

## T is for...

Este MacLeod

### Textiles

Mbuti are the decorative textiles created by an ancient Pygmy tribe living in rain forests in the Democratic Republic of Congo (central Africa). They are also the inspiration for today's mini project. These cloths are in fact flattened bark, decorated with a variety of patterns that to my eye relate somewhat to capital letters of the Western alphabet.

They look a bit like maps with the marks creating a sort of visual language. They relate to abstract paintings with the graphic, flowing lines that cross and morph into each other. Black and brown lines are painted on the irregularly shaped bark pieces that reinforce their uniqueness.

You can read more about the cloths here:

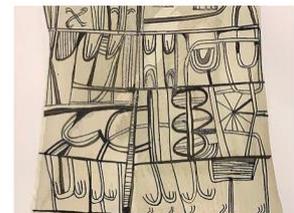
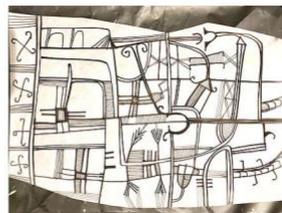
<http://toghla.com/2014/03/mbuti-art-in-barkcloth/>

### Creative Process

Look at the examples of Mbuti cloth in the Pinterest link:

<https://www.pinterest.co.uk/estemacleod/textile-mbuti-inspiration/?eq=textile&etslf=8194>

On a copy piece of paper write the alphabet in capital letters. Find marks and shapes that relate to letters on the cloth samples. Now write another sheet of letters, adapting and altering them to fit in with the shapes on the cloth. You can make sections distorted and elongated and link them with straight and curved lines or divide the art piece in sections.



Create an irregular rectangular shape to work within and choose no more than four or five letter shapes to use in your artwork. Draw shapes with a black liner or paintbrush. Do some practice drawings using marks from the Mbuti samples and design your own piece. For a bigger project do it on watercolour paper. Choose a shape and paint it with a wash of light brown High Flow paint (very diluted just with water).



Once dry commence with the painting of your design using either a paintbrush or dip pen, and black or brown high flow. Dilute with water only, don't use paint medium.

## Objective

Using Mbuti ethnic designs and surface patterns as inspiration for an abstract artwork using capital letters. Adapting and adjusting shapes to suit the designs as well as observation and a disciplined eye and imagination are important in creating artworks for this project. Consider the ways in which you can use these designs and shapes in your own work.