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THE COLOURS OF ANTARCTICA

ARTS/TECHNOLOGY CURRICULUM REFERENCE

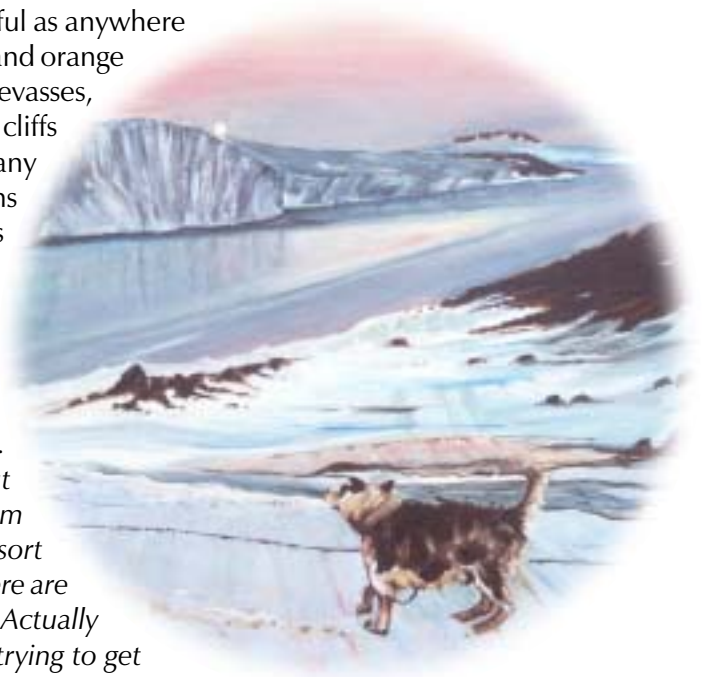
This Arts / Technology activity relates to The Arts curriculum strands: Visual Arts: Creating, making and presenting Music: Creating, making and presenting Dance: Creating, making and presenting

In its own way, Antarctica is as colourful as anywhere on Earth. Jade icebergs, brilliant pink and orange sunsets, brown rocks, deep blue crevasses, subtle shades of blue amongst ice cliffs give the stereotype Antarctic white many colours. The following are observations by two prominent Australian artists who travelled to Antarctica with the Australian Antarctic Division in 1987:

"I think it's a lot more colourful place than I had imagined it. People used to crack jokes about it, saying "take plenty of titanium and flake white with you", that sort of stuff. But it's not that at all. There are fantastic colours and contrasts... Actually one of the difficulties I had was trying to get the colours not to look so tropical. But as you painted it you'd say "well that colour is there, therefore I'm going to note that and try to work that in..."
Melbourne artist Jan Senbergs

"There is plenty of potential for a colourist — almost impossible blues, the variety of browns and blacks in the bare rock areas, the reflected light late in the day. Also an unexpected and wonderful variety of forms and textures in the ice. The possibilities are all there. More colour than you expect, more forms."

Sydney artist John Caldwell



■ After viewing videos, or browsing pictorial books or the photographs on the Australian Antarctic Division's web site at http://www.aad.gov.au/information/aboutantarctica/images_of_ant/ or the 'Pictures from around Mawson' at <http://www.aad.gov.au/stations/mawson/pictures.asp>, students should create an Antarctic scene that explores the colours of Antarctica.

Go to the Scott Polar Research Institute's site at <http://www.spri.cam.ac.uk/photo/notelet.htm> to see Edward Wilson's watercolours which were painted on Scott's Discovery and Terra Nova expeditions. [view the web-standard \(html\) version for up-to-date links](#)

■ Students can attempt to create 20 different shades of blue either with paints or by using food colouring and freezing the examples in ice cube trays. Ask them to then come up with words to describe each of these 'blues'. (It is worth mentioning here that some languages do not contain separate words for green and blue or for yellow and orange, while Eskimos use 17 words for white as applied to different snow conditions! In the same vein, the Eskimo language has many words for snow, whereas Aztec employs only a single term for the concepts of snow, cold, and ice.)

■ Students could create their own antarctic palette by collecting paint strips from a hardware shop, selecting those that seem to be 'Antarctic colours' and then naming each of them with an appropriate Antarctic name eg. glacial blue, midwinter pink ... They could also create a Subantarctic colour palette (lots of greens and greys!) after examining images of Macquarie Island <http://www.aad.gov.au/stations/macca/>. And they could create an Australian Outback palette as a striking comparison. [view the web-standard \(html\) version for up-to-date links](#)

■ An alternative to using physical colour swatches is to use the colour palette in a computer drawing program such as MS Works or Claris Works (Appleworks) or in a web authoring program such as MS Front Page or Claris Home Page. [An Antarctic [colour palette](#) of 216 numbered colours has been created for you.] ■

NEXT ACTIVITY ►