

GREAT ART IDEAS FOR TEACHERS

END OF SCHOOL DAY, 3P.M.: INSPIRED BY JOHN BRACK'S *COLLINS STREET, 5P.M.*

YEAR 3–6

OVERVIEW

In this activity students will explore the theme of urban Australian life by examining *Collins Street, 5p.m.*, 1955, by artist John Brack. They will consider how Brack represents his chosen subject matter and uses techniques such as a limited palette of colours and repetition of lines and shapes to evoke a mood and to create a harmonious composition. Taking inspiration from *Collins Street, 5p.m.*, students will work together to create a class portrait which represents their emotions at the end of the school day.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Identify and describe how ideas are expressed in John Brack's *Collins Street, 5p.m.*, 1955.
- Practice art making skills including sketching with a limited palette to create a portrait and using subtle variations in tone to create depth.
- Create a class portrait which takes inspiration from John Brack's visual arts practice and expresses ideas about school life.
- Reflect on how effectively their ideas or feelings have been expressed in their class artworks.
- Explain the idea/s they addressed in their work and reflect on how effectively their intentions have been realised in their finished pieces of graphic design.

STUDENT EXAMPLES



Examples created by Mr Coates's Year 6 class at Eltham Primary School

RELATED ARTWORKS

John Brack
Collins St, 5p.m. 1955
oil on canvas
114.8 x 162.8 cm
National Gallery of Victoria,
Melbourne
Purchased, 1956
© National Gallery of Victoria



DISCUSS

John Brack (1920–99) was one of Australia's leading modern artists. He was interested in describing modern life and society and often painted urban Melbourne, recording the city's shops, bars and workplaces. *Collins St, 5p.m.*, 1955, is considered to be both an iconic painting of peak-hour Melbourne and a social commentary on daily life in the 1950s. Inspired by his own experience employed by a city-based insurance company, Brack depicts Melbourne's CBD at the end of the working day focusing on uniformly dressed office-workers travelling homeward. While the repetition of formal elements such as shape and line, and the muted colour palette creates a sense of the drudgery of nine-to-five office life, Brack also points to the enduring presence of the individual by personalising each figure.

Look at *Collins St, 5 p.m.* and use the following discussion prompts to explore the painting with your class:

- What clues are there which suggest the time of day, season and location of the scene in the artwork?
- Describe the mood of the painting. What do you see that suggests this mood? Consider the artist's use of colour, tone, repetition, composition, the subject matter, use of body language and facial expressions.
- Why do you think the artist chose to use a limited palette of colours? What effect does it create?
- Why do you think John Brack chose to paint Melbourne CBD at rush hour? What does this tell us about his perspective on modern life and society?
- Compare the artwork to photos of busy city streets in Australia today. How have they changed? What similarities can you find?
- In what ways does the painting remind you of something in your life? How do you feel when you are leaving school at the end of the day?

RESOURCES & MATERIALS

- Coloured pencils (limit to 4 different colours; optional – include the colour of your school's uniform)
- White A4 cartridge paper, divided into thirds (one third for each student)
- 1 sheet of A2 coloured paper (harmonious with the colours of the pencils being used) OR 1 sheet of white A2 paper to draw a background for your portraits
- Glue sticks and Scissors

CREATE

Students design and create an artwork which shows their class on their way home from school through the following steps:

1. Sketch an image of your partner in profile facing left, only include the upper half of their body from the elbows up. *Consider the expression that your partner might be exhibiting on their face as the school day ends.*
2. Add shading and colour to your portrait using the coloured pencils. *Look for the darkest and lightest areas of your partner's face.*
3. Your portraits are going to be arranged and glued down onto an A2 sheet of paper. You can either use a plain colour of your choice, or, as a class you might want to create a hand-drawn background for your portraits. *If creating a unique background for your portraits, consider where everyone might be as the school day ends and everyone is preparing to leave.*
4. Once you are happy with your portrait and the background (if you have chosen to draw one) arrange your portrait with others from your class on the piece of A2 background paper according to the rules of perspective (largest figures are closest to the front and smaller figures behind). *Don't glue it down just yet.*
5. Once the whole class's portraits have been added to the A2 paper, work together to make any last positioning changes to the composition of the work.
6. Glue the portraits in place.

PRESENT & REFLECT

Students discuss the result of their class artwork:

- What was it like being drawn by another person?
- What challenges did you find when drawing someone else?
- How well did your partner represent the way you feel when leaving school?
- What effect does the limited palette of colour have on the final work?
- Discuss the mood of your class artwork. What ideas are conveyed about school life?
- How is your artwork similar or different to *Collins St, 5p.m.*?

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