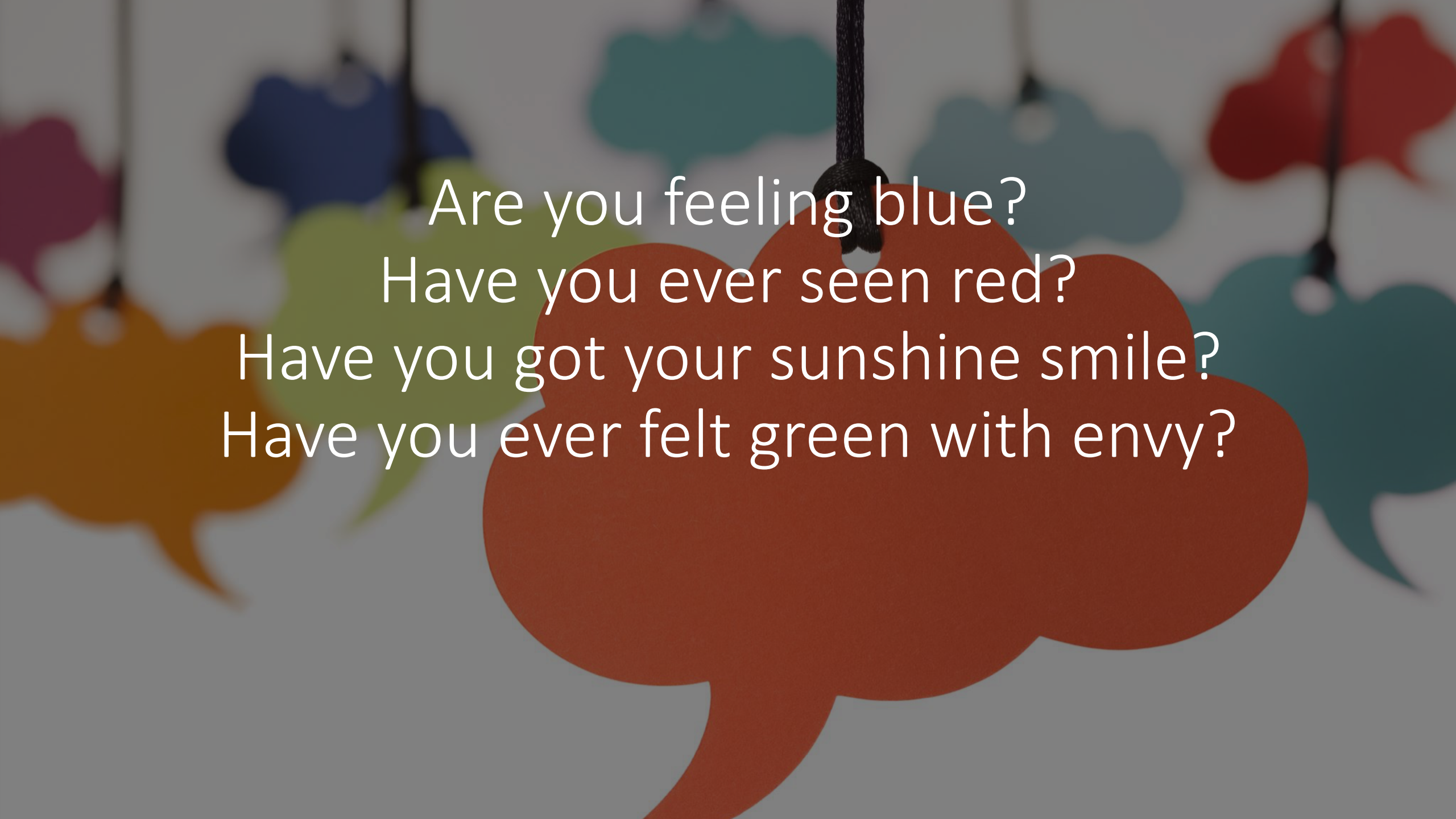


Feelings, Emotions and Art



Are you feeling blue?
Have you ever seen red?
Have you got your sunshine smile?
Have you ever felt green with envy?

Colour has always been recognised for its symbolic power and an appreciation of this reaches back to ancient times.

The next few slides show how colour has been used by different artists to help to represent a feeling or emotion. I wonder if you agree with what has been written beside each image.

Red through its association with fire and blood is used to represent danger, anger and violence. For the same reason it is also associated with affairs of the heart: love and passion.

PAUL GAUGUIN (1848–1903)
'Vision After The Sermon', 1888





Orange symbolizes creativity, change, energy and endurance. It is the colour that represents Autumn. As a [secondary colour](#) it combines elements of the colors used to mix it: the creative passion of red with the energy and joy of yellow.

Mark Rothko, the American [abstract expressionist](#) artist, encouraged viewers to stand close to his large paintings so that they became spiritually immersed in the experience of colour. 'Orange and Yellow' is the door to an inferno of colour with a radiant energy that invites the spectator to open their emotions to *"a spiritual kinship with primitive and archaic art"*.

MARK ROTHKO (1903–1970)
'Orange and Yellow', 1956 (oil on canvas)

Yellow is the colour of the sun – the life support for our planet. As such it has come to represent life, energy, happiness, hope and wisdom. Vincent Van Gogh's 'Sunflowers' is painted almost entirely with yellow and without any shadows. It expresses the radiance of sunshine rather than giving us a detailed description of what the flowers look like.

[Van Gogh](#) also uses yellow as the symbol of hope and friendship as the 'Sunflower' series was painted to welcome his friend [Paul Gauguin](#) to the Yellow House in Arles.



VINCENT VAN GOGH
(1853–1890)
'Sunflowers', 1889 (oil
on canvas)



Green, as the colour of plants and grass, is the colour of nature and all that is associated with health and growth.

However, it is also used to represent more negative traits such as envy and inexperience.

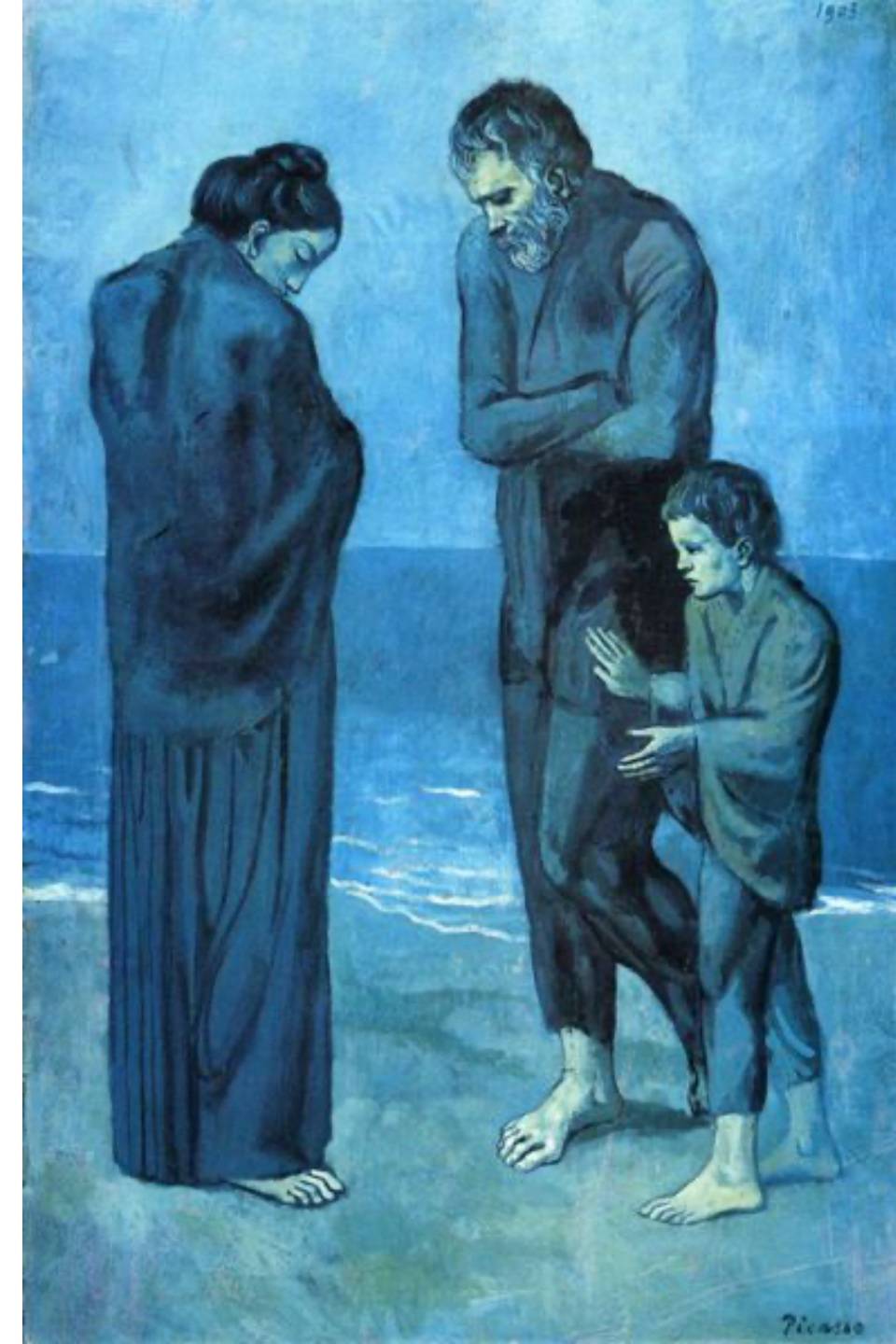
PAUL CÉZANNE (1839–1906)
'The Bridge at Maincy', 1879 (oil on canvas)

Blue is the coolest and most calming of all the colours. As the colour of the sky, it has been used since ancient times to represent heaven. In classical mythology, blue was the colour associated with the gods, Venus and Jupiter.

In Christianity, it becomes the symbol of the Virgin Mary. As the colour of the ocean, it is also suggests qualities like freshness, purity and hygiene.



AMES MCNEIL WHISTLER (1834–1903)
'Nocturne, Blue and Silver: Chelsea', 1871



In 'The Tragedy' (1903) Picasso uses cool blues to evoke the chill of sadness and despair in a typically gloomy subject from this period.

PABLO PICASSO (1881–1973)
'The Tragedy', 1903

Purple is the colour of royalty, wealth and power. In times past, purple dyes were rare and expensive. Only the rich and powerful could afford to wear clothes of this luxurious colour.



FYODOR ROKOTOV (1736–1808)
Catherine the Great (1780)

VINCENT VAN GOGH (1853–1890)
'Shoes', 1888 (oil on canvas)

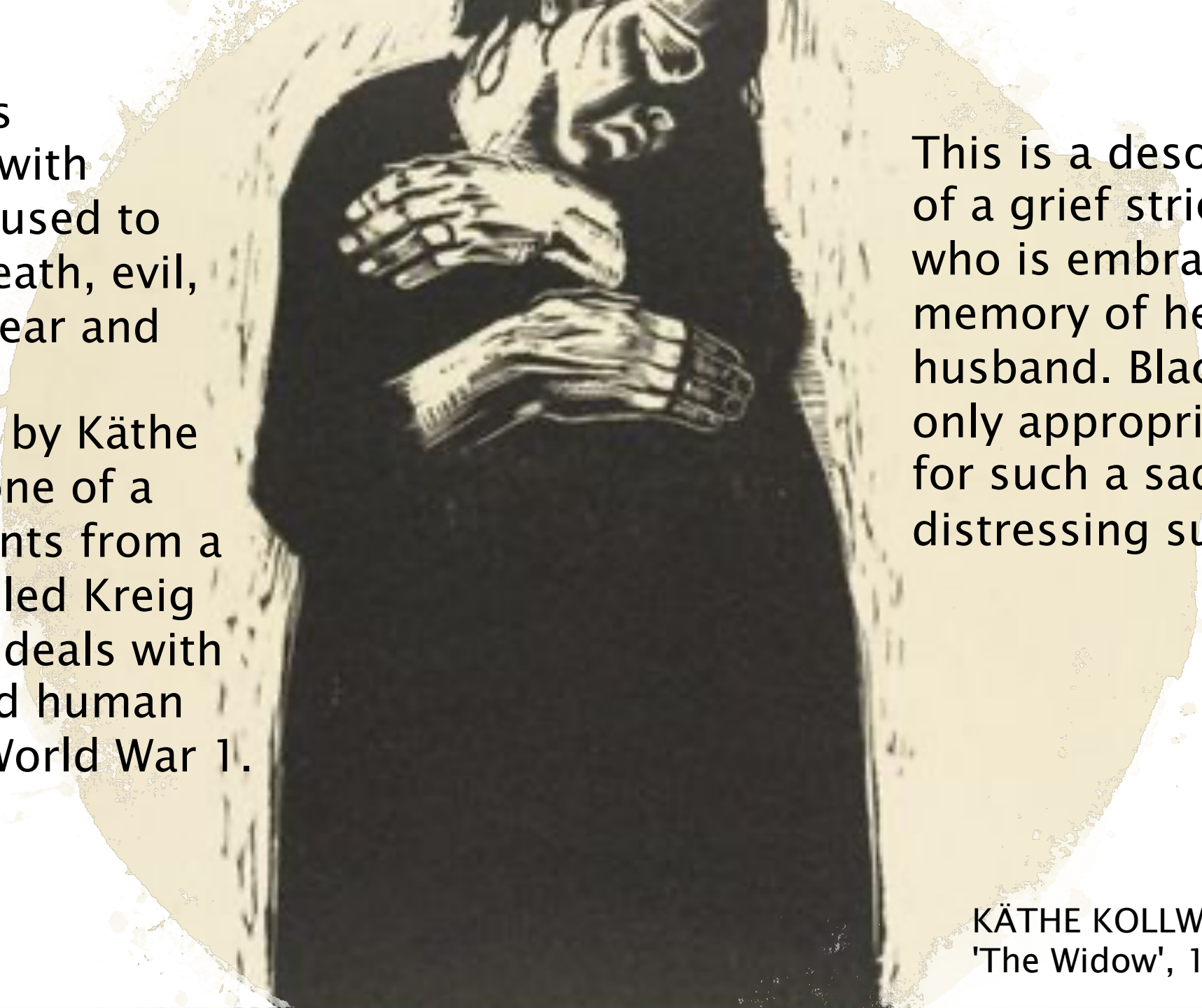


Brown is the colour of earth, wood and stone. As such, it evokes craftsmanship and the great outdoors. It is also used to represent humility: a down to earth virtue.

Black and its association with darkness is used to represent death, evil, witchcraft, fear and mourning. 'The Widow' by Käthe Kollwitz is one of a series of prints from a portfolio called Krieg (War) which deals with the wretched human tragedy of World War 1.

This is a desolate image of a grief stricken wife who is embracing the memory of her departed husband. Black is the only appropriate colour for such a sad and distressing subject.

KÄTHE KOLLWITZ (1867–1945)
'The Widow', 1922–23

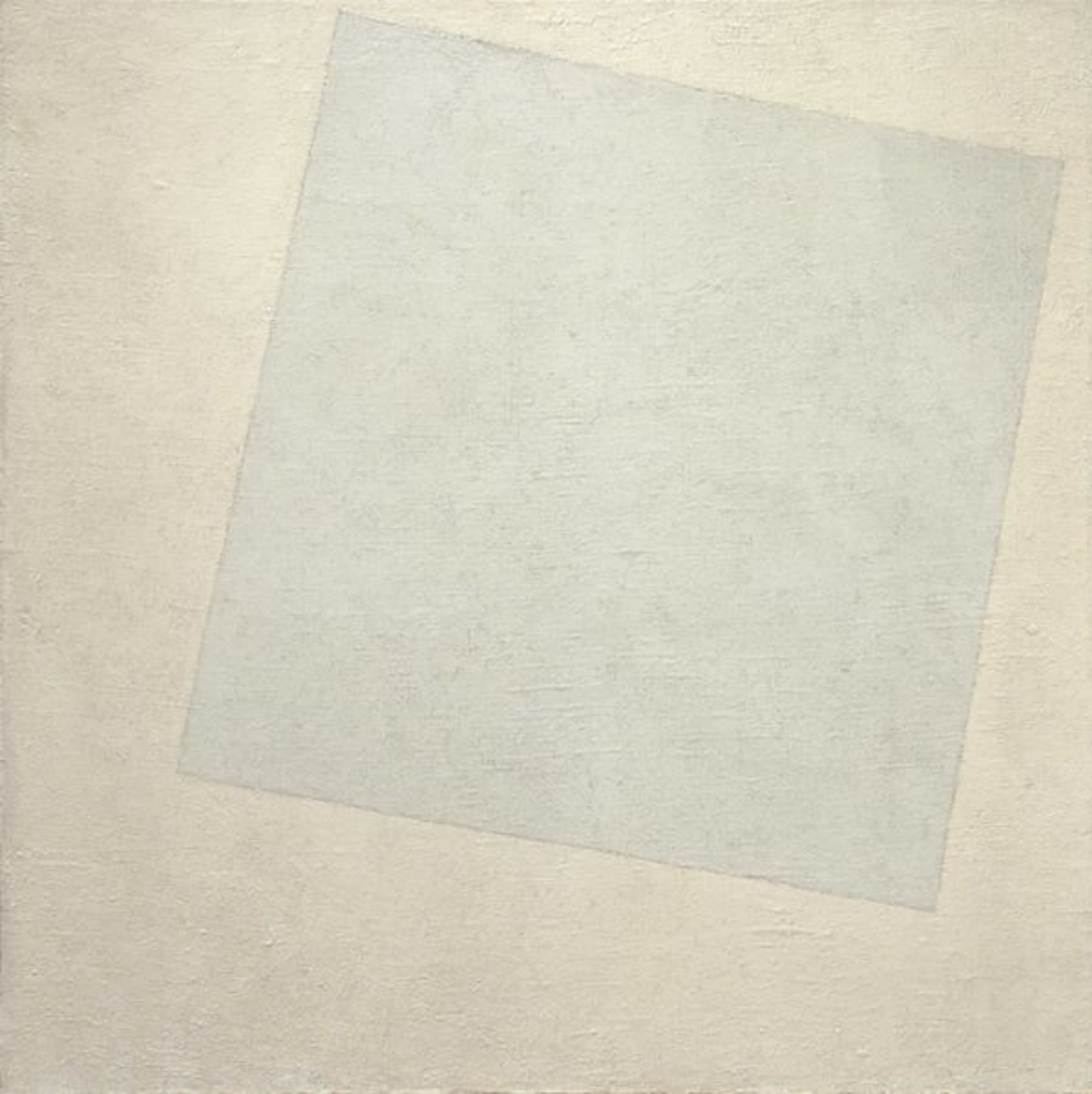


Grey is the natural colour of some metals and stone, but it also has some negative associations with the weather, boredom, decay and old age. Grey is a mixture of black (death) and white (peace) and is the colour of ashes and dust. As such it is also associated with death and mourning.

[Picasso](#) often painted in monochrome to heighten the emotional tone of his work



PABLO PICASSO (1881–1973)
'Goat Skull, Bottle and Candle', 1952



White and its association with light is used to represent peace, purity and goodness.

KAZIMIR MALEVICH (1887–1935)
'Suprematist Composition: White on White ', 1918

Multicolour

In 'The Circus #3', Dine applies vibrant primary colours with expressive brushstrokes in a colour chart of emotion both inside and around the symbolic arena of the heart, evoking the excitement of the crowd, the energy of the performers and the fun of the show.



JIM DINE (b.1935)
'The Circus #3', 2007

Activity

- Draw your own emotions colour wheel
- Check the resources on the [class webpage](#) for help – the interactive emotions wheel is really good
- Use colour **and** adjectives to depict a range of emotions
- Add pictures (drawn, cut out or pasted from the internet) to support your work
- Email a photo or scanned copy of your work to your class teacher
goldfinch@archbishopcourtenay.kent.sch.uk
heron@archbishopcourtenay.kent.sch.uk
redwing@archbishopcourtenay.kent.sch.uk

This is important - you will be using this work later in the term.

