

ART · Y3–Y6

# Abstract Art & Mixed Media

Knowledge Organiser — Y3–Y6

## Key vocabulary

1

### Abstract art

Art that does not attempt to represent external reality, but uses shapes, colours, forms, and lines to create a composition that exists independently. The 'opposite' of representational art.

2

### Representational art

Art that clearly represents something from the real world — a portrait, a landscape, a still life.

3

### Expressionism

Art that expresses emotional experience rather than objective reality. Often bold, distorted, or intense colours.

*Example: Edvard Munch, The Scream (1893)*

4

### Abstract Expressionism

Post-WWII movement emphasising spontaneous and subconscious creation. Colour, gesture, and scale.

*Example: Jackson Pollock (drip painting), Mark Rothko (colour field)*

5

### Mixed media

Artwork that uses more than one medium — combining paint, collage, photography, fabric, found objects, or digital elements.

6

### Collage

An artwork made by assembling different materials (paper, fabric, photographs, text) onto a surface.

*Example: Picasso and Braque developed the technique c.1912*



# Abstract artists to study

A starting collection

- WASSILY KANDINSKY (1866–1944): Often credited as the first abstract artist. Used colour and shape to express music and emotion.
- PIET MONDRIAN (1872–1944): Pure geometric abstraction — straight lines, primary colours, white and black. Inspired countless designers.
- JACKSON POLLOCK (1912–1956): Action painting — dripped and poured paint onto canvas on the floor. The gesture IS the art.
- MARK ROTHKO (1903–1970): Large fields of glowing colour. Viewers often report strong emotional responses.
- BARBARA HEPWORTH (1903–1975): British abstract sculptor. Organic forms, holes in sculptures to create negative space.
- BRIDGET RILEY (b.1931): Optical illusions using geometric patterns (Op Art). Black and white early work creates movement.

