

# Scaffolding Projects

By [Paula Briggs](#)

In this post we address the question 'How do we Balance Ongoing Skill Development with the Novelty of Fresh Projects?'

At AccessArt, we believe that the key to balancing skill development with fresh projects is by scaffolding projects with sketchbooks and drawing activities. Find out more about our approach below.



Image: Jan Miller

In the [AccessArt Primary Art Curriculum](#) we have

created 36 pathways, each one lasting between 6-8 weeks for pupils in primary aged settings. Within these pathways we have ensured that we've built in really rich and exciting exploration of materials, disciplines and concepts, underpinned by drawing and sketchbooks throughout. To accompany the curriculum we have also created [supporting documents](#) such as a revised [Progression Plan](#) which demonstrates how, when taken as a whole, you can be sure to build a really rich and exciting creative curriculum.

Because every school is different in the amount of time and resources it can commit to art, we have created 4 different versions of the Primary Art Curriculum: [A Full Curriculum](#) which covers one session of art in school per week across the year; [The Split Curriculum](#) for schools who swap between art and D&T; [The Mixed Year Curriculum](#) for school who teach mixed year groups; [The Split and Mixed Year Group Curriculum](#), for those schools who divide time between art and D&T, and who teach in mixed classrooms.

We want to enable all teachers to feel that they are able to build their knowledge and experience of art and therefore have supplemented the curriculum with [ongoing CPD](#), to help improve individuals understanding and skillset. We record the majority of our sessions which can be found [here](#).

There are two important elements within the

AccessArt approach which can be found across all of our pathways. These are:

Encouraging learners and teachers to take a [Journeyful Approach](#). You won't find prescribed teaching ideas and pre-defined outcomes in the AccessArt Curriculum. Instead our emphasis is on journeyful teaching and learning which empowers teachers and pupils to become confident creative decision makers. Teachers and pupils can GROW with our curriculum, and to help that happen we have created clear structures and access to resources which help teachers understand the WHY as well as the HOW.

Scaffolding all visual arts activities with drawing and sketchbook skills. Each pathway tells a story / forms a journey, for both teacher and pupil. Each pathway follows a particular format which promotes excellent teaching & learning:

1. Warm-up: Artists: Activity: Crit / Reflection
2. Artists: Materials: Activity: Crit / Reflection
3. Challenge or Brief: Artist: Activity: Crit / Reflection

Each of these elements are underpinned by sketchbook work and drawing, with tasks such as [Show Me What You See](#) and [Visual Notes](#) featuring in all pathways. By starting these practises (which

can be challenging at first) in KS1, it will ensure that [knowledge is acquired through experience](#) throughout their primary education, guaranteeing the learning is owned by the pupils.

Both drawing and sketchbook work also involve a slowing down – a making time for. What exactly you are making time for will be revealed along the way – and will probably be as important, if not more important, than the thing you thought you were doing (i.e. the project)!

Taking or enabling a journeyful approach means creating space around and within a project to encourage learners to think around the subject area. Being journeyful means finding time for serendipity, accident, and personal discovery within a thoughtful structure. It also means making time for fallow time, or for things to go wrong, – essential parts of the creative process – so that we can enable children to take creative risks. Think of children enabled to discover their own pathway via a meandering walk through the woods, noticing things along the way, with room for personal diversions and sharing amongst the group, rather than a direct and swift bus ride from A to B.

You can find out more about what we mean by a [journeyful approach here](#), but in this post we will think a little more about how we can use scaffolding to support and expand the projects in the AccessArt Exemplar Plan.

## How Do We Scaffold Creative Projects?

AccessArt advocates using creative projects to help give focus to an exploration of new materials, techniques, and concepts. Most importantly, creative projects keep visual arts learning fresh and inspiring – there is always a new start with new stimuli and ideas.

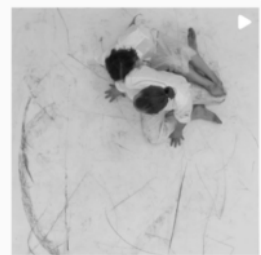
But AccessArt also advocates scaffolding creative projects with key elements which will help make the creative project all the richer and more rewarding, and also provide ongoing opportunities for skill development. Here are a few tips about how to scaffold a creative project, and why.

- Balance the novelty brought through creative projects with time spent practising drawing skills. Use warm-up drawing exercises and icebreakers at all stages of a project to help pupils slow down their journey and open minds. Use drawing as a tool to help deepen and broaden understanding of ideas within the project. Don't forget drawing can be used to help pupils see, discover and share.
- Make time for sketchbooks. Time exploring is never wasted, and pupils will return to the main project with a richer and more personal understanding. Think of sketchbooks as the stretchy glue between the learner, the project and the world. Use sketchbooks before, during and after a project. And don't forget sketchbooks aren't just for sketching

- they are also for collecting, researching, noticing, testing, thinking and reflecting.
- Finally, explore the work of a [diverse range of artists](#) to help feed imaginations. Look at the work of other artists so that you can deepen understanding of the artist's work, be open to the different roles artists have within society, and understand the relevance of their work to you.

Weave these activities within the main creative project. As your experience as a facilitator grows, you will learn when it is time to freshen things up with a drawing ice-breaker, or realise that children need more sketchbook time to help them connect to a project. Think of the activities which you introduce to scaffold a project as not just supporting the project, but feeding it too.

## Step 3. Be Inspired by An Artist



Introduce children to an artist who uses their whole body in connection with a drawing tool and a drawing surface to make drawings. This widens their perception of what drawing can be and opens their thinking. Explore the videos of [Caroline Denervaud](#) as she makes her drawings with her whole body.

Questions to ask:

Is this drawing?

What do you feel when you see the drawings being made?

What do you think the artist is trying to do?

Where else and how else could these kinds of drawings be made?

See an example of a creative project scaffolded by sketchbooks and drawing at the [Gestural Drawing With Charcoal Pathway](#).

Don't worry if it feels like some of the scaffolding around a project takes children on small diversions from their main project, or even if the scaffolding raises more questions than answers. We have become slightly obsessed in schools with making sure we tie up loose ends, and have a clear plan with tight learning targets, but in art, it is often the spaces in between our experience and the apparently disconnected threads that can nurture the biggest creative leaps. Scaffolding a creative project doesn't mean holding the project so tight that there is no room for creative freedom – it means providing just the right support at just the right time to ensure each pupils can grow into their creative potential.

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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.

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## Which Artists: Liz West

## What We Like About This Resource...

*“It’s really interesting to hear how the interest Liz has in the quality of light comes from a personal place and is something she has responded to since childhood. Seeing how her work has developed over the years is therefore a really positive re enforcement that individual creative journeys, where nurtured, are so central to a rich arts education. We also love hearing Liz is always on the ‘quest for knowledge’ – meaning she is open to her ideas constantly evolving and the process of gathering new information and inspiration never stops!” – Rachel, AccessArt*



# You May Also Like...

## Pathway: Brave Colour



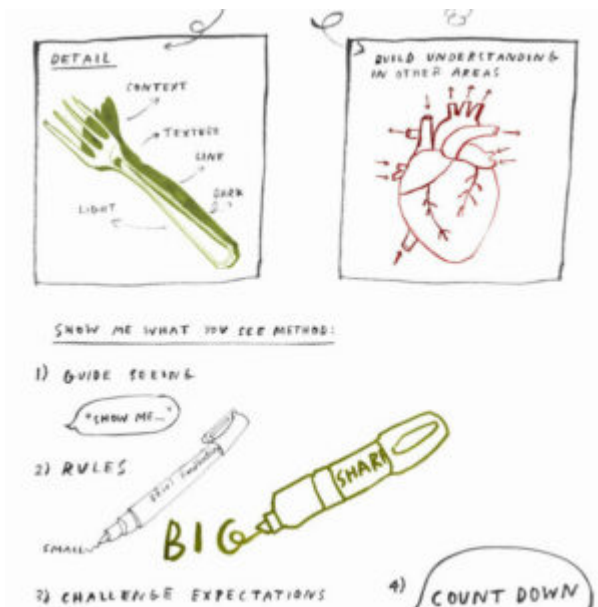
This is featured in the 'Brave colour' pathway

using sketchbooks to make visual notes



## Find out how pupils can respond to artists work in sketchbooks

Show me what you see



## Enable close looking and drawing with this exercise

Lightbulb Art



## Mini World Light Boxes



## Visual Arts Planning: Light and Dark



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## Collage Streets

# What We Like About This Resource...

“This project provides a real opportunity for children to engage with a range of different processes to produce truly individual final results. Jan Miller is an experienced teacher and connects her projects well with learning outcomes. In this case, children are encouraged to have a loose approach and to make their own creative decisions – which is such a valuable part of any child (or adults!) creative education”. – *Rachel, AccessArt*

## You Might Also Like...

### Painted Houses



### One Line Street





# What We Like About This Resource...

“This project links poignant subject matter with meaningful art processes and local history. What we learn about the re purposing of materials, (in this case spent ammunition) re affirms how we can use what is around us as a starting point to making and creating. You could extend or adapt this project by looking at broken pottery, re purposing that into new sculptures that link with Roman or other local historical cultures” – *Rachel, AccessArt*

## You May Also Like...



[Henry Moore's Shelter Drawings](#)



## Remembrance Day Soldiers



## For Remembrance Day

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**Which Artists: Claire Harrup**



# What We Like About This Resource...

“We really enjoyed reading about the process of creating art work according to a design brief and how the experience of this differs to when an artist begins with their own idea or concept. That’s not to say an artist can’t approach a brief with their own individual style and ideas, but what this post shows us is that there can be a balance between the two. This would be a great resource to show older KS pupils who may be beginning to consider their options beyond Primary School”. – *Rachel, AccessArt*

## You Might Also Like...

**Pathway: 2D Drawing to 3D Making**



This is featured in the '2D Drawing to 3D Making' pathway

## Talking Points: Packaging Design



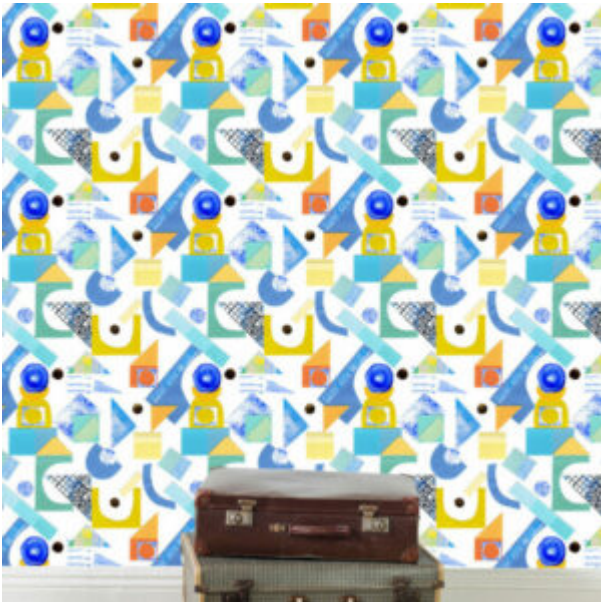
# What is Typography



## Which Artist: Rachel Parker



## Repeating Patterns



## Block Printing Repeat Patterns



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**Which Artists: Theresa Easton**

**What We Like About This Resource...**

**“It’s interesting to hear Theresa describe Printmaking as a social activity, with the shared use of materials and equipment so central to the practice. This could be a positive way of working for lots of children in school, where instead of just working on individual art work, they can collaborate and embrace the creative sharing experience!” – Tobi, AccessArt.**

# You Might Also Like...



## Monoprint Animals



## Screen printing Inspired by Matisse





## An Exploration of Shepherd Fairey

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**Which Artists: Ava Jolliffe**

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**Which Artists: 2B or Not 2B**

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**Sketchbook      Journey      At  
Haslingfield Primary School**

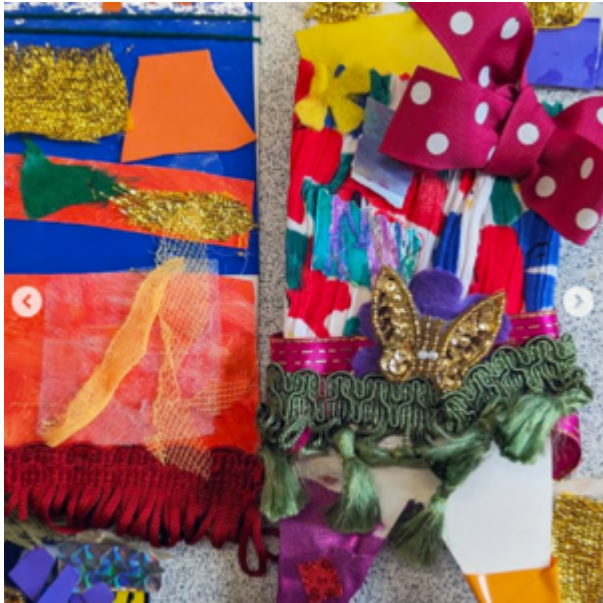
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# Creativity Medals

See the Resource Used in  
Schools...







## What We Like About This Resource...

“The sentiment behind this resource idea is lovely and it provides an opportunity to really develop some fine motor skills as well as independence of approach. Taking ownership of the medal design means the sense of achievement is heightened beyond the children just being given one. You can

really imagine the positive energy that would surround this activity within a classroom, with each child working on a shared project but embarking on their own creative journey.” – *Rachel, AccessArt*

## You May Also Like...

### Pathway: Playful Making

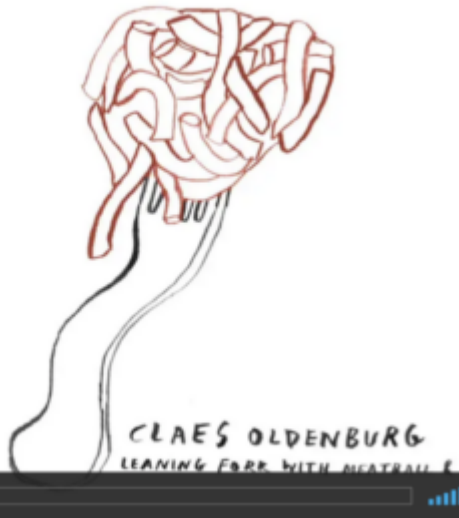


[Featured in the 'Playful Making' pathway](#)

Talking Points: Introduction to sculpture

Sculpture.mp4

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## Clay Art Medals



## Talking Points: Nnena Kalu



## Talking Points: Linda BELL



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## Making Musical Instruments

# What We Like About This Resource...

“It’s great to see music being explored in this way, and combining it with making creates a really interesting immersive project. This activity would work well as part of an extended project looking at musical instruments around the world and some of the natural materials they are made from.” – *Rachel, AccessArt*

## You Might Also Like...

Pathway: Music and art



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

Talking Points: Linda BELL





## Talking Points: Nnena Kalu



## talking points: wassily Kandinsky



**drawing source material: orchestras**



**A Cheerful Orchestra**





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## Touch Wood

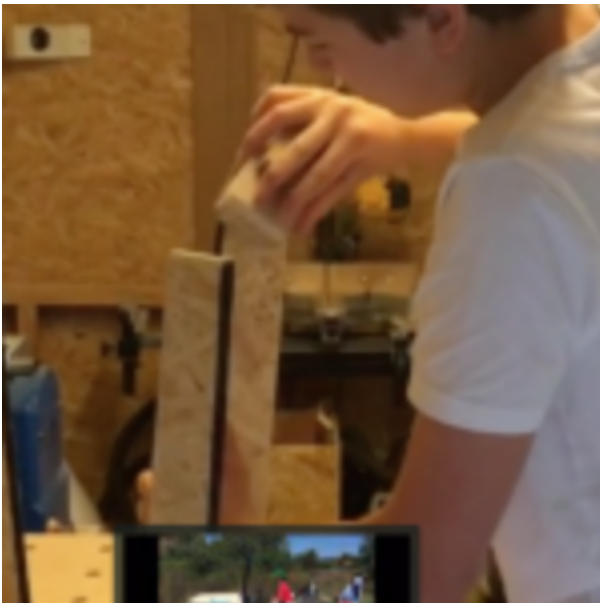
### What We Like About This Resource...

“You can get a real sense of the environment in this post and how this could provide so much inspiration for creative projects. We are aware there the challenges to exploring the outdoors when many schools are in towns and cities. A way around this could be to have a regular collection of natural objects within the classroom and using them as a stimulus to respond creatively in sketchbooks or in extended projects” – *Andrea, AccessArt*

# You Might Also Like...



## [Woodland Exploration](#)



## [A Passion for Woodworking](#)



## Visual Arts PLanning: Tees, Forest and Landscapes

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**Which Artists: Jason Line**

**What We Like About This Resource...**

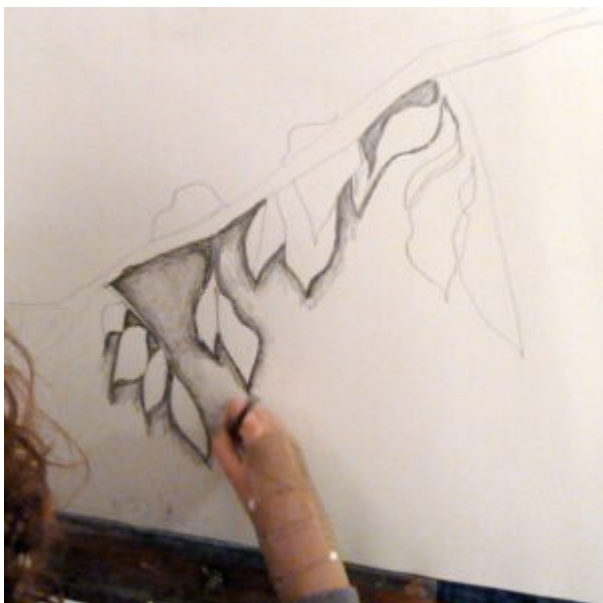
“It’s always so inspiring to hear how different artists work and we particularly like the detailed references Jake makes to his process – marking out the composition using neutral tones; adding and taking away compositional elements and gradually building in more colour and detail. Delivering a still life session in a classroom could begin with

this process and encourage the practice of looking at positive and negative space. Some suggested resources below also touch on this". – *Rachel, AccessArt*

## You Might Also Like...



### [Tackling Still Life for Children](#)



## Drawing Negative Space



## Visual Arts Planning: Still Life

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**Which Artists: Su Blackwell**

**What We Like About This Resource...**

“It’s really interesting to hear how Su’s career path evolved organically, and how experimenting with different disciplines such as ceramics and sculpture whilst studying Textiles at the RCA began her journey towards paper craft and books. We really like how the small book sculptures

inspired the larger scale set designs for The Snow Queen. They transfer so effectively to the stage and you can imagine how engaging it would be for a young audience to recognise letters and words on lampposts and other scenic elements". – *Rachel, AccessArt*

## You Might Also Like...



### [Creating a Book World](#)





## Sketch Set Design Models



## Set Design for Primary Aged Children

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**Henry Moore's Shelter Drawings**

**You May Also Like...**

**Pathway: Exploring Form Through Drawing**





[This is featured in the 'Exploring Form Through Drawing' pathway](#)

**Watercolour Washes Inspired by the Tapestries of Henry Moore**



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# 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.*

## You Might Also Like...

Pathway: Exploring pattern

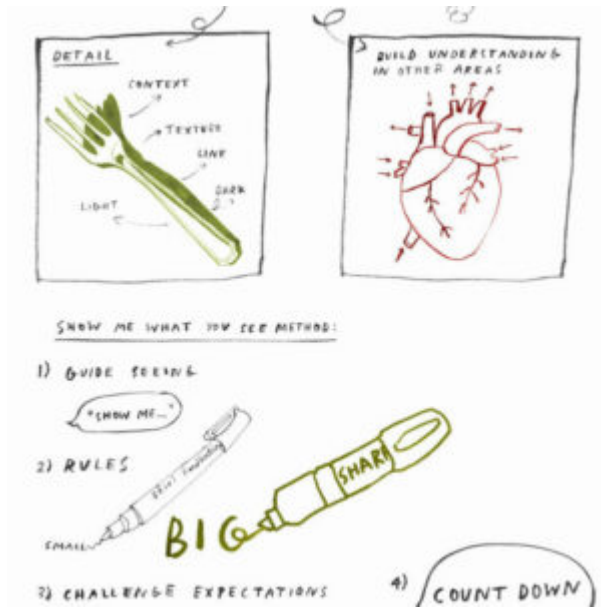


This is featured in the 'Exploring Pattern' pathway

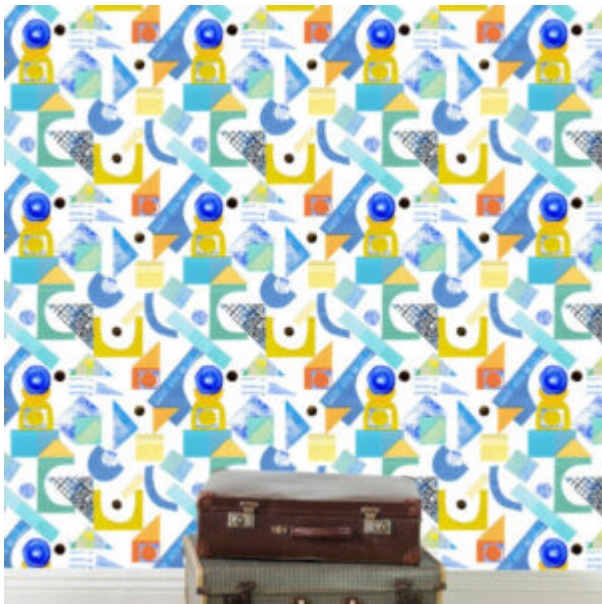
using sketchbooks to make visual notes



Show me what you see



**Inspired by Rachel Parker**



**Sewn Treasure Box**



## Felt and Embroidery Sets



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**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*

## You Might Also Like...



[Draw Your Home](#)



## Working With and In the Landscape



## Landscape Sculptures

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# Working with Dogwood

# What We Like About This Resource...

“It’s lovely to see a resource that centres on a particular material and the scope it offers. I particularly like how the dogwood is used here to make wooden beads. This idea could be developed further by looking at how wood has been used to make jewelry throughout history and within many different cultures.” – *Rachel, AccessArt.*

## You Might Also Like...



[A Passion for Woodworking](#)



## Woodland Exploration



## Visual Arts Planning: Trees, Forests and Landscape

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**Which Artists: Nathan Ward**

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# Which Artists: Toby Pritchard

## What We Like About This Resource...

“It’s a really positive thing for an artist to share the concept of the creative journey. At AccessArt we believe journeys are pretty important and we are pleased to show this in action through Toby Pritchard’s post. We particularly like the anthropomorphic element, and how this really brings life to Toby’s work.” – *Rachel, AccessArt*

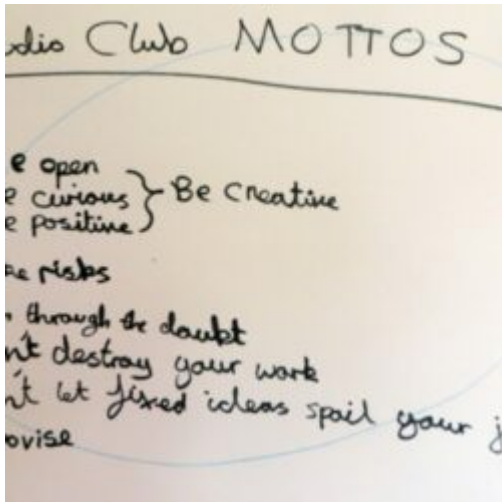
## You May Also Like...



[Anthropomorphic Animal Paintings](#)



## Exploring Animation



## Teaching for the Journey not the Outcome