



Claire (top right) was intrigued with the affordances of dye. After a few attempts, she mastered the skill to blend the different coloured dyes together, announcing with a flourish that she had painted a rainbow.

A large jar of water and smaller jars of dye using the primary colours, with pipettes as a tool to add drops of dye and watch the colour change, children are engrossed and delighted in their work.

As children work around the table, they constantly take note of what each other is doing, and observing the results, often remark on them with comparisons and analogies. "I've got green too." "It's black Sam. It's a batman drink!" "I'm going to make a mucky brown." These comments highlight children's growing understanding of what they're seeing and creating.

"Colour is a means of exerting direct influence on the soul." Wassily Kandinsky

Perspectives on Colour and Form

Kandinsky Hundertwasser
Mondrian Matisse

Children are often invited to explore the transformative nature of colour as it mixes and makes other colours. Understanding the principles of colour allows children to bring this knowledge to life in other areas of creativity and daily experiences. Over recent years inspiration has been taken from artists who use different techniques and ideas with a bold colour palate

The artwork offers a provocation for conversation and exploration as children work.



Kandinsky's influence is evident in Ayla's pastel work. (left). She created quick circular/curvy lines using a variety of colours in a cluster within each section of the paper.

Hundertwasser explored ideas of colour and shape in his artwork as well as in architecture. His work is characterized by the absence of straight lines and distinctively formed houses, often rain drops are in his pictures, and frequently there is black detailing.

Tom and Ella (below) show they are thinking about the Hundertwasser image, Tom with his dabbling raindrops, and Ella with the circularity of her brushstrokes.

Impressed with this gradient work done by five year olds, Jessie set up a tableau offering seven different shades of yellows and greens. Children really enjoyed discussing the different shades and looking for the lighter and darker tones. Claire (below) spent a long time layering different shades of green on top of each other, before blending the shades together. Using canvas paper and heavy card allowed children to apply layer upon layer of colour to their work without it disintegrating.



Various tools and materials were presented for children to use to look more closely at Hundertwasser's work. Loose parts, with the emphasis on circularity provided materials for arranging and composing. White boxes with boldly painted facades accompanied the image of Hundertwasser's Vienna houses, inviting stacking constructions.



By using basic forms and colours, Mondrian believed that his vision of modern art would transcend divisions in culture and become a new common language based in the pure primary colours, flatness of forms and dynamic tension in his canvases. Matilda (above) explores these concepts in an ephemeral format.

"An artist must possess Nature. He must identify himself with her rhythm, by efforts that will prepare the mastery which will later enable him to express himself in his own language"

Henri Matisse

Initially using felt pieces to understand the idea of layering colour, exploration moved to the easel with small trays of paint and sponges so children could apply layers of colour in interesting patterns. Alyssa chose only a few colours to paint with, dabbing the sponges to make distinctive shapes across the card, but found it difficult to add more layers over her original work. Once she took the risk and applied more paint, she observed, with wonder, the contrasting colours in the previous layer coming through. Claire enjoyed the process of putting more layers on, swirling the paint in different directions and dabbing the sponge. She showed quite an artistic eye for space, often standing back to take in all her work at once, noticing the white spaces.



Claire's representation of Hundertwasser's tower (age 4.3 yrs)

