

Botanical Fairies

By **Rachel Thompson**

In this table top post, AccessArt team member **Rachel Thompson** demonstrates a simple collage activity using flowers from the garden to create a Fairy collage.



Despite the challenging times, feeling the warmth of the sun and the new growth of spring is something I've been thankful for over recent weeks. With this in mind, I wanted to do a simple collage activity that used flowers and plants as inspiration. This is an early years resource and is great for encouraging figurative drawing skills as well as observing colour and design. Of course, older children could also enjoy this process, and may be able to create more complex botanical work.

For this activity, I used a couple of books as a starter, both of which are regularly dipped into by my 5 year old daughter. Firstly, one of the well known and loved **Flower Fairy books** by Cicely Mary Barker and secondly, **Fairie-ality: The Fashion from the House of Ellwand**, a beautiful book of fairy costumes made with flowers. Older children doing this activity may be able to create more detailed botanical collage, akin to David Ellwand's lovely work.





We started by going into the garden to observe and discuss the flowers that are now blooming beautifully in all the spring sunshine we have been having. We picked a few - making sure to leave plenty for the bees!

We also had a lovely vase of tulips inside, that were just passing their best - and so these petals formed the bulk of what we used.



Pansies in a pot showing their lovely two tone colours. We discussed how the petals looked like ballet skirts.



A purple wall flower provided some small delicate flowers



Inside now, and pulling off a few carefully chosen tulip petals.



The collected petals arranged on a tray.

Next, it was time to design and draw a fairy! Depending on the age of your participants, this stage could take all of four minutes (as with us) or could take your child on an imaginative journey, and take considerably longer...





Once the fairy has been drawn, invite your child to make choices as to which flower petals work best for the different elements of their dress. In our case, the idea was floated of using some greenery to contrast with the pink petals - but my daughter preferred to use just the petals so that's what we went with.



Adding smaller flowers along the top of the skirt created a lovely contrast.



It's good to use the opportunity for children to develop their scissor skills for this activity. Trimming petals makes an interesting change to paper and some minutes can be spent just snipping and trimming little pieces of petals, even if they don't make it onto the final collage!



The final collage with some colour added using pencils - a simple exercise in collage and colour composition but something fun to do at this time of year to bring some spring colour in from the garden! The activity could be extended into creating more fairy characters, and even using old fashioned clothes pegs and fabrics to create something more 3 dimensional. Another idea would be to make a chain of fairies using fan folded paper.

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FAIRIE-ALITY

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