

Exploring, Associating & Connecting – a Sketchbook Exercise

By [Paula Briggs](#)

“Combinatory play seems to be the essential feature in productive thought”
Albert Einstein [Source](#)



Try this sketchbook exercise to help practice [sketchbook skills](#) and encourage creative thinking. The exercise will take between 10 and 30 minutes. Adapt it for different ages by choosing appropriate images, and come back to the exercise whenever you feel learners would benefit from practicing their

creative thinking skills, or reminding of the many skills they can use in their sketchbooks.

Before You Start

Gather together images from magazines and mailouts etc. Cut the images into 10cm squares, making sure you create interesting and unusual compositions. Look at colour and shape, as well as subject matter. Cut enough images so you can pick two at random to work with. Alternatively, work with the images below.

To Begin

Place two images on the sketchbook page, with white space between them.

Remember (or discuss as a class) the various skills you have available which you can use in your sketchbook:

- Looking,
- Collecting,
- Cutting/Tearing
- Drawing,
- Writing/Noting/Referencing (single words, lists, sentences, quotes),
- Doodling,
- Mark-making,
- Painting,
- Printing,
- Collaging / Sticking,
- Destroying,
- Sharing,
- Talking

Take a few moments to look at the two images and think about them on the white space of the page. Ask yourself:

- What do the images make me think of?

- Where can I find connections or common ground? Is it in colour? Shape? Subject matter?
- How does one image highlight the differences in the other?

Pick up a [drawing tool](#) and start to work into the white space on the page. Use whichever of the sketchbook skills above seems appropriate and try to be aware of

Work intuitively. Follow the smallest thought. Don't talk yourself out of putting anything down on the sketchbook page - there is always time for reflecting thinking later. Keep working until you feel the page is pushed as far as you can, and you have [thought around](#) the original images on the page.





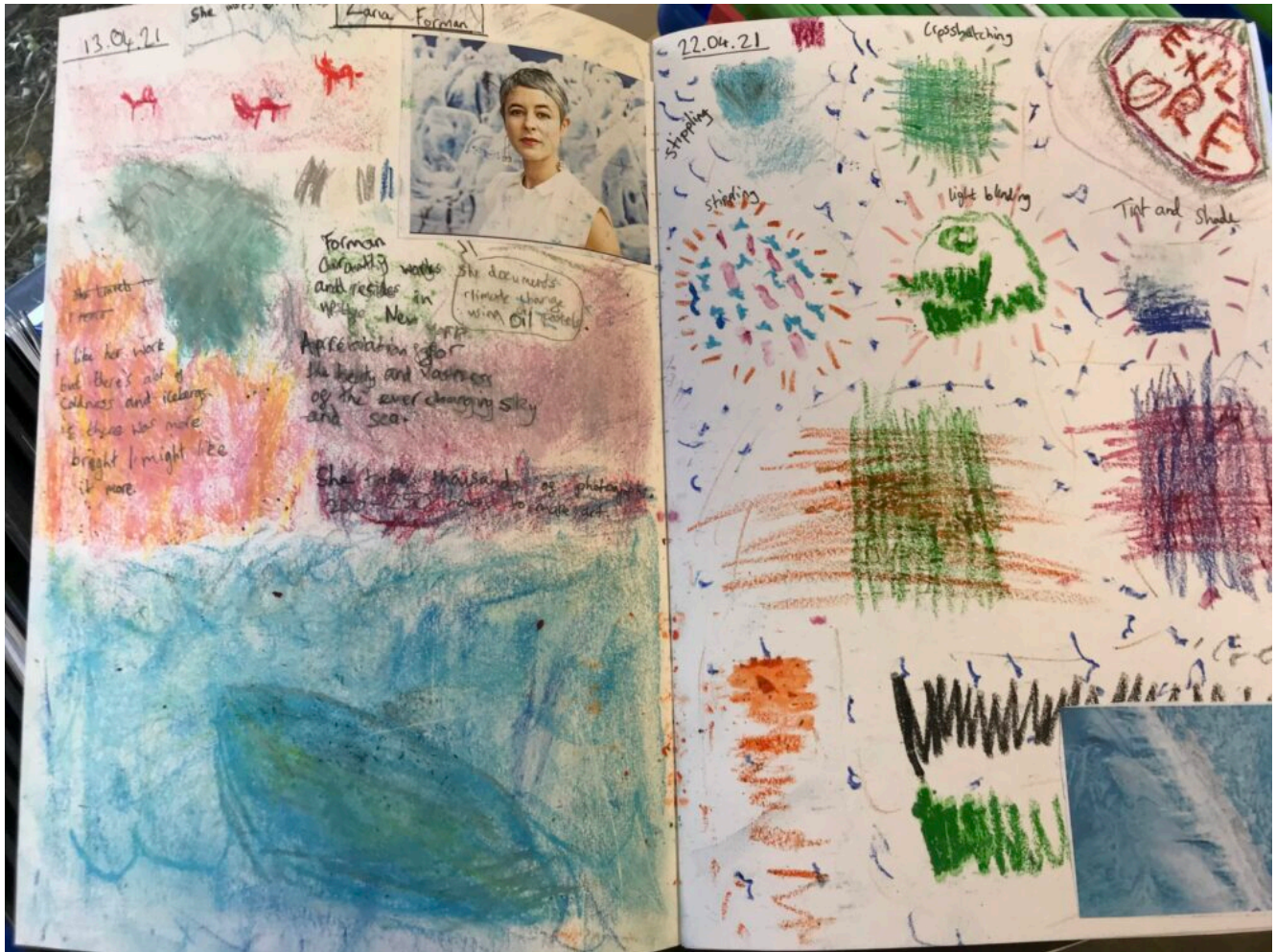
This is a sample of a resource created by UK Charity AccessArt. We have over 1500 resources to help develop and inspire your creative thinking, practice and teaching.

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.

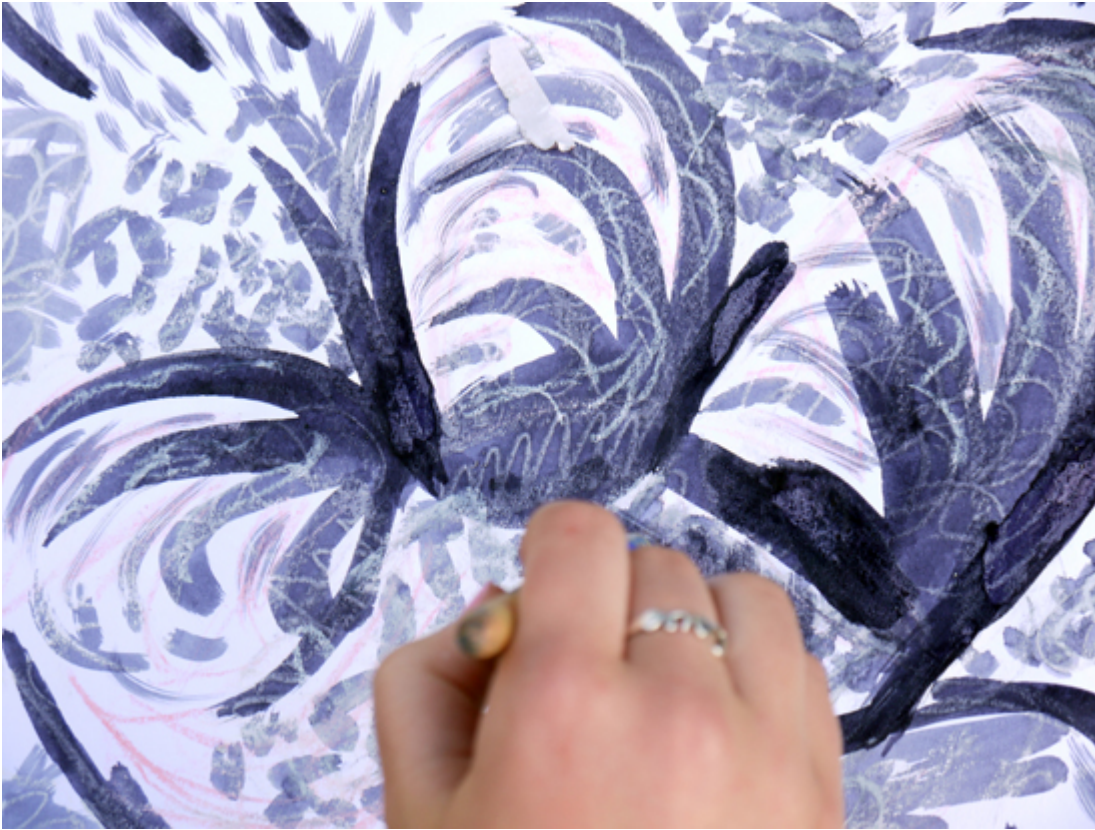
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The Sketchbook Journey

Explore the [AccessArt Sketchbook Journey](#) to grow your understanding about what sketchbooks are and how they might be used.



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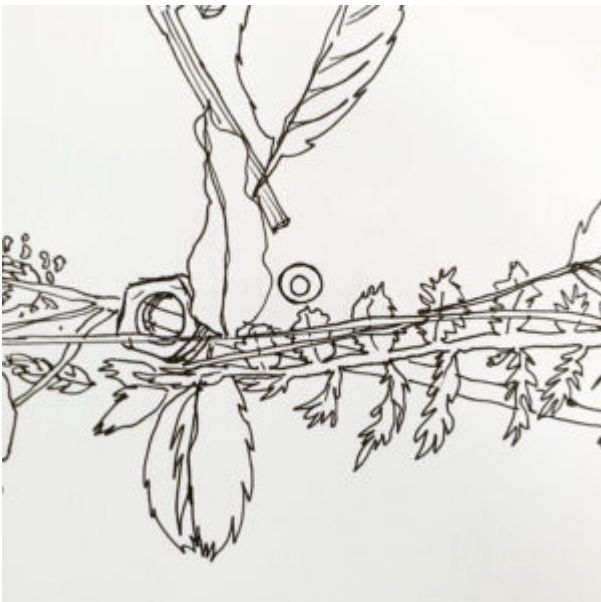
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Inspire 2020: Teachers

This post is based on CPD (Continued Professional Development) sessions in February and March 2019, hosted and delivered by the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge in collaboration with AccessArt, for Cambridgeshire teachers participating in Inspire 2020 Project.

Taking on the Inktober Challenge

Artist Morag Thompson Merriman taking on the Inktober Challenge and generously shares her process with AccessArt.

Colour Wheel for Infants and Juniors

In this post, artist educator Rosie James, shows her open-ended and experiential approach to introducing the colour wheel to primary aged children throughout the key stages.

Composite Still Life Studies in Candlelight

Making an Ink and Wax Village with Pupils in Mansfield

Sketchbooks Made with Screenprinted Papers

Sketchbook Exercise: Drawing Brushes with Charcoal

Using Drawing to Get Closer to 18th Century Portraits at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

This post shares how Paula Briggs and Sheila Ceccarelli from AccessArt and Kate Noble from the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, used drawing exercises to take a closer look at 18th Century portraits

Making Sketchbooks at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

This post shares how Paula Briggs and Sheila Ceccarelli from AccessArt and Kate Noble from the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, enabled teachers to make sketchbooks and explore them as a physical space to connect and collect ideas and observations from museum collections.

Making Sketchbooks: An Introduction

Making sketchbooks is an excellent way to introduce your group (adults and children) to using a sketchbook. This post describes a variety of simple ways to make your own sketchbooks all of which can help nurture ownership of learning. Highly recommended by teachers across all key stages.

Sketchbook Teaching Tips

Tips and advice relating to best teaching practice when using sketchbooks in schools

Sketchbooks for Designers – An Introduction for Children

This module explores how sketchbooks can be a vital tool in any design process – whatever pupils are designing. Includes a module for pupils and teachers notes. [Full AccessArt Members Only](#)

Use of Sketchbooks in Primary Schools

This resource explores when schools might want to use sketchbooks within the school day