

Workshops on the run

Abstracting the environment



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Teacher notes: Workshop activity

Abstraction with environment

The basic premise of this workshop is an easy approach to abstraction, using view and scale: looking from the whole, to a partial view of the subject and then manipulating the scale of the image to create an abstracted view. This offers students the opportunity to see the initial view in relationship to the abstracted outcome.

Abstraction with environment – Heide provides a unique opportunity for students to observe art and nature in distinctive combinations by interacting with the many sculptures to be found in its garden areas.

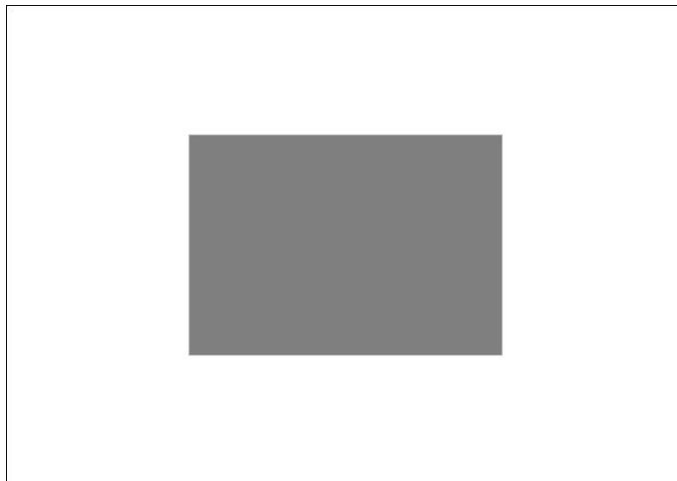
Materials

You will need:

Drawing materials – paper, pencils and view finder.

You can add any other materials you have available at step 6 in the process.

Make a view finder



- Take a rectangular piece of paper (10 – 15 cm)
- Fold it in half
- Cut a rectangular shape on the folded edge (leaving an edge on both sides) to create a central square opening
- Use the frame opening as a view finder

Viewfinders can be any shape or size.

The Process

Step 1.

Choose your subject – a sculpture within the natural environment.



Step 2.

Using the view finder, frame your initial subject and draw it in as much detail as you can within the time allowed.



Step 3.

Now move your view finder around on your first drawing to find an area of the work that interests you.



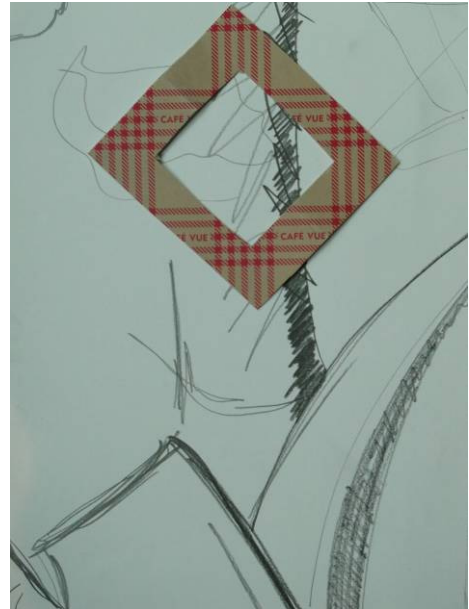
Step 4.

Take a new sheet of paper and enlarge / blow up the area you have chosen so that it fills the new page.



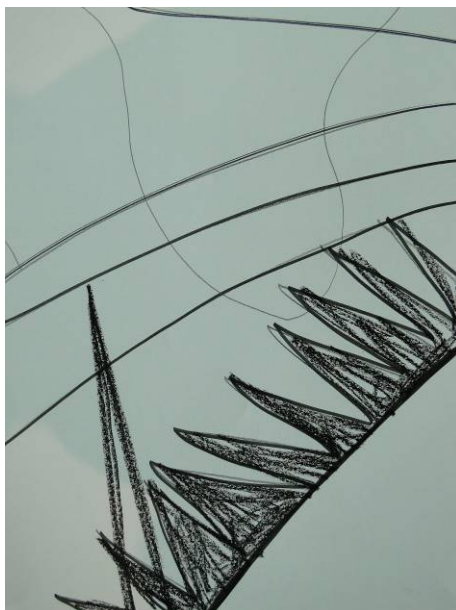
Step 5.

Compare the two works looking for similarities and differences. You have now 'abstracted' your initial subject.



Step 6.

The same process can also be applied to the abstracted image to be developed further e.g. adding colour, shading or pattern.



Initial drawings can be taken back to the classroom and the abstraction then completed away from the original view if teachers do not wish to extend the task. It is instructive for students to be able to see the 'reality', the first impression and the abstraction so that comparisons can be made.

There are many ways that this basic idea can be modified, such as overlay, repetition and variation, with or in addition to the original abstraction process.

Overlay—from the initial drawing choose more than one view to blow up and place these over one another on the page to create a new image.

Repetitions—choose one view from the initial drawing that can be repeated on the page, in either a linear or non-linear way, at the same or different sizes, overlapping or in patterns.

Variations—from the initial drawing choose more than one view to blow up. With each new view you can either fill the total page or a section that may only overlap with other areas of the page creating new dimensions in the work.

Incorporating other curriculum areas

Physical, Personal & Social Learning

Personal Learning — Write a reflective piece on what the development of this work has meant to you. What has this exercise taught you about the way you look at things?

Discipline Based Learning

Maths — Using a grid, incorporate ideas of scale when copying from the original drawing

English — Create a story for the original view and compare the written material with the abstracted final work

Interdisciplinary Learning

Communication — Discuss how your two works communicate differently

Design, Creativity & Technology — This process can also be used with digital media such as photography. It can assist in creative decision making in relation to the initial framing or cropping of images

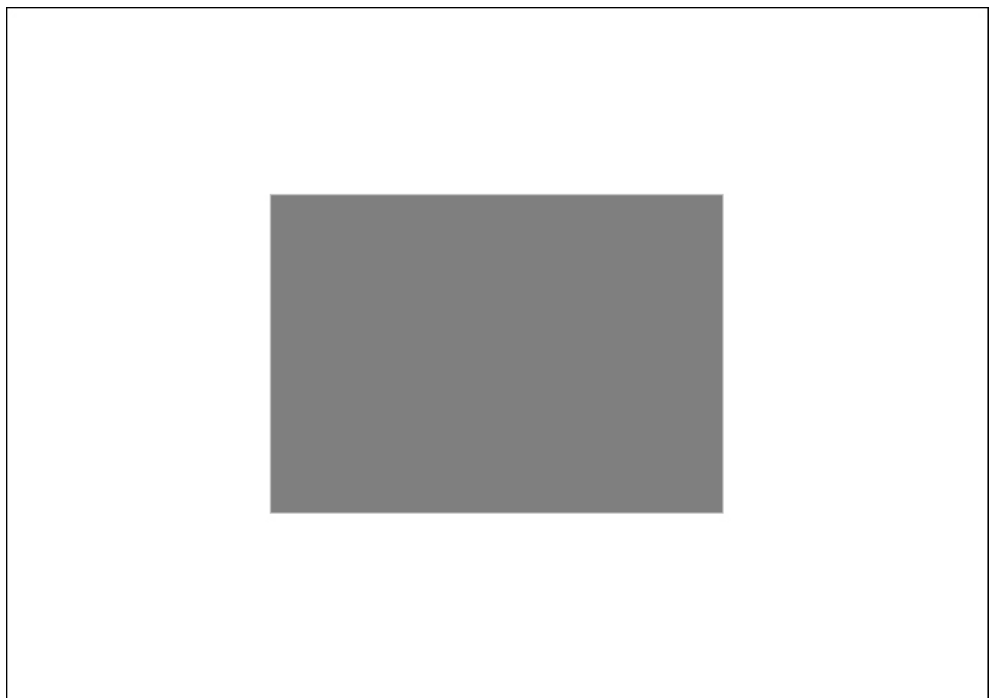
Thinking Processes — Consider the differences and similarities between the artwork and the environment you find it in. What would you, as an artist, need to think about if you were making an art work that would live in the natural environment?

Student worksheet: Workshop activity

Abstraction with environment

Make a view finder

1. Cut out the larger rectangle
2. Fold the square along the midline and cut the grey section out neatly
3. Unfold and you have your view finder



The steps

1. Find a Heide sculpture in the natural environment.
2. Using your view finder to frame the sculpture, draw a picture of it and its environment in as much detail as you can within the time allowed.
3. Again using your view finder move it around on your drawing and find an area that interests you.
4. Take a new sheet of paper to enlarge or blow up the area you have chosen from your first drawing, so that it fills the new page.
5. Compare both your pictures looking for similarities and differences. You have now created an 'abstract' artwork.