

# Aspire to Create: Inspired by Nature & Empowered by Creativity – Red to Green

By Sheila Ceccarelli for Students and Staff at Red2Green

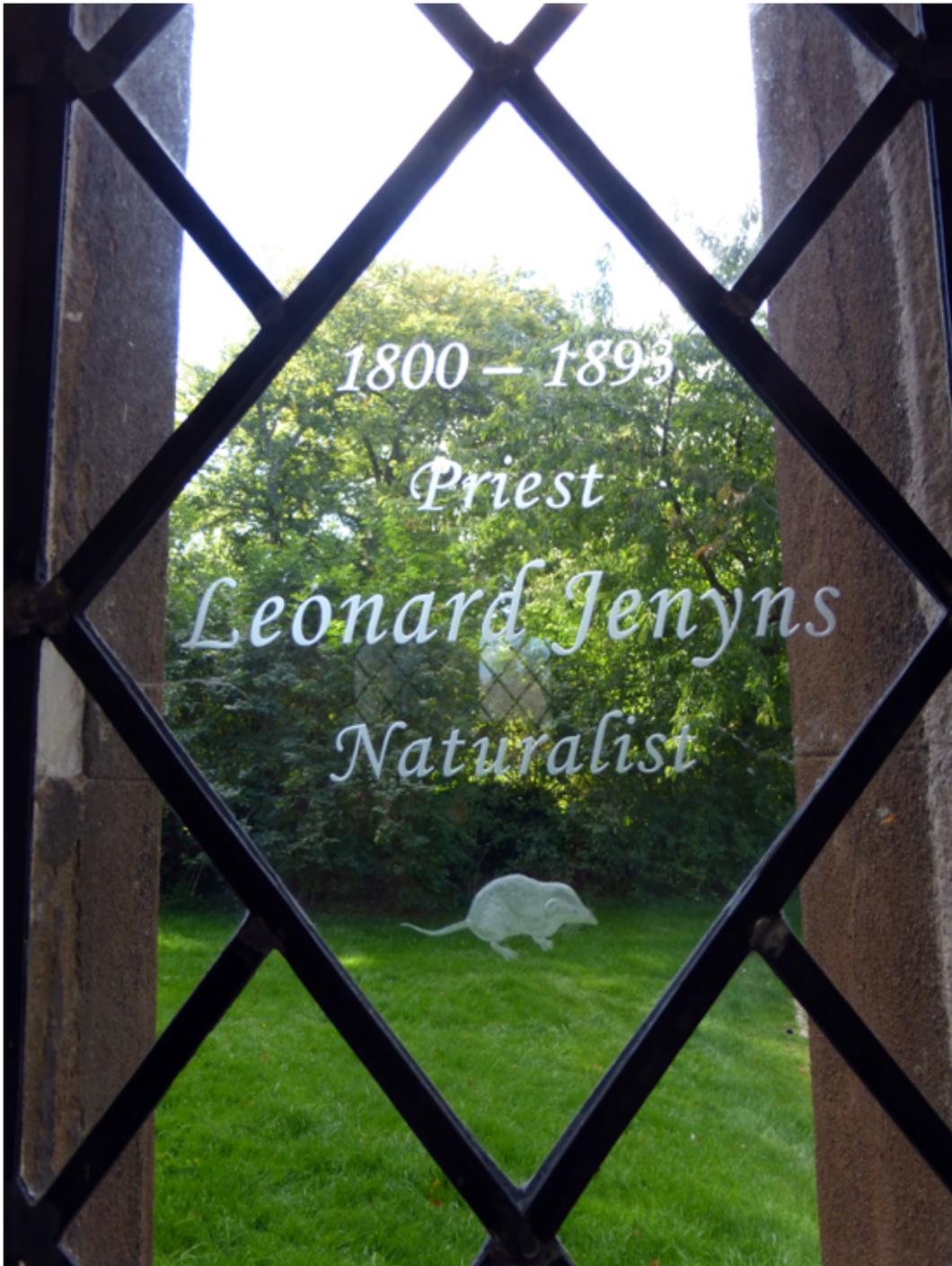
In autumn 2015, AccessArt was invited to lead a series of practical workshops as part of an [Arts Council, Grants for the Arts](#) project, *Aspire to Create* which was managed and delivered by [Red2Green](#).

Red2Green is a 'Cambridgeshire charity providing services including learning, leisure and work opportunities for adults with a wide range of disabilities.'

*Aspire to Create* aimed to 'broaden its students' access to creative opportunities.'

During a two week residency, [Sheila Ceccarelli](#), from AccessArt, worked with *Aspirations*, a group of adult learners with [Autistic Spectrum Disorders](#) and staff at Red2Green, on a series of practical workshop sessions, exploring creative processes from drawing and printmaking to sculpture & casting, inspired by nature and culminating in an exhibition.

The *Aspire to Create* project was underpinned by the students' research into a local 19thC amateur naturalist [Leonard Jenyns](#) and his connection to [Charles Darwin](#). Prior to Sheila's visits, learners visited the local church in Swaffham Bulbeck, where Jenyns was the vicar.



Window dedicated to naturalist Leonard Jenyns at St. Mary's, Swaffham Bulbeck - photo by Aspirations learner

Learners had also visited the [Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge](#), exploring both 20th century and classical art works inspired by nature and the [Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences](#). A box of skulls was also borrowed from the Cambridge University Museum of Zoology [Loans Boxes](#) service.

Sheila continued themes inspired by nature and natural form and offered students a bespoke opportunity to build up a repertoire of techniques and a portfolio of creative experiences.

The weeks were action packed and sessions were energetic and sometimes chaotic, but one of the most wonderful outcomes, beyond even that of the beautiful and thoughtful work created, was the transformation of the classroom into a studio and the commentary and conversations that happened there.

Sessions were documented and the series of AccessArt posts, below, created to offer a lasting archive to demonstrate how learners accessed the processes and highlight the extraordinary work produced.

Please note that not all was documented to protect the privacy of some of the learners who preferred to remain anonymous.

*Many thanks to Sharon, Sally, Vicky, Jeanette, Alice and Elizabeth for their help during the workshops and inviting me to be part of such an inspiring and supportive learning environment - Sheila*

## **One: Casting**



[Exploring mark making into wet clay,](#)

## mould making, mixing and pouring plaster

### Two: Patterns in Nature, Line and Wire



## Using drawing to look at designs and patterns in nature to inspire the creation of wire sculpture

### Three: Taking Rubbings and Making Compositions



## Recording the surrounding world by taking rubbings

### Four: Block Printing



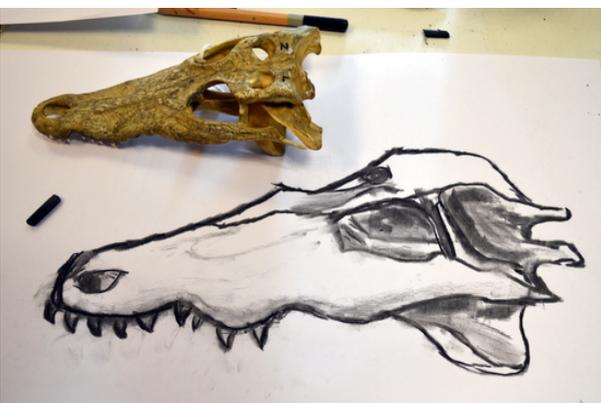
Learners are introduced to block printing

**Five: Monoprinting**



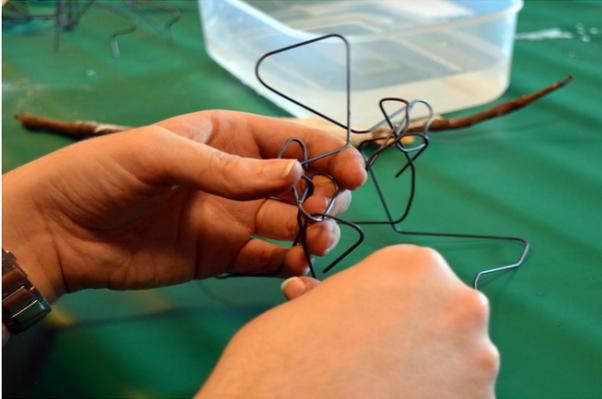
Exploring texture, pattern and mark making through monoprinting

**Six: Steps to Observational Drawing**



## Four steps to enabling observational drawing

### Seven: Making Sculpture



Learners explore sculptural principles of form, space and balance

### Eight: Wax Resist and Scraffito



Introducing colour with wax resist and scraffito techniques

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# **Painting the Light and the Dark...**

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# **Paint, Colour and Autobiographical Imagery**

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# **Exploration of Watercolour in the Studio**

After having studied watercolour paintings at the Fitzwilliam Museum Cambridge with AccessArt, teachers were invited to undertake their own exploration of working with watercolour, including colour mixing, paint techniques, and intention. This resource shares the processes and outcomes of the practical studio session.

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# Introduction to Watercolour

## You May Also Like...

Pathway: Exploring Watercolour



[Featured in the 'Exploring Watercolour' pathway](#)

Pathway: Mixed Media Land and city scapes



[This is featured in the 'Mixed Media Land and City Scapes' pathway](#)

**PAINTING THE STORM AT BOURN PRIMARY SCHOOL**



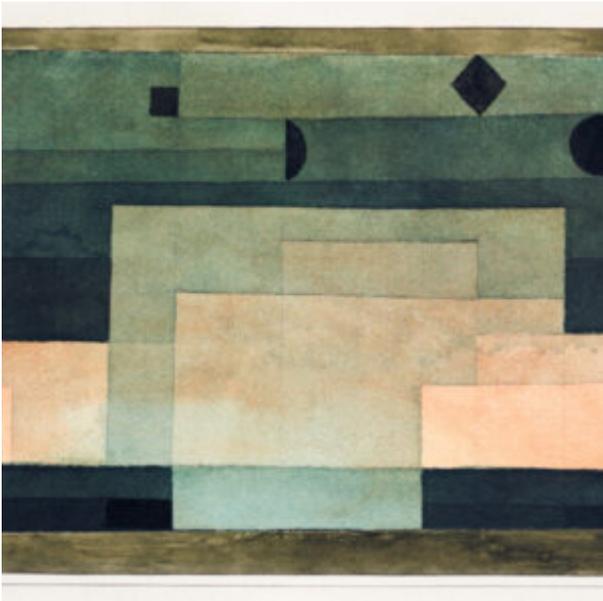
**Collection of Landscape Resources by Hester Berry**



## **part 2: Exploration of Watercolour in the studio**



**Talking Points: Paul Klee**



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# Exploring Watercolour at the Fitzwilliam Museum Cambridge with AccessArt

part 1: Introduction to Watercolour



The resource describes and demonstrates individual watercolour techniques, and then shows examples of these techniques in paintings from the Fitzwilliam Collection.

**part 2: Exploration of Watercolour in the studio**



After studying paintings from the collection at first hand and identifying how various marks within the paintings may have been made, teachers undertake their own exploration of working with watercolour.

The  
Fitzwilliam  
Museum  
CAMBRIDGE



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# **Painting the Storm, at Bourn Primary Academy**

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## **Wax Resist with Coloured Inks and Sgraffito on Foamboard**

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## **The Friendship Tower by Rachel Scanlon**

A 3D workshop inspired by the onset of the world cup and discovering more about other nations. by Rachel Scanlon

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## **The Paint Swing-0-Meter**

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**Gothic                  Revival:                  Craft**

# Techniques for the Class Room Inspired by the Leach Firm of Cambridge

## How to Make a Tessellated Design



## 'Pouncing': A Simple Technique to Transfer Patterns onto Plaster Tablets



## Gilding and a 'Touch of Gold'



## Painting on glass



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### The Firm

In 1862 Frederick Leach started F. R. Leach & Sons, artist-decorators who worked with the best-known Victorian architects/designers including William Morris, Charles Kempe and George Bodley.

Their expertise led the firm to work on ecclesiastical and civic arts, crafts and decoration as well as domestic architecture and interiors.

If their workshops could talk they would have told of stained glass being designed, painted and fired; stone statues carved; wooden decorations turned; panels chiselled, decorated and gilded; furniture crafted; metal forged; and tiles painted. In fact they could create anything that a well-decorated house, church or college would need.

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## **Pouncing**

Wall painting was a popular decoration for churches during the neo-gothic revival in the mid to late Victorian era.

The paint colour was mixed by hand and then often applied straight to the wall or ceiling. The design was often painted freehand or using stencils which included a technique called 'Pouncing'.

This technique is where the design is drawn out on paper and the outline is pricked all around to produce small holes.

Click on the image above to see [How to Make a Tessellated Design](#).

This is then placed on the wall and dabbed all over with a small bag of fabric filled with powdered graphite or chalk. The powder is forced through the holes so that when the paper is removed it leaves an outline of the pattern on the walls.

Click on the image above to see how teenagers used ['Pouncing' to Transfer Designs onto Plaster Tablets](#)

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## **Gilding**

Gilding was a popular finish for the ornaments that decorated the ceilings of neo-gothic churches.

These ornaments were made of lead or plaster and were often start that shone down from their great height once gilded in gold.

The first stage to gilding is when gold is pounded until it becomes as thin as tissue paper (25g can be beaten out to cover an area of 3m square).

The surface of the ornament to be gilded is prepared by

brushing it all over with a glue called size.

This is left to dry until it reaches a 'tacky' state.

The gold sheets are then carefully laid onto the surface of the ornament and the size sticks it to the surface.

The gold is then worked into all the areas of the ornaments using a brush to push it down. There were special brushes made for doing this including one made from squirrel's fur.

Click on the image below to see how to apply gold leaf to a plaster relief sculpture [Gilding and a Touch of Gold](#)

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## **Stained Glass**

The neo-gothic revival saw a resurgence in stained glass design for churches and domestic architecture of the day.

One technique used was that of Silver Staining Glass. This is where silver nitrate is painted onto clear glass and fired until the silver paint becomes part of the molecular structure of the glass and produces colours from a pale yellow to a rich orangey-amber.

Follow the link above to see [How to Print on Glass](#).

Motifs or designs were painted onto glass 'quarries' or shapes of glass that would be could together to form a leaded window.

For this reason diamonds, squares or other shapes that would tessellate were popular. This type of stained glass window also allowed a lot of light into the building which went well with the decoration of a neo-gothic church where the walls were decorated and deserved to be seen.

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**Gilding and a 'Touch of Gold'**

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**'Pouncing': A Simple  
Technique to Transfer  
Patterns onto Plaster Tablets**

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**Jo Allen and Rachael Causer:  
Relief Printmaking at  
Ridgefield Primary School**

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**Making Plaster Reliefs**

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# **Detached and Timeless Painting Workshop by Sara Dudman**

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# **Intuitive Art- Freedom to Paint by Natasha Day**

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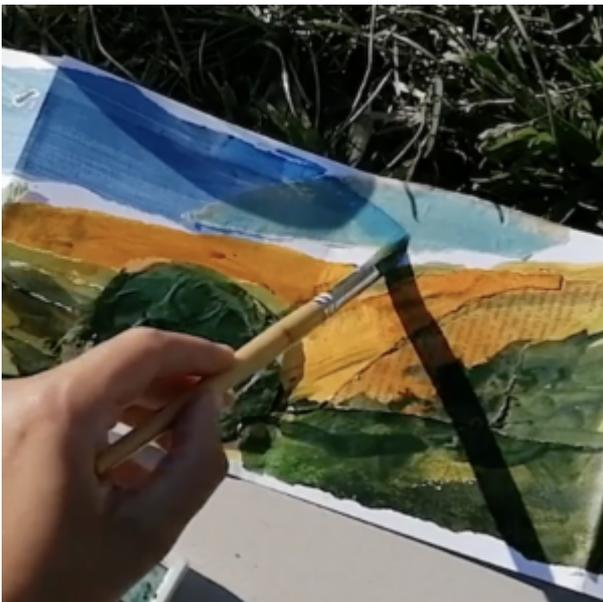
# **Layers in the Landscape by Emma Davies**

## **You May Also Like....**

**Visual Arts Planning Collections:  
Cardboard and paper**



**concertina landscapes**



**diary of a sculptural sketchbook**



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# **Working WITH and IN the Landscape by Frances Hatch**

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





## You May Also Like...

**Pathway: using natural materials to make images**



**[This is featured in the 'Using Natural Materials to Make Images' pathway](#)**

## Talking Points: Frances Hatch



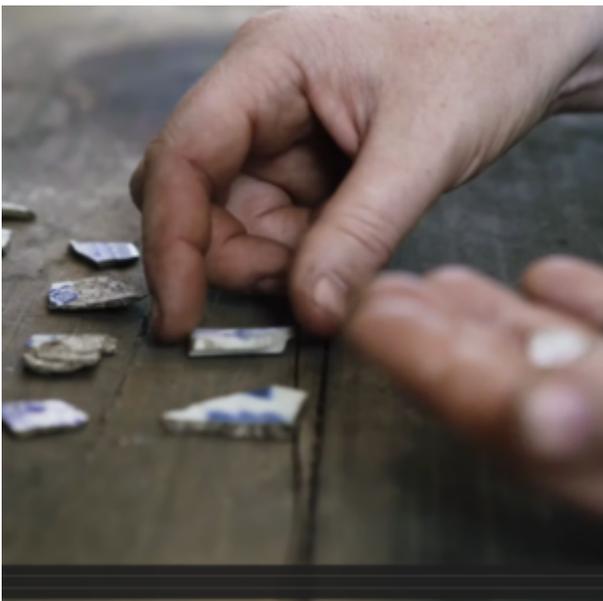
## Talking Points: Anna Atkins



## Talking Points: What is a cyanotype



**Talking Points: Artists as explorers and collectors**



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**Newspaper Heads by Sharon**

**Gale**