

To Construct...

[By Sarah Evelyn Marsh](#)

Within the [creative workshops](#) I facilitated in Gdansk, Poland, I explored a collection of schema-inspired themes with a small group of families. In my final post on the project, I want to reflect on the theme of *To Construct...* looking at the different ways we *constructed* during the project.

Please remember this is a personal and artistic reflection, based on the ideas I presented and the (emotional and physical) reactions and responses of the children and their families, who inspired changes and the development of the project as we experienced it. Much of what I discuss here is referenced by images in previous posts, so please go back to find images that will build upon the visual story of this blog, which you can find here: [Sensory Spaces: An Autism Friendly Project.](#)



Hand sewn objects filled with lavender

The construction of language through sensory experiences

The overarching fabric theme of the project emulated the sensitive, sensorial feel and approach of workshops. The soft and gentle folds and tucks of cotton, silk or velvet embody the care and safety I wanted to create within the environment.



Fold, wrap, conceal, secure, protect

The carefully selected fabrics, chosen for their textures, colours and opacity were used by the group in so many ways, they stimulated movement, security, they concealed, transformed and revealed.



Objects are tactile, they become extensions of the body, (tube filled with lavender).

Soft, sculptural lines, scented with lavender or filled with dry beans or soft wadding were squeezed, bitten and twisted into shapes, wrapped around heads, connected to other objects and transformed into imaginary characters.

I constructed these fabric tubes and shapes as a way to 'draw in space', malleable to bend into forms, they contour our surrounding space and body, creating boundaries and paths; tracing the world around us.

On reflection, I wonder how they were perceived by the children. Some of the group seemed to take emotional comfort from them, they created a sense of calm and security.

I wonder if the group saw artistic value in them?



Constructing with materials and Nature



Elements from my hand made 'toolkit'

A handmade 'toolkit', of sensory-inspired objects enhanced the children's engagement, supporting new ways of connecting to the world around them. Without verbal communication these objects became part of our language.



Handmade Hand



Textured language

Observations and reflections of the emotional and physical responses to these handmade objects, alongside the verbal opinions of the parents, formed a process-driven landscape that allowed us to explore 'construction' in all of these ways, and more;

- we constructed a creative language
- developed and built confidence
- formed trust and relationships
- created safe spaces
- made connections to the world around us.

This developed into / or perhaps grew from;

- experimenting and engaging with new ideas
- asking questions and seeking answers
- trying something new
- making choices, making decisions, making mistakes

- risk-taking
- feeling happy, feeling relaxed, taking ourselves out of our comfort zones
- connecting to our surroundings, connecting to each other.

All of these actions and learning strategies connect, each developed and informed the other. Forging a continual loop of learning, experiencing, playing, experimenting and communicating.

Beyond this Project...



Ewa with kaleidoscope (looking forward)

As an artist and educator, I construct new ways to work, plan, inspire and develop. This project and previous research is extending my own creative language, inspired by the families I've worked with and the outcomes of our ideas, interactions and responses. The tactile and textured world we have

inhabited is producing new artworks that I will reveal in future Access Art blog posts.

My research will continue in such galleries as [Tate Liverpool](#), April 2018 and new ventures that are being realised as I write this post.

These final images represent some of the different ways we expressed ourselves throughout the project; forming the creative language that we constructed as a group. The use of textiles was at the forefront of our experiences, but it kickstarted other creative outcomes such as: drawing, photography, writing and performance art.



Reading a script inspired by the sessions, written by Marianka, aged 7



Photographs taken by a participant in their constructed den

Our Rainbowgarden

Sara

Monika



Drawing the group as a family of mythical animals

See more posts from Sarah in this series by following this link: [Sensory Spaces: An Autism-Friendly Project](#)

evelynarts.moonfruit.com – work portfolio

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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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Making Worry Dolls

AccessArt and Mencap have created three great ways for children to make their own worry dolls. This provides children not only with a great opportunity to practice their making skills, but also to create their own very special “friend” who can listen to their fears.

Roseate Spoonbill Mixed Media Project

Year 3 Roald Dahl & Quentin Blake Homework

A year three homework brief to ‘make or draw a Roald Dahl character inspired by Quentin Blake.’

To Colour...

As part of Sensory Spaces: An Autism Friendly Project, artist, Sarah Evelyn Marsh ran two sessions exploring the theme of colour. What does colour smell like? What does colour feel like?

One Material: Sea Sculptures from Plastic Bottles

Snowflakes

Artist Melissa Pierce Murray leads teenagers in a festive workshop exploring snowflakes and decorating Christmas cookies with piping and egg tempura.

Installing Artwork in “To Scale” Gallery

Draw, Paint, Build, Make: Gallery Project

To Conceal....

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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

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.

A “Wallpaper” Sketchbook – Enabling Drawing by Getting Rid of the White page

Layered Landscapes: Working in Mixed Media on Location with Kittie Jones

Fabulous Fish

Fabulous Fish was a Brilliant Makers workshop, for year four pupils, led by Sheila Ceccarelli, raising ocean awareness at Ridgefield Primary School, Cambridge.

Wave Bowls

In this session children make 'wave bowls' with Paula Briggs – a session where the pieces literally 'come together'.

Ink & Foamboard Architecture

Inspired by "Amphis" by Folke Köbberling and Martin Kaltwasser at Wysing Arts Centre, this post shares how the children went on to make architectural models based upon their exploration with Paula Briggs.

Under the Ocean Mirrors

This was an afternoon session for year four pupils at Ridgefield Primary School, Cambridge, and part of AccessArt's Brilliant Makers Club, a campaign supporting and championing making experiences in schools. By Sheila Ceccarelli

Graphic Inky Still Life!

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talking points: Flemish and Dutch Still Life Painters



Talking Points: Paul Cezanne



talking points: Contemporary still life



Making Boats that Float Out

of Everyday Materials

What Makes a Boat Float? This was an afternoon session for year four pupils at Ridgefield Primary School, Cambridge, and part of AccessArt's Brilliant Makers Club, a campaign supporting and championing making experiences in schools. By Sheila Ceccarelli