

Exploring A Midsummer Night's Dream: Creating a Forest Collage Part One

By [Rachel Thompson](#)



This series of six sessions explores Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream through art and is aimed at upper KS2 children (Years 5 and 6) although could be delivered to younger age groups with some simplification in terms of the use of text. The aim of the series is to introduce children to the work of Shakespeare in a fun and creative way.

In this third in a series of six resources on Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream, we take a closer look at the primary setting of the play: The Forest. The session begins with

exploring paper and how it can be torn and cut to make shapes and form, before beginning to make a large scale collage of the forest using different papers and colours. The collage continues into session four where the magical symbol of moonlight is explored.

Go back to session two [here](#).

Session Three: Creating a Forest Collage

Warm up: Approx 20 minutes

Main Activity: 45 minutes - 1 hour

Materials Needed: Large roll or sheets of paper, assorted green or brown sugar and scrap papers/old art work, pencils, paints, brusho, brushes, glue, scissors.

Focus Theme/s: The Natural World

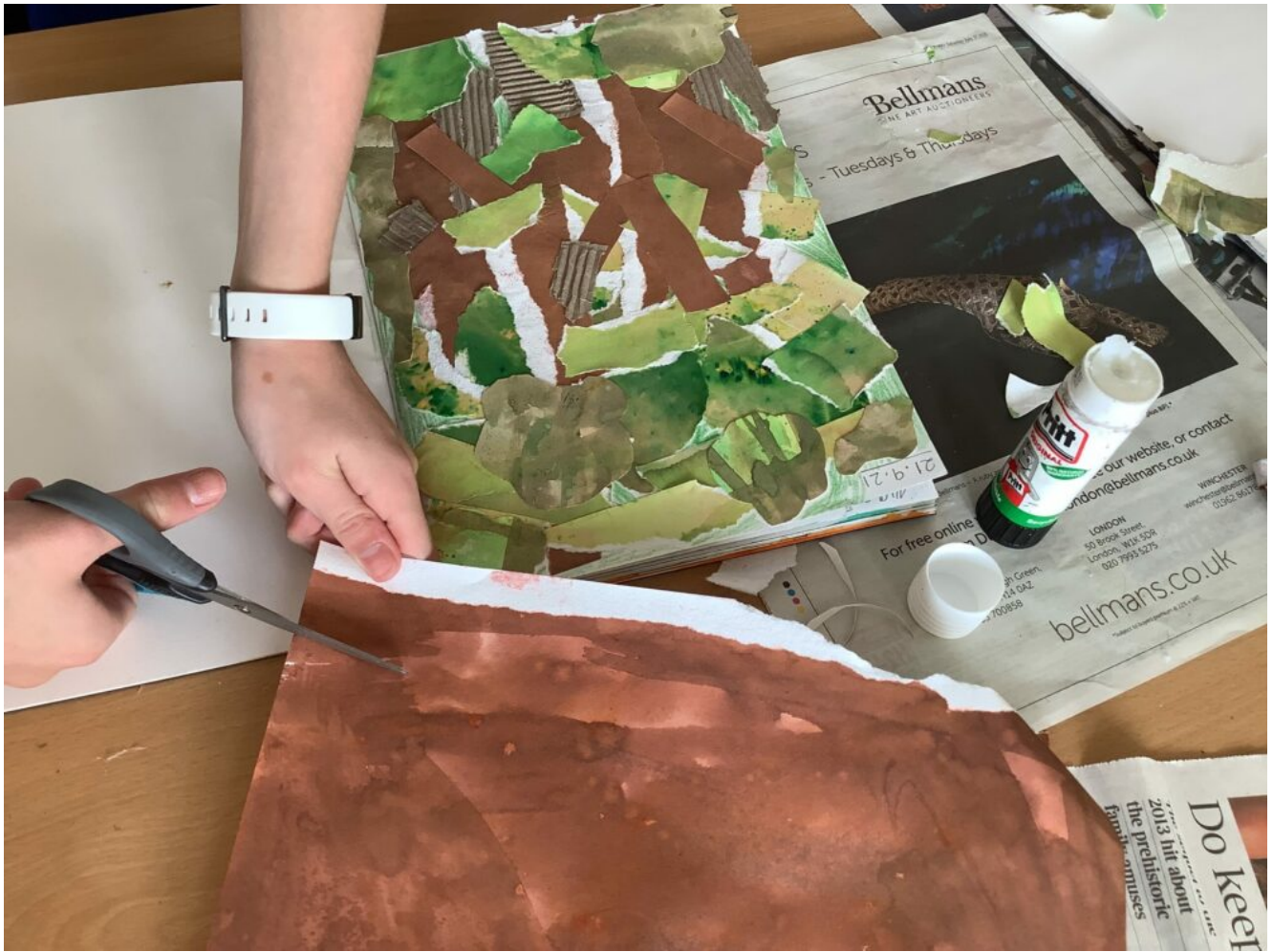
Time to Warm Up! Playing with Collage Papers.

Take some scraps of paper, preferably a mixture of green and brown tones. You will also need some glue and scissors.

Using your sketchbook or some A3 cartridge paper as a background, experiment with ways to tear up pieces of the paper and create pattern and form on the paper.



Try not to think too much about making a 'picture' - this is more about finding patterns and paths as you work and following a creative instinct. Does a particular type of paper appeal to you? Do different papers tear in different ways? What happens when you layer them over each other and stick them down?



Now try using scissors to create more angular or precise shapes? Stick these shapes down on your paper and see what shapes you make.

Do you want to repeat patterns or do you want to make more fluid meandering shapes?

Spend about 15 minutes exploring collage in this way.





Starter Discussion:

In session three we'll be looking at the other main setting in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*: The Forest, and how this contrasts with the setting of Athens.

The Forest at night creates a dark and confusing environment for some of the characters in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* – but not all of them. Which characters do you think use the darkness and night to their advantage?

The woods are a place of mysterious happenings, and the fairies are right at home there. The world of nature is both a place of beauty and a place of danger. We grow our food with the help from natural elements, but these elements, or forces of nature, also have capacity to cause havoc and damage to our lives.

How do you think an Elizabethan production of *A Midsummer*

Night's Dream could portray the forest without the use of an elaborate sets, lighting, or sound?

Main Activity: Collaborative Forest Collage

NB for teachers: There are a few options on how to deliver this activity and this depends on practicalities in your own setting. You can either use a large roll of paper or a series of large A1 sheets of cartridge paper. You will need to stick the paper onto the wall or lay it out on the floor so everyone can access it. Alternatively, you could make an 'indoor forest' by each child tearing and creating a tree separately before sticking them up and around the room. These can then be added to and developed.

The slight disadvantage of this method is that there's no background to draw on so gaining that sense of perspective and 'what's beyond the trees' is more challenging.

You can either do this as a full class exercise or split the class into small groups depending on practical limits.

Because this activity is more large scale; it's been split over two sessions, with session 4 also being focused on the forest and how we can develop the effect of light and dark.

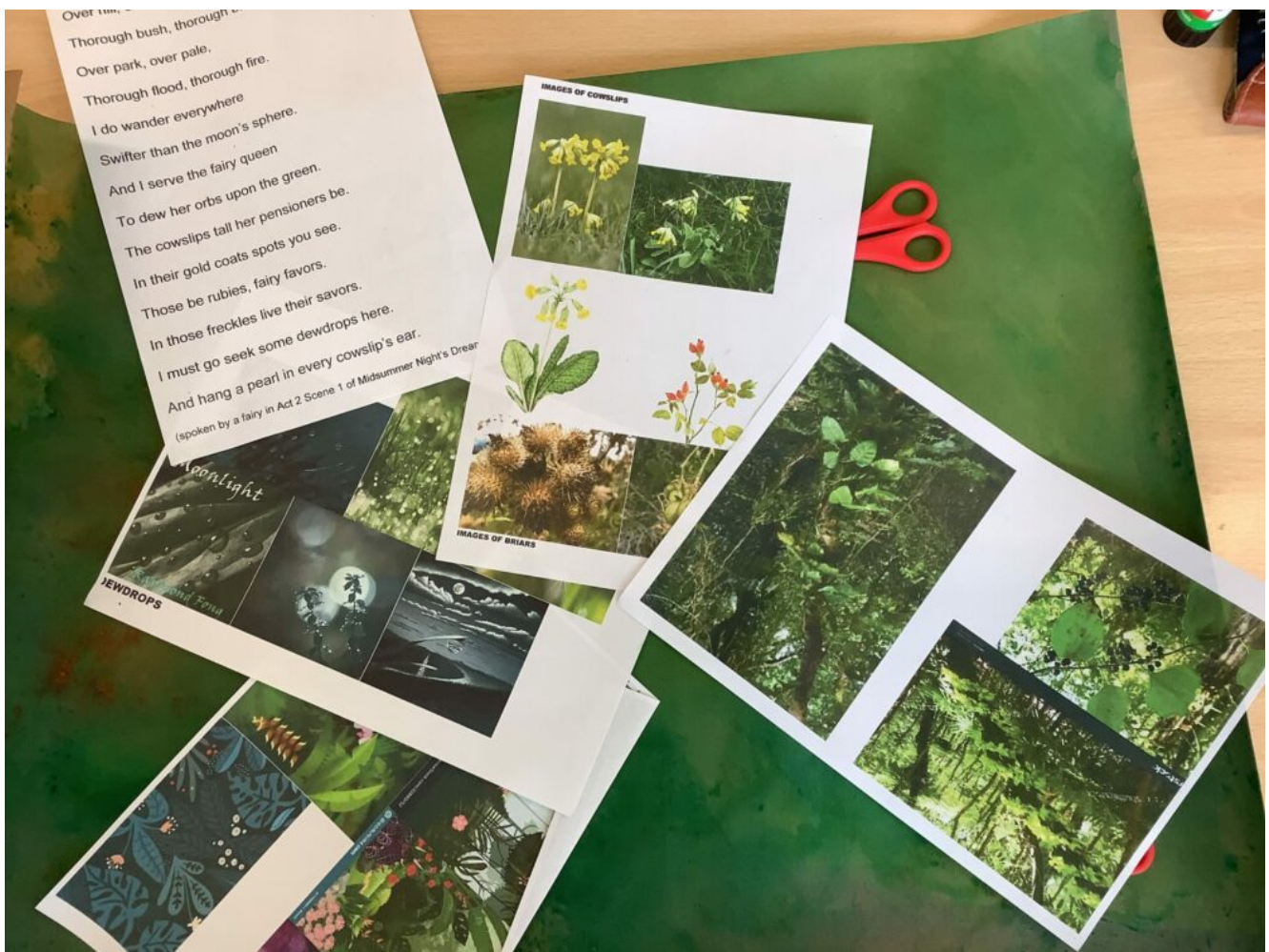
Together as a group, you're going to make your impression of the Forest in A Midsummer Night's Dream!

Begin by reading the following words spoken by a fairy in Act 2 Scene 1:

*'Over hill, over dale,
Thorough bush, thorough brier,
Over park, over pale,
Thorough flood, thorough fire.
I do wander everywhere
Swifter than the moon's sphere.
And I serve the fairy queen
To dew her orbs upon the green.
The cowslips tall her pensioners be.
In their gold coats spots you see.*

*Those be rubies, fairy favors.
In those freckles live their savors.
I must go seek some dewdrops here
And hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear'.*

What imagery does Shakespeare evoke here? Is the pace and rhythm fast or slow? What is the effect of this? Think about who is speaking the words and what being in nature, with all its 'rhythms', feels like.



The descriptions Shakespeare uses of the forest here, and elsewhere in the play, create images and enhances contrasts. It demonstrates that just like the human world, the natural world can be unbalanced, inharmonious – and even dangerous.

Make a list of all the natural forms mentioned in this verse. Do any of them contrast? What would you like to include in your collage?

To begin, you need to prepare some large backing paper onto which you will collage your forest. You could draw over the top of newsprint or old magazines with coloured pencils or pastels or working over large sheets of paper with water colour wash. Just be mindful not to make the paper too saturated with water as you will need it dry when you start collaging.

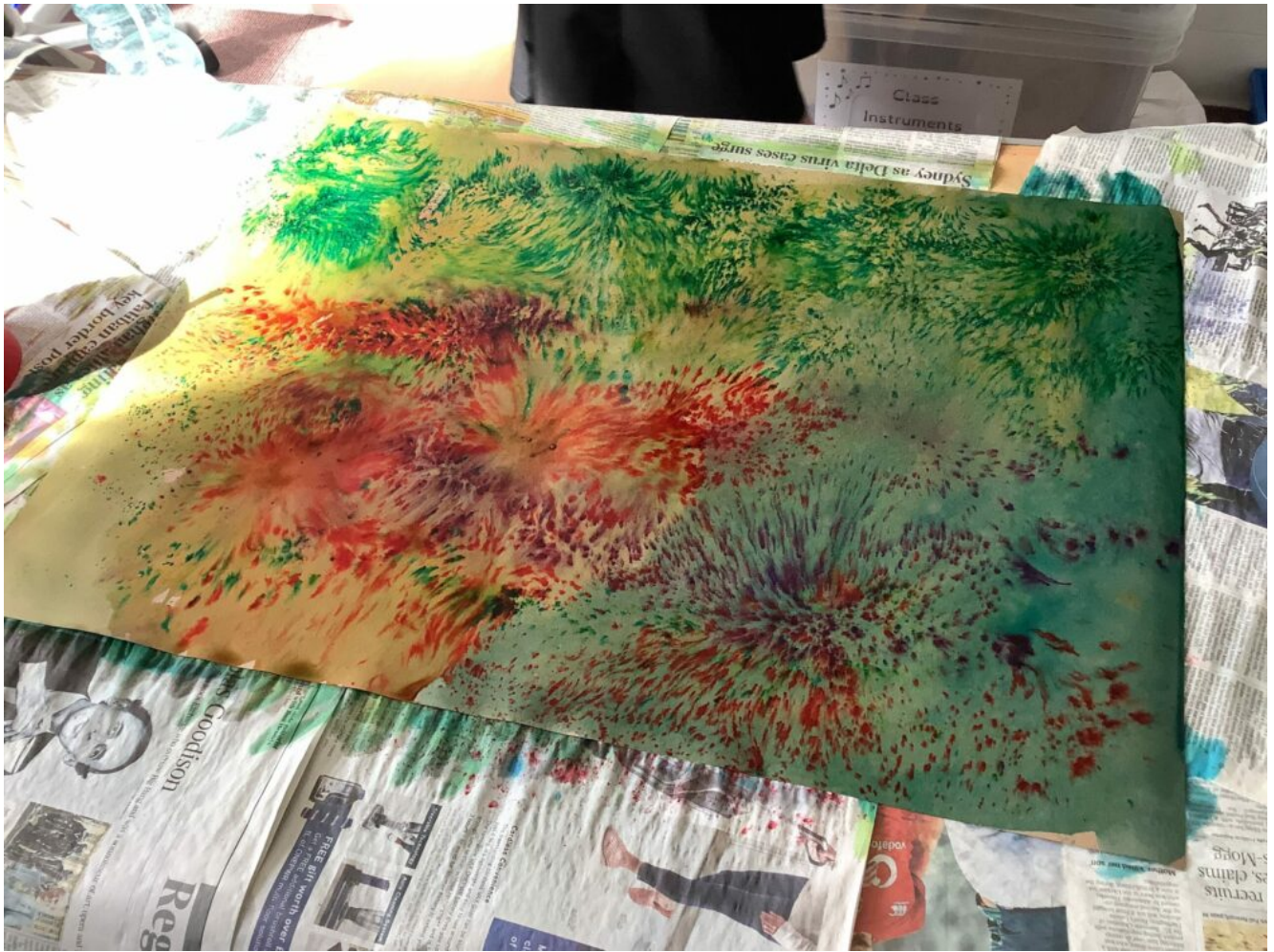


Try adding brushstrokes to create fluid movement with colour, adding to the 'other worldly' feel of the forest.



You could use some water spray bottles to apply watered down brusho.





Using the collage techniques you used in the warm up, begin shaping some trees, leaves, flowers and other natural forms out of different papers. It's a good idea to use the time while any background papers are drying.





Decide as a group if you will have different sized trees. Do they all look the same or do some have different shaped leaves.





Vary the papers as much as possible to create texture and contrast.





When we are in nature, we are surrounded by hundreds of creatures everywhere, and we can't see them. How can you show this in your collage? What is hiding behind the leaves?



Think about light and dark and how the forest might look different at night? Is part of your forest lit by the moon and another part showing the sun just rising? Discuss your ideas as a group. We will be looking at light and dark in more detail in session four.



Work over the top of the paper forms using felt tip pen. These can be used to create a detail through a variety of lines.











Move onto session four [here](#).

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Making a Treehouse

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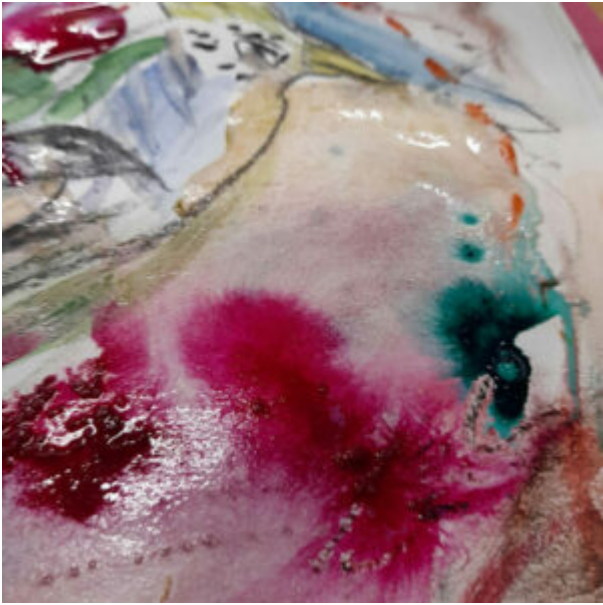


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Talking Points: Kittie Jones



A Visual Poetry Zine with Monotype

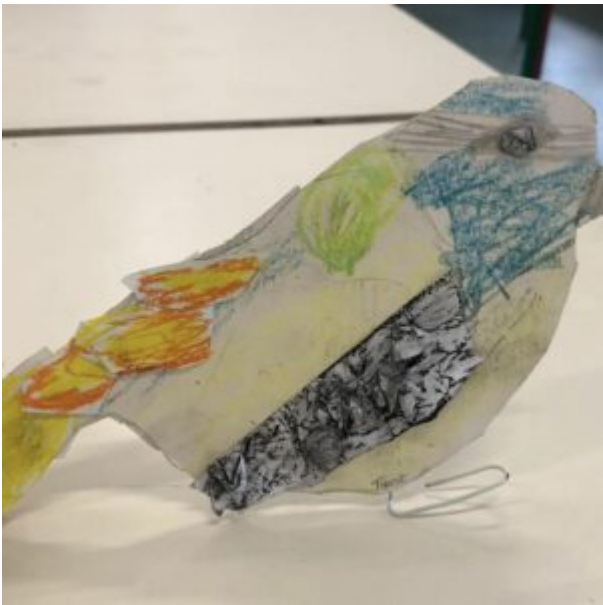
Use monoprint, paint and collage to create zines inspired by poetry.

Osakana

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Which Artists: Tatyana Antoun

What We Like About This Resource...

"The research phase of a creative project can be presented in many different ways, and can even be an art form in itself. Here, Tatyana demonstrates how her sketchbooks became a medium through which she expressed her thoughts, refined her ideas and explored materials. We believe sketchbooks to be a powerful tool for children to take ownership of their ideas and travel on their own creative journey, without necessarily knowing the destination. Take a look at our [sketchbook journey](#)

for more sketchbook inspiration” – Rachel, AccessArt.

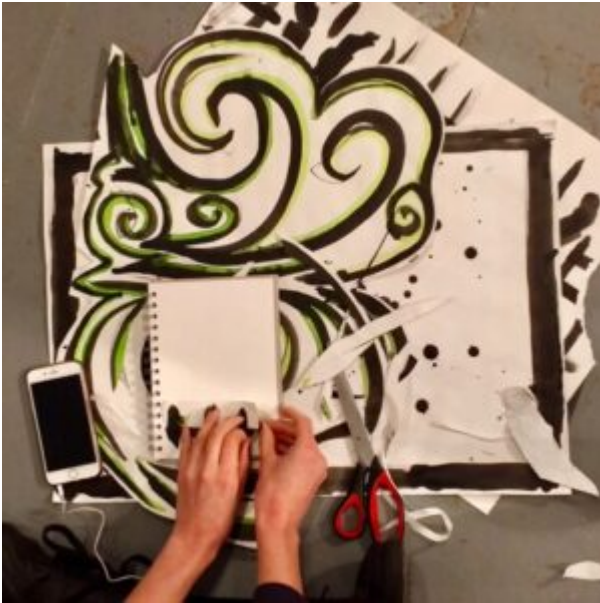
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[Sketchbooks and Thinking Skills](#)



[Sketchbooks for Designers – an Introduction for Children](#)



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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*

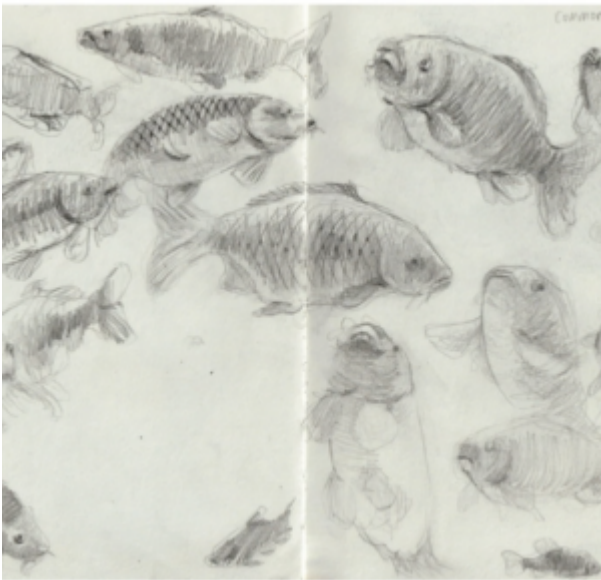
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How I Use Drawing and Sketchbooks

Transformation of Materials

Inspired by El Anatsui

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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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The Transformation Project

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Transforming Cardboard with Andrea Butler

Artist Andrea Butler shows how to explore simple design and construction using cardboard and jewellery. [Read More](#)

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*

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One Line Street



Responding to Place



World War I Mail Art

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*

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[Henry Moore's Shelter Drawings](#)



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[For Remembrance Day](#)

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.

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Creativity Medals

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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*

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Talking Points: Introduction to sculpture

Sculpture.mp4



Clay Art Medals



Talking Points: Nnena Kalu



Talking Points: Linda BELL



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*

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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



Touch Wood

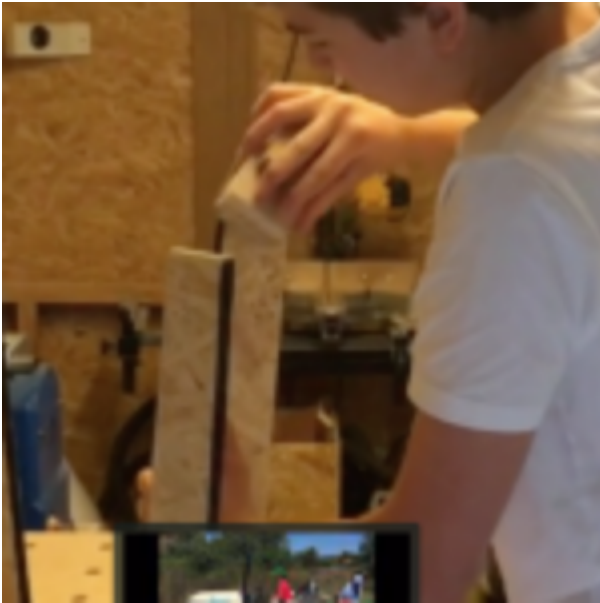
What We Like About This Resource...

“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*

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[Visual Arts PLanning: Tees, Forest and Landscapes](#)

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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