

ART · Y3-Y6

Key Artists

Knowledge Organiser — KS2 Art

About this organiser

Ten artists from different times and places, each with a distinctive style. Use them as starting points for art projects, or to expose children to the diversity of art across cultures and centuries. Most KS2 art schemes will draw on several of these.

Impressionist and Modern

Late 1800s onwards

- VINCENT VAN GOGH (Dutch, 1853-1890) — bold colours, swirling brushstrokes. 'Sunflowers,' 'Starry Night.' Sold only one painting in his life.
- HENRI MATISSE (French, 1869-1954) — bright colour, simple shapes. Famous for paper cut-outs in his old age. 'The Snail,' 'Goldfish.'
- PABLO PICASSO (Spanish, 1881-1973) — invented Cubism (showing many sides of a thing at once). 'Guernica,' 'Three Musicians.'
- BRIDGET RILEY (British, born 1931) — Op Art. Black and white patterns that seem to move. 'Movement in Squares.'

Beyond Europe

Different traditions

- FRIDA KAHLO (Mexican, 1907-1954) — bright colours, Mexican folk traditions, self-portraits about pain and identity. 'Self-Portrait with Thorn Necklace.'
- YAYOI KUSAMA (Japanese, born 1929) — polka dots, infinity rooms, pumpkins. Still working in her 90s.



- JEAN-MICHEL BASQUIAT (American, 1960-1988) — graffiti meets fine art. Bold, urgent, political. African-American identity at the centre of his work.
- HOKUSAI (Japanese, 1760-1849) — woodblock prints. 'The Great Wave off Kanagawa' is one of the most famous images in the world.
- GEORGIA O'KEEFFE (American, 1887-1986) — close-up flowers and desert landscapes. 'Black Iris.'
- BANKSY (British, identity unknown) — street artist. Stencils with political messages. 'Girl with Balloon.'

How to study an artist

What to look at

- WHO were they? When and where did they live?
- WHAT did their art look like? Distinctive features?
- WHY did they make their art that way? What inspired them?
- WHAT are their most famous works?
- HOW does it make you feel?
- WHAT can you try yourself in a similar style?
- Don't just copy — let the artist's ideas inspire your own original work.

How to talk about art — questions to ask

How to talk about any artwork

- What can you see? (Describe it.)
- What colours has the artist used? Why might they have chosen these?
- What shapes and lines do you notice?
- What's in the foreground? Background?
- How does it make you feel?



- What might the artist have been trying to say?
- Have you ever seen anything like this before?
- If you could ask the artist one question, what would it be?

