

“Acts of Kindness” Workshop

By [Paula Briggs](#)



Portrait of Jan Brueghel I (1568-1625) and his family, by Peter Paul Rubens (Detail)

The day after Trump and Zelenskyy stunned the world with their televised argument in the Oval Office, AccessArt ran a “Constructing Positive Social Stories: Acts of Kindness” workshop session at the [AccessArt Lab](#).

The event was one of a number of “[Artists & Teachers Exploring Together](#)” sessions, devised by AccessArt to give us an opportunity to think about some of the more philosophical issues behind art education. By working with artists and educators who are open to holding ideas lightly, we hope to collaboratively discover new arts educational approaches and activities, transferable to a variety of settings.

The idea behind this particular session was to explore how we can use making as a tool to help us focus more closely on the positives which surround us everyday, no matter how small. By creating a shared space for making and conversation, we hoped to lift spirits and create a sense of shared experience.

This post shares the session aims, some of the conversational highlights, and observations of the workshop attendees, and my own as facilitator. Thank you to all who attended, and for your generosity.

“A timely workshop this Saturday morning led by AccessArt. Reflecting individually on our own experiences of small kindnesses, and then choosing

from a table of materials to abstractly or literally depict these, prompted conversation that magnified the acts beyond their original intent. The joy of creating by hand alongside others, of talking and making sense whilst sculpting and glueing, of sharing in stories of the smallest of acts that had made a difference to someone else... about people feeling seen, loved, heard. I left feeling lighter, more hopeful about the world, and with more generosity towards other drivers on my journey home."

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Angry Cat, Calm Cat

Alternative Fashion

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Barbie and Ken Transformation

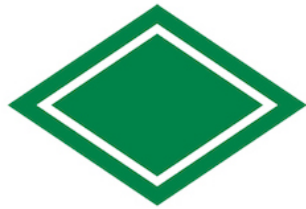


Puppets Inspired by Historical Paintings

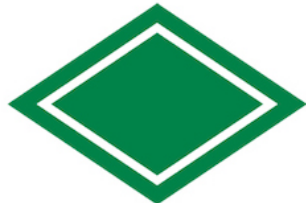


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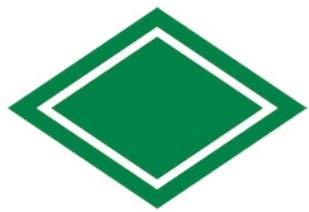
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opportunity to design and wear their own T-shirt

Autumn Floor Textiles



Use a variety of different materials on calico as well as use new techniques such as wax resist

Marbled Hole Punch sketchbooks



Create simple and inexpensive sketchbook

made up of old paper

Exploring A Midsummer Night's Dream: Costume Design for Bottom

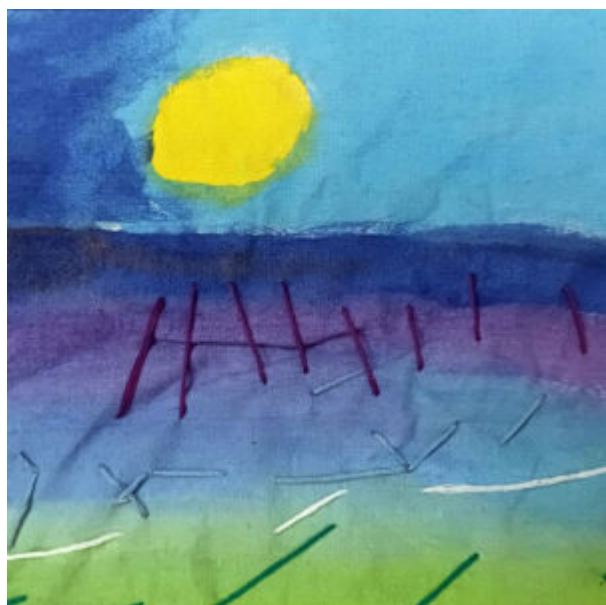
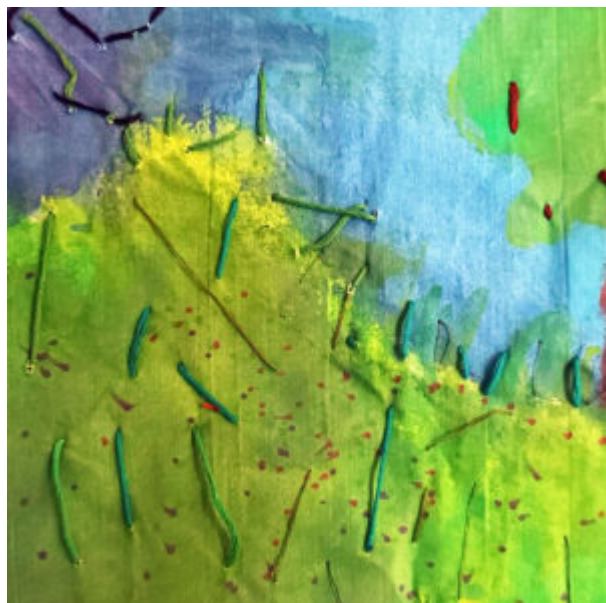
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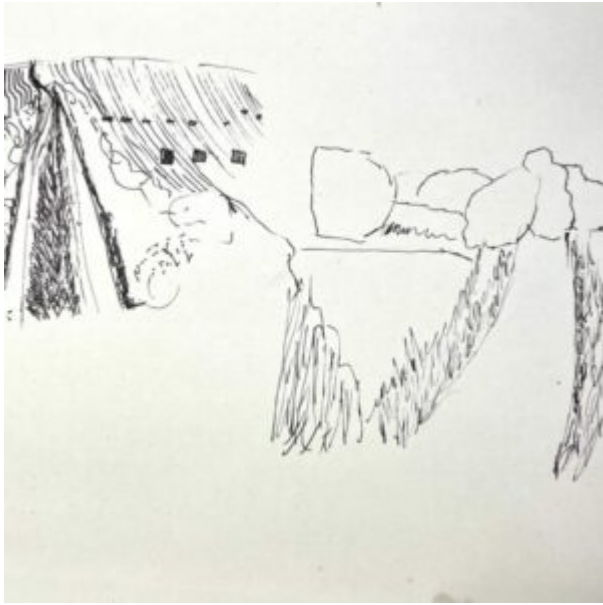


















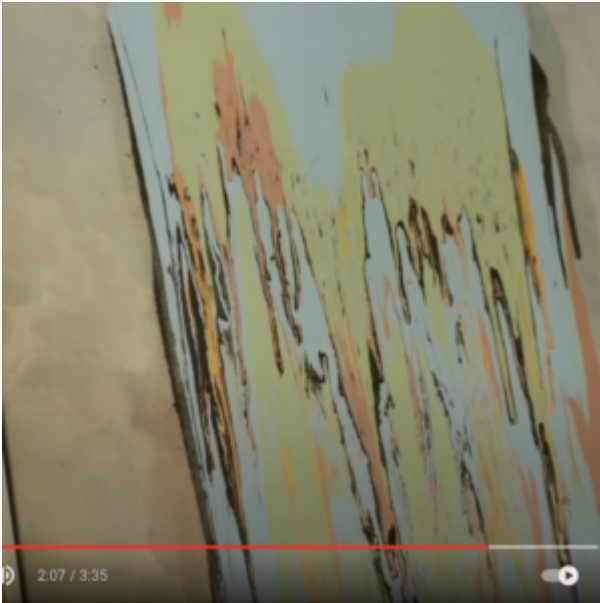
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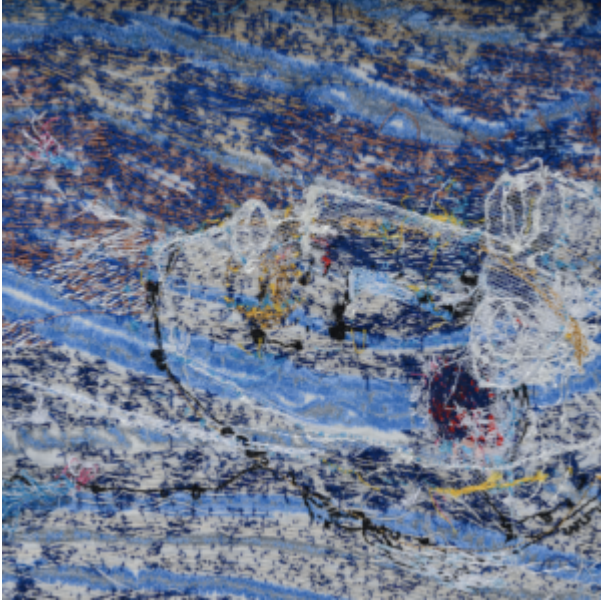
Talking Points: Frank Bowling



Talking Points: Hannah Rae



Talking Points: Alice Kettle



Osakana

**How Do We Look At
Contemporary Sculpture: Meg
Klosterman**

Still Life Compositions:

Inspired by Cezanne

What We Like About This Resource...

“This activity walks through a number of different processes and taps into multiple skills. This provides a rich exploratory project for children to fully immerse themselves in. Cezanne was the focus artist for this project, but other contemporary still life painters could be used as starter inspiration. We actually advocate showing the work of more than one artist as this builds knowledge of how approaches to painting, drawing etc differ. This also helps children move towards a personal response rather than creating a ‘copy’ of one particular artist’s work” – Rachel, AccessArt

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Pathway: Exploring Still Life



[This is featured in the 'Explore Still Life' pathway](#)

talking points: Flemish and Dutch Still Life Painters



Talking Points: Paul Cezanne



talking points: Contemporary still life



Remembrance Day Peg Soldiers

What We Like About This Resource...

"It's great to see a different approach to thinking about remembrance day. These peg soldiers are a refreshing alternative to artwork inspired by poppies. The processes involved encourage children to focus on fine motor skills: wrapping embroidery thread around the peg and creating small detailed clothes and helmets. These dolls look particularly effective when standing as a collection and would make a poignant alternative to a standard display board" – Rachel, AccessArt

See This Resource Used In Schools...





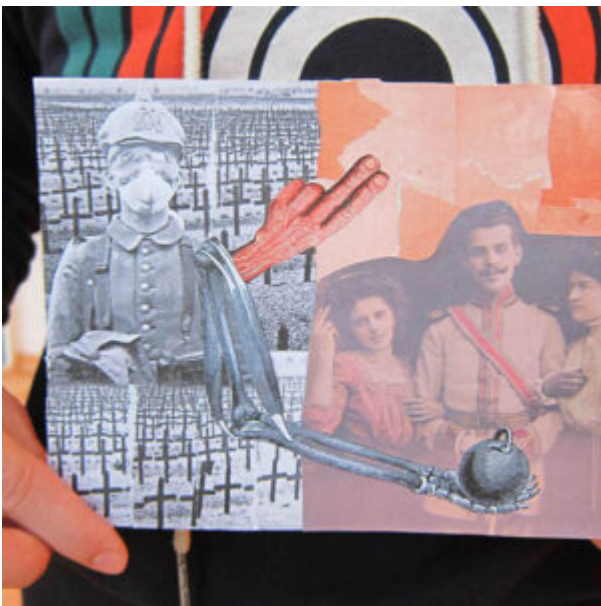
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[An Exploration of Paul Nash](#)



For Remembrance Day



World War 1 Mail Art

An Exploration of Pandora's Box

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Decorative Coil Clay Pots



Visual Arts Planning: Clay

Which Artists: Rachel Parker

What We Like About This Resource

“It’s really interesting to see the combination of hand and digital work in Rachel’s work, and particularly how her hand stitched embroidery is scanned before being used to create patterned products. We love that lots of Rachel’s work begins in sketchbooks and how this really

underpins her creative process. For children in school, learning to utilise a sketchbook and discover their potential through drawing and mapping ideas is invaluable. We have a whole Sketchbook Journey section on the AccessArt website (linked below) which explores this in more detail". – *Rachel, AccessArt.*

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Pathway: Exploring pattern

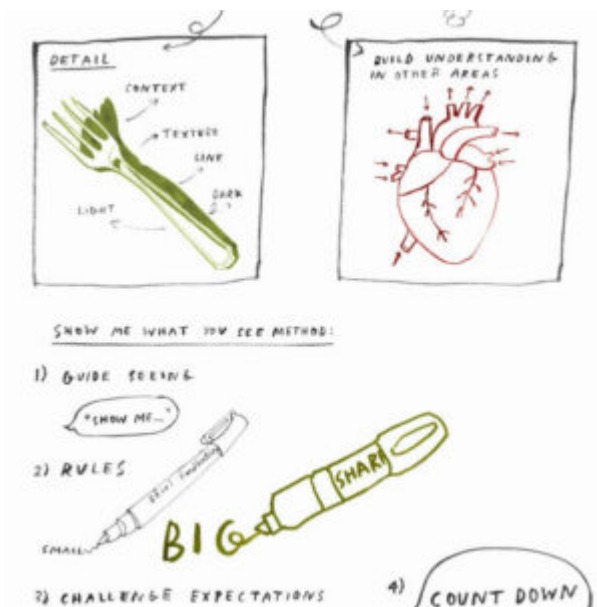


[This is featured in the 'Exploring Pattern' pathway](#)

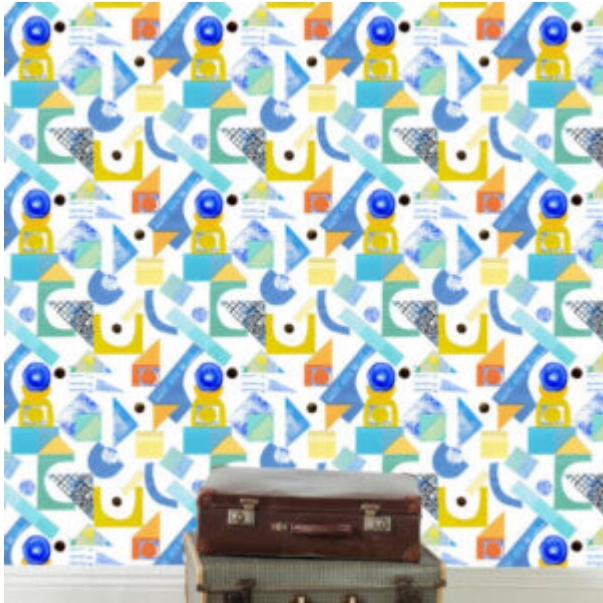
using sketchbooks to make visual notes



Show me what you see



Inspired by Rachel Parker



Sewn Treasure Box



Felt and Embroidery Sets



Which Artists: Cas Holmes

What We Like About This Resource...

“The sense of journey and feeling of movement is such an interesting part of Cas’ textile work here. We love how location and place is communicated through the variety of fluid and meandering textile marks used. Cas’ Romani background as well as early experience living in Japan make for a rich cultural backdrop to her work. The themes here could be explored in the classroom by asking children to use memories of places they’ve visited to produce a creative

response using fabrics and mixed media” – *Rachel, AccessArt*

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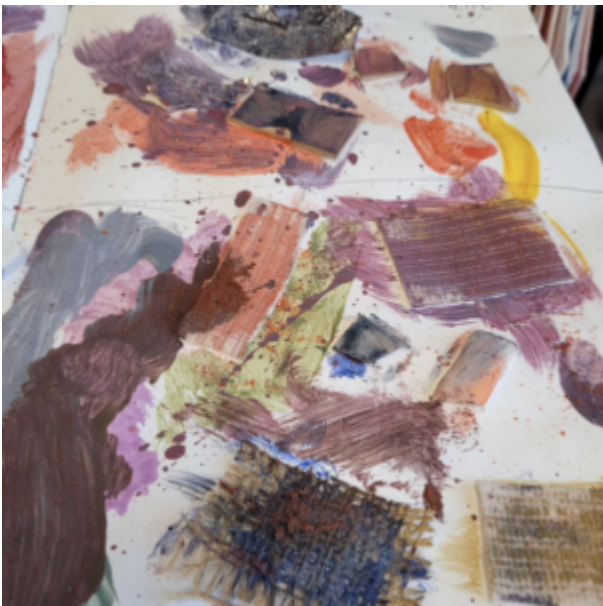
[Landscape Sculptures](#)

**Volcano Painting inspired by
Frank Bowling**

**See This Resource Used In
Schools...**

















What We Like About This Resource...

“We love how this activity provides an opportunity to explore a well known Artist’s work, through focussing on their materials and techniques. The children looked at Frank Bowling’s work before creating their own individual responses that retained individual ownership – something we advocate as part of a rich and balanced visual arts education. It was also great to see how a professional artist visited the school to further enhance the children’s experience.” – *Rachel, AccessArt*

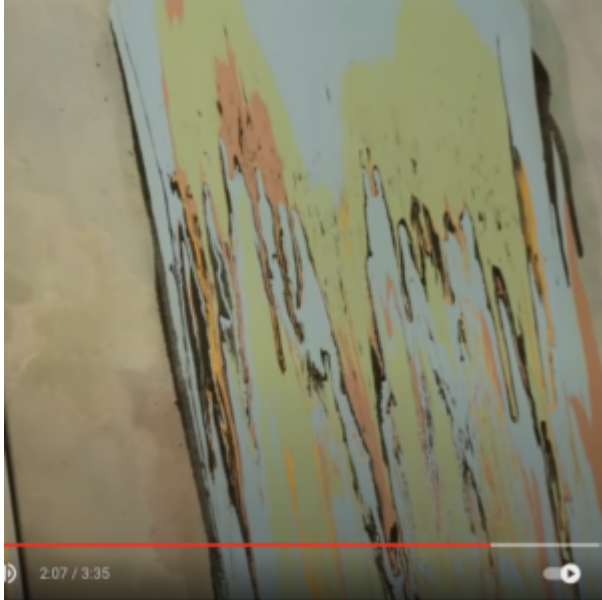
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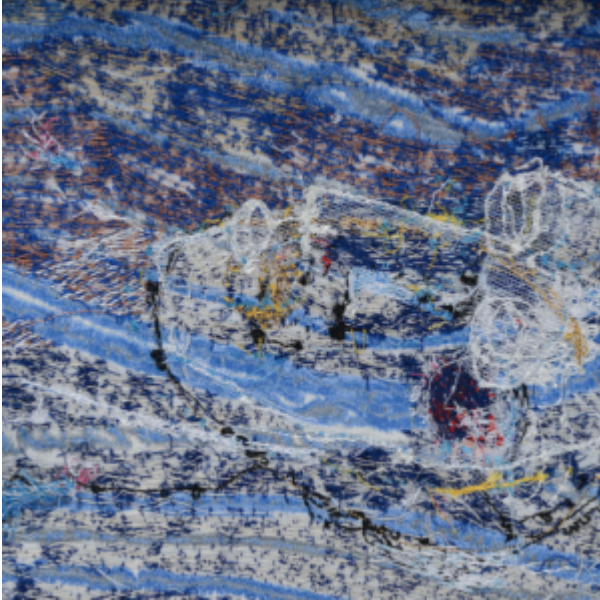
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Talking Points: Hannah Rae



Talking Points: Alice Kettle



Art Club Cafe

Use a range of making and modelling techniques to create a cafe, including modroc doughnuts and fabric pizzas!

Shakespearean Sock Puppets

How to make textile and wood sock puppets using Shakespeare's Macbeth as inspiration.

Inspired! Psyche's Resilience by The Fitzy Peters

Natalie Bailey shares the pupils' Inspire journey and their response to the Renaissance painting of Cupid and Psyche by Jacopo Del Sellaio at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge as well as her reflections on the transformative impact that the project had on the children and how Art can support healing and wellbeing.

Unesco: Celebrating the Power of Making!

Inspired by Paula's recent rousing film, 'It's in Our Hands', artist Jan Miller pulled images together from her own teaching to illustrate the things the children in her classroom do with their hands