Grow Flourish Think

BE: RESPECTFUL
BE: FORGIVING
BE: KIND

BIRKENHEAD
HIGH SCHOOL ACADEMY
Junior School Vision Statement
GDST

| Year 2 Summer | Art Knowledge Organiser |
|---|---|
| Topic: | Yayoi Kusama |
| Links to other year groups: Pointillism, Abstraction and Surrealism (Years 5 and 6) Mark-making linked to work on Indigenous Australian artists who used similar techniques (Year 2 Spring) | |

**Key Vocabulary & Skills:**

Yayoi Kusama

Japan

Matsumoto

Surrealism

Abstract

Expressionism

Minimalism

Conceptual

Installation

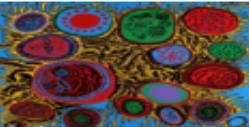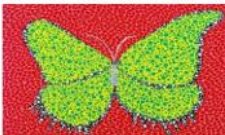Polka dots

Obliteration Room

Bizarre

Subconscious mind

Yayoi Kusama is a Japanese contemporary artist, who mostly works in sculpture, installation, painting and performance/video art.

-Kusama creates conceptual art that contains features of being minimalist, surrealist and abstract expressionist.

-Her most famous artworks include *Dots Obsession, Pumpkin* and *Butterfly*

-She was an important part of the pop art movement in the United States throughout the 1960s. She came to public attention through her series of works with brightly-coloured polka dots.



| Significant Works | | |
|---|---|---|
| Dots Obsession (2003) |  | -*Dots Obsession* symbolises the hallucinations that Kusama suffered when she was a child, in which she felt all of the world around her was dominated by repeated patterns.<br>-She used red paint, white dots, large balloons and a number of mirrors to create this immersive and visually-striking installation piece. |
| Pumpkin (1990) |  | -Kusama has long held an obsession with pumpkins, which she felt were one positive aspect of her otherwise troubled childhood.<br>-As a young girl, she spend hours sketching pumpkins, which she found beautiful, but they first made their way into her artwork in 1946. She painted this piece in the Nihonga style of traditional painting from 19th century Japan. |
| Butterfly (1988) |  | -As with Pumpkin, Kusama's Butterfly work contains an 'infinity net' background, whilst the butterfly itself is decorated with her trademark polka dots, also representing infinity.<br>-In Japanese culture the butterfly is believed to transport the soul between the living and the dead and is representative of transformation. |

| Styles and Techniques | | |
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| Abstract Expressionism | -Abstract art is a type of modern art which does not aim to represent images of our everyday world.<br>Abstract expressionism was considered a variance of 'pure abstract' art because the work was more expressionistic: it was trying to convey some kind of subjective emotion. Abstract expressionists paint with emotion and randomness hoping to capture their subconscious thoughts. |  |
| Surrealism | Surrealism means 'above realism'.<br>-Surrealist artists created strange, illogical scenes, utilising the subconscious minds to create images. Surrealist artists believed that the subconscious mind held the secrets of life.<br>-Surrealist works have an element of surprise: unexpected items are placed next to each other for no clear reason. Some viewers may find this shocking or unnerving.<br>-Surrealist paintings may contain a mixture of strange objects and everyday objects looking out of place. |  |
| Conceptual Art | - Conceptual art is art for which the idea (or concept) behind the work is more important than the finished art object. It emerged as an art movement in the 1960s and the term usually refers to art made from the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s. Installation art is often conceptual.<br>-One idea of Kusama's conceptual art is the installation Ascension of Polka Dots (2006). She used bungee cords and metal staples to tightly wrap several trees in a red polyester fabric covered in white spots. |  |

**Abstract expressionist** artists paint randomly with emotion and hope to capture what is going on in their unconscious minds – like when we dream

**Surrealist artists** create images which are unusual and unexpected and have a mixture of strange objects

**Conceptual artists** are most interested in the IDEAS in their art work rather than the finished art. Many of Yayoi's **installation pieces** are conceptual.

| Sequence of Lessons | |
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| | **Brief summary of lesson content** |
| Lesson 1 and 2 | Introduction to Yayoi Kusama and her art. Introduction to the concepts of abstract expressionism and surrealism |
| Lesson 3 | Mark making based on Yayoi's work with links to pointillism . Creating polka dots using dabbers, bubble wrap, cotton buds etc |
| Lesson 4 | Using collage to recreate Kusama's Obliteration Room |
| Lesson 5 | Exploring sculpture with clay – creating a pumpkin |
| Lesson 6 | Using similar techniques to Kusama to decorate pumpkin sculpture – followed by evaluation of work |