



LESSON 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE ARTIST FRANK BOWLING

Frank Bowling in the liferoom at Royal College of Art by unknown photographer, c.196
Courtesy of the Frank Bowling Archive

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WHO IS FRANK BOWLING?

Frank Bowling is a celebrated contemporary artist known for his vibrant and experimental abstract paintings. Born in Guyana and later working in Britain and the United States, Bowling developed a distinctive style that blends colour, texture, and movement. His work often involves pouring, staining, and layering paint to create rich, atmospheric surfaces that can suggest landscapes, memory, or emotion without depicting them directly. At 92 years old, Frank is still creating exciting, large scale pieces in his studio in London.

What do you notice about this painting?

How is colour used?

How is shape used?



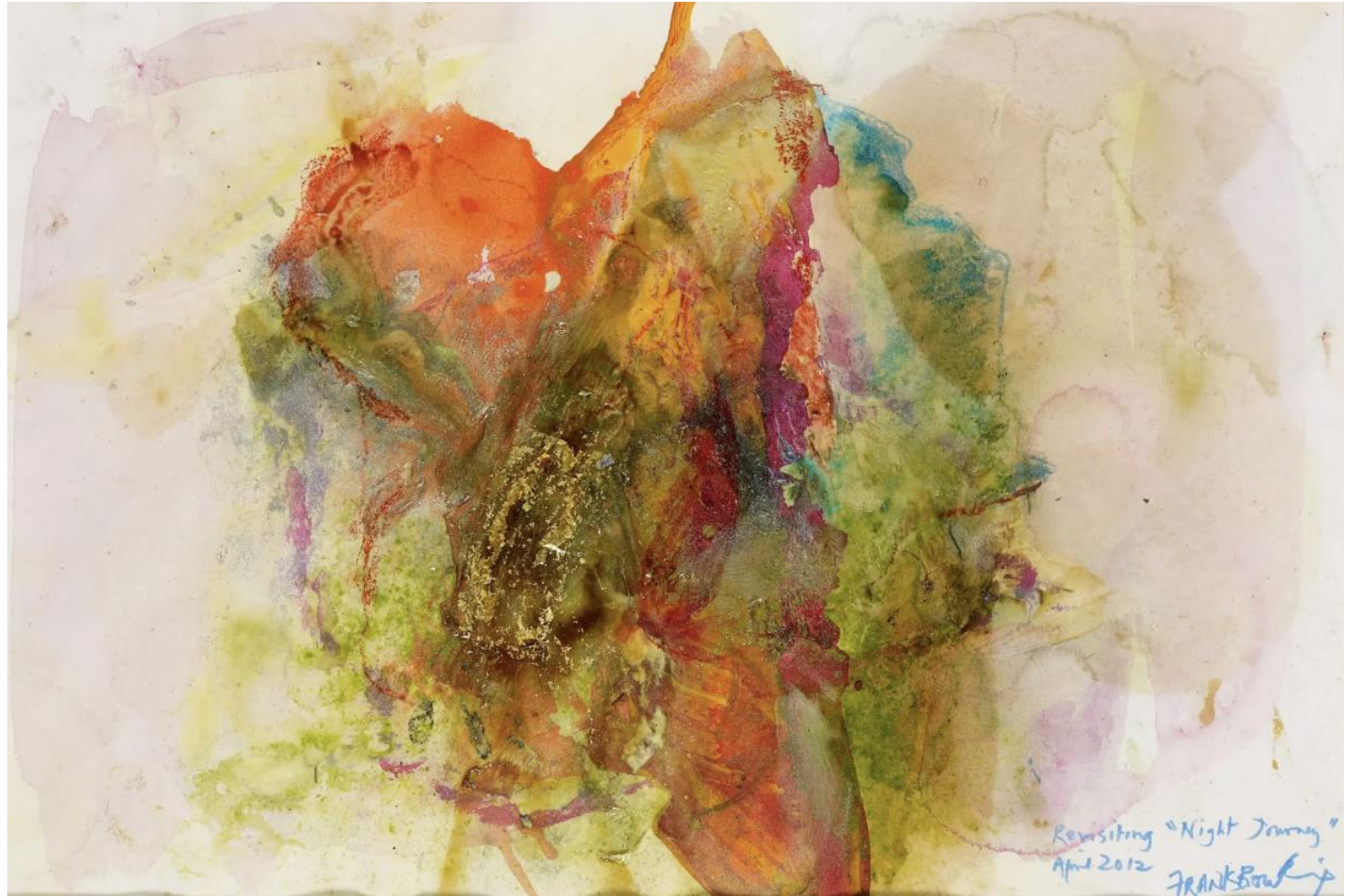
Frank Bowling, Swan II, 1964

How has Frank Bowling used colour in this piece?

What types of colour are they?

Look at the title of the piece, what do you think is happening in this painting?

What is happening at foreground, middle ground and distance?

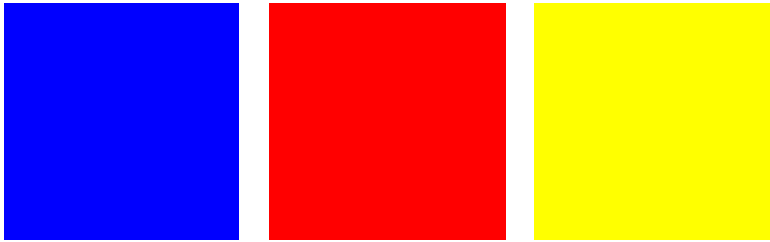


Frank Bowling, Revisiting 'Night Journey', 2012

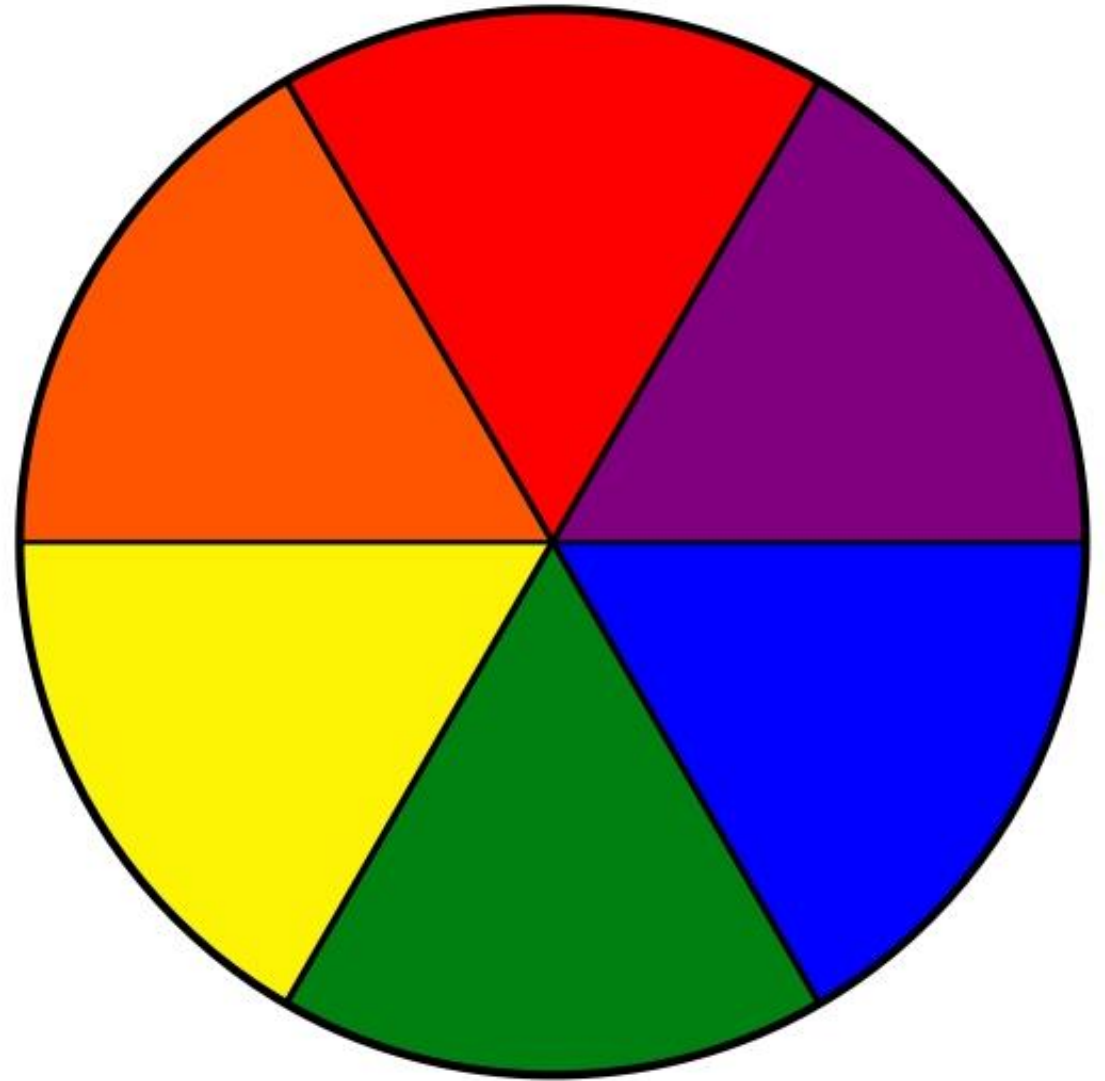
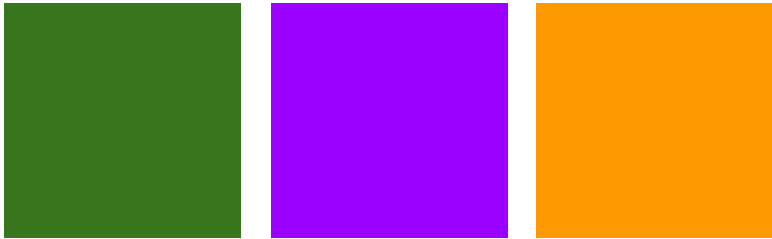
Starter: Colour wheel refresher lesson

What can you remember about the colour wheel?

What are the primary colours?



What are the secondary colours?



Starter: Colour wheel refresher lesson

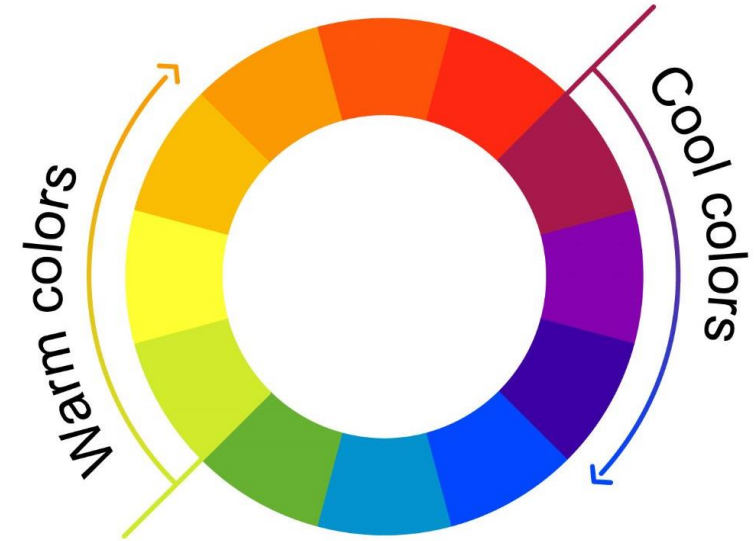
What do complementary colours sit on the colour wheel?

Opposite each other on the colour wheel.

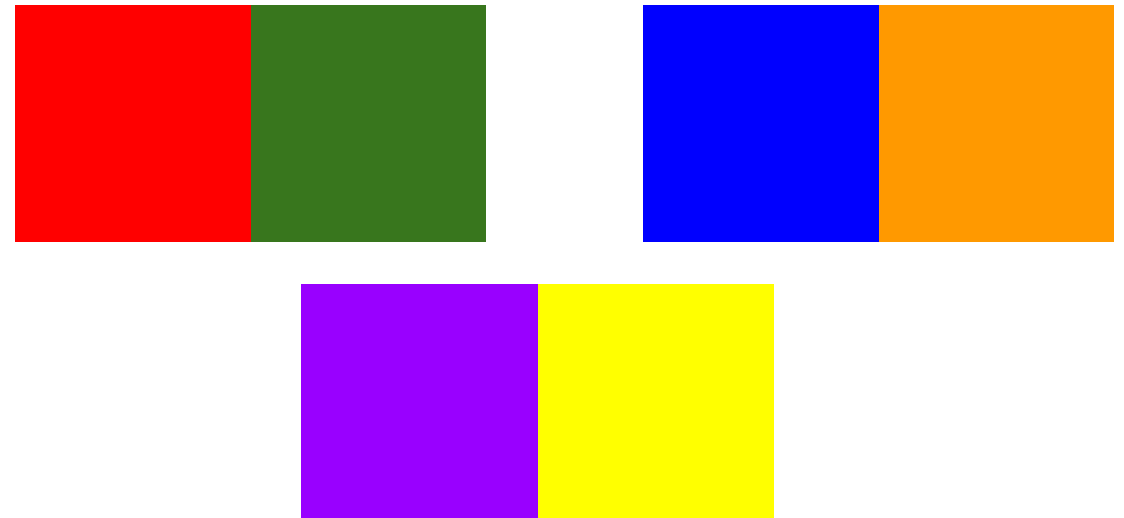
What makes complementary colours special?

They make the colours stand out.

How do you make the following colours? Fill out the blanks



What are the complementary colours?



Lesson objective: Write a context and analysis on Frank Bowling

Write a paragraph on who Frank Bowling is

What types of colours can you see?

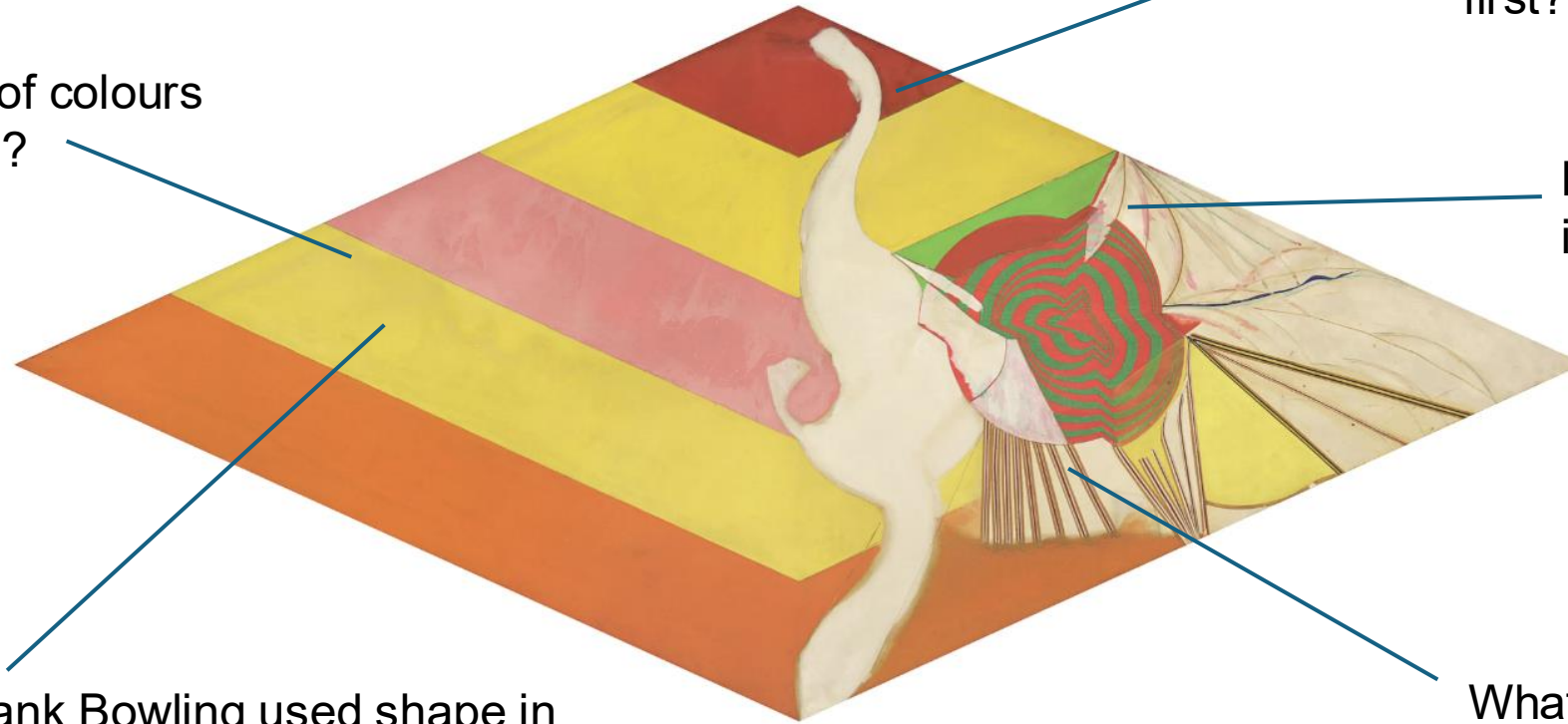
Where is the focal point?
What drew your eye here first?

Describe what is happening in this artwork?

How has Frank Bowling used shape in his work?

Challenge: How does this change the perspective of the artwork?

Challenge: Have art keywords can I use to develop my answers further



What have you learnt from looking at this painting

Frank Bowling, Swan II, 1964

Lesson resources

Lesson objective: Write a context and analysis on Frank Bowling

1. Write a paragraph on who Frank Bowling is.

2. What types of colours do you see?

3. How has Frank Bowling used shape in his work?

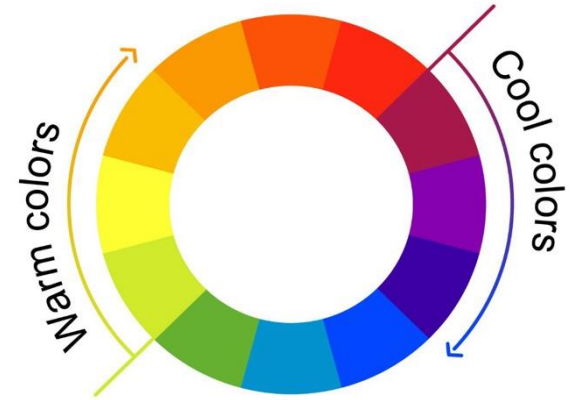
Challenge: How does this change the perspective of the artwork?

4. Label on the painting where the focal point is.

Write what drew your eye here first.

5. Describe what you think is happening in this work.

6. What have you learnt by looking at this painting?

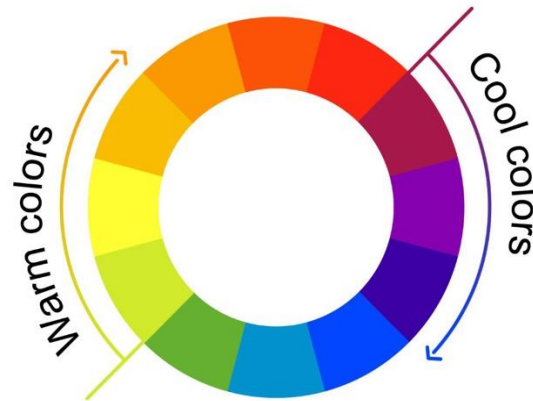


Challenge: Have art keywords can I use to develop my answers further



LESSON 2: INTRODUCTION TO THE MAP PAINTINGS

Starter: What did you learn last week?
Be prepared to discuss your answer with the class.



MOVING TO LONDON AND MOVING TO NEW YORK



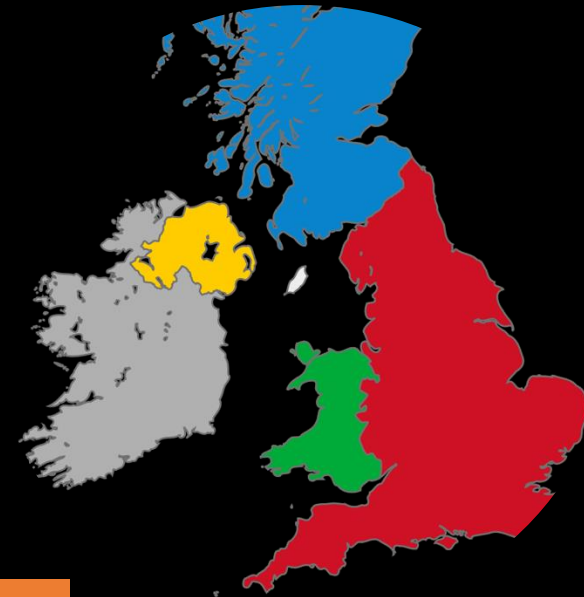
When Frank was 19 years old he moved from British Guiana to London to live with his uncle.

He loved the big city and it inspired him to become an artist. He wanted to become a poet at first but then decided to study art. He was inspired by all the art galleries in London. The first gallery that he visited was the Whitechapel Gallery in East London.



After he finished his studies he moved to New York, a big city in the USA.

How do you think he felt moving so far at such a young age? How might this influence his art?





The more paintings Frank made, the more they were about colours. He moved New York City in 1966.

He had a big studio in Manhattan and began to do the map paintings.

Here is a picture of Frank in his Broadway studio.

WHAT CAN YOU SEE ON HIS PAINTINGS?

Frank Bowling in his 535 Broadway studio with his map paintings by unknown photographer, c. 1971. Courtesy of the Frank Bowling Archive

Lesson objective: Mapping your London

Today's lesson is all about you and what is important to you. You will be creating a mixed medium artwork in your sketchbook in response to Frank Bowling's Map painting.

To start, you will create your base layer using collage.

What is mixed media and collage?

Mixed media describes an artwork which has been created using a combination of different medias or materials such as paper, paint, pencil, pen, glitter, glue....

Collage is the technique where pieces of paper, photographs, fabric is stuck down on a supporting surface.



Lesson objective: Mapping your London

Start off by sticking the map of London into your sketchbook.

Using magazines, paper and materials provided, stick down imagery, colours and shapes which feels personal to you and your London. This can be stuck down inside the map or around it

Once you have stuck down your base, add colour using the watercolours provided add colour to your map. You can splash your page with your paintbrush, make the paint watery and let it drip down your page or create a wash of colour using a thin amount of paint.

Draw in imagery, this can be of people close to you, pets, games, landmarks or your home.



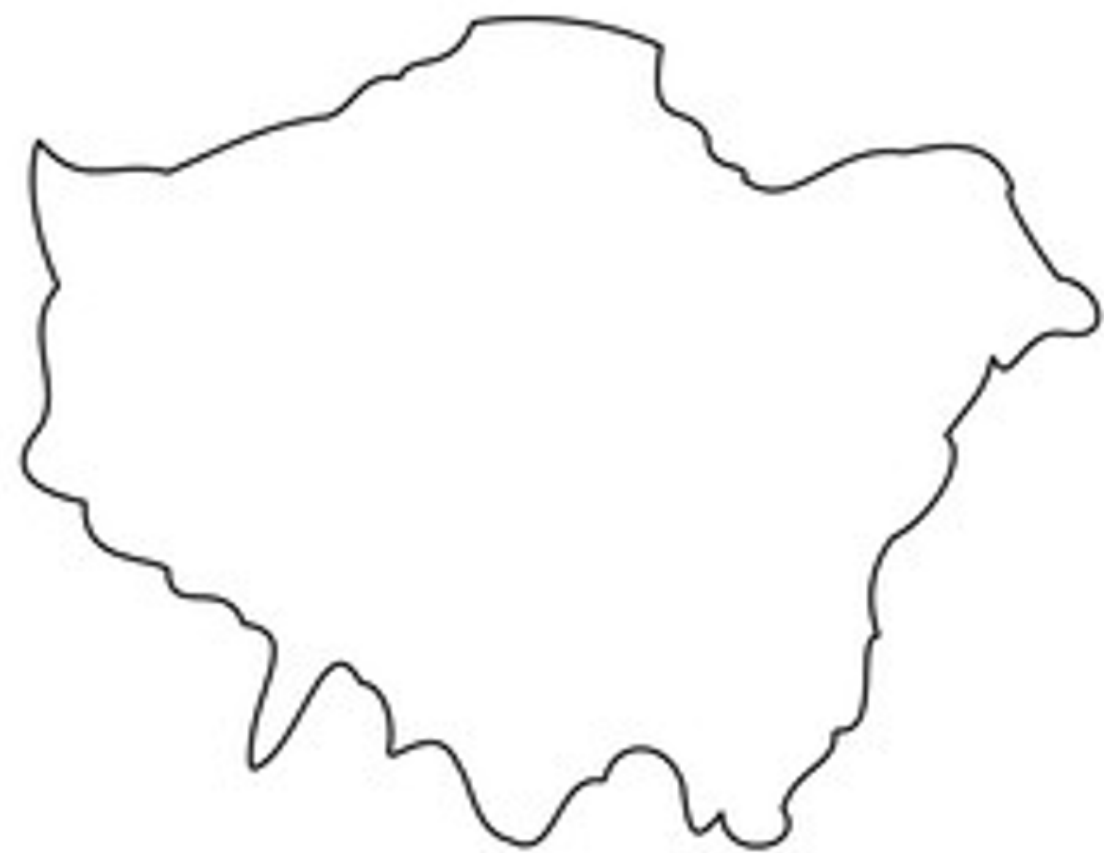
Plenary

Talk-partners:

- Share 3 things that you have learned about Frank Bowling
- What colours did you choose for your drawing and why?
- What would you like to find out more about Frank Bowling



Lesson resources





LESSON 3: HOW TO USE COLOUR LIKE FRANK BOWLING

Which words can you use to describe these colours?

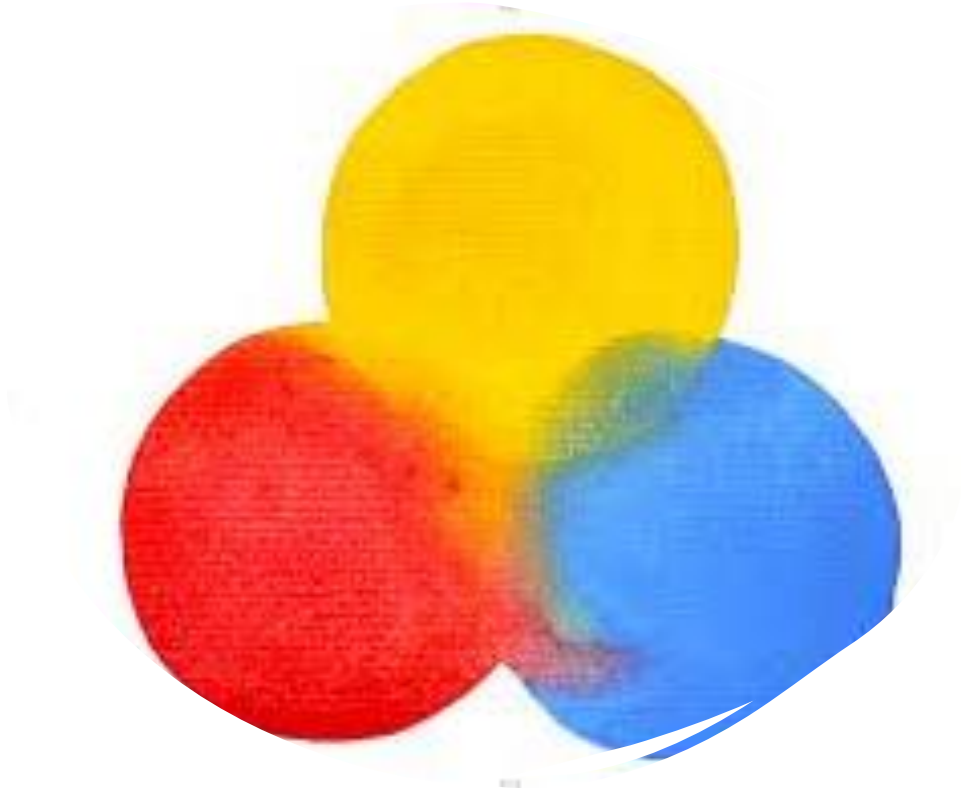


Frank Bowling, Leafy, 2024

What is the colour wheel?

The colour wheel is made up of **primary colours** and **secondary colours**.

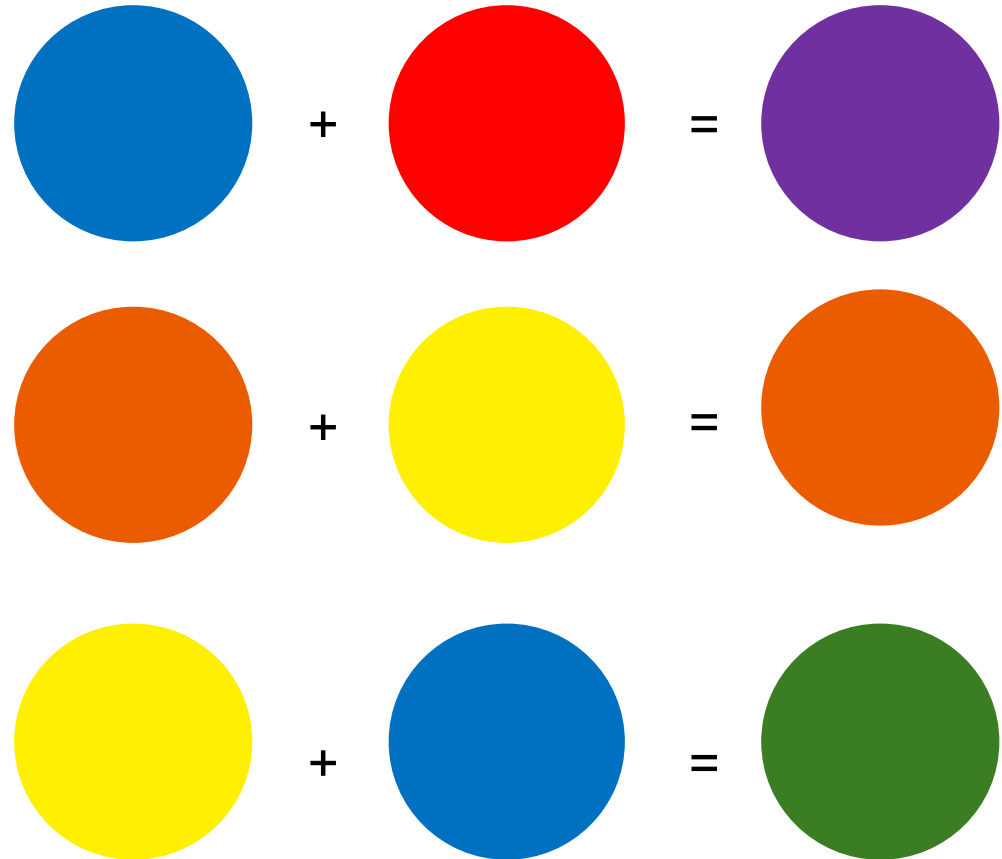
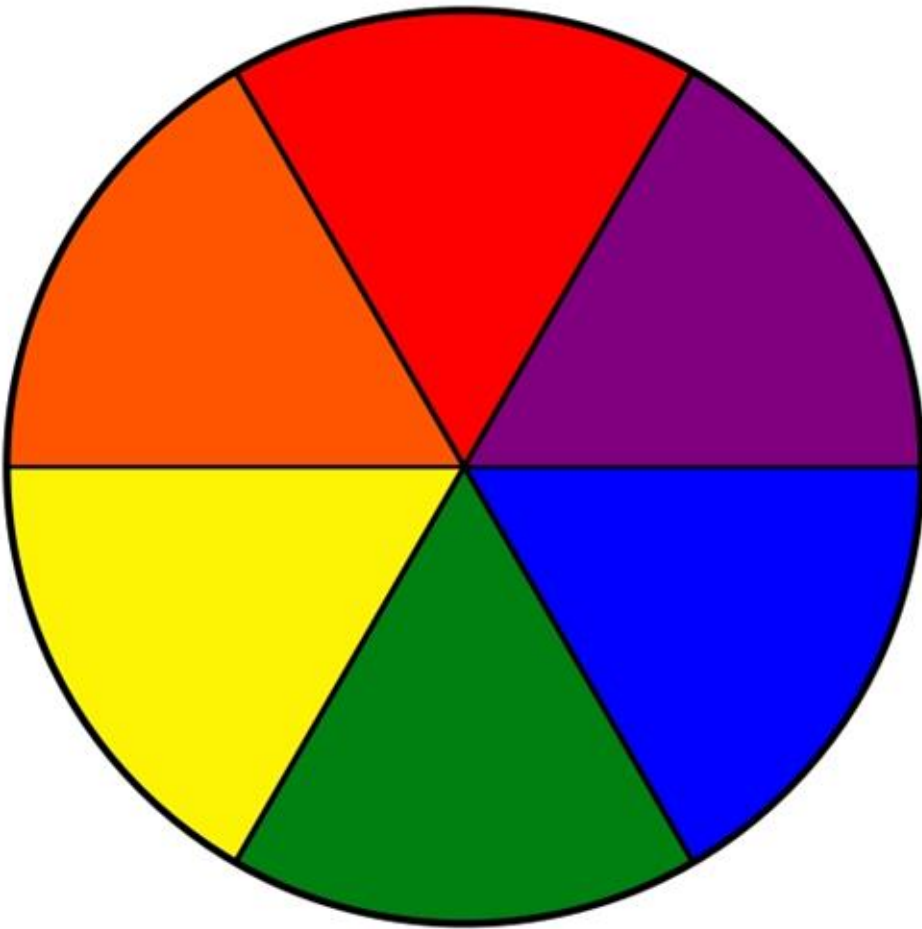
Primary colours are blue, red and yellow. These colours can not be created by mixing other colours



What is the colour wheel?

The colour wheel is made up of **primary colours** and **secondary colours**.

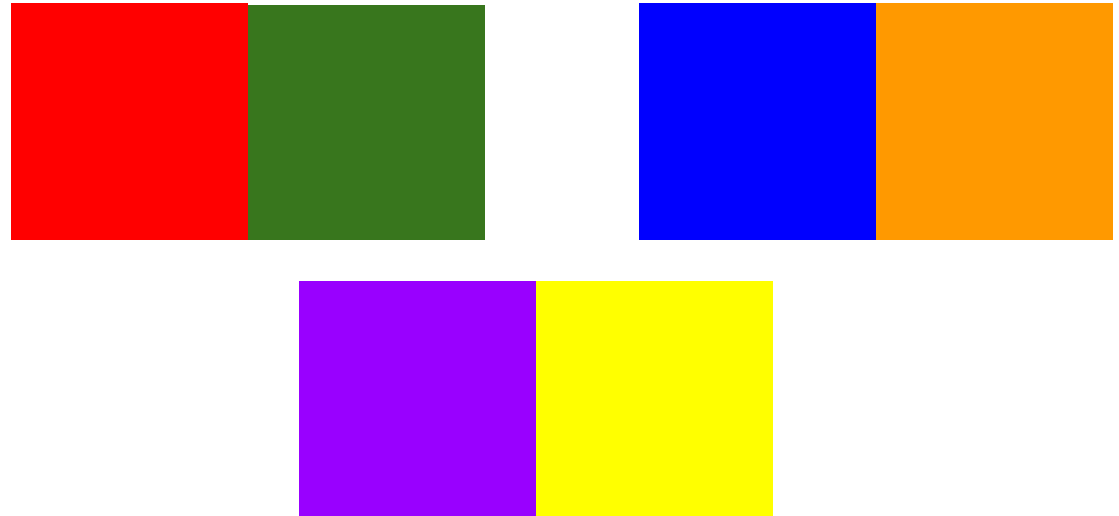
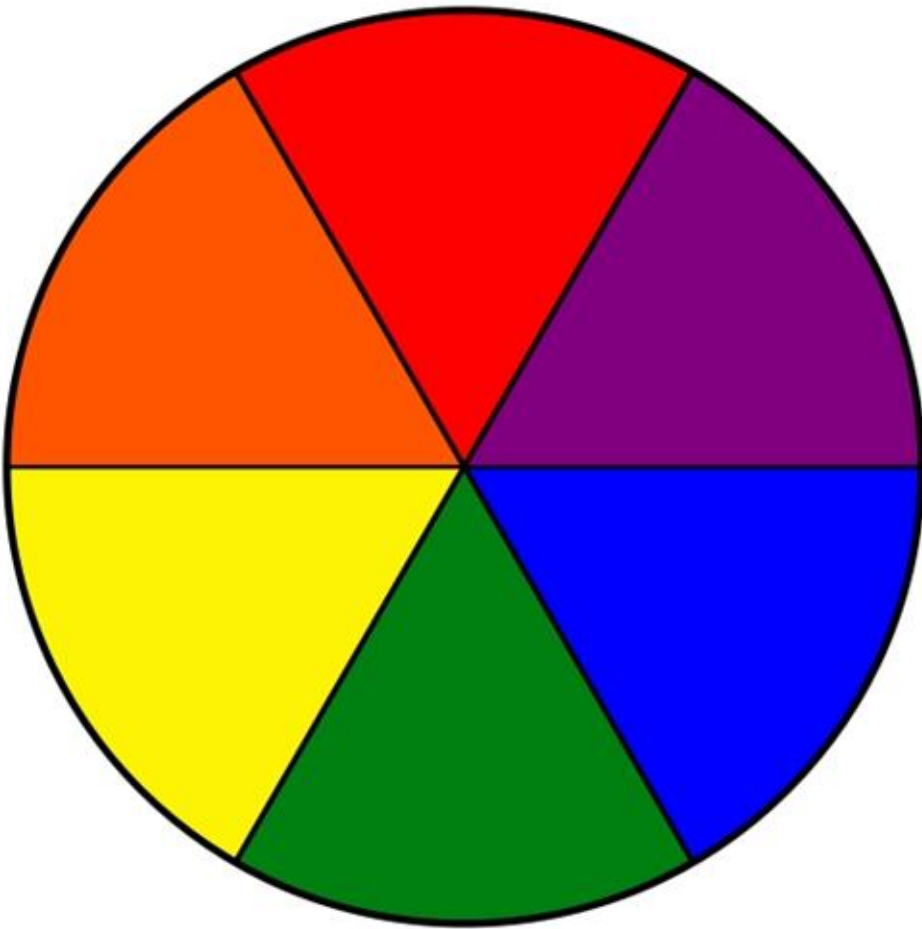
Secondary colours are **green purple and orange** and are created by mixing primary colours together



What is the colour wheel?

The colour wheel is made up of **primary colours** and **secondary colours**.

Complementary colours sit opposite each other on the colour wheel.
They make the colours stand out



What is Colour?

- Colour is a way that we describe an object based on the way that it reflects or emits light.
- Your eye can see different colours because a part of your eye called the retina is sensitive to different wavelengths of light.
- Colours can be blended, tinted and shade

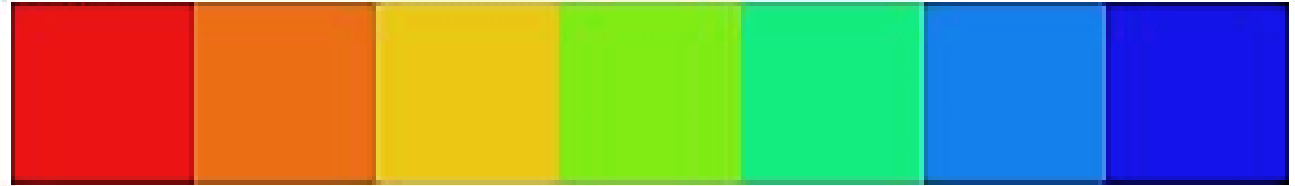
Hue: Hue is the true colour (Red, Blue, Yellow, Green, etc)

Saturation: Saturation in art refers to the intensity, purity, or vividness of a colour, defining how bright or dull a hue appears

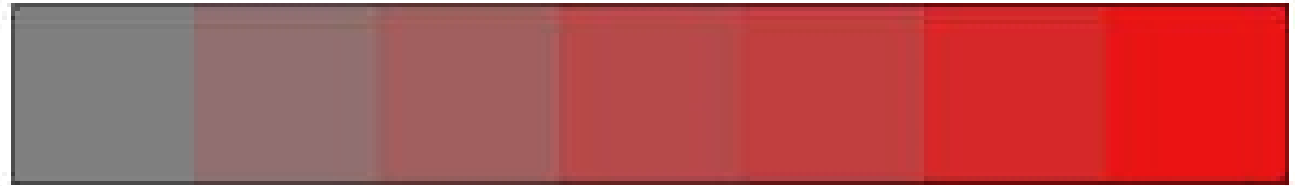
Tint: A colour + white (Red + White = pink) Pink is a tint of red.

Shade: A colour + black (blue + black = navy blue)

Hue



Saturation



Lesson objective:
Learning how to paint a gradient.

Gradation in art is a visual technique of gradually transitioning from one colour hue to another, or from one shade to another.

What mood do these colours have on you?



Frank Bowling, Oriented Light, 2020

Lesson objective: Learning how to paint a gradient.

Using acrylic paint, create four different variations of gradients in your sketchbook.

- You can pick any colour you like
- You can work in any direction you want for the gradient such as portrait or horizontal



Challenge: For one of your gradients can you work in a different shape? This can be any shape that you like



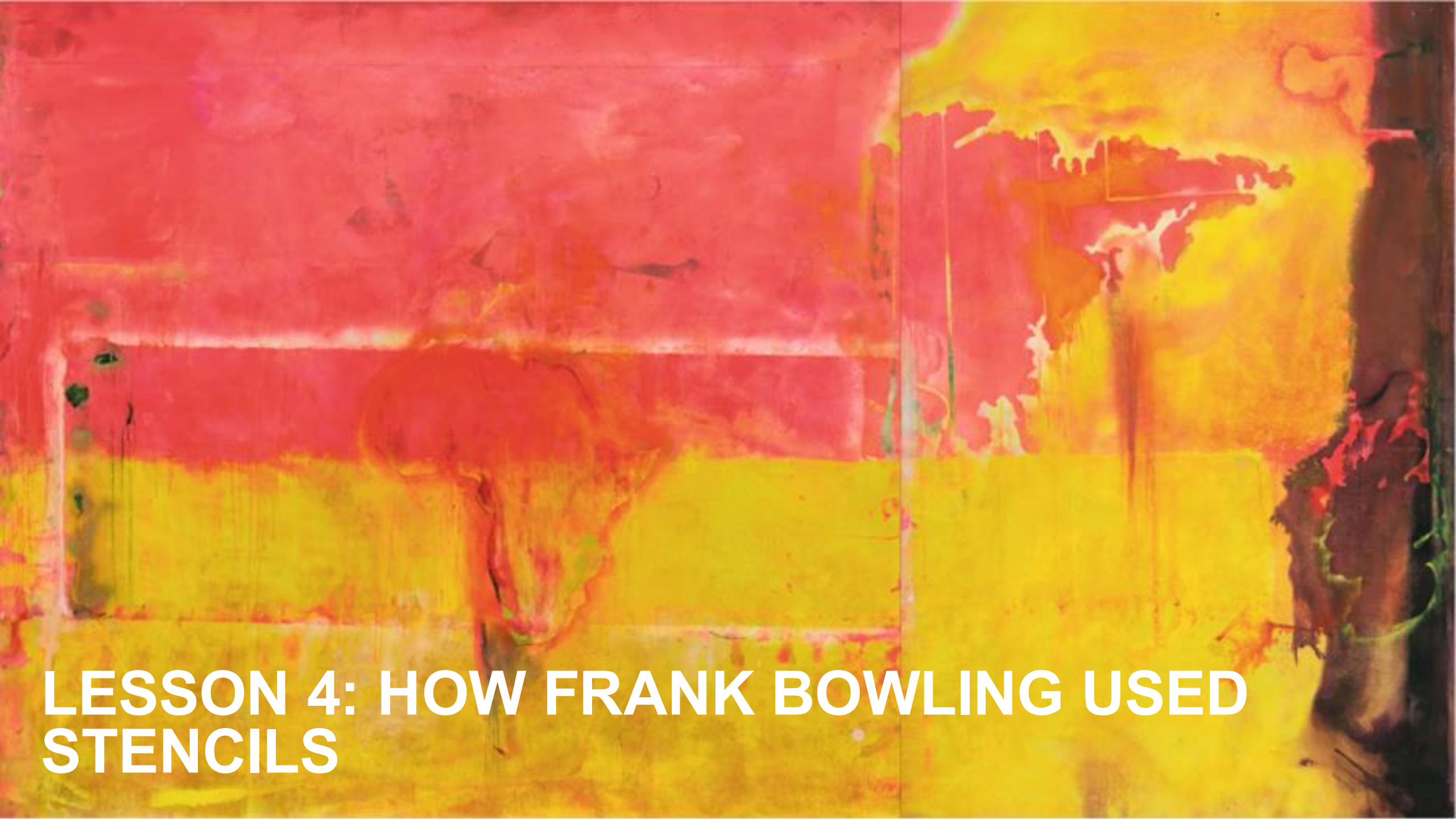
Self assessment

Annotate your work. Write about your process, what types of colours you used and how this links to Frank Bowling's work.



Challenge: For one of your gradients can you work in a different shape? This can be any shape that you like





LESSON 4: HOW FRANK BOWLING USED STENCILS

Starter: Using art terminology, how has Frank Bowling used colours in these pieces. What mood does it create for the artwork?



'False Start' 1968



'Bartica Born 1' 1968

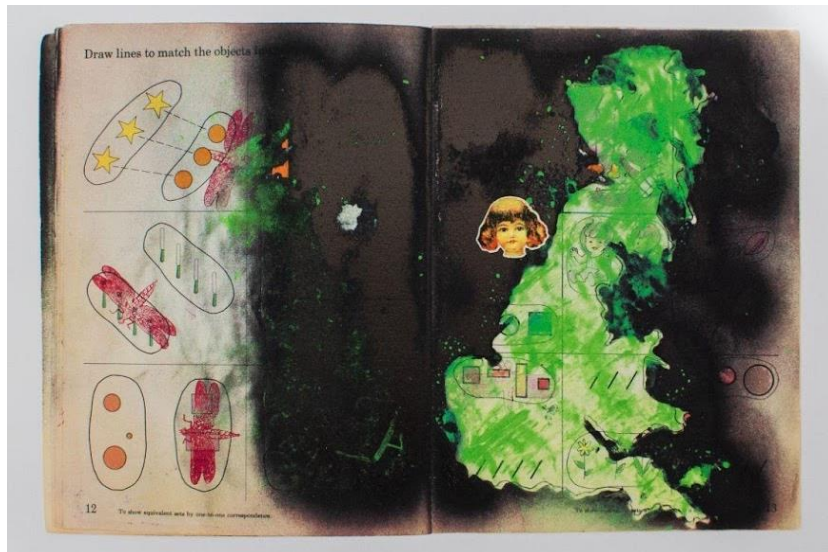


'Mel Edwards Decides' 1968

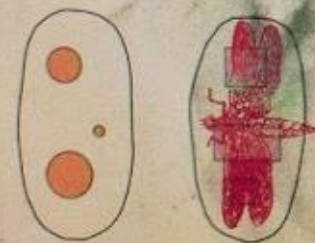
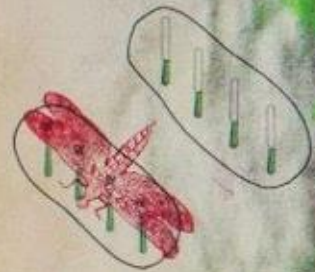
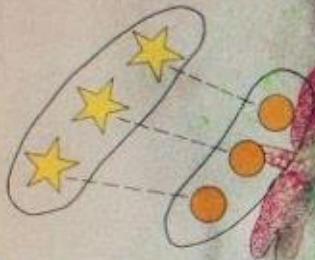
Map Stencils

Frank Bowling uses a range of methods to make his artwork, in his earlier works he often used stencilling or screen-printing to add maps or imagery from his family history.

After moving to New York in 1966, Frank Bowling began to create his *Map Paintings* (1967—71). Featuring continental landmasses spray-painted with stencils.



Draw lines to match the objects in



12

To show equivalent sets by one-to-one correspondence.



Look at this painting.

What do you notice?

What do you think?

Lesson objective: Creating a stencil in the style of Frank

1. Take your printed map and place it in the centre of your page.
2. Using a sharp pencil carefully draw around your map on any choice of background paper.
3. Carefully cut around the map, look at the shape of the line carefully and try to include any bumps.



4. Experiment with drawing around your stencil using different materials e.g., an oil pastel, a chalk pastel, brush and paint.

5. What sort of line does each material create?

6. Can you try overlapping your maps, sometimes Frank Bowling repeats his maps 2 or 3 times in a painting.



Peer assess:

Using a green pen, assess your neighbours artwork.

Which was the most successful piece?
Why?

Which didn't work out so well? Why?





LESSON 5/6: CREATING YOUR FINAL PIECE

Creating your Final Map Painting

Think about all you have learnt about Frank Bowling and the stories he tells with his map paintings.

- Which new vocabulary have you learnt?
- What new techniques have you learnt?
- What is your story?

Try to remember these as you complete your final map painting.



Creating your Final Map Painting

1. Creating the base of your artwork

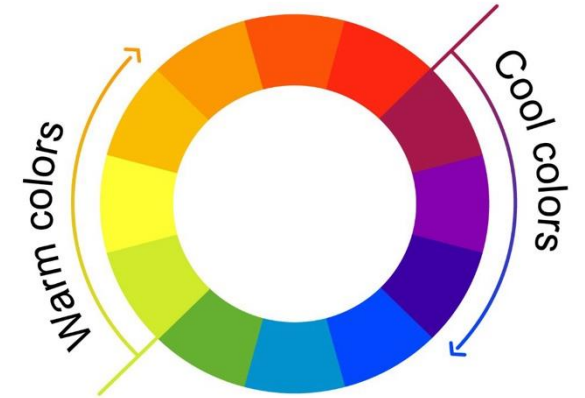
To start off with, using ripped paper, create a collaged background. This is to create texture in your work

2. Paint over your collage

Now using a gradient, paint the background using acrylic paint. Colour mixing will be crucial here. Make sure your colour choice is meaningful for you. What colour makes you think of home?

3. Choose your map

Using your map of choice, this could be of London, UK, where your parents are from or where you were born. Use this map as a stencil to place over your artwork

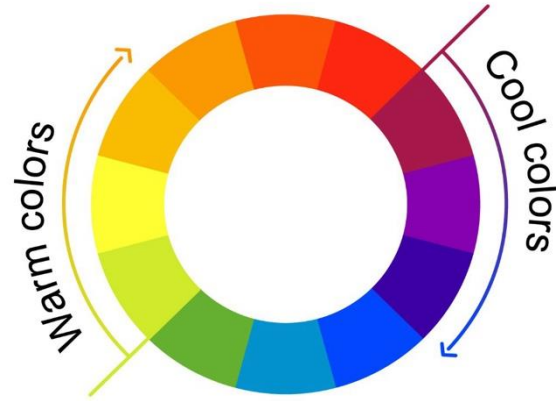


Developing your Final Map Painting

Before you work onto your final piece, sketch out imagery of things that are important to you. You may want to develop sketches from lesson 2.

4. Inside your map, draw out the imagery you have planned in your sketchbook. Will you add patterns in the background of your map.

5. Paint your imagery using acrylic paint.



Self Assessment: Evaluate your final piece

What did you learn about Frank Bowling?

How did you work in his style?

How successful was your final piece?

Describe why you used the colours and imagery in your final piece.

How could you improve?

Did anything surprise you with this work?

