

## Portmadog 14.9.96 – Chris Ofili (1996; Tate)

<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/ofili-portmadog-14-9-96-p78038>



- What shapes can you see here? **Diamonds (and/or squares and kites).**
- Where are the biggest shapes? **On the far left and right of the artwork.**
- Where are the smallest ones? **In the middle.**
- Does it look like the shapes are still or moving? **In reality they are still but they look as if they are moving.** If you thought they looked like they are moving, how do you think the artist has made that happen? **The shapes gradually get smaller and smaller from the edges to the middle. They are straight on the left and right sides but become slightly stretched as they reach the top and bottom. Both these things – and the use of diagonal lines – make it look as if there is movement, either out from the middle or in from the edges.**
- Some works of art look as if they are noisy and some look quiet. If we could turn up a volume button on this one do you think we would hear anything? If you think we would hear something what kind of sound would it be?
- Stand facing a partner with a little space between you. With your arms as straight as possible make an arch with your partner so that your arms become a diamond shape like the big diamonds on the outside of the artwork. Now, at the same time you have to move closer together and then further apart. When you do this your arms have to always do the same thing as your partner's – the closer to each other you are the straighter your arms are, the further away the more straight ahead they will be. See if you can keep moving in and out like a concertina, making your diamond shape bigger and smaller all the time. If you thought that we would hear some noises in the artwork then now is the time to make them!
- When an artist makes art that does not clearly look like anything in particular it is called Abstract Art. Do you think the artist wanted us to think this is meant to be anything in particular or is it just some shapes and patterns?
- Although this is an abstract work of art that does not look like something real the artist made it when he went on holiday to north Wales. He made ten different drawings in ten different places and each drawing shows how he felt about each place. How do you think he felt about this place? Happy, sad, excited... or something else?
- Are there any places you have been to that make you feel a certain way? If you were to draw those feelings in shapes and patterns like Chris Ofili, who made this one, what do you think your drawing would look like?

### *Follow on ideas*

- Either go to or think of a place you like to visit. Think about what emotions this place makes you feel (e.g. happy, nervous, excited). Make an abstract drawing using patterns made from one particular shape. Try to do what Chris Ofili did by changing the sizes of the shapes to make your pattern look like it's moving.
- If you could give a name to this artwork what would it be? Do you think it should be named after the place it was made or something to do with the shapes the artist used? Or should the name have something to do with what the drawing makes you feel?

### *Topic links*

- Patterns
- Shapes
- Journeys