

“Acts of Kindness” Workshop

By [Paula Briggs](#)



Portrait of Jan Brueghel I (1568-1625) and his family, by Peter Paul Rubens (Detail)

The day after Trump and Zelenskyy stunned the world with their televised argument in the Oval Office, AccessArt ran a “Constructing Positive Social Stories: Acts of Kindness” workshop session at the [AccessArt Lab](#).

The event was one of a number of “[Artists & Teachers Exploring Together](#)” sessions, devised by AccessArt to give us an opportunity to think about some of the more philosophical issues behind art education. By working with artists and educators who are open to holding ideas lightly, we hope to collaboratively discover new arts educational approaches and activities, transferable to a variety of settings.

The idea behind this particular session was to explore how we can use making as a tool to help us focus more closely on the positives which surround us everyday, no matter how small. By creating a shared space for making and conversation, we hoped to lift spirits and create a sense of shared experience.

This post shares the session aims, some of the conversational highlights, and observations of the workshop attendees, and my own as facilitator. Thank you to all who attended, and for your generosity.

“A timely workshop this Saturday morning led by AccessArt. Reflecting individually on our own experiences of small kindnesses, and then choosing

from a table of materials to abstractly or literally depict these, prompted conversation that magnified the acts beyond their original intent. The joy of creating by hand alongside others, of talking and making sense whilst sculpting and glueing, of sharing in stories of the smallest of acts that had made a difference to someone else... about people feeling seen, loved, heard. I left feeling lighter, more hopeful about the world, and with more generosity towards other drivers on my journey home.”

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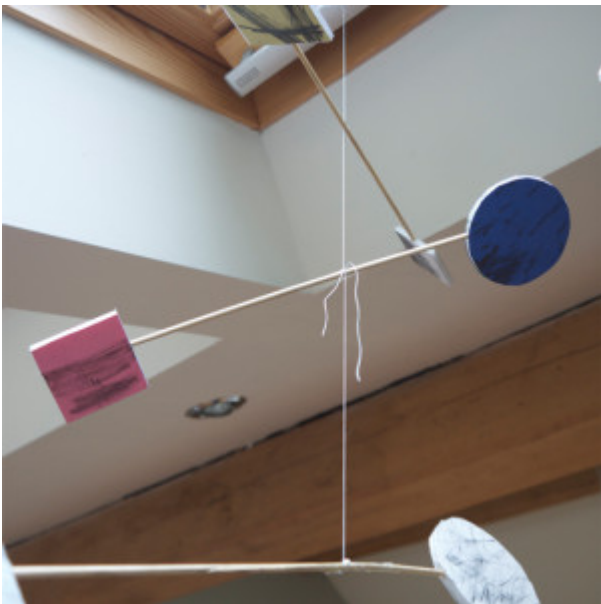
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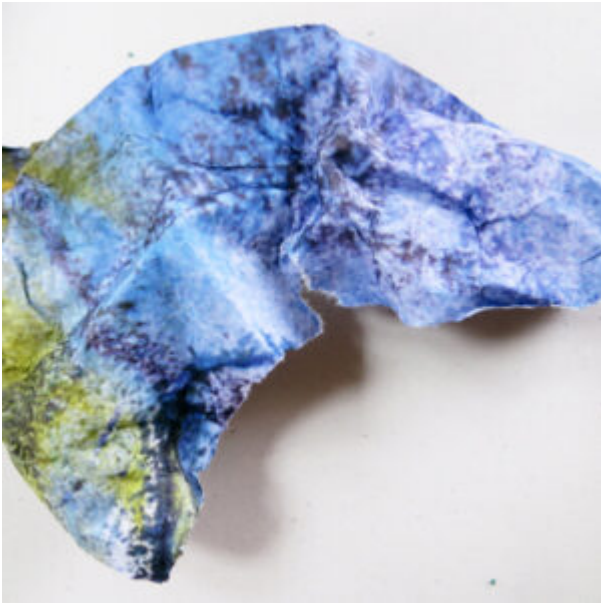
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Transforming Materials into Sculpture

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.

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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*

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Sketch Set Design Models



Set Design for Primary Aged Children

Flying Minpin Birds

Roald Dahl's The Minpin Birds inspired Arbury school pupils to design and make their own birds for a tiny Minpin to ride

upon. Alongside this project, the class drew their own maps of imaginary worlds and imagining themselves as Minpins.

Withy Butterflies

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

Making Sculpture Inspired by Degas

This resource explores sculpture by French artist Edgar Degas (1834-1917) and shows how hands-on sculptural processes can be facilitated in a classroom. This resource was created in collaboration with AccessArt and the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.

Two and Four Legged Creatures

Two and Four Legged Creatures with oil based clay over a simple wire armature to make delicate, extended structures. A one hour, artist led session with Melissa Murray.

The Winter Tree Challenge: A Combined Sculpture & Drawing Project!

This post shares an hour long session at the AccessArt Art Lab, in which the young teenagers (12 and 13 years) worked on two projects simultaneously: a shared winter forest drawing in charcoal, and a sculpture challenge to make a winter tree. The time and material constraints resulted in an energetic and inventive session. By Paula Briggs

Drawing with Objects by Melissa Pierce Murray

Teenagers explore ideas of placement with artist Melissa P Murray by arranging or assembling objects to make compositions or maquettes.

Brushes, Rollers and Dabbers – Year 4 Pupils Use Mixed

Media to Make Mark Making Tools

to explore constructing in mixed media and using inventiveness and innovation to create painting tools, which would later be used to paint a Communal Drawing of the River.

Perseverance, Determination and Inventiveness: Building Nests

Year 4 pupils from Comberton Village College and Cambourne Village College feeder schools met for a Gifted and Talented Sculpture Masterclass led by AccessArt at Bourn Primary Academy. The session centred around an exploration of the materials and construction methods we might use to build inventive, sculptural nests.

Shipwrecked! A Shadow Puppet Play by Children Aged 10

As the winter nights draw in and it was dark outside and cosy inside, Friday Club students, turn the summerhouse into a theatre and make a shadow puppet play.

Paperback Figures: Collaged, Relief Sculptures

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Red to Green: Making

Sculpture

I wanted students to be pushed to explore how to make a free standing sculpture encompassing modern sculptural principles of form, shape and balance, yet with an accessible and tangible approach to working.

Red to Green: Patterns in Nature, Line and Wire

using drawing as a way into exploring designs and patterns in nature, followed by a making session using wire to extend ideas into 3D