Arte Povera Systems

Arte Povera literally means 'poor art' and referred to a group of Italian artists in the 1960s who explored unconventional and non-traditional 'everyday' materials such as ball point pens, soil, clothes, twigs and ideas. Alighiero Boetti (1940–1994) was a very important artist in the group. He was fascinated by ideas of chance, order and the systems of classification such as words, numbers, dates and games. This activity focuses on found everyday materials and forming systems to order and view them in different ways.

1) Recycle an egg box to use to help you collect materials. Search you home for small items. E.g Dust, loose threads, crumbs, hairband, stray lego etc.
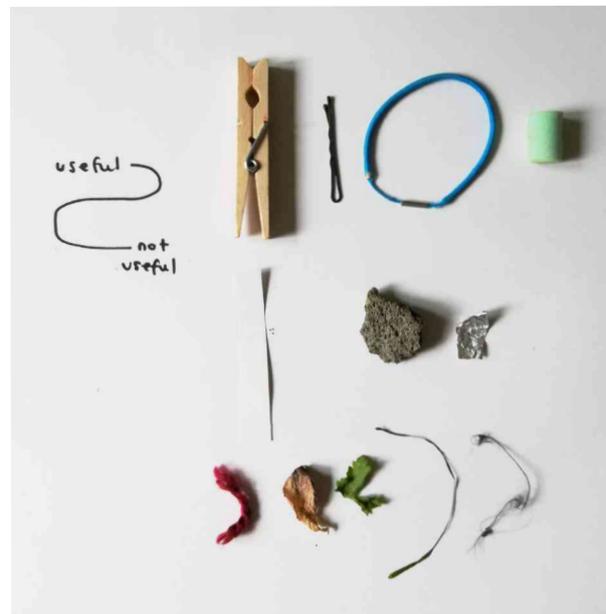

2) Write down a list of what you've found.

3) Order all the items into the following categories.
- Size- small to big
- Similar shapes
- Usefulness
- Texture- soft to rough
- What other categories can you think of?

4) Try drawing around your found items to record their shape and make notes to keep a record.

Top Tip: Ask someone else to order the objects by category. Do you agree?

Experiment: How else could you record your findings about the items? What other ways of categorising could you use? Number and letter systems? Could you make a game from the items?

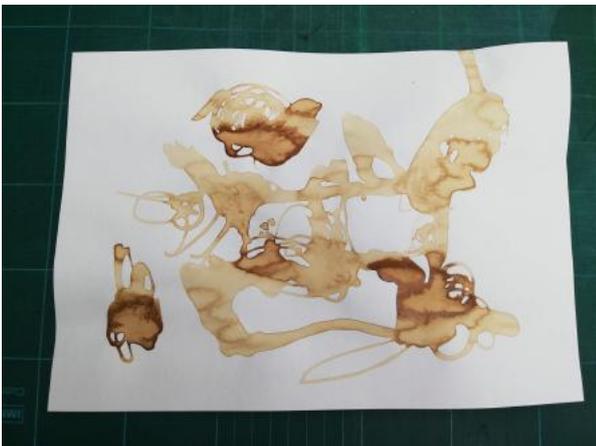**Research:** Repeat the activity outside or in your home on a different day.

Caffè Abstracts

The word abstract means to separate or withdraw something from something else. This activity uses chance happening by working with liquid to create interesting forms that serve as a good starting point to examine interesting abstract compositions.

1) Gather some paper, cold black coffee and a tool to move it around on the page.

2. Once the coffee is dry fold the paper 4 times and cut along the lines to create small abstract compositions. Move them around to see what other images you can make.

Top Tip: Work with the behaviour of the liquid and try moving it in different ways.

Experiment: Switch to using ink or other food dyes. You could add salt to the liquid to add different textures. Select shapes you like. You could cut them out and use them as a template to repeat.

Research: Explore the expressive abstract artworks of Emilio Vedova.