

If AccessArt Were A Boat

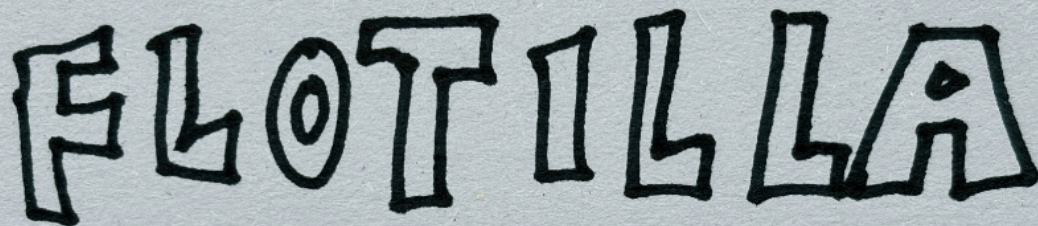
By [Paula Briggs](#)

Many away days are focused around PowerPoints and presentations, but at our latest away day in York AccessArt trustees and team members enjoyed a practical making session. We used boats and seascapes as metaphors to explore how AccessArt might best show up in the current climate and serve our arts education community...

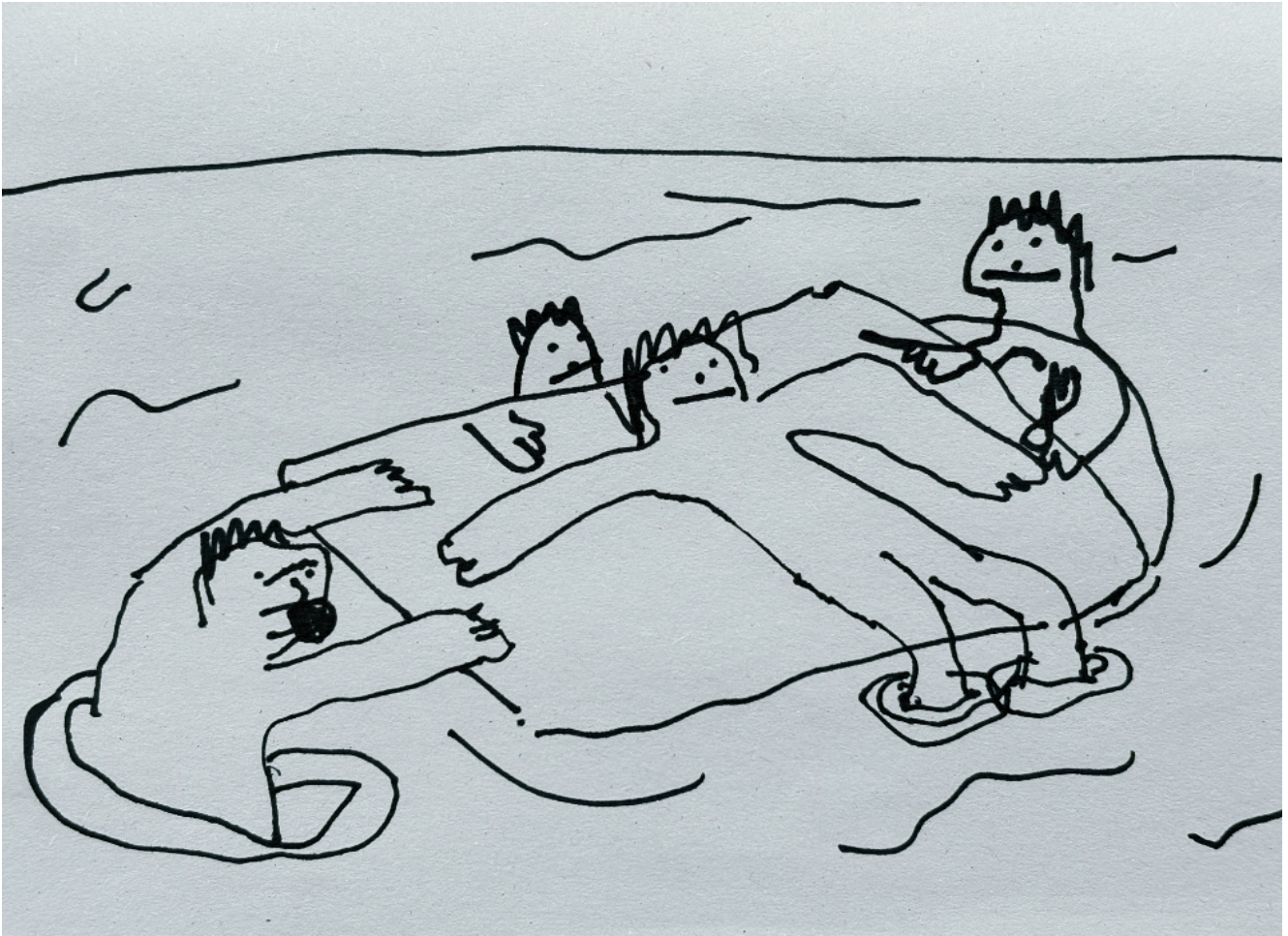


One of the things I love most about AccessArt is the extent to which our values are at the heart of how we think, act and make daily decisions. They shape the way we support one another as a team, the way we develop resources and opportunities, and the way we work with teachers, artists and educators. Beyond AccessArt, these core beliefs also describe how we can enable creativity to flourish as a community, whatever our setting or audience.

My role is at its most fulfilling when I can focus on the doing: the creative acts of making and sharing. Sometimes this involves envisioning new projects, working with artists, educators and team members to create new resources, or making new videos to share ideas and build understanding of pedagogy. At these times, it is easy to be guided by our core values, and the work feels productive.

The word "FLOTILLA" is written in a bold, hand-drawn, blocky font. The letters are black with a white outline, giving it a stencil-like appearance. The background is a light gray, textured surface.

But over the past few years, and especially over the last few months, I have spent an increasing amount of time in what feels like fight mode. There are many reasons why the art education landscape is tough right now, and AccessArt, along with many others, has been campaigning long and hard, using our voice and expertise to try to put things right.



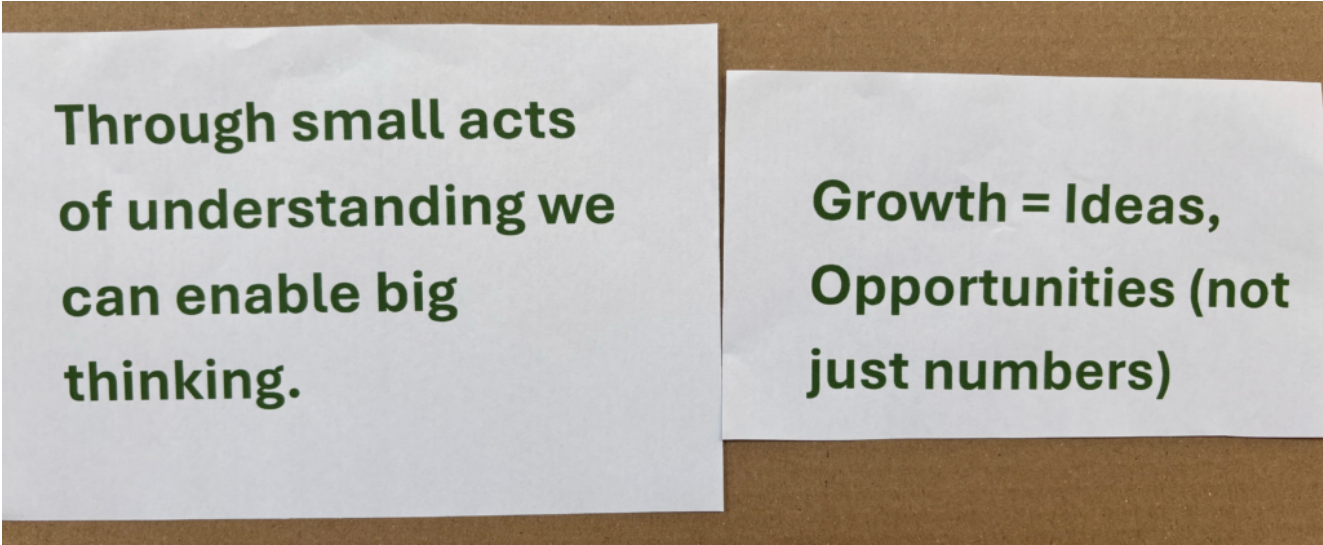
When we are identifying issues, campaigning and speaking out, it can feel as though we've shifted from a mode of productive creativity to one of constant vigilance and problem-solving. Watching for threats and seeking solutions is demanding, yet as both a Subject Association and a charity, we have a responsibility to advocate for and defend our subject. In those moments, our organisational values continue to guide everything we do, even if they become less visible.

Our away day in York was a reminder that, at the same time as we campaign and advocate from the top, we must also protect and enjoy the positive energy created when we act as a beacon on the

ground, providing a place of value-centred refuge, invention, creativity and hope for the arts education community.

AccessArt Trustees and members of our team used the metaphor of a boat at sea to explore how AccessArt can best navigate the current art education landscape. Together, we considered how our values might shape the boat's structure and character, how our team shows up as its crew, and how the challenges of the surrounding seascape present opportunities to realign with our vision and better serve the AccessArt community.

Our values and aspirations were at the centre of our thinking:



Through small acts
of understanding we
can enable big
thinking.

Growth = Ideas,
Opportunities (not
just numbers)

Reactive / Proactive

How can
we see every action
as a jewel?

How
can we be energised
by encounters with
those experiences
and ideas outside our
comfort zone?

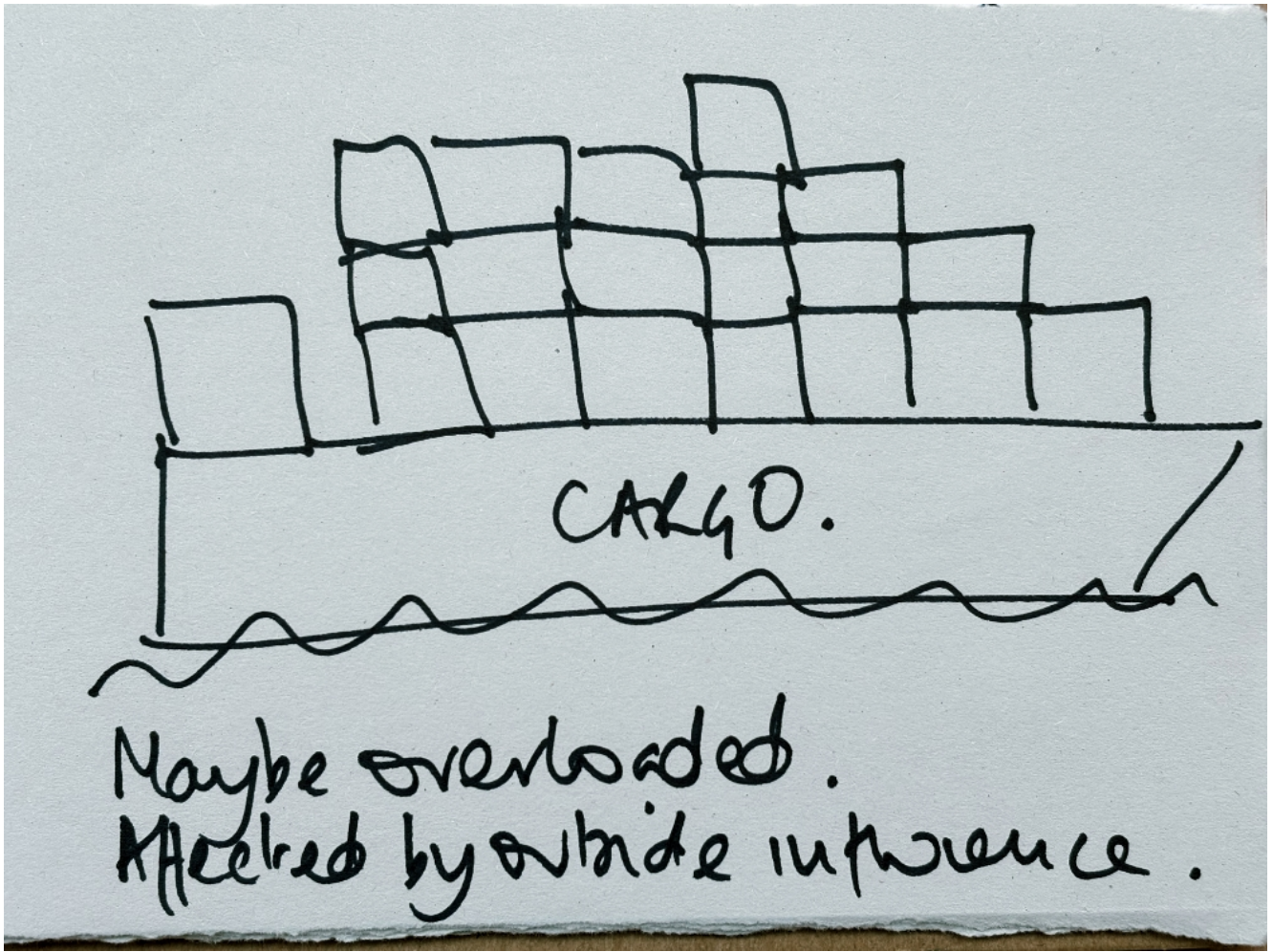
We asked ourselves metaphor-rich questions, for example:

- "If AccessArt is a boat, how do our values appear as structural, practical and necessary elements?"
- "What are we navigating by?"
- "What would a safe but ambitious passage look like?"
- "What should remain our north star?"
- "What is the weather doing around us?"
- "What is happening beneath the surface?"
- "What storms have we already weathered?"
- "What is changing with the tide?"
- "Which values keep us afloat?"

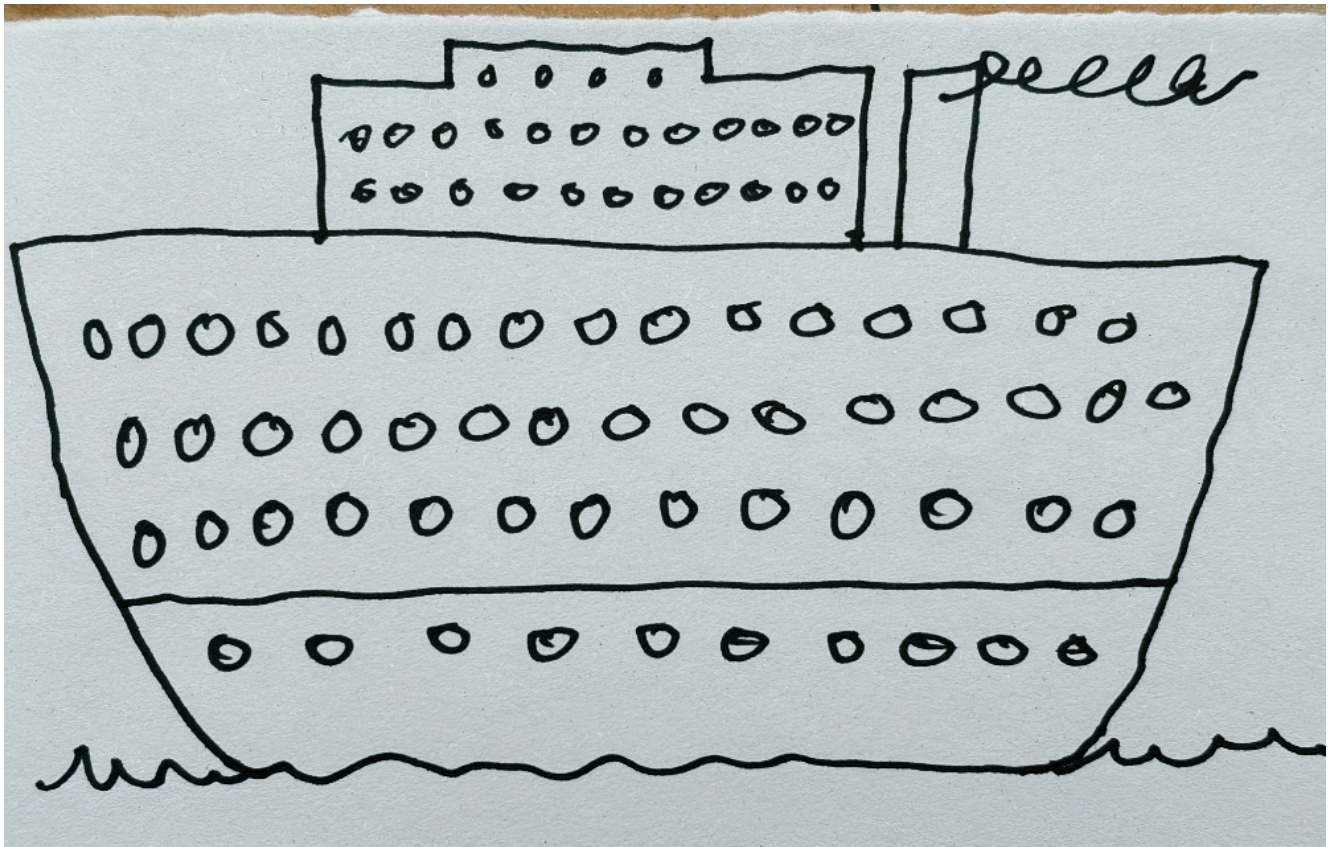
- “Which values protect the crew?”
- “Which values give us courage to enter open water?”
- “How do our values become useful in rough weather?”
- “Who is on deck?”
- “Who is watching the horizon?”
- “Who is tending the engine?”
- “Who is making sure the crew is nourished?”
- “Where do we need more hands?”
- “What skills are already aboard?”
- “What do we need from each other for the next part of the journey?”
- “Where is our harbour?”
- “What helps us recover after a storm?”
- “What are we carrying that is too heavy?”
- “What would sustainable speed feel like?”
- “How do we know when to pause?”

We each drew versions of the boat we would never want AccessArt to become. This helped us clarify and share what was important to us as individuals.

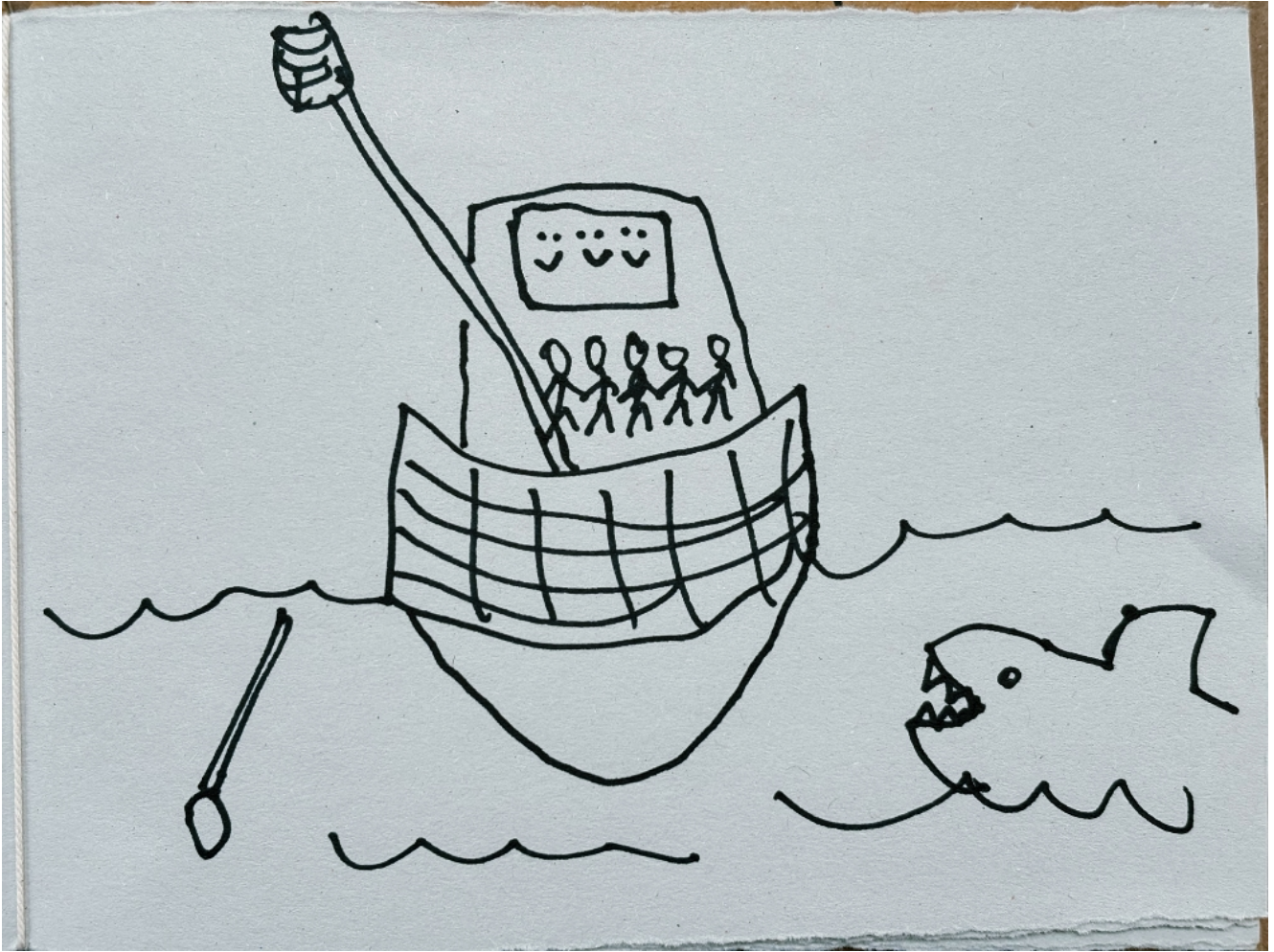
AccessArt would never become a cargo ship...



Or a cruise ship...

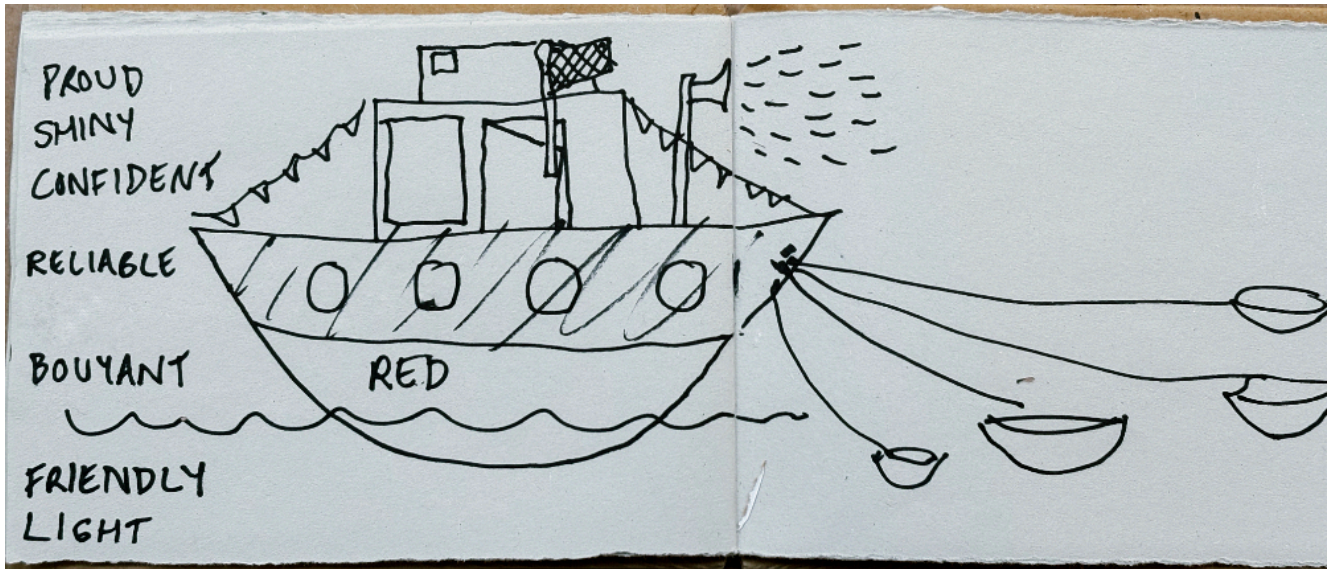


Or a work horse...



And then we drew pictures of boats which felt representative of the values and aspirations held by AccessArt.

A boat which is buoyant... sits high in the water. Solid, cared for, well kept. Has a sense of "holding" the occupants whilst being able to communicate to smaller boats that might follow....



A flotilla...



And then finally we worked as a team to construct a cardboard boat which felt representative of the

values we hold, and worthy of navigating the current art education seascape.





Thank you to the AccessArt Trustees and team members. These conversations are just the start and will continue over the coming months. I am always so grateful that AccessArt is made possible entirely by income from memberships. We receive no core or revenue grants; instead, every membership fee contributes to us being a self-sufficient arts organisation, bringing us great security and autonomy. Thank you to all our AccessArt members. We truly value your support and hope you feel inspired, enabled and connected.

This is a sample of a resource created by UK Charity AccessArt. We have over 1500 resources to help develop and inspire your creative thinking, practice and teaching.

AccessArt welcomes artists, educators, teachers and parents both in the UK and overseas.

We believe everyone has the right to be creative and by working together and sharing ideas we can enable everyone to reach their creative potential.

Make, Build, Create: Sculpture Projects for Children

Published by Black Dog Press, Make, Build, Create: Sculpture Projects for Children encourages children to explore how they might transform a variety of materials through a series of open-

ended projects.

**Free Copies Are Now Sold Out!
Pls buy second hand via
online book shops**

Many thanks to everyone that bought one of the 220 free copy of Make, Build, Create (p&p only). Apologies no further copies remain.

A top-down view of various art supplies scattered on a bright orange surface. The supplies include several wooden sticks, a bundle of thin white string, a bundle of thin grey string, a blue marker, a yellow marker, a pink marker, a blue marker, a white glue stick, a pair of scissors, a peacock feather, a small blue and white striped egg, a small white egg, a small red string, a small black and white striped fabric, and a small black and white striped fabric. The background is a bright orange surface with some white and black patterns.

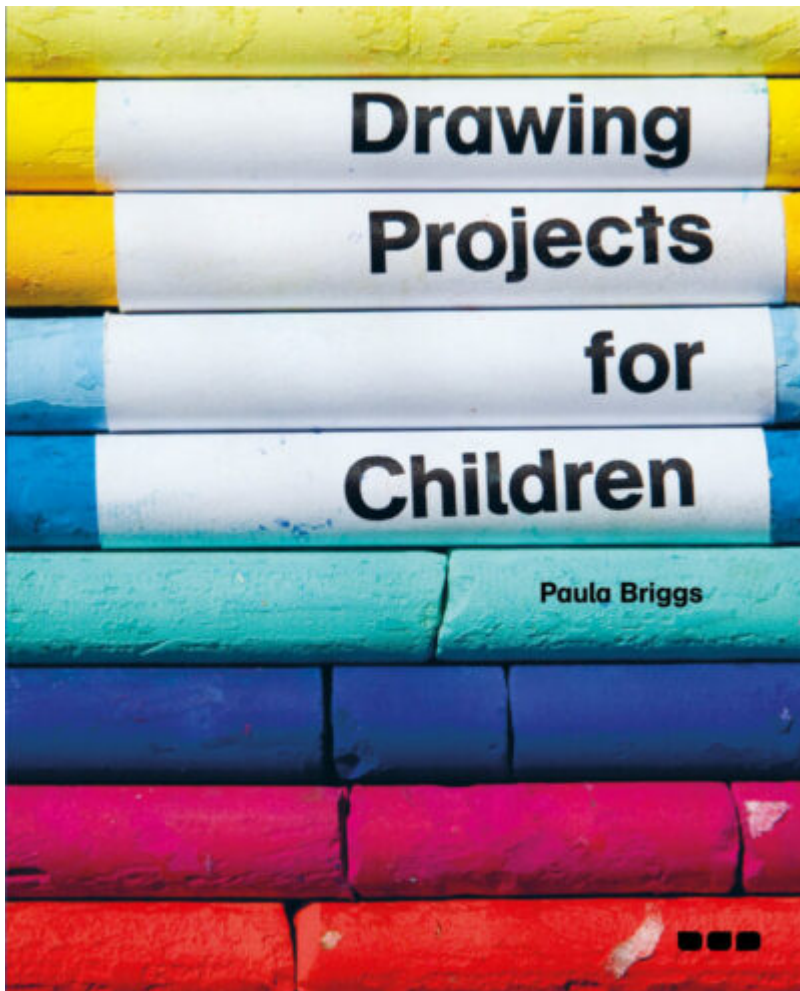
MAKE BUILD CREATE

SCULPTURE PROJECTS FOR CHILDREN

PAULA BRIGGS

black dog
publishing





You May Also Like...

Published by Black Dog Press, [Drawing Projects for Children](#) is a beautifully illustrated collection of activities that will expand the mark making abilities and imagination of children of all ages, and help fuel their passion for drawing.

The book features a collection of drawing exercises and projects taken from the AccessArt website, presenting them in a beautiful and inspirational format.

“A beautiful book, full of ideas and a vivid sense

of materials – truly appetising and stimulating.”
– Sir Quentin Blake

“Drawing Projects for Children is fantastic and I know it will be an inspiration to many educators.”

“I am so thrilled with the book! Thank you for your inspiration and excellence.”

The AccessArt Education Survey 2026

AccessArt is launching its biggest-ever survey to help drive positive change in arts education.

As a [Subject Association for Art and a Registered Charity](#), we take seriously our responsibility to champion the value of a rich visual arts education for all. To do that effectively, we need to understand what is happening on the ground, and to do that we need to hear from people like you.



The AccessArt Education Survey 2026 was open to teachers, educators, senior leaders, students, parents, and those working in creative and cultural organisations and industries.

By taking part, you will help us build a clearer picture of the current state of arts education and engagement. Your insights will help shape our advocacy, research and campaigning work, ensuring that the voices of those who care about arts education are heard.

Why take part?

- Help strengthen the case for a rich visual**

arts education for all.

- Ensure our advocacy work reflects real experiences and challenges.
- Contribute to evidence that can help influence future policy and practice.

Deadline: This survey is now closed.

Thank you for helping us build a stronger future for arts education.

Paula Briggs, AccessArt

**Shibori-Inspired Fabric
Dyeing: The Art of the Reveal**

**Opening Out: Shells and
Sketchbooks**

You May Also Like...

making a blind contour drawing



Experimental mark-making tools



Nests: Materials, Tools and

Sketchbooks



Insect Cubes

You May Also Like...

Drawing insects big



continuous line minibeasts



iridescent insects



Fruit Plates

You May Also Like...

working on black paper



cut paper still life collage



graphic inky still life



**Making the “AccessArt
For All” Banner**

Autobiographical Houses

You May Also Like...

Printed Houses



Making A Treehouse



Talking Points: Architecture



AccessArt Art Week 2026: Kindness and Curiosity Assembly Presentation

You May Also Like...

AccessArt art week 2026:

Curiosity and Kindness



AccessArt art week 2026: Curiosity and Kindness Activities



explore other art week themes



Curiosity and Kindness: Prompt Cards for Making

You May Also Like...

**AccessArt art week 2026:
Curiosity and Kindness**

CURIOSITY AND KINDNESS



ACCESSART

AccessArt art week 2026: Curiosity and Kindness Activities



explore other art week themes



Prompt Cards for Making



roots and shoots



playful making inspired by nnena kalu



Finding Kindness in Marks Made by Artists

You May Also Like...

AccessArt art week 2026:
Curiosity and Kindness



AccessArt art week 2026:
Curiosity and Kindness Activities



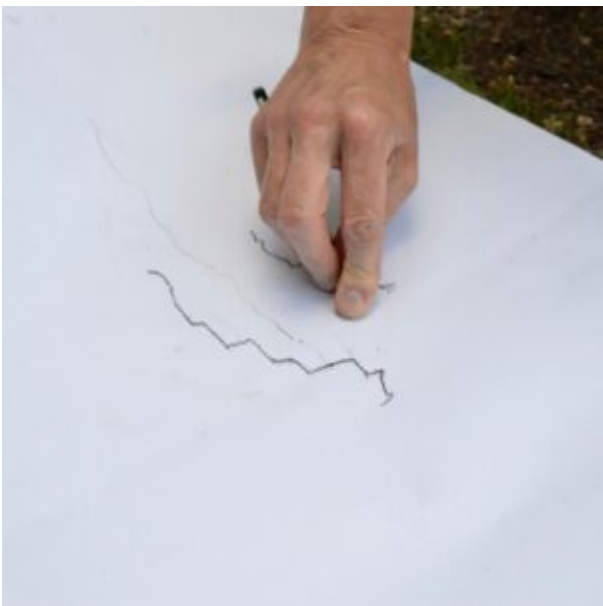
explore other art week themes



Experimental mark-making tools



the anatomy of a pencil

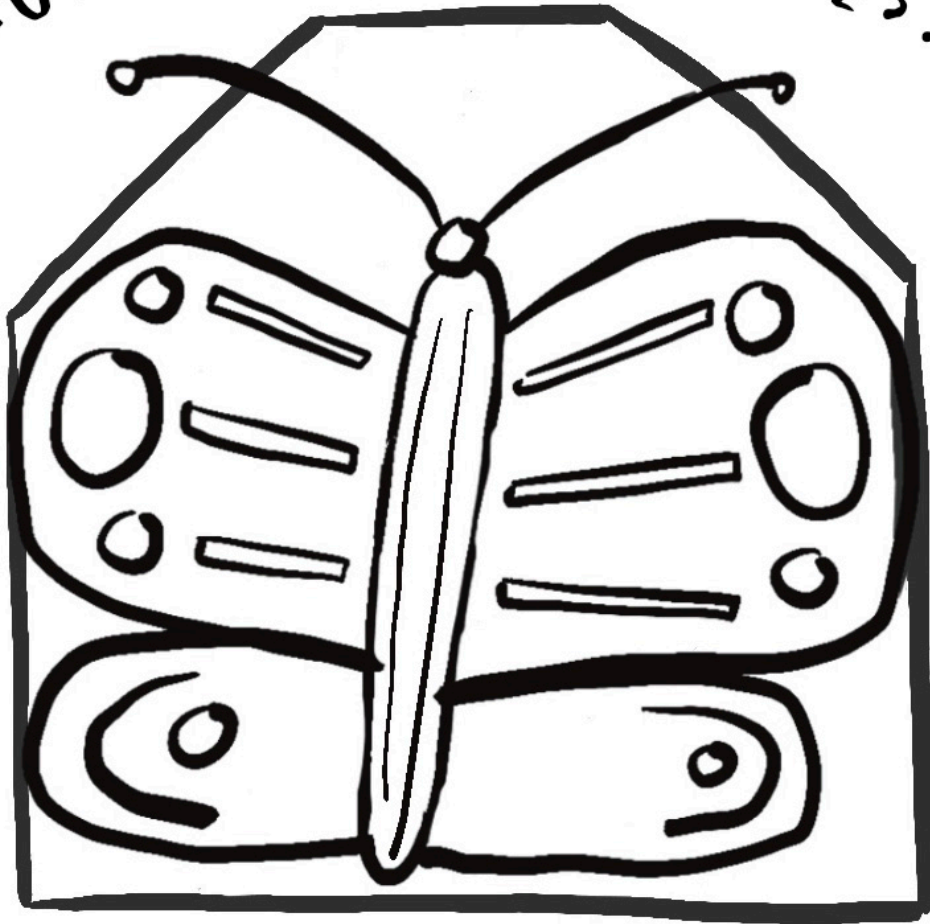


**Finding Marks Through Drawings
Made by Artists**



Curiosity and Kindness: Poetry for Projects

CURIOSITY AND KINDNESS



ACCESSART

Step 1:

Choose a Poem

Step 2:

Choose a Project

On this page, you will find a selection of poetry that can be used as prompts for your [Kindness and Curiosity Art Week](#) projects.

Choose a poem that you think will spark rich imagery and imagination in your learners, and then select a project from the bottom of the page to support their creative discovery.

Give space for learners to process information through both sketchbook work and group discussion, prompted by resources and questions below.

Please Note:

This page includes links and videos from external sites, verified at publication but subject to change.

Teachers should review all content for classroom suitability.

[Report any issues](#), and check school firewall settings if videos don't play.

AGES 5-8

AGES 9-11

AGES 11-14

FREE TO ACCESS

Step 1: Choose a Poem

Kind Hearts are the Gardens by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Explore the text version of the poem at [Words for Life](#).

Questions to Prompt Discussion

What is this poem about?

Why has the poet chosen a garden as a way to talk about kindness?

Why do you think 'kind thoughts' are the roots in a garden?

What does this poem suggest about kindness?

What pictures/colours/shapes do you see

in your head when you listen to this poem?

How does this poem make you feel?

What kind thoughts will you plant today?

You by Donna Ashworth

Find the text version of You at [Kindness Poems](#).

Questions to Prompt Discussion

What is this poem about?

What does it say about 'you'?

What do you picture your 'bright pathway' to look like or be lit up by?

Where would your map reach to?

What does this poem teach us?

How does this poem make you feel and why?

Miss Flotsam by Joseph Coelho

Explore a written version of Miss Flotsam at [The Children's Poetry Archive](#)

Questions to Prompt Discussion

What is this poem about?

Describe Miss Flotsam.

How does Miss Flotsam show kindness to others?

What is the poet trying to show us when he says Miss Flotsam would turn "fists into begging bowls" or she "placed sandbags around my lies"?

Does Miss Flotsam remind you of anyone you know?

How does this poem make you feel?

If All The World Were Paper by Joseph Coelho

Explore a written version of this poem at [The Children's Poetry Archive](#)

Questions to Prompt Discussion

What is this poem about?

What is in the poets 'world of paper'?

Why do you think the poet makes his world out of paper and not another material?

Name the different ways he alters his world for people. Why does he do these things?

What feelings can you spot in the poem?

What material would you make your world from?

How does this poem make you feel?

Tips for Exploring Poetry with Learners

Once you have chosen a poem to explore, watch the video with your learners. In sketchbooks, ask them to create some

simple visual notes, noting down significant words, images, marks, lines or colours that come to mind as they listen to the poem.

Follow on by discussing the poem with the class, using the questions next to the poem to prompt conversation. Encourage learners to add to their visual notes as they think more deeply about what the words in the poem might represent, and the narratives that begin to emerge.

Throughout the project, learners can refer to these visual notes for additional visual stimulation.



Step 2: Choose a Project



Still and Dynamic Drawings: Making Magic Spells

Explore both observational and experimental drawing, as well as collaborative working, in this project. Here, learners will create a collaborative spell inspired by the chosen poem. They will start with a series of observational drawings before working together to create a dynamic, bubbling pot of kindness.

Adaptations: Collect a variety of objects that represent the 'ingredients'

in the chosen poem for learners to use when creating their shared magic spell pot.



[Set Design with Primary Aged Children](#)

If you'd like to incorporate 3D projects into your art week, this activity allows learners to explore form and narrative through both drawing and making, inspired by visually descriptive lines from the chosen poem.

Adaptation: In the first session,

learners will create a mini scene using small toys to inspire drawings that depict a moment of kindness from the poem. In the set building sessions that follow, the descriptive starting point will be taken from the poem.



[A Visual Poetry Zine in Monotype](#)

Choose this project to explore painting, collage, drawing and printmaking in your

art week. Create zines in response to the chosen poem, inspired by the shapes, colours, lines and text that learners imagine when they listen to and picture the poem.

Adaptation: Choose to print with either ink or carbon paper to suit your setting.

You May Also Like...

AccessArt art week 2026:
Curiosity and Kindness



AccessArt art week 2026: Curiosity and Kindness Activities



Talking Points: Chalk Riot

How can public art positively impact a community?

[Chalk Riot](#) began as a group of friends sharing joy in their community through

chalk drawings on neighbourhood pavements. What started as simple acts of creativity grew into a movement encouraging neighbours to connect, share stories, and celebrate their shared spaces. Their mission is to unite, protect, and energise the cities we love, starting from the ground up.

Find out what Chalk Riot do and how they create using the sources below, then discuss the questions provided.

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AGES 5-8

AGES 9-11

AGES 11-14

FREE TO ACCESS

Chalk Art

With beginnings in the 16th century, chalk art has long adorned pavements in communities across the world. It began with the religious street-painting tradition of [Madonnari](#) in Italy and over time, has evolved into a vibrant form of public expression. Today, artists and collectives such as [Chalk Riot](#) use chalk art to energise public spaces, foster connection, and help communities reclaim and protect their environments.

Explore the videos below and use the questions to inspire classroom discussion.

Chalk Riot

Find out what Chalk Riot does in public spaces and the impact it has on the community.

Questions to Ask Children

Where in your community would you like to make a chalk drawing?

How can chalk drawings change the way a space looks, or how people interact with the space?

What kind of message might you leave for someone else to find?

How does public art bring the community together?

Session

Recording:

AccessArt Treehouse – Glimpses and Folds Sketchbook Challenge

You May Also Like...

glimpses and folds: A Sketchbook challenge



CPD RECORDING: ACCESSART
TREEHOUSE CHALLENGE: TRANSFORMING
LETTERS



CPD Recording: AccessArt Treehouse Challenge: Drawing with Two Hands



accessArt treehouse



cpd recordings: Disciplines and pedagogy



all recorded cpd sessions



Splendour and Opulence Inspired by Klimt

What We Like About This Resource...

“We really love how Nichola devised and facilitated this activity, giving learners complete freedom whilst limiting certain elements such as colour

palette. This activity incorporates a journeyful approach, in which the experiments all come together to form a shared outcome, and celebrate every learners exploration, which we love!" – Tobi, AccessArt

See this Resource in Schools...





You May Also Like...

visual notes



sculptural environments inspired
by hockney



Multimedia Response to Yayoi Kusama



**AccessArt Offers Free
CPD**



We're delighted to share that from the Summer Term 2026, all AccessArt and collaborative CPD will be free for [AccessArt members](#).

Since launching our online CPD programme in 2020, we've offered a mix of free and

paid sessions. As part of our ongoing commitment to helping teachers and educators provide a rich, diverse visual arts education, we're expanding this offer. From the Summer Term 2026, AccessArt members will be able to attend any of our [collaborative CPD](#) sessions at no extra cost, as part of their membership.

Not a member? You can still join any of our collaborative CPD events by purchasing a ticket for £25. All our in house CPD (those not run in collaboration with Susan Coles and Mandy Barrett), will remain free and open to AccessArt members only, If you would like to become a member, we'd love to [welcome you to the community!](#)

We will be launching our summer term 2026 programme very soon, so do keep an eye on our [events page](#) for updates.

Please note, that all AccessArt members will need to verify their membership by

including the email address associated with their membership, upon registering their attendance for our collaborative CPD.

Dizzy Tins

You May Also Like...

Drawing Hands



Paint your corner shop



animating hands



redesigning food packaging



Sharing Feel-Good Art Moments



Those of us who have worked in the creative industries or in arts education have long known the positive impact the arts can have on our lives. As makers or teachers, audience members or learners, we have all experienced moments when we have felt somehow more alive, more seen, and more connected to others through our engagement with the arts.

AccessArt is passionate about the value

of those moments. Added together, no matter how small, they are the golden nuggets that shine through the work we all do, and keep us going when things get tough.

Better still, when we share examples of how the arts have made a positive impact, passing them back and forth among ourselves and on to others, they help us collectively deepen our understanding of the value of a rich arts education for all.

[Send us your feel-good art moments](#) and we'll share what we can to help advocate for the importance of inclusive arts education for all. It's quick and easy to do, and here are a few prompts to get you started:

- Tell us about the ways you have seen the arts make a real difference to your pupils or learners. Share specific examples (please be mindful to anonymise) of action and impact,

Or, tell us about the ways the arts have helped you – as an audience or as a maker – or both. How have the arts made your life richer?

Or, tell us about the ways in which you have found AccessArt helpful. Share any impact you have seen, as a result of using our resources, approach and philosophy.

Thank you!

Paula Briggs, AccessArt

**CPD Recording: Drawing
Progression Across the
AccessArt Primary Art**

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Curriculum

You May Also Like...

cpd recordings: Disciplines and pedagogy



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