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FACULTY OF EDUCATION

COLOUR
DEVELOPING AN APPRECIATION OF COLOUR IN ART
EDUCATION

A Dissertation submitted to Faculty of Education
in

Candidacy for the
B.A. DEGREE IN ART AND DESIGN EDUCATION

by

Olive Beggs

June 1999

I hereby declare that this dissertation is entirely
my own work and that it has not been submitted as
an exercise for a diploma or degree in any other
college or university.

Signed *Olive Ryan*

ABSTRACT

The focus of this dissertation will be to develop an appreciation of colour in art education. In order to explore this, one must establish how colour has been cultivated in art. A review of the foundations of colour in art is discussed, by exploring what the Impressionists discovered about this art element. This explains how discoveries in Physics helped to change these artists approach to colour and liberate painting. The second review of colour in art explores the work of 19th and 20th century painters who were influenced by the Impressionists and instigated the use colour as a subjective form. In the review of colour painting techniques an understanding of colour theories and the colour properties are established. The role of the students self-expression in art explores how colour can function within society, within expression, within painting and be explored in an art discipline. The evaluation discusses how an appreciation of colour was developed in art education. In conclusion there is a discussion of the issues dealt with in this dissertation.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To my family for all their help and support
through the year and a special thanks to Maria Farrell for her guidance
for this dissertation.

INTRODUCTION

The subject of colour has been studied in chemistry, physics, psychology and art. Indeed, its relevance to our lives is of great importance. Therefore our understanding of this phenomenon owes much to those innovators who laboured in unfolding the mysteries of colour.

The role which colour plays in the lives we lead is inestimable, it is a part of the food we eat, the clothes we wear, the environment in which we live and our day to day activities. Colour in art has the visual power to excite, motivate and generate interest in all aspects of this subject. It can be explored throughout a range of art disciplines such as; painting, printing, graphics, ceramics, textiles, embroidery. In painting, for example colour can allow the individual to convert ideas into pictorial forms. Through this approach one can develop an understanding of colour theory and techniques. A knowledge of colour can be utilised to portray visual images, illusions and to depict atmospheres in painting. Colour may function in a expressive way in painting, as it has the capacity to creatively act as an instrument to represent emotions. Therefore, the significance of appreciation of colour and expression in art education is of immense importance to students.

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CHAPTER 1.1

Review

The foundation of colour in Art

"Manifestly, the purpose of colour was to make images more realistic, and thereby to imbue them with more magic power" (1)

The initial function of colour in the history of art was to enhance a piece of work. Some early examples of colour occurred in ancient Egypt when artists painted bright colours on to mummy cases, statues and furnishings as an embellishment. In ancient Greece craftsmen would also use colour to decorate sculpture, architecture and vases. Invariably during the 14th and 16th centuries when the Renaissance was flourishing, the artists' concern revolved around the knowledge of perspective and proportion. Colour was employed by these artists to create realistic forms in painting. Then in the Baroque period in the mid-eighteenth century a stronger interest in colour did arise. While the artists of the Rococo movement allowed; "...a veritable explosion of forms, colors and ornamentation." (2) By the introduction of reviving classical art in the early nineteenth century, colour became less important in painting and was used merely to enhance the drawing of a composition by the artist and it has been suggested that; "Colour was subservient to outline drawing in this classicist period" (3)

Joseph Mallard William Turner and John Constable have been called the forerunners of impressionism because they influenced artists to review

the painting process. These English artists displayed that focusing on looking at their subject matter was primarily an important part of painting. In the early 19th century Turner and Constable developed landscape painting in a movement called Romanticism. They abandoned the process of working in a studio and favoured the experience of exploring painting directly from the subject matter. They believed this allowed them to truly describe the colour, atmosphere and nature of the environment, "...working from direct observations, they omitted small details and concentrated on colors, motion and mood." (4)

It was essentially the school of Impressionism, in the mid 19th century, which revised what Turner and Constable had explored with colour and atmosphere in their superlative landscape paintings. The artists involved in this movement included Edouard Manet, Edgar Degas, Claude Monet and Pierre Auguste Renoir. It was these Impressionists' initiative which furthered the development of reshaping colour in painting.

"The greatest innovation of the Impressionists, and their greatest gift to posterity, lay in the achievement most apparent to their contemporaries; their liberation of pure bright colours. It was this which enabled their successors, such as Van Gogh or Matisse, to paint with hitherto undreamt of immediacy and vividness." (5)

The Impressionists adopted the view that a painting's aesthetic value became the most important aspect of a painting and the spectator should be visually stimulated by the subject-matter.

"...color, they felt was in the eye of the beholder, not in the picture itself. They intended to paint not so much what is seen but how it is seen." (6)

The concepts of the movement seemed informal at this period when narrative Classical art was the accepted style. The Impressionists looked to scientific discoveries on how changing light affects the colour of objects and this endeavoured to make these paintings more challenging.

In the late 19th century physicist Helmholtz, published the book; Physiological Optics, which explained the way we see colours. Initially in 1663, Sir Isaac Newton had established the colour wheel which contained; red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet. Newton discovered this through placing a glass prism in front of a white light, which caused the light to break into a band of seven colours. New scientific advances took place, in 1866, where Physicists like Helmholtz;

"...made discoveries about the component prismatic parts of white light and pointed out that the sensation of color has more to do with the retina of the eye than with the objects themselves." (7)

These Physicists explained how the retina of our eyes are sensitive to the stimulus of light. Therefore they discovered that our perception of colour is determined by the light which is reflected onto the objects. The impressionist movement was influenced by these findings in Physics and were innovative in employing them in their approach to colour;

"..impressionist painters were seeking a formula for incorporating into the accepted framework of pictorial art the new physical discoveries concerning the nature of light and its perception by the human eye." (8)

The consequence of these revolutionary discoveries in science helped to focus their development of colour within Impressionism. The Impressionist painters began to explore the effects of light on objects looking directly at their chosen subject-matters.

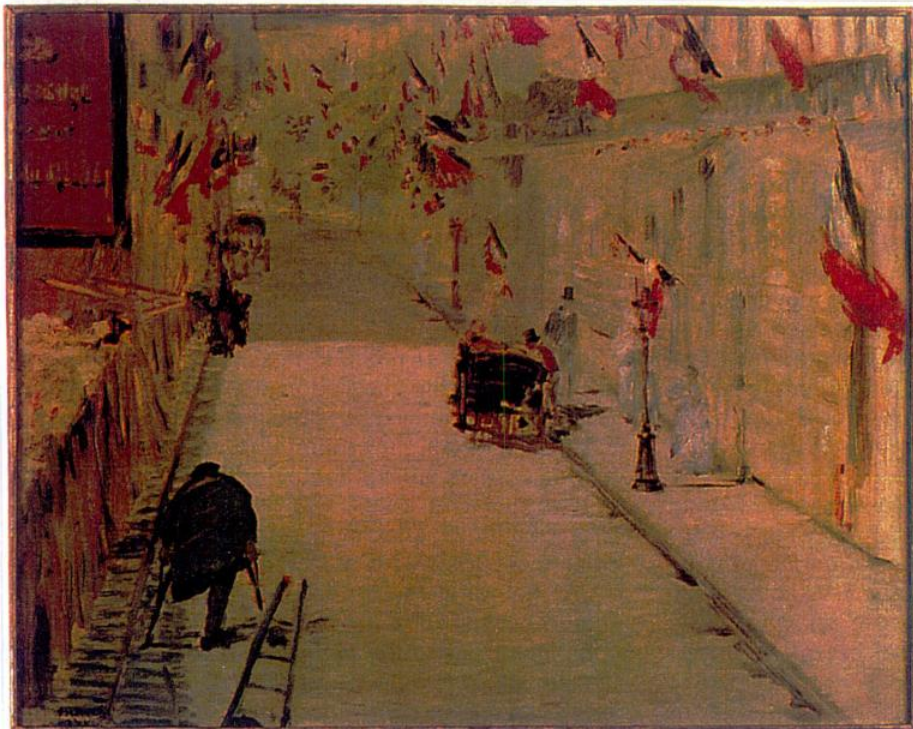
"A painting, according to the Impressionist should consist of a breakdown of sunlight into its component parts, and brilliance should be achieved by the use of the primary colours that make up the spectrum" (10).

The paintings of Claude Monet involved using colour to portray the light and mood of the environment with which he was painting. He was devoted to achieving accuracy within his approach to colour in painting landscapes. Paul Cezanne, a contemporary painter, complimented Monet on great observational skills by remarking; "Monet, he's only an eye, but my God what an eye" (9). Monet was devoted to the Impressionist doctrine, he would depict a view of a particular subject in many different paintings, surveying how the natural light changes from early morning, to mid-day, to the evening. His painting demonstrated how colour was affected by light. This is evident in his works such as, Rouen Cathedral (see plate 1) where he portrayed the same cathedral in three different paintings. The first depicts the cathedral in the early morning, with cool yellow, white and grey hues. Then he painted the subject-matter in the afternoon where the mid day sun determined that the hue of the painting was made up of warmer yellows, blues and whites. To complete this undertaking his final portrayal of the cathedral was in the evening, when the sun had started to set and prompted Monet to adopt a palette with darker hues of blue, grey and orange to succeed in depicting this.

Plate 1



Plate 2



Edouard Manet's use of colour was influential within the impressionist movement even though he initially began as a realist artist.

His ability to be innovative in his experimental use of colour and colour tones displayed how artists have poetic licence to paint whatever way they wish.

"His elimination of half-tones, by exploding the academic doctrine that a painting must be based on intermediate tones progressing from dark to light, established the impressionists' right to paint in whatever color or tonalities they wished". (11)

Manet demonstrates this ability to be liberally minded in his painting, Rue Mosnier, Decorated with Flags on June 30, 1878 (see plate 2). Here he depicts a casual road scene, the style of the painting is very loose in its brushstrokes giving the piece an unfinished quality, that captures Manet's impression of the street. He employs delicate colours to portray the perspective of the road which blurs into the distance. "By his subtle use of color intensities more than by linear perspective, he achieves the effect of recession and depth." (12)

The most important impact of what the Impressionists had established was showing how an artist could work with colour. They demonstrated how the artist had an ability to express their own style of painting, choose whatever subject, and to be as creative with colour as they liked.

FOOTNOTES

1. Ralph Fabri, Color a Complete Guide for Artists, New York: Watson-Guptill Publications, 1967, p.15.
2. Ibid., p.19.
3. Ibid., p.19.
4. Ibid., p.20.
5. Phoebe Pool, Impressionism, London: Thames and Hudson, 1967, p.263.
6. William Fleming, Arts and Ideas, New York: University Press, 1980, p.39.
7. Ibid., p.385.
8. Ibid., p.385.
9. Ibid., p.389.
10. Ibid., p.385.
11. Phoebe Pool, Impressionism, London: Thames and Hudson, 1967, p.133.
12. William Fleming, Arts and Ideas, New York: University Press, 1980, p.386.
13. Ibid., p.391.

CHAPTER 1.2

Review

Artists who pioneered in using colour in an expressive way

In the 19th and 20th century colour was cultivated as a subjective expression in painting. The artists who pioneered this development included; Vincent Van Gogh, Henri Matisse, Pablo Picasso and Wassily Kandinsky. These painters were dedicated to exploring colour in innovative and creative ways. The styles which developed by these artists varied and this displayed that colour can be manipulated in many ways in painting.

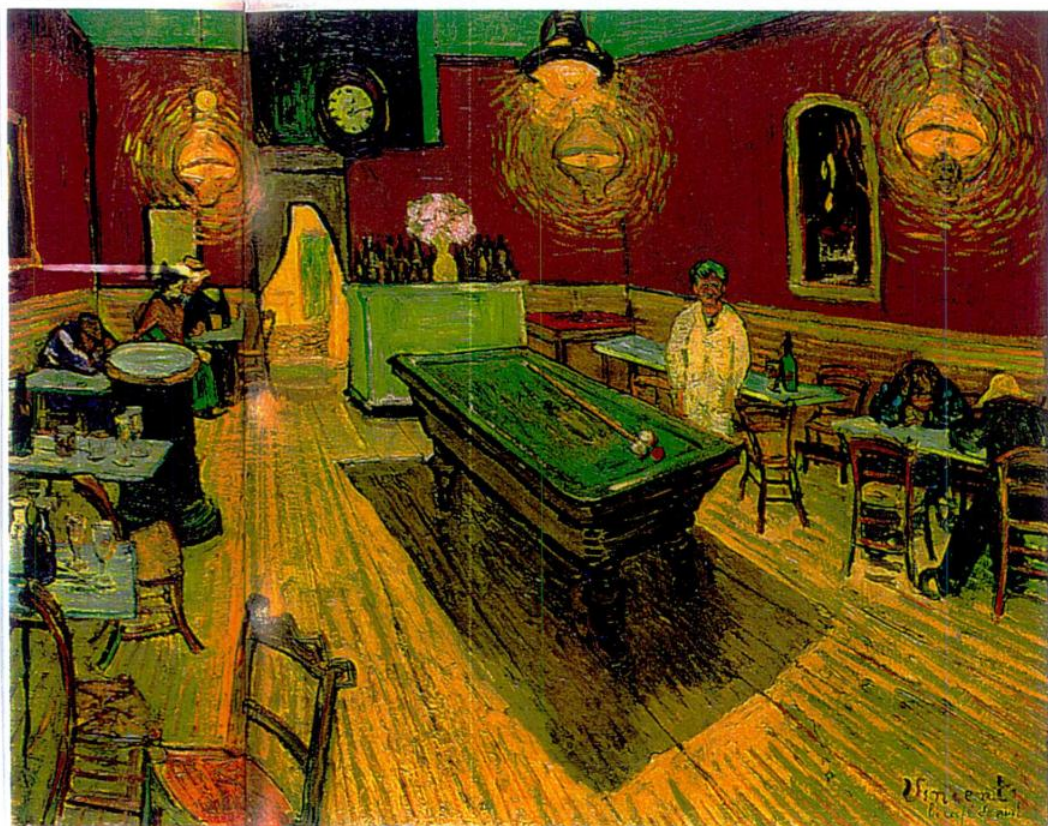
The master of Post-Impressionism, Vincent Van Gogh, in the late 19th century pioneered a subjective use of colour in painting. He was an artist famous for exploring his own temperamental feelings through his paintings. Van Gogh would apply a personal approach to his choice of subject-matter in his paintings. The colour which he adopted was often used to reflect his own feelings towards the subject of his painting. For example, in two of his works which he executed in the same year he explores two very different places and his treatment of colour allows him to show the contrasts of the environments.

Van Gogh's painting The Artist Room in Arles, 1888 (see plate 3) displays the subject-matter of his bedroom. The colour scheme in the painting is made up of green, yellow and blue. This choice of colour was used to evoke the calm mood which he sensed in this environment as he explained to his brother, Theo in a letter;

Plate 3



Plate 4



"...this time it's just simply my bedroom, only here colour is to do everything, and, giving by its simplification a grander style to things, is to be suggestive here of rest or of sleep in general." (1)

Then in the, The Night Cafe, 1888 (see plate 4) the artist again employs colour to interpret his feelings about the environment of the bar.

"So I have tried to express, as it were, the power of darkness in a low public house by soft Louis XV green and malachite, contrasting with yellow-green and hard blue-greens, all this in an atmosphere like devils furnace, of paler sulphur." (2)

Van Gogh contrasts intense greens, yellows and red hues which to explicitly portray the harsh, seedy atmosphere of the night cafe in his painting.

In the early stages of Pablo Picasso's career he looked to the previous artists who had pioneered in their use of colour for direction and spoke of how, "Van Gogh had pointed the way with his frenzied canvasses, passionate pictorial elements, outbursts, saturated colours, evangelical fervour." (3) Picasso was hugely influenced by what Van Gogh had begun in the late 19th century. The ability to explore the personal feelings through colour in painting was of great importance to this young artist. Picasso, a 20th century painter recognised at an early stage in his career the subjective power of colour. His paintings from the Blue and Pink periods demonstrate how he allowed colour act as personal expression in his work.

In the years from 1901 to 1904 Picassos' palette was dominated by the colour blue. This ranged from pastel blue, to ultra-marine to navy blue.

Picassos' decision to paint in such depressing monochromatic blues was sparked off by a tragic event in his life, the suicide of his close friend.

Picasso like Van Gogh made a conscious decision to use colour as a device to relate his emotions to certain subject-matters and this would develop the theme within the painting.

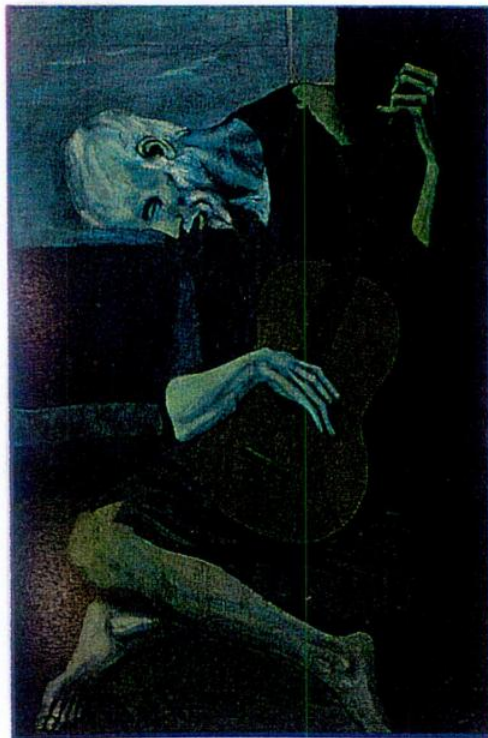
"But this blue is not only a colour, it creates an atmosphere that is in keeping with the subjects, with the human character of these paintings which represent the outcasts of society-blind beggars, itinerant musicians, tramps - those who spend their lives in wretched poverty on humble servitude." (4)

Picasso's choice of subject-matter in paintings like, The Old Guitarist, 1903 (see plate 5) depicts a starving and poverty stricken individual on the Parisian streets. His use of colour was a reaction to this human suffering which surrounded him throughout the Blue period. He wanted the monochromatic blues to evoke the despair and depression he felt towards society.

"The choice of colour is therefore not arbitrary, nor is its limitation to a single tone simply an aesthetic device; the Blue Period is the artist's expression of the human condition seen vis a vis his fellow human beings and society,..." (5)

In 1904 a change occurred in Picassos' work, this was marked by his transition to use warmer colours in his painting. This stage of his career adopted the name of, The Pink period, due to the cultivation of soft pinks, terracotta's and pale ochre's in his painting.

Plate 5



"The colour itself is perhaps the clearest indication of his changed attitude towards life,...The warmth of Picasso's new palette went hand in hand with the warmth he felt towards the world." (6)

He would portray subject-matters like figures in a compassionate manner; figures close together, hands, arms touching in his paintings. This is evident in paintings like the, Mother and child 1905, (see plate 5).

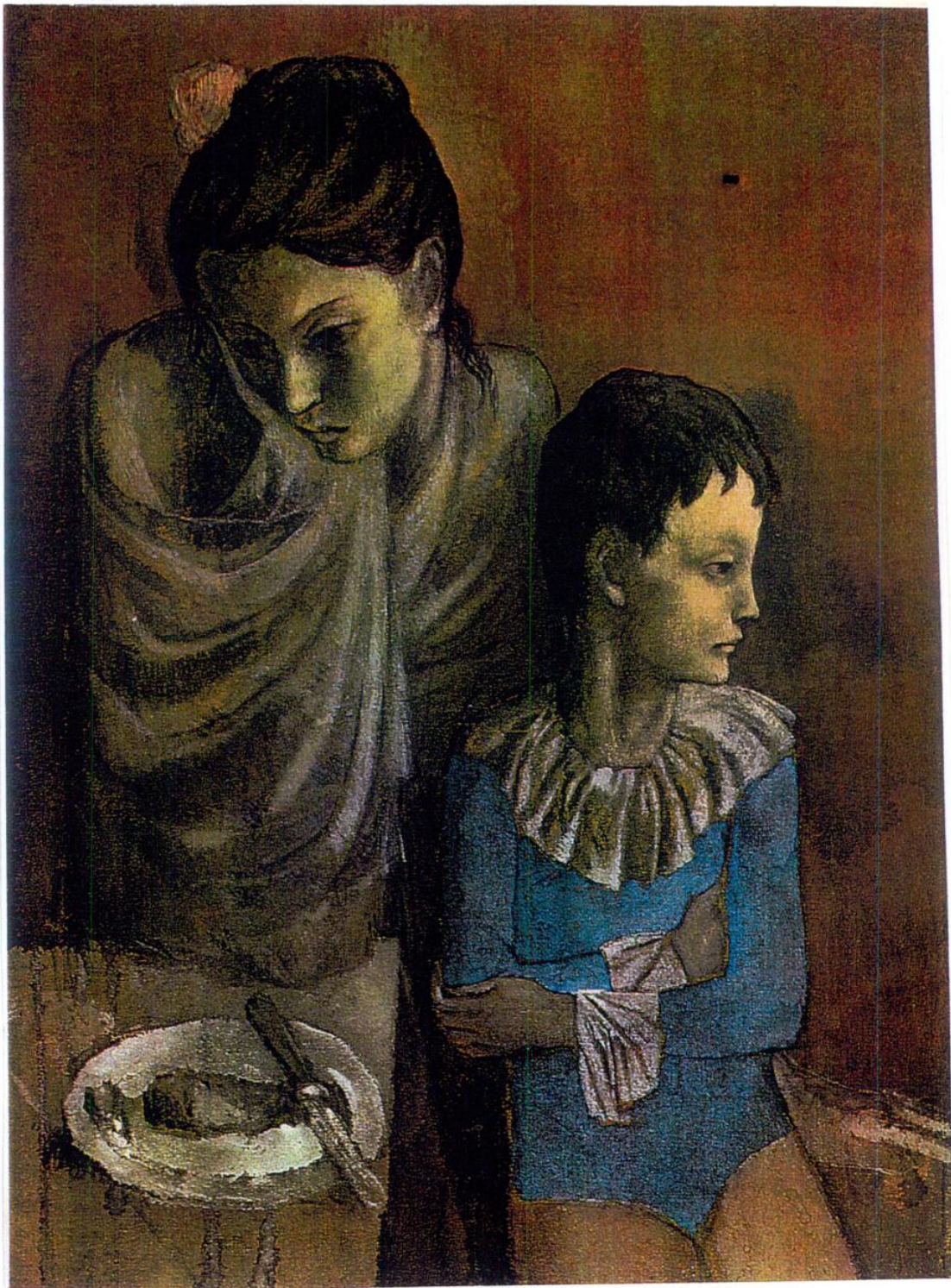
Henri Matisse was a close contemporary of these artists who explored colour differently in his paintings. He was devoted to this art element, "For Matisse alone colour remained the Ultimate Substance of art." (7) Matisse used pure saturated colour in his paintings. He believed art was of innate importance, allowing us to revert back to our primitive human nature. Unlike Van Gogh and Picasso, he considered that painting should be devoid of sad or depressing subject-matters. Matisse would employ colour in an integral way to express this in his painting. He explained how,

"Expression to my way of thinking...does not consist of the passion mirrored upon a human face or displayed by violent gesture. The whole arrangement of my picture is expressive." (8)

Therefore the arrangement of colour, shape and pattern worked together with the subject-matter in Matisses' paintings to convey the artists meaning.

In, The Dance, 1910 (see plate 6) Matisse demonstrates his ability to rely on pure colours, flat shapes and pattern. He depicts a group of swaying figures' engaging in a tribal dance. They are all painted in an intensely red hue and this use of unnatural skin colour makes them look very primitive. The warm coloured figures project outwards from the cool background which recedes in the distance. The sky is represented by a blue colour and

Plate 6



ground is suggested with a green and this process of simplifying the forms in the environment enabled Matisse to command the meaning in the whole composition.

His cultivation of colour is bold in; Madame Matisse: The Green Line, 1905 (see plate 7). Here Matisse painted a portrait of his wife. He experimented with his use of colour in this painting. The background of the composition is cleverly divided into sections of warm and cool colours. Matisse painted warm red and pink sections on the left side of the background and cold green colour tones on the right side of the composition. By painting the face with a mixture of warm colours tones, yellows and creams the face advances from the background. Matisse paints a green line down the centre of Madame Matisse's face which connects the two sides of the painting. Matisse's style was loose and divisionalist. He was expressive in his use of bright colour which was modelled in its application.

In Russia, Wassily Kandisky pioneered a new approach to painting which was innovative in the development of colour. He was an aesthetic theorist who allowed the visual aspects of colour to function in his painting as a spiritual language.

"Generally speaking color is a power which directly influences the soul. Color is the keyboard, the eyes are the hammers, the soul is the piano with many strings. The artist is the hand which plays, touching one key or another, to cause vibrations in the soul," (9)

He cultivated exploring how colour in painting would work on the spectator like music, for example the colour yellow in his paintings was used to

Plate 7

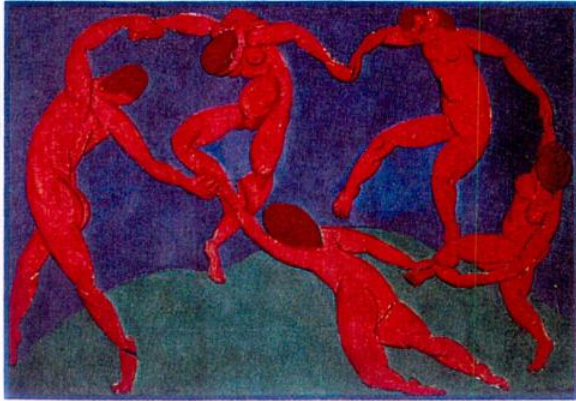
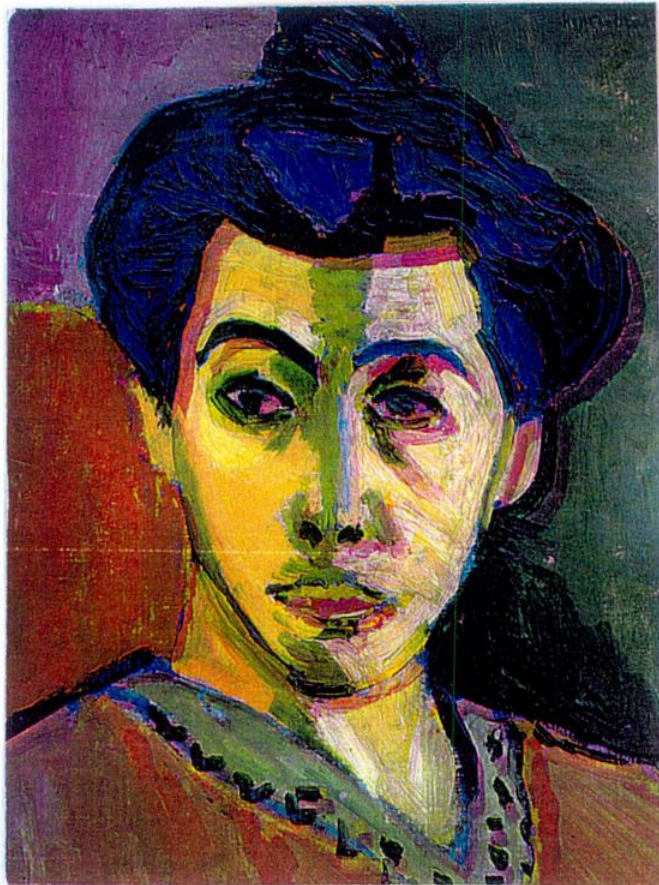


Plate 8



suggest high pitch notes. This is evident in Kandinsky's, Improvisation, 1913 (see plate 8) which display his brilliant use of colour. The composition is semi-abstract with bursts of yellows, reds and blues. He eliminates realistic representation by painting bold shapes of colour. He interprets the landscape with erratic lines which curve within and around different colour structures. He employed colour to orchestrate a spiritual meaning in his painting.

"the artist associated the colour blue with the moon, yellow with sun and the "mysterious birth" of red with their meeting at dawn and dusk."
(10)

Colour became a visual language in his painting. Kandinsky adopted a personal colour-coding process which allowed him to select colour on the basis of spiritual feeling.

The expressive nature of colour was fostered by these great artists. They engaged in using colour in various ways which was both creative and innovative. Artists like Van Gogh, Matisse, Picasso and Kandinsky all extensively explored how colour could be used in art in a expressive way. They pioneered the development of colour on a level where it could evoke personal meaning within their artwork. It is true to state that these artists have demonstrated how colour could be appreciated as a form of self-expression.

Plate 9



FOOTNOTES

1. Gombrich, The Storey of Art, London: Phaidon, 1950, p.48.
2. Pierre Carbonne, Van Gogh , Paris: Thames and Hudson, 1961, p. 143.
3. William Fleming, Arts and Ideas, New York: University Press, 1980, p. 412.
4. Jaffe Hans, Picasso, London: Thames and Hudson, 1968, p. 12.
5. Ibid., p.12.
6. Ibid., p.13.
7. Lawerence Gowing, Matisse, Paris:: Thames and Hudson, 1979, p.108.
8. William Fleming, Arts and Ideas, New York: University Press, 1909, p. 65.
9. Belinda Recio, Blue, Layton, : Gibbs Smith Publications, 1996 p.43.
10. Peg Weiss, Kandinsky and Old Russia, Paris: Yale Unversity Press, 1995, p. 170.

CHAPTER 2.1

Colour Painting Techniques

In order for an artist to engage effectively with colour in painting, there is a need for him/her to understand the techniques of using this medium. Through an awareness of colour, an artist can approach the painting process with a knowledge that will help them achieve the desired effects of what they wish to portray. This can range vastly, as colour is versatile and may depict perspective, create illusion of projection, serving the artist in many ways.

For instance, the highly skilled colourist, Paul Cezanne developed many inventive techniques with his use of colour. He had an amazing ability to manipulate colour to achieve many illusions in painting, finding "...that a lemon looks brighter with a blue outline, and a red apple appears to be more brilliant if you paint green around it." (1). Through Cezanne's careful application of colour he could achieve the illusion of projecting objects and dictating where the colour should be most vibrant (see plate 10) Basket of Apples, 1890-94. Therefore, Cezanne's understanding of colour was vital for him to be experimental in his painting.

An understanding of the basic colour theory is invaluable to the artist. The colour wheel is made up of primary, secondary and tertiary colours (see plate 11). The primary colours yellow, red and blue are considered pure colour as they cannot be made from any other colours in practical use.

Plate 10

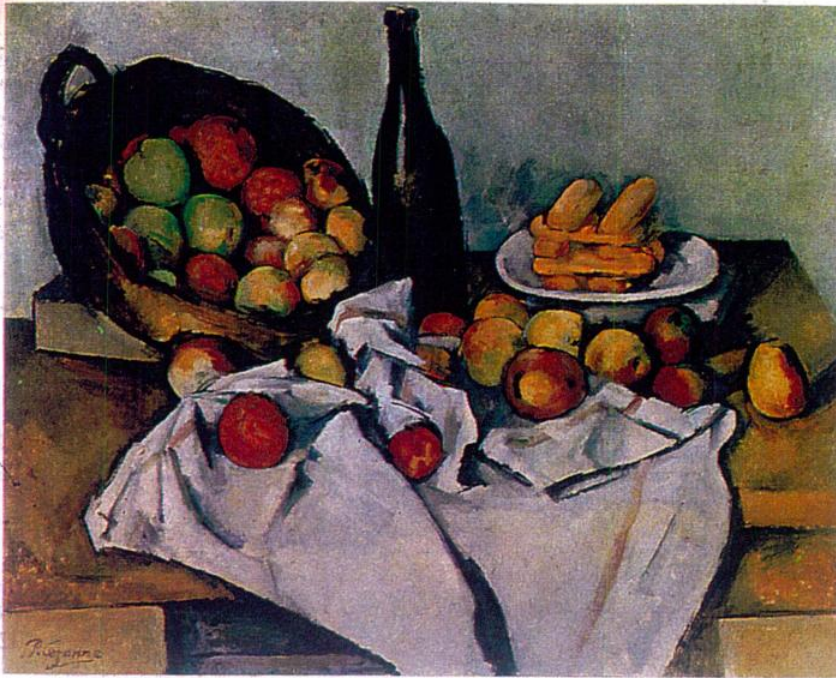
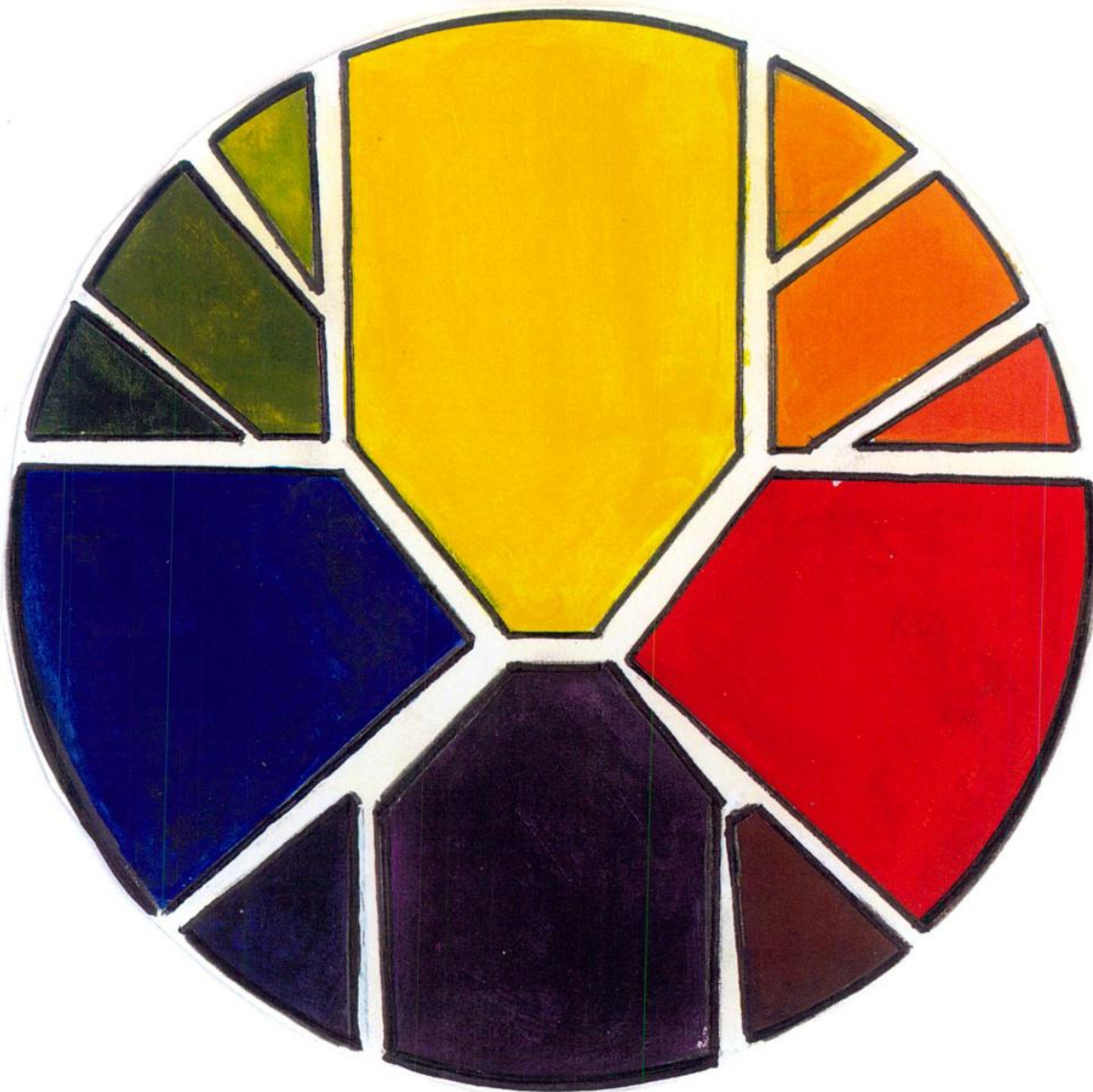


Plate 11



An artist can mix two primary colours together to make a secondary colour. Yellow and blue will produce green, red and yellow produce orange and blue and red will produce purple. The secondary and the primary colours make up the basic colour wheel. The complimentary colours are made out of certain primary and secondary colours; yellow and violet are complimentary, red and green are complimentary and blue and orange are complimentary (see plate 12). In practice Cezanne's painting, Basket of Apples, 1890 (see plate 10) displays that when a complimentary colour like, red, is painted beside another complimentary colour like, green, they visually stimulate one another by bringing out the vibrancy in each composition. The tertiary colours are made when a secondary colour is mixed with a primary colour. To make tertiary colours the artist can experiment with a number of variations by mixing red with orange, blue with green-yellow, green with purple-red etc. and there is a wide range of colour combinations which can be explored in this paint mixing process.

It is important to understand the properties of colour, so that as a painter one can understand how to control this medium in one's own work. According to Roy Sparkes, the author of Teaching Art Basics there are three important properties of colour in painting which are intensity, temperature, and tone.

INTENSITY

The colour intensity is used to describe the range of the pigments' potency. In practice, the intensity of a colour maybe weakened with the addition of water or oil to the pigment by the artist. The intensity of

Plate 12

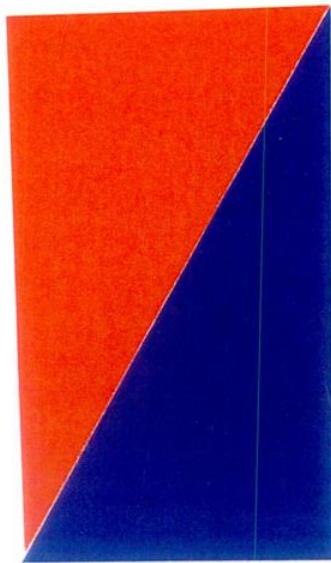
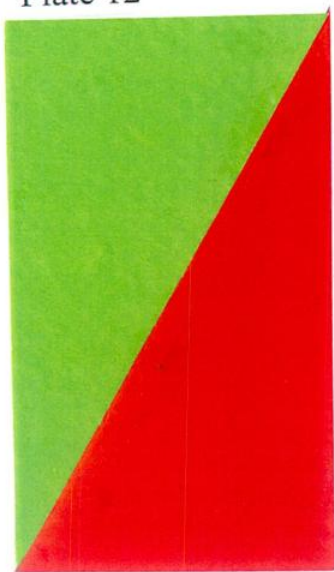
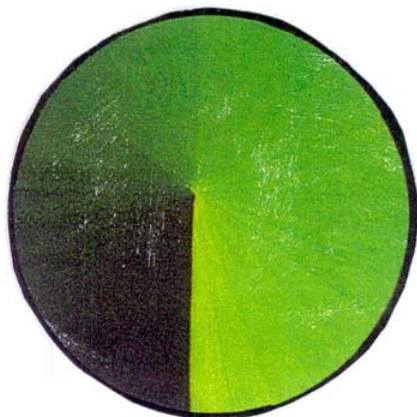
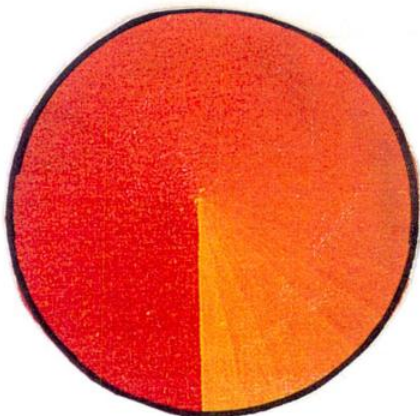


Plate 13



the colour can be moderated if the artist mixes one pigment with another colour, such as a white, a grey or a yellow and by doing this the saturation of the colour is reduced weakening the intensity. For example (see plate 13) a colour at its full saturation is a strong colour but if one adds other pigments or water to the hue, it loses its intensity.

TEMPERATURE

The second property of colour is temperature. This term is used to explain how colour has the ability to refer to feelings of association and indicate atmospheres. Therefore certain colours are considered to be warm and others are considered cool. For instance red, orange and yellow are termed as warm colours because they are suggestive of hot, sunny climates. Green, blue and purple remind one of ice, sea or cold temperatures, they are referred to as cool colours. It is also important to develop an understanding of what warm and cool colours are able to achieve within painting, so that the artist has control over them. According to Diarmuid Larkin, warm colours can be used in painting to portray the impression of something moving towards us, then the opposite effect, of creating the illusion of something receding can be achieved through using cool colours. This is evident The Dance (see plate 6) by Matisse who painted the warm red colours on the dancing figures, these project outwards from the cool background of green and blue which recedes in the distance. In practical work this will help the artist to portray a good spatial relationship in ones own compositions;

"Understanding warm and cool colours is imperative in realistic work because it helps you show spatial relationships, and helps you avoid the frequent problems of having certain parts of your painting seem to be jumping out of the picture."²

The visual effect of each colour is of significance throughout the painting process. Consequently, a clear understanding of colour temperatures will help the artist to achieve a number of illusions like depth of space or painting areas which project outwards while allowing other parts to recede. This knowledge assists the artist during the painting process to achieve maximum effects.

TONE

Tone is the third property of colour which is significant in the painting process (see plate 13). The light source creates varying lights and shadows on objects, which changes the colour which is reflected. This makes it possible for one to observe form. "Tone indicates the lightness or darkness of a colour i.e. the amount of light reflected from an object." (3) For the artist colour tone can be used to portray the illusion of form in a two dimensional way (see plate 10) the form of the apples in Cezannes, Basket of Apples. Therefore observation is of key importance as the Impressionist, Cezanne displayed in his work, to achieve an accurate depiction of the varying tones of colour which are generated by the light which falls on objects.

At a practical level, once the artist has an understanding of the kind of colour tones they observe on their subject-matter they can begin the process of mixing them. The process of mixing colour tones is the same as reducing or increasing the intensity of a pigment by adding white/ light hues to create a light colour tone or by adding black/ dark hues a dark colour tone (see plate 13).

FOOTNOTES

1. Ralph Fabri, Color a Complete Guide for Artists, New York: Watson-Guptill Publications, 1967, p.28.
2. Roy Sparkes, Teaching Art Basics, New York: Watson-Guptill Publications 1973, p.37.
3. Ibid.,p36.

CHAPTER 3.1

The role of colour in students self-expression

In education, self-expression is an important part of the students creative and mental growth. Victor Lowenfeld, a psychologist defines, 'self- expression' as; "... giving vent in constructive forms to feelings, emotions and through-out ones own level of development." (1) In art education self-expression can be cultivated to allow the individual student to constructively release his/her inner thoughts and emotions in a visual format. Self-expression is defined as a subjective experience in art, where the artist can express his/her point of view in a visual way, rather than transcribing the external realities. For example, the painting The Night Cafe (see plate 4) is an expression of how the artist Van Gogh viewed the environment of his local bar with contempt. Van Gogh depicted the seedy atmosphere through using devilish colours to suggest this place was a kind of hell on earth. Van Gogh was personally expressing his own opinions through images and colour in this painting.

The art element of colour plays a huge part in the adolescents' student everyday life. Students come into contact with colour on a daily basis, i.e.; wearing a school uniform / eating lunch in the canteen / socialising with friends in the classroom / watching television at home / participating in sport. The student is constantly exposed to colour. This is an issue which the student will often analyse in great detail when he/she is deciding what to wear / what to buy/ where to go. Therefore, the adolescent student

thinks much about colour and is constantly making personal decisions relating to this subject. The adolescent students are expressing themselves when they are making decisions about colour.

The students' own perception of colour will feed into how he/she will explore this in the art room. The individuals understanding of colour has been moulded by how this art element functions in society. This would date back to an early stage of the adolescents life when as young children they were dressed in pink if they were a girl or blue if they were a boy. The students would be aware of how colour-codes function to control traffic on their streets; green for go, amber for slow and red for stop. The students would also be aware of how colour can be used in traditional sayings to express emotions like, 'feeling blue' or 'green with envy'. Therefore, this personal experience with colour as a language to state gender, express feelings or signal a message may naturally filter into their art work.

In order to promote the students understanding of the subjective nature of colour in art. It is important to introduce the styles and techniques of artists who have pioneered their development of colour in painting. Through displaying works of art by artists including Claude Monet and Paul Cezanne pupils could develop an understanding of how colour is manipulated to achieve certain effects in painting. Art work by Van Gogh / Henri Matisse / Pablo Picasso / Kandinsky could demonstrate to students how colour can be used expressively in different ways in this medium. For instance, through displaying work by Picasso during his Blue and Pink Periods (the see plate 5 and 6) would visually demonstrate to the students how colour can be used to portray personal emotion in painting.

The painting The Old Guitarist (see plate 5) would explain to pupils how Picasso used a monochromatic palette of blue to depict his feelings of sadness and depression whereas the colours change in his painting from the Rose Period. This is evident in, Mother and Child (see plate 6) which shows how colours like pink and red can represent his state of happiness. The work of Kandinsky can be displayed to students. Through showing students paintings like, Improvisation (see plate 7) by Kandinsky, pupils can appreciate colour as a spiritual language, by explaining how the artist chose certain colours because of what they represented to him.

In a painting scheme, for instance the art students personal expression will be developed. This approach, will help the pupils to gain a knowledge of the basic theories relating to colour. By explaining to students about primary, secondary and tertiary colours and teaching an understanding of the three properties of colour; intensity, temperature and tone. Through discussions on colour theories the students can cultivate confidence about this art element and through practical work the individuals will develop a personal system to work with this medium. By introducing artists who pioneered in their use of colour in art, the students will develop an understanding of how colour can be manipulated in different ways and how this art element can evoke meaning in a creative way throughout the painting process. The students personal experience of colour will feed into their artwork. At the design stage the students personal choice of colour can represent a meaning or emotion to the individuals within the composition.

FOOTNOTES

1. Victor Lowenfeld and Lambert W. Brittain, Creative and Mental Growth, NewYork: Macmillian, 1982, p. 18.

The techniques which the student will develop when applying the different colours to the board will encourage the individual to nurture a unique and personal style of painting. The student will learn how to use colour as a subjective form in an art discipline.

It has been proven by great artists like Picasso, Van Gogh and Matisse that colour can be employed in different ways in painting as a form of self-expression. Therefore this is an interesting way to introduce colour to a group of first year pupils. The art students will not only develop an awareness of colour theory, the properties of colour and an ability to manipulate colour in painting, the individual will also learn to explore colour as a form of self-expression. The student will develop an appreciation of colour by creatively exploring in a concrete visual way. This will further the adolescents confidence, as the work he/she will produce will be a personal expression of themselves.

CHAPTER 4.1

Evaluation of Scheme of Work

The optimum way the student will develop an appreciation of colour as self-expression is if the individual experiences the process on a practical level. Roy Sparkes explains, "Children have a stronger grasp of this knowledge and its application if the learning comes from their own experiences." (3). Therefore, a scheme of work was conducted in a female single sex school to explore whether an appreciation of colour can be developed through expression.

The scheme was aimed at a group of First year art students. Developing an appreciation of colour at an early stage of the students art education is important. A knowledge of colour can filter into students art work through design stages, experimental stages and in the making of the product. This may be explored through the art disciplines; painting, 3-D craft, printing, graphics, textiles. It is therefore a necessity for these first year students to develop a broad understanding of this art element. Throughout the Junior and Leaving Certificate Syllabuses' the students will need a good understanding of colour. This scheme of work proposes to educate the student about colour. To provide the individual with confidence in their ability to employ colour expressively and creatively in art.

AIM OF THE SCHEME

To design and make a self-portrait painting using the theme of Clowns and Harlequins.

DURATION OF SCHEME

Nine weeks [26-12-1998 - 20-02-1999]

SCHEME DESCRIPTION

This scheme of work was aimed at developing an appreciation of colour through the medium of paint and exploring the individuals self-expression. This group of first year students displayed a good interest in art. Therefore my choice of theme, 'Clowns and Harlequins', for this scheme was based on the student-teacher relationship that developed during the year. The finished piece was an expressive self-portrait painting of the student as a clown/ harlequin. The approach was to explore self-portraiture and facial expressions as the primary source to the project. The students explored the process of combining primary self-portrait drawings of facial expressions with secondary source imagery of clowns. Throughout the scheme the pupils would develop an appreciation of colour through personal expression whereby this art element had the power to function as language within the students work. The class was introduced to the medium of paint for this project. This art discipline was relevant for cultivating an appreciation of colour as many artists have used colour as a form of personal expression in their work.

Lesson one

Objectives:

- To introduce the theme, 'Clowns and Harlequins'.
- To create an understanding of line, shape, tone, form and proportion.

- To create an awareness of how line and tone can denote shape, structure and head proportions which describe facial expression.

This lesson did not deal with colour but functioned to introduce the theme of the project and to make primary observation drawings of facial expressions (see plate 14). During a brainstorming session of the theme, the pupils discussed Clowns and Harlequins in an animated way. The class responded well to the visual aid (see plate 15) which contained pictures of Picassos' harlequin paintings and pictures of other famous clowns. This was a vivid and bright visual aid which captured the students attention immediately. Pupils were questioned about facial expressions of the clowns and explained whether they were smiling, laughing or looking sad. This generated a good level of discussion and interest in the theme. The students reacted well to this introduction and volunteered opinions about what they thought of the clowns. In the task, pupils produced self-portrait drawings describing different facial expressions (see plate 16 and 17). In evaluation the students discussed how line and tone were used to describe the structure and proportion of facial expressions. The students displayed an understanding of the class objectives.

Lesson two

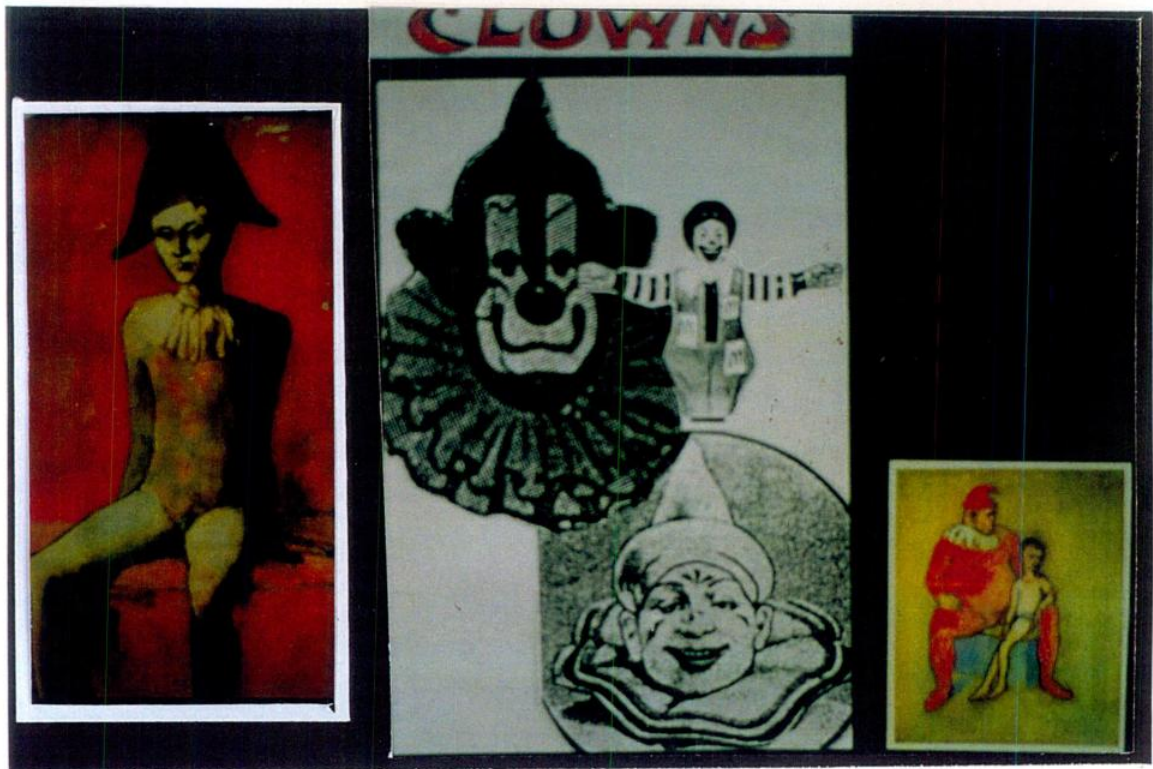
Objectives:

- To introduce colour theory, complimentary colour and properties of colour.
- To develop techniques in using paint to experiment with colour theory; primary, secondary, tertiary colour and colour tone.

Plate 14



Plate 15





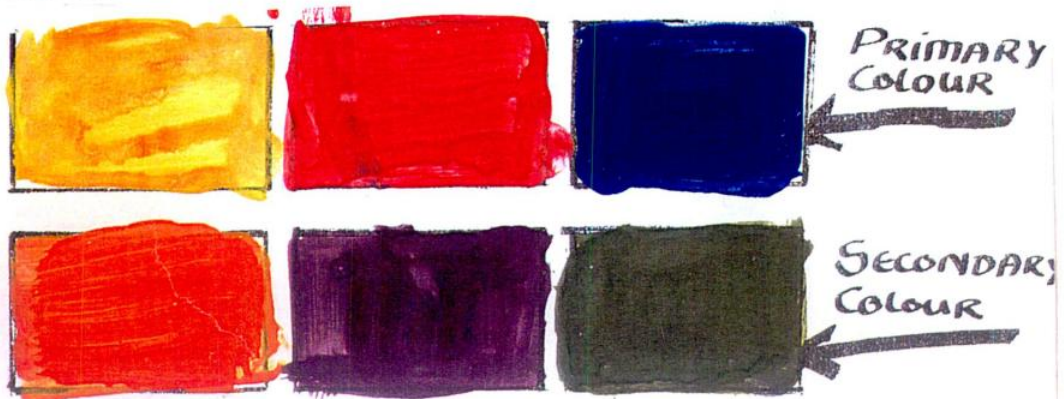
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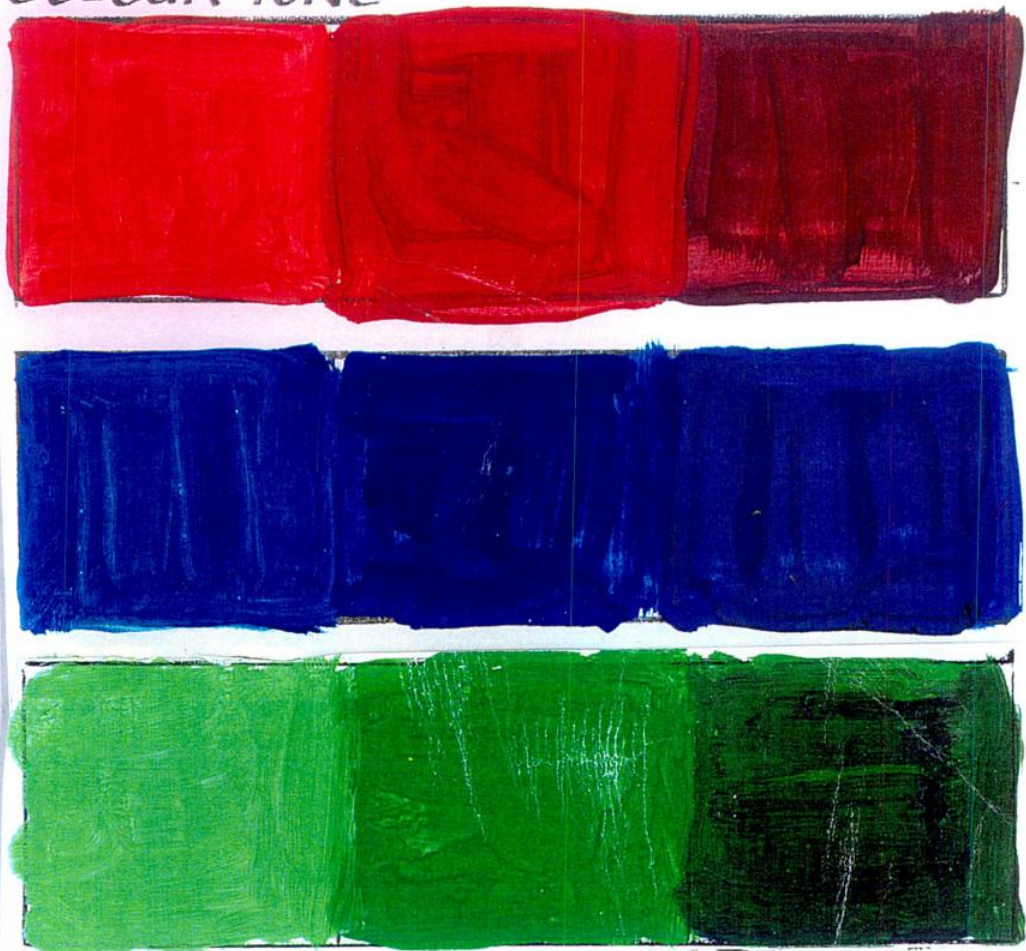
- To introduce work by Paul Cezanne in order to explain colour painting techniques.

● The colour wheel was displayed (see plate 11) to introduce an appreciation of colour at the beginning of the lesson. The students discussed primary, secondary and tertiary colour and this generated a good understanding of the basis of this art element. By pointing to red, yellow and orange on the colour wheel the students were questioned on what type of weather the individuals associated with these colours, the girls answered hot, sunny days. It was explained that these are warm colours. Then by pointing to blue, purple and green the same question was asked of the class. The students answered that blue and purple reminded them of coldness. This discussion introduced colour temperature and gave the students an awareness of which colours are warm and which ones are cool. To demonstrate how complimentary colours can function in painting and how colour tone is used to create the illusion of form, Paul Cezanne's Basket of Apples, was displayed to students (see plate 10). The pupils pointed to where they could see dark colour tones at the bottom of apple forms and lighter colours around the middle of the apples. The class thought that the green and red were very strong side by side. It was explained that these two colours are complimentary and when placed together bring out a vibrancy in each other. The pupils observed other complimentary colours on the visual aid (see plate 12). In the demonstration students learned how to lighten the intensity of a colour by adding white/ a lighter colour to it which produced a light colour tone.

Plate 18



COLOUR TONE



To make a dark colour tone the students had to mix black or a dark colour to the pigment and visual aids were displayed (see plate 13). The students developed an awareness of how to manipulate colour in the task (see plate 18). In the evaluation pupils discussed the importance of caution when painting the primary and secondary colours with a brush in order to keep between the lines. The students found that if the brushes were not washed after each colour the paint became muddy. Then pupils explained how to make colour tone, by adding white to a colour the intensity of the paint became a lighter colour tone. The class explained that the opposite would occur if one mixed a black or a darker colour to the paint, this would create a dark colour tone. The students displayed a good understanding of colour theory and the properties of colour in this class.

Lesson Three

Objectives

- To introduce colour as a means of expressing feelings of 'happiness' and 'sadness'.
- To develop an understanding of how Pablo Picasso used colour to portray his changing moods.

The class brainstormed topics which relate to certain colours. For example, the pupils associated; red with love and Valentines day; green with grass, the earth/ St. Partrick's day; blue with sky, water/ cold weather; purple with death/ royalty; yellow with the sun/ summer; orange with orange juice /Halloween.

Plate 19

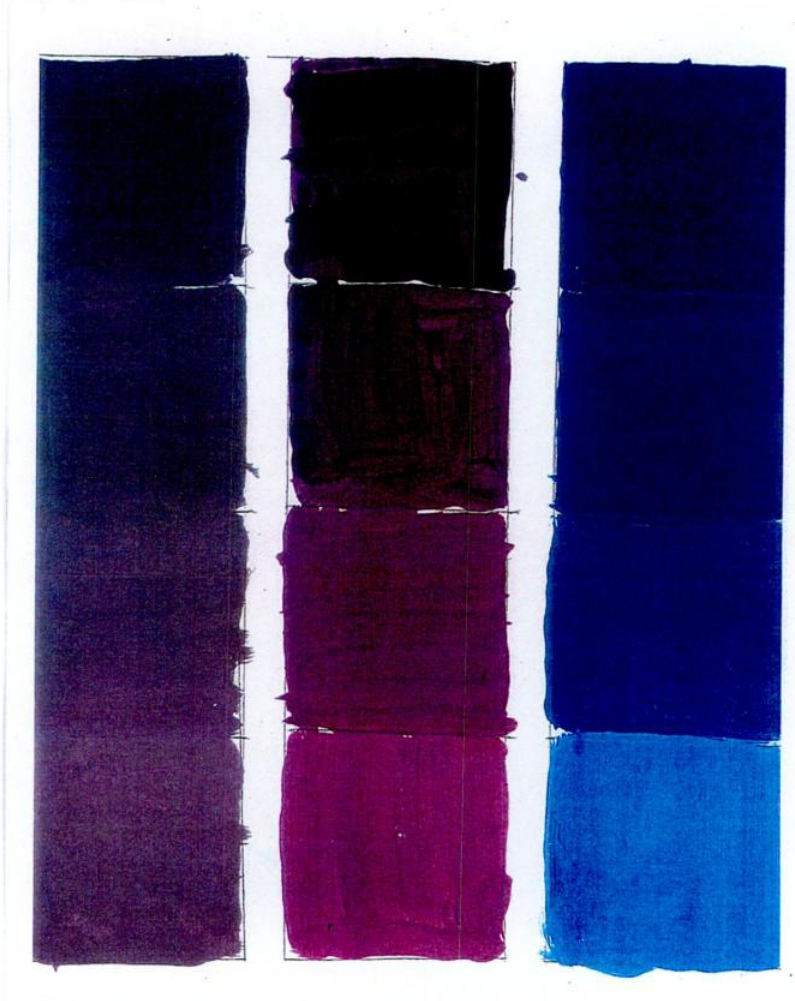
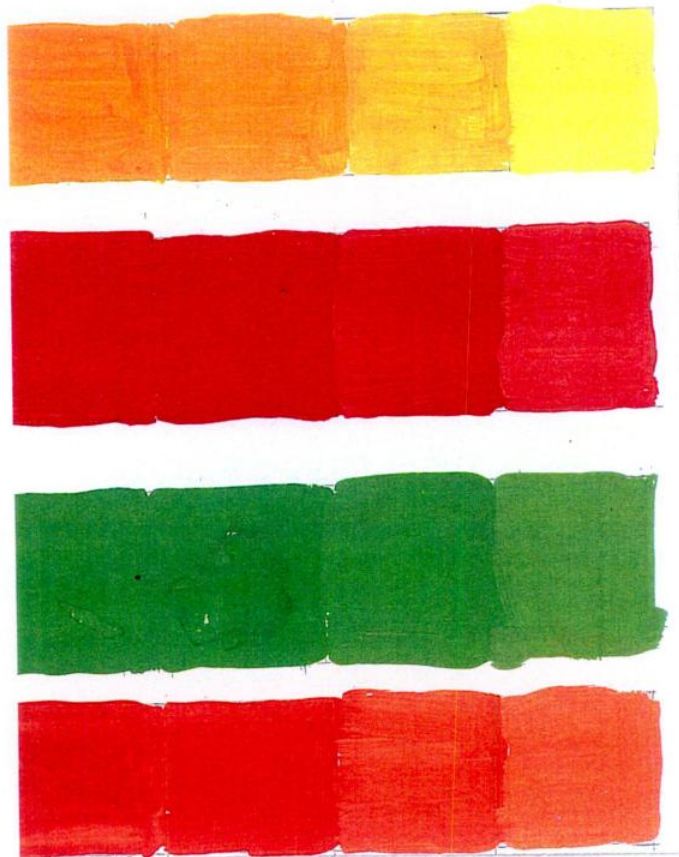


Plate 20 a



Plate 20 b



To develop an understanding of how colour can portray different topics and emotions in painting, work by Picasso (see plates 5 and 6) was displayed to the class in this demonstration. The pupils discussed how the blue colours looked sad and thought the subject of the painting looked quite poor. However, the students thought the colours in Picasso's painting from his Rose period were warmer, pinker and the subjects looked richer. In the task students worked from the observational self-portraits which depicted different facial expressions. The pupils selected colours which represented what the individual wanted to express about themselves. In the evaluation, the students explained why certain colours were chosen. For example one student produced a sheet with blue, navy and purple tones and she explained why she associated these colours with sadness (see plate 19). Another student (see plate 20a) discussed how red, yellow, green, and orange colour tones reminded her of summer and feeling happy (see plate 20b).

Lesson four

Objectives:

- To introduce visual and tactile texture through colour and mixed media.
- To develop techniques in order to use colour to make tactile and visual texture.
- To create an understanding of how Claude Monet used colour in an expressive way to create visual textures.

The Rouen Cathedral by Monet (see plate 1) was introduced to show how artists experiment with paint to make different effects with colour. The students thought the buildings surface was rough and looked blurred.

Plate 21

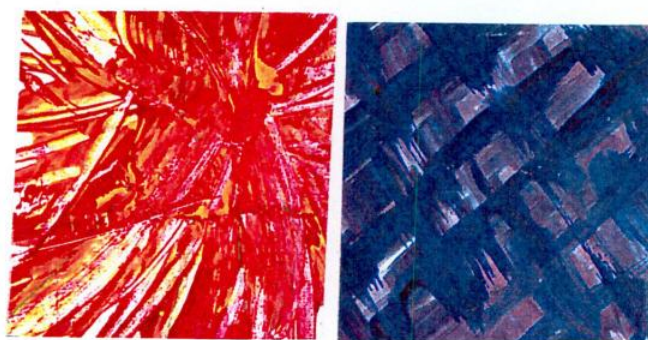
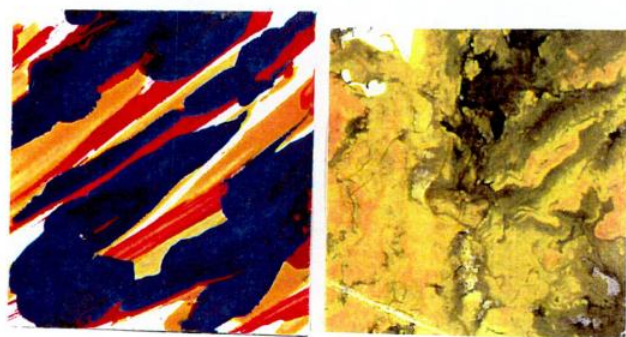
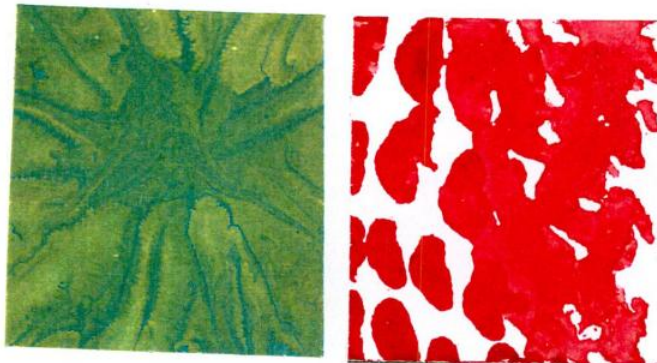


Plate 22



Plate 23



In the demonstration visual aids (see plate 21) displayed a variety of painting techniques which could be explored with colour to make different textures; broken colour, sponging, scraping, cross-hatching. The pupils were highly motivated in this task and seemed to enjoy the freedom of experimenting with colour through paint (see plate 22). In the evaluation of student work (see plate 23) the techniques of how paint and mixed media are combined to achieve particular expressive effects in colour, was discussed.

Lesson Five

Objectives:

- To introduce the process of designing a painting composition to use colour as a means to express.
- To develop the ability to make composition and reinforce understanding of colour, colour theory and expressive colour.
- To create an awareness of how colour was employed by Van Gogh to represent his feelings.

In the introduction the work of Van Gogh was displayed to pupils as another example of how colour has been cultivated to function within art. The class discussed colours used in the painting, The Artist Bedroom at Arles (see plate 3). The students thought the yellows, and greens matched the setting of the bedroom, whereas the pupils thought the colours in the painting, the Night Cafe (see plate 4), clashed. The class believed the complimentary colours of red and green contrasted with the yellow tones. To explain why the artist had chosen these colours in this painting, a quote by Van Gogh was read out in the demonstration;

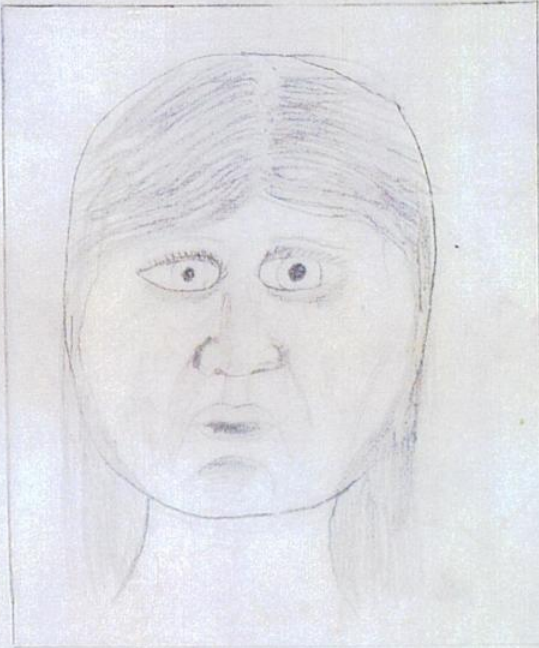
Plate 24



Plate 25



Plate 26



Doife S

Plate 27



Julie

"So I have tried to express, as it were, the power of darkness in a low public house by soft Louis XV green and malachite, contrasting with yellow-green and hard blue-greens, all this in an atmosphere like devils furnace, of paler sulphur." (2)

This quote encouraged the students to think more about what had provoked the artist to use these colours in his painting. The class agreed that Van Gogh had used red to represent the devil and that he had thought much about colour before he had painted this picture. Here, the class learned to be aware of putting more thought into the selection colours and images for the painting composition. The pupils developed a good understanding of how this may portray different ideas in painting. In the demonstration, the students also displayed a good understanding of how to combine primary self-portrait drawings with secondary source imagery for the painting composition. This was evident in the task (see plate 24 and 25) where students used the tone charts as reference for colour in their composition. At the end of the lesson the students assembled and discussed the different painting compositions. The pupils commented on how they liked the way one student had drawn a harlequin using many different purples on the face and in the way she had a mixture of bright yellow, red and blue colours in the background (see plate 26). Other pupils liked the way in which another student combined colours like green, blue, yellow, orange and red to make the subject look happy in her composition (see plate 27).

Plate 28



Plate 29



Lesson Six

Objectives:

- To introduce the grid process to enlarge and transfer composition onto a painting board and reinforce an awareness of line and shape.
- To create an awareness of the grid process through displaying work by Chuck Close.

To introduce the grid process, a self-portrait of Chuck Close was displayed to the class (see plate 28). The grid of squares on the subjects face provoked discussion in the class. In the demonstration the students learned how to use the grid to transfer a small composition and enlarge this onto a painting board. During the task the pupils transferred and enlarged the outline shapes of their colour composition onto the painting board (see plate 29).

Lesson Seven

Objectives:

- To introduce the process of painting compositions onto a board.
- To develop the skill of painting flat colours from a composition.
- To create an awareness of Richard Lynsdar who paints with flat colours.

In this lesson pupils were motivated about working with colour. In fact, the class was quite eager to begin painting their composition onto the board. The painting by Richard Lynsdar New York New York was displayed at the introduction (see plate 30).

Plate 30

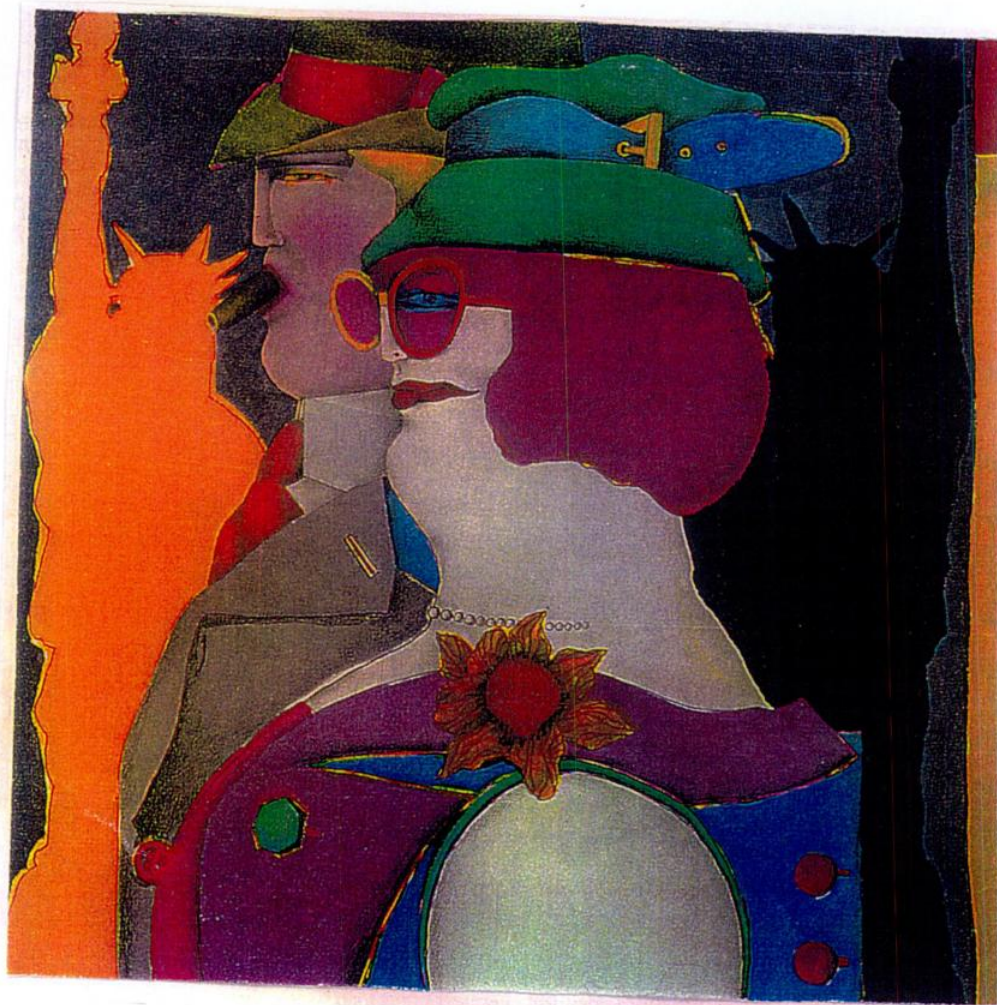
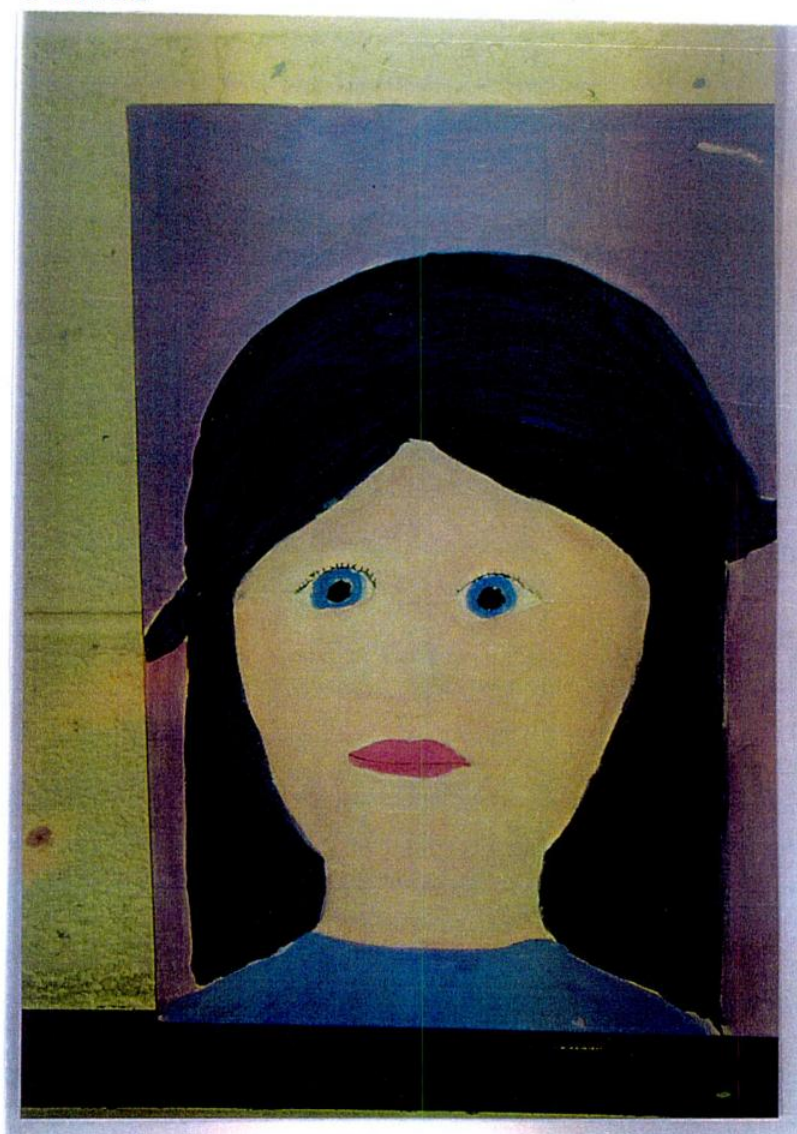


Plate 31



Plate 32



The class noted how the artist had painted flat shapes of colour which displayed no colour tones. A visual aid (see plate 31) was used to show pupils how to select and mix colours which were in the composition and how to apply these to the painting board flatly by not applying different colour tones. In the evaluation pupils explained the process of painting with flat colours which matched the compositions' colours (see plate 32).

Lesson Eight

Objectives:

- To introduce how Henri Matisse and Edvard Munch used colour expressively in different ways in painting.
- To develop techniques of building up the surface of the paint by adding mixed media to colour.
- To develop students individualism in the use of colour in painting.

To introduce the lesson, paintings by Henri Matisse and Edvard Munch were displayed. The painting Madame Matisse : The Green Line (see plate 7) was firstly discussed by pupils, the class commented on the combination of bright colours in the painting and how there was a thick line of green in the centre of the subjects face. The students loved the bright colours used in the painting, The Scream (see plate 33) and the way Munch had painted them as curved lines. This displayed to students how colour can be developed in different ways in painting. The students worked hard throughout the task (see plate 34). In the evaluation, pupils commented on the different ways each individual had used colour and mixed media expressively in the paintings (see plate 35 and 36).

Plate 33

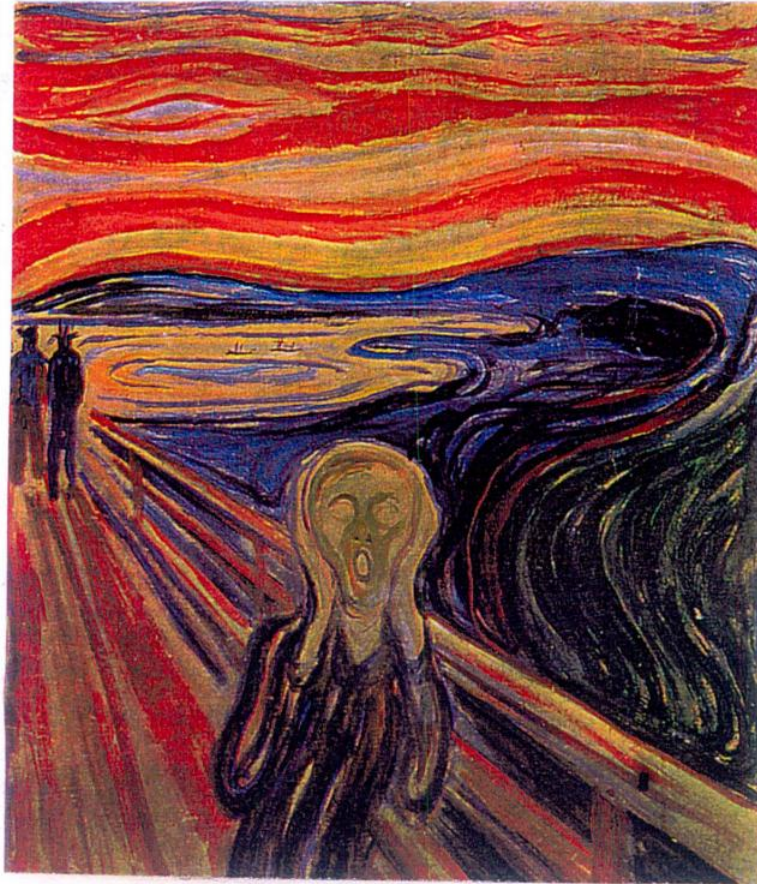


Plate 4



Plate 35



Plate 36



Lesson Nine

Objectives:

- To stimulate student interest of colour cultivation through the example of Pablo Picassos' painting.
- To further the pupils appreciation of colour and develop further painting techniques using colour tone to highlight or to create shadows.

In this lesson pupils finished self-portrait paintings (see plate 39). To stimulate interest in colour, the painting Harlequin, 1901 by Picasso was displayed (see plate 37). The classes' response to this was good as pupils could analyse confidently how the artist had used cool blues and whites to portray a sad clown. The students explained where they observed white colour tones which created highlights on the face of the Harlequin. A visual aid (see plate 38) was used in the demonstration to recap on colour tone and how to apply highlights/ shadows to the painting. The class thought there was a good mix of different painting styles in the evaluation. The students remarked on the way one student had painted a happy clown composition with check patterns of primary and secondary colour on the jester hat and clothes (see plate 40). The class complimented another student on her combination of blue and purple tones on the face of her sad Harlequin painting (see plate 41). The class liked the way another pupil had painted her clown with a colourful background of clouds and mountains (see plate 42).

Plate 37

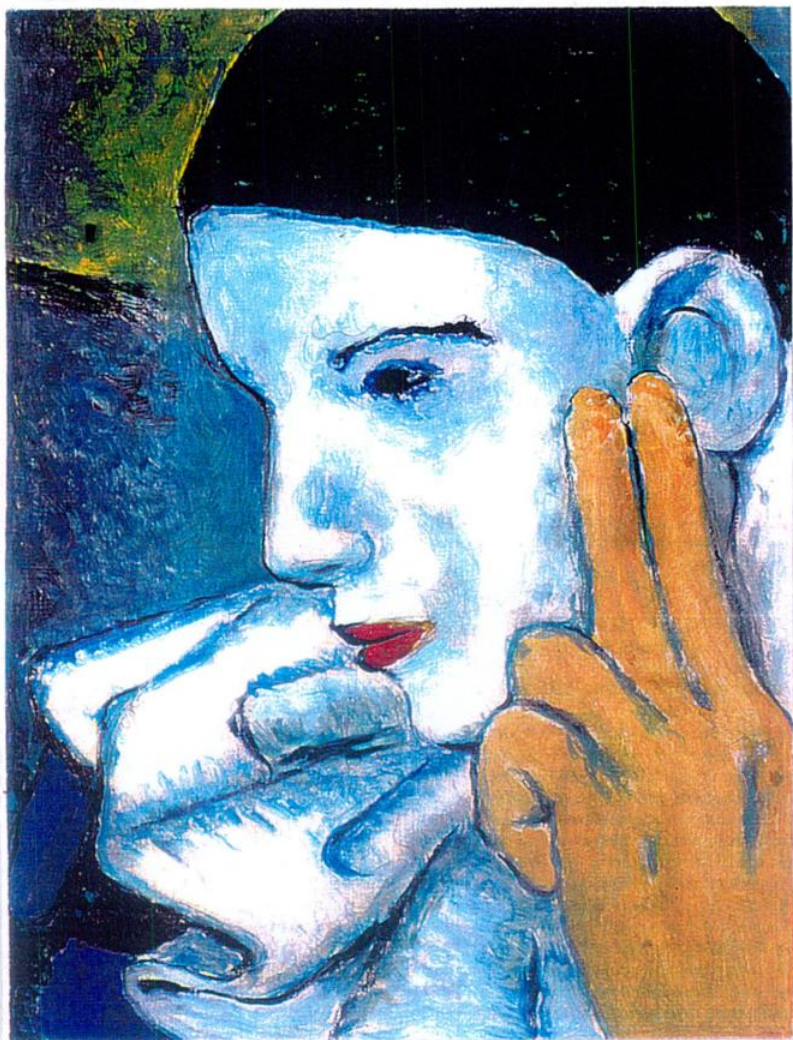


Plate 38

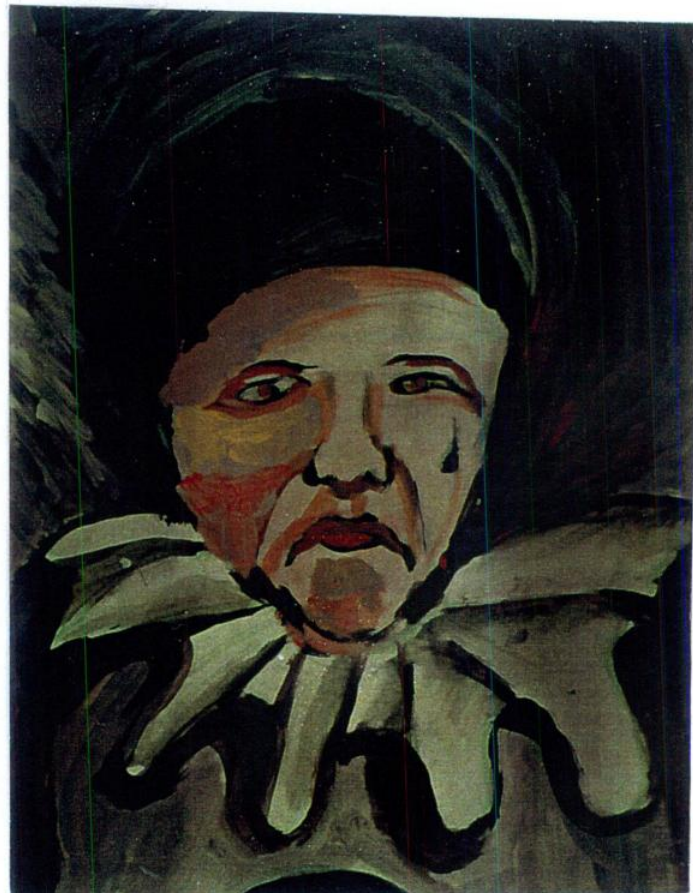


Plate 39



Plate 40

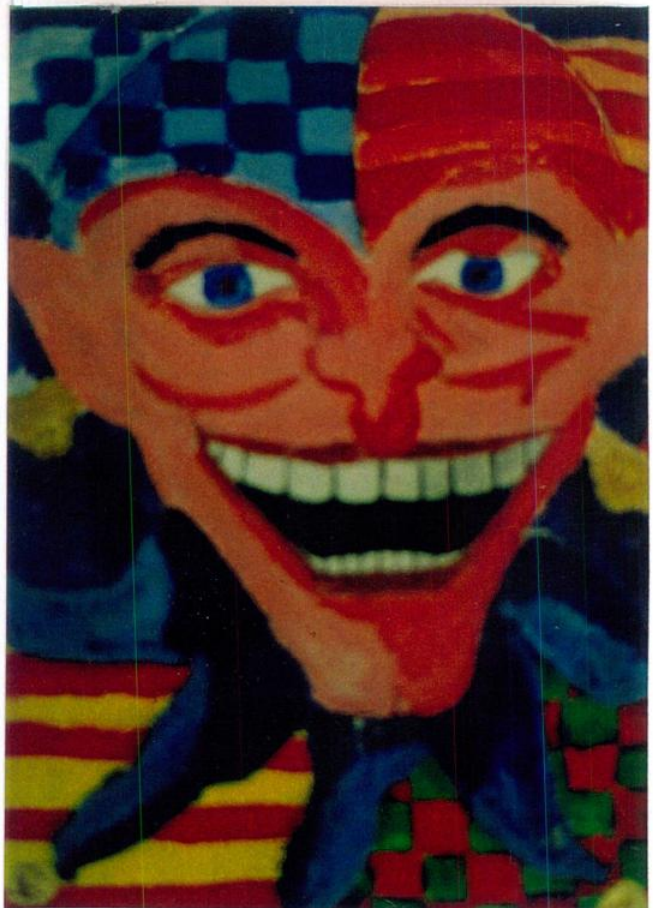
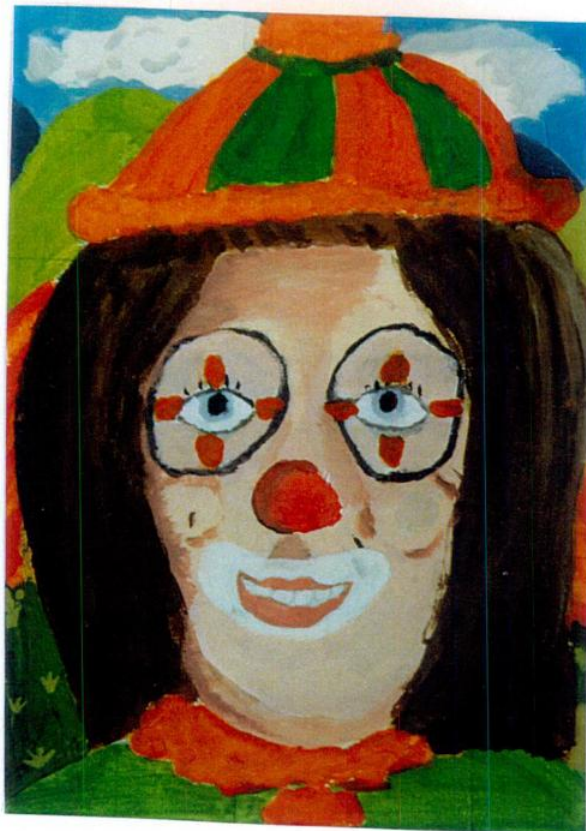


Plate 41



Plate 42



FOOTNOTES

3. Roy Sparkes, Teaching Art Basics, New York: Watson Guptill Publications, 1973, p. 37.

CONCLUSION

In a self-expressive painting scheme an appreciation of colour in art education was examined for this dissertation. By exploring how this art element could be cultivated within a scheme of work for first year students, it became evident that this medium of painting was very applicable to teach colour to this group. The individuals benefited from exploring colour theory through painting as the practical classes allowed the students to engage physically with colour and developed painting techniques. Then to challenge individuals understanding of colour theory discussions about visual aids and artists work helped to questioned the students cognitive understanding of colour. By making the scheme of work self-expressive the students familiarity helped individuals to relate to colour with ease and be expressive in the way that it was employed within the art work. The students broadened awareness of colour, enabling individuals to be confident in their ability to work creatively and expressively with this art element through painting.

In the first chapter colour in art is reviewed. It is important to document what the Impressionists movement achieved with colour in painting. It is explained how the Impressionists surpassed conventional Classical art in the 19th century by demonstrating the importance of colour in art. The Impressionists were great innovators, who adopted new discoveries in physics to reshape the way artists looked at colour, through choosing original subject-matter and experimenting with new ways to employ colour in painting. The Impressionists liberated colour in art which encouraged other artists to re-evaluate how colour can be cultivated.

In the second part of this chapter, colour in art in the 19th and 20th century is reviewed. This records how artists like Van Gogh, Matisse, Kandinsky and Picasso developed innovative, creative and individual ways to cultivate colour in painting. These artists' instigated the use of colour as a practical tool which could visually be used to express meaning in art. By discussing examples of these artists work an understanding of the importance of colour is developed.

To establish the basics of this art element, colour theory and the colour properties are reviewed in chapter two. Through explaining the colour wheel (see plate 11) an understanding of the primary, secondary and tertiary colour and complementary colour (see plate 12) is established. Then by reviewing the properties of colour a knowledge of colour intensity, temperature and tone is developed in reference to the practical work. An understanding of how to apply these colour theories to the painting process is developed in this chapter.

The role of colour in the students self-expression explores the relevance this can have in art education. This methodology chapter explores the beneficial aspects of self-expression in art education for the individuals. It explores the relationship of colour with the student and how this art element could function within a self-expressive painting scheme for first year students to develop an appreciation of colour in art education.

In the self-expressive painting scheme it firstly became evident that to develop an appreciation of colour in art education through the medium of

paint, the students needed to gain a knowledge of the colour theories. Discussions and demonstrations in the classroom developed an awareness of; primary, secondary and tertiary colour; complimentary colour, colour temperature and the properties of colour. The work of Paul Cezanne, an Impressionist artist, (see plate 10) was used to establish how complimentary colour creates vibrancy within painting. Throughout lessons the students gained the vocabulary to help them to articulate themselves when discussing this art element. In task work students learned to put some colour theories into practice. The individuals established what the primary and secondary colours are and learned how to lighten or darken the intensity of the pigment to make different colour tones (see plate 15).

In painting, the Impressionists developed innovative colour techniques through this medium. For example Claude Monet and Edouard Manet displayed how to paint with broken colour tones to loosely depict images in painting (see plate 1 and 2). To encourage the students to experiment with colour in painting, the work of Claude Monet was displayed (see plate 1). The students examined how this artist applied colour to his painting. It was decided that Monet had painted his picture with blobs of colour. In the demonstration the students learned that Monet was using his broken colour technique. This task helped the pupils to learn to experiment many different techniques with this art element; sponging colours, scraping into colours, cross-hatching colours and using the broken colour technique (see plate 19).

To encourage the students self-expression in the art room, the class brainstormed the topics which individuals associated with particular colours. This helped the students to understand how colour can evoke a

personal meaning. The students discussed the different ways Picasso had used colour to function within his painting (see plates 12 and 14). During practical work students learned how to be selective with colour and mix colour tones which related to the individuals drawings (see plates 16 and 17). By introducing Van Gogh at the design stage the pupils gained a greater awareness of how colour could evoke personal meaning within an individuals art work. The class interpreted how Van Gogh would narrate his feelings about certain particular places using colour (see plates 3 and 4) and how he had thought much about colour before painting his pictures. In the design process the pupils learned to think for themselves, about the colours, primary drawings and secondary images before making decisions on a composition for painting. The pupils developed an awareness of how colours and images could be combined to express what the individual wished to portray in the compositions (see plate 20).

The work of Henri Matisse and Edvard Munch (see plates 7 and 25) encouraged the students to develop an individualistic approach to painting when using colour. During practical work the pupils explored different techniques, building up the surface of colour and applying mixed media to paint (see plate 26). It became evident that throughout the painting process, the students understanding of colour allowed individuals to cultivate a personal system to manipulate colour expressively. Developing an appreciation of colour explored this art element on practical, theoretical and subjective levels in art education.

