

# **B B C BITESIZE**

Our sense of touch allows us to gauge the way different objects feel, be they rough, smooth, hairy, soft, sharp, scaly or slimy. Texture helps us understand and experience the world around us.

Actual texture refers to how something would feel if you touched it.

'Squirrel' by Meret Oppenheim plays with texture. Imagine what it would feel like to try and pick this glass up. By using a furry, squirrel-like tail for a handle, the artist has suggested a totally unsuitable material for its function. Oppenheim has used texture to create a surreal object, combining items not normally associated with each other to create new meaning. It's playful and thought provoking.

Often artists and designers have to suggest texture that we can't physically feel. Artists working in two dimensions can create the illusion of real texture using colour, lines and shading. This is called visual texture.

This Jan van Eyck painting shows a huge variety of visual textures. Blending the oil paints to a smooth finish and using highlights and lowlights for reflections tells us that the chandelier is made from a shiny metal, like brass. Shading creates folds in the dress fabric and a decorative ruffle so we can imagine the weight and feel of the material.

The wire-haired dog is brought to life with layers of coloured oil paint. A final layer of light colours and highlights in long lines show the individual hairs. The textures in the painting are realistic. We can imagine what it would feel like to pat the dog.

Some artists use the physical texture created by the media they use to add meaning to their work. In this oil painting by Claude Monet, a range of different brushstrokes describe the clouds and water. Most of the water is painted smoothly but Monet used dabs and short lines of thick paint to bring out the waves and ripples around the boat and show where the sunlight hit the river.

The physical texture suggests Monet was working quickly, to create an impression of how the light played on the water at that moment.

Chris Ofili in his painting, 'No Woman, No Cry' built up layers of primer, acrylic paint, oil paint, resin, glitter, cut out photographs and elephant dung. He scratched through the surface to reveal the layers beneath. The range and mix of contrasting materials create physical textures that reflect the many sources that inspired Ofili both from his everyday life as well as his heritage and background.

Artists can use physical texture through the techniques and materials they use to add an extra dimension and tell us more about their work.

Surface texture and actual texture refer to the real tactile qualities of the object.

Visual texture uses colour, lines and shading to create the illusion of how objects would feel.