



discover art

AT DUBLIN CITY GALLERY THE HUGH LANE

AN INTRODUCTION TO MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY ART FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Jessica O'Donnell

The Artist at Work



Interior of Francis Bacon Studio, 7 Reece Mews
by Perry Ogden

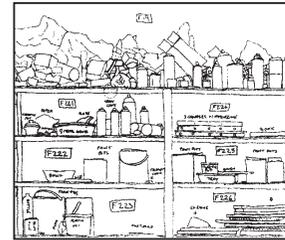
An artist's studio is the name of the room where an artist paints, sculpts, draws or just sits and thinks of ideas!

The Francis Bacon Studio

Francis Bacon was one of the most famous artists of the 20th century. Although he lived most of his life in London, he was born in Dublin and lived in Co. Kildare with his family until he was 16 years of age. He liked being surrounded by lots of things as he could then easily reach for one of his many art books, photographs or newspaper clippings in search of inspiration. His studio contained over 7,500



Francis Bacon often used plates as palettes



This archaeologist's drawing was used to record the location of items found in Francis Bacon's studio and to assist with the re-construction of the studio in Dublin.

items including paint pots, brushes, two easels and a mirror. He used the walls and door of his studio as a palette and these are covered in blobs of pink, red, orange among other colour paint. Very few people were allowed into the room especially when he was working. Following Francis Bacon's death, his studio was donated to the gallery by his friend John Edwards. Like a large-scale jigsaw, the entire studio was then moved from London to Dublin and put back together exactly the way it was. By studying the items found in his studio, discoveries have been made about what and how he painted.



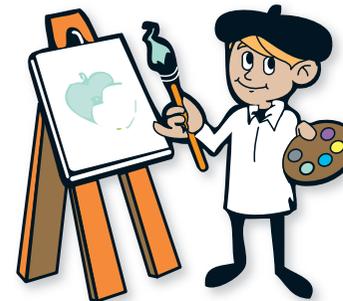
One of the palette knives found in Francis Bacon's Studio

Portrait of Miss Anstruther Thomson by John Singer Sargent

John Singer Sargent was one of the most famous portrait painters of his day. He was very skilled at painting the magnificent dresses that were fashionable during the late 19th century and early 20th century. In this black chalk drawing, he shows Miss Anstruther Thomson holding a pencil in her hand and a sketchbook on her lap. She is wearing a long dress with very full, puffy sleeves. There is a lot of light coming in from a side window. She is concentrating very hard on what she is drawing. What do you think she may be sketching?



Miss Anstruther Thomson
by John Singer Sargent





Manet worked on this painting for a year. When he was finished he signed his name and the date, (1870), on the rolled up canvas on the floor

Still Life is the name given to paintings of flowers, fruit or objects.



The Artist's Studio by James McNeill Whistler

Portrait of Eva Gonzalès by Edouard Manet

Eva Gonzalès was a young French artist who was a dear friend and pupil of Edouard Manet. In this very large work, Eva is shown painting a vase of flowers in her studio. One of the flowers, a white peony, has fallen to the floor. Around her are all the things Eva needs to paint: an easel to hold her painting, a palette to mix and test her colours and a selection of paintbrushes of different sizes. Having brushes of different sizes meant that she could use some for little details and the larger ones for the background. She is also holding a long stick. This is called a *mahl* stick. She used this to lean on and keep her hand steady while she carefully painted the little petals. Leaning against her chair is a portfolio containing some of her paintings and drawings. Eva is wearing a beautiful white dress. She probably wanted to wear her best outfit because she was having her portrait painted. However, white may not be the best colour to wear while she is painting!



Portrait of Eva Gonzalès by Edouard Manet

The Artist's Studio by James McNeill Whistler

This is one of two sketches Whistler made showing himself at work in his studio which he intended to use as studies for a large oil painting. This oil sketch shows Whistler standing with a palette in his hand. His palette had raised edges to stop runny paint from dripping onto the floor. There are two elegant women in his studio. Whistler loved all things Japanese and in this painting one of the women is holding a fan and wearing a kimono. The woman sitting down was an Irish woman called Joanna Heffernan. She was the artist's model.

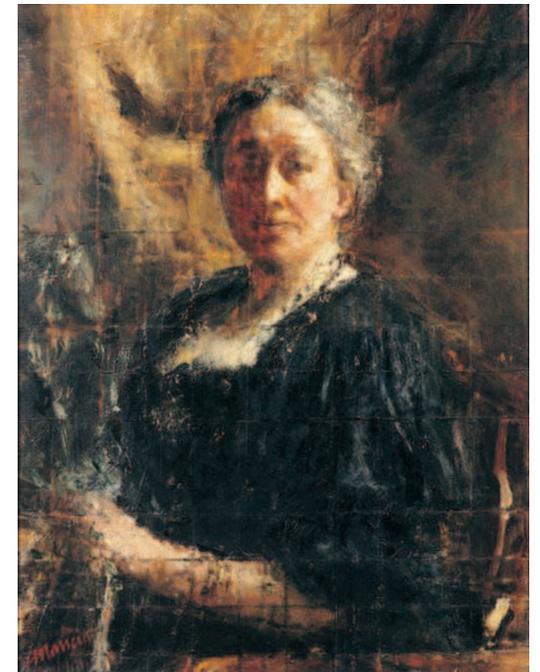
Unusual Working Methods: Antonio Mancini

Hugh Lane had his portrait painted by the Italian artist Antonio Mancini during a visit to Rome in 1904. Impressed with the result, Lane invited Mancini to Dublin. A special studio was set up for Mancini in a large room in Clonmell House in Harcourt Street, the first home of the Municipal Gallery of Modern Art. When painting portraits, Mancini had a very distinctive way of working to help him get a good likeness. First of all he would set up a frame in front of the person he was painting. He would then pin criss-cross threads to the frame to create a grid made up of lots of squares. He would place another similar shaped grid very close to his own canvas. Then square-by-square he painted through this thread grid. The grid helped him compose his painting and ensure that everything was the right size and in proportion. Because he used such thick oil paint, many of his paintings have this grid shape imprinted on the painted surface. He was careful, however, to avoid these square shapes appearing on the faces of the people he was painting.

Composing a Picture: Composition is a word to describe how a picture is arranged, where objects or people are placed and what is chosen to be included.

Arttrivia

Berthe Morisot used to paint in her drawing room and would tidy her equipment away in a cupboard when visitors called.



Portrait of Lady Gregory by Antonio Mancini

The portrait shows Mancini's distinctive grid square shapes

ARTISTS' EQUIPMENT

i Francis Bacon preferred to paint on an unprimed canvas because it had a rougher texture.

Paintings: Out of necessity, artists occasionally used materials which were easily and cheaply available. The French artist Paul Gauguin, for example, is known to have painted on potato sacks stretched over a wooden frame. However, most of the paintings in the gallery are painted on canvas. Canvas is usually made of linen which has been stretched over a wooden frame. Occasionally canvas can also be made of hemp, jute or cotton. A *primer* or *ground* spread over the canvas protects the paint surface and gives it a smooth finish. It also prevents paint from sinking into the fabric. The colour of the *primer* or *ground* can influence the tonal range or overall colour of the painting. In addition to paintings on canvas, there are paintings on cardboard, wood, aluminium, zinc, copper, porcelain and a synthetic wood material called MDF in the gallery's collection. Oil paint, acrylic paint, household paint, watercolour, gold leaf, sand, gouache and gesso are among the materials artists have used. Sometimes artists varnish their paintings to give them a protective layer and a finished appearance. Over time, varnish can sometimes discolour and make colours seem darker than they are.

Brushes: These are a selection of brushes used by artists. Brushes are not the only implements used by artists to apply paint. Oil paint can also be added to the canvas with a palette knife or squeezed directly from a tube. Jack B. Yeats often used a palette knife for his oil paintings. Large roller and household brushes, as well as aerosol spray cans, were among the unusual methods of applying paint employed by Francis Bacon.

Jam jar: to hold any liquids to dilute your paint or clean your paintbrushes

Palette: Useful to mix and test your colours. Yellow, Red and Blue are called **primary** colours because they cannot be made from any other colours. Orange, green and purple are called **secondary** colours because they can be made by mixing two primary colours together.



i **Complementary colours** are those which are opposite each other on the colour wheel.

MAKING MINI FRANCIS BACON STUDIOS

First visit the Francis Bacon studio. Walk all around it. Look through the door, the spy holes and the window. In a notebook or on a piece of paper write or sketch the following information which will help you make your mini-studio:

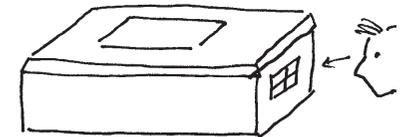
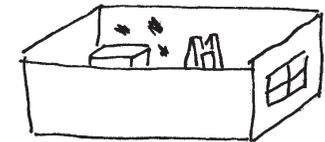
1. What is covering the floor?
2. What coloured paint is on the walls?
3. What shape are the windows?
4. List five objects you can see in the studio e.g. books, easel, mirror and so on.

What you need:

- * Shoe box with lid
- * Poster paints or crayons
- * Magazines and/or newspapers
- * Tin foil for the mirror
- * Sheets of acetate or plastic for windows (optional)
- * Card
- * Scissors
- * Glue

Instructions:

- The shoe box represents the studio. First you need to cut out the window at one of the short ends of the shoe box. Some adult help may be needed here. You can also cut out a door along one of the sides and another larger window in the lid of the box.



- Next you can fill the interior of the box based on the information you collected during your visit. Start by covering the floor with bits of torn newspaper. Then put colours on the walls with paint or crayon.



CONTINUED ➔

Drawing

The first mark on a blank page can be the most daunting and the most exciting!

Drawings and sketches have special qualities which make them very personal and informal. The speed with which sketches are made adds to their charm and informality. Sketches are generally small in scale and are made with the simplest of materials such as a pencil, piece of charcoal or pastel on paper. Because sketches are usually unfinished they can reveal the original ideas, thought processes and working methods of the artist. The very fact that sketches and drawings are 'unfinished' means they do not have to be perfect. They usually have a freshness and vitality that is sometimes lost in a finished painting.

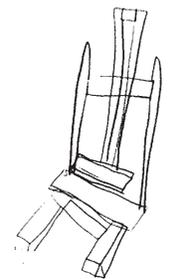


Hugh Lane Reading by William Orpen

Sketches are sometimes observations made discreetly, capturing a glance or gesture without a person even being aware and without the 'stiffness' of a posed formal portrait. Drawings can also be very detailed studies valued as artworks in their own right or as important preparatory work for a finished painting.

Hugh Lane Reading by William Orpen

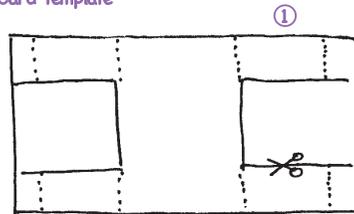
Hugh Lane and William Orpen were good friends as well as being distantly related and they travelled to France and Spain together in 1904. While in Paris, they visited the art dealer Durand-Ruel. It was from Durand-Ruel that Lane bought many of the great masterpieces of French art that were to form part of the Lane Bequest. William Orpen was widely admired for his skill in draughtsmanship or drawing and his precocious talent saw him enter the Metropolitan School of Art in Dublin shortly before his thirteenth birthday. The lovely sketch above shows Hugh Lane relaxing at home with his feet resting on the mantelpiece. During their travels together William Orpen observed that Lane would go to bed very late at night and get up late in the mornings. At the same time Hugh Lane was known for his energetic bursts of enthusiasm in the pursuit of getting things done.



Drawing of Francis Bacon's easel made during a Sunday Sketching workshop

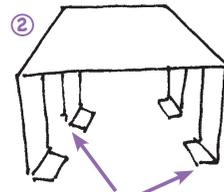
- Next, using some card, make a stand up easel and table. Add other things such as the circular mirror by covering a circle of card with tinfoil. Make your own mini books and paint cans. You can personalise it by putting your own painting on the easel and adding objects you would like to have in your own studio.

TABLE DESIGN: Card template



Fold

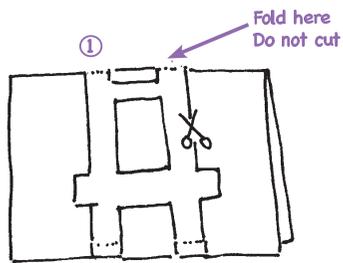
Table template assembled



Stick to floor

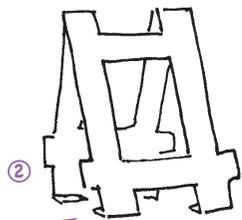
EASEL DESIGN:

Card template folded over



Fold here
Do not cut

Easel template assembled



Stick to floor

- Cover the windows with light coloured clear plastic (optional). With the lid on, you can look at your studio through the windows and door or from above with the lid off.

Arttrivia

Auguste Renoir liked to keep an extremely tidy studio with everything kept clean and in order.

For this reason Orpen's little sketch is additionally charming for revealing such an active character in a position of such repose.

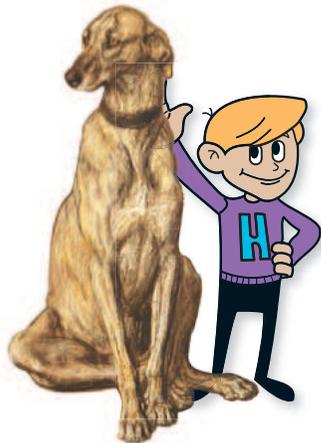


Studies of an Irish Wolfhound by Briton Riviere

Studies of an Irish Wolfhound by Briton Riviere

Briton Riviere was one of the most famous and popular animal painters in Victorian Britain. Dogs, above all, appear throughout Riviere's work and they are often depicted in portraits of their masters. The dogs in his paintings were also used to suggest humour or sadness in the story being told and as an animal lover, he reveals them to live up to their reputation as man's best friend.

Unlike a still-life, it is not so easy to draw something that moves or fidgets a lot! However, the artist has revealed here how skilled he was at showing the wolfhound in different positions as well as the dog's alert expression and the softness of his fur.



Artists' Sketchbooks

Having a little pocket sketchbook and pencil ensures that you are always at the ready to record at a moment's notice an idea or an object that attracts your attention. Drawing encourages close observation and can stimulate fresh understanding of how paintings and sculptures are made. Drawing and sketching may also lead to discoveries of previously unnoticed details and also allows for lots of experimentation in your style and technique.



MAKING YOUR OWN ARTIST'S SKETCHBOOK

This little sketchbook is very easy to make and you can decorate the cover with your own design. You can add as many or as few pages as you like and can easily make new sketchbooks when your own one is full.

What you need:

For the sketchbook cover:

- * 2 pieces of A5 size cardboard. The stiffer the cardboard, the more durable the sketchbook will be. Cardboard cut from an old box would be quite good.
- * 4 coloured or plain pipe cleaners.
- * Materials for decorating your sketchbook cover such as crayons, coloured paper, collage materials from old magazines, buttons, feathers, fabric, glitter.

For the inside pages:

- * 6 A4 coloured or white sheets of paper (you can add additional sheets at this stage if you would like more pages in your sketchbook).
- * Staples and stapler, glue, scissors.

Instructions:

- Carefully cut two pieces of A5 size cardboard. A5 is half of an A4 page. Some adult help may be needed when cutting the cardboard.
- Fold each of your A4 coloured paper sheets in half.
- Glue the folded A4 sheets together to create a concertina-style effect.



- Glue one end of the paper 'concertina' to one piece of cardboard and the other end of the paper 'concertina' to the other piece of cardboard creating front and back covers.
- To bind the covers, staple one side of each of the pipe cleaners to the cardboard covers and tie the other end of the pipe cleaners together.



- Decorating the cover of your book is as important as filling the sketchbook up with drawings, poems, observations and thoughts. Use the collage materials, glitter, feathers and other materials to help you decorate the front and back covers as you would like.