

World in a Matchbox



Children love working on a miniature scale where they can create worlds which they can control and oversee. AccessArt and Mencap have devised the “World in a Box” activity to enable children plenty of creative freedom resulting in fantastic autobiographical artwork.

Aimed at ages 5 to 11.

Allow between 1 and 2 hours to complete the boxes.



You will need:

- Blank craft matchboxes. You can get these in two sizes; we went for the larger size (approximately 110mm, 60mm x 20mm).
- Plain white card or paper
- Coloured card
- Paper for collage (e.g. old magazines, old books, postcards, leaflets, etc)
- Selection of fabric, wool, string, etc

Selection of small found objects (e.g. matchsticks, cocktail sticks, beads, etc)

- Glue sticks
- Scissors
- Pens and pencils
- Printer (optional)

1. As a class, establish that the children should feel as if they own their world in a box – its will be theirs, and it can contain anything they like. The more the children feel a sense of ownership from the beginning, the greater their creative freedom of expression.

2. Children might choose to create a world which:

- Depicts their bedroom (real or fantasy)
- Shares a hobby or pastime, or something they really like (pets, objects, places)
- Depicts a dream world they would love to inhabit
- Shares a happy memory (a holiday, a person, a visit...)
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- Depicts friends or family

3. Don't worry about getting the children to design their boxes on paper. Instead, let them start making straight away, responding to the materials available. To help this process, make sure you have collected together a wide variety of materials for them to use to collage and create. The greater the variety of materials, the more the children can make thoughtful decisions about which materials they use and how they use them.

4. Make sure the children understand they can take risks in their creativity. If they don't like something, they do they can always redo it!

5. Start with either the matchbox cover or the interior – it doesn't matter.



6. Think about how the matchbox cover might be manipulated. Might you cut a hole in it (with help) to give a glimpse of what's inside? Or might you decorate it with imagery or words (printed or handwritten).



7. What will be revealed inside the box? Use collage or drawing to decorate, and perhaps paint the sides? Use collage items and small objects to add 3d detail. Create fold-out panels or small booklets which you can glue in.









8. Think how the finished Worlds in Boxes might be displayed; they should make for a very rich and exciting display.

9. Most of all, have fun and celebrate the unique and diverse personalities of everyone in the class!

UK Charity 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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