Making a Mark

Years 1 and 2

This is a Year 1 and 2 inquiry into different ways in which artists can make marks.

We first looked at applying paint using unconventional tools, such as feathers, balls, cardboard pieces, pegs and sticks. They used these tools to create repetitive patterns, to highlight that repeating a process would give the same (or similar) results and using the same tool in a different way would yield a different outcome.

The second lesson looked at removing paint or ink to make a mark. The children rolled printing ink onto acetate sheets, then scraped it back using cardboard tools they had cut out. They compared the patterns created by flat and corrugated cardboard. They dragged, twisted and slid the cardboard tools over the ink to create a variety of different marks.

The third lesson explored using gesture to make a mark with paint. The children watched a short film of American painter Jackson Pollock applying paint to his canvas, dribbling and splashing the paint with sweeping arm movements. The children then took their blank canvases to Bifron’s Lawn, where they painted their own Abstract Expressionist artwork using these same techniques.

The Year 2 children replaced paint with soil, as an extension of their Science investigation. They explored the qualities of the soil with clay, silt and sand and the different ways in which it adhered to the paper.