



UPPER PRIMARY

# MODERN TO CONTEMPORARY



# MODERN TO CONTEMPORARY

LOWER PRIMARY | TEACHER'S NOTES



## CREATIVE THINKING AT ABERDEEN ART GALLERY

Welcome. This pack has been put together by our experienced learning team to help you explore the building and the collection with your pupils. Every artwork tells a story, giving an insight into a particular culture, society or time in history. Exploring the collection will encourage curiosity, imagination and problem solving.

### **About Aberdeen Art Gallery**

The opening of Aberdeen Art Gallery on 7 July 1885 was made possible by financial contributions from local businessmen including granite and flour merchants, art collectors and civic-minded individuals. The people who paid for this building also donated many of the older paintings that you see on display today. They were philanthropists who wished to give something back to the community by establishing a public venue for the enjoyment and appreciation of art.

### **Before your visit**

You may want to begin with a picture of Aberdeen Art Gallery and ask your learners to set some questions about the gallery and what they might see there.

This will help to de-mystify what an art gallery is, who it's there for and hopefully have them looking forward to their visit.

### **How to use the teacher's notes**

In order to make these notes work for you, we have chosen artworks and activities that are age appropriate. Primary is divided in to Lower and Upper and Secondary is divided in to Junior and Senior phase.

This resource provides you with suggested activities and background information on selected artworks. There are six themes that will direct you to at least three gallery spaces, but you can of course look at more artworks along the way.

As these teacher's notes will be available to download from our website, some images of the artworks are copyright protected and cannot be included in the pack.

Visit our website at [www.aagm.co.uk](http://www.aagm.co.uk) to see images of all the artworks featured in this pack as well as many others from the collections of Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museums.

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## THEME FOR THIS PACK: MODERN TO CONTEMPORARY

Some learners can feel intimidated and confused by modern or contemporary art. There can be an assumption that the skills required to create these artworks are not comparable to artworks of the classical era. Aberdeen Art Gallery actively collects modern and contemporary artworks which showcase the talent and diversity of each new generation of artists. Our galleries display a vibrant collection where learners can engage with modern and contemporary art in an entertaining and educational way.

### **On arrival**

Go to the welcome desk and staff there will tell you where to store your coats and bags.

They will also point out where the toilets and lifts are.

Our staff will provide you with any equipment you have booked in advance of your visit.

If you have booked our Learning Centre to use for a snack or lunch, please let our staff know. Eating and drinking in the gallery spaces is not allowed.

### **Around the Gallery**

Explain to your learners that they must not touch any of the art on display (oily hands can damage artworks) unless a label invites them to touch.

You are welcome to sketch with pencils in the Art Gallery but please make sure your learners are creative on their paper only, not on any other surfaces!

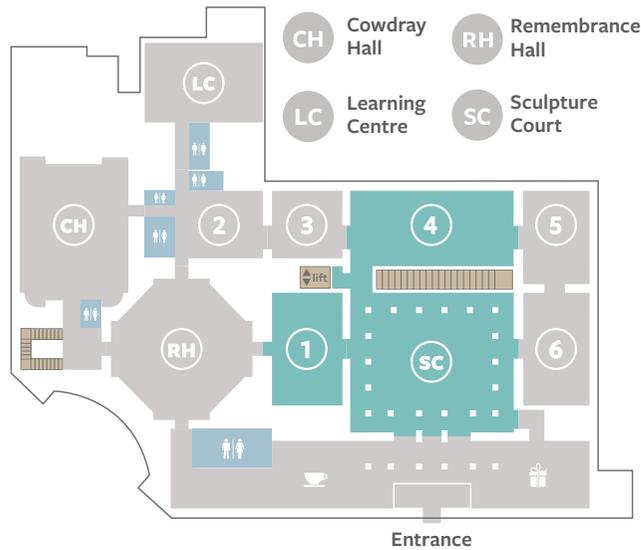
Please supervise your pupils appropriately at all times and ask them to be considerate of other visitors.

We really hope you enjoy your visit to Aberdeen Art Gallery and we welcome any feedback on how to improve the experience for others.

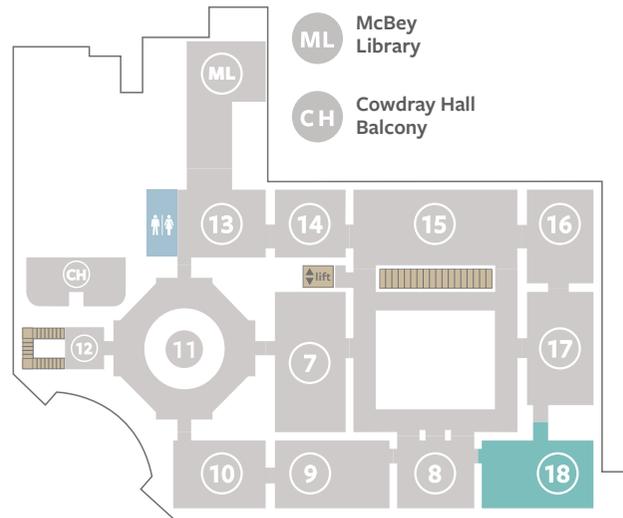
# GETTING AROUND THE ART GALLERY



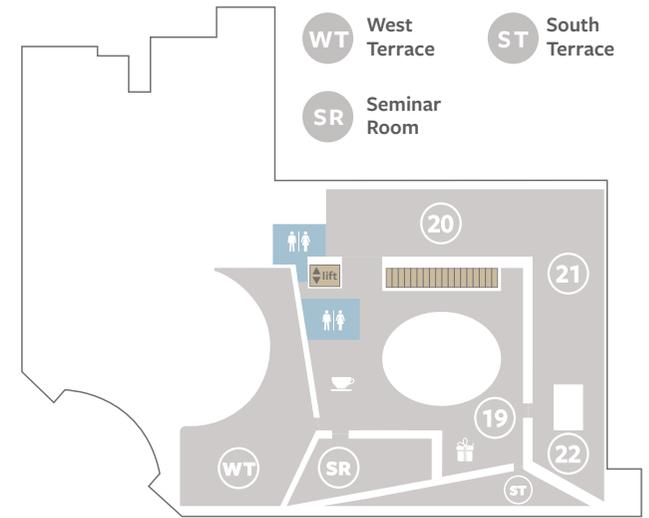
## Ground Floor



## First Floor



## Second Floor



start here **18** **1** **4** **SC** end here

**People and Portraits**    **Collecting Art**    **Human Presence**    **Sculpture Court**

**Settler Activity**  
**Pope I - Study after Pope Innocent X by Velázquez**  
 Francis Bacon

**J.Y.M. Seated**  
 Frank Auerbach

**Head of Francis Bacon, Study No 6 (Head and Teeth)**  
 Clive Barker

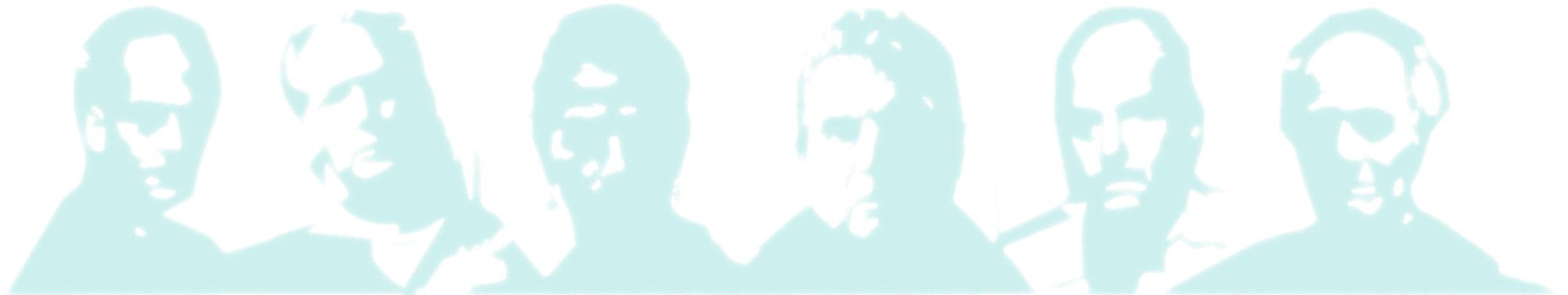
**Exquisite Corpse**  
 Jake and Dinos Chapman

**For You**  
 Tracey Emin

# SETTLER ACTIVITY

## Gallery 18: People and Portraits

Gallery 18  
People and Portraits



When you arrive in this room organise your class into a circle. Ask them if anyone can name a famous artist. After you have received five names, ask how many of these artists are living and how many are dead. Explain to them

that artists are not just people who lived in the past but there are many artists living and working today, and during their visit they will see some of this creativity displayed in the gallery.

# POPE I STUDY AFTER POPE INNOCENT X BY VELÁZQUEZ

## Francis Bacon, 1951



Francis Bacon is one of the most important figurative painters of the 20th century. He received no formal training and took up painting after seeing a Picasso exhibition in Paris in 1928. Bacon was born in Dublin to English parents and although he was an artistic child, his talents were not widely recognised until later in his life.

Bacon approached his figure compositions and portraits in an unusual and shocking manner. They are often blurred, distorted and fragmented figures on canvases which have been stretched backwards, torn and trampled on.

Painting images of the head of the Catholic Church became an obsession for Bacon for more than 20 years. The artist drew his inspiration from the portrait of Pope Innocent X painted in 1650 by the Spanish artist Diego Velázquez. Bacon never actually saw the original painting in Rome, working instead from numerous reproductions of the famous image. *Pope I* was the first of three works which together formed Bacon's first completed series of Pope paintings.

The original painting of Pope Innocent X by Velázquez, painted almost 300 years previously, shows the influential man with appropriate pomp and power. Bacon's version is a far more visceral comment on the omnipotence of the Catholic Church that, as a homosexual growing up in Ireland, Bacon would have keenly felt. He shows empathy for his fellow outcasts by depicting the Pope as an infirm figure entombed in a vapid background. In the foreground Bacon shows a curtain falling away to expose what he believed was the fallacy of Papal power.

### **Activity for *Pope I - Study after Pope Innocent X* by Velázquez**

Please continue to the portrait on the next page where you will find a joint activity.



# J.Y.M. SEATED

Frank Auerbach, 1976

Auerbach was born in Berlin in 1931, of Jewish parentage and was sent to England to escape Nazism when he was eight years old. His parents died in concentration camps. He spent his childhood at a boarding school for Jewish refugee children in Kent. Auerbach attended St Martin's School of Art from 1948 to 1952 and the Royal College of Art from 1952 to 1955. He has used three principal models throughout his career: his wife Julia; a professional model Juliet Yardley Mills (JYM); and his close friend Estella West (EOW), the model for most of his nudes and female heads prior to 1973.

Auerbach painted JYM weekly, first as a life model in 1963, then as a friend over the next two decades. Writing about his work he said:

'I can't foresee the end of my pictures or my drawings. I keep on working and trying to do them in the hope of finding this result which to me is surprising, more surprising than finding an Easter egg as a child. I take one picture at a time... doing drawing after drawing and then trying to get to this bit of a raw, wild, untamed, unpredicted fact... down onto canvas.'

Auerbach has been criticised for his thick application of paint, but admirers of his work describe his technique as exciting and impressive. Rarely leaving Britain, he lives and works in London and has had the same studio since the 1950s.

## Joint activity for *Pope I - Study after Pope Innocent X* by Velázquez and *Portrait of J.Y.M. Seated*

Organise your class into two groups. Give them a time limit of ten minutes and ask them to discuss the questions for each of the highlighted artworks.

After ten minutes swap the groups over and repeat the process.

### Discussion points for *Pope I - Study after Pope Innocent X*

- Looking at this portrait alone provide five words to describe the personality of the sitter.
- Ask your learners if they know what a Pope does and what role they play today's society.
- Why do you think the artist did not paint a photo realistic portrait of the Pope?

### Discussion points for *J.Y.M. Seated*

- Do you think it is easier to paint an abstract portrait compared to a photo realistic one?
- Provide five words to describe the colours the artist has used?
- How old do you think the sitter is?



Now go to the **Gallery 1: Collecting Art.**

When moving between galleries ask your learners to look out for other examples of modern and contemporary artwork such as sculptures, photographs, prints and drawings.

# HEAD OF FRANCIS BACON STUDY NO 6 (HEAD & TEETH)

Cliver Barker, 1978

Clive Barker achieved a high level of fame and commercial success as a British Pop artist in the 1960s.

Barker briefly attended art school in 1957 but never finished his course due to a dissatisfaction with the conventional methods he was taught. For a period of 15 months from the age of 20, he worked on the assembly line at Vauxhall Motors in his hometown of Luton. It was here that he was inspired to create sculptures using ready-made materials. For over 40 years he has been using unconventional materials such as leather and chrome, plated steel and brass in his sculptures.

This sculpture is one of a series of 12 portraits of the famous artist Francis Bacon, with whom Barker had a close working relationship with in the 1960s and 70s. The images he created are only sometimes portraits in the traditional sense. Most are about the personality of the sitter rather than a realistic interpretation of the person.

Using casts made from a real set of teeth and ribbed tubing for the windpipe, Barker distorts and reinvents Bacon. It is as if Bacon's well documented, eruptive personality has had an impact on Barker's interpretation. It is almost fighting its way out of this calm, classic head, creating for the viewer an uncomfortable tension.

## **Activity for *Head of Francis Bacon, Study No 6 (Head & Teeth)***

This sculpture is very different to the other ones your learners will see on display. Ask them how this artwork makes them feel. Is it frightening and unpleasant to look at or do they find it funny and eye-catching?



 Go to **Gallery 4: Human Presence.**

# EXQUISITE CORPSE

## Jake and Dinos Chapman, 2000

Iakovos 'Jake' Chapman and Konstantinos 'Dinos' Chapman, often known as the Chapman Brothers, are British visual artists who began working together shortly after graduating from the Royal College of Art, London in 1990. For their first solo installation, *We are Artists*, in 1992 the brothers stencilled an anti-aesthetic manifesto onto a mud-splattered wall at the Institute of Contemporary Art, London. They followed this with their three-dimensional recreation of Goya's series of etchings *The Disasters of War*, in which they carefully and playfully depicted horrific acts of violence using miniature and life-size figures.

*Exquisite Corpse* is a game developed by Surrealist artists from the traditional children's game of Consequences. This is where a piece of paper is folded horizontally, and each team member draws a part of the body without seeing what the others have drawn. The end-result is a character created from composite parts.

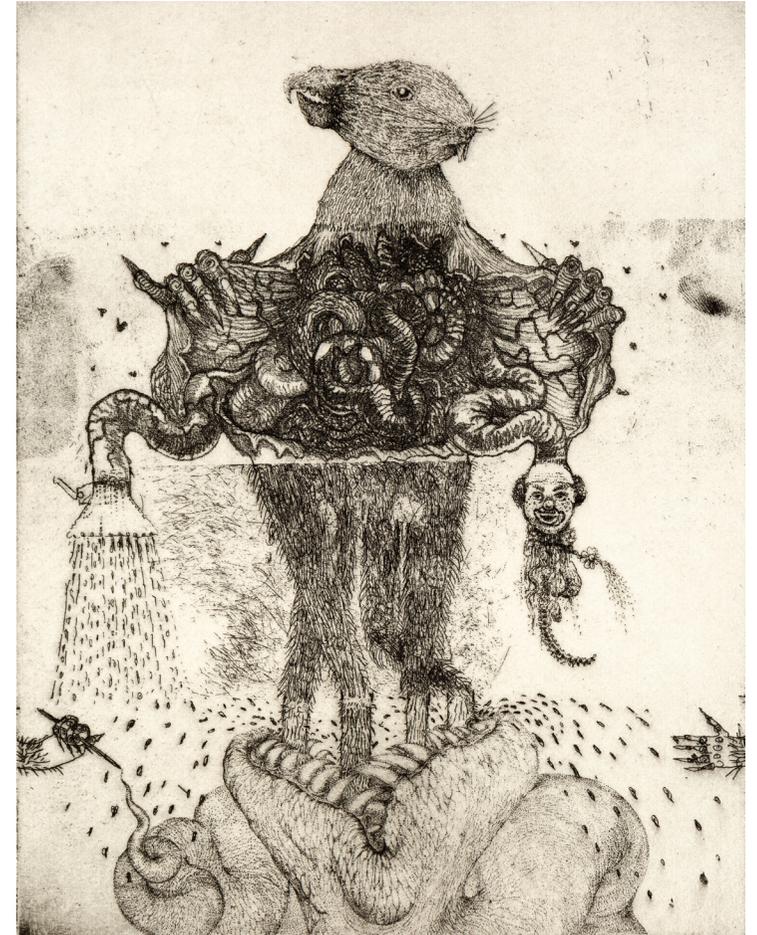
For the artwork *Exquisite Corpse*, the Chapman Brothers used the game to explore the dual nature of their working together and to illustrate the differences within a unit. They didn't draw on paper, instead they drew onto etching plates and by using a selection of tools and varying degrees of pressure on the plates, a wide range of effects were created.

For this series of 20 black and white images, the brothers created ten head sections that were then randomly exchanged, so they didn't know who was working on which character. They also used a variety of different drawing styles, making it difficult to say who drew what sections. Claw-like hands and feet, eyeballs on stalks, skulls and

writhing intestines are characteristic of the Chapmans' work. Their exaggerated comic-horror style has been dismissed by some as juvenile but the craftsmanship and painstaking labour evident in their execution cannot be denied.

### Activity for *Exquisite Corpse*

Point out to your group that some of the etchings are a bit rude, with lots of naked body parts. Others can be a bit scary to look at. Tell them how some galleries put up warnings advising visitors that some of their artworks may be considered offensive. Ask your pupils if they think this a good thing to do.



Now go to the **Sculpture Court**

# FOR YOU

## Tracey Emin, 2004

Tracey Emin is one of the most well-known and successful British artists of her generation. She emerged in the late 1980s as part of the Young British Artists group and became noted for provocative and controversial pieces. Working across a range of media including painting, drawing, video, needlework and sculpture, her work is candid and intimate.

Born in London in 1963 to parents of British Romani and Turkish Cypriot descent, Emin studied at Maidstone College of Art and the Royal College of Art, London. In 1993 she opened a shop with fellow artist Sarah Lucas, to sell their artwork, and had her first solo show at White Cube, a contemporary art gallery in London. In 1995 she came to the public's attention with her work, *Everyone I Have Ever Slept With 1963-1995*, a tent with the appliquéd names of everyone, including pets and friends, she had ever slept with. This was followed up in 1998 by her equally controversial Turner Prize-nominated, *My Bed*.

As Emin has matured the art establishment has embraced and rewarded her. In 2007 she represented Britain at the 52nd Venice Biennale, becoming only the second British woman artist to do so. In 2011 she was appointed Professor of Drawing at the Royal Academy, one of only two female professors since the Academy was founded in 1768.

*For You* is a hand-blown neon sign, a pink heart containing the words "I felt you and I knew you loved me" written in blue. Neon is generally associated with the advertising business and has connotations of seediness, which is in direct contrast to the message exploring love and sensuality. The heart is a warm pink, but the writing is in an icy blue colour. This piece is very much a continuation of Emin's autobiographical artworks which illuminate her own experiences and emotions.

### Activity for *For You*

Ask your learners to look at this sculpture before providing them with any information about it. Then invite them to give it a suitable title.



# EXTENSION ACTIVITY

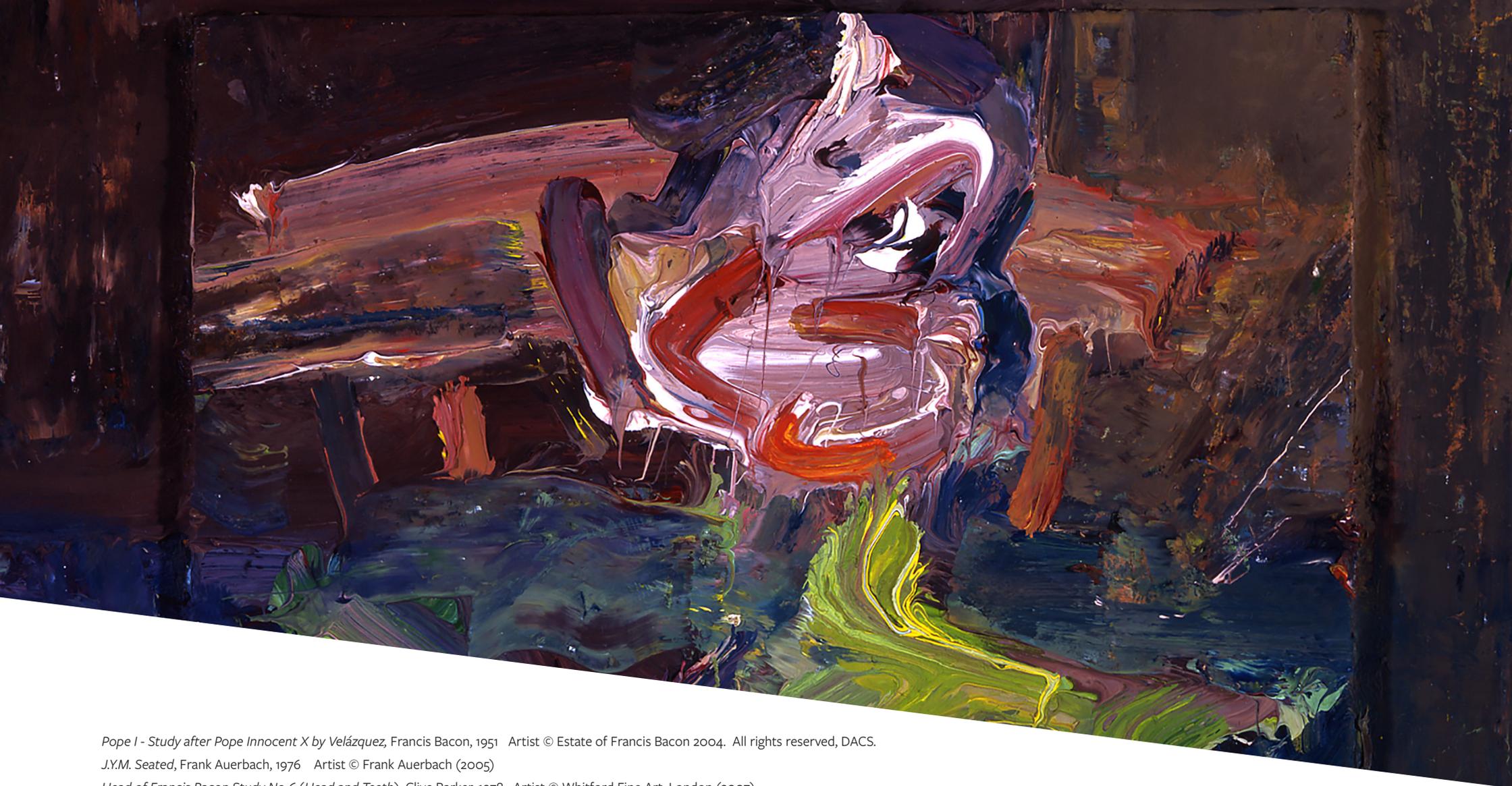
Complete back at school



**“Through observing and recording from my experiences across the curriculum, I can create images and objects which show my awareness and recognition of detail.”**

EXA 2-04a

Referring back to Exquisite Corpse, organise your learners into groups of four and lead them in a game of Consequences. Allow five minutes for them to draw each of the four body sections – head and neck, upper body, lower body, knees and feet – before passing the concertinaed paper on to the next artist.



*Pope I - Study after Pope Innocent X by Velázquez*, Francis Bacon, 1951 Artist © Estate of Francis Bacon 2004. All rights reserved, DACS.

*J.Y.M. Seated*, Frank Auerbach, 1976 Artist © Frank Auerbach (2005)

*Head of Francis Bacon Study No 6 (Head and Teeth)*, Clive Barker, 1978 Artist © Whitford Fine Art, London (2007)

*Exquisite Corpse*, Jake and Dinos Chapman, 2000 All rights reserved, DACS.

*For You Tracey Emin*, 2004 All rights reserved, DACS



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