

Remembrance Day Peg Soldiers

By [Mandy Barrett](#)

In this post Mandy Barrett shows us how she inspired the children at Gomersal Primary School to create a powerful installation commemorating the 75th Anniversary of D Day. Encourage your children to get creative whilst helping them understand the significance of this anniversary in the post below. This activity can be adapted for all primary ages.



Remembrance Day or Armistice Day comes around each year, in the United Kingdom, on the 11th November. It is at this time that we take part in numerous activities, to teach our children the importance of remembering the sacrifices of those who served for our country during the wars.

To mark the 75th anniversary of the D Day landings, we wanted to create a memorable art installation. Something that would be meaningful, make an impact on our children and help them to understand the significance of this anniversary. In the past we have created displays of poppies but wanted this year's to

be different. Our children find it difficult to visualise large numbers, in fact many adults do too. I will never forget the impact of seeing the ceramic poppies displayed in London. A stark visual, to aid the comprehension of what the numbers actually represent. I wanted our school display to do the same.

We decided to create our own visual army with every child and adult in school. Each person was given a wooden dolly peg and asked to design their own soldier to be part of a battalion. What would 420 peg soldiers all look like displayed together? How would this portray a sense of community and camaraderie?



The children learnt about different battalions and looked at a range of uniforms from various army regiments, both past and present. We also looked at the range of materials and fabric available to us from the school cupboards. The children used their sketchbooks to consider how they would turn their wooden peg into a soldier. What would they need? How would we fix the materials to the peg? Time was allocated for the children to

explore and design. We talked about camouflage and why the Queen's guard wore red (because that certainly doesn't help them to blend in with their environment).

The battalion slowly began to grow as each year group tackled this project in a slightly different way. Some of our youngest children, painted their pegs with black trousers and a green top. Some children chose to use different colours. Some added matchsticks or pipe cleaners for arms and carefully considered the expressions on their peg doll's face. Some soldiers had helmets while others were given hair. What became increasingly evident was these little peg dolls were all unique and each had their own personality. One Year 6 child even had the idea to turn their peg into a War Horse.



Our older children spent time adding finer details to their soldier. Wool was carefully wrapped around the peg to create the uniform and fixed into place with either PVA glue or a

glue gun. Some created medals and backpacks and a small group of children wanted to add guns and grenades. The children were very much encouraged to be creative, resulting in some incredibly detailed soldiers. The children named their soldiers and began telling stories of their lives. Where were they travelling to? Who were the family members they had left behind? The links to Literacy were innumerable.



Finally, we displayed the battalion of soldiers all together in our school reception area. A lump of plasticine was used on the base of the peg to help the soldiers stand to attention. This is what 420 peg soldiers look like and we were able to use this as a teaching point when discussing figures and numbers relating to the war. Throughout the project we constantly remembered, thought and reflected on events from the past.





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creative and by working together and sharing ideas we can enable everyone to reach their creative potential.

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...



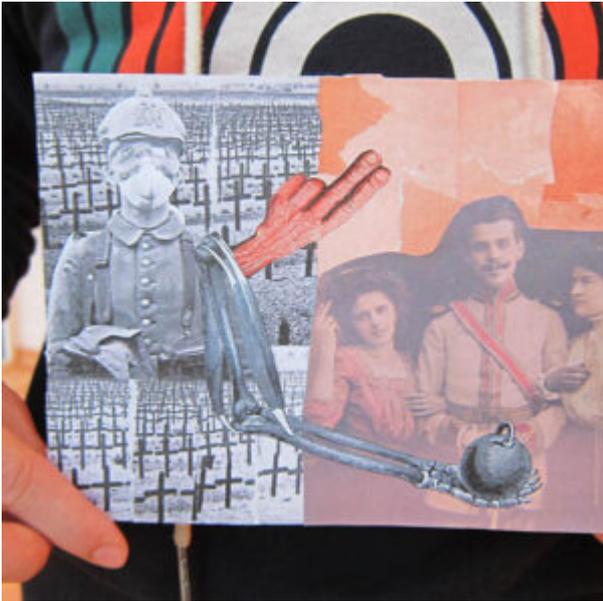
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An Exploration of Paul Nash



For Remembrance Day



[World War 1 Mail Art](#)

Outdoor Art In Urban Gardens

**Which Artists: The Life &
Works of Madge Gill**

What We Like About This

Resource...

“The life of Madge Gill that Sophie Dutton recounts here gives us real insight into the challenges that Madge Gill experienced, and how these challenges would have been common among women at the time. When we study the work of Artists, it adds a rich context to our experience of their work to consider their personal history, and helps us ask questions like ‘why do you think the Artist painted in this way or was inspired by this subject matter?’ If you introduce your class to Madge Gill, begin with looking back over her younger life to try and better understand her motivations as an Artist” – *Rachel, AccessArt*

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Transforming Materials into Sculpture

This pathway shares how teachers might take inspiration from El Anatsui and encourage pupils to think how they might disassemble objects around them to transform them into sculptural pieces.

[Read More.](#)

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

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Pathway: Brave Colour



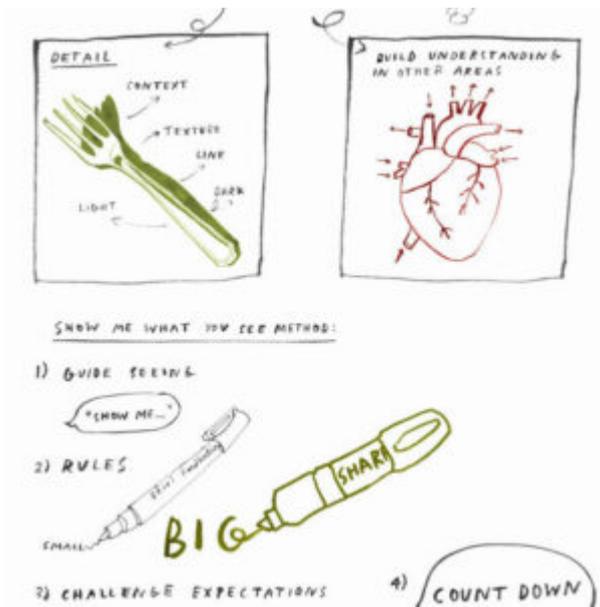
[This is featured in the 'Brave colour' pathway](#)

using sketchbooks to make visual notes



[Find out how pupils can respond to artists work in sketchbooks](#)

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[Enable close looking and drawing with this exercise](#)

Lightbulb Art



Mini World Light Boxes



Visual Arts Planning: Light and Dark



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*

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Sketch Set Design Models



Set Design for Primary Aged Children

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

Which Artists: Nathan Ward

Collaborative Public Mural Project

“Missing You” – Pavement Art Response to #SchoolclosureUK

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

Children's Community Project

Mini World Light Boxes

Teacher Anna Campbell shares this beautiful resource which shares how children aged between 4 and 7 years old, made 'Light' boxes. This project could easily be adapted for an older class and is brilliant for SEN children/adults.

Wall Drawings with Tape

Making the Gift of Home this Winter

The AccessArt Village in the Ruskin Gallery, Cambridge and how to celebrate community, creativity and home.

For Remembrance Day

Anne-Louise Quinton creates a project for her Year 9 pupils to commemorate Remembrance Day. The teenagers worked collaboratively to create a collaged frieze of paper soldiers in response to an artwork by John Singer Sargent and a war poem by Wilfred Owen.

Withy Butterflies

Art educator Anne-Louise Quinton shares a workshop for making a flock of large, withy butterflies, creating a colourful and dramatic artwork.

The AccessArt Village and How a Small Idea can be Big

Sheila Ceccarelli from AccessArt leads year nine students from Frances Bardsley Academy for Girls on a collective drawing and collage experience exploring the #AccessArtVillage in BRG Brentwood Road Gallery. Students absorb this stunning collection of sewn houses and inspired by thread and stitches, make their own creative responses.

Draw, Paint, Build, Make: Gallery Project

Making a Pocket Gallery

This post shares an idea devised by Anne-Louise Quinton in which she enables children and teenagers to revisit the “ordinary” and resee it’s potential. The activity is a great way not only to inspire children as artists and curators, but also to introduce them to a whole range of concepts and vocabulary. It would be a great activity to use in a museum and gallery education context, as well as the classroom.