

St. John's
'THE STUDIO'
presents



**WHAT A
WONDERFUL
WORLD
2ND
EDITION**



Welcome to this year's edition of our St. John's Art Magazine, a celebration of imagination, curiosity and the extraordinary creativity of our pupils. Within these pages you will find a collection of ideas, experiments and artworks that reflect the spirit of the Art Department at St. John's, a place where young artists are encouraged to explore, question and express themselves freely.

Our aim has always been to create an environment where creativity can flourish. Art lessons are not simply about learning techniques, they are about discovering new ways of seeing the world. We encourage our pupils to take risks with their ideas, to experiment with materials and to develop the confidence to share their own unique artistic voices. Every sketch, sculpture, textile and painting tells a story about how a child is learning to think creatively and express their imagination.

At St. John's, we believe that creativity should extend beyond the boundaries of the classroom. We challenge our pupils to think independently, to question their ideas and to persevere when they encounter difficulties in their work. Artistic growth often comes through moments of uncertainty, and we encourage children to work through these challenges with resilience and determination. In the St. John's Art Department we do not simply make, we create. We push the boundaries of what pupils believe they can achieve and encourage them to feel proud of their artistic accomplishments.

The Art Department is a place of constant energy and curiosity. It never truly sleeps. Projects continue to develop, ideas evolve, and every day brings something new and interesting to explore. Whether pupils are experimenting with colour, building sculptures, designing textiles or exploring new artistic influences, there is always a sense of excitement about what might be created next.

This year, our artistic journey has been inspired by the magical world of Mozart's opera *The Magic Flute*. The story, filled with mystery, symbolism and adventure, has provided a wonderful foundation for exploring themes of power, transformation, light and darkness. Mozart's music has guided our thinking and helped pupils imagine the characters, landscapes and fantastical creatures that appear throughout the opera.

Alongside Mozart's music, we have explored the work of the great modern artist Marc Chagall, whose dreamlike paintings capture the magical and poetic spirit of *The Magic Flute*. Chagall was so inspired by the opera that he created a series of remarkable paintings for the ceiling of the Metropolitan Opera House in New York. Much like Michelangelo's famous ceiling in the Sistine Chapel, Chagall transformed the ceiling into a vast and colourful storytelling space, filled with floating figures, musicians and mythical characters.

Chagall's imaginative style, with its bold colours, symbolic imagery and sense of wonder, has inspired our pupils to create artworks that combine music, storytelling and visual creativity. Throughout the year, children have explored painting, textiles, sculpture and design to interpret the magic of Mozart's opera in their own unique ways.

This magazine captures just a glimpse of that journey. It reflects the enthusiasm, dedication and creativity that our pupils bring to the Art Department every day. We hope that as you explore these pages you will feel the same sense of curiosity and wonder that inspires our young artists.

I hope you enjoy this wonderful magazine!
Lesley-Anne Newnham



Pre-Prep



Jordan, Lydia, Wesley, Aava, Oliver, Alesso, Esme, Akira, Rihaan, Jem Ryan, Boray, Alexandros, Miller, Ariella, Ryan, Isabella, Zacakary, Lila, Boyuan, Emmeline, Nefeli

Autumn is a magical time of year when the world turns into a canvas of bright reds, oranges, and golden yellows. During our autumn walk, we explored the crunchy carpet of leaves and watched how they dance and get tossed in the wind, just like in the story *Leaf Man*. We learned that beneath those rustling leaves, little hedgehogs are busy finding cozy spots to sleep. By reading stories, listening to poems, and watching nature documentaries, we discovered how these prickly friends prepare for the colder months. It was exciting to see the natural world change and learn how every falling leaf helps create a home for the creatures in our gardens.





Our youngest artists have been busy exploring different textures and mediums this term. From structured patterns to messy, atmospheric landscapes, here is a look at what they've been up to:

Mixed-Media Trees

The children practised their fine motor skills by creating vibrant tree compositions. Using a base of paint, they layered various collage materials to add "character" to their work:

Buttons: Used to represent fruit, blossoms, or knots in the wood.
Shiny Card: Cut into shapes to catch the light and add a modern twist to their nature scenes.

Autumnal Pastel Landscapes

Inspired by the changing seasons, the Pre-Preps took their learning outdoors for an Autumn Walk. After observing the fiery oranges, deep reds, and earthy browns of the school grounds, they returned to the classroom to translate their experience onto paper using soft pastels and paint.





The Little Autumn Hedgehog

Beneath the amber autumn sky,
 Where drifting leaves go tumbling by,
 A little hedgehog softly creeps
 Through woodland paths and mossy depths.
 His prickly coat of silver spines
 Gleams faintly where the moonlight shines,
 A tiny nose begins to twitch
 Beside the hedgerow's winding ditch.
 He rustles through the crunchy leaves,
 In swirling gold that autumn weaves,
 Each step a shuffle, small and slow,
 As chilly evening breezes blow.
 Curious eyes both bright and round
 Search every corner of the ground,
 For beetles hiding, worms that sleep,
 In earthy tunnels buried deep.
 Though shy he is, he's brave as well,
 A quiet guardian of the dell,
 With gentle heart and cautious way
 That keeps him safe both night and day.
 He sniffs the wind, then curls up tight,
 A prickly ball in fading light,
 While owls glide silent overhead
 And leaves make carpets for his bed.
 When autumn whispers through the trees
 And scarlet leaves dance in the breeze,
 The hedgehog wanders, calm and wise,
 Beneath the starry countryside skies.
 So if you walk where hedgerows grow
 And autumn winds begin to blow,
 Listen close... you just might hear
 A rustling hedgehog wandering near.

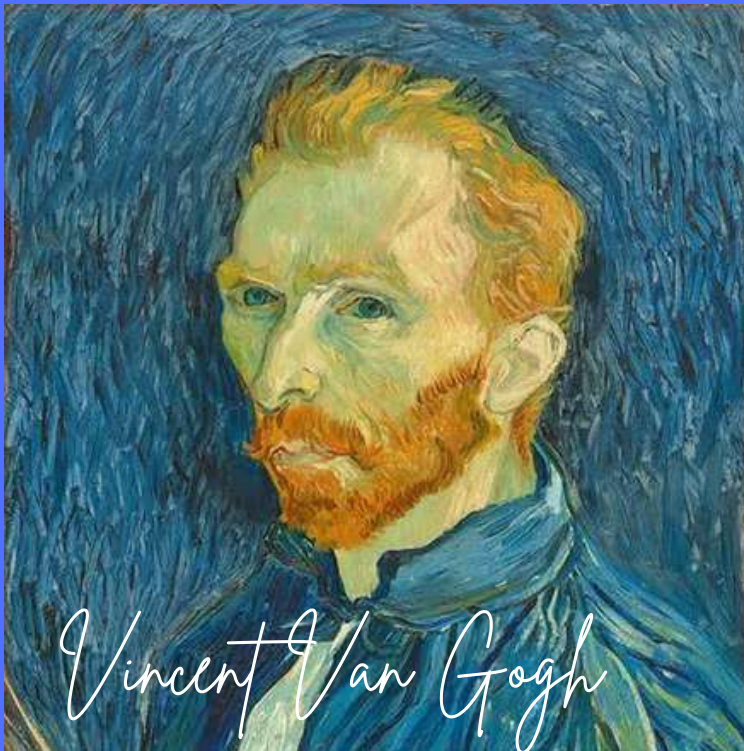
Written by Lesley-Anne Newnham



Prep 1

Noa, Evren, Farah, Vian, Orion, Eliz, Zekai, Emilio, Isla, Antonia, Ryan, Oliver, Anastasia, Sienna, Melina, Annabel, Arya Ella, Lakshmi, Khai

Vincent van Gogh's *The Starry Night* is one of the most famous paintings in the world, known for its swirling energy and bright colours. When you look at it, your eyes are immediately drawn to the massive, glowing yellow stars and the crescent moon that light up the dark blue night sky. Van Gogh used thick, wavy brushstrokes to make the air look like it is moving, almost as if the wind is dancing across the canvas. Below the restless sky sits a quiet, peaceful village with a tall church steeple, while a large, dark green cypress tree climbs toward the stars like a flickering flame. It is a magical painting that shows us how nature can feel both calm and full of excitement at the very same time. The Prep 1's have enjoyed exploring this painting and learning about Vincent Van Gogh.





Can you see our swirling 'Starry, Starry Night' paintings?

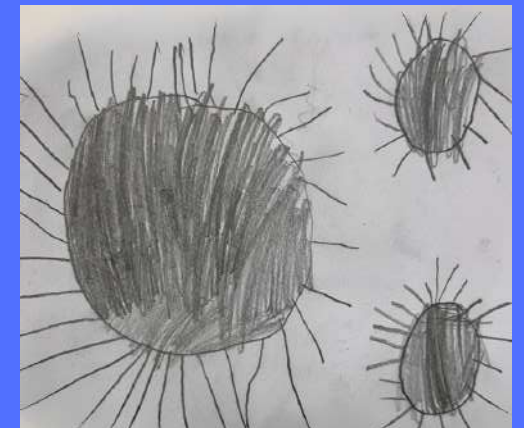
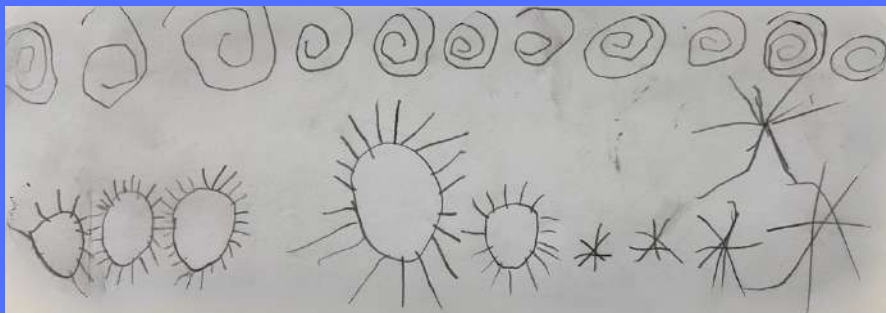
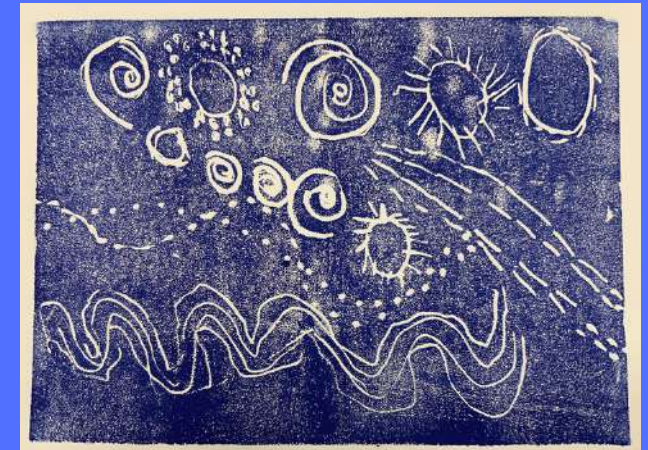
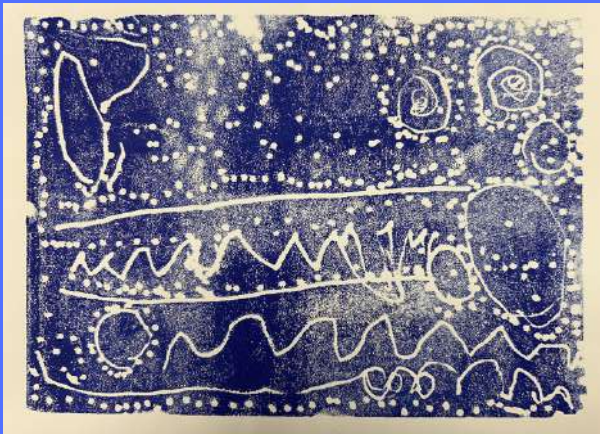


The children created clay star and moon puzzles.



Drawings with
pencils.

The children also
created block prints
out of poly block.





Prep 2



*Shivraaj, Kaan, Lilia, Tuana, Athena, Elissa, Rohan
Jason N, Jason NP, Andreas, Anthea, Christian, Kianaa, Amalia, Alina*

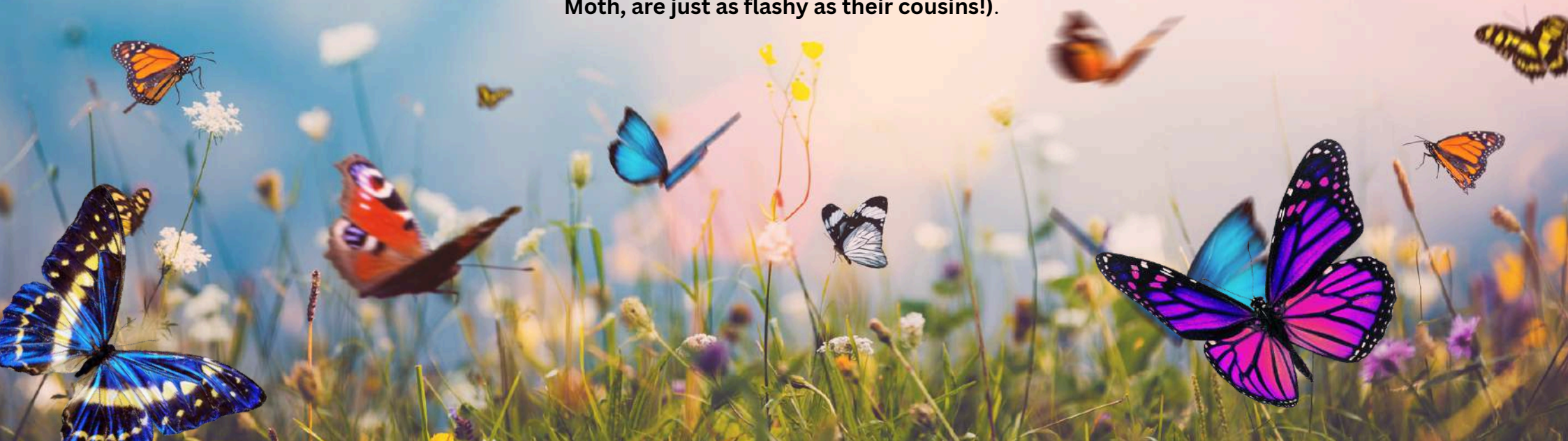
This term, our young designers have looked to the skies for inspiration, diving deep into the intricate world of Lepidoptera (moths and butterflies). Their journey from scientific observation to artistic expression culminated in a vibrant exploration of color, texture, and form. Pupils experimented with symmetry and bold contrast, creating striking visual patterns that pop from a distance.

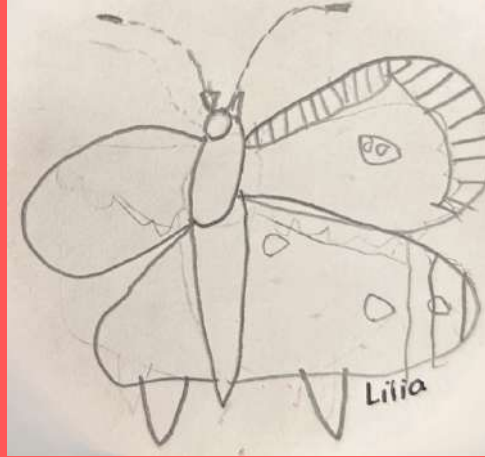
"Nature is the best designer. The children didn't just draw bugs; they studied the engineering of a wing and the 'couture' patterns of the Empress Moth to inspire their own fashion statements." - *Lesley-Anne Newnham*

The children have been experts this term. Did you know that the children found out that...

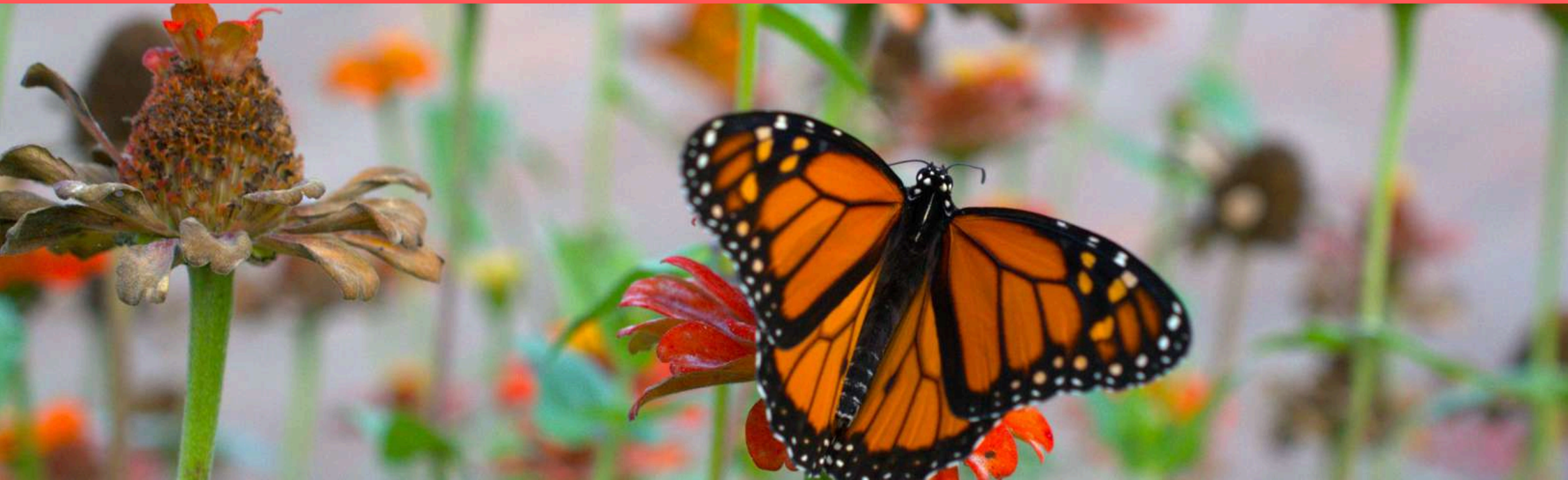
Butterflies are the "daytime divas," using bright colours to say "look at me!"

Moths are the "nocturnal stylists," often using intricate textures and sophisticated neutrals (though some, like the Madagascan Sunset Moth, are just as flashy as their cousins!).





The pupils created these amazing block prints of moths and butterflies using poly block.



Lower Transitus- Dragons

Smahi, Lucian, Felix, Gianluigi, Hasan, Leonardo, Sia-Valentina, Zexin, Weihang, Stella, Deniz, Jan, Arman, Diya, Eleni, Lucas, Jayden, Amyra, Ayla, Andreas, Amaya, Raajan, Artemis, Xavier, Anushka, Saiyan, Aadyant, Affion

The Lower Transitus have chosen to focus on dragons and serpents this year to bridge the gap between ancient mythology and Mozart's operatic storytelling. At the very heart of *The Magic Flute*, the hero Tamino is pursued by a fearsome, slithering serpent—a moment of high drama that sets the entire adventure in motion. By exploring these reptilian creatures, the pupils are not just studying biology or folklore, but are learning how to represent movement, scales, and power through art. To capture the legendary essence of these beasts, the children have experimented with a wide variety of mediums: using clay to sculpt three-dimensional forms, collage to layer shimmering "scales," and detailed drawing and design to map out the fierce personality of their creatures





These snakes were drawn and decorated using felt tips to create a bold effect.

Niki De Saint Phalle

The Lower Transitus have been diving into the bold, colourful world of Niki de Saint Phalle, specifically her famous, vibrant snake sculptures. Known for her "Nanas" and mosaic-covered creatures, Saint Phalle used bright, joyful colours and swirling patterns to turn frightening subjects into symbols of life and energy. This style provides the perfect inspiration for our students as they recreate the formidable serpent from the opening of *The Magic Flute*, the very creature that Prince Tamino must face. For their fashion show pieces, the children are using a clever "upcycling" technique—transforming tights into stuffed, wearable art. By stuffing and decorating these flexible tubes, they are creating slithering, three-dimensional snakes that wrap around the body, blending Saint Phalle's playful aesthetic with the dramatic storytelling of Mozart's opera.





These dragons were created using watercolour paint. The dragon figures were cut out and placed on soft pastel backgrounds, culmunating in these wonderful collage pieces.

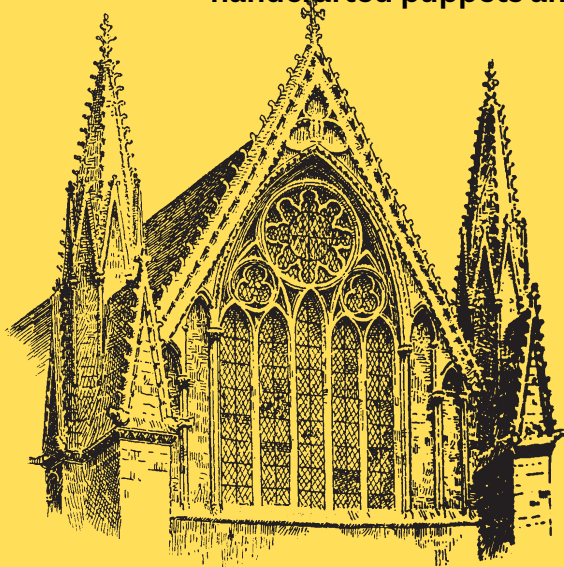




Upper Transitus

Ahmet, Ariella, Ferran, Theo, Ethan, Krishan, Harry, Theodore, Ayah, Saniye, Christian, Charani, Isabella, Enya, Abigel, Ashriel, Aashvi, Alexander, Rihanne, Max, Rupert, Anson, Kuzey, Mila

This year, the Upper Transitus pupils are embarking on a breathtaking creative journey that spans millennia, from the dawn of human expression to the vibrant world of modern design. Our adventure began in the shadows of the ancient world, where we dived back in time to explore Paleolithic and Neolithic cave paintings. Blending prehistoric tradition with modern inspiration, the children reimaged these primal scenes through the lens of Marc Chagall, using soft pastels and his signature palette of dreamlike, brilliant colours to create vivid "rock art." From the caves, we transitioned into the grandeur of the Middle Ages, meticulously studying the architectural structures of English cathedrals and churches. By drawing intricate designs and analysing the engineering marvels of the medieval era, the pupils gained a deep appreciation for the stone "skeletons" that define our landscape. Currently, the focus has taken flight as we study the anatomy and elegance of birds in preparation for this year's Fashion Show for *'The Magic Flute'*. The children are busy sketching and observing avian life linked to the characters Pappageno and Papagena- birdcatchers in the story of *The Magic Flute* to inform their upcoming masterpieces: stunning, handcrafted puppets and headdresses that will bring the beauty of the natural world to the runway.

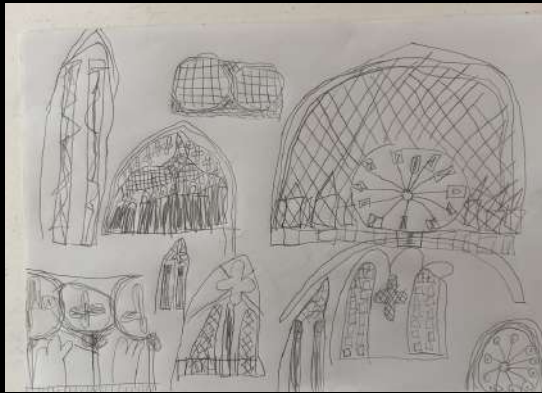






Look at these beautiful and brightly coloured soft pastel cave paintings!





The Upper Transitus has been exploring the remarkable evolution of English medieval architecture, a journey that spans from the sturdy, thick-walled Norman structures to the soaring, light-filled masterpieces of the Gothic era. Their studies likely highlighted how the transition from the Early English style to the intricately decorated and uniquely British perpendicular styles allowed for increasingly ambitious designs, such as the breathtaking fan vaulting found in late medieval chapels. By examining the "engineering DNA" of these buildings, specifically the use of pointed arches, rib vaulting, and flying buttresses, the pupils can see how architects managed to redirect the massive weight of stone roofs to allow for thinner walls and expansive stained-glass windows. Centred around a symbolic cruciform (cross-shaped) floor plan, these cathedrals were not just religious hubs but also feats of structural brilliance that transformed the English landscape into a gallery of stone and light.





Andari 28/10/2016 1/1



Angel 27/10/2016 1/1



Maya 28/10/2016 1/1



Cherani 27/10/2016 1/1



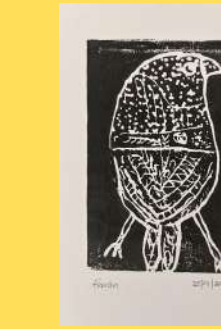
Pawandor 28/10/2016 1/1



Therese 28/10/2016 1/1



Andari 28/10/2016 1/1



Andari 27/10/2016 1/1



Mya 28/10/2016 1/1



Sariya 28/10/2016 1/1



Andari 28/10/2016 1/1



Phanna 28/10/2016 1/1



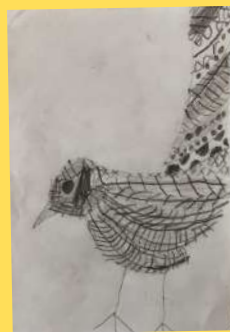
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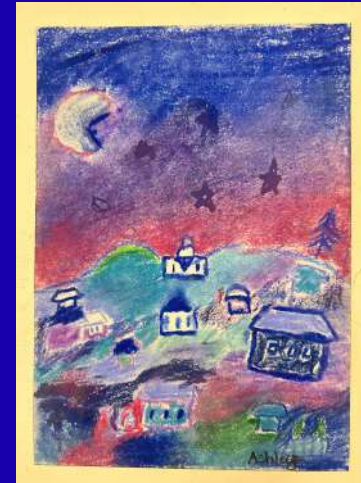


F1

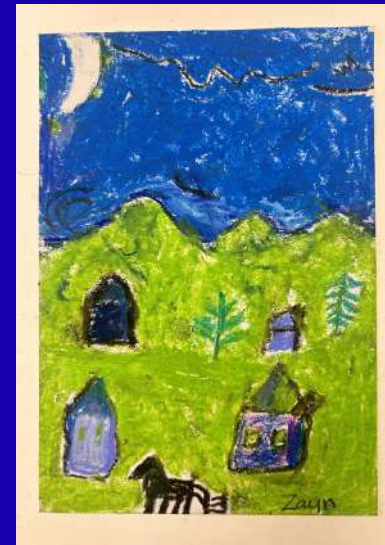
Toyosi, Xavier, Geneva, Valentino, Zayn, Nicholas, Jaiden, Ashely, David, Fodiana, Nya-Rose, Ewan, Beran, Cagan, Constantinos, Jarvis, Selena, Amraj, Isla, Emily, Carter, Rosalise, Dylan, Thiago, Ryu, Nicholas W, Daniel, Olivia

The F1 students have been immersing themselves in the breathtaking world of landscapes and seascapes, drawing inspiration from the mystical settings of *The Magic Flute*. Throughout this unit, the pupils have acted as young explorers, masterfully using oil pastels to capture vibrant, bold horizons and watercolours to mirror the fluid, ethereal beauty of the sea.

These artistic explorations are more than just paintings; they serve as the foundational blueprints for their highly anticipated summer fashion show. The children are currently busy translating their 2D skills into textile concepts, preparing to create wearable art. This upcoming collection will feature flowing caftans and architectural landscape headpieces, allowing the students to bring their artistic visions to life as they walk the runway in a spectacular fusion of nature, music, and fashion.



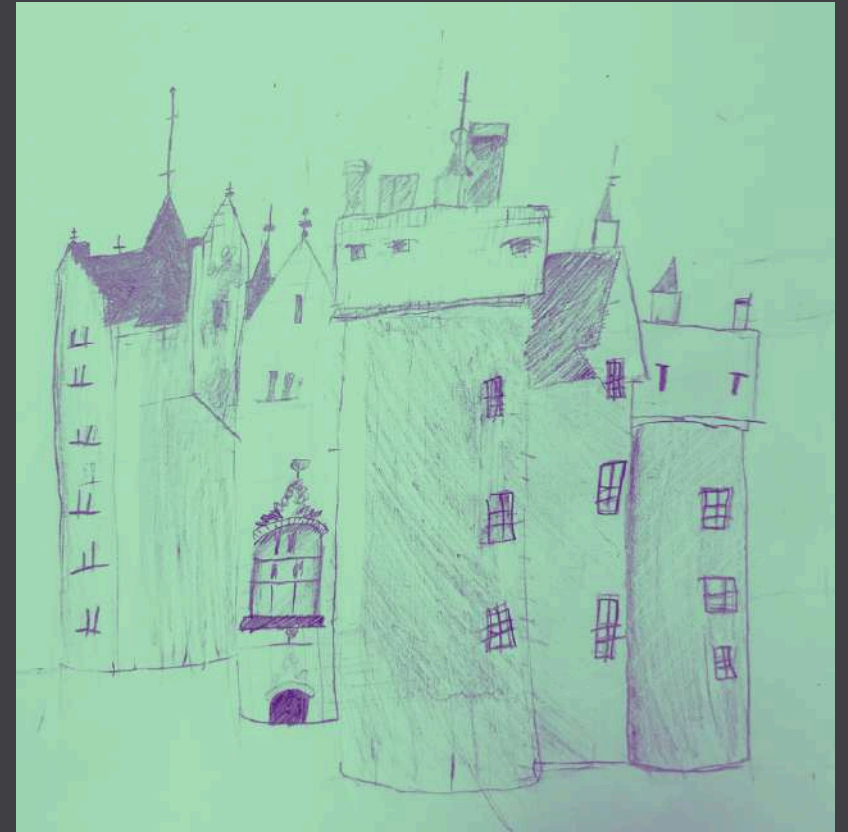
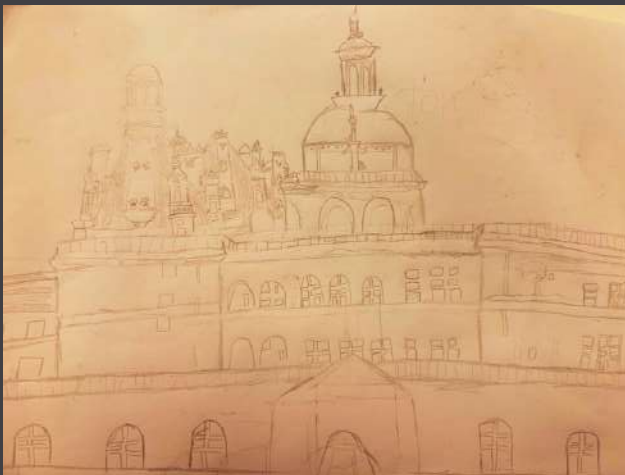
Marc Chagall
inspired landscapes
in soft pastel.





Oil pastel on black
landscapes. The pupils
scratched out their
landscapes using needles.





Drawings of castles using graphic materials and digital art.

Palaces



F2-The Magic Flute Posters and Crowns

The F2 pupils have embarked on an enchanting creative journey exploring Mozart's *The Magic Flute*, blending traditional craftsmanship with modern technology. To advertise their upcoming production, the children designed vibrant posters using a clever multimedia approach, combining expressive hand-painted backgrounds with intricate digital overlays. This process allowed them to experiment with texture and colour in the physical world before enhancing their work with digital tools. Building on this theme of "old meets new," the students also constructed majestic collage crowns fit for the Queen of the Night or Prince Tamino. By layering various tactile materials, such as metallic papers, fabric scraps, and sequins—they created rich, textured bases which they then "levelled up" by integrating personalised digital art elements. This project not only brought the story's whimsical characters to life but also helped the children see themselves as both traditional artists and innovative digital creators.





F3-Spanish Blackwork

Sienna A, Meyzi, Danny, Marios, Maya, Ares, George, Jonida, Arianna, Tryphonas, Olivia, Ece, Elfida, Ibrahim, Tejumade, Javell, Sienna M, Emily-Jane, Chloe, Agastya, Akira, Shahan, Yifeng, Ezra

The F3 students are embarking on a fascinating creative journey, moving from the structured world of block printing into the delicate artistry of Spanish Blackwork. While they've already mastered the art of Tudor and Elizabethan floral designs through printing, they are now discovering the rhythmic beauty of "Holbein" stitches and geometric fills. This transition allows them to explore how a simple black silk thread on white linen can create stunning depth and texture—a technique that famously traveled from North Africa to the Spanish court and eventually became the height of fashion for English royalty like Catherine of Aragon. By picking up their needles, the students aren't just crafting; they are connecting with a tradition that has adorned monarchs for centuries.

Whole School Projects

The Magic Flute



Wolfgang
Amadeus
Mozart



Marc
Chagall

This year, our whole school project is learning about an enchanting journey through Mozart's famous opera, *The Magic Flute*. We are diving deep into its whimsical story and vibrant characters to find inspiration for our grand fashion show coming up in the summer term. To help spark our creativity, we have been exploring the breathtaking sets, frescoes and costumes designed by the artist Marc Chagall for the Metropolitan Opera House in New York. We learned how Chagall was inspired by the opera's themes of love and light, using his signature dreamlike style to bring the music to life. The children have had a wonderful time experimenting with various artistic processes, using different mediums to recreate the magic of the Queen of the Night and the playful Papageno.



Diwali Workshop

Our Diwali Workshop was a vibrant celebration of culture, creativity, and storytelling. During the workshop, pupils explored the traditions of Diwali and learned about the magnificent elephant parades that take place during celebrations in parts of India. They discovered how elephants are often beautifully decorated with intricate patterns and bright colours, creating a breathtaking spectacle during festivals. The pupils also learned that elephants are considered sacred animals in many parts of Indian culture, symbolising wisdom, strength, and good fortune. Inspired by these traditions, each class created their own painted elephants, using a variety of different artistic media. Some pupils worked with paints, while others experimented with mixed media, patterns, and decorative techniques to bring their elephants to life.

Before beginning their final pieces, pupils carefully explored colour, pattern, and design, drawing inspiration from traditional festival decorations. The workshop provided an exciting opportunity for pupils to learn about the story of Diwali while expressing their creativity through art. The pupils thoroughly enjoyed the process of designing and creating their elephants, and the finished artworks reflected both their imagination and their growing artistic confidence.







Remembrance at St. John's

Why We Wear the Poppy

At St. John's, Remembrance Day holds a very special place in our school calendar. It is a time when our school community pauses to reflect on the courage and sacrifice of those who served in the armed forces. Taking the time to celebrate this day is not merely a history lesson; it is about teaching our pupils the value of peace, the weight of freedom, and the importance of collective gratitude.

By wearing the poppy, we bridge the gap between the past and the present, ensuring that the legacy of those who fell in conflict, and those who continue to serve, is never forgotten.

This year, our pupils engaged with Remembrance through a unique artistic lens. The pupils created painted poppies using acrylic paints.

The design process was inspired by the intricate techniques of Aboriginal dot painting. This choice was intentional, allowing pupils to explore the concept of "storytelling through symbols", much like the poppy itself is a symbol of a much larger narrative. Pupils were restricted to a poignant and symbolic colour scheme of white, grey, black, and red.

Using fine tools to apply precise dots, the children built up textures and patterns, representing the many individual lives that weave together to form our history. Each poppy became a bespoke piece of art, blending a traditional British emblem with an ancient artistic tradition from Australia.

"The use of dot patterns encouraged the children to work with patience and precision, a quiet, meditative process that perfectly mirrored the solemnity of Remembrance."

In the bustle of school life, "taking the time" is our most valuable gesture. It allows our pupils to develop empathy and a sense of duty toward their community. These hand-painted poppies now serve as a visual reminder across the school that while the events of the past may feel distant, our respect for them remains vibrant and ever-present.

Christmas Cards

At St. John's, the creation of our annual Christmas card is a cherished whole-school tradition that truly stands the test of time. Each year, our designs seem to get better and better, reflecting the incredible growth and creativity of our students. This year, our theme focused on the beautiful birds of Christmas, a choice that perfectly harmonised with our school-wide study of Mozart's *The Magic Flute*. Inspired by the bird-catcher Papageno and his sweetheart Papagena, the children captured the spirit of the opera through their artwork. From feathered textures to vibrant, musical colours, these cards are not just holiday greetings, but a wonderful celebration of how our classroom learning takes flight through art.



ROYAL ACADEMY YOUNG ARTISTS SUMMER EXHIBITION

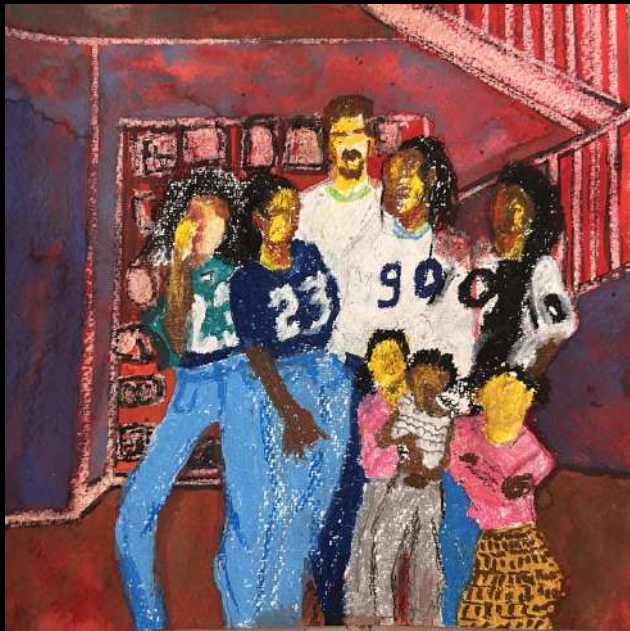
2026

Each year, pupils from St. John's Prep School take great pride in preparing their entries for the Royal Academy of Arts Summer Exhibition. The process begins well before the final pieces are created, with careful planning and thoughtful preparation. Pupils are encouraged to research ideas, sketch their concepts, and develop their designs through a series of studies before beginning work on their final artwork. This stage is important, as it allows them to refine their ideas and think carefully about composition, colour, and technique.

Throughout the project, pupils explored themes that they felt a personal connection to. This helped them to express their own ideas and individuality within their work. They experimented with a variety of media, including paint, drawing materials, collage, and mixed media, discovering how different materials can help communicate mood, texture, and movement within a piece of art.

An important part of the process was learning to work towards a deadline. Pupils developed a sense of discipline and consistency in managing their time, ensuring that their work progressed steadily from initial sketches to a completed final piece. Along the way, they supported one another, shared ideas, and celebrated the creativity within the classroom.

Most importantly, the pupils thoroughly enjoyed the experience. The journey of planning, experimenting, and creating was both exciting and rewarding. Now that the entries have been submitted, we eagerly await the results, proud of the dedication, imagination, and artistic effort shown by our young artists at St. John's Prep School.



Nya-Rose



Chloe



Felicity



Xidun



Isla



Toyosi

Easter Bonnet Parade 2025



UT FASHION SHOW 2025

The Upper Transitus pupils explored the intricate beauty of Celtic design. Known for its complex knots, spirals, and interlacing patterns, Celtic art requires incredible focus and precision. The children took these ancient symbols and brought them into the modern day by creating their own unique designs directly onto fabric. Using specialised fabric crayons, they carefully mapped out their linework and vibrant color palettes. To ensure their masterpieces stand the test of time, the students learned how to heat-set their work, using an iron to permanently bond the pigment to the fibres. It has been wonderful to see such ancient traditions reimagined through the students' steady hands.



F1 FASHION SHOW 2025

The F1s have been busy bringing the spirit of the British seaside to life by designing and engineering their very own summer hats! Using sturdy cardboard to build the base, the children had to think like real milliners to create a structure that was both stylish and functional. This project was a true test of their mathematical skills, as they found it quite challenging to measure constantly—ensuring the bands fit perfectly around their heads and the brims stayed even. Once the structures were complete, they used vibrant layers of tissue paper to decorate them, capturing the bright colours of beach balls, ice creams, and the shimmering ocean. It was a fantastic exercise in combining structural engineering with creative flair!

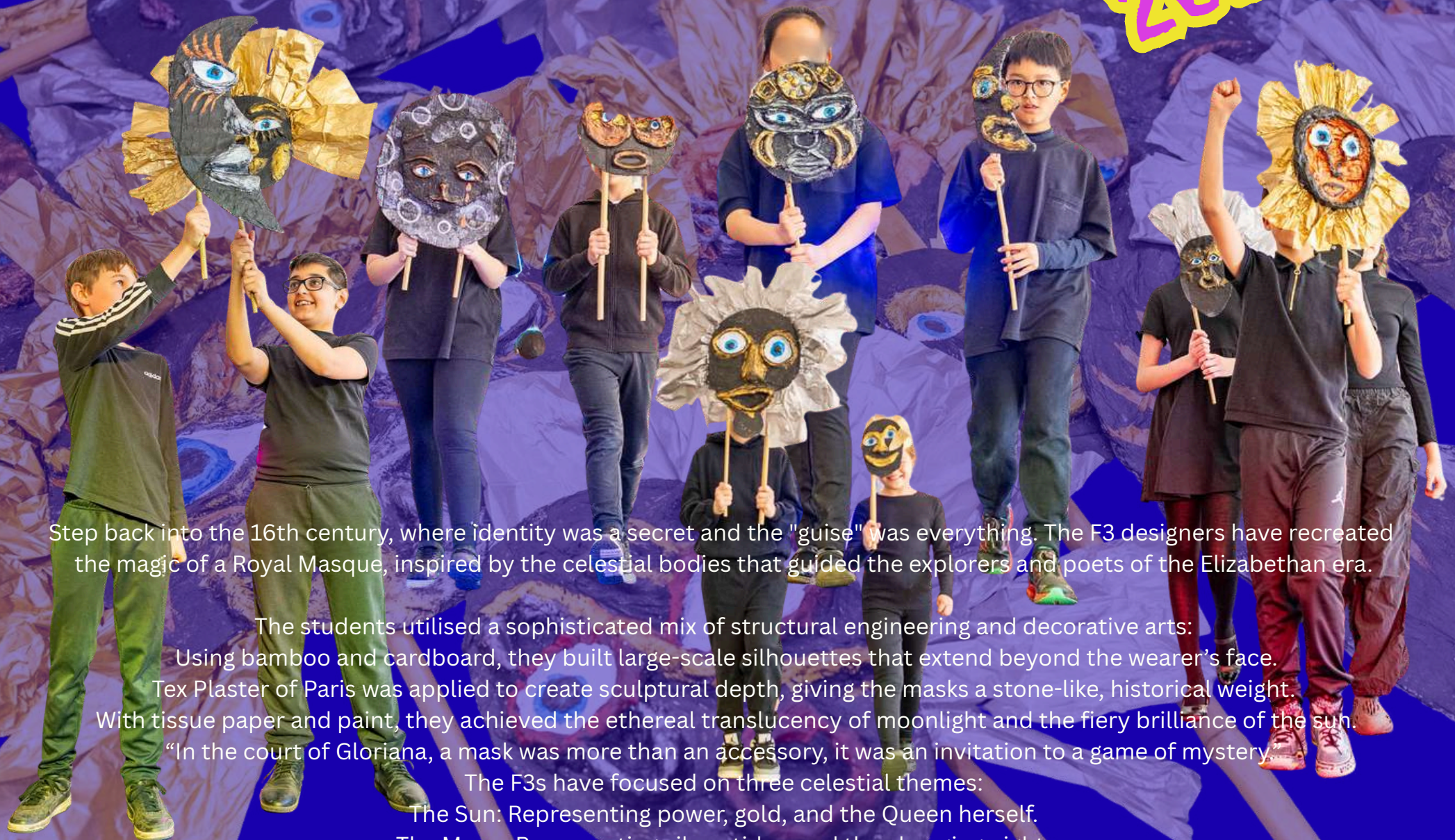


F2 FASHION SHOW 2025



The F2s rose to an incredible challenge by designing and constructing their own bespoke outfits for the runway. The girls took on the delicate task of sewing special tissue papers together to create ethereal, voluminous skirts, which they paired with structured fabric tops. While working with such fragile materials was at times very difficult, the girls showed remarkable resilience, carefully navigating the sewing process to produce truly fabulous pieces. Meanwhile, the boys experimented with a bold "reverse-art" technique, using bleach on black T-shirts to bring mythical creatures to life. They developed impressive control over their medium, mastering both thin and thick lines and discovering how to vary the intensity of the bleach to create professional-looking highlights and shading.

F3 FASHION SHOW 2025



Step back into the 16th century, where identity was a secret and the "guise" was everything. The F3 designers have recreated the magic of a Royal Masque, inspired by the celestial bodies that guided the explorers and poets of the Elizabethan era.

The students utilised a sophisticated mix of structural engineering and decorative arts:

Using bamboo and cardboard, they built large-scale silhouettes that extend beyond the wearer's face.

Tex Plaster of Paris was applied to create sculptural depth, giving the masks a stone-like, historical weight.

With tissue paper and paint, they achieved the ethereal translucency of moonlight and the fiery brilliance of the sun.

"In the court of Gloriana, a mask was more than an accessory, it was an invitation to a game of mystery."

The F3s have focused on three celestial themes:

The Sun: Representing power, gold, and the Queen herself.

The Moon: Representing silver, tides, and the changing night.

The Stars: Representing navigation, destiny, and the infinite.

Maths and Art Workshop Early Years and Key Stage 1 Wassily Kandinsky



The Power of shape in The Early Years

Introducing the works of Wassily Kandinsky to our Early Years pupils offers a vibrant gateway into the worlds of both art and mathematics. For young children, Kandinsky's transition from representational art to pure abstraction is more than an art history lesson; it is an invitation to see the world as a collection of foundational building blocks. His work proves that you don't need to draw a "thing" to communicate a feeling—sometimes, a bold red circle or a sharp black line says it all.

Mathematics through Modern Art: Our Workshop Day

During our Maths Workshop Day, the children explored Kandinsky's masterpiece, *Squares with Concentrating Circles*, served as our primary blueprint for exploring geometric properties.

The children learned about **Geometric Recognition** where they identified and distinguished between circles, squares, and triangles, noticing how Kandinsky used "sharp" shapes versus "soft" shapes to create energy. The children created their own concentric patterns. Pupils in Prep 2 learned the concept of "circles within circles." By layering different sized shapes, they explored the mathematical relationship of scale and size (small, medium, and large).

Spatial Awareness: Using Kandinsky's *Composition VIII* as inspiration, pupils practised "mapping" their ideas using the floor space in Pre-Prep and Prep 1, deciding where shapes should intersect or overlap.

Why Design Matters for Young Learners

For a child in the Early Years and Key Stage 1, "design" is synonymous with problem-solving. When a pupil decides to place a yellow triangle next to a blue circle, they are making a cognitive decision about balance and contrast.

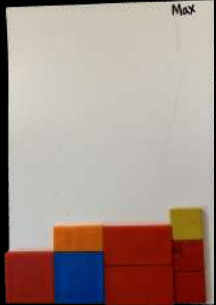
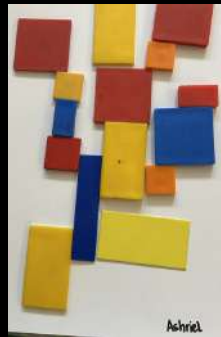
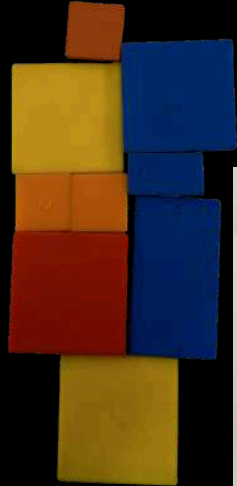
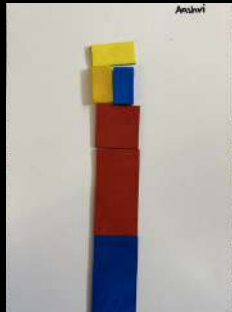
Kandinsky's use of abstract patterns encourages children to categorise: Sorting shapes by colour and attribute.

Predict: Determining which shape comes next in a repeating pattern. **Measure:** Comparing the diameter of their drawn circles.

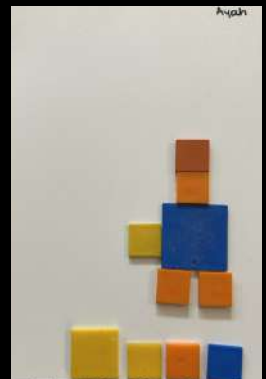
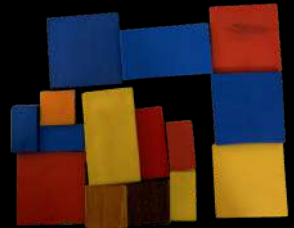
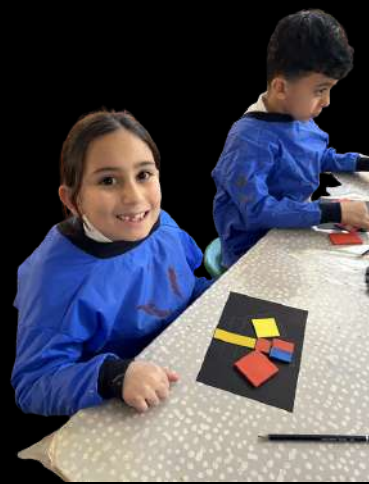
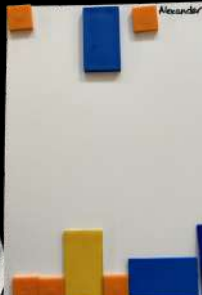
"By stripping away the need to draw 'perfectly,' Kandinsky allows children to focus entirely on the rhythm of the shapes and the logic of the pattern."



Maths and Art Workshop Key Stage 1 Pete Mondrian



Pete Mondrian



Mondrian's Trees: A Study in Tangram Geometry

Building on our exploration of Piet Mondrian, our pupils took his journey of abstraction into the third dimension. By using Tangrams—ancient Chinese puzzles consisting of seven flat shapes—the children recreated the skeletal structure of Mondrian's trees. This exercise moved beyond traditional drawing, challenging the pupils to "build" a tree using only a fixed set of geometric constraints.

The Tangram Challenge: From Branches to Polygons

The beauty of the Tangram lies in its simplicity. To create a Mondrian-inspired tree, the children had to manipulate:

5 Triangles (of varying sizes)

1 Square

1 Parallelogram

By arranging these simple shapes, the children mirrored Mondrian's own transition from the "curvy" reality of nature to the "angular" logic of his later work. They learned that a large triangle could represent a sturdy trunk, while the smaller triangles and the parallelogram could be angled to mimic the reach of winter branches.

Why Simplicity and Balance Matter

At this developmental stage, teaching children to create simplicity and balance is about more than just aesthetics; it is about cognitive discipline.

1. The Art of "Stripping Away"

In a world full of visual noise, Mondrian teaches us that less is more. By using Tangrams, children cannot get distracted by the "leaves" or "texture" of a tree. They are forced to look for the essential structure. This develops critical thinking—learning to identify the core components of a complex object.

2. Visual Equilibrium (Balance)

A tree in nature doesn't tip over because its weight is distributed. In our workshop, if a pupil placed all the large Tangram pieces on one side, their "tree" looked unstable.

Mathematical Balance: Pupils learned about symmetry and asymmetry.

Weight: They discovered that a small square can "balance" a large triangle if placed correctly in the composition.

3. Spatial Reasoning

Rotating a parallelogram to fit against a triangle requires high-level spatial awareness. This is the foundation for both geometry and engineering. As Mondrian sought the "universal truth" through horizontal and vertical lines, our pupils found their own "truth" through the perfect fit of a puzzle piece.

The Mathematical Result

By the end of the session, the children had not just made "art"; they had solved a geometric problem. They saw that the same seven shapes could create an infinite variety of trees, each one balanced, simple, and strong.

"To reach the foundation of things, one must first learn to see the shapes that hold the world together."

Would you like me to create a "Tangram Tree Template" that you can print out for the children to use as a guide for their next art session?



Henri Matisse

Maths and Art Workshop Key Stage 2 Henri Matisse

In Key Stage 2, our pupils dived into the vibrant world of Henri Matisse, specifically focusing on his "drawing with scissors" period. The children explored how Matisse, later in his life, moved away from traditional painting to create expressive cut-outs (gouaches découpés). By studying iconic works like *The Snail and Icarus*, the pupils learned that a shape doesn't need a black outline to be bold; it simply needs strong colour and fluid movement.

To create their own masterpieces, the children began by painting large sheets of paper with vibrant, flat washes of acrylic. Once dry, they moved straight to the "organic" stage, cutting shapes directly from the paper without using pencils first. This encouraged artistic confidence and a sense of "improvisation." The pupils then experimented with composition, layering their organic, leaf-like shapes (algues) against geometric backgrounds to find a sense of rhythm and balance. The final results were a celebration of Matisse's belief that "cutting into colour reminds me of the sculptor's direct carving."



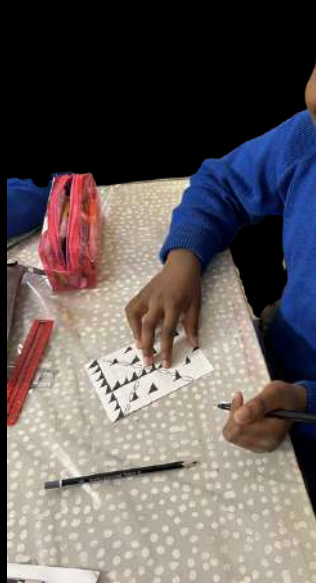
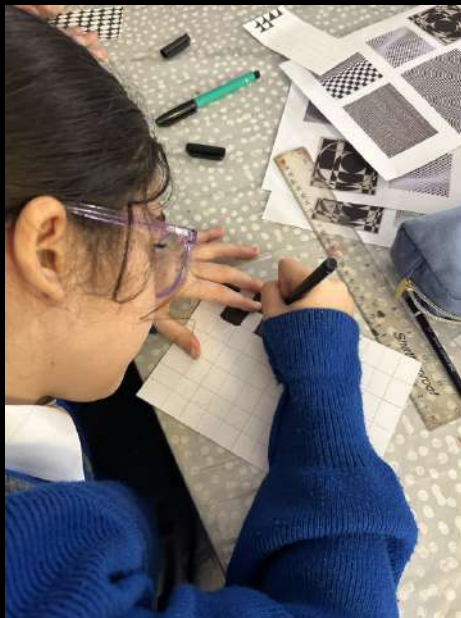


Maths and Art
Workshop Key Stage 2
Bridget Riley



In our recent workshops, the pupils delved into the mesmerising world of Bridget Riley, a pioneer of Op Art (Optical Art). The children explored how simple geometric elements—lines, circles, and squares—can be manipulated to create the illusion of movement, shimmering, or hidden depth. By focusing on the relationship between negative and positive space, the pupils learned that the human eye can be "tricked" into seeing waves or vibrations where only flat lines exist.

To create their own designs, the children used high-contrast palettes, primarily working with black and white to maximise the optical effect. They practiced precision drawing, using rulers and compasses to create repetitive patterns that slowly shifted in scale or orientation. This process required immense patience and accuracy, as the pupils discovered that even a slight change in the thickness of a line could transform a static drawing into a "moving" one. The resulting gallery of work was a testament to their understanding of visual rhythm and the mathematical logic behind abstract art.



Planning and creating an art exhibition at St. John's Prep School is a thoughtful and carefully organised process that begins a year before the exhibition itself. The first stage involves planning the art programme and lessons so that each class works towards producing a finished body of work that reflects both the theme of the exhibition and the skills developed during the term. Lessons are carefully structured to allow pupils time to explore ideas, experiment with materials and refine their work so that each child can contribute pieces they are proud of.

Alongside the teaching programme, it is important to organise and order the necessary resources in advance. This includes selecting the correct sized mounting boards, display materials and fixing equipment needed to present the artwork professionally. Careful measurement of the hired display space around the school ensures that the boards and artworks fit appropriately and that there is sufficient room for each pupil's work to be displayed clearly and respectfully.

A key part of the preparation involves creating the supporting materials for the exhibition. Name labels are designed and printed so that each piece of work is clearly attributed to its artist, often including the pupil's name, year group and the title of the piece. It is also essential to keep track of the number of artworks produced by each class to ensure that every pupil is represented and that the overall exhibition remains balanced across the year groups.

Once the artwork is complete, the mounting and arrangement of the pieces begins. The layout of the exhibition is carefully considered so that the work flows visually through the space, allowing visitors to appreciate the range of techniques, themes and creative responses developed by the children.

At St. John's, art exhibitions are always more than simply a display of work. They are a celebration of creativity and imagination, providing an opportunity to showcase the talents, effort and individuality of every pupil. The exhibition allows the wider school community to see the progression of artistic skills across the year groups and to appreciate the dedication and enthusiasm that the children bring to their art.



ST. JOHN'S ART BIANNUAL EXHIBITION

2024

After two years of meticulous planning and inspired creation, the Art Department is thrilled to present our Biannual Art Exhibition. This event is a true cornerstone of our school calendar, representing a marathon of imagination where every single student has the opportunity to shine.

This year, the halls have been transformed into a vibrant gallery, showcasing a diverse journey through time, geography, and style. From the youngest creators to our senior artists, the breadth of work is a testament to the curiosity of our students.

A Journey Through the Grades

Pre-Prep & Prep 1: Embarked on a foundational discovery of "The World," capturing its many fascinating facets through fresh eyes.

Prep 2: Transported us to the vibrant landscapes and textures of Africa.

Lower Transitus (LT): Took a "journey down under," producing stunning pieces inspired by the spiritual depth of Aboriginal Dreamtime.

Upper Transitus (UT): Delved into the Ancient World, exploring how the civilisations of the past continue to shape our modern aesthetic.

Form 1: Went "Pop Art crazy," celebrating the bold colours and high energy of popular culture.

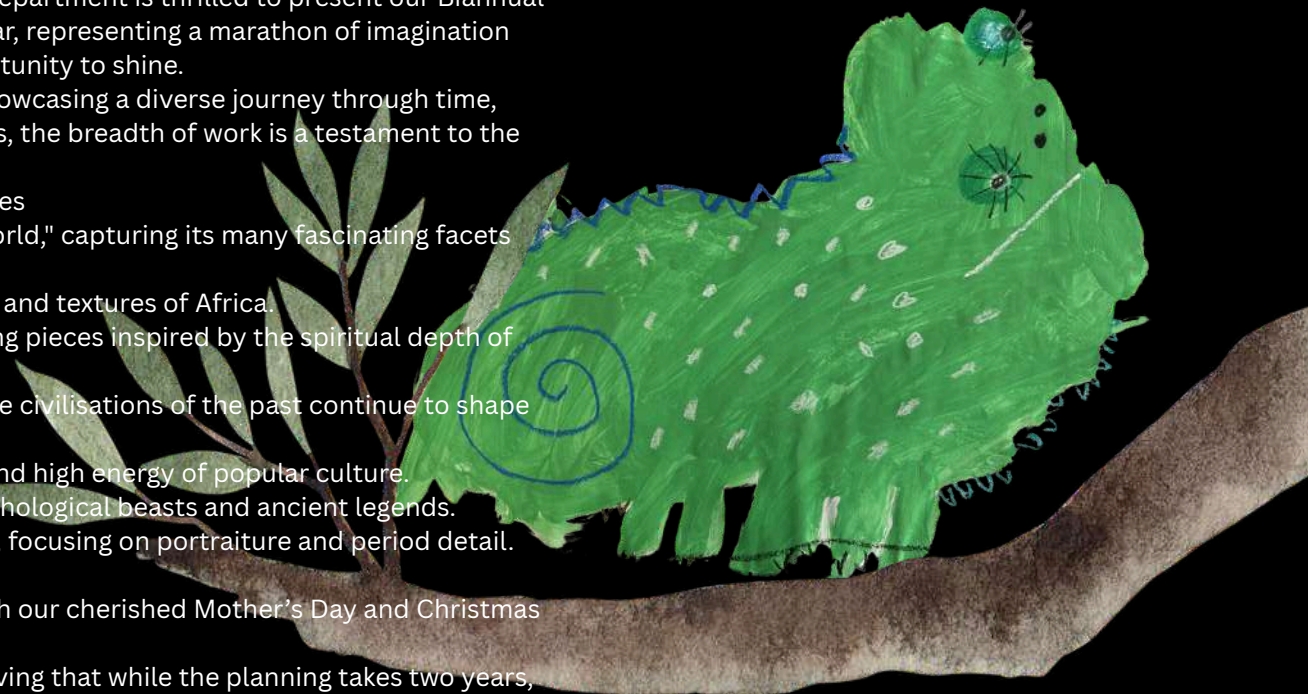
Form 2: Embraced the ethereal, weaving together stories of mythological beasts and ancient legends.

Form 3: Investigated the regal elegance of Tudor and Elizabethan art, focusing on portraiture and period detail.

More Than Just Canvas

The exhibition also highlights the practical beauty of student work, with our cherished Mother's Day and Christmas cards taking centre stage.

This "extravaganza of art" ensures that every child is represented, proving that while the planning takes two years, the inspiration lasts a lifetime. We invite you to wander through the galleries and celebrate the incredible talent of our young artists.



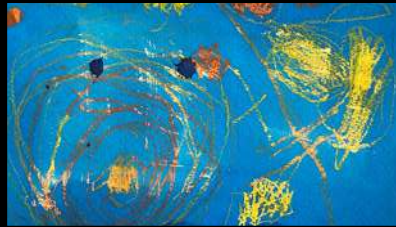
'We Are All Artists'



Every child in Pre-Prep and Prep 1 created their own portrait using paint and oil pastel.



Pre-Prep and Prep 1
Group Piece-Aliens



Up, up, up, up in a balloon, up so high I can chase the moon ...

Out of Africa

The Prep 2's explored the many wonders of Africa through charcoal, collage, sculpture, clay and paint.





'The Dream Time'

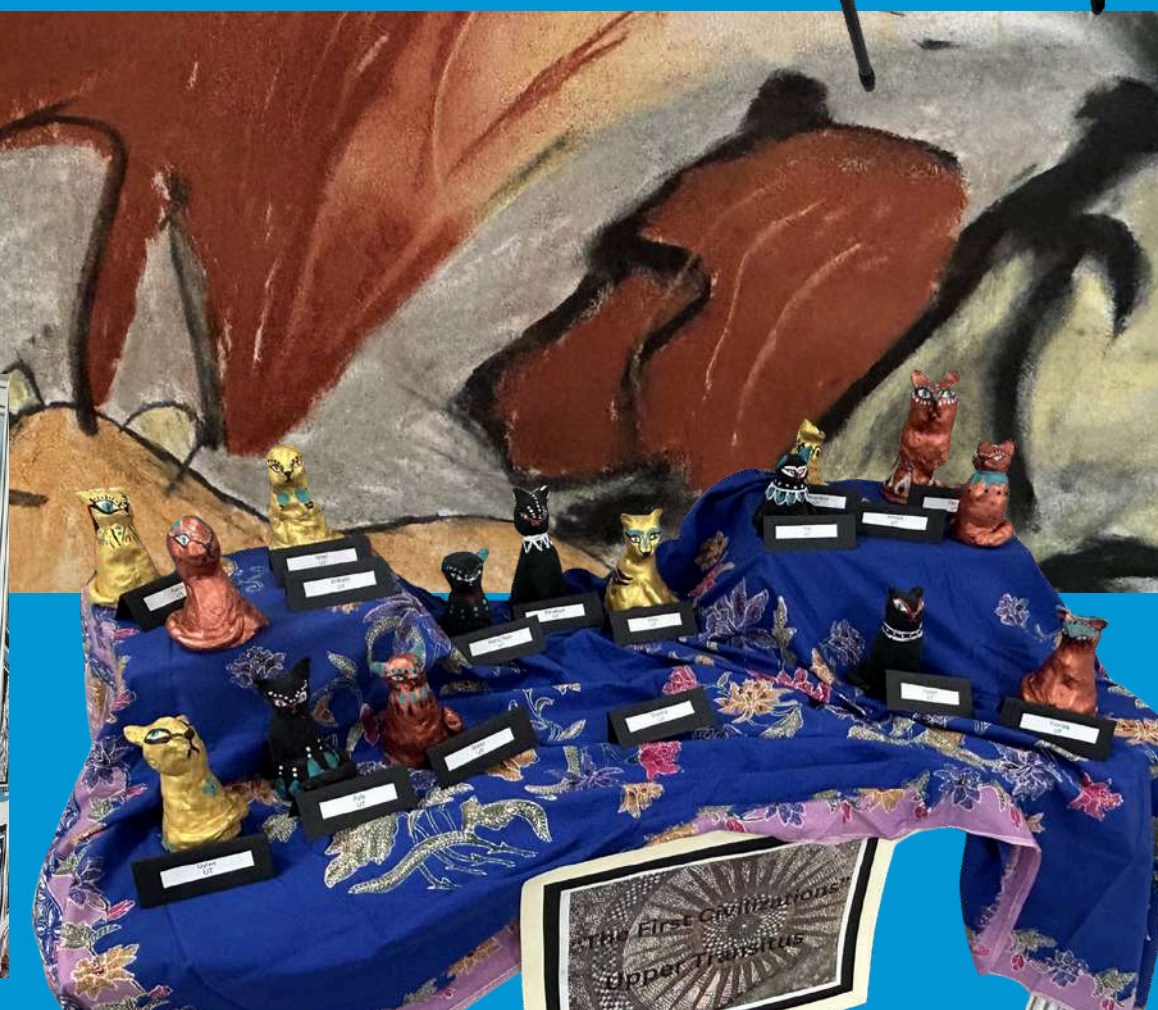
The Lower Transitus explored the many wonders of Australia through charcoal, collage, sculpture, clay and paint.



Group Piece



The Upper Transitus explored the 'Ancient Worlds' of time gone by.





F1 Pop Art

The F1's created a plethora of art pieces based on popular culture. They enjoyed bringing their pieces to life through, clay ,textiles,assemblage, drawing, painting and collage.





The F2's explored 'Story Telling' through traditional stories around the world.

They used a variety of mediums such as paint, clay, ink, sculptural materials and textile materials

F2 'Story Telling'



Off with their heads

The F3's have delved into the world of 'The Tudors and The Elizabethans'. They explored a variety of craft processes such as embroidery in Spanish Black Work, clay tile making and natural printing.



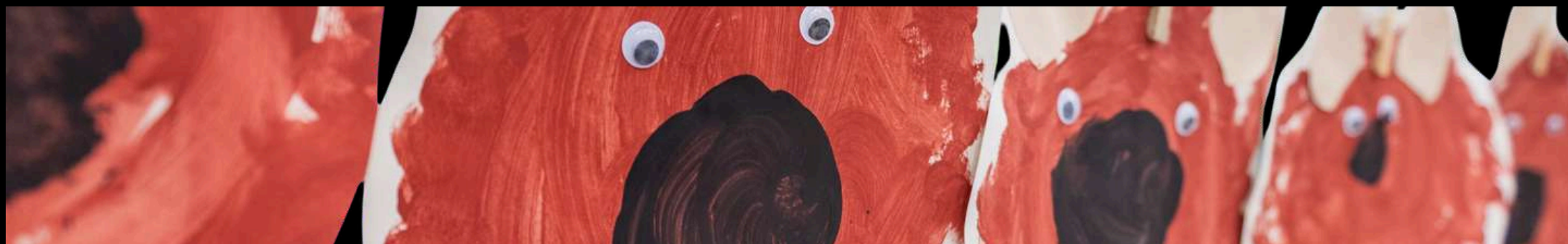
ST. JOHN'S ART MINI EXHIBITION

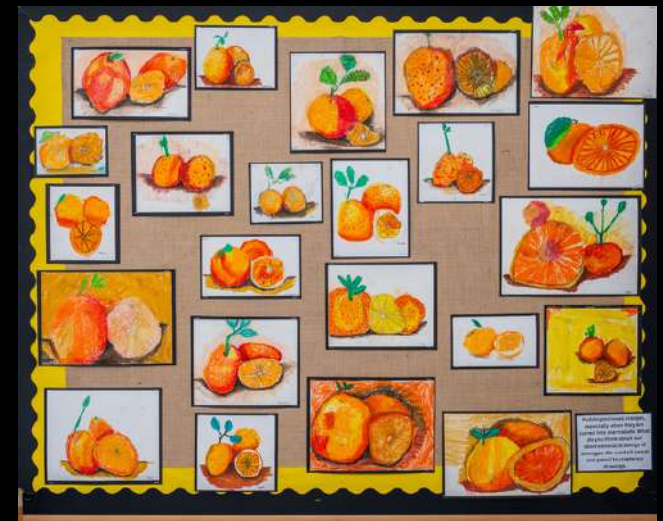
2025

The 2025 mini exhibition was a resounding success, serving as a truly joyous celebration of all the pupil's hard work and artistic growth. By inviting parents to view the displays alongside their children, the event fostered an intimate atmosphere where the the pupils could personally guide their families through their creative process. This shared experience was a highlight for many; seeing the children beam with pride as they explained their artwork and inspired designs was incredibly rewarding. The exhibition did more than just showcase art, it built a sense of community and gave every child a well-deserved moment in the spotlight to feel deeply proud of their accomplishments.



Early Years





Key Stage 1





Key Stage 2





Carter



Nicholas W



Xidun



Dylan



Constantinos

The Master of Mist and Light: The World of J.M.W. Turner

Long before the invention of high-definition cameras, there was an English artist who could capture the roaring wind and the glowing sun better than anyone else in history. His name was Joseph Mallord William Turner, though most people simply know him as "William." This year, the F1 pupils have been stepping into his shoes, exploring how he transformed flat pieces of paper into swirling, breathing worlds of weather and light. Born in London in 1775, William was a true "boy wonder" of the art world. His father was a barber who proudly displayed William's drawings in his shop window, and by the age of only 14, William was invited to study at the prestigious Royal Academy of Arts. He was a whirlwind of energy, carrying a sketchbook everywhere he went to capture the beauty of the world around him. What truly motivated William Turner was the sheer power of nature. While many artists of his time liked to paint neat, quiet scenes of people sitting in gardens, William wanted to show the "Sublime"—the feeling of being tiny in the face of a massive, crashing ocean or a golden, blinding sunset. He was fascinated by the way light could hide things in mist or make them sparkle on the water. To achieve this, he didn't always follow the rules of "neat" painting. He was known to use his fingers, scrapers, and even sponges to move the paint around, creating what he called "tinted steam." There is even a famous story that he once had sailors tie him to the mast of a ship during a terrifying storm just so he could feel the spray and see the lightning up close!

As William grew older, his ideas became even more exciting and modern. He began to care less about painting every tiny detail, like the leaves on a tree or the buttons on a coat, and instead focused on the feeling of the scene. His paintings became swirls of bright yellows, deep oranges, and moody greys. He was one of the first artists to be excited by the "Industrial Revolution," painting the very first steam trains as they sped through the rain. Because he wanted everyone to enjoy art, he left thousands of his paintings to the British public when he died. Today, if you look at a £20 note, you will see his face staring back at you—a reminder of the man who taught the world that art isn't just about what you see, but how the world makes you feel. Some may say his paintings are boring but I say William Turner was a pioneer who spearheaded the use of light and dark and inspired modern artists like Mark Rothko. William Turner did something very few artists did of his time he pushed the boundaries so that he could paint and create art so we the viewer can experience the violence, the peace, the euphoria of what he experienced as an artist.