

Drawing Lesson with 3rd to 6th Classes

'Paul Klee: Inventions'

Gemma McGirr

Curriculum Strand: Drawing (Visual Arts Curriculum p.48, 66)

Objective: *Express his/her imaginative life and interpret imaginative themes using imaginative pattern and detail (p.48)*
Look at and talk about his/her work, the work of other children and the work of artists (p.49)
Draw imaginative themes using inventive pattern and detail (p.66)
Look at and talk about his/her work, the work of other children and the work of artists (p.67)

Linkage: Paint and Colour > *Express his/her imaginative life and interpret imaginative themes using colour expressively (p.50, 66)*

Integration Possibilities:

History: Study aspects of social, artistic, technological and scientific developments over long periods (p.50, 71)

Developing this Activity in Class:

Getting Started: The stimulus [The Hero with the Wing](#) is an etching by Paul Klee. It shows a man born with one wing, who in his constant efforts to fly has broken his other limbs. One of his legs, a tree trunk is rooted in the ground and he stands gazing upwards, yearning to fly. Klee was fascinated by flight and this etching was made two years after the Wright brothers' successful flight in 1903. It is one of a series of etchings Klee called the *Inventions* and shows his desire to remove himself from the conservatism of mainstream art and to use his imagination.
 (You might like to talk to the children about unlocking the door to their own imagination, which is an amazing thing).

Materials Needed: Paper
Pencils 2B, 4B or 6B

Stimulus: [The Hero with the Wing](#) (1905) by Paul Klee
 "Look closely at this picture. Look at his head, in what direction is he looking? Is he wearing something on his head? What is it? Look at his arms, are they the same? Can you describe them? What about his feet? Can you look closely and describe what you see? Do you think he looks like a hero? Why do you think Paul Klee called him a hero? What do *you* think this hero is thinking about? Have you ever been fascinated by something? Could you draw a fantastic creature of your own?"

Activity: Having discussed the etching and Klee's urge and ability to give free rein to his imagination, the children draw their own fantastic creatures. Encourage them to talk about their drawings, where this creature lives, what it does and what it symbolises for the child.

Evaluation/Looking and Responding: This will be happening as the children work. When they have finished, give them time to discuss their drawings, what inspired them to create this fantastical creature. Did they make changes as they were drawing? Did their ideas change? Could they give their drawing a title? Could they make up a story about their fantastical creature? When they have finished their

drawings, they sign them, just as artists do! Display the children's work in the classroom or in the corridor.

Encourage them to look at some more of Paul Klee's drawings, e.g. *(Little) Fool in a Trance* and *The Twittering Machine*.

Extension Activities: The children could try making drawings with a continuous line. Choose a starting point at the side or bottom of the page. Start a line from there and without taking the pencil off the page draw a landscape or townscape (real or imaginary). Try this to draw a face, an animal, a person.

ICT Possibilities: The children could scan in their drawings and write a story about their fantastical creature on the computer.

Using the I Am An Artist DVD: The *Drawing* programmes on the DVD offer opportunities to hear children talking about their drawings in the 'Artists Chair'.

Note: I always find it very helpful to talk to the children about the power of the imagination before starting an art lesson. It helps them to free up their minds of pre-conceived notions of what their drawings or any artwork *should* be and allows them to make their own art, free of any interference. It also provides a safe place for them to discuss their work without fear of ridicule. We all have an imagination and we are all different!

Relevant Artists: Paul Klee
Other artists you think relevant

Relevant Websites: *Hero With a Wing* by Paul Klee
http://www.moma.org/collection/browse_results.php?criteria=O%3AAD%3AE%3A3130&page_number=7&template_id=1&sort_order=1

Twittering Machine by Paul Klee
http://www.moma.org/collection/browse_results.php?object_id=37347

Paul Klee Museum in Berne, Switzerland
http://www.paulkleezentrum.ch/www/en/pub/web_root.cfm

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