

## Art Lessons 4 and 5: Amazing Aquarium

### Lesson Overview

In Lesson 4, pupils listen to *Aquarium* from *The Carnival of the Animals*, by French composer Camille Saint-Saëns. They use this as a starting point to create their own clay fish. Pupils use different techniques to create a design on their fish, such as relief or scoring. In Lesson 5, pupils have the opportunity to paint their fish.

### Suggested Learning Intentions

We are learning to:

- explore and develop our skills using clay;
- talk about the processes involved in creating our own work; and
- focus, sustain attention and persist with tasks (Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities: Self-Management).

### Suggested Success Criteria

I will be successful if ...

- I can use clay to create a fish.
- I can use different techniques to create texture on my fish.
- I can keep going and complete my artwork.

### Materials needed for these lessons

- Air dying clay
- Water jars, fine paint brushes and paint
- Tools for manipulating clay
- Items to press into clay, for example lace, shells, buttons or matchsticks
- Newspaper or tablecloths

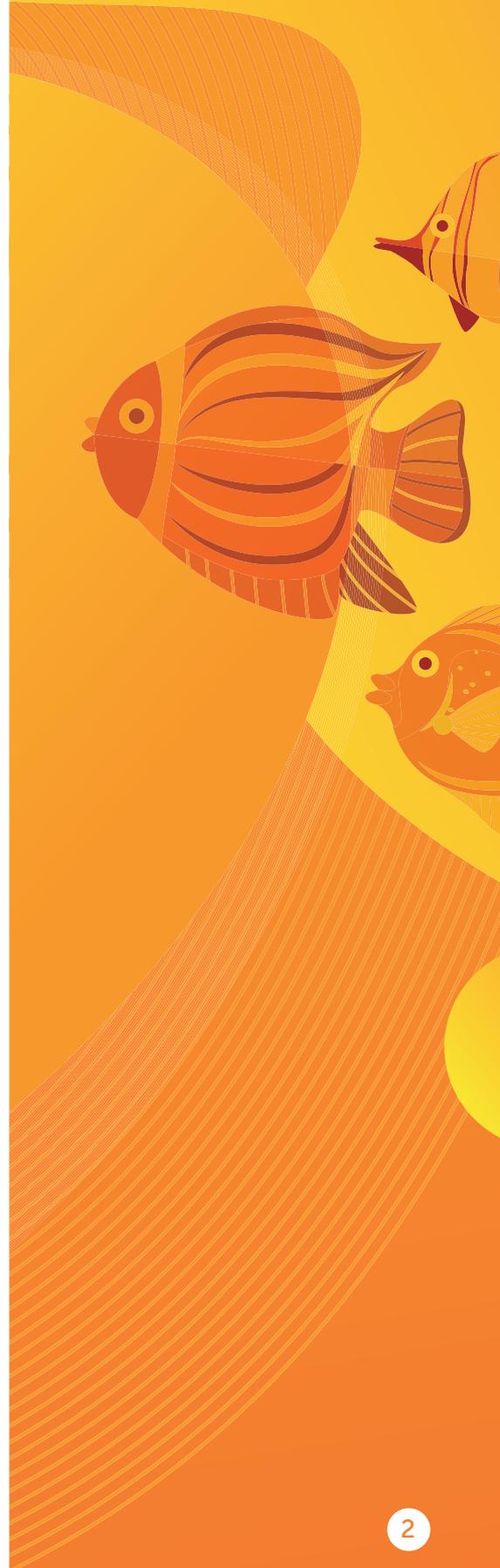
- Aprons
- **Resource C: Amazing Aquarium**

### Suggested Artworks

- *Goldfish* by Henri Matisse (1911)
- *The Goldfish* by Paul Klee (1925)
- *Fish Magic* by Paul Klee (1925)

## Ideas for Cross-Curricular and Connected Play-Based Learning Opportunities

- **Language and Literacy**  
Read story books about fish with the class. For example *The Rainbow Fish* by Marcus Pfister, *Barry the Fish with Fingers* by Sue Hendra and Paul Linnet, *The Pout-Pout Fish* by Deborah Diesen, *Hooray for Fish!* by Lucy Cousins or *Tiddler* by Julia Donaldson. Use as a stimulus for writing or talking and listening activities. You could also use puppets to dramatise under the sea stories.
- **Mathematics and Numeracy**  
Ask your pupils to:
  - create a picture of sea creatures, using 2D shapes; and
  - create a large-scale picture of an aquarium outdoors, using found objects, for example pebbles, leaves or tree stumps, counting in the course of play.
- **Music**  
Play instruments to create an underwater scene and encourage your pupils to sing songs and rhymes, such as 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 Once I Caught a Fish Alive or A Sailor Went to Sea.
- **Role Play**  
Ask your pupils to pretend they are a deep sea diver exploring the ocean.
- **World Around Us**  
Teach your pupils about the life cycle of a fish and the ocean and the creatures that live in it.
- **ICT**  
Ask your pupils to draw and design an under the sea picture.



## Suggested Lesson Phase for Lesson 4

### Introduction

Share the learning intentions and success criteria with your pupils, making sure to include Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities. Recall *The Carnival of the Animals* and ask your pupils to listen to [Aquarium](#), which is available on YouTube.

Ask your pupils to guess what creatures the music was about. Encourage them to describe the music. Then ask them to listen a second time and lie back and close their eyes. When they open their eyes, ask them to describe what types of sea creatures they had seen in their imagination. Look at

**Resource C** and discuss with your pupils:

- What shapes are the fish?
- What types of patterns can they see?

Tell your pupils that they are going to use clay to create their own fish to live in their Amazing Aquarium. They will decide on what tools and techniques they want to use to create a design on their fish. Techniques could include:

- **relief** – adding more clay to the base to create a raised up design; and
- **scoring** – using tools to scratch into the surface of the clay.

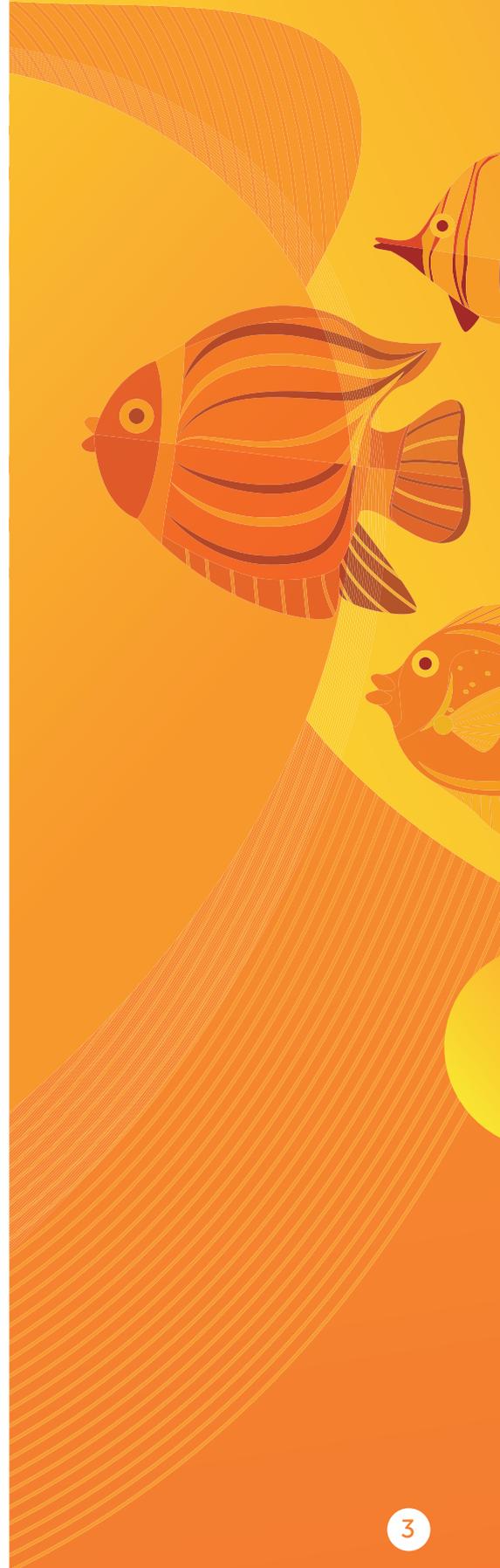
### Activity

Give each pupil a ball of clay about the size of their closed fist. Ask them to talk about the properties of the clay as they roll it between their hands. How does it feel? Is it warm or cold? Is it hard or soft?

Show your pupils how to place their clay on the table. Drop it and use the palm of your hand to flatten it. You should now have a pancake shaped piece of clay.

Using **Resource C**, show pupils a tail and fin. Tell them that they need to create their own tail and fin on their fish. Show how to pinch the back of the clay to create a tail shape. Do the same at the top of the fish to create a fin. Help your pupils as they create their own tail and fin.

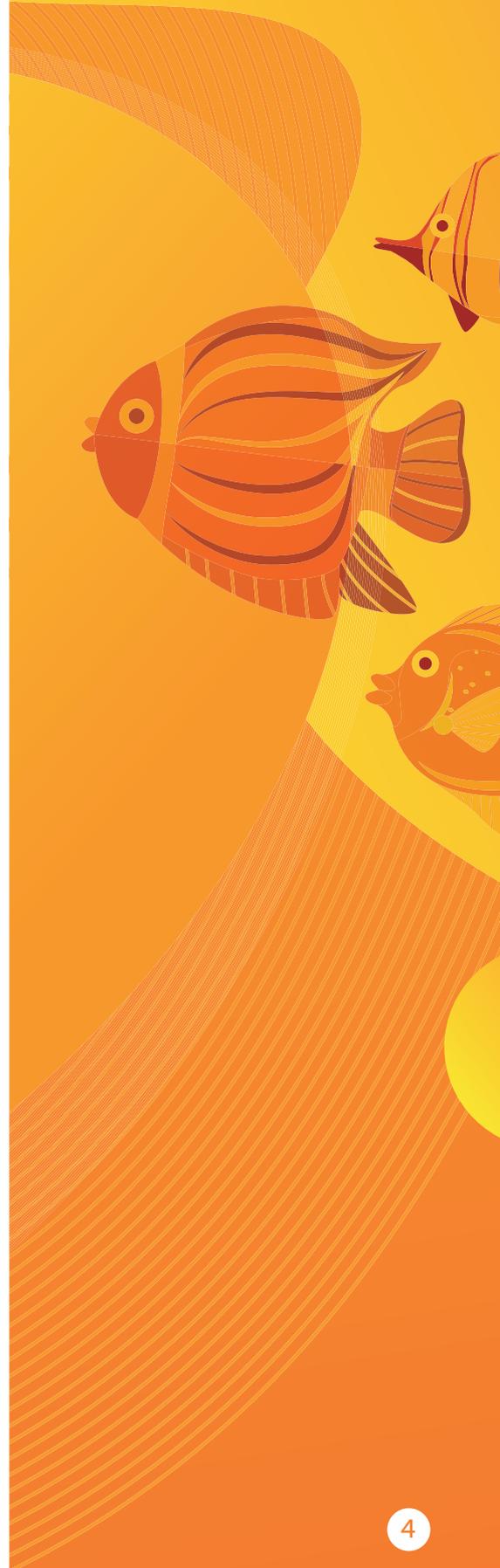
Show your pupils *Fish Magic* by Paul Klee and ask them to observe the patterns and textures in his painting. If pupils want to try relief techniques, give them extra clay that they can add on. Pupils can also use the tools to scratch designs onto their fish. Tell your pupils that they need to leave their clay fish to air dry.



### Plenary

Invite your pupils to talk about the process of making that they were involved in. Questions might include:

- What way(s) did you use the clay today? (For example, score, scratch, relief or added material.)
- Did anything surprise you about the clay? (For example, the way it felt.)
- What did you enjoy most about working with clay?
- What did you enjoy least about working with clay?
- What one new thing did you learn today?



## Suggested Lesson Phase for Lesson 5

### Introduction

Share the learning intentions and success criteria with your pupils, making sure to include Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities. Recall *The Carnival of the Animals* and invite your pupils to listen to *Aquarium* again. Then ask them:

- What colours does it make you think of?
- Imagine an under the sea image – can you describe the creatures that you can see?
- What do they look like?
- Do they have patterns on their skin or scales?

Refer to **Resource C** again. Ask your pupils to look closely at the colours and the patterns. The colours are bright and vibrant. Each fish has a pattern, such as spots or stripes. Tell your pupils that they can decide what type of pattern they want to paint on their fish. Ask them to sketch their pattern on a small piece of paper.

### Activity

Pupils can paint their fish using poster or acrylic paints. Encourage them to look at their pattern sketch to keep on track with their chosen pattern. Your pupils should use fine brushes for this activity.

### Plenary

Display all the fish in the class's Amazing Aquarium. Invite your pupils to observe and talk about the different effects that each pupil has created. Ask pupils to talk about how they created their effects. Questions might include:

- What part did you find most difficult to paint? Why was this?
- What is the best thing about your fish?
- If you were going to make another fish, what would you do differently?
- What have you learned about using clay and painting it?

