

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.

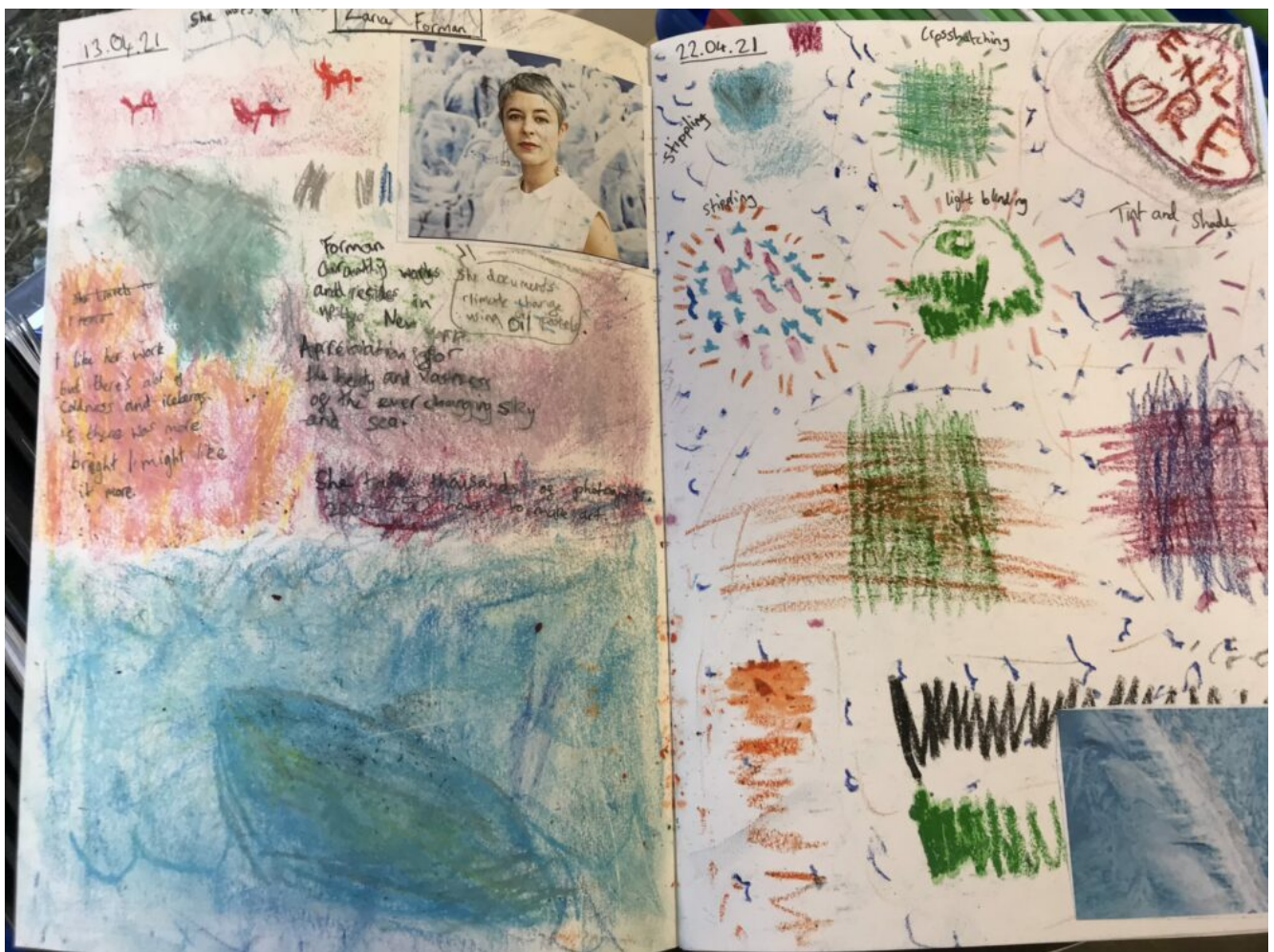
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We believe everyone has the right to be creative and by working together and sharing ideas we can enable everyone to reach their creative potential.

How I Use Sketchbooks & Drawing

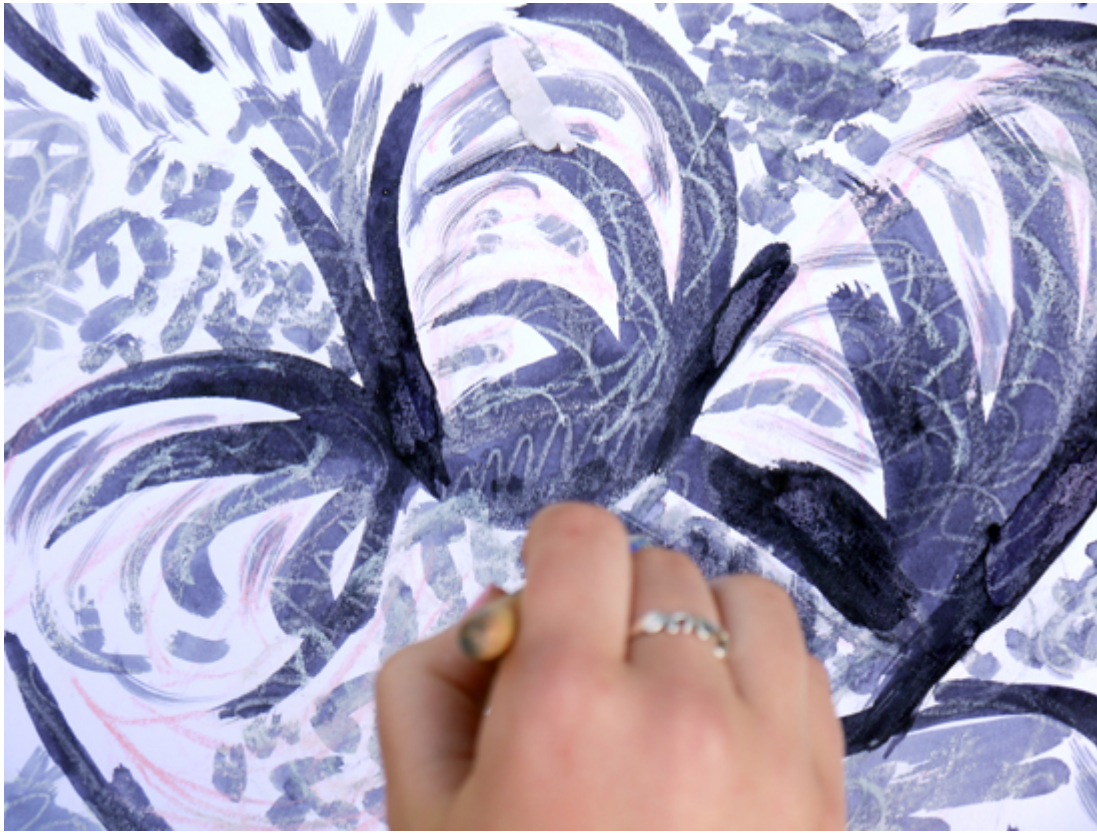
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Which Artists: Rachel Parker

**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.*

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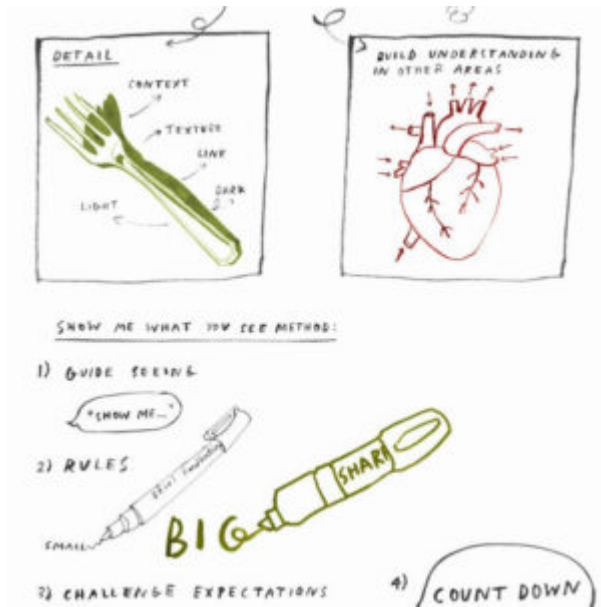


This is featured in the 'Exploring Pattern' pathway

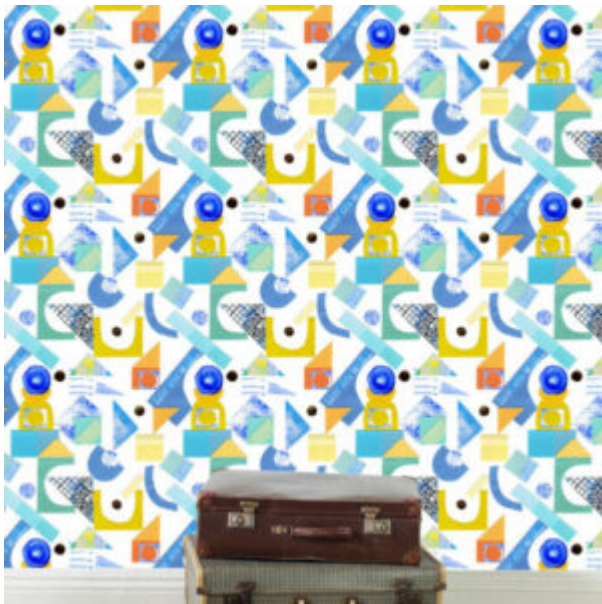
using sketchbooks to make visual notes



Show me what you see



Inspired by Rachel Parker



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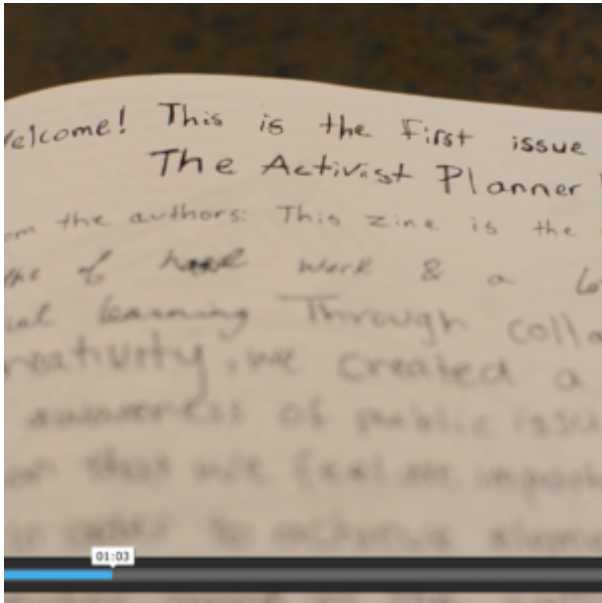


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Finding Marks Through Drawings Made by Artists

By [Paula Briggs](#)

This resource shares a way to introduce learners to the diversity of mark making at their disposal when making drawings. By deconstructing drawings made by artists, we can begin to build our own vocabulary of marks, and start to make our own creative decisions about when to use a certain mark in a particular context, and understand how the marks we choose will affect the final drawings.

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