

Years 5/6 Art and Design

Through this unit of work, pupils will:

- *Learn about the work of the artist Henri Rousseau*
- *Experiment with the style of the work of the artist*
- *Create a range of moods in their pieces through the use of a wide range of techniques*
- *Explain why they have chosen specific techniques, materials and tools to work with*
- *Combine visual and tactile qualities to express mood and emotion*
- *Regularly analyse and reflect on their progress taking account of what they hoped to achieve*

The Art of Henri Rousseau 1844—1910

What inspired Rousseau's most famous piece 'Tiger in a Tropical Storm', also known as 'Surprised!'?

What is surprising about the painting to you?

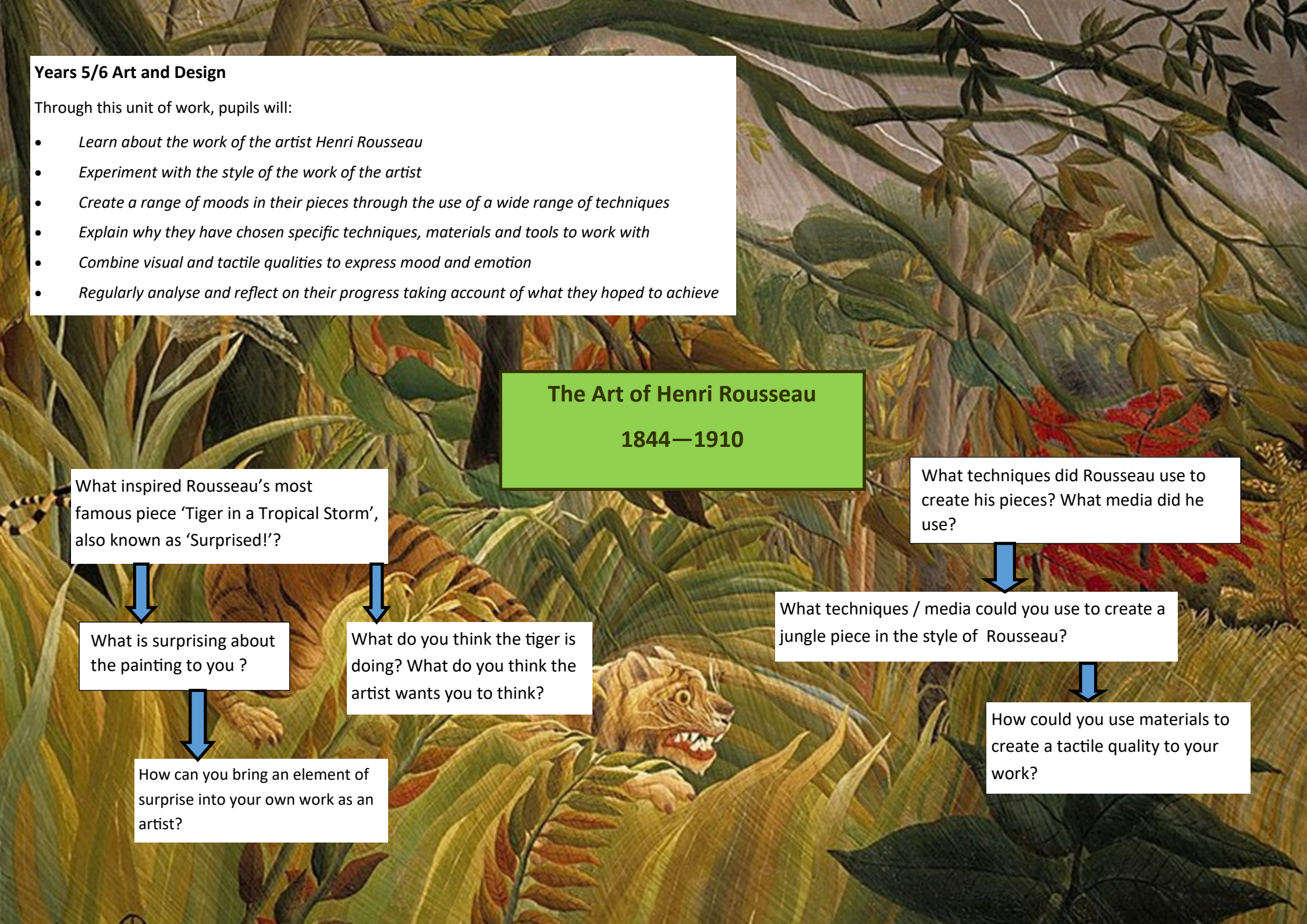
How can you bring an element of surprise into your own work as an artist?

What do you think the tiger is doing? What do you think the artist wants you to think?

What techniques did Rousseau use to create his pieces? What media did he use?

What techniques / media could you use to create a jungle piece in the style of Rousseau?

How could you use materials to create a tactile quality to your work?



Notes

He (Rousseau's tiger) is derived from a motif found in the drawings and paintings of [Eugène Delacroix](#). It was claimed, either by Rousseau himself or by his friends and admirers, that he had experienced life in the jungle during his time in [Mexico](#) in 1860, where he had served as a regimental bandsman. In fact he never left France, and it is thought that his inspiration came from the botanical gardens of Paris, such as the [Jardin des Plantes](#) (which included zoological galleries with [taxidermy](#) specimens of exotic animals), and from prints and books. The [fin de siècle](#) French populace was captivated by exotic and dangerous subjects, such as the perceived savagery of animals and peoples of distant lands.^[1] Tigers on the prowl had been the subject of an exhibition at the 1885 [École des Beaux-Arts](#). [Emmanuel Frémiet](#)'s [famous sculpture](#) of 1887 depicting a gorilla carrying a woman exuded more savagery than anything in Rousseau's canvases, yet was found acceptable as art; Rousseau's poor immediate reception therefore seems the result of his style and not his subject matter.^[2]

The tiger's prey is beyond the edge of the canvas, so it is left to the imagination of the viewer to decide what the outcome will be, although Rousseau's original title *Surprised!* suggests the tiger has the upper hand. Rousseau later stated that the tiger was about to pounce on a group of explorers. Despite their apparent simplicity, Rousseau's jungle paintings were built up meticulously in layers, using a large number of green shades to capture the lush exuberance of the jungle. He also devised his own method for depicting the lashing rain by trailing strands of silver paint diagonally across the canvas, a technique inspired by the satin-like finishes of the paintings of [William-Adolphe Bouguereau](#).

Further information may be found by visiting https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger_in_a_Tropical_Storm