

Keys to the collection— Form

John Brack

“I was born in Melbourne in 1920. I studied at the Box Hill High School. I left work at 16 and worked in an insurance company. Then at about the age of 17 I saw a couple of little reproductions of pictures of Van Gogh. That was a revelation to me—I had taken very little interest in the paintings in the museum.”

—John Brack, interview with James Gleeson, 29 November 1978, National Gallery Australia.

1920 Cecil John Brack was born in South Melbourne on 10 May.

1938—1940 He attended evening classes at the National Gallery School, studying under Charles Wheeler.

1940 During World War II, Brack enlisted in the army and was assigned to the Artillery Corps.

1946 Brack returned to the National Gallery School as a full-time student under the Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme, studying under William Dargie.

1947–48 He shared a studio with Fred Williams, a fellow Gallery School student.

1948 He married a fellow student, Helen Maudsley. Brack completed his studies in the following year, and destroyed almost all of his student drawings and paintings.

1949–1951 He worked as an assistant frame-maker at the National Gallery of Victoria, then served as Art Master of Melbourne Grammar School until 1962. He was then appointed Head of the National Gallery School, a position he held until 1968.



1999 Brack died at the age of 78, in Hawthorn, Melbourne, on 11 February.

The hunt—

The hunt was painted in 1988. Imagine you are an investigator in search of hidden clues. Many paintings include cryptic motifs, while geometrical shapes and forms occasionally signify subjects concealed within the composition. For example, the regimented pencils could be interpreted as hunters or soldiers on parade. Can you make out different patterns in this composition? How has the artist created the optical illusion of depth?

**Geelong
Gallery**

AusVELS level 2 to 6

geelonggallery.org.au/learn

John Brack
The hunt 1988
oil on canvas
Collection: Geelong Gallery

G E E L O N G
E E L O N G
E L O N G
L O N G
O N G
N G A L L E R Y
G A L L E R Y



John Brack

Australian 1920–1999

The hunt 1988

oil on canvas

182.0 x 152.3 cm

Collection: Geelong Gallery
Geelong Art Gallery centenary
acquisition. Purchased through
public subscription, 1996
© Geelong Gallery and Helen
Brack

Questions

Can you see the triangles and rectangles in *The hunt*? Can you count the number of rectangles in the painting?

Research

In your own words answer the following:
What was your first reaction to this painting?
What is the first word that came into your head when you saw it? What did you first notice? Do some parts of the image draw your attention more than others?

Can you count how many different coloured pencils are in the painting? How many different tones of each colour are there?

Activity

Create a drawing using everyday objects found in your classroom. Place them in your drawing using triangles, squares and spaces, and create a background, a middle ground and a foreground. Your drawing should look a bit like a stage in the theatre. Once you have completed your drawing you can add colour using any medium. You may like to add a little shading to help create depth and form.