

### Suggestions for a visual art project (Secondary)

This project is linked with your choice of case study from the HMD education website <http://education.hmd.org.uk/case-studies> and takes inspiration from the work of Henri Matisse.

**Introduce** the lesson with some information about Henri Matisse. **Tell** the students he was a French painter known for working with very bright colours. In the later part of his life he contracted cancer and had to spend a lot of time in a wheelchair. It became too difficult for him to work with paints and so he found another way to create works of art. He started to make collages, often using geometrical shapes and silhouettes cut from coloured paper, which he placed onto a plain background.

**Explain** that students will have the opportunity to discuss one of his creations which was linked to a story and to historical events. They will be challenged to work in a similar way to create an exhibition of special collages based on **Untold Stories** for Holocaust Memorial Day.

**Give** the student more information about Henri and his family. During the Second World War Henri lived in France. His family were directly involved in the struggle against the Nazis. His wife, daughter and son were involved with Resistance work in different ways and Henri chose to use his art to honour Resistance workers.

**Show** everyone Henri's work '*Icarus*' which you will find at the end of this document.

**Explain** that when Henri created this piece this piece in 1947 he was ill and no longer able to paint. He developed a new style in collage which he called 'painting with scissors.'

**Ask** students to describe the work. What do they see? **Encourage** them to talk about the colours used for background and cut-outs, construction, the shape and number of the pieces used in the collage. **Explain** that this type of paper work is sometimes called d coupage.

This piece is based on a Greek myth. It shows the figure of Icarus, a young man who worked with his father to make a pair of wings but flew too near the sun and fell to earth. Henri was inspired by the story. He represented it in the collage but also used the image to represent the courage of the Resistance, both members working in France and French pilots who escaped to the UK and fought the Nazis alongside the RAF. Icarus can be seen as a metaphor representing resistance and the struggle against the Nazis in and under European

skies. The work is therefore linked to many stories not just one. Henri completed other collages, some like this one, related to the struggle against evil. They were published in a book after the war. The book was called *Jazz*. It is still popular today and has never been out of print.

**Tell** students they now have the chance to follow in the footsteps of Henri Matisse. They are going to create collages linked with stories from the 1940s. **Choose** one of the case studies and **share** the story with the group. **Retell** the story in your own words. You do not have to use the whole case study and should **select** the material you feel is most suited to the age and ability of your students. As the stories are quite emotional **remember** to **allow** time for student to discuss their responses.

**Explain** that the stories they have heard are only a small sample of the millions of **Untold Stories** which unfolded during the Holocaust. Just as Henri Matisse created a collage to honour the Resistance, the students will create a book of collages to honour the memory of the people who have **Untold Stories**. We do not know all their names but the students' art will make sure they are not forgotten.

**Instruct** students to work in no more than five colours, one for the background and up to four for the paper cut-outs. Suggested titles for the collages could be

Lost communities - 'The Void.'

T4 - 'Stolen Life.'

Raphael Lemkin - 'Justice.'

St Louis - 'Rejection'

When the work is complete, **open** an exhibition and **invite** people to view the collages.

or

Be inspired by the actions of Henri Matisse, **bind** the collages into a book, **take** photographs and either **print** extra copies of the book to circulate around the school or college or **create** an on-line exhibition.

Whichever option students choose **make** sure that as many people as possible see their work. **Remind** viewers of the importance of remembering **Untold Stories** on Holocaust Memorial Day.

