

These knowledge boxes provide background information for teachers to help develop knowledge for teaching **Australia Here We Come!**

Creating artwork based on pattern



Photo: © variationblog

Lesson 5 looks at how artwork can help develop a sense of place through personal responses. The starting point for this lesson is *Malu Kangaroo* by Bronwyn Bancroft. This book shows a place that Bronwyn Bancroft knows very well. This is her 'country'; she was born in this part of New South Wales and her family roots are here. Because she paints rather than takes photographs she is able to convey the essence of the place and what it means to her. The paintings convey far more emotion than a photograph. They give us an insight into her feelings and her attachment to this place.

Bronwyn Bancroft has illustrated many high-quality Australian books for children. She is also a highly regarded artist and is represented in many art collections both in Australia and overseas. Her paintings owe much to her cultural heritage: her father, Bill, was a descendant of the Djanbun clan of the Bundjalung nation and her mother, Dorothy, is of Scottish and Polish descent. For more information go to her website: www.bronwynbancroft.com

If you develop this activity over several weeks you could cover the following objectives.

Art: Exploring and developing ideas

- Compare ideas, methods and approaches in the work of the artist Bronwyn Bancroft.

Art: Investigating and making

- Use ideas from *Malu Kangaroo* as a starting point for pupils to create their own designs.
- Investigate printmaking techniques and explore ways of combining and organising shapes, colours and patterns.

Art: Evaluating and developing

- Pupils create their own image of the coastal landscape.
- They identify the similarities and differences between their own work and that of the artist and other pupils.
- They suggest different purposes for their work and where it might be used.



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Activity 1: Exploring and developing ideas using *Malu Kangaroo* by Bronwyn Bancroft

Here is some guidance for how to use the book and some questions to prompt thinking.

1 Start with pages 2 and 3.

Focus on the foreground.

- What simple shapes can you find?
- Are there shapes within shapes?
- Which shape(s) is used or are used most often?
- How are the shapes organised across the page? (Focus on the rows of patterns which form the wavy lines and then the patterns within patterns.) Do the shapes repeat or overlap?
- How is pattern used to decorate the animal, plant and rock formations?
- Draw the pupils' attention to the fact that pattern is made when a shape is repeated many times.

2 Move on to pages 4 and 5.

- How is this page different from the previous pages?
- What colours represent the sea, the beach, the 'bush'? Are these solid colours or are different colours used in each area?
- Do you notice particular marks being used to represent the sea, beach, and 'bush'? Do these form a pattern?
- Do you see one of the shapes from the previous page used as an important 'motif' on this page?
- The 'scroll' design is used to represent the sun's rays, the waves as they approach the beach, the breakers on the beach, the 'bush'.

3 Show the next few pages of the book.

- Are any new patterns introduced?
- Are any new colours introduced that they haven't seen before?
- Do the pupils notice any patterns that they particularly like that they would like to draw in their travel journals?

4 Look for patterns around school.

- Pupils can create rubbings of some of these patterns using chunky wax crayons on thin paper.

Activity 2: Investigating and making

Pupils can use this range of activities to develop designs of what they think coastal Australia is like.

1 Printing with found materials

- Collect together materials such as bubble wrap, corrugated card and polystyrene packing material; in fact anything that can be used to create an interesting mark. Pupils use the materials to print on a large piece of paper and then use the paper to create a collage.



In these images the theme was 'fish'. Each family group was asked to create a fish collage at home. An exhibition was arranged at the start of the following session.

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The examples shown in the photographs were created by toddlers, foundation stage pupils and parents working with artist, Jane Cooper, and writer, Ann Hamblen, at Watercliffe Meadow School, Sheffield.

2 Printing with potato or small blocks



These printing patterns are built up in small stages by repeated printing of the shape many times. Pupils will need a number of stamps. Potatoes make very good printing blocks. Start with the smooth flat potato surface, and then

cut the patterns. Pupils can suggest what shape they would like to use. Alternatively, small print blocks can be made from chunks of wood with firmly-glued card shapes or shapes made from string.

Tempera paint (ready mix or powder paint) should be mixed with washing up liquid and a small amount of water to make a creamy consistency. Discuss the paint colours with the pupils; look at the colours that Bronwyn Bancroft has used in *Malu Kangaroo* for ideas. The impact will be enhanced if the colours harmonise. There is information on complementary colours at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Complementary_color

Spread the paint evenly on the potato or block surface using a sponge pad. This can be made using a kitchen sponge cut into four. Use plastic take-away lids and containers to hold the pad.

This print was built up systematically – first, a row of blue triangles which touched one another across the row. Then two rows of the open rust-coloured triangle were printed followed by pale green rectangles. The whole was overprinted using small square sections of potato in different colours. The



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bottom rows were printed with a scroll pattern cut from potato (string attached to a print block would be an alternative). Each row was printed in a different colour.

3 Using print rollers to build patterns

Small patterned sponge rollers are very



inexpensive and can be used to create large-scale patterns with younger pupils. Use a mix of tempera paint and washing-up liquid to print with. Pupils can experiment on a sheet of newspaper. Ask the pupils to create patterns that wave like the sea, cross-hatched lines, repeated blocks, etc. These can be overprinted in a different colour. Potato printing can add different shapes in 'complementary' colours. The ends of wooden dowel could be used to print small dots.

4 Creating images based on pattern

This can be done by using Quickprint foam (polystyrene sheets) that can be drawn on with a ball-point pen. Alternatively you can use thin sheets of polystyrene packaging. This creates a relief surface for printing.



Mix washing-up liquid into tempera paint and spread out evenly on a large tile, or plastic tray. (Special printing ink gives better results.)



Place the relief plate on the table first and carefully align your printing paper over the top. Use a roller to apply pressure to the back of the paper; alternatively use the back of a wooden spoon. Then carefully peel the paper away from the block.

