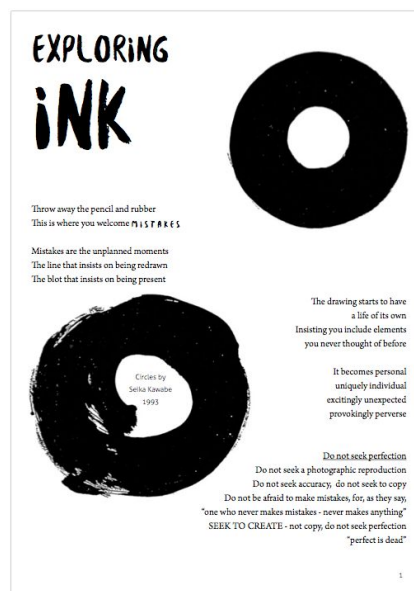


Facilitator's Notes:

Exploring Ink

These notes work with the '*Exploring Ink*' worksheet, or with any painting-based workshop. Feel free to adapt sessions, or develop your own. Do share your new plans or notes via our website <http://kewstudio.org/explore-creativity>



Working with Paint or Ink

You will need paper, paints, brushes, and rags or paper towel to mop up accidents. You will also need dishes or some kind of palette. Your space should have access to water for cleaning up, good lighting, and be comfortable to work in (not too hot or cold, and with enough furniture and space for all participants). Ideally you will not be likely to be disturbed by external activities during the session.

- You could just provide the materials and wait to see what the participant starts to work on – using that as a starting point for your conversation
- You could bring in natural objects for people to paint – this will also provoke discussion. (Natural objects are easier to draw than man-made ones as people get over-anxious about getting the symmetry and perfection of a manufactured object, but a branch will still look like a branch even if inaccurately drawn!)
- You could discuss a theme for painting if the participant is hesitant to start. For example a season – a type of place – a self portrait – a memory – a feeling - a pattern
- You could offer a whole range of unusual tools with which to make marks on paper – twigs, crumpled paper, fingers. Encourage people to experiment and then see what isolating a few of these marks suggests. (See *Exploring Ink* for the encouragement of experiment, selection and inspiration from the abstract marks which can result in a title, a poem, writing etc)
- Paint and ink cannot be rubbed out – so all 'mistakes' need to be included and worked with, as in life! This is very freeing for the artist once the fear is removed by regarding everything as experimental and capable of further development, either by selection or repetition and addition... Photocopying works well to allow pieces to be worked on further... and with a variety of treatments.

Some people might prefer to watch you painting – if so, talk to them as you are painting, tell them what you are doing, and what you are thinking about as you work. Remember the aim of this is not to get people to paint the Mona Lisa! It is the taking part and the communication between you that counts.

A few do's that you probably know already...

when working with ink

Time – painting needs time so try to be relaxed yourself to create a calm and receptive atmosphere

Space – Sit beside your partner, at the same level, rather than lean over them. Knowing your participants you might find you need to stay with one for a while to keep their confidence up while others may prefer to work alone.

Listening – listen to your partner, reflecting back their last words or a phrase that seems important for them to continue with their thoughts.

Silence – can be a positive rather than a negative, so do not be afraid of staying silent especially when participants need to concentrate on their work

Encouragement – be genuine and specific e.g. I really like the shapes you are forming.

Finishing – hold a participant's work away from them so that they can see it differently and maybe others can see it too. Then let them decide if it is finished. Your care with their work is a mark of respect. If possible, arrange to store all work, even if only until the next session. Often this can result in a sense of achievement or progress as ideas develop.

Discussing – be sure to treat participants as equals when talking with them. Keep to the 'Adult' Ego state. (See '*Working Together*' and '*Professional Practice*') If asked what you think, using the feedback phrase: "*When you... I feel...*" will give you a pattern for authentic discussion. Sharing some of your own thoughts and feelings with the participants makes for a more equal and much deeper relationship.

A few don'ts that you might know already...

- Don't paint on another person's paper!
- Avoid saying something is wrong or would be better done another way...avoid 'corrections'