Looking for Hope in the Small Things

By Catherine Laing

Catherine Laing shares her journey with her baby daughter during the Covid 19 lockdown. Inspired by the many beautiful things that end up on the shore, each day Catherine collects 10 similar objects, takes them home, and then draws on them an image of something she sees that makes her feel hopeful. Once completed (this can take a day, or a week) she leaves them sitting on the groynes on #Broughtyferry beach to (hopefully) share with other walkers and (more likely!) the River Tay. And then repeats the process...

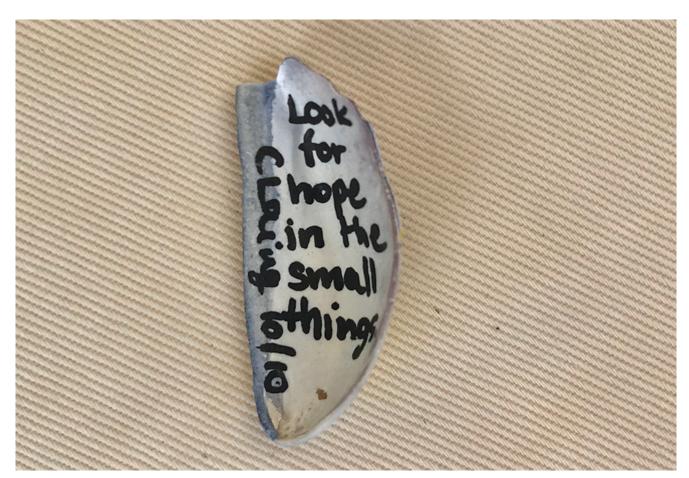


"At the beginning of the lockdown, like everyone, I felt isolated. So, during my daily walks, I would play a game where I would always try to smile at everyone I passed, to try and summon up some hope for us all. I began to think of how to connect with others in a more concrete way, in a time where we all had to remain separate. I found myself drawn to the decaying groynes on the local beach. Originally designed to stem the erosion of the beach, over time they have eroded and are now beautiful objects encrusted with shells, seaweed and barnacles. I decided to use them as a site for an artwork, which would be a way to share the burgeoning hope I felt when walking on the sand with my daughter.



During my walks I collect ten similar objects from the beach that catch my eye. I then take these home and draw an image on them of something I have seen on that same walk that made me feel hopeful. On the opposite side of the objects I write 'Look for hope in the small things'





When these drawings are complete, I return them to the beach and place them on the groynes. My hope is that they will be seen, and even collected by other people, and they will feel the joy of finding something unexpected when they are walking. However, I realise that many of them will be washed away with the tide. At the time of writing I have made thirteen sets of these drawings - my goal is to reach a symbolic 19!







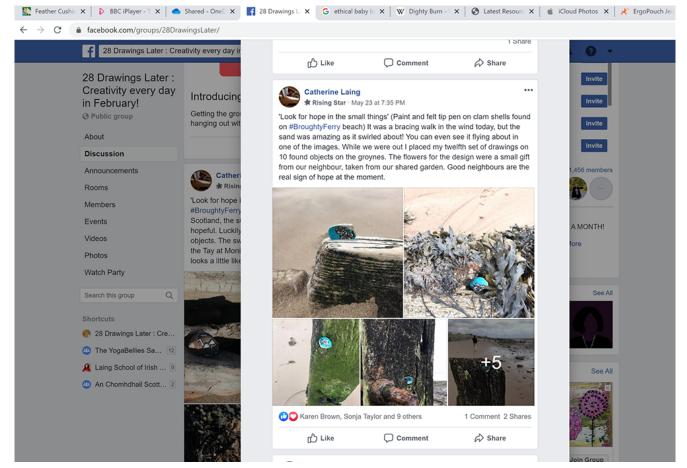




I have kept one of each of all the editioned drawings and have taken photographs of them on the groynes.



Due to the small size of many of my drawings, and having observed how people walk along the beach looking at the skyline, I'm not sure that many people notice my work before it is washed away. However, by posting photographs on social media I have found a second, wider audience to connect with.



Initially, I just sat my work on the groynes; however, over time I found ways to wedge them into the rotting wood. This makes them more secure and makes them feel more part of the existing landscape. I always feel a thrill upon returning on another day to find that some are still there!



Each time, I challenge myself to find a different material to draw on. My only criteria are that the objects are small, and have a relatively smooth surface to draw on. Each time I have to adapt my technique to the different textures and shapes of the chosen objects.







Before lockdown, I made things for my home and my job, but it had been quite some time since I have made any art as an artist. My hope is that I will find some way to continue carving out some time in my days and weeks to continue what has been a rewarding, hopeful experience, using drawing to connect with others."





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.

One Roll of Paper, Two Activities

Botanical Fairies

Get Connected! Cardboard Robots with Movable Joints

You May Also Like...

Pathway: Making Animated Drawings

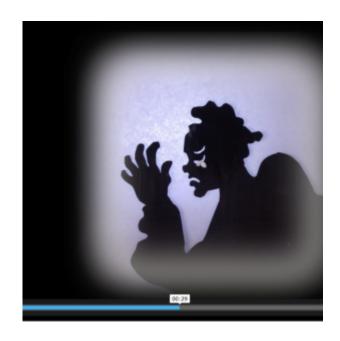


This is featured in the 'Making Animated Drawings' pathway

Talking points: Making drawings move



Talking Points: paper cut puppets



Talking Points: Lauren child



Talking Points: Lotte reiniger



Talking Points: WWF Campaign "We Can't Negotiate The

Melting Point of Ice"

Explore the videos below to find out about the creation of a WWF campaign.

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AGES 9-11

AGES 11-14

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A Stop-Motion Made of Ice

"We follow the story of a young polar bear which tries to survive in the increasingly melting Arctic environment. In the film, as in real life, Arctic sea ice is melting quickly "changing the Arctic ecosystems forever, causing destruction around the planet." This is a stark reminder that world leaders need to act now.

We used an innovative combination of 3D-Printing, Mould-Making, and Ice-sculpting to create 500 unique polar bear ice-sculptures that were then used to create the stop-motion animation. More than 1000 liters of ice were used to create the polar-bear sculptures and environment. The film, which took a year to produce, was created by NOMINT co-founder Yannis Konstantinidis, in collaboration with Marcos Savignano and Jua Braga, with music by Ted Regklis." — Vimeo

Watch the video below to find out how the animation was created

Questions to Ask Children

What can you see in the animation?

What do you like / dislike about the animation?

How does the animation make you feel?

How successful is the animation in communicating its message?

Would you like to create an animation out of ice? Why?

If you could make an animation with a message about our planet, what would that message be?

This Talking Points Is Used In...

Pathway: Using Art To Explore Global Issue

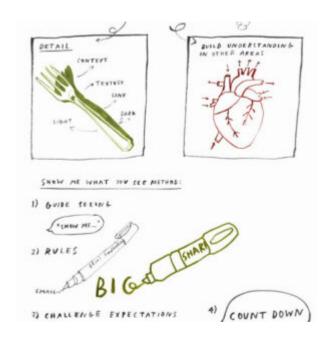


This is featured in the 'Using Art To Explore Global Issue' pathway

using sketchbooks to make visual notes



Show me what you see



Talking Points: Faith Bebbington

A collection of sources and imagery to explore the work of sculptor, Faith Bebbington.

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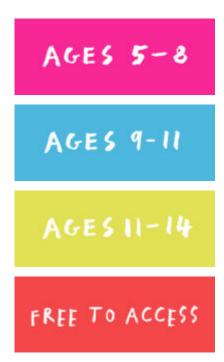
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Faith Bebbington

Faith Bebbington is a nationally renowned sculptor based in Liverpool. Faith has worked with a range of big name clients, from the Football Association to campaigning for endangered species. Faith is best known for her sustainable practise; her large sculptures utilise lots of waste materials, with her biggest sculpture to date re-using over 2500 deconstructed plastic milk bottles!



itv Reindeer For itv Creates reimagined Brand Identity by Faith Bebbington (Illuminated Plastic Milk Bottles)



Polar Bear In The Studio (Created With 3000 Plastic Milk Bottles) by Faith Bebbington



Recycled Plastic Bengal Tiger for Veolia Environment by Faith Bebbington

Find out more about Faith Bebbington's process in this "Which Artists?" post.

Questions to Ask Children

What materials can you spot in the sculptures?

Why do you think that Faith has used recycled materials to make her sculptures?

How would you describe the sculptures?

Which sculpture is your favourite? Why?

This Talking Points Is Used In...

Pathway: Using Art To Explore Global Issue

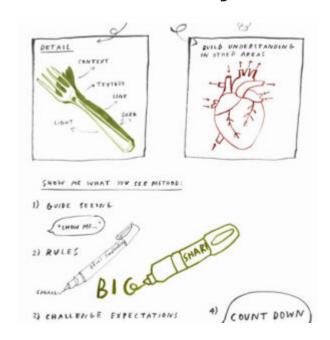


This is featured in the 'Using Art To Explore Global Issue' pathway

using sketchbooks to make visual notes



Show me what you see



Draw your Granny and Grandpa or Any Relative You Love!

The Nonna Maria Drawing Challenge by Luca Damiani

Be Inspired by Flowers in a Glass Vase by Jan Davidsz de Heem

This resource looks at 'Flowers in a Glass Vase' by the Dutch painter, Jan Davidsz de Heem (1606-1684), on permanent display at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, and how it might inspire

your own creative responses and experimentation with colour.

Galaxy Painting

"Missing You" - Pavement Art
Response to #SchoolclosureUK

Drawing Large

See This Resource Used in Schools...









You Might Also Like...

Pathway: Gestural Drawing with Charcoal



<u>Featured in the 'Gestural Drawing with</u> <u>Charcoal Pathway'</u>

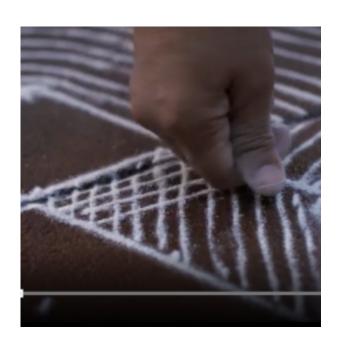
Session Recording: exploring Charcoal



Molly Hausland



The ancient art of konan



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.

Drawing Source Material: Nests

A collection of imagery and sources which you can use to prompt drawing in schools and community groups.

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Nests

Use the film below to enable children to explore

drawing nests. Try to create a sense of momentum — for example you might pause the video 4 times and ask the pupils to make a 1 minute, 2 minute, 3 minute and 4 minute drawing at each pause.

Encourage close and slow looking by talking as they draw — use your voice to attract their attention to qualities of the nest.

Try the same exercise using different materials, ie handwriting pen, ink and nib, pastel, watercolour...



Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge, Davis, United States. Original public domain image from Wikimedia Commons



Bird nest hanging on a tree. Free public domain CCO photo.



Birds nest in tree, nature photography. Free public domain CCO image.



Birds nest in tree, nature photography. Free public domain CCO image.





You May Also Like...

Pathway: Sculpture, Structure, Inventiveness & determination



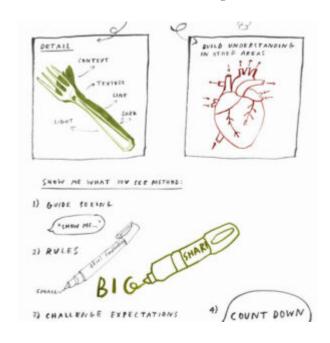
This is featured in the 'Sculpture, Structure, Inventiveness & Determination' pathway

using sketchbooks to make visual notes



Find out how pupils can respond to artists work in sketchbooks

Show me what you see



Enable close looking and drawing with
this exercise

The Language We Use Defines The Society We Create: Taking Control of the Narrative

Since 1994, AccessArt has worked to shape high quality visual arts education. As a Subject Association, we have attended All Party Parliamentary Groups and Roundtable discussions with various art specialists, organisations and Unions, to come together to advocate for the

importance of art education. At these meetings arts organisations and experienced individuals agree:

- -We need to better value the arts in education, placing arts subjects on an equal footing with STEM subjects, creating time and space for exploration and experience, as well as knowledge.
- We need to invest in Initial Teacher Training and CPDL.
- -We need a reprieve from assessment which creates a climate of fear and drives us towards limited outcomes, in direct opposition to the kind of nurturing space art requires to flourish.
- The current Curriculum needs rewriting to ensure it is relevant, diverse and accessible to all.

Art education has been systematically attacked for many years. Art educators have had to defend, and therefore our dialogue has been defensive. We have defended the subject by using language we hoped would be understand by those in government — language which asserts itself but is spoken in their terms. We have taken the current model, shown its shortcoming, and the effects of those shortcomings, and suggested solutions. But all that has been done using the existing vocabulary

which defines education today. And that is a problem, because it limits ambition and vision. We are driven to talk about assessment, monitoring, progression and knowledge, when the subject we hold needs a very different set of words to describe its rich, organic nature and build understanding of the potential for the subject to change lives.

The accidental or deliberate (depending on your viewpoint) misunderstanding of the subject area shown by those in power has demerited the importance of art education. By pushing a knowledge-rich, assessment-heavy, STEM-prioritised curriculum, the government has created a system in which the very words we need to use, as creative practitioners, teachers and pupils have been taken away from us. There is no space in the current curriculum to use words like "intuition," "growth," "personal," "organic," "experimental." We could hold such a rich, exciting, enabling subject in our hands - a subject which should be oozing with joy and richness, discovery and vision, but instead the government wants us to grip it as if it were a beast we need to beat down and control; something to be scared of which offers no real benefit to anyone. Is this misunderstanding on the part of the government, or is this fear? Fear that if we enable personal creativity we create a beast which enables free expression, resulting in a population not so easily "controlled"?

The language used by any government creates the culture through, and in which, we act, and in that way we become conditioned. We forget there are always other options, other approaches, and other words which describe other philosophies open to us. All the while we have been trying to defend art education by using the words they want us to use, and in that way we are becoming complicit, despite our intention, because we are not using the words we really need to use.

This struck home, finally, when I realised through conversations with school leavers that they could no longer use words like intuition, entitlement, dreaming, invention, play. These words are unfamiliar to them, and they no longer resonate. These words, and therefore the ways of being they describe, are not available to them right now. They find it hard to embody these words. (Embody is an important word by the way).

So, yes, let's keep defending the importance of art education, but let's take a much firmer stance. We need to unfurl our own language — the words we really need to use — the words which more accurately describe an exploration of the future role of education in general and value of art education in particular. I am no longer going to be embarrassed to use the word love in relation to education. I am no longer going to purposely not use the words intuition, passion, fun and play, for fear of making art education

seem less than; for fear of being dismissed.

Their words have been hurled at us for years — and now our whole educational and societal bedrock is built on silt. We need to start using words which build a solid place on which our children and young people can stand, and from which they can grow.

The language needs to be visceral. Honest. Brutal. We need to nail it and say it as it is. We have listened to and struggled with their vocabulary, and now they are going to hear ours. Please join us; let's use the words we really need to use, not the language we have been forced to use in a system which has been using the wrong language in the first place. We are artists after all, and we should not be apologetic that our vision, wisdom and insight comes from a very different place, is highly relevant, and to be listened to. Let's use our language, and in doing so say exactly what we need to say.

As artist, educator, CEO and parent — this is what I really want to say...

Where do we stand, at this point in time?

How are our children standing on the earth, at this point in time?

How are we serving them, in terms of education, health, wellbeing?

Are we helping them build their sense of self? Sense of safety? From which they can grow?

Are we helping them understand the relationship between sense of self and connection with others? The relationship between compassion and action? Action and impact?

Are we helping them understand what makes them human? What makes a community? A society? Are we helping them think about purpose?

Are we showing them what healthy relationships look like? With each other? With themselves? With the planet?

Are we empowering them to dream, to envision, to imagine? Are we enabling them to communicate so that they can inspire and collaborate? Are we skilling them to affect, enable and build?

Are we enabling them to think critically and creatively, and to understand the difference between the two?

Where do we stand at this point in time?

We stand at a point, caught between the way society has been shaped by previous government policy (or lack of policy), and the future. We are ALL held at that point, no matter our privilege.

But it is not the only way to stand. And we should not accept it, or think we can't affect it.

So how do we enable every person to stand on the earth grounded, belonging, able to dream, empowered to act?

Can we even imagine such a thing, or have we been so stripped of our ability to dream, confidence to be optimistic, ability to think?

Think about it now. Can you even imagine everyone you know being able to feel like they are able to work towards their full potential? Feel appreciated, valued, have something to offer, and able to contribute?

If you can't imagine that, then please get angry and ask if we have perhaps been conditioned?

Don't say it is idealistic.

Why do we stand the way we do, on the earth today? And how can we make change?

When we look, what do we see with our own eyes?

We see teenagers, emerging from their knowledgerich, assessed-heavy, education, uncertain. Uncertain as to how they feel about their place in the world and unsure what their entitlement is to dream, act and affect, because they have been stripped of their permission. Ask a school leaver about intuition, and see how they answer. Do they know what that word means? Ask a school leaver about their dreams and hopes, and see how they answer. Ask a school leaver if everyone has equality of opportunity and see how they answer. Have they been enabled?

We see children and teenagers holding so much anxiety. Flight, fright or freeze — sense of self becomes fragmented and constricted and in that state we cannot go out into the world feeling safe and grounded ready to explore and contribute. Ask them if they feel safe and enabled. Ask them if they feel held. Ask them if they understand how what manifests as anxiety often starts as sensitivity — which can be a beautiful and vital thing which in turn can be explored, expressed and shared through art. Sensitivity need not develop into anxiety. It is not inevitable.

We see children and teenagers avoiding school, because their nervous systems know that school in its current state does not feel like the safest place for them. Do we understand what their bodies and minds need, now, to enable them to learn? Ask a child: What would keep you in school? In which lessons do you feel listened to and can flourish? What does flourish even mean? Has anyone asked you?

We see no time, no space. We send them hurtling, ticking off a list. Towards what? And the existential skills they have learnt are? Have we been brave enough to create generations who are curious? Brave enough to embrace the "other" — to explore differences and yet to be able to connect? Ask a child: Do you feel you have had the space to

follow your interests and really understand? Have you ever had the experience of exciting an other?

We see a climate of crippling fear. Everyone looking over their shoulder, or averting their eyes. Ask a teacher: Can you imagine overtly valuing things that can't be measured?

We see everything treated the same. Vanilla subjects. Tidy, neat, convenient. Don't risk, don't dare. Don't create mess. Don't give access to that tool. Don't let them fail. Ask a teacher and ask a child: In what ways is art unique? What does art need to be allowed to flourish in your school? What even is "art"?

We see teachers who cannot find joy and love in teaching, because they are not enabled to find joy and love in teaching. Does Ofsted ask: Do you find joy and love in teaching? Do your pupils find joy and love in learning? What do we feel this takes from us, to ask this question? What are we scared of? Why can't we use those words?

We see young parents and teachers whose own education has not shown them the promise of a more creative, holistic education, so they do not see the possibilities, do not know what their own children are therefore missing. Ask a young teacher: What is art for? How does it serve us? In what ways is it a catalyst? In what ways is it a sensor? In what ways is it a release? How can art make children feel safe?

We see how a curriculum which places emphasis on measurable knowledge which can be pedantically defined and assessed has destroyed the space for exploration, discovery, self-learning. Ask a child: Are you able to explore uncertainty without fear of being judged? Do you feel like you are only valued when you can achieve? Do you feel like you are valued enough for the journey you are on to be the thing which is celebrated? Ask the teacher: How do you feel about the facilitation of an exploration of unknowledge? How do you feel about a child discovering something you didn't know could be taught (or measured)?

We see lack of vision. Our education system is a run-down version of a Victorian model. Does our education system embody aspiration? Just as the language we use reflects and shapes the culture we are in, our schools are a physical manifestation of our educational values. Ask a child: Does the environment in which you learn fill you full of excitement? Does it fill you full of confidence for the future? Ask a teacher: Does the pedagogy by which you teach stir your soul? Do you believe you are part of a system which is inclusive and aspirational?

We see whole communities who don't feel any sense of cultural entitlement. It starts with valuing finger painting which seems so throwaway. Anyone can finger paint. But if you don't let the exploration follow and grow, art remains just

finger painting and of course we can do away with that. We see a basic misunderstanding that art cannot be facilitated with as much rigour as any other subject. That if we assume art is just "nice" then it is a luxury we don't need. Ask a child: When was the last time you (choose a word: made, drew, painted, sung, acted, were introduced to an artist who shared your values, celebrated your creativity...)?

We see a culture in which we are embarrassed to use words like love, play, curiosity, and nurture in schools beyond EYFS. We have been disempowered to use language which celebrates individuality, and which acknowledges what it is to be human in schools. Ask a child and a teacher: Do you feel better after your day of education than you did before the start? Does the environment make you feel cared for and supported? Do you feel emotionally and intellectually richer? Was it fun? Do you feel fulfilled? Do you even know what that means?

Does this sound idealistic? Too big a job? Shall we just continue as we are? Turn our cheek. If being brave, visionary, radical feels hard, even impossible, then please understand the way we currently stand on the earth has not encouraged that kind of approach. By taking away our right to nurture our creative and critical thinking skills, we are being disempowered. It's happening already. The books are already burning — smouldering rather

than flames so we do not notice.

Being brave can be small and quiet. We don't have to shout. It doesn't have to take years (it can't).

More heart. Less arrogance, less bullishness, more listening. More seeing with our eyes wide open. Less measurement. More holistic approaches. Less binary choices. A big re-think about what purpose education serves. Radical rethink about what a curriculum is. Greater ability to understand education has a responsibility to go beyond knowledge, which can be googled or accessed in the blink of an AI. More recognition that we are humans and we have traits, needs, desires which can be developed and tapped into. More modelling of who we would like to be as a society. More emotional intelligence to counterbalance artificial intelligence. More problem solving through experience. And willingness and ability to see the far, far bigger perspective.

So that one day, we might look on this point in time, as we stand upon the earth, and see it for what it is: a very small contracted dot, tight and defensive, that we have been engineered into through lack of vision, insight, confidence and love. From here we have to feel able to relax and expand outwards. To use the word love in education without embarrassment, and in doing so ensure we give opportunities to teachers and pupils which enable them to feel grounded, appreciated,

empowered, connected and safe. And from there, we can all move forwards.

Which words would you like to use?

Paula Briggs, CEO & Creative Director, AccessArt, April 2024

Explore...

Not just ideas: Action Too



"One cold, rainy morning in January 1999,
I received a phone call from the then

DfES. The woman started the call with the words: "What is the best news someone could call you with on such a rainy January day?"

Explore and understand all that AccessArt has achieved and the impact we are making

Why AccessArt Can't support oak national academy



"Like many educational publishers, we were concerned at the time about both the

nature and quality of the resources created, the ethics of the creation of a curriculum by government, and also the potential impact of a so called "free" curriculum on commercial and charitable educational suppliers..."

Read why we think Oak is a flawed idea...

Talking Points: Hormazd Narielwalla

A collection of sources and imagery to explore the work of Hormazd Narielwalla.

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AGES 9-11

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Hormazd Narielwalla

Hormazd Narielwalla works across a number of artistic disciplines including printmaking,

sculpture and artist's books but he is best known for his intricate paper collages and assemblages, which are made on the surfaces of antique, vintage and bespoke tailoring patterns. — Hormazd Narielwalla

Explore more of Hormazd's figure work on his biamond Dolls.

Questions to Ask Children

What do you like/dislike about Hormazd's work?

Why do you think that Hormazd works on brown paper/used patterns?

Are there any collaged designs that stood out to you? Which ones and why?

This Talking Points Is Used In...

Pathway: Fashion Design

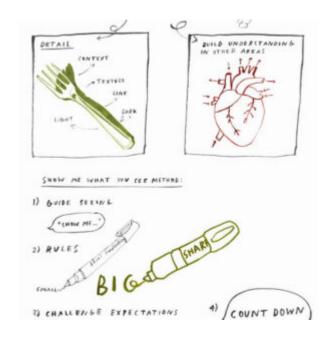


This is featured in the 'Fashion Design' pathway

using sketchbooks to make visual notes



Show me what you see



Talking Points: The Art of Nature

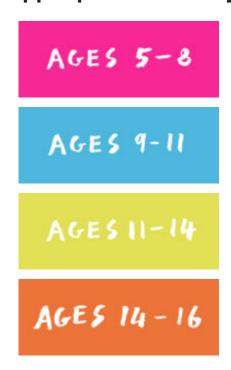
A collection of sources and imagery to explore artist Laura McKendry's love of nature.

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Laura McKendry

Laura McKendry is an artist who lives and works in London. She takes her inspiration from wildlife and nature.

Explore more of Laura's work on her website.

In this video Laura McKendry explains how the natural world inspires every aspect of her work — from the art itself to the materials with which

she works.

Questions to Ask Children

Which season is your favourite? Why?

Is there a space in your local area where you would like to sit and draw?

How do you think sitting in nature whilst drawing differs to working in a studio?

Drawing Source Material: Drone Footage over Natural Landscapes

A collection of imagery and sources which you can use to prompt drawing in schools and community groups.

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FREE TO ACCESS

Drone Footage Over Natural Landscape

Use the film below as source material to enable an exploration of drawing natural landscapes. You can also try to find drone footage of your own environment, or that of areas relating to projects you are covering in school.

Pause the footage at points which catch your eye and invite the children to make timed drawings — 15 minutes, 10 minutes, 5 minutes, 2 minutes or 1 minute.

Vary the drawing materials you use and work in sketchbooks or sheets of paper of different sizes and textures. You may also like to make multiple line drawings over one page — each with a different colour or line weight, to describe different pause points in the same film to capture a moving landscape.

Dixie National Forest, Utah

Howqua Hills, Australia

Reading, UK

The Netherlands

This Source Material Features in...

Pathway: Cloth, thread, paint



This is featured in the 'Cloth, Thread, Paint' pathway

Pathway: Mixed Media Land and city scapes

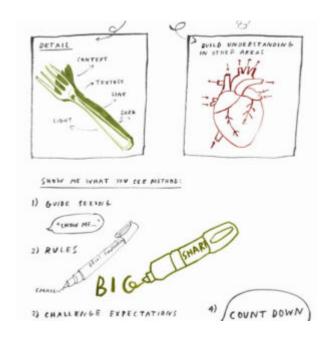


This is featured in the 'Mixed Media Land and City Scapes' pathway

using sketchbooks to make visual notes



Show me what you see



Talking Points: Shaun Tan

A collection of sources and imagery to explore the work of graphic artist Shaun Tan.

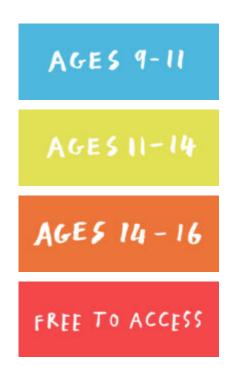
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Shaun Tan

Shaun Tan grew up in Perth and works as an artist,

writer and film-maker in Melbourne. He is best known for illustrated books that deal with social and historical subjects through dream-like imagery, widely translated throughout the world and enjoyed by readers of all ages. —Shaun Tan

See more of Shaun Tan's work on his website.

Shaun Tan's Sketchbook Work

Watch the film below to hear how Shaun approaches his early sketchbook work, and how he then develops this into more finished artwork.

Stop the video at various points so that you can have a discussion with the children to help them think through what Shaun might mean by his various working practices.

The Arrival

Watch the trailer for 'The Arrival' by Shaun Tan.

Watch the video above to see the full animation of Shaun Tan's graphic novel.

Questions to Ask Children

Do you like Shaun Tans work? Why?

How do his drawings make you feel?

What kind of atmosphere did you pick up in'The Arrival'? How do you think he achieved this?

Do you think that Shaun Tan was successful in capturing the story without any writing or text? Why?

This Talking Points Is Used In...

Pathway: Storytelling through drawing



This is featured in the 'Storytelling Through Drawing' pathway

Additional Pathway: Drawing and Making Inspired by Illustrators

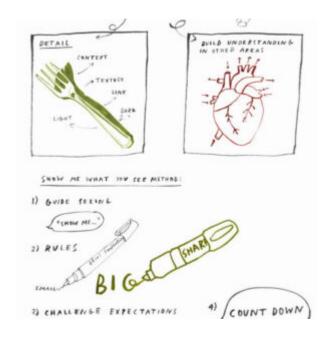


<u>This is featured in the 'Drawing and Making Inspired by Illustrators' pathway</u>

using sketchbooks to make visual notes



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Talking Points: Laura Carlin

A collection of sources and imagery to explore the work of illustrator Laura Carlin.

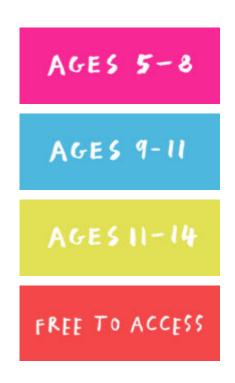
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Laura Carlin

Primarily known for her work as an illustrator,

Laura Carlin's ambitious and emotionally resonant work has led to some of the most striking contemporary books for children, including her award-winning illustrations for *The Iron Man*, *The Promise* and for her solo project *A World of Your Own*. — Waterstones

Explore all of the books that Laura Carlin has illustrated here.

Questions to Ask Children

Do you like the illustrations in The King of the Sky? Why?

How do they make you feel?

What colours might you feature in an illustration if the story was about being hopeful? Fearful? Lonely? Happy?

How has Laura's use of materials and composition helped with the storyline?

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Pathway: Storytelling through drawing



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Show me what you see

