

Victoria Art Gallery, Bath

William Scott



Teacher Resource Notes KS3-KS5

These notes are designed to support KS3-5 teachers in engaging students as they explore the art work. As well as factual information they provide starting points for discussion, ideas for simple practical activities and suggestions for extended work that could stem from a Gallery visit.

His oil painting '**Bottle and Fish Slice**' from 1949/50 was one of a group given by the artist to his sons James and Robert Scott in April 1982. They later donated the painting to the William Scott Foundation Ltd in April 2011.

Jon Benington, Manager of the Victoria Art Gallery, said: "This painting is from a key date in terms of William Scott's relevance to Bath. It was painted in Scott's studio at home in the village of Hallatrow, 10 miles from Bath, while he was working as Senior Painting Master at the Bath Academy of Art. This period can be seen retrospectively as the Academy's most significant period, acting as the seeding ground of a truly progressive force in the British art world.

"**'Bottle and Fish Slice'** is a typical example of Scott's work at this time, when he became obsessed with depicting humble kitchen utensils and food stuffs. These not only echoed his working class upbringing, their simple shapes also aligned with his preference for abstract design. As he painted and market gardened at Hallatrow his reputation grew rapidly, to the point where he was favoured with a visit from the world-famous American abstract painter, Mark Rothko, in 1959."

The Heritage Lottery Fund grant will also support an associated programme of learning activities planned by the Victoria Art Gallery including the making of a film about William Scott by Year 12 art and media students from Chew Valley School. The culmination of the project will be timed to coincide with the centenary of the artist's birth on 15 February 2013.

Ways of looking: ideas for KS3-5 groups

Listening to others/responding personally/sensory experiences

A huge amount of information can be revealed just by asking the question ‘what do you see?’ Once a few ideas are circulating, this often cascades into very imaginative and perceptive ways of viewing the work. Asking ‘why do you say that?’ invites more considerations and sharing of ideas from students.

- What word(s) does the work make you think about?
- Have you seen anything like this before?
- What do the titles tell you?
- How does it feel to be part of this space?

Visual experience/what can you see

What materials and processes has the artist used to make the work? Have you seen this material in art before? Do you think some materials have more relevance to art than others?

- Is the work part of a series; does the artist paint this subject frequently?
- What is it? (painting, collage, etc)
- How is it displayed? What space does it occupy and how does it relate to other work in the exhibition?
- What is the scale of the artwork and how does this affect our relationship to it?
- Is the work made to be permanent?
- What tactile/surface qualities does the work have?
- Does the work show signs of age?
- What do the archive materials add to your understanding?

Communication of ideas and meaning

- What do you think the artist wants to communicate?
- Is it about real life?
- Is there a story or narrative in the work?
- Does it communicate an issue or theme?
- Does it have cultural, social or political meaning?
- Does it relate to contemporary life?
- Does the title affect the meaning of the work?

Art in context/cultures/times. Local/national/global

- Is the work about a particular place or person?
- Who is the artist? Is it important to know who created the work? Does the artist’s background inform the work?
- Does the work comment on contemporary society?



Title: **Bottle and Fish Slice**

Artist: William Scott

Date: 1949 or 1950

Collection: Victoria Art Gallery, Bath and North East Somerset Council

Copyright: © William Scott Foundation 2012

First Impressions

Before being told anything about the painting, what are your first impressions? What do you think the objects are? Do they look like objects that you recognise? Do the shapes look realistic? What do you think of the colour pallet? Is there anything interesting about the way the objects are placed in the space?



Putting in Context

Now look through the series of Scott images below, simply discussing or selecting individual tasks to work through.

Second Impressions

After looking at the series of Scott images, discussing them and producing a series of work in you sketch book based on them, have your opinions changed? Go through the questions from the first impressions stage again and note down any changes of opinion.

After discussing which activities worked best for students, they should develop one of the activities into a final piece, using still life objects as the starting point. These final pieces could relate to one or more of Scott's images and include different style that he used. Students should be able to explain how they came to there final images and how they relate to the work of William Scott.



Title: **Girl and Blue Table**

Artist: William Scott

Date: 1938

Collection: Leicester County Council

Copyright: © William Scott Foundation 2012

Impressionism

Scott had studied and been influenced by the French impressionists during his art education. Do you know what Impressionism was? What was it about? What similarities does this image have? How would you produce an image referencing the impressionists?



Time and place

If you didn't know the date when would you guess this painting had been made? Can you tell from the clothing or hair style? Make sketchbook drawings of others in your group, indicating a setting, poses or objects you might include in the final image, to provide clues about time and place.

Mood and light

How would you describe the light in this painting? How would you describe the mood of this painting? Does the painting evoke any emotions? Would you describe the painting as still or dynamic? All paintings are still so how could you give paintings a sense of movement?



Title: Harbour

Artist: William Scott

Date: 1939

Collection: Private collection

Copyright: © William Scott Foundation 2012

Colours

If you were painting the sea and sky, what colours would you use? Has Scott used the same colours? Why do you think he choose the colours that he did? Using a muted colour pallet produce landscapes in your sketch books, what effect does the muted colour pallet have on the work?

Simplicity

How many colours do you think Scott has used to produce the image? Do you think the image should have more colours? What details are included in the image, do you think the image should have more details in it? If the image had more colours and more details in it do you think the mood of the piece would change? Produce work in sketch books simplifying landscapes or still life scenes.





Title: The Ribbon

Artist: William Scott

Date: 1942

Collection: Private collection

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Skin tone

Describe the skin tone of the figures, does it remind you of another surface in nature or the man made world? How has the skin tone changed from the earlier picture of the girl and the blue table?

Composition

Describe the composition, is the girl sitting or standing? Is the chair on the floor or on the table? Do you think the figures are inside or outside? Do the shadows tell you where the light source is?

Abstracting the figure

Produce a series of figurative sketches and try to abstract and simplify them but at the same time try to retain the shadows to create depth.





Title: Cyclamen

Artist: William Scott

Date: 1946

Collection: Private collection

Copyright: © William Scott Foundation 2012

Shadow

What do the shadows do in this picture, how would the picture look without shadows? Produce still life images with and without shadows and discuss the difference.

Number of Colours

At first glance how many colours are in this picture? Now look closer, are the shapes made of one colour or a many different shades of the same colour? Produce simple still life paintings, with and without many shades of the same colours, discuss the difference.





Title: Italian Cockerel

Artist: William Scott

Date: 1949

Collection: Private collection

Copyright: © William Scott Foundation 2012

Same Colour

Do you think that a cockerel's legs and lemons are really the same colour? Why do you think Scott chose to paint them in the same yellow? How does that relate to his earlier work?

Difference

Is there a difference between the way the lemons are painted and the way the cockerel's body is painted, if so what do these differences change about the objects?





Title: Still Life with Candle

Artist: William Scott

Date: 1950

Collection: National Museums and Galleries of Wales

Copyright: © William Scott Foundation 2012

Background

What do you think is in the background? Does it matter? How does the background in this painting relate to his earlier work? How do the colours in the background relate to the table itself? Do you think the colours are important and why? Produce simple still life images and use different shapes and colours in the background: What do you think of the results?



Angles

Look at the angles in this composition, how do the angles relate to each other? Are they random or carefully constructed? Do the angles of objects in pictures matter? Do you think people prefer to have certain angles in pictures and if so why. Take coloured paper and cut out still life objects and background shapes, take a series of photographs changing the angle each time; Do you have a favourite and why?



Title: Slagheap Landscape

Artist: William Scott

Date: 1952

Collection: Arts Council Collection, Hayward Gallery, London

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Similarities

How does this work relate to the still life paintings and the landscape that you have already seen? Has Scott's style changed? Are there any landscapes near you that you could simplify and produce work about? Produce simple landscapes considering what you have learnt about Scott's work so far.





Title: White Sand and Ochre

Artist: William Scott

Date: 1960

Collection: Tate

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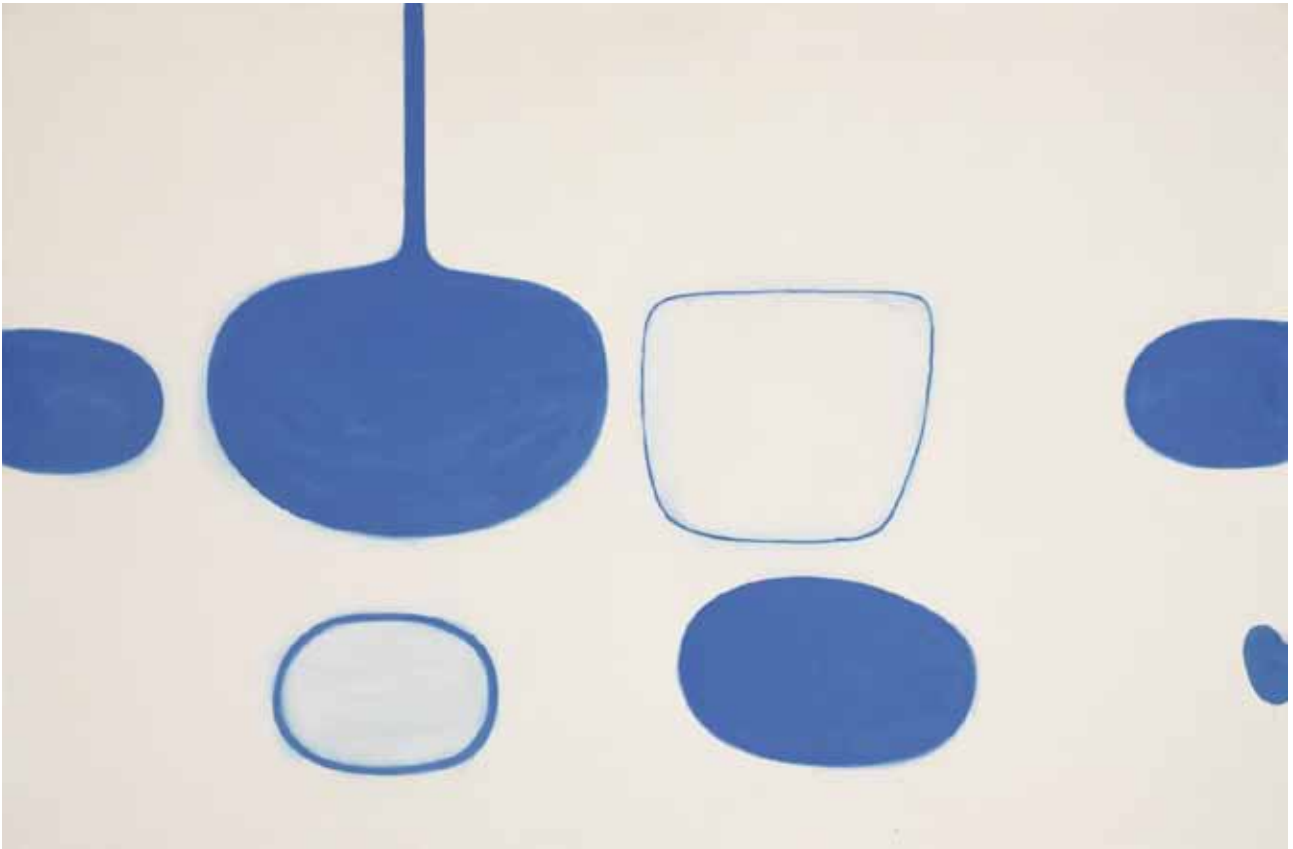
What is it?

What are you looking at? Is this painting like the others that you have looked at? Does the title help? How is this similar to the paintings you have already discussed? How do you think Scott got to this stage?

Abstract landscapes

Look at areas in nature and create colour pallets and simplified shapes that relate to them. Using the colour pallets and shapes produce simple abstract paintings based on areas of nature, such as the sea, fields or the beach.





Title: **Blue Still Life**

Artist: William Scott

Date: 1969

Collection: Irish Museum of Modern Art (on loan from George and Maura McClelland)

Copyright: © William Scott Foundation 2012

Recognition

Do you recognise anything in this painting? What is it a still life of? Can it still be a still life if you can't recognise objects in it? Do you think the objects are on a table or the floor or hanging? Do you think the objects were all blue or did Scott choose to paint them that way and if so why?



Pattern

The objects look like a pattern that you might find on fabric or wrapping paper. In groups create simple still life images in one colour, cut out the objects and create a pattern using them.



Photograph: **William Scott at Hallatrow studio**

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