

ART AND POETRY



POETRY AND ART

**AN ACTIVITY PACK FOR SCHOOLS BASED ON
THE WORK OF HANNAH FRANK**



Arts at
Rozelle

South Ayrshire
COUNCIL CSPP

Adopt an Intern

Who was Hannah Frank?

Hannah Frank was an artist born in Glasgow on the 23rd August 1908. She would live to 100 years of age and have an artistic career that would last 75 years. Turn to the next page to find out about her life and her family.

Hannah came from a loving and encouraging Jewish family. She had three brothers called Leo, Morris and Arthur. She was the oldest and only girl. Her father, Charles was an immigrant from Vilkomir in what was then Russia, now modern day Lithuania. Charles Frank became a successful businessman. He opened a shop specialising in photographic and scientific instruments.

From the age of 17 Hannah began to produce black and white pen and ink drawings. She was greatly inspired by poetry, literature, nature and the Old Testament. However she also drew images about difficult issues such as death, despair and mourning and the struggle of refugees in Europe from the Nazis during World War II.

Hannah studied Latin and English at the University of Glasgow but attended evening classes at the Glasgow School of Art. Between 1927 and 1932 the Glasgow University Magazine published her drawings and poetry. Hannah did not use her real name in these magazines but called herself 'Al Aaraaf.' She chose this name from an Edgar Allan Poe poem about a star discovered by a Danish astronomer which grew brighter and brighter in the sky for just a few days before disappearing.

In the early 1950s Hannah took evening classes at the Glasgow School of Art in sculpture. Her teachers were also famous sculptors, Benno Schotz and Paul Zunterstein. From 1952 she stopped drawing to concentrate on her sculpture.

Hannah died in 2008 at the age of 100. After her death, Hannah was given some very important awards such as an honorary degree *"in recognition of her outstanding contribution to Glasgow, the Jewish Community, and the arts"* from the University of Glasgow and the Lord Provost's award.

Looking Closely At Pictures

When artists create a piece of work they are expressing something, telling the viewer (that is you) how they feel or how they see the world. They hope that the person who looks at their work will respond and receive the message.

A good way to think about art is to try to decode the message. Look at the images below and write down any words which come into your head. Here is an example:



Sun (1943)

My word list:

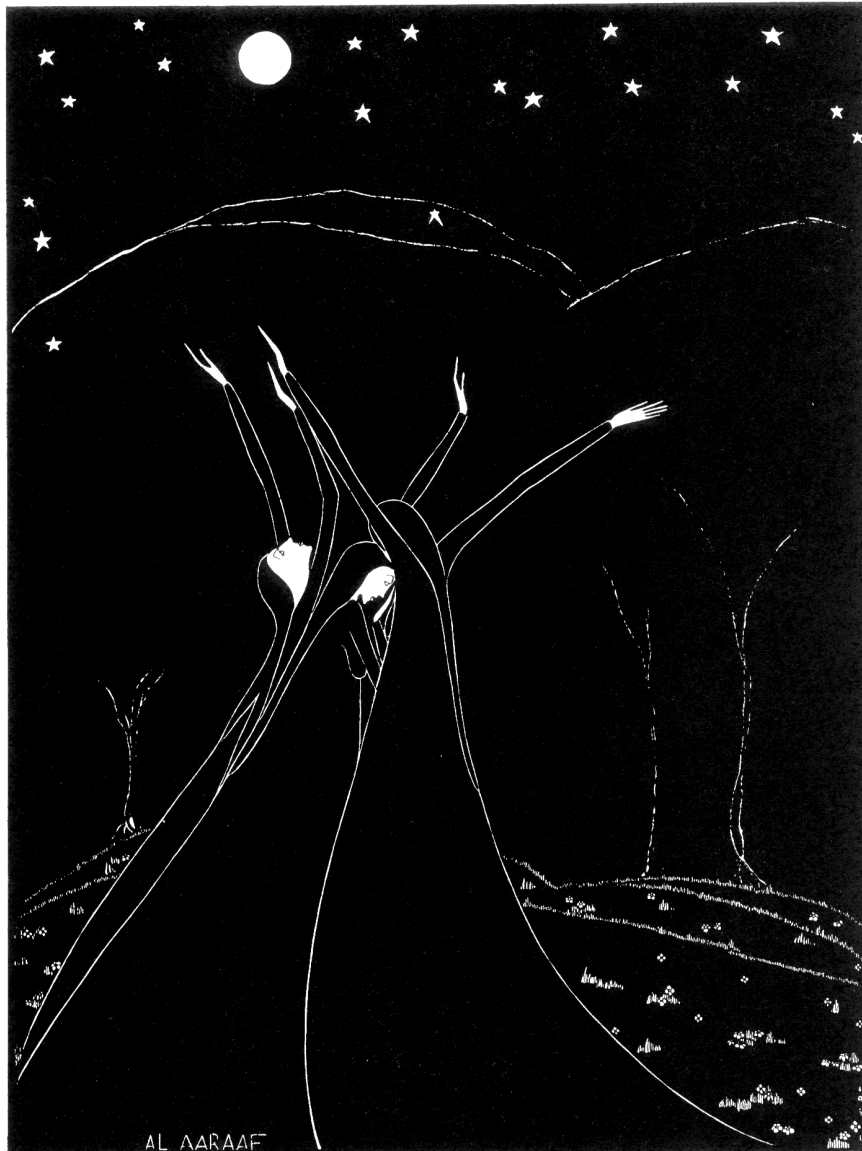
1. Happy
2. Joyful
3. Warm
4. Tangle

TASK 1: Here are four drawings by Hannah Frank. Under each image write down some words that come to your mind. You can write as many as you like.



*And out of her cold cottage never answered Mrs. Gill
The fairy mimbling mambling in the garden ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣
The Mocking Fairy (1931)*

My word list:



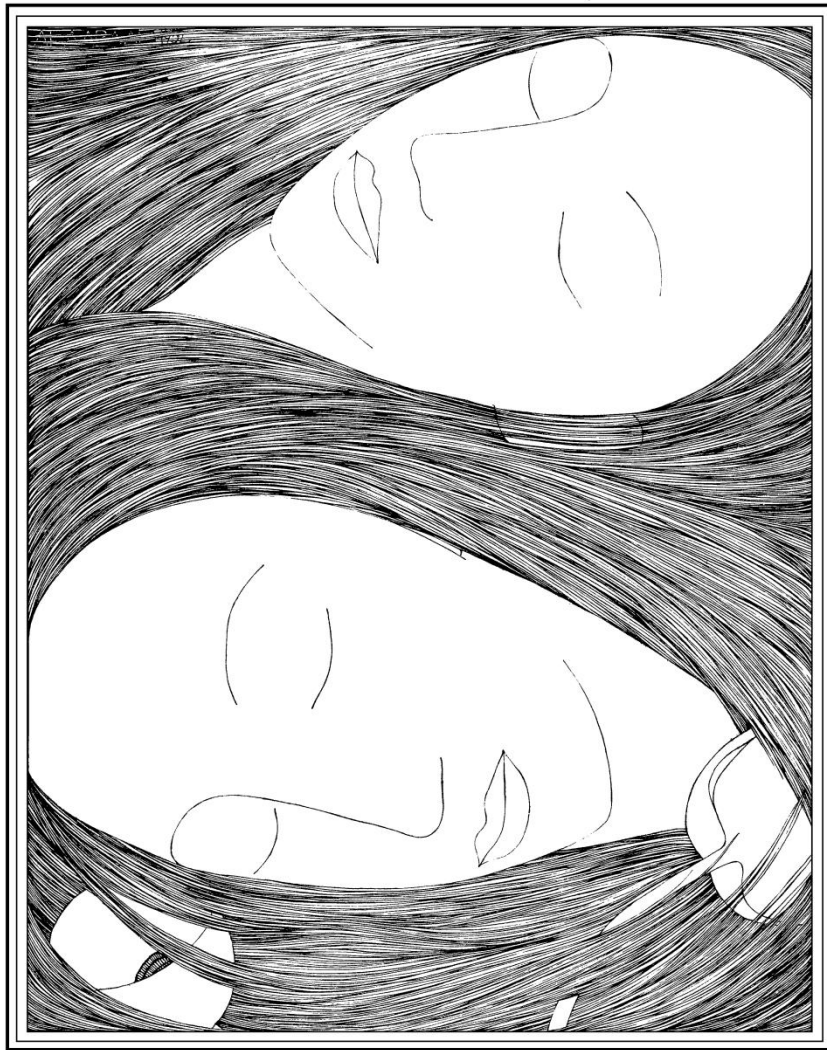
Moon Ballet (1934)

My word list:



Garden (1934)

My word list:



Dream (1952)

My word list:

TASK 2: Choose the picture you like best from the four images and write two sentences about it. Try to explain why you like it.

Artists and Poetry

Artists use many things as a source of inspiration. They might see a landscape which appeals to them which they want to share with their viewers. They might want to paint a portrait of someone they know or someone with an interesting face. Some artists such as Hannah Frank use poetry.

The drawing below is an example of Hannah Frank using poetry as inspiration. This drawing is called, *Diaphenia like the Daffadowndilly* and was drawn by Hannah in 1928. It is based on the poem 'Damelus' Song to His Diaphenia' written by Henry Constable.



Diaphenia like the Daffadowndilly (1928)

TASK 3: Choose a favourite poem then use a black felt tip pen to create a black and white picture to illustrate it. If you don't already have a favourite poem you will find a selection of poems to help you on pages 15-17.

WORDS AND PICTURES

Hannah Frank often used lines from poems as part of her pictures. The example below is called *O Wild West Wind* and was drawn in 1928. Just like *Diaphenia like the Daffadowndilly*, it is also inspired by poetry. This drawing is based on a poem called 'Ode to the West Wind' by Percy Shelley (1792-1822). Underneath the drawing Hannah has written a line of the poem in a style of writing called 'calligraphy.'



O Wild West Wind (1928)

The word 'calligraphy' is from the Ancient Greek words, *kallos*, meaning 'beauty' and *graphe*, meaning 'writing.'

Calligraphy is written using a broad tipped pen or a brush with liquid ink.

In the fourth and fifth centuries calligraphy was used in monasteries. Monks developed very beautiful but complicated calligraphy to write the Bible. They believed that the Bible was a holy text and that a lot of care and work should go into writing it.

The Torah scrolls in the Jewish faith are written in Hebrew by highly trained scribes called 'Sofers.' The lines must be perfectly straight and even. If one letter is missing or smudged the Torah scroll cannot be used as it is no longer kosher.

Calligraphy is also used in other cultures such as China and Japan.

In Korea calligraphy is known as *Seoye* which means 'the art of writing.'

If you look carefully at some of Hannah Frank's work, you can see very faint pencil lines where she marked out where to add her calligraphy.

TASK 4: Now go back to your word lists at the start of your worksheets. Can you write a short poem about one of the pictures? It does not need to be very long but try to say how you feel.

Here is an example about the picture called *Sun* (1943) which is on page 3.

It is very warm
I lift and stretch towards the rays of the sun upwards almost
leaving the ground
I am soaring upwards towards the sky.

MY POEM

TASK 5: Use your own poem to help you create a black and white picture. Put the whole of your poem or just part of it into your picture.

Here are some poems to help you with the task on page 9.

The Eagle

by Alfred Tennyson (1809-1892)

He clasps the crag with crooked hands;
Close to the sun in lonely lands,
Ringed with the azure world, he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;
He watches from his mountain walls,
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

Caterpillar

by Christina Rossetti (1830-1894)

Brown and furry
Caterpillar in a hurry,
Take your walk
To the shady leaf, or stalk,
Or what not,
Which may be the chosen spot.
No toad spy you,
Hovering bird of prey pass by you;
spin and die,
To live again a butterfly.

A Fairy Song

by William Shakespeare (1564-1616)

Over hill, over dale,
Thorough bush, thorough brier,
Over park, over pale,
Thorough flood, thorough fire!
I do wander everywhere,
Swifter than the moon's sphere;
And I serve the Fairy Queen,
To dew her orbs upon the green;
The cowslips tall her pensioners be;
In their gold coats spots you see;
Those be rubies, fairy favours;
In those freckles live their savours;
I must go seek some dewdrops here,
And hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear

I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud
by William Wordsworth (1770-1850)

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company:
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.