Activities for Primary School Teachers
Exhibition Summary

The exhibition traces the career of the Czech born Israeli topographical artist Ludwig Blum, who immigrated to Palestine in 1923 and settled in Jerusalem at the age of 32.

The exhibition, of some 35 works, traces Blum’s consistent representation of ‘the real’ over half a century of painting the Holy Land and beyond. Jerusalem was Blum’s city and he never ceased to find inspiration in its architecture, holy places, markets, peoples and the extraordinary changes of light and shadow, which bathes its buildings each day of each season.

Blum’s European persona and academic practice never changed in the heat and heart of this very different continent. He is recognised not only as a distinguished artist of the classic mould but also as the finest topographical artist of his time working in the Levant.

His was a unique period in history being the 25 years before and after the founding of the State of Israel in 1948. He travelled extensively and across borders to Iran and Iraq, and his work chronicles in realistic and archival fashion the characteristics of different societies during those times.

The exhibition brings together a remarkable body of Blum’s work not seen in London since he exhibited in London in 1933 and 1938. Included are a set of remarkable views of Jerusalem, its landscape and peoples, providing a unique historical glimpse of this majestic and holy city over half a century.
Key Words and Concepts

- Landscape
- Colour Theory
- Topography
- Holy Land
- Levant
- Sense of Place
- Zionism
- Architecture
- Impressionism
- Kibbutz
Ludwig Blum was from a country in Europe which is now called the Czech Republic. He was born in 1891. Ludwig Blum was a trained artist. He also served as a staff-sergeant in the First World War. The war was a hard time for the Blum family. Blum lost his brother and also his brother-in-law in WW1. Blum was a talented athlete as well as an artist and he competed in lots of gymnastic competitions. In 1923 he went to live in Palestine. He was 32 (See the next page for a timeline of significant events in the life of Ludwig Blum)
Ludwig Blum
1891–1974

1891 Born 24th July in Líšen, near Brno, Moravia
1910–12 Vienna: Private art lessons with David Kohn. Gymnastics training
1913 Recruited to the Austrian Army
1914–18 Serves in the Austrian Army during WWI
1919–20 Prague: studies at the Academy of Fine Art. Active member of the Maccabi sports club
1921–23 Visits Amsterdam, London, Paris, Spain and Italy
1923 Immigrates to Palestine, settles in Jerusalem
1924 Marries Dina (Clementine) Mayer, birth of their daughter, Dvora
1925 During a first visit to Brno, exhibits his works. In the following years continues to visit and exhibit in Czechoslovakia and Europe
1926 Birth of his son, Eliyahu (Elie)
1930 Travels to Iraq with Wolfgang von Weisel
1936–37 Spends some months in Brno, Czechoslovakia
1937 Commissioned by Museum of Biblical Antiquities in Brno to paint a panorama, Jerusalem, a view from the Mount of Olives. The painting is exhibited in Blum’s studio and the Tel Aviv Museum prior to its delivery
1938–39 Lives in London for 18 months, paints portraits and participates in exhibitions
1946 Son, Elie Blum, is killed in action during the Night of the Bridges, a Palmach operation
1948-49 Volunteers for the Civil Guard in Jerusalem, guards roadblocks, draws and paints figures and sites of Israel’s War of Independence
1951–52 During a ten-month visit to the USA, exhibits and forms professional contacts
1955 Publishes the album, 10 Historical Sites of the Holy Land
1964 Death of wife Dina
1967 Awarded the title of honorary citizen of Jerusalem
1974 Dies in Jerusalem, 28th July
Discussion Points for the Classroom

Where would you paint?
If you were going to travel around painting where would you most like to go? What country? City or countryside, coast or mountains? Where or what would you most like to paint?

Sense of Place
Blum is very successful in conveying the feeling of place. We can picture exactly where he is, from the feeling of the temperature and weather, to the architectural detail of the buildings, as well as the details in nature such as the trees, plants and flowers. Picture a place in your head and describe this place to your partner, without telling them the name! You must not give them any clues about the place, but just describe what you can see. What is the weather like, what buildings can you see? What people can you see? What is naturally growing or living there? Can your partner guess the name of your place?

Changing Landscapes
Blum recorded everything that he saw when he travelled, from the views of the deserts, to the construction work that was taking place, such as in, Tel Aviv Under Construction 1925. Do you know about a landscape that is changing? Why is it changing? Do you like the changes that are happening? Is there an area you would like to change? Why?

Holy City
Jerusalem is a very important place to followers of 3 of the world’s major religions. Do you know the names of these religions? Do you know the names of the buildings in which followers of these religions worship? Can you find any of them in Blum’s paintings? Are there any of these buildings in the area where you live?
Inside and Out
Blum liked to paint from the outside and inside. He would sometimes travel off on foot or by donkey and watch the city of Jerusalem from the mountain, where he would make his landscape paintings, such as Jerusalem, View from Mount Scopus towards the Valley of Jehoshaphat, 1924. Sometimes he would stay in the city and climb on to the roofs of the buildings to paint the city instead, such as in Jerusalem, Temple Mount 1928.

Can you paint from the inside and outside?
Choose a view from your classroom window and draw what you can see. Remember to include all of the detail, such as the clouds in the sky, the details on the buildings, the trees or plants. Then go outside to the spot where you were drawing and look back to your classroom. What can you see now? Make a drawing of your new view.

Colour
Blum was very skilled at using colours to show the time of day or type of weather. Sometimes his skies are bright blue, such as on a clear sunny day by the coast. Sometimes the skies are almost white, such as during a scorching hot day in the desert.

Create colour washes to try and depict different skies. Perhaps there are reds and oranges such as during a sunset or sunrise. Perhaps there are dark grey and blue skies such as before a storm?
Impressionist Painting
Blum shows the influence of Impressionism in his work, such as in *Grove of Olives, Gethsemane* 1928-30. Impressionist artists were less concerned with painting things exactly as they are in real life, like in photographs, but instead they painted an ‘impression’ of something. They painted how something might look at a certain moment in time, such as the sky after a storm, or the light reflecting on water just before sun set.

Impressionist painters were very interested in light and how the natural light changed at certain times of day. They would use very short brush strokes of colour to make their paintings, which when looking close up, can make the paintings look a bit messy and blurry, but when standing at a distance from the painting, the image and the detail appears more in focus. Impressionist painters were not as concerned with making perfectly realistic and ‘still’ paintings, instead the paintings were brought to life, for example by capturing the feeling of movement when painting people dancing, or the feeling of the wind when painting trees on a windy day.

Discussion
*Do you know the names of any Impressionist painters? (Claude Monet, Paul Cezanne, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Alfred Sisley, Edgar Degas, Camille Pissaro)*

Activities for the Primary Classroom

**Impressionist Painting**

An explanation of complementary colours

- The three primary colours are red, yellow and blue.

- Two primaries can be mixed to make secondary colours:
  - yellow + blue = green
  - red + yellow = orange
  - red + blue = purple

- The complementary colour of each primary is the mix of the other two:
  - red’s complementary is green (blue + yellow);
  - yellow’s complementary is violet (red + blue);
  - blue’s complementary is orange (yellow + red)

- Placed next to one another, complementary colours look stronger and stand out more.

**Activity 1:** Can you make a colour wheel starting off with the 3 primary colours first? What are the complementary colours?

**Activity 2:** Could you make an Impressionist style painting of a landscape? Perhaps the view from your classroom window, or the playground? (Use the complementary colour chart to help you make your painting)