

GREAT ART IDEAS FOR TEACHERS

THE AUSTRALIAN LANDSCAPE INSPIRED BY FRED WILLIAMS'S YOU YANGS SERIES

YEAR 2–6

OVERVIEW

In this activity students will investigate how ideas about the Australian landscape can be interpreted and communicated through art. Students will explore visual conventions and techniques used by Australian artist, Fred Williams, and take inspiration from his work to create their own composition. They will engage with drawing and collage techniques and develop their own personal interpretation of the Australian landscape.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Discuss features typically found in landscape paintings.
- Describe how Fred Williams presented the Australian landscape in his artworks.
- Create a landscape inspired by the work of Fred Williams using oil pastel and collage techniques.
- Use art elements, including colour, shape, line and texture in an artwork to convey an idea or feeling.
- Reflect on how effectively their ideas have been expressed in their own artworks

STUDENT EXAMPLES



RELATED ARTWORKS



Fred Williams

You Yangs landscape (1965)

oil on canvas

137.4 x 152.8 cm

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Purchased with the assistance of the

Visual Arts Board, Australia Council, 1977

A21-1977

© Estate of Fred Williams



Fred Williams

Knoll in the You Yangs 1965

oil on canvas

150.0 x 206.3 cm

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Gift of Lyn Williams AO through the

Australian Government's Cultural Gifts

Program, 2019

2019.233

© Estate of Fred Williams



Fred Williams

You Yangs pond (1967)

gouache

69.7 x 57.4 cm (image and sheet)

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Purchased through The Art Foundation

of Victoria with the assistance of the

H. J. Heinz II Charitable and Family Trust,

Governor, and the Utah Foundation,

Fellow, 1980

AC14-1980

© Estate of Fred Williams

DISCUSS

Fred Williams (1927–1982) was an Australian painter and printmaker who pioneered a new vision of the Australian landscape. During the 1960s he often took inspiration from the Victorian landscape where he lived, painting outdoors with gouache then working on oil paintings back in the studio. *You Yangs landscape*, 1967, and *Upwey landscape*, 1965, are inspired by the You Yangs near Geelong and Melbourne's Dandenong Ranges .

Rather than following a traditional approach to landscape painting, with obvious background, middleground and foreground and descriptive detail, Williams developed a distinctive abstract style that emphasised the colour, form and space of the landscape in a bold new way. Swathes of colour and gestural daubs of paint allude to elements of the landscape and capture the essence of place rather than describing it in great detail. Williams's compositions reflect his observation that the Australian landscape was characterised by a random scatter of elements with no obvious focal point. His paintings appear deceptively simple, however every mark and element was carefully considered and the result of a careful study of the defining qualities of the landscape represented. With your class, look at the related artworks and use the following prompts to discuss Fred Williams's approach to the Australian landscape:

Landscape painting:

- Brainstorm the defining features of a landscape.
- What does the term 'landscape painting' mean to you?
- What do the terms 'background', 'foreground', 'middleground' and 'focal point', 'viewpoint' mean in reference to landscape painting?
- Can a landscape be natural, man-made or both? Explain your answer.

Fred Williams's landscape paintings:

- Look at the examples of Fred Williams's paintings of the You Yangs.
 - Which features of the landscape are recognisable in Williams's paintings? How can you recognise these features?
 - What do they have in common?
 - How is each one unique?
- Compare and contrast Williams's paintings with photographs of Australian landscapes. How are they similar or different?
- Define and discuss the terms 'abstract' and 'realistic'. In what ways are Fred Williams's paintings abstract? In what way are they realistic?
- Describe the marks and gestures in the paintings of the You Yangs. How do you think Fred Williams applied paint to the canvas to achieve these results?
- What observations can you make about the viewpoints that the artist adopts for these works?
- Which colours, shapes, lines and textures has the artist used? How are they used?
- What mood or emotion is evoked in Fred Williams's paintings? Create a list of adjectives that describe the mood or emotion in one or the collection.
- Reflecting upon the list generated by the class, discuss what these moods suggest about Fred Williams's relationship the landscape in his paintings.

RESOURCES & MATERIALS

- A4 coloured paper (neutral tone)
- Oil pastels
- Tissue paper
- Glue stick

CREATE

Students design and create their own landscape artwork through the following steps:

1. Research and choose an Australian landscape to serve as the inspiration for your artwork. Why did you choose this landscape?
2. Identify the features that define the essence of your landscape. Is the landscape flat or undulating? Consider elements such as trees, flowers, rocks and bushes. What colours, shapes and lines do you see?
3. Begin by colouring the background of your landscape using the A4 paper and oil pastels. *Utilise pastel techniques such as using the side of the pastel and blending to develop your background. Try and cover the entire background with colour. Remember that your background doesn't need to be detailed or realistic.*
4. Once your background has been coloured identify the colours, shapes and/or textures you will use to create the features of your landscape.
5. Experiment making these features using tissue paper. *You can tear, roll and scrunch the tissue paper into different 3-dimensional forms to represent the features of your chosen landscape. Try tearing both smaller and larger pieces of tissue paper and rolling/scrunching them loosely and tightly to achieve variations in size, shape and texture.*
6. When you have made enough features, arrange them on top of your background and experiment with different compositions. *Don't glue them down until you are happy with your composition.*
7. When you're happy with the arrangement, glue the tissue paper pieces in place.

PRESENT & REFLECT

Students share their artwork with a partner:

- What landscape did you choose to represent and why?
- Use one word to describe the mood or feeling evoked in your landscape. Explain to your partner why you chose this word.
- What methods and techniques did you use to develop your landscape? *Consider the way you blended the colours into your background and the tissue paper rolling/scrunching techniques you used to produce different shapes and textures.*
- How did Fred Williams's artworks inspire the creation of your landscape?
- Compare your artwork with your partner's. How are they similar and different?

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