

Manchester Art Gallery

Key Stage 2

Self-Guided Resource



Theme: Four Ways to Use a Pencil

Sketching activities to help you explore the gallery

A really enjoyable way of looking at art through drawing with plenty of practical tips.
Each drawing exercise is designed to take 15 – 25 minutes.
Activities 1, 2 and 3 are appropriate for KS1 children.
All four activities are ideal for KS2 children.

Grown-ups will need:

A set of activity sheets with text on one side and drawings on the reverse for demonstrating visual examples to the class.
A floor plan of Manchester Art Gallery

Children will need:

A board to lean on
Four sheets of paper
Pencil
Rubber

Activity 1

Find the bronze sculpture of the Walking Leopard located on the first floor of the Atrium, next to the lifts. (See illustration 1)

This exercise is a really good way of encouraging close observation of artworks and using descriptive language, ideal preparation for any practical activity.

The sculpture has been coated with a protective layer allowing visitors to touch the artwork without it being damaged.



Illustration 1 *Walking Leopard*, 1880s, John McAllan Swan (1847-1910), Bronze

Imagine that you are describing this sculpture to a pen friend. You want your description to be so good that your friend can image the sculpture and make a drawing of it without actually seeing it.

You can either make a list of words (KS1) or use a 'Spider diagram' (KS2).

A 'Spider diagram' looks like a spider's web (see illustration 2).

Start in the middle of your spider's web by writing the title of the sculpture in the centre of your page.

Then think about other important things that you will need to describe such as shape, size, colour, what it feels like to touch and write these words around the title. Draw lines radiating out from the title to these words.

Finally, to complete your spider's web, start describing the sculpture in more detail. Look at the illustration for more ideas.

Do you think this leopard is life size?

Does it look real?

What do think a real leopard would feel like to touch?

What does this sculpture feel like to touch? Is it furry, shiny, smooth or scratchy?

What colour is the sculpture?

How would you feel if you came face-to-face with a real leopard?

How do you think the leopard would feel about meeting you?

Where do you think the artist saw this leopard? He studied a specimen in a zoo.

Note: The same activity can be done with the portrait head on the same floor.

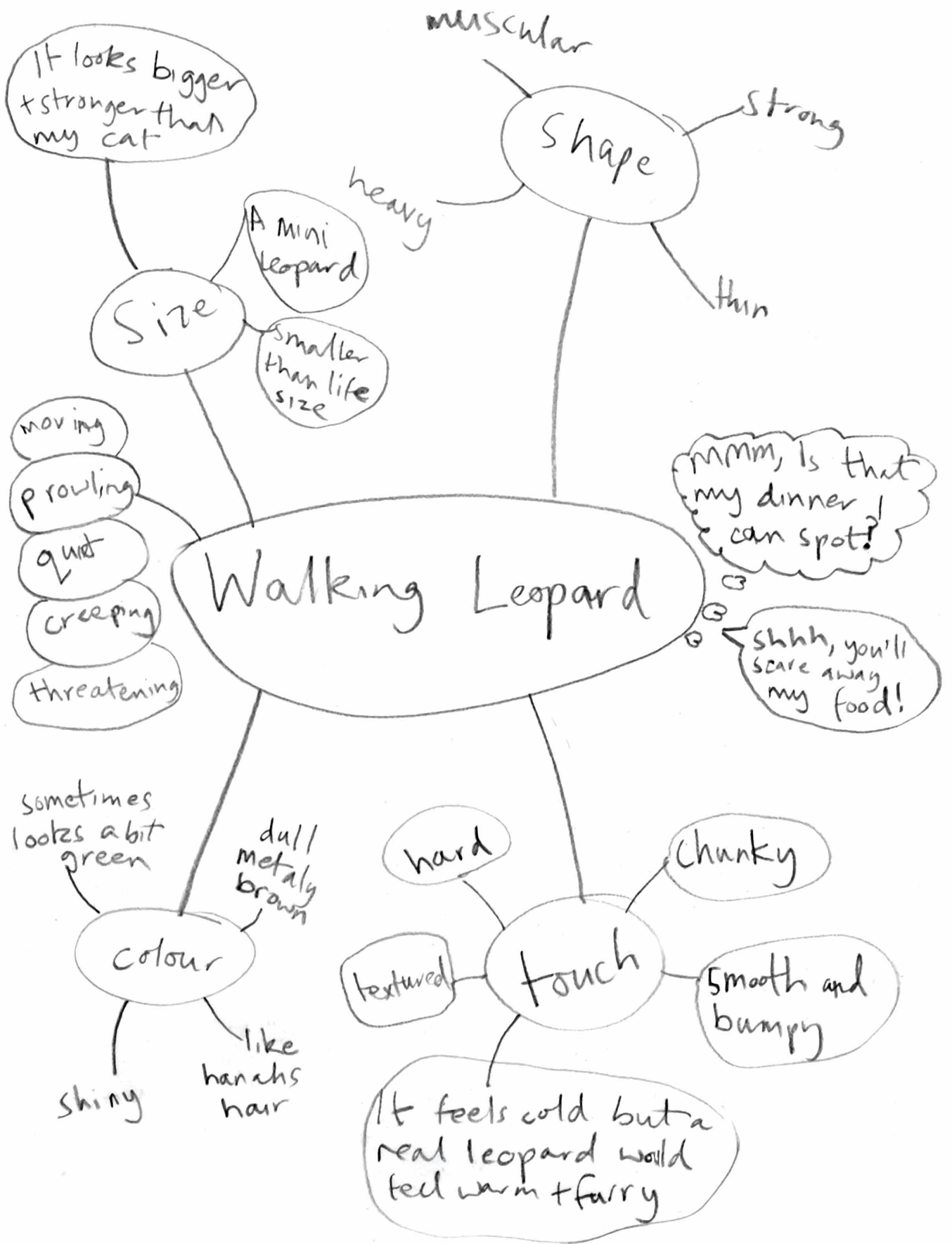


Illustration 2 Example of a spider diagram

Activity 2

Go to Gallery 8 and look for the cabinet with **Pilkington Tile & Pottery Co.** ceramics decorated with fish and water scenes. (See illustration 1)

Gather the group around the display cabinet – sitting on the floor will give you the best view.

These exercises develop observational skills and remove barriers to drawing.



Illustration 1 Earthenware, metal lustres. Designed by Richard Joyce (1871-1931) Manufactured by Pilkington's Tile and Pottery Co.

Stage 1

Draw a fish as quickly as you can. You have 10 seconds (your teacher will count down for you).

Your drawing will look very simple, perhaps an oval shape for the body with a triangle for the tail (see illustration 2).

Stage 2

Choose a fish that you can see easily from where you are sitting.

Put your pencil in the centre of the page.

You are going to make a drawing without lifting the pencil from the page. The best place to start is from the nose or the tip of a fin.

Keep your eyes on the fish in front of you as much as possible and let your hand follow the shapes of its body and scales.

Try to use lines that describe the shape of the fish: smooth, flowing, curved lines (see illustration 3).

Stage 3

You will now have a go at making a drawing without looking at your paper at all!

As you look at the fish, allow the line to move around the page in the same way that your eyes move across the bowl. If your eye jumps from nose to tail, your pencil should do the same.

Try your best not to look at the page just let your hands move automatically. Your lines will probably overlap (see illustration 4).

When you have finished, compare drawings. Whose is the funniest?
There is no right or wrong way to draw, so don't worry if your drawing doesn't look like a fish.

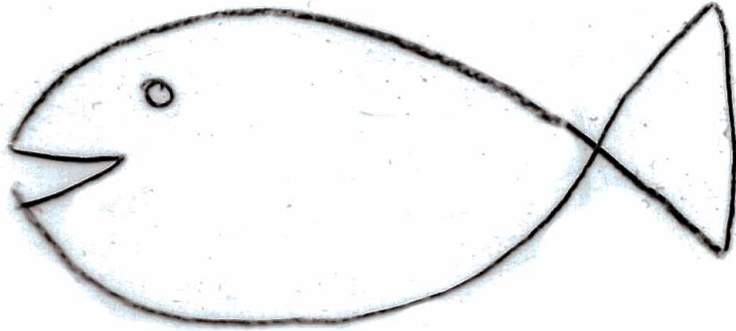


Illustration 2 10 second fish

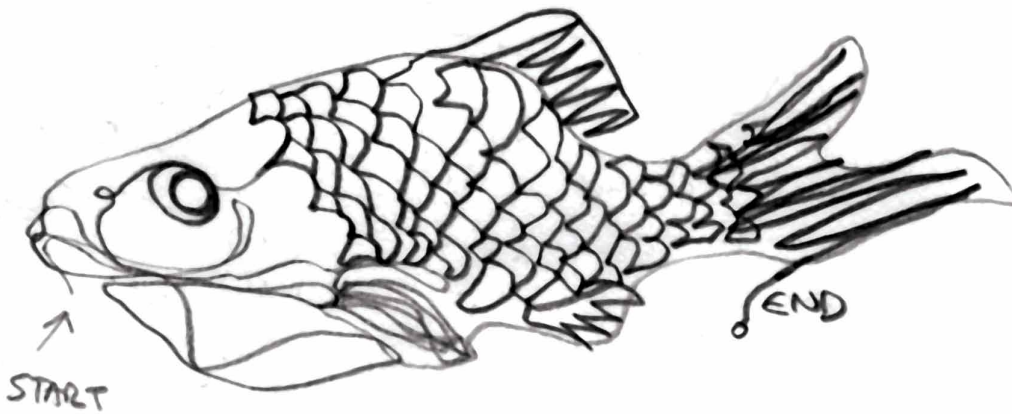


Illustration 3 One line fish

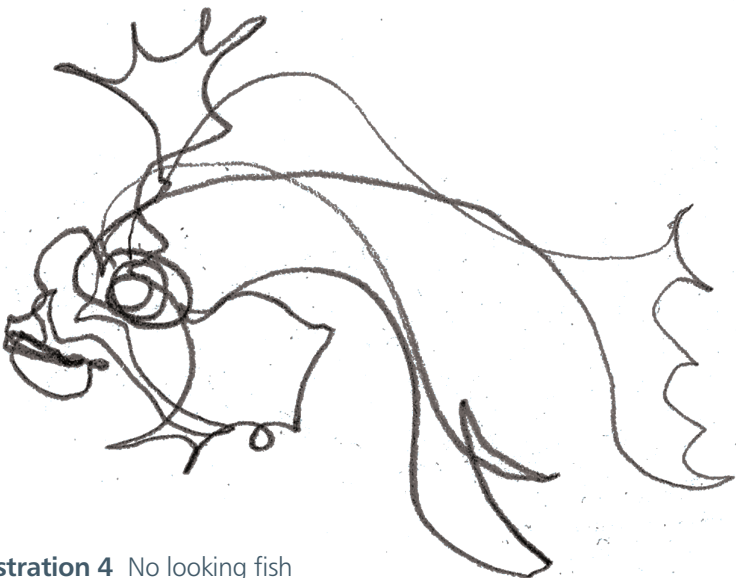


Illustration 4 No looking fish

Activity 3

Go to the Gallery of Craft & Design on the top floor and look for the display of textiles in 'The Industrial Art Collection' cabinet. Look for the green cloth with a simple leaf design (Illustration 1).

This exercise looks at ideas of positive and negative by moving away from the drawn line towards blocks of tone. The drawing will be made by lifting colour off the page using a rubber (See Illustration 2).



Illustration 1 Material from the Industrial Art Collection



Illustration 2 Drawing with a rubber

You will need to start this drawing by lightly covering the whole of your page with broad pencil strokes. Don't press too hard, as this will make it very hard to rub out. Try holding the pencil close to the page and use the side of the lead – this should give you a smooth block of colour across the page.

Don't leave any white gaps in your shading and make sure you go right up to the edges of your sheet.

Now take your rubber and carefully try to rub out the shape of the leaf.

The leaf should be pale and the background darker.

A rubber is a much fatter drawing tool than a pencil, so make your leaf nice and big on the page.

This drawing exercise can be repeated in the classroom or at home using more complex shapes.

Activity 4



Illustration 1 *Albert Square, Manchester 1910*
Adolphe Valette (1876-1942), Oil on jute

Go to Gallery 10 and look for the painting of Albert Square by Adolphe Valette (Illustration 1).

This exercise develops shading skills and looking further at light and dark.

Stage 1. (See illustration 2)

Shading is rather like colouring-in but using only one colour to show tones of light and dark. Remember to use the side of your pencil lead to make broad, sweeping lines.

Move your hand quickly from side to side as you slowly make your way across the page.

Let's have a quick practice at shading before making a drawing.

Draw three small squares on your page, each one the size of a stamp.

Fill the first square with very light shading to make a really soft tone.

Fill the second square with slightly darker shading by pressing a little harder with your pencil.

And in the last square, try to fill with really dark and heavy shading.

Now cross your eyes slightly and look at Valette's painting. The picture should be blurred and all the details will have turned fuzzy. Look at how people and buildings have become blocks and blobs of light and dark colour or tone.

Which is the darkest area of the painting?
(The man in the foreground)

Where are the lightest tones? (The sky)

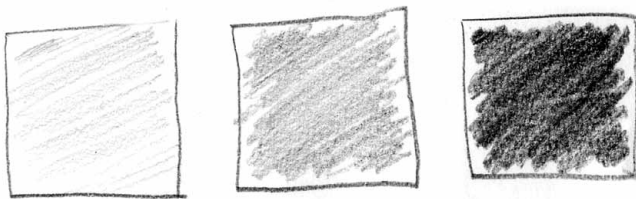


Illustration 2 Tone practice

Try standing alongside the painting to get a sense of scale. Use your hands to indicate to the rest of the class the top of the man's head and his feet and you will see that he is surprisingly large.

How has Valette created the feeling of people and things being near or far away?

The picture can be divided up into three distinct areas:

The foreground (look for the man with the barrow)

The middle ground (look for the statue)

The background (the distant buildings)



Illustration 3 Adolphe Valette sketch

Stage 2. (See illustration 3)

Now that you have looked closely at the painting, you are ready to make a drawing.

Draw a large rectangle on your page, like a picture frame.

Shade in light, medium and dark tones to indicate the light and dark areas of the painting. Don't be tempted to use outlines for your people or buildings, aim for getting the blocks of tone in the right place on the page.

The sweeping lines you use for shading can move in different directions, up and down, left to right, etc. For really dark tones, your shading can be made up of lots of lines moving in different directions.

Keep comparing your drawing with the painting by holding it up at arm's length and narrowing your eyes so that you can see both at the same time. Don't worry about making an accurate copy of the painting. Valette had years and years of experience when he painted this!

Note: For a lovely example of drawing using shading, look at Valette's Drawing from the Antique: Cast of Pan in Gallery 10.