



# Lesson Activities

William Scott



*For this first part of the lesson bring in a few of the following objects: a pear, a lemon, a pot, a frying pan, an egg and a candle. These are typical objects that appear in William Scott's still life paintings. Also bring in another object that is not commonly featured in Scott's paintings, for example a football, a pineapple, a bunch of bananas – children will use this in a memory exercise.*

On the whiteboard, show children a selection of William Scott's still life paintings. For each painting, ask children to call out any objects they recognize.

When you have finished going through the paintings, ask children to talk about what made them recognize the objects in the painting: was it the colour, the shape, the size, the other objects around it?

Display some of the still life objects that you have brought in to class. You can ask the children to pass them around.

Ask them in what way are the objects in the painting not like the objects in real life. They may mention things like: the shape isn't the same, the colour isn't right, the artist has used just one colour, but the object has lots of shades of the colour, there might be a thick outline in the painting, the painting may not include particular details.

Remind them, that the object in the picture is flat or two-dimensional, while the object in real life is three-dimensional.

## Abstract Art

Explain to the class that William Scott was just one of the artists at this time in the 20th century who was experimenting with how to represent objects and ideas in art. Since the early 1900s lots of artists, including Picasso, Matisse and Mondrian, had been experimenting with making the objects, figures or landscapes they were representing much simpler.

In the 1940s and 1950s a group of American artists started to produce art where the shapes and colours they used on the canvas, were not simplified versions of



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what they were looking at in real life, but to represent ideas, emotions or dreams.

Show children a variety of abstract art from early pioneers like Matisse, Picasso and Mondrian (his series of sketches of trees are a good introduction to the idea of abstract art) to abstract expressionists like Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko and Willem de Kooning.

Ask children to compare William Scott's art with the other abstract painters – what are the similarities and differences?

## Drawing from Memory

Explain to the children that Scott often drew from memory. The objects weren't in front of him while he painted. Tell the children that you're going to carry out an experiment. You're going to hold up an object for 5 seconds, during that time they should look at the object and think about how it looks (they shouldn't make any notes).

Hold up the object that you brought in that does not feature in Scott's paintings for five or ten seconds. When the five/ ten seconds is up, hide the object from the children's view. Now pick on a few children to say one thing they noticed about the object – write these words on the board.

When you've collected 5 – 8 words or short descriptions of the object, show the object to the children again. Did they miss anything out in their description? For example, if you chose a pineapple, they may have said it was yellow and green – but when they look again, they might notice that parts of the pineapple look orange or light brown, they may notice that the base of the leaves on the shoot look almost silvery grey.

## Drawing from Real Life

Ask children to bring in objects from home or supply them with a number of objects which feature in Scott's paintings.



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Using pencils or pens, give the children twenty minutes to draw the objects. Instruct them to try to add in as much detail as possible. Ask them for ideas on how they can add detail about the texture of the object (different ways of mark-making).

## Making it Simpler

In the next art session, remind children about the still life drawings they completed in the last session. They can have a look at the drawings to remind themselves of the objects they had drawn.

In this session, explain that they are going to draw and paint the objects from memory just as William Scott did in his paintings. They can use paints, or markers, lino-prints, or cut up bits of coloured card or paper to make the still-life art.

Emphasize that it is not important for them to get a very life-like representation of the objects at the end of the session, what is important is that they use their imagination and creativity to represent the objects as they remember them – to create a simpler more abstract version of the objects.

Display the finished pieces of work. Ask children to comment on the pictures that are particularly interesting or surprising. Ask the children to comment on what aspects of the art exercise they enjoyed and what they found challenging.



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## What's Next?

