

Fabric and Fibre Lesson with 1st to 2nd Classes

‘A Portrait of Spring’

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Curriculum Strand: Fabric and Fibre (Visual Arts Curriculum p.40)

Objective: *Explore the possibilities of fabric and fibre as media for imaginative expression (p.40)*
Make small inventive pieces (p.40)

Linkage: **Paint and Colour** > *Discover colour in the visual environment and become sensitive to tonal variations between light and dark, and to variations in pure colour (hue) (p.32)*
Paint objects chosen for their colour possibilities (p.32)
Drawing> *Draw from observation (p.30)*
Print> *Use a variety of print-making techniques to make theme-based or non-representational prints (p.34)*

Integration Possibilities:

Oral Language: *Listen to other children describe experiences and ask questions about their reactions to them (p. 29)*

Science: *Understand that seasonal changes occur in living things and examine the changes in plant and animal life during the different seasons (p.42)*

Become familiar with the life cycles of common plants and animals (p.42)

Geography: *Observe and record the influences weather and seasonal changes have on people, animals and plants in the locality (p.42)*

Developing this Activity in Class:

Getting Started: This activity can be done individually or in groups. A few days before the lesson have a discussion with the children about Spring flowers, plants and animals and encourage them to bring in samples. If they live in the country they might be able to bring in some sheep's wool that has caught onto fences or hedges. They might find some feathers and mosses too. Also ask them to bring in wools, fabrics, ribbons or laces that might be suitable for the lesson.

Materials Needed: Open weave fabrics such as Hessian or onion bags
 A variety of wools
 A variety of fabrics cut into narrow strips
 Ribbons, laces, threads
 Bodkins or wool needles
 Spring flowers, grasses, twigs
 PVA or glue
 Shallow containers for the PVA e.g. Pringle lids

Stimulus: “What can we see to let us know that Spring has arrived? Can you name the flowers? What Festival is celebrated during Spring? What animals do we associate with Spring? Are there any colours that we especially link with Spring? Think about all these things and see if you could put them together to make a portrait of Spring. This portrait is going to be special because we are going to make it with fabrics, fibres and flowers and whatever else you think should be part of a Spring picture and it need not look like a face!”

Activity: The children decide on the fabric strips, wools, ribbons and flowers they are going to weave into the Hessian or onion bags (which have been cut into suitable sizes). If they pull fibres from the Hessian it makes it easier to weave the yarns, fabric strips and flowers into it. Encourage them to

try stitching the coloured wools into the fabrics and to be inventive using the grasses, flowers and twigs. They might like to incorporate some symbols of Easter into the portrait. The finished pieces could be backed with coloured card if the children wish, and displayed in the classroom or suitable place in the school.

Evaluation/Looking and Responding:

This will be happening as the children work. Encourage them to talk about what they are doing, about the yarns chosen and what they think about weaving flowers into their picture. (You could discuss the idea of an art form with a short life, like the beautiful sand pictures made by the Tibetan Monks or ice sculptures). Show them the slideshow in the Fabric and Fibre section where they will see a wall hanging made by children using an onion bag. Ask them to respond to the tapestries by Le Brocquy and Miro.

Extension Activities: The children could make portraits of Summer, Autumn and Winter.

ICT Possibilities: Scan the children's work into the computer and encourage them to write a little piece about the process.

Using the I Am An Artist DVD:

The *Fabric and Fibre* programmes on the DVD offer opportunities to see children using fabrics and fibres to make pictures. They can see the Hessian being deconstructed and see children weaving.

Note: Onion bags are great to introduce the children to simple weaving. They can weave wools, ribbons, laces and narrow strips of fabrics through with their fingers. Wool needles are ideal for stitching on the Hessian, they are very easy to thread and do not have sharp points.

Relevant Artists: Louis le Brocquy
Joan Miro
Christo and Jean-Claude

Relevant Websites: Visit Louis le Brocquy's website and see his wonderful tapestries
<http://www.anne-madden.com/LeBPages/Tapestry90thcelebration.html>

The official site of Christo and Jeanne- Claude, famous for the art of wrapping major buildings and landmarks with fabrics
<http://www.christojeanneclaude.net>

Scoilnet, which is a portal to lots of sites useful in the classroom
<http://www.scoilnet.ie>