

Using word cards to describe, interpret and compare artworks

- **View** your first artwork
- **Separate words** into two groups: those that fit in some way with the artwork, and those that don't. Words can be considered descriptive or interpretative, that is, 'dark' could refer to the tones or colours as well as the mood or themes
- **Narrow down** the selection into your top three
- **Justify and share your choices.** Did you interpret the chosen words in the same way as other people?
- **Repeat** with a second artwork and compare and contrast between the two artworks
- **Reflect:** What connections did you find between your descriptions of the artworks and any interpretations you made?

GENERAL SET 1 (BASIC)

gentle	simple	exciting
smooth	shiny	calm
floating	bumpy	dangerous
soft	hard	safe
repetitive	complicated	natural
structured	loose	free
fragile	powerful	weak
tense	rhythmic	futuristic

GENERAL SET 2 (ADVANCED)

ordered	organic	mysterious
broken	bold	smooth
bright	monochromatic	minimal
intense	dark	overwhelming
gestural	flat	balanced
neutral	busy	warm
static	comforting	energetic
spontaneous	subdued	nurturing

LINES

Words that can describe formal elements and can be used across a range of artworks (OBJECT):

continuous	layered	geometric
etched	random	free
transparent	delicate	strong
chaotic	spontaneous	solid
flowing	rigid	scratched
rough	bold	organic
curved	splattered	thick
broken	organised	smooth

COMPOSITION AND SEQUENCE

balanced	looped	free
circular	separate	upright
spiralling	spacious	linear
cluttered	fragmented	harmonious
asymmetrical	focused	overlapping
confined	chaotic	rigid
rhythmic	recessive	flowing
horizontal	empty	adjacent

COLOUR AND TONE

bold	cool	harmonious
bright	deep	loud
clean	flamboyant	mellow
sombre	vibrant	vivid
earthy	contrasting	flowing
subtle	warm	dark
dramatic	light	intense
muted	pure	rich

TEXTURE AND FORM (good for analysing sculptural works)

rough	smooth	hollow
convex	silky	coarse
sleek	firm	flat
unsteady	woven	greasy
gritty	embossed	velvety
angular	engraved	firm
polished	corrugated	solid
blistered	multi-axial	concave

PHOTOGRAPHIC

shallow	crisp	recessive
contrast	reality	evocative
candid	mysterious	monochromatic
artificial	glow	cropped
contemplative	intimate	confrontational
macro	rich	still
blurred	staged	nostalgic
wide angle	glossy	vignette

Different focuses or themes in artworks (SUBJECT, CONTEXT):

LANDSCAPES

dark	loud	violent
bright	warm	mysterious
dull	cool	restrained
faded	blustery	agitated
stormy	wild	exhilarating
exciting	still	relaxing
calm	frightening	suggestive
harmonious	tranquil	isolated

SOCIAL/POLITICAL THEMES IN ARTWORK

energetic	organic	spontaneous
utopia	passive	bold
rough	smooth	alienation
confrontational	light	busy
sensitive	intense	overwhelming
dark	flat	content
deep	ordered	gestural
broken	warm	dystopia
free	balanced	peaceful

PORTRAITURE AND IDENTITY

calm	weak	powerful
thoughtful	confident	spiritual
knowledgeable	reserved	proud
aggressive	gentle	energetic
isolated	intense	ordered
chaotic	rigid	connected
rich	laboured	harmonious
bold	natural	constructed