

Animating with Charcoal

By Paula Briggs

Inspired by the charcoal animations of William Kentridge, teenagers at the AccessArt Art Lab for ages 11, 12 & 13 worked in their [Pink Pig Sketchbooks](#) to create charcoal animations.



William Kentridge (born 28 April 1955) is a South African artist best known for his prints, drawings, and animated films. These are constructed by filming a drawing, making erasures and changes, and filming it again. He continues this process meticulously, giving each change to the drawing a quarter of a second to two seconds' screen time. A single drawing will be altered and filmed this way until the end of a scene. These palimpsest-like drawings are later displayed along with the films as finished pieces of art.

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In the studio, I asked the students to open their sketchbooks on a double page, and to begin by writing / drawing their name in charcoal across the page. I then challenged them to layer drawing after drawing on the same page, each drawing made in response to the previous one. Charcoal is a very fluid medium, and in addition to the charcoal sticks themselves, students used their fingers, hands and putty rubbers to help move the charcoal around the page. Sometimes the children added new lines to a drawing, sometimes they took lines away.











When working with charcoal it's very easy to end up with a grey, uniform image. [This warm-up exercise](#) might be useful to help students appreciate the full range of marks they can expect to get from a charcoal stick.

Over the hour long session each student produced 10 to 20 drawings over their double page, and I photographed each image as we went along, as instructed by each student.

The images were then edited and dropped into a movie to make an animation of all the students' work.

This is a sample of resource created by

UK Charity AccessArt. We have over 1100 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.

Decorative Eggs

A project based on Ukrainian Pysanky eggs using broken beads.

World in a Matchbox

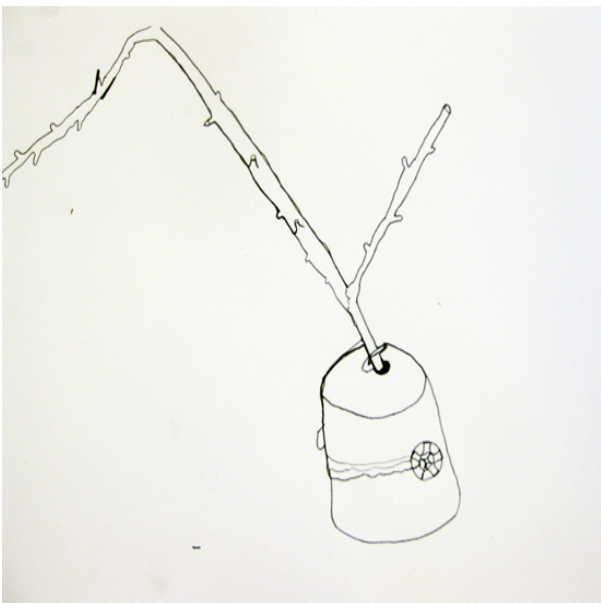
Children love working on a miniature scale where they can create worlds which they can control and oversee. AccessArt and Mencap have devised the “World in a Box” activity to enable children plenty of creative freedom resulting in fantastic autobiographical artwork.

Making Finger Puppets

AccessArt and Mencap have got three great ways for you to make finger puppets depending on your time or level of expertise. Starting with a simple print, colour, cut and stick and moving on to a full blown sculptural version, we hope you are inspired to make some puppets and possibly put on a show!

Visual Arts Planning: Exploring Line

Continuous Line Drawings (Squiggle Drawings) of Sticks



A great warm-up exercise for all ages – whatever their level of experience, continuous line drawings are a very useful way to get children (and adults) to

tune into their subject matter and quieten ready for drawing.

Drawing hands



Another warm-up exercise that can be done anywhere! Drawing your own or someone else's hand in continuous line can be a very useful way to explore concave shapes for sculptural/making projects such as nests and bowls.

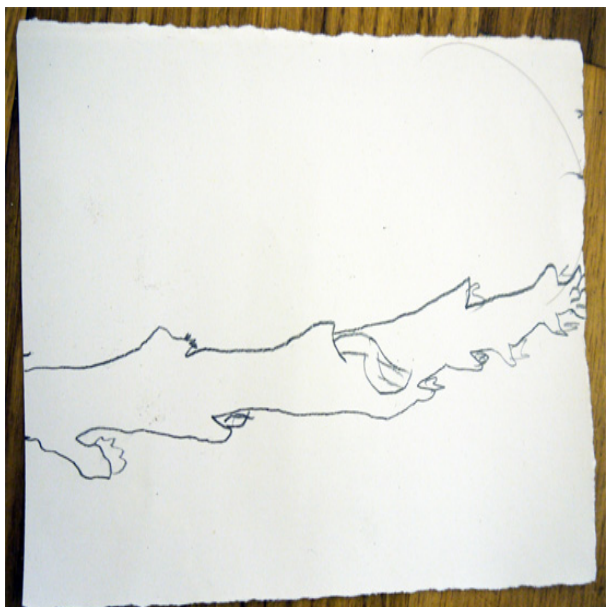
Warm-Up Drawing Exercise: Drawing Spirals



A great warm-up/ice breaker to use at the start of a drawing workshop for both adults and children. As well as getting participants to start making marks on the paper without worry or mental blocks, this simple exercise aims to introduce participants to the idea that

drawing and mark making comes from the finger tip, wrist, elbow, shoulder and whole body.

Quick Drawing Exercise: Helping Children to Draw Larger!



A quick 5minute drawing exercise to encourage children to work large and make their drawing fill the page.

Right Hand, Left Hand – Non Dominant Hand Drawing Exercise



Practising drawing with your 'none dominant' hand, (right hand if you are left handed, left

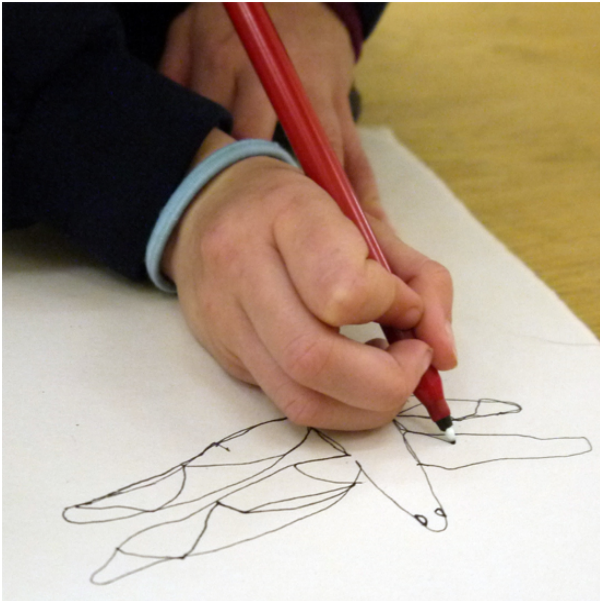
hand if you are right handed), can be a useful strategy for loosening up and for experimenting with the potential of mark making without worrying about the outcome. Another excellent ice-breaker for accessing drawing processes across all mediums.

Making a Shy Drawing – Drawing Exercises for Beginners



[_](#)This resource shares unusual yet accessible drawing exercises for beginners. How can we change the nature of the drawings we make – how would we make a “shy” drawing? These exercises and suggestions provide a focus which enables pupils and teachers to explore different aspects of making a drawing, including sound, action and intention.

Drawing Minibeasts – using a continuous line, graphite and oil pastel



Using images of insects as inspiration, children make 4minute continuous line drawings in pen as a warm-up exercise to encourage close looking and to get their fingers moving.

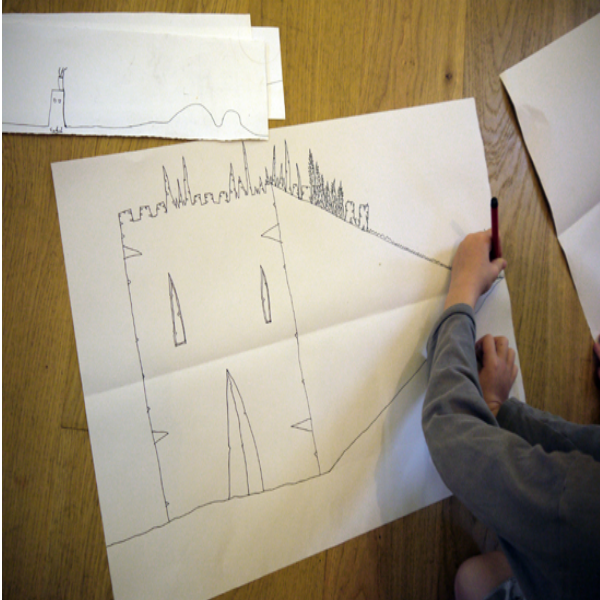
One Line Street Scene: A Visualisation Warm Up Drawing exercise



Another fun variation on the continuous line warm-up exercise: children made a drawing consisting of a single line, which started at the left hand side of the page, and finished at the right hand side. The subject matter was a street scene, which they visualised by listening to details of the buildings/objects that they would meet. The results were beautiful and the children enjoyed

their journey!

Simple Perspective Art Lesson for Young Children



Following on from the above exercise, this resource introduces children (aged 6 to 10) to the basics of perspective in relation to drawing architecture. They learn some simple rules of perspective drawing, before being given plenty of opportunity to develop their drawings on their own.

Making a Blind Contour Drawing



This is a classic drawing

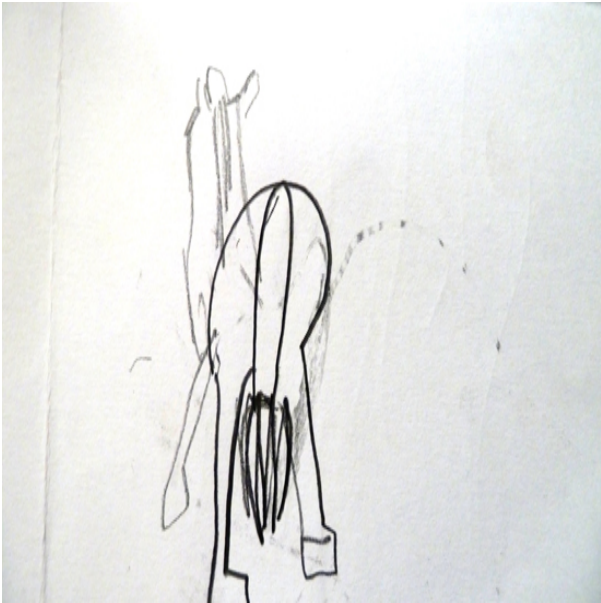
exercise to use with all ages & all abilities and helps you focus upon careful looking, without the worry of what your drawing looks like. In this resource we describe the process and suggest some suitable subject matter and drawing materials.

Minimalising: Using Simple Line Drawings to Explore Sculptural Form



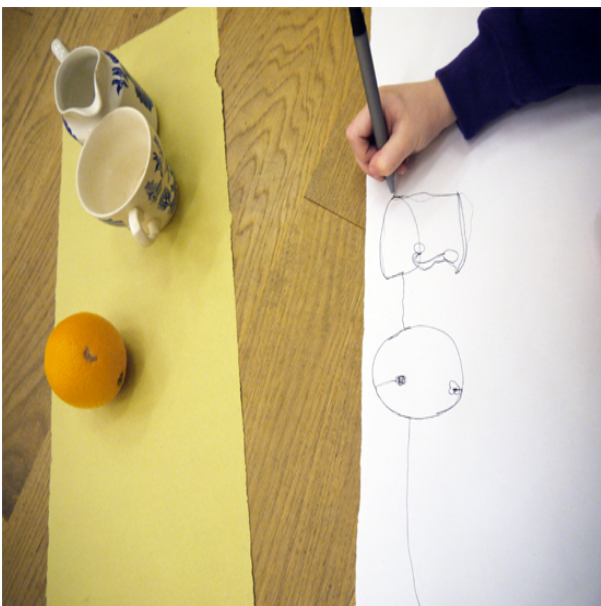
Teenagers explore form using a reductive or minimalising approach to drawing. They were encouraged to create a series of drawings in quick succession, using a limited number of lines to record their objects. For each subsequent drawing, they dropped a line, starting with a seven line drawing and working down to a drawing in one line. This exercise was to get students thinking about essential, sculptural elements in their constructions and drawings.

Exercise to Introduce Foreshortening and Volume in Line Drawings



 This workshop introduces children aged 10 to 13 to foreshortening but can be adapted for groups or individuals and is appropriate for all age groups. The activity enables students to find a way to facilitate the development of volume in their line drawings. They work 'small and quick' to encourage 'doing without thinking' (and worrying!).

Tackling Still Life for Children Part 1 – Continuous Line Drawing



 In the first of a three part workshop on painting a still life, children gain familiarity with the objects by making continuous line drawings. As well as tuning into the subject matter, the drawing exercises also

encourage the children to consider the shape and dimensions of the canvases right from the start.

Drawing Skulls in Black Pen



This workshop on drawing skulls was about looking and the re-examination of marks and lines. Students used black pen to create continuous line drawings on A1 paper.

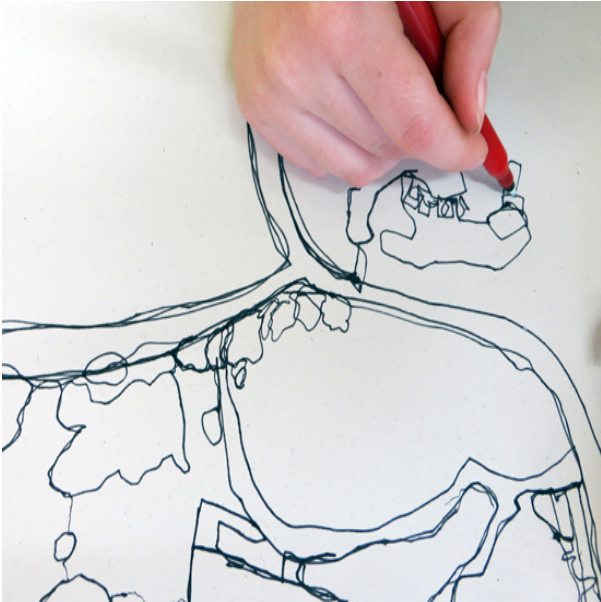
Still Life Drawing in a Cubist Style Using Carbon Paper



A fun workshop and a great way to study still life and explore Cubist ideas of 'temporal

frames' and drawing 'time and space'. Different views of the same glass objects are captured through drawings made with carbon paper, to produce a composite drawing of a still life.

Inspired by Google Earth: Drawing



A session suitable for all ages, continuous line drawings are used to gather information taking inspiration was taken from Google earth images. A variety of media were then explored to extend and develop the drawings,

Drawing and Making Flowers



A beautifully structured resource which shares how drawing can be used to enable children to familiarise themselves with flower anatomy.

Children are given the opportunity to develop their observations and ideas in three dimensions by making flowers with paper and wire.

Quentin Blake's Drawings as Inspiration!



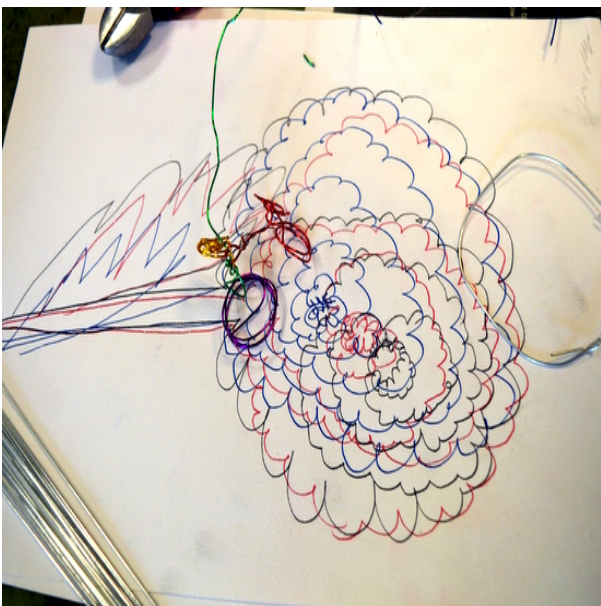
_Taking Quentin Blake's drawings as a starting point for simple exercises, children make drawings from life using line and explore how they might use exaggeration as a tool to help them convey the intention of their drawing. During the session, the children are encouraged to take risks and try new ways of working.

Inspired by Henri Matisse – Repetitive Life Drawing Exercise



—This workshop encourages students to challenge pre-conceived ideas of what a drawing should be or what finished drawings should look like. By making drawings of each other they can experiment with line and expression, inspired by the working practice of Henri Matisse, who often drew an object or life pose many times in succession.

Red to Green: Patterns in Nature, Line and Wire



—One of a series of workshops by Accessart at Red2Green using drawing to explore designs and patterns in nature, followed by a making session using wire to extend ideas into 3D.

Drawing Insects in Wire and Tracing Shadows in Black Pen



Students use modelling wire to 'draw' an insect from their first drawings in black pen. The purpose of this exercise was to help them see and draw form and to think about the quality of line achievable in black pen. It was also an exercise in simple abstraction or simplification of subject matter.

Drawing with Wire



Teenagers in AccessArt's Experimental Drawing Class explore drawing their bodies with wire. They were asked to think about how they feel physically

from within and try and find a way of expressing that with wire. The exercise was about finding a way to 'represent' physical sensations using form.

Drawing with Wire like Calder, and Backwards Forwards Sketching



An exciting resource based on the work of Alexander Calder. Children make drawings of their own toys, which are then interpreted in fine wire – an introduction to the tricky business of drawing in space!

Standing Up! – Making Vertical Sculptures and Working from the Base



Teenagers are challenged to create sculpture that was able to stand up and to explore how tall the sculpture could be before it fell down. They experimented with elegant solutions to make their wire forms stand, considering also the relationship between its base and the surface it was standing on.

This was also an opportunity to explore construction materials and finding the right materials for the job.

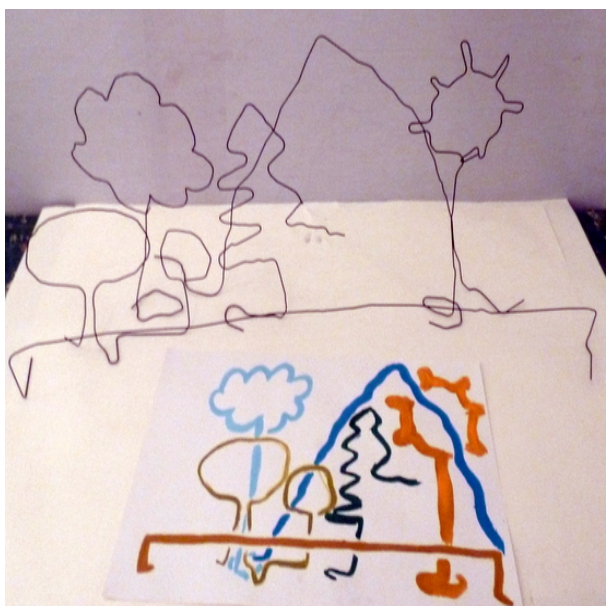
Reaching the Limit: Making Tall Sculptures and Stretching Materials



Following on from working with the vertical in Standing Up! – Introducing the Vertical and Working from the Base, students were pushed to further develop

their understanding of sculptural relationships such as balance, the object's relationship with the ground and how to build elegant, vertical structures. They were set the challenge of building a sculpture or structure, which was as tall or taller than themselves, working with basic (and quite flimsy) construction materials, in an hour.

Landscape Sculptures in Wire and Mixed Media: Working Through Ideas



Teenagers work from the theme of landscape exploring rhythm and movement in wire, drawing from their sculptures and making simultaneously. They were introduced to modelling wire and modroc as construction materials – paper, drawing and collaging materials were also readily available.

Withy Sculptures



Traditionally used for basket weaving and garden sculpture, withies, or willow sticks, are a versatile construction material, ideal for exploring sculptural form and 'drawing in space' with line.

Drawing with Wire: The Polymeric Approach by Julie de Bastion



Artist Julie de Bastion shares a wonderful workshop that enabled participants to create a "drawing within a drawer" making delightful "Story Boxes" involving 3D drawing with flexible black wire, and drawing with mono-printing.

Drawing Space/Drawing in Space



In Western art, we use the term 'negative space' to talk about the areas between objects on the page/canvas but this tends to convey quite a static idea of space. There is a Japanese word, 'ma' (間), that suggests a more evocative and dynamic spatial experience and it was this concept that inspired this workshop, in which teenagers made three dimensional line drawings to explore the space around them.

Teachers Explore 'Line and Shape' at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge with AccessArt



In the spring and summer of 2016, Paula Briggs and Sheila Ceccarelli from AccessArt and Kate Noble from the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge to create and deliver a series of InSET sessions (in-service-training) for primary school teachers.

The aim was to fuse top Museum Education practice with practical, hands on learning in Fine Art disciplines including: drawing, printmaking, sketchbooks, collage and sculpture.

Making Elastic Band Sketchbooks with Pupils at Philip Southcote School

Mayan Tabletop Eraser Printing Project

Make a Stitched Drawing of a House in an Hour

Making Paper Masks for Carnival and Mardi Gras

Making a Carnival Mask with the help of an AccessArt Template.

InSET Day at Welland Academy: Exploring Printmaking Processes

Aluminium Foil Printing by Paul Carney

“Plasticine Models & Decorated Plinths ” Inspired by the Book ‘Dirty Beasts’ by Roald Dahl & illustrated by Quentin Blake

You Might Also like...

Pathway: Telling Stories through drawing and making



[This is featured in the 'Drawing Stories Through Drawing and Making' pathway](#)

Sketchbook Exercise: Drawing Brushes with Charcoal

Make a Model Stitched House

Collage and Construction

What is a Canvas? Exploration Activity

**Making Felt Sailing Boats by
Ruth Purdy**

Building and Drawing

Feeling Our Way Around Wool

**Marbling for Surface Design
by Ruth Purdy**