

Gestural & Action Painting

Abstract Art Project III of III

Abstract Art Project (Project III of III):

This is the third and final week of the Abstract Art Project following on from [Bubble Prints](#) and [Feather Painting](#). This week we will be experimenting with *gestural marks* and *action painting*, adding some *texture* and putting it all together into our final completed abstract art piece.

As art has evolved artists have explored the boundaries of art making and ways in which art can be created. Mark making describes the different marks we can create in an artwork such as lines, dots, patterns and textures. Marks can also be made by printing onto paper from another surface or by scratching into a surface.

Artists use gesture to express their feeling and emotions in response to something seen or something felt – or gestural qualities can be used to create a purely abstract composition.

From the Tate website: <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/student-resource/exam-help/mark-making#:~:text=Why%20use%20gestural%20qualities%3F,we%20create%20in%20an%20artwork.&text=Artists%20use%20gesture%20to%20express,create%20a%20purely%20abstract%20composition.>

This process aims to get away from creating a representation of some 'thing' in our art, to merely creating art through exploring different processes of mark making to create purely abstract works. (Abstract is a term used to describe art that does not represent anything based on external reality or nature.

From: https://www.moma.org/learn/moma_learning/glossary/)

GESTURAL MARK MAKING:

Gestural mark making in art terms refers to the application of paint (or any other mark making medium) that is applied with free flowing gestural strokes that result from the artists movement and is sometimes referred to as a projection of the artists inner emotional state.

The idea was that the artist would physically act out his inner impulses, and that something of his emotion or state of mind would be read by the viewer in the resulting paint marks. De Kooning wrote: 'I paint this way because I can keep putting more and more things into it – drama, anger, pain, love – through your eyes it again becomes an emotion or an idea.'

From Tate website: <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/g/gestural>



Robert Motherwell, *Elegy to the Spanish Republic*, 1958

Some famous artists known for their **gestural mark making** methods include: Jackson Pollock, Willem De Kooning, Franz Kline, Robert Motherwell and Franz Hoffman. Their method of gestural painting resulted in works termed as **abstract expressionism**.



Hans Hofmann, Nulli Secundus, 1964



Willem De Kooning,
Composition, 1955

Action painting...

Paintings produced with a focus on the physical act of the artists action to apply the paint to the canvas became known as Action Painting from the 1940's to the early 1960's. From Tate: <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/a/action-painters>



Jackson Pollock, Detail of *Blue Poles*, 1952.

Jackson pollock was well known for his method of applying paint to canvas by throwing and dripping paint onto his large canvases that he placed on the floor.



Franz Kline (above with his work) created purely abstract works using gestural strokes and house paintbrushes. Unlike the other action painters of the time whose works held an underlying meaning, Kline made work that purely resulted from process and only referenced itself. The brush strokes he created were, as he explained, "*unrelated to any entity but that of their own existence.*" From: <https://www.ideelart.com/magazine/franz-kline>

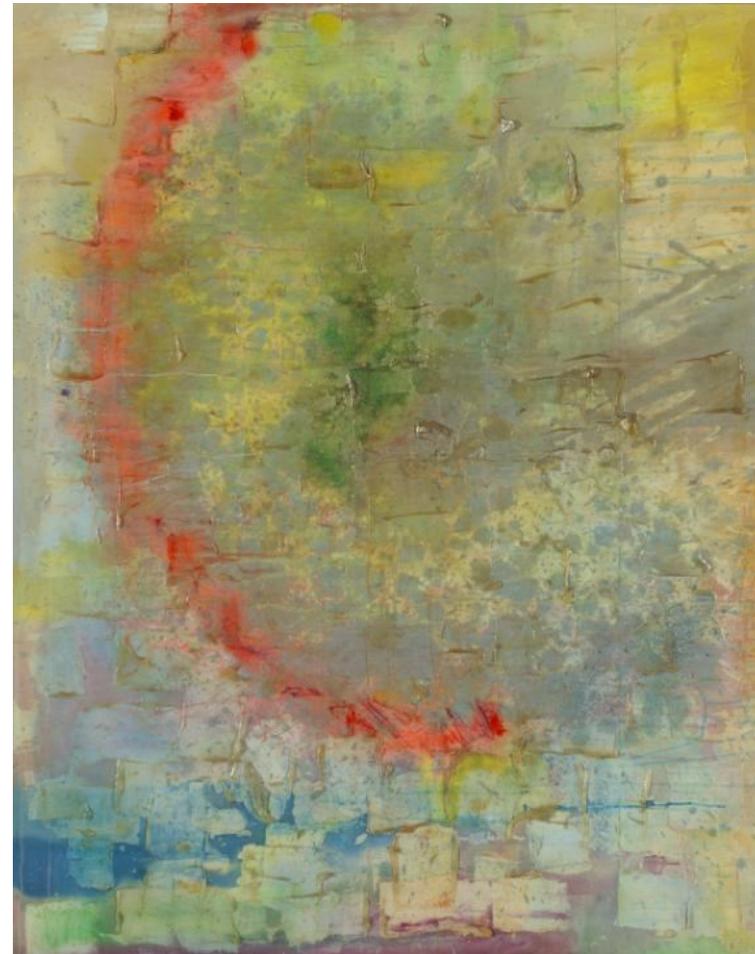
Contemporary artist incorporating action painting processes:

Frank Bowling

Frank Bowling is a contemporary artist who incorporates processes such as dripping, pouring and layering mixed media into his work. You can watch his process and get some inspiration [here](#). Notice how he adds multiple layers and techniques to each painting and incorporates texture with different found objects that are embedded into the work. You might like to include some of these processes and techniques into your work.



Frank Bowling, *Spread Out Ron Kitaj*, 1984-6.



Frank
Bowling,
*Sacha Jason
Guyana
Dreams*, 1989

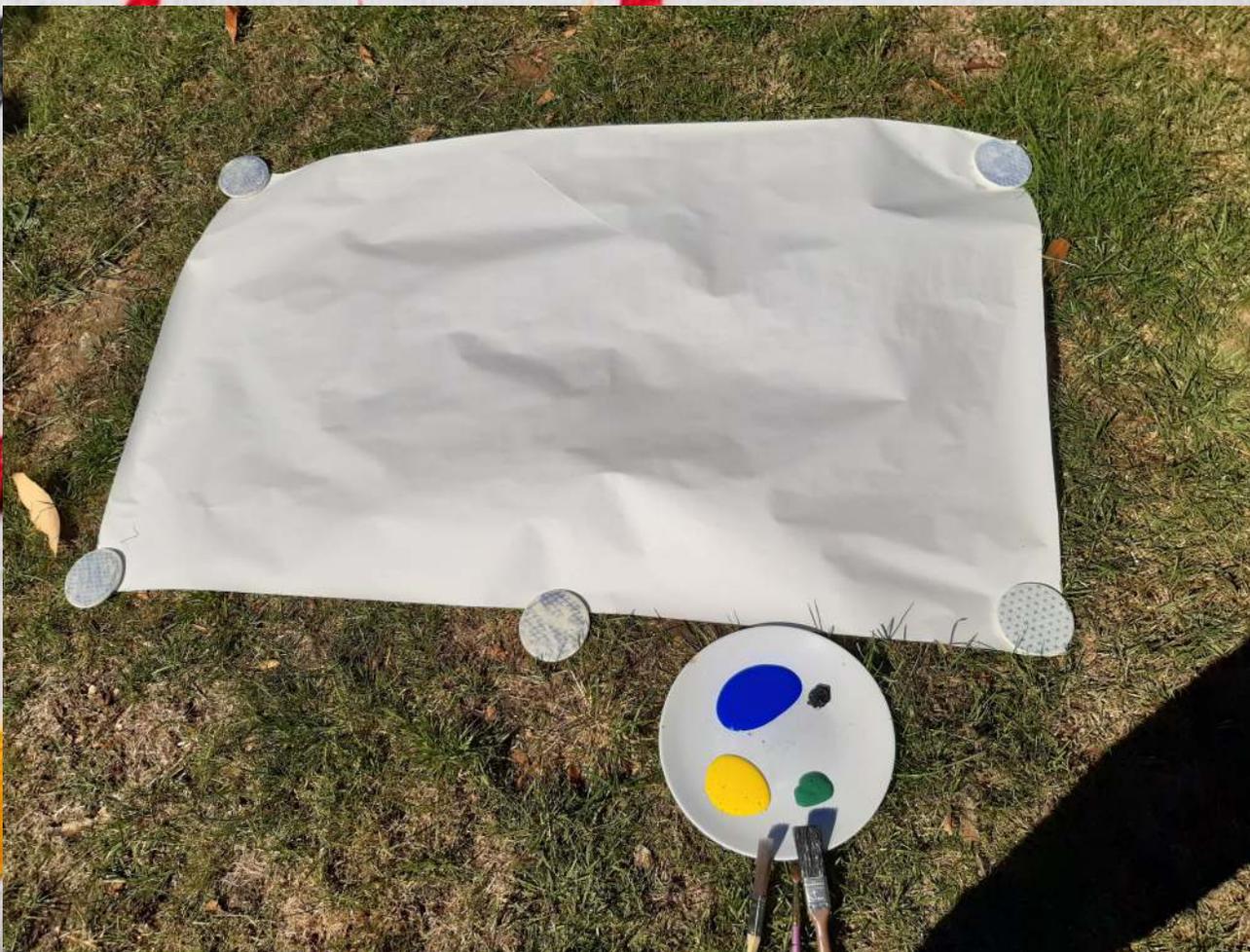
YOU WILL NEED:

- Your work in progress from the last two weeks activities [Bubble Prints](#) and [Feather Painting](#)
- Acrylic paint (or any paint you have at home)
- Large butchers paper (to experiment on)
- Hessian, tissue paper or other materials to add some texture.
- PVA glue (optional)
- Paintbrushes
- Feathers and other found objects for mark making
- Masking tape
- Scissors
- Food dye
- Bubble print maker (sock over plastic water bottle and container with dishwashing liquid. See [Bubble Prints](#))
- Drop sheet



STEP 1: PREPARATION...THIS IS GOING TO BE MESSY!

Put on some old clothes you don't mind getting messy, gather your materials needed and take your paints, brushes, and paper outside with a drop sheet under. Prepare for messiness! Secure the corners if windy.



STEP 2: EXPERIMENT WITH ACTION PAINTING

Dip your brush into your paint and flick it, drip it, apply it to your canvas with large gestural sweeping strokes or any way that you can think of. Use other found objects and paintbrushes you have made to apply and flick the paint. Enjoy the messy process! Keep experimenting until you have covered your entire page. As you are working look at the different kinds of effects and marks you create when you use different actions and methods of applying the paint. Paint your entire piece of paper.



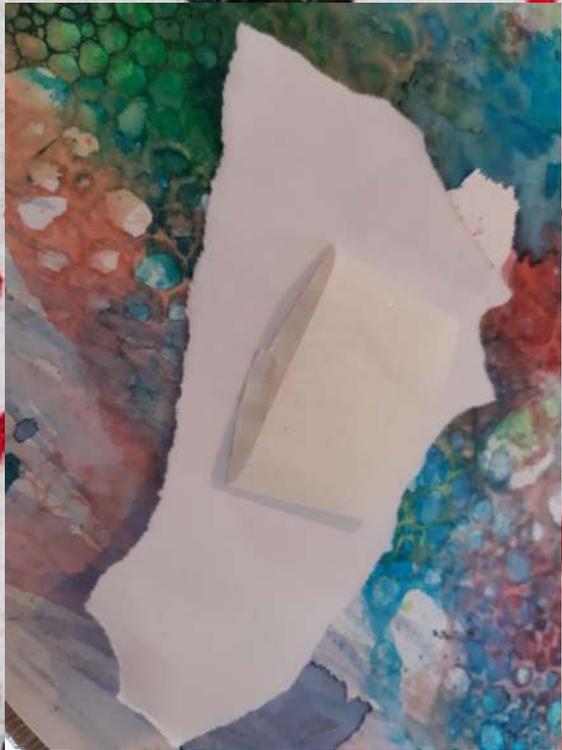
Finished Gestural & Action Painting experimentation piece...



Details

STEP 3: TAKE WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT AND APPLY IT TO YOUR WORK IN PROGRESS.

When you have finished experimenting with gestural and action mark making, get your work in progress from previous Abstract Art Projects ([Bubble Prints](#) and [Feather Painting](#)) and lay on the drop sheet. Add some torn paper stencils to the areas you don't want to paint over. These can be lightly stuck down using masking tape. Or, use a fresh piece of thick large paper and cover entire page in thick large gestural strokes of acrylic paint. This will be your background/ first layer. **Tip:** *You can work on a few different pieces at a time.*



STEP 4: ADD SOME TEXTURE

Take any other materials you would like to add to your work to build texture such as pieces of hessian, tissue paper, ripped or torn paper, fabric and cardboard. If needed you can stick textural materials down with PVA glue or simply embed them with a thick layer of acrylic paint.



Example: Pull apart pieces of hessian to create thin pieces of texture.

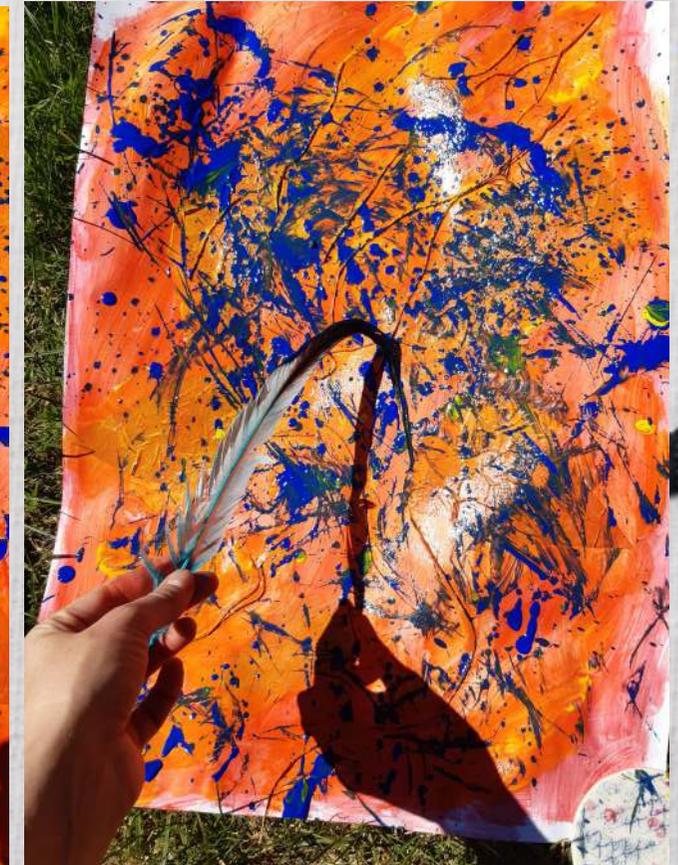


Or start from scratch. Cover an entire piece of thick paper in acrylic paint with gestural strokes. Layer a few colours together and include thicker and thinner areas of paint. Add some areas of texture and embed into the paint.



STEP 5: ADDING MORE LAYERS AND PAINT

Apply layers of acrylic paint over your bubble print/ feather painting in the way you have been experimenting. Flick your paintbrush at the paper, drip paint and/or use gestural marks. Apply paint thick in some areas and thin in others. Use a dry paintbrush to move some of the paint around in areas. Use the other found objects and paintbrushes and feathers you have made and experimented with.



STEP 6: REMOVE SOME OF YOUR STENCILS AND KEEP LAYERING

If working from your bubble print and you have applied torn paper stencils, remove some of them and continue layering paint by throwing and dripping over and using gestural marks. You can use paintbrushes or any found objects you have to apply the paint. When you are finished remember to take off all of the torn paper stencils or masking tape and leave it to dry. Keep layering and experimenting.



TIP: WORK ON A FEW DIFFERENT PIECES AT A TIME.



It's a good idea to have different materials on hand to use as you go.

STEP 7: REPEAT THE PROCESSES. LET DRY IN BETWEEN COATS.

Continue to repeat the processes we have used over the past three weeks building up layers. Stencil off any areas with torn paper and tape first and remove when finished before your work dries. Allow your work to dry between the layers so you don't over soak your paper. You could try adding more bubble prints over your dried paint too. This process of layering and drying is a slow process and can be done and added to over weeks.



STEP 8: FINISHED!

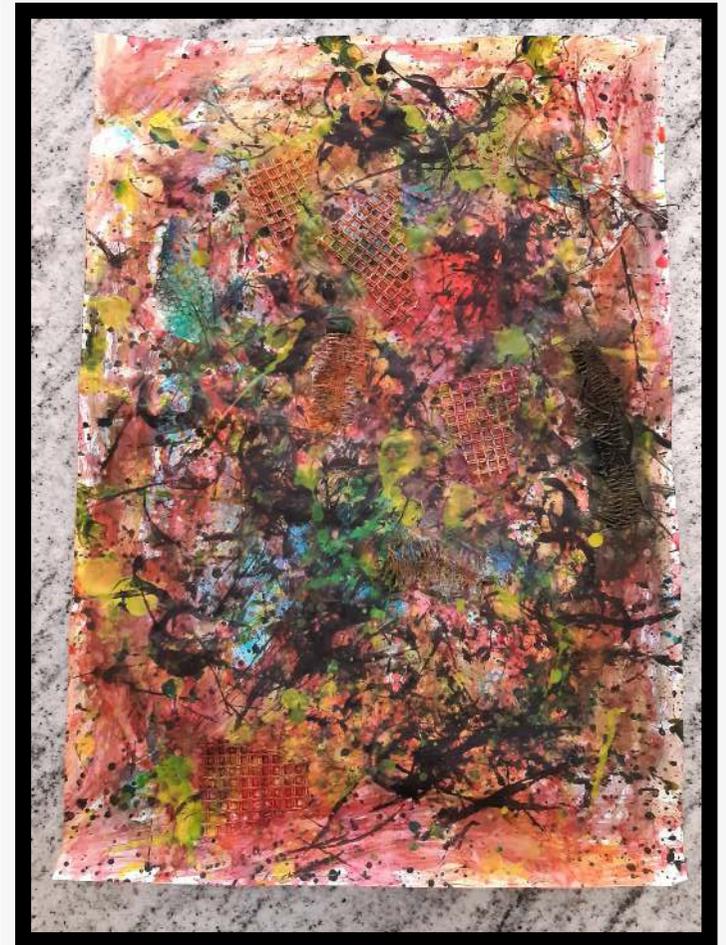
When you are happy with your work and feel that it is finished, carefully peel off any of the stencils and/ or tape and leave to dry. Keep your work somewhere safe or bring it into the gallery for safe keeping to display in the upcoming exhibition!



Piece #1



Piece #2

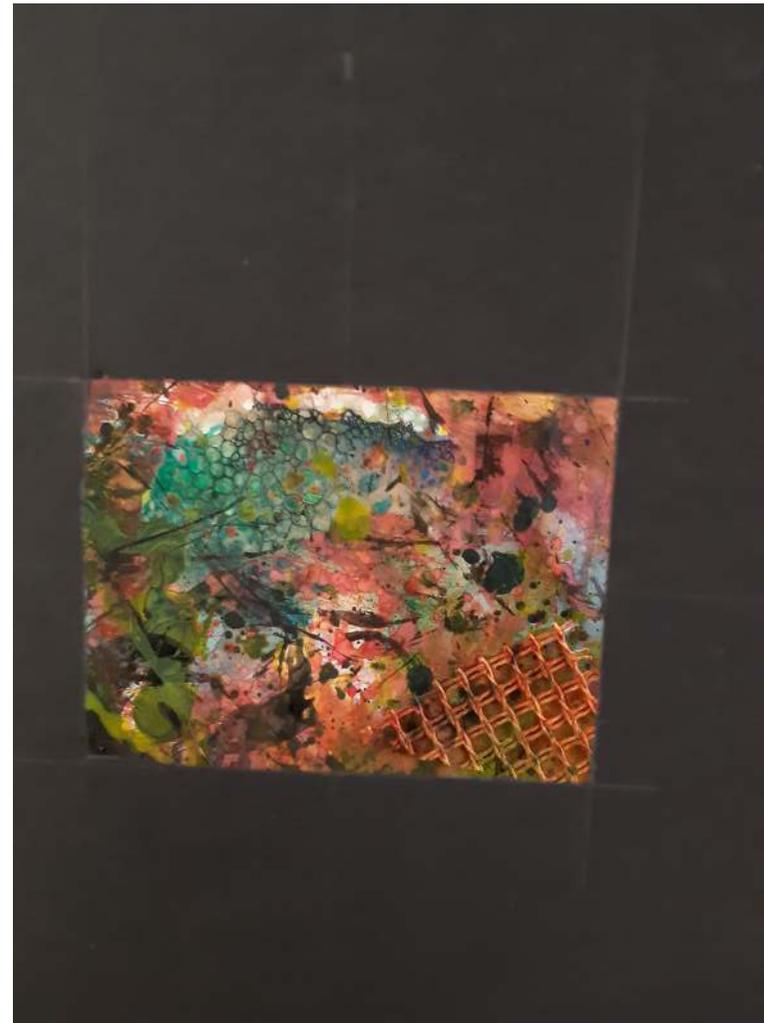


Piece #3

Finished pieces.

Tip: Use a viewfinder or a camera to select details and areas you like. Take close up photographs of these areas. Send in your photos to share your results with others. To make a view finder cut the middle out of a piece of paper or card. For more information and instructions see previous weeks activity:

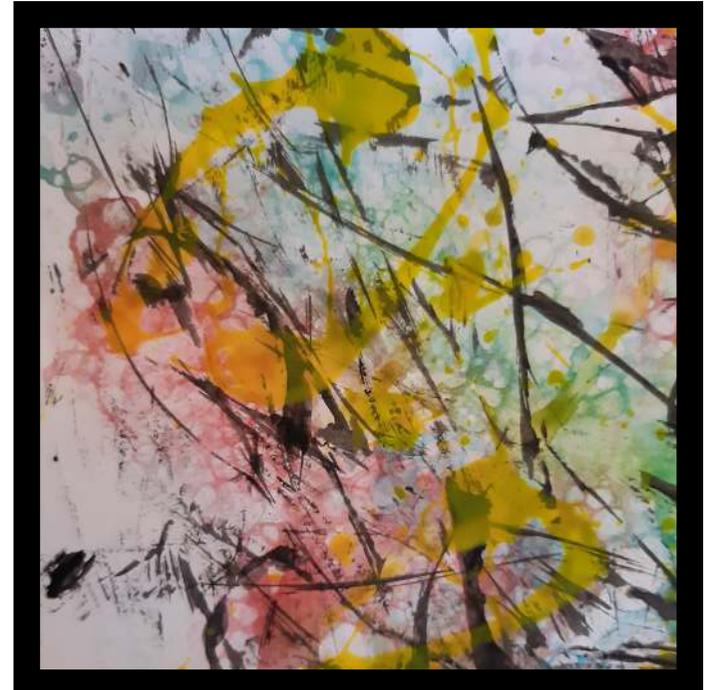
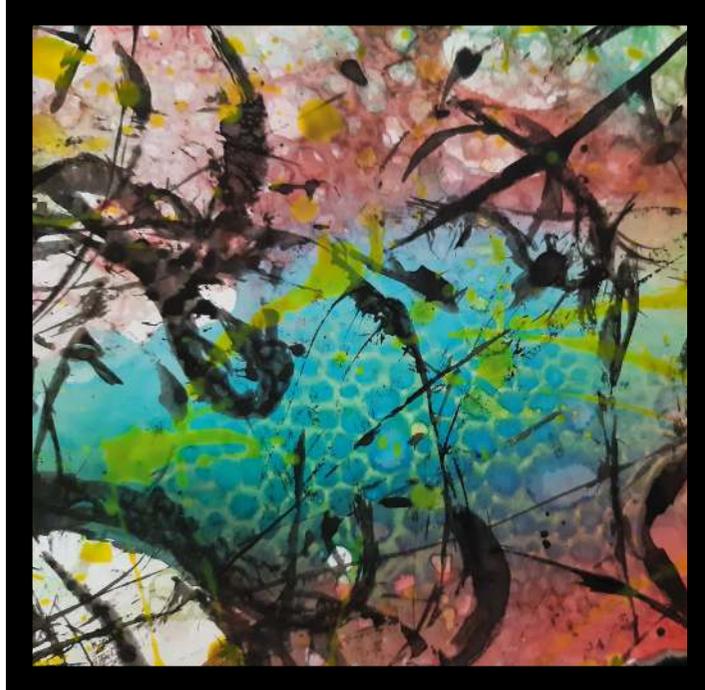
[Drawing Details.](#)



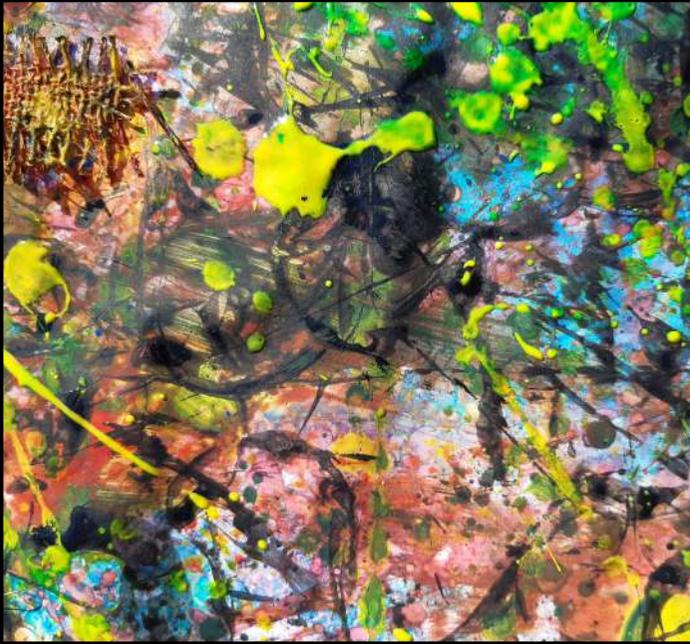
Details of my Abstract Art project pieces...



Piece #1



Piece #2



Piece #3

UPCOMING EXHIBITION!

Keep your work safe!

To be part of the upcoming HOME IS WHERE THE 'ART IS' exhibition, please register your interest by emailing

artgallery@devonport.tas.gov.au

Devonport
Regional Gallery

Presents

HOME IS WHERE THE 'ART IS

Exhibition

30th January- 14th March 2021

An exhibition of works created in homes during the COVID 19 restrictions as part of the Devonport Regional Gallery's on-line art programs, 'Home is Where the 'Art is'.

Open to anyone who has or who would like to create works as part of the on-line art workshops available at: paranapleartscentre.com.au/devonport-regional-gallery/public-programs-creative-learning/

Please register your interest in participating by email:

artgallery@devonport.tas.gov.au





SHARE YOUR CREATIONS!

**Send in pictures of your Gestural &
Action Painting experimentations
and your completed Abstract Art
Project creations to:**

artgallery@devonport.tas.gov.au