

Mark Making & Sound: Part Two

By [Paula Briggs](#)

Mark making underpins all drawing activity. In Part Two of [Mark-Making and Sound](#), we explore how we might capture the spirit of a piece of music through abstract mark-making.

This resource is the second of three resources that explore how we can use sound to inspire mark-making.



This exercise aims to enable learners to develop mark-making skills without the pressure of trying to make a drawing that "looks like" something else. This activity aims to enable learners to link the marks they make, how they feel when they make them, and how others 'read' those marks.

How can we use sound to inspire personality into our mark-making? What kinds of marks will we make, inspired by the music we hear?

This resource can be used with ages 6 through to adults and takes between 5 minutes and 15 minutes.

A more open or able learner might be able to begin to capture the spirit of the music through visual marks. People "reading" the drawing might be able

to directly reference elements within the musical piece.

Please use this exercise in the context of the other [Mark Making and Sound exercises here](#). The text explanations on the other resources in this series apply to this resource, too.

Even very young children understand that we enjoy listening to music because of the variety of rhythms, melodies, and instruments within the piece. Likewise, they can make their own drawings more interesting by using a variety of marks, but we need to enable children to experience for themselves that they can invent their own mark-making language.

In this exercise, we will use music to inspire mark-making. In particular, we explore how the spirit of the music affects the pressure, speed, and movement of our hand/mark making.



This exercise can be used as a transitional exercise between activities or to precede other drawing activities. It's an ideal exercise to do as a [guided activity](#), i.e., with the teacher using verbal prompts and sounds to help the children.

Note to Teachers:

Please do try this exercise yourself a few times so you know how it feels to actually do the exercise before you run through it with pupils.

Watch the video above as a class so that the children can begin to appreciate some of the different ways that they can use their drawing tool, inspired by the sound.

You can then either use just the audio from the video so the children can create their own marks (it is important that they don't feel the need to

replicate the marks in the video), or you might choose your own music.

There is also a lot of scope for pupils to compose their own music or make their own musical choices, to help increase ownership and diversity of mark-making.



Without a visual subject matter (i.e., you are not drawing anything in particular), you will be making marks using your drawing tool, inspired by the sounds you hear.

It's really important to try and work intuitively and without overthinking what you are doing. This can take a little bit of practice, and it can also take a little bit of time to settle into the session. At first, the saboteur voice inside your

head might be telling you:

- I'm not doing it right
- This is silly
- I don't know what to do
- I'm pretending...

Try to ignore this voice. Acknowledge its presence, but politely tell the voice to shush. The more you can relax into the activity and stop resisting, the more you will get out of the exercise.

Always remember there is no right or wrong way of drawing in this exercise, only an “expanding” of what is being experienced.

To Start

Take a sheet of A3 or A2 cartridge paper, and a drawing tool: a soft pencil (2B, 4B, 6B) or a handwriting pen, or ink and brush, etc.

As you listen to the music, challenge yourself to make a variety of marks in response. To help push the diversity of marks you make, think about how you:

- Hold the drawing tool. For example, holding it firmly near the drawing end will give you

a different result than holding it lightly at the other end. Be experimental!

- Experiment with the pressure applied
- Experiment with the speed of movement
- Experiment with how you move your fingers, wrist, elbow, or shoulder.

Varying each of these in different combinations will help you make a more diverse set of marks.

Feel the energy of the sound, and let the same kind of energy travel down your arm to the drawing tool!

Tip:

If you feel like you're really struggling to let go and you can't stop that voice inside your head saying "I don't know what I'm doing", then try closing your eyes as you listen to the sounds and make the marks with your eyes closed.



Reflection

Once you have tried the exercise, you may like to ask the following questions to help you reflect upon the experience:

- Which marks do I like?
- Which marks are unexpected/ have I never made before?
- When I look at the marks, can I hear the sound that inspired me to make them?
- Can I see that my marks have character or personality? Do they convey emotion, for example, anger or care?

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.

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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.

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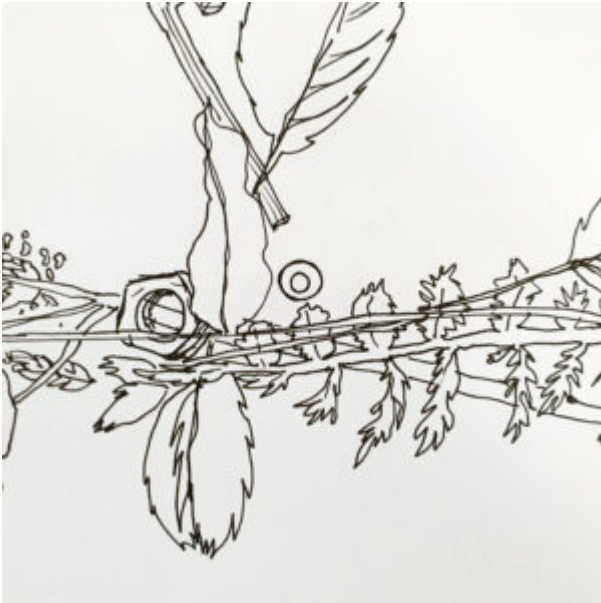


[This is featured in the 'Music and Art' pathway](#)

Mark Making & Sound: Part One



Mark Making & Sound: Part Three



Mark-Making & Sound: Part One

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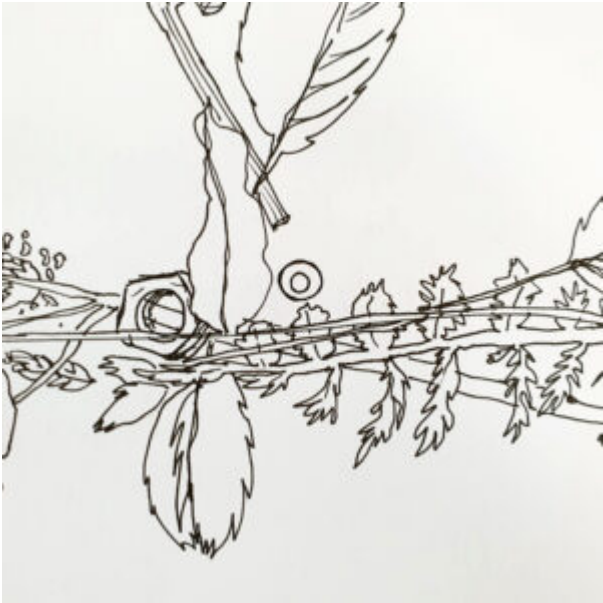


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Mark Making & Sound: Part Two



Mark Making & Sound: Part Three



Drawing to a Slow Rhythm



Inspired by Miro



Drawing to Music



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Draw your Granny and Grandpa or Any Relative You Love!

The Nonna Maria Drawing Challenge by Luca Damiani

Be Inspired by Flowers in a Glass Vase by Jan Davidsz de Heem

This resource looks at 'Flowers in a Glass Vase' by the Dutch painter, Jan Davidsz de Heem (1606-1684), on permanent display at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, and how it might

inspire your own creative responses and experimentation with colour.

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Drawing Large

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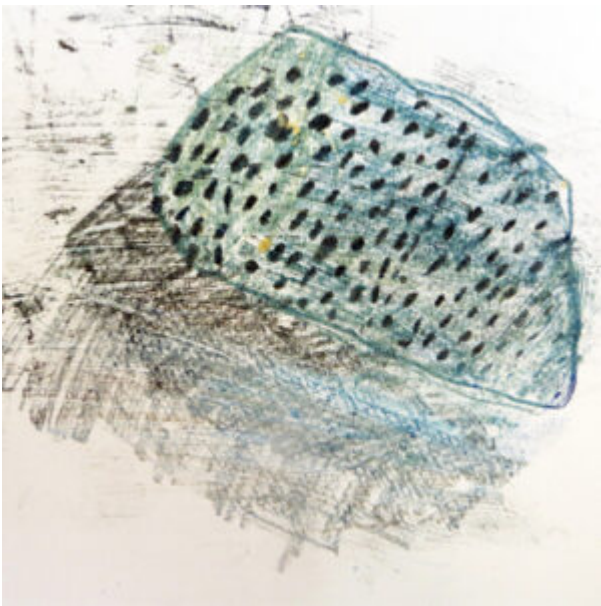
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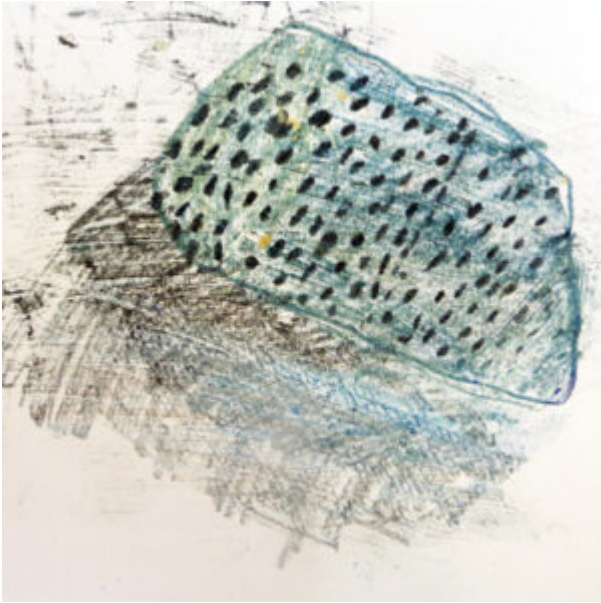
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Drawing Large



A Progression Pathway in Clay Work

From Early Years

**Woodland Exploration by Caroline
Wendling & Deborah Wilenski**



Artists Caroline Wendling and Deborah Wilenski encourage young children in a woodland exploration using art and imagination as their discovery tools.

Nest By Paula Briggs



Paula gives children the tools to both draw and make. Children worked with hard and soft pencils, graphite, wax resist, watercolour, clay and sticks.

From Key Stage One

How to Clay Play



[_](#)This resource, commissioned by Cambridge City Council, encourages being together through making and introduces the basics of working with Scolaquip air-hardening clay.

Ofsted are Coming Tomorrow!



[_](#)Primary school teacher, Sue Brown, shares her experience of an Ofsted Deep Dive in Art and gives advice to other teachers on how they might prepare themselves.

Quick Clay Figurative Sketches By Paula Briggs



Paula provided young children with the opportunity to explore clay as a “short term” construction and modelling material. Without being fired, the dry clay has a limited lifespan, and the sculptures will crumble, but I think it’s important to remind ourselves that even without access to a kiln, clay can still be regarded as a valuable sculptural material.

Decorative Clay Coil Pots by Sharon Gale



This simple clay pot making resource is not the traditional way of making coil pots but it’s lots of fun and by using different paint effects, the end results can be very interesting. We worked on this project for two, two-hour sessions.

Making Plaster Reliefs By Paula Briggs



 This resource describes how to create plaster reliefs using clay and foamboard moulds. It is based upon a session which took place at Bourn Primary Academy with a group of Year 5 children.

Clay Art Medals by Sharon Gale



 In this three stage resource, students make a circular medal from clay depicting their own profile, look at examples of fun lettering and devise a short, fun or meaningful phrase to paint inside their portrait profile. Clay art medals are a fun way to link class topics with an art activity.

Japan: Making Sushi – Recycled Style! By Jan Miller



 Inspired by research into Japanese culture, children explored the potential and limitations of paper and recycled materials, learning through play and experimentation to make 3D forms. The outcomes of this process were used to inform work created in a second medium of clay, using kitchen equipment to shape the clay and add textures.

From Key Stage Two

Japan – Ceramics Inspire Painting and Painting Inspires Ceramics By Jan Miller



Jan shares a Year Three class project that uses the work of a contemporary Japanese ceramicist to inspire vibrant paintings in a variety of materials. The children then used their own art to design ceramic vessels.

Clay 'Portrait' Miniatures by Sharon Gale



Portrait miniatures are small painted images, usually of monarchs and very wealthy, important people. Dating back to the 1520s, these tiny portraiture paintings are like medals, but with realistic colour. This two stage clay and painting resource is very versatile because essentially the miniatures are blank canvasses.

Clay Slab Work by Andy Cairns



[_](#)This resource explores how to make an armature and use clay slab to build a form. Based upon the legend of “Black Shuck”, a ghostly dog that roams the coast searching for its drowned masters, this project engaged the children and resulted in charismatic sculptures, but you could equally transfer the activity to other themes.

Fruit-Inspired Clay Tiles By Rachel Dormor



[_](#)Ceramicist Rachel Dormor shares a workshop idea suitable for primary or secondary aged children. Working in clay, pupils take their inspiration from drawings of fruit to

make decorative clay tiles.

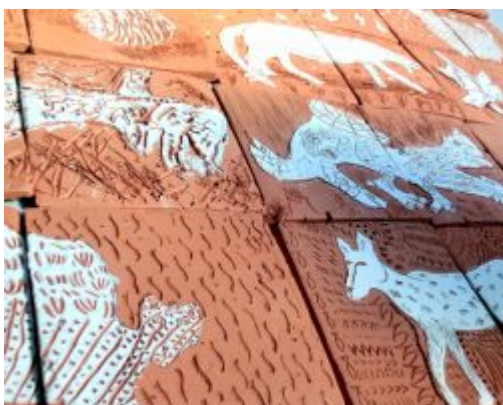
Fruit Pinch Pot Project By Rachel Dormor



Ceramicist Rachel Dormor shares a workshop idea suitable for primary or secondary aged children. Working in clay, pupils take their inspiration from drawings of fruit to make simple pinch pot mugs.

From Key Stage Three and Beyond

Chimera Drawings into Beautiful Terracotta Tiles By Eleanor Somerset



Sgraffito, or 'scratching' is

a technique which is an excellent way to reinforce mark making with all age groups.

Drawing into leather hard red clay tiles to create designs using mark-making can be even more effective when done through a white earthenware slip to reveal the red clay beneath.

Exploring Materials: Clay and Water by Sheila Ceccarelli



[_Sheila](#) asked teenagers at AccessArt's Experimental Drawing Class when the last time was that they had played with clay?

Arts and Minds: Manipulating Clay with Water by Sheila Ceccarelli



[_This](#) post shows how to

facilitate a sensory session exploring water and clay – by Sheila Ceccarelli (artist) and Yael Pilowsky Bankirer (Psychotherapist) for Arts and Minds.

Painted Clay by Melissa Pierce Murray



[_](#)This post was inspired by the Japanese art of dorondongo, where mud and dirt are shaped and buffed into highly polished spheres. We made clay spheres and other simple forms in clay, and once dry, painted them with ink and acrylic.

Exploring Portraits with Eleanor Somerset



[_](#)In this resource artist,

Eleanor Somerset shows how she led students in The Little Art Studio, Sheffield, to explore and discover portraiture through various media.

Introducing Sgraffito using a Coloured Clay Slip on a Terracotta Tile By Eleanor Somerset



[_](#)Further explore how to make beautiful sgraffito, or 'scratched drawings' with artist Eleanor Somerset.

From Bones and Body to Structure and Form By Melissa Pierce Murray



[_](#)Artist Melissa Pierce Murray worked with teenagers from AccessArt's

Experimental Drawing Class on a series of workshops which physically explored drawing and sculptural responses to form, forces and anatomy.

Simple Clay Moulds by Melissa Pierce Murray



In this post, artist Melissa Pierce Murray, shows, step-by-step, how young teenagers explored plaster casting by making simple clay 'waste moulds' and then moved on to making simple 'two piece moulds'.

Casting a Negative Space in Plaster with Sculptor Rachel Wooller



Resident artist at ArtWorks

Studios, Cambridge, Rachel Wooller, introduces teenagers at AccessArt's Experimental Drawing Class to the process of casting and creating negative shapes in plaster from clay positives.

Rowan: Clay Coiling Techniques to Make Penguins, Tweety Pie and a Dalek too! by Abi Moore and Sarah Nibbs



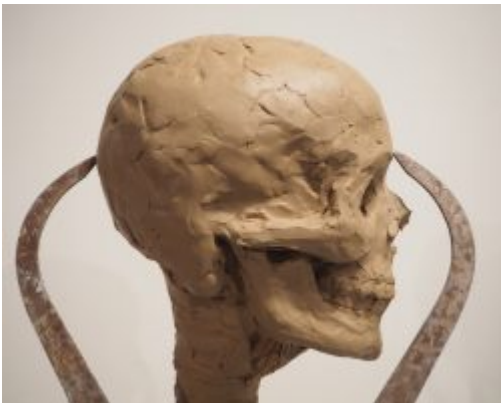
Abi, Sarah and students at Rowan Humberstone, show how they made clay birds using clay coiling techniques and with a plaster mould for the birds' bases.

Rowan: Making a Clay Bird from a Mould by Abi Moore and Sarah Nibbs



Abi and students from Rowan Humberstone, describe how they made clay birds from a plaster mould.

Modelling The Head in Clay by Melissa Pierce Murray



Artist Melissa Pierce Murray led a series of workshops for AccessArt's Experimental Drawing Class in which the teenagers modelled a head in clay. There are five resources in this series, beginning with constructing an armature and making preparatory drawings, then studying the bone structure of the skull before moving on to features. The final post in this series looks at ways to increase the techniques and approaches used in drawing.

Design Lab: Phoebe Cummings at the V&A



Students, from the DesignLab at the V&A, London, worked with artist Phoebe Cummings over a three month period to create a site-specific, group piece, from unfired clay which was inspired by the historical 2D designs found on 19th century British tableware in the collection.

Life Drawing Class: Visual Impressions

Research: Life Drawing & Adolescents

Walking and Drawing

Foreshortened Sketches

The Story of Cupid and Psyche by Jacopo del Sellaio (1442 – 1493)

In this post, Kate Noble, Education Officer at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge shares the story of Cupid and Psyche as depicted in the 15th Century

painting by Jacopo Del Sellaio. This is one of a series of posts from Inspire: A Celebration of Children's Art at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.