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Abstract Painting Challenge

The painting you make during the second half of today's session should be a totally abstract representation of your chosen text. This means that in your final painting, there should be no depiction of the shape or details of an object, person or scene, nor any symbols. But it's okay; there are still plenty of things that can be included, for example, colours, marks, lines, shapes and textures.

Use the following guide to help you make a worksheet of elements to include in your final abstract piece.

Colour:

Colour can be used to create a mood. For example, colours can be loud, quiet, happy, sad, relaxing or exciting. Colour can also suggest things, for example a particular red might make us think of a warning sign or a certain yellow might make us think of the sun.

Make some colour swatches. Experiment with colours to discover the ones that represent your text.

Tone:

What tonal range of paint will you use? The atmosphere of an image with high contrast between the lightest and darkest tones creates a very different mood to that of an image which is bleached out and dreamy.

Experiment with the tone of your colour swatches and consider contrast, discovering the ones that represent your text. How might you darken or lighten your colours?

Mark making:

Will your work be made from distinct brushmarks? What type of marks represent your text the most? Short sharp jabs of the brush? Dots? Dashes? Applied fast or carefully? What shape brush will you use? Rounded, filbert, flat? And what size marks will you make? Or will you use a palette knife, card or your finger to get the marks that you need?

Will your marks sit on their own, blend into others, or overlap. Will your marks have soft or hard edges? Will they be applied loosely or in a controlled way?

Using the colours and tones you have discovered, experiment with making marks to find ones that represent your text.

Line, shape, pattern and texture:

What type of lines represent your text? Long, short, italic? Do they change in width or remain constant? Will they be consistent in colour and tone, or change along the length? What happens at the start and end of the lines?

What shapes might be in your work? Rounded, curved and organic, or geometric, angular and straight edged? Will the shapes sit alone, be a part of a collection of shapes or even a repeat pattern?

How thick will your paint be? Chunky, bold blobs? Dry brush marks, scumbled across the surface of the paper? Or maybe thin, watered down marks? Will the texture feel rough or smooth? You might even want to consider working on different surfaces.

Experiment with texture to discover the ones that represent your text.