

Engaging Audiences Through Transportation

By [Paula Briggs](#)

The “Engaging Audiences Through Transportation” workshop at the [AccessArt Lab](#) aimed to bring together artists and teachers to explore how we can help inspire and engage learners by manipulating the learning environment itself. Thank you to all those who attended the session – it felt extremely positive and energetic!



The Thinking Behind the Session...

So many of our children's learning experiences are relatively unsensory. When we engage with art – making, looking and talking – it is usually a sensory experience. Most definitely the senses which are ignited as part of the process help us connect with our emotions, feelings and thoughts. So I wanted to explore, with the help of teachers and artists, how far we (the facilitators) can go to help meeting the learning in accessing art in a sensory way by creating a space which is primed to

stimulate the senses...

This goes beyond a traditional approach of an art lesson in which the facilitator “sets up” the room before the activity – making sure there is access to tools and materials, to subject matter etc etc. Here we are thinking instead about curating a space for the learners to discover – which begins the process of transportation (or engagement, or escapism, or imagination) which ultimately helps the learners access their own creativity.

It seems to me a generous act, that the facilitator thinks carefully about how to curate a space in which the learners might be best placed to act. It takes time, attention to detail, access to materials, your own creativity and imagination – to create a temporary environment which is specifically honed to the activity in question. It is the opposite of “bland” or “vanilla” or “classroom”. Instead, the question for the facilitator might be: “how can I use materials, furniture, sound, and space to create an environment which will delight, or challenge, and stimulate curiosity and conversation?”



Other Thoughts...

Any workshop session is always an opportunity to layer experiences upon experiences. Another aspect I wanted us to explore in this session was how, as part of the challenge to make, we can give permission to participants (whether artists and teachers or the learners themselves) to take what they need. This sounds glib, or even undesirable, but I wanted us to be able to acknowledge that to

be creative, we need to be brave to take what we need, and to put unlikely things together, without any kind of guarantee of outcome. To take what we need, to destroy before we create, and to explore free from fear of “success” is vital if we are to explore creative potential.



The Warm-Up...

We began with a visualisation. I asked

participants to stand (bravely!) in a circle, facing outwards so no-one felt “watched.” As they stood, I asked them to first imagine, and then to act out, that they were reaching their arms out, one at a time, to take un-named “things” out of the air, pulling them towards their body. I asked them to explore “taking” these things from different parts of the space around them – much like you’d pluck an apple from a tree. As they did this, I asked them to purposely not name or even imagine what these things were – I didn’t want them to limit or second guess what they wanted or needed. Instead to imagine the vastness of what they *could* take... Perhaps they were gathering tangible things – like materials, or sounds, or objects, or elements, or even ways of being...

I explained that I wanted them to give themselves permission to take what was needed – even without knowing what was needed (that would come through exploration). To recognise that we have this whole world out there, and as creative beings we can take elements from anywhere, bring them to us without knowing why, and sit with them before using them to create.

Ultimately, we need our children and young people to understand they are empowered to act and to create. The action must start with them – they are responsible for their actions – we give them permission and help them understand the space in which they act. If they remain disempowered, they

will not thrive.

The Set Up:



My “gesture” for transporting the artists and teachers was to fill the room full of yellow. I had been feeling like there was a lot of tiredness in the people I met (generally – not the participants!), and a lot of fear and worry. Yellow is the colour of energy and optimism, so my urge was to give participants an abundance of yellow – rich not just with the colour but also with its materiality.



The materials were presented on the table with participants working facing inwards so that there was a sense of community and shared aim.



The Invitation:

I invited the participants to explore the materials in front of them, to absorb their yellow materiality. I reminded them they were able to be active – to walk about with curiosity. To go and look and find, not just to accept the materials immediately in front of them. This investigatory curiosity is key to creativity.

I invited them to begin to make in one of two ways (which in effect are the same – but offering the two ways of saying the same thing might appeal to different people):

- *Collect and Curate, or*
- *Make a Creative Response.*

I encouraged them to do nothing more than try to follow their instinct, and let one thing lead to another. The only criteria was to transform “yellow”, into “my yellow”.

I reminded them again “they had permission.” They could (and should) feel able to destroy before they create. For example, feel able to cut the tape measure, feel able to snip the fabric. Of course, as facilitator you will have your own boundaries around the materials you supply, and you should be clear about these. But it is important we enable learners to act responsibly by giving them trust and permission to act. Art is a safe space in which to learn these skills, and to

After 45 minutes, the participants shared their responses.

















The Collaborative Task...

Next, I invited participants to work in pairs and to collaborate to brainstorm, through making, a small maquette (model) of a space which they thought would be transportational to the learners in their experience. I emphasised that these

should be aspirational, imagination and ultimately unrealistic, but that these would give us the opportunity to talk about what might be possible, or might be helpful, in understanding how best we might engage our learners.

Thank you once again to the artists and teachers who took part. Please do post any comments below, thank you.









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.

Animation Set Design Challenge

An animation set design challenge.

AGES 9-11

AGES 11-14

Animation Set Design Challenge

Use this challenge to design and make a model “set” for an animation.

1. Explore the [Rosie Hurley: Esio Trot](#) resource to see how artist Rosie uses her sketchbook to help

her design and make a set for an animation project.



Artwork by Rosie Hurley

2. Decide upon your creative stimulus.

Your set will be inspired by a particular poem, story, short film or piece of music. Make sure you are familiar with the stimulus by watching / listening to it many times. Talk about it with your class so you can start to understand characters/mood/settings/narrative.

3. Use your Sketchbook

Use your sketchbook, just as Rosie does, to help you understand the stimulus. If the stimulus is visual, like a film, then pause the film and make drawings of scenes which you feel are important.

If the stimulus is aural, listen and use your

imagination to make sketchbook drawings.



Artwork by Rosie Hurley

4. Think about Structure

Start to think about what scene or set you will create. It can change as you work, but try to have a starting point. Think about:

Is it indoors or outdoors?

- Is it on one level?
- What would the audiences' viewpoint be?
- Does it have spaces within it?
- Will it have movable walls/parts?

Try to think of it as a 3d composition.



Artwork by Rosie Hurley

5. Think about Colour and Texture

Use your sketchbook to explore colour palettes. What colours would suit your set/the initial stimulus? Mix and test colours in your sketchbook, or cut colours from magazines and stick them in.

Think about how you use the colours too. Think about backgrounds, foregrounds, objects on the stage. Will there be colour everywhere? Will you have areas of no colour?

Think about the materials and textures you will use when you build your model set. Explore different materials – fabrics, wire, wood, paper, string, found objects... there is no limit to the materials you might use.



Felted and Embroidered Yellow Living Room by Gabby Dickson

6. Start Building your Model Set

Take a box, and cut away some sides so you are left with a 3, 4 or 5 sided structure in which to make your model set. Don't forget to look back through your sketchbook to see your ideas about structure.

Start making! This is the fun bit and your ideas might change from your initial sketchbook work – and that is absolutely fine and as it should be!



Chalkboard Prop for Kitchen By Gabby Dickson

7. Think about Lighting

Finally it is time to light your set. Consider how you might use torches or natural light to light the set. Perhaps you will use coloured lenses too. Remember lighting is a key tool to create mood and it should be used with the mood of the original stimulus in mind.



Rosie Hurley Set Design

8. Photograph your Set!

Take photographs of your set, making sure you explore camera angles, near and far focus and lighting.

If you have time, use your set as basis for an animation!



Artwork by Gabby Savage-Dickson

You Might Also Like...

Pathway: Set Design



[This is featured in the 'Set Design' pathway](#)

talking points: negative space by tiny inventions



[Explore the work of animation directors Max Porter and Ru Kuwahata.](#)

Sculptural Challenge No 1: Colourful Walls

A sculptural challenge encouraging the exploration of colour.

AGES 9-11

AGES 11-14

Artwork by Krijn de Koning

Questions for Children

How would it feel to be in the spaces Krijn creates?

How do you think he chooses the colour for each wall? How do you think the shape and size of the wall affects the colour too?

Find more of Krijn's work [here](#).

Sculptural Challenge!

Use Krijn's work as your inspiration, think about how you might make a series of colourful walls. You won't be building a life-size sculptural installation (not today anyway!) but instead you can either make a model or create a piece of 2d artwork which shares your vision. Remember, because you are not creating the artwork then you can really be imaginative and dream!

Here are some clues, but you may have your own ideas too:

Use your sketchbook to "collect" colours that you like. Find them in magazines by cutting swatches out, find them by mixing paints, find them by

mixing other materials. Record them, test them, label them, make notes (what colours did you mix?), name them (the names you give them might help you to describe the affect they have on you).

Next think about what the “walls” would be like. What shape? What size? Would they enclose? Would they have holes? Would there be a roof? How do they connect? How would the person get in to the space? How would you want the person to feel? Again, use your sketchbook to plot and plan.

Think too about the location or context you would like your sculptural installation to be in. Would you like it to be in the Antarctic? The jungle? The high street? Again, use your sketchbook.

Think about how you would apply your colours to the walls? Would each wall be one colour? Would you introduce pattern? Images? Again, use your sketchbook.

Finally, either make a model using card, paint, fabric etc to share your vision, or make a 2d artwork.

You May Also Like...

Pathway: Brave Colour



[This is featured in the 'Brave colour' pathway](#)

Talking Points: Yinka Ilori



[See how Yinka Ilori transforms spaces with colour and pattern](#)

Talking Points: Morag Myerscough



AGES 9-11

Questions for Children:

Can you imagine what it would be like to be in a room with the installations in the videos above? How would it make you feel? What do they remind you of?

How do you think the colour affects the mood?

Sculptural Challenge!

Using the artwork in the videos above as your inspiration, think about how you might design a sculptural installation which involves light, form and colour.

You won't be building a life-size sculptural installation (not today anyway!) but instead you can either make a model or create a piece of 2d artwork which shares your vision. Remember, because you are not creating the artwork then you can really be imaginative and dream!

Here are some clues, but you may have your own ideas too:

Use your sketchbook to "collect" colours that you like. Find them in magazines by cutting swatches out, find them by mixing paints, find them by mixing other materials. Record them, test them, label them, make notes (what colours did you mix?), name them (the names you give them might help you to describe the affect they have on you).

Think about the kinds of forms (shapes) you would like the coloured light to fall on to. Would you like the coloured light to surround a person, or would you like the person to pass near the objects? How would the person enter the space? Would the space be very small or very large? How would you want the person to feel? Again, use your sketchbook to plot and plan.

Think too about the space you would like the coloured light to be in. Would you like it to be a dark space so that the lights show up against the darkness, or would you prefer a light space, so that it feels floaty and ephemeral?

Think about how you would apply your colours to the walls? Would each wall be one colour? Would you introduce pattern? Images? Again, use your sketchbook.

Finally, either make a model using card, paint, fabric etc to share your vision, or make a 2d artwork. If you make a small space, you might like to be inspired by the [Mini Art World](#) Resource and use coloured filters and torches to replicate the space.

You May Also Like...

Pathway: Brave Colour



[This is featured in the 'Brave colour' pathway](#)

Talking Points: Carnovsky



[Explore different colour profiles and see how light can transform art](#)

Which Artists: Liz West



Find out how Liz West is inspired by light, colour and reflections

Talking Points: Olafur Eliasson



See how Eliasson uses elemental materials such as light, water, and air temperature