front of us. Again there were two key activities:



Observation Drawing

With reference to the exploration of line in the last session, we set about drawing some natural forms from observation. Students were challenged to draw from leaves using a variety of lines to help describe the shapes and details they could see. The children were reminded about how lines could 'talk' and tell us things about the object we were drawing. We talked about the criteria for a successful observation drawing and focused upon drawing what we could see. We held onto our drawing to use later in the creative process



.Artist Analysis

Building upon the idea of looking carefully, we took a closer look at prints by Angie Lewin. The children were invited to choose one of the artist's images and to talk about its features. Then the children were asked to try and copy part of the image they had chosen using a drawing grid to help them analyse the proportions of the shapes, etc. Finally the children were asked to describe what they liked, noticed and wondered about the work of Angie Lewin.

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SESSION THREE

Angie Lewin creates her carefully composed imagery via printmaking. These aspects were the inspiration for this session which was designed to allow students to experiment with a broad variety of media and different ways of constructing an image. We talked about the word 'composition' and what it meant as well as how the artist had designed her images. The room was split into two different working zones. One 'wet' area was designated for the exploration of printmaking techniques and the second 'dry' area was designated for composing collage. The two activities ran simultaneously with half the class at each station and the children swapping at the halfway point of the session. The activities were as follows:.

Printmaking Experiments

Students were provided with a variety of objects with which to make marks, e.g. circular pieces of sponge, bottle caps, water bottle bases, card tubes, circular pan scrubs, wine corks, cotton tips, etc. These largely circular objects were picked so that students could produce marks that could resemble flora and other natural elements in response to the Angie Lewin prints. Children dipped their objects into a small range of ready mixed paint colours and printed shapes onto A3 pieces of sugar paper. Children were asked to think about the way Angie Lewin arranged her shapes as they arranged their prints onto the paper. These prints were then left to dry and kept safe for use in our final session.



Collage and Composition

The children were given access to pritt sticks and 3 different coloured pieces of A5 sugar paper. One piece to be used as a base for their collage and the other two to be torn and stuck to the base as a background. The children were given free choice in their approach and allowed to make their own decisions on paper orientation, colour, sizes and positions of torn shapes. Once the backgrounds were constructed, the students were invited to add strips of black paper to their designs in order to represent the stalks in the artist's work. Children then selected from a range of pre-cut print outs of Angie Lewin style natural forms. They then arranged these in a way that they felt best reflected the work of the artist. At the end of the session, all of the students presented their collage for a group review and we discussed the success of their compositional designs.

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SESSION FOUR

This session was our final session and was designed to allow the students to consolidate all their learning and complete both a personal final outcome as well as a large scale group piece as responses to the art of Angie Lewin. Again the room was split into two different working zones so that the two different activities could run simultaneously. At the end of this final session, we reviewed our outcomes and celebrated our successes.



Group Outcomes

We discovered that Angie Lewin works on a wide variety of scales within her creative practice. We looked at images of some of her extremely large prints and with these in mind, set about making very large table top sized group collages. We used a similar methodology to our small collages from the previous lesson - 3 swaths of background colour (made from presentation board backing paper) and strips of black paper for stalks/lines, however our natural shapes were constructed from cutouts made from our 'moving drawings' from lesson one. Students were invited to work in small teams to construct and stick down these large scale images.

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SESSION FOUR

Personal Outcomes

Throughout this final session, when children were not involved in the group collage, they were challenged to create and complete their own personal final response to the work of Angie Lewin. Students used their dried print work from session three and embellished these with felt tipped pen mark making (using a variety of styles learned in session one), cut-outs from their observation drawings (which they made in session two), as well as other printed natural form images further developing their collage and composition skills from session three. Each child was able to take ownership over their work and produced an original final design.



Overall, I feel the project went very well. The students really enjoyed the variety of challenges provided and were able to demonstrate their understanding of the artist's work via their practical outcomes as well as through discussion in their use of key vocabulary. The staff loved the large scale group outcomes, which were bright and colourful and featured the key elements explored via Angie Lewin's work. They also praised the individual response of the children and were keen to highlight pieces by those students who had found difficulties in accessing other areas of the curriculum, but had made great strides with their artwork.