

Colour: Expressive potential



Activity page for:

Image 17: Otto Dix, *Leonie*, 1923

Image 19: Käthe Kollwitz, *Brustbild einer Arbeiterfrau mit blauem Tuch/Bust of a Working-class Woman in a Blue Shawl*, 1903



Did you know that the colour red has been shown to raise blood pressure?

Psychologists have discovered **the importance of colour** in influencing our moods—blue will calm you, black and purple are for superiority, yellow cheers us up.

HOW and WHY does colour affect your appetite, your vision, your mood?

Follow this link to read up about the psychology of colour:

<http://www.colormatters.com/entercolormatters.html>

Think about it:

Discuss the following questions with a partner. Refer to the gallery notes for more information.

1. Describe the use of colour in Otto Dix's colour lithograph, *Leonie*. How do Dix's colour choices affect the expressive qualities of the piece? Explain.
2. Compare this piece to Kollwitz's *Bust of a Working-class Woman in a Blue Shawl*. Does this piece convey a different mood? Discuss similarities and differences.
3. "When it comes to setting the mood in a work of art, colour is the most important element." Discuss this statement with a partner. Do you agree with it? If not, try reading up on the importance of colour in advertising, and then approach the question again.

Try this:

Print out a low-resolution copy of Otto Dix's *Leonie* or Käthe Kollwitz's *Bust of a Working-Class Woman in a Blue Shawl*. Using a paint or pencil crayons, add colour to the pieces. Choose colours that you think might introduce different expressive qualities. When you are finished, compare your colour alterations with your classmates' versions.

Have the different colour schemes succeeded in establishing a different mood or tone to the pieces? Discuss why this might have (or might *not* have) occurred.