

Galaxy Painting

By [Rachel Thompson](#)



In this table top activity, AccessArt team member Rachel uses a classic water colour technique to create a colourful galaxy scene.

You will need:

- Some large water colour paper (unfortunately standard cartridge paper is not absorbent enough for this activity!)
- Water colour paints, inks or food colouring
- Pippets and/or brushes
- Test tubes, jug and funnel (if you don't have test tubes then a standard paint pallet or a few pots work fine)
- A small sponge

- An ice cube tray or other colour mixing pots

To create a link between art and science, we used some equipment taken from a 'science kit' we have - namely, pippets, test tubes, a funnel and food colouring - but you can just as easily use paint brushes and water colour paint or inks. The advantage of pippets and funnels however, is that it creates a few more steps to the process, (therefore taking more time, keeping engagement up for more than twenty minutes!).



This activity uses a classic water colour technique of applying paint to a dampened piece of paper. The result is that the paint shows its lovely quality of travelling and swirling across the paper through the channels of wet paper. Young children love to see how colours can 'magically' merge together and create beautiful moving patterns.

Starter discussion: This is a great opportunity to combine a

bit of art with science! Take a look at photos or books of how our galaxy looks. Observe the colours and patterns and talk about where space is and how we learn about it. I did this activity with my five year old daughter and a few minutes discussing space galaxies definitely seemed to help her focus!

Then, we used the test tubes to mix our colours. This proved an engaging part of the process as we could use a small funnel and jug of water to first add some water into each tube, followed by some drops of food colouring. Inks or water colour paint work equally well here though.





Primary colours work well here as there's more scope for creating new colours.



Then, take a large sheet of water colour paper that is as absorbent as possible. Using a sponge or large brush, spread some water across the paper evenly. Try not to make it too wet at this stage or the paper will become too saturated once the colour is added.



Next, use pippets (or brushes) to drop colour onto the dampened paper - and wait for the magic to happen!







Create patterns with brushes and drop colour in between.



After a few minutes I introduced an old ice cube box that was useful for playing with colour mixing. I also got out a set of water colour paints to add variety.



Spending a few minutes dropping colour into each ice cube section was an activity in itself!

Once the paper has been covered with colour, and is probably getting to the point where it can't hold much more water, set it aside to dry. If little puddles of coloured water are pooling on the paper, show your child how they can extract this using the pipette. This is a great technique to learn and encourages the child to make decisions about their painting and where sometimes, less is more! You can also do this with a dry paint brush, making sure you squeeze or blot the fluid out of it each time.

Once the painting is dry we moved on to looking at some space books, so some context was given for the next part of the activity.



Then, using a range of drawing materials (my daughter mainly used simple colouring pencils as they have a lovely chalky quality over the top of dried water colour paper) draw your space picture! This is really an opportunity to let your child use their imagination and explore the composition of the page. Allow them to draw what comes to mind, only steering them towards discussions about space rather than dictating what they draw. My daughter was particularly drawn to a photo of an astronaut in the book we looked at and so wanted to re create that.

She began drawing some planets, some with rings around them.





Next came a rocket!



And then the astronaut, he she decided was a girl astronaut called Sally.



Depending on your child's attention span, this could take up half an hour or so - or even more! They may leave the picture and come back to it. Above all, keep it relaxed and open ended - and have fun!



You can see more of Rachel's resources [here](#).

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.

**“Missing You” – Pavement Art
Response to #SchoolclosureUK**

Drawing Large

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Pathway: Gestural Drawing with Charcoal



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Session Recording: exploring Charcoal



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Home: The Little House on West Street LockDown Project

Inspired! Making at Linton Heights Junior School

Anna Campbell shares how a whole school engaged with making projects integrated across subjects in response to the Renaissance painting of Cupid and Psyche by Jacopo Del Sellaio at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, and how she used the project to progress pupils' making skills throughout the year groups.

Sculptural Challenge No 1: Colourful Walls

A sculptural challenge encouraging the exploration of colour.



AGES 9-11



AGES 11-14

Artwork by Krijn de Koning

Questions for Children

How would it feel to be in the spaces Krijn creates?

How do you think he chooses the colour for each wall? How do you think the shape and size of the wall affects the colour too?

Find more of Krijn's work [here](#).

Sculptural Challenge!

Use Krijn's work as your inspiration, think about how you might make a series of colourful walls.

You won't be building a life-size sculptural installation (not today anyway!) but instead you can either make a model or create a piece of 2d artwork which shares your vision. Remember, because you are not creating the artwork then you can really be imaginative and dream!

Here are some clues, but you may have your own ideas too:

Use your sketchbook to "collect" colours that you like. Find them in magazines by cutting swatches out, find them by mixing paints, find them by mixing other materials. Record them, test them, label them, make notes (what colours did you mix?), name them (the names you give them might help you to describe the affect they have on you).

Next think about what the "walls" would be like. What shape? What size? Would they enclose? Would they have holes? Would there be a roof? How do they connect? How would the person get in to the space? How would you want the person to feel? Again, use your sketchbook to plot and plan.

Think too about the location or context you would like your sculptural installation to be in. Would you like it to be in the Antarctic? The jungle? The high street? Again, use your sketchbook.

Think about how you would apply your colours to the walls? Would each wall be one colour? Would you introduce pattern? Images? Again, use your sketchbook.

Finally, either make a model using card, paint, fabric etc to share your vision, or make a 2d artwork.

You May Also Like...

Pathway: Brave Colour



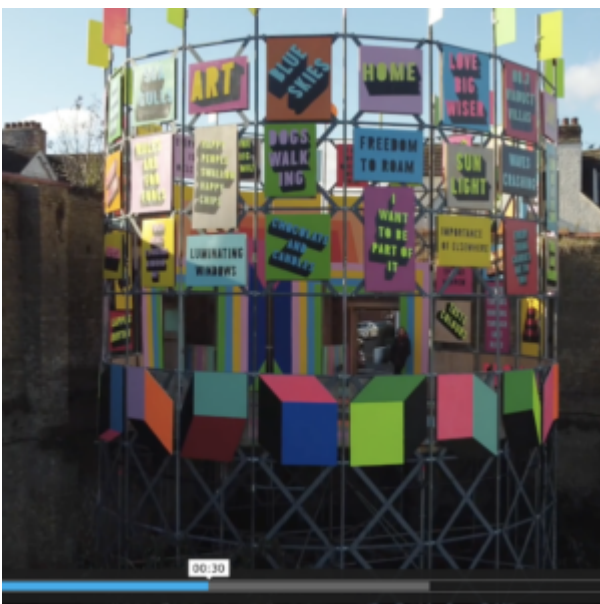
[This is featured in the 'Brave colour' pathway](#)

Talking Points: Yinka Ilori



[See how Yinka Ilori transforms spaces with colour and pattern](#)

Talking Points: Morag Myerscough



[Explore installations and immersive spatial artworks that transform places](#)

Sculptural Challenge No 2: Colour, Light and Form

A sculptural challenge to encourage the exploration of colour, light and form.

AGES 9-11

AGES 11-14

Questions for Children:

Can you imagine what it would be like to be in a room with the installations in the videos above? How would it make you feel? What do they remind you of?

How do you think the colour affects the mood?

Sculptural Challenge!

Using the artwork in the videos above as your inspiration, think about how you might design a sculptural installation which involves light, form and colour.

You won't be building a life-size sculptural installation (not today anyway!) but instead you can either make a model or create a piece of 2d

artwork which shares your vision. Remember, because you are not creating the artwork then you can really be imaginative and dream!

Here are some clues, but you may have your own ideas too:

Use your sketchbook to “collect” colours that you like. Find them in magazines by cutting swatches out, find them by mixing paints, find them by mixing other materials. Record them, test them, label them, make notes (what colours did you mix?), name them (the names you give them might help you to describe the affect they have on you).

Think about the kinds of forms (shapes) you would like the coloured light to fall on to. Would you like the coloured light to surround a person, or would you like the person to pass near the objects? How would the person enter the space? Would the space be very small or very large? How would you want the person to feel? Again, use your sketchbook to plot and plan.

Think too about the space you would like the coloured light to be in. Would you like it to be a dark space so that the lights show up against the darkness, or would you prefer a light space, so that it feels floaty and ephemeral?

Think about how you would apply your colours to the walls? Would each wall be one colour? Would you introduce pattern? Images? Again, use your sketchbook.

Finally, either make a model using card, paint, fabric etc to share your vision, or make a 2d artwork. If you make a small space, you might like to be inspired by the [Mini Art World](#) Resource and use coloured filters and torches to replicate the space.

You May Also Like...

Pathway: Brave Colour



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

Talking Points: Carnovsky



Explore different colour profiles and see how light can transform art

Which Artists: Liz West



Find out how Liz West is inspired by light, colour and reflections

Talking Points: Olafur Eliasson

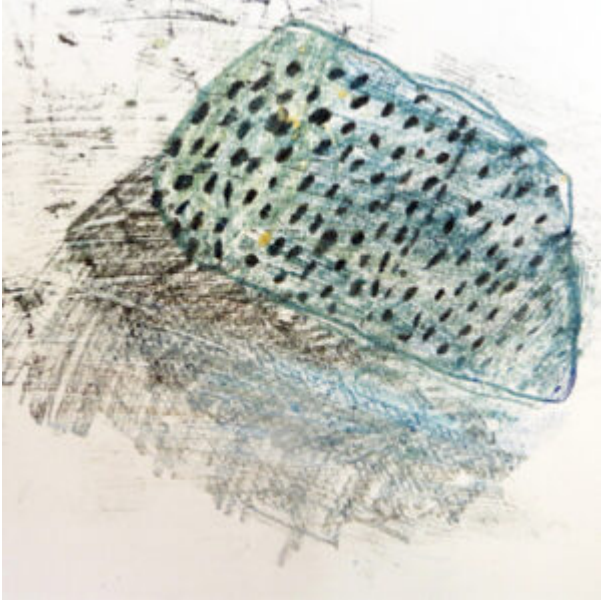


[See how Eliasson uses elemental materials such as light, water, and air temperature](#)

Mono Printing Session with 'Change, Grow, Live'

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Pathway: Exploring the world through mono print



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Talking Points: Xgaoc'o Xare



Video enabled monoprint resources

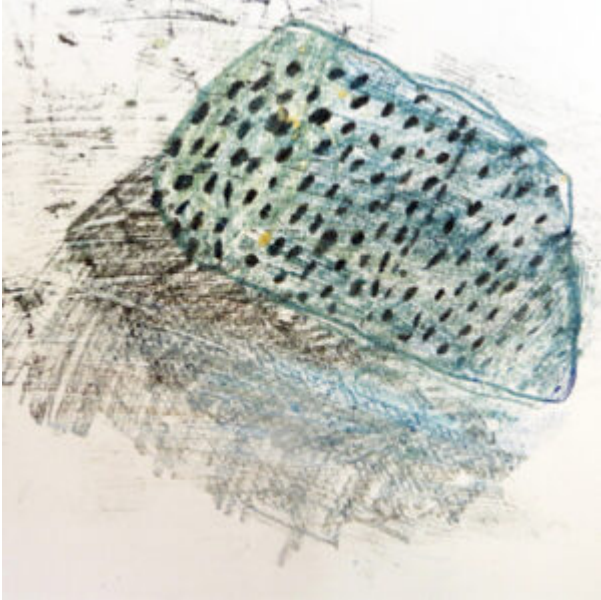


Rainbows and Waves for Grey Days

Drawing Small

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Pathway: Exploring the world through mono print



This is featured in the 'Exploring The World Through Mono print' pathway

Drawing Large



Printed Houses

Inspired! Re-Creating Cupid and Psyche in Mixed Media by Year Fives at Linton Heights

Year Five teacher, Kirsty Webb, shares her pupils' Inspire journey and their response to the Renaissance painting of Cupid and Psyche by Jacopo Del Sellaio at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge and the benefits of having a full immersion into materials and working together as a class on a shared project.

Inspire 2020: Introducing Colour and Egg Tempera on a Gesso Panel

This post shares how egg tempera was used as a medium in the Italian Renaissance and how teachers interpreted the processes involved in the teaching studio at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge with AccessArt and the Fitzwilliam Education Team, as part of the CPD programme for Inspire 2020

A Progression Pathway in Clay Work

From Early Years

Woodland Exploration by Caroline Wendling & Deborah Wilenski



Artists Caroline Wendling and Deborah Wilenski encourage young children in a woodland exploration using art and imagination as their discovery tools.

Nest By Paula Briggs



Paula gives children the tools to both draw and make. Children worked with hard and soft pencils, graphite, wax resist, watercolour, clay and sticks.

From Key Stage One

How to Clay Play



[_](#)This resource, commissioned by Cambridge City Council, encourages being together through making and introduces the basics of working with Scolaquip air-hardening clay.

Ofsted are Coming Tomorrow!



[_](#)Primary school teacher, Sue Brown, shares her experience of an Ofsted Deep Dive in Art and gives advice to other teachers on how they might prepare themselves.

Quick Clay Figurative Sketches By Paula Briggs



Paula provided young children with the opportunity to explore clay as a “short term” construction and modelling material. Without being fired, the dry clay has a limited lifespan, and the sculptures will crumble, but I think it’s important to remind ourselves that even without access to a kiln, clay can still be regarded as a valuable sculptural material.

Decorative Clay Coil Pots by Sharon Gale



This simple clay pot making resource is not the traditional way of making coil pots but it’s lots of fun and by using different paint effects, the end results can be very interesting. We worked on this project for two, two-hour sessions.

Making Plaster Reliefs By Paula Briggs



[_](#)This resource describes how to create plaster reliefs using clay and foamboard moulds. It is based upon a session which took place at Bourn Primary Academy with a group of Year 5 children.

Clay Art Medals by Sharon Gale



[_](#)In this three stage resource, students make a circular medal from clay depicting their own profile, look at examples of fun lettering and devise a short, fun or meaningful phrase to paint inside their portrait profile. Clay art medals are a fun way to link class topics with an art activity.

Japan: Making Sushi – Recycled Style! By Jan Miller



 Inspired by research into Japanese culture, children explored the potential and limitations of paper and recycled materials, learning through play and experimentation to make 3D forms. The outcomes of this process were used to inform work created in a second medium of clay, using kitchen equipment to shape the clay and add textures.

From Key Stage Two

Japan – Ceramics Inspire Painting and Painting Inspires Ceramics By Jan Miller



 Jan shares a Year Three class project that uses the work of a contemporary Japanese ceramicist to inspire vibrant paintings in a variety of materials. The children then used their own art to design ceramic vessels.

Clay ‘Portrait’ Miniatures by Sharon Gale



Portrait miniatures are small painted images, usually of monarchs and very wealthy, important people. Dating back to the 1520s, these tiny portraiture paintings are like medals, but with realistic colour. This two stage clay and painting resource is very versatile because essentially the miniatures are blank canvasses.

Clay Slab Work by Andy Cairns



This resource explores how to make an armature and use clay slab to build a form. Based upon the legend of “Black Shuck”, a ghostly dog that roams the coast searching for its drowned masters, this project engaged the children and resulted in charismatic sculptures, but you could equally transfer the activity to other themes.

Fruit-Inspired Clay Tiles By Rachel Dormor



[Ceramicist Rachel Dormor](#) shares a workshop idea suitable for primary or secondary aged children. Working in clay, pupils take their inspiration from drawings of fruit to make decorative clay tiles.

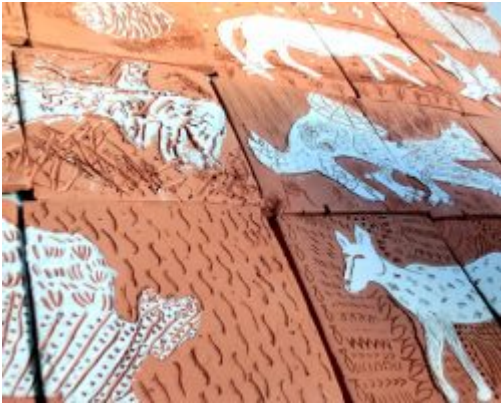
Fruit Pinch Pot Project By Rachel Dormor



[Ceramicist Rachel Dormor](#) shares a workshop idea suitable for primary or secondary aged children. Working in clay, pupils take their inspiration from drawings of fruit to make simple pinch pot mugs.

From Key Stage Three and Beyond

Chimera Drawings into Beautiful Terracotta Tiles By Eleanor Somerset



___Sgraffito, or ‘scratching’ is a technique which is an excellent way to reinforce mark making with all age groups.

Drawing into leather hard red clay tiles to create designs using mark-making can be even more effective when done through a white earthenware slip to reveal the red clay beneath.

Exploring Materials: Clay and Water by Sheila Ceccarelli



___Sheila asked teenagers at AccessArt’s Experimental Drawing Class when the last time was that they had played with clay?

Arts and Minds: Manipulating Clay with Water by Sheila Ceccarelli



[_](#)This post shows how to facilitate a sensory session exploring water and clay – by Sheila Ceccarelli (artist) and Yael Pilowsky Bankirer (Psychotherapist) for Arts and Minds.

Painted Clay by Melissa Pierce Murray



[_](#)This post was inspired by the Japanese art of dorondongo, where mud and dirt are shaped and buffed into highly polished spheres. We made clay spheres and other simple forms in clay, and once dry, painted them with ink and acrylic.

Exploring Portraits with Eleanor Somerset



[_](#)In this resource artist, Eleanor

Somerset shows how she led students in The Little Art Studio, Sheffield, to explore and discover portraiture through various media.

Introducing Sgraffito using a Coloured Clay Slip on a Terracotta Tile By Eleanor Somerset



[_](#)Further explore how to make beautiful sgraffito, or 'scratched drawings' with artist Eleanor Somerset.

From Bones and Body to Structure and Form By Melissa Pierce Murray



[_](#)Artist Melissa Pierce Murray worked with teenagers from AccessArt's Experimental Drawing Class on a series of workshops which physically explored drawing and sculptural responses to form, forces and anatomy.

Simple Clay Moulds by Melissa Pierce Murray



[_](#)In this post, artist Melissa Pierce Murray, shows, step-by-step, how young teenagers explored plaster casting by making simple clay 'waste moulds' and then moved on to making simple 'two piece moulds'.

Casting a Negative Space in Plaster with Sculptor Rachel Wooller



[_](#)Resident artist at ArtWorks Studios, Cambridge, Rachel Wooller, introduces teenagers at AccessArt's Experimental Drawing Class to the process of casting and creating negative shapes in plaster from clay positives.

Rowan: Clay Coiling Techniques to Make Penguins, Tweety Pie and a Dalek too! by Abi Moore and Sarah Nibbs



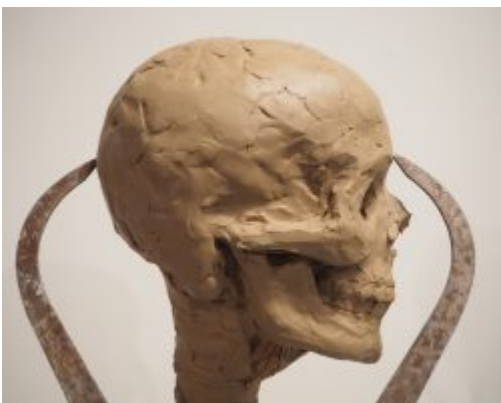
Abi, Sarah and students at Rowan Humberstone, show how they made clay birds using clay coiling techniques and with a plaster mould for the birds' bases.

Rowan: Making a Clay Bird from a Mould by Abi Moore and Sarah Nibbs



Abi and students from Rowan Humberstone, describe how they made clay birds from a plaster mould.

Modelling The Head in Clay by Melissa Pierce Murray



Artist Melissa Pierce Murray led a

series of workshops for AccessArt's Experimental Drawing Class in which the teenagers modelled a head in clay. There are five resources in this series, beginning with constructing an armature and making preparatory drawings, then studying the bone structure of the skull before moving on to features. The final post in this series looks at ways to increase the techniques and approaches used in drawing.

Design Lab: Phoebe Cummings at the V&A



Students, from the DesignLab at the V&A, London, worked with artist Phoebe Cummings over a three month period to create a site-specific, group piece, from unfired clay which was inspired by the historical 2D designs found on 19th century British tableware in the collection.

Inspired! Psyche's Resilience by The Fitzy Peters

Natalie Bailey shares the pupils' Inspire journey and their response to the Renaissance painting of Cupid and Psyche by Jacopo Del Sellaio at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge as well as her reflections on the transformative impact that the project had on the children and how Art can support healing and wellbeing.

Life Drawing Class: Visual Impressions

Research: Life Drawing & Adolescents

Inspired! 'The Tree' by Year One and Two at Hauxton Primary School

In this post, Pamela Stewart shares the submission by Hauxton Primary School, Cambridgeshire for Inspire: A Celebration of Children's Art in Response to Jacopo del Sellaio's Cupid and Psyche by Year One and Two pupils in 'Owl Class'.

It shares the pupils' Inspire journey and all that they learned in response to looking at the Renaissance painting at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.

Ofsted are Coming Tomorrow!

Sue Brown shares her experience of an Ofsted inspection with an Art Deep Dive.

Walking and Drawing