

# Sensory Spaces: An Autism-Friendly Project

Artist, [Sarah Evelyn Marsh](#) shares autism-friendly strategies through a series of creative workshops she facilitated in a contemporary gallery in Gdansk, Poland.

Sarah developed a six week project for a small group of families whose children were on the autistic spectrum, one of the group also showed traits of Aspergers. The project was called *Space in the Process*, and through open-ended engagement with constructed spaces and handmade sensory-inspired objects, the group explored ideas and activities that developed a creative language and kick-started a dialogue with the gallery to deepen engagement with the families.

## To Connect



At the beginning of the project it was important to take time getting used to each other, the learning space and the surrounding environment. Below is a list of considerations you may find helpful to use in your own learning spaces. Be aware of the daily sounds, smells and other textures of life in your learning space; a constant humming noise or flickering light may be stressful for a child with autism. Allow time for everyone to feel their way in the space; connections may be made through the use of different senses and body parts. [Read More](#)

## To Conceal



During the six week project, the group explored different themes and actions, some of these were displayed through learning schemas. In week 2 we experimented with different ways to conceal ourselves and objects; schemas such as enveloping and enclosure were exhibited by the group. [Read More](#)

## To Colour



Two of the sessions explored the theme of colour. The first was rather abstract, I asked questions such as; What does colour smell like? What does colour feel like?

For a child on the autistic spectrum, a question like this may be confusing, some autistic people think and understand literally. So instead of directing these questions at the children, I answered and speculated on them myself. These abstract questions became vehicles for the workshops documented below. [Read More](#)

## To Construct



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. [Read More](#)

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## To Conceal....

# You May Also Like...

**Talking Points: Linda BELL**



[Explore how Linda Bell creates sculptures](#)

**Talking Points: Nnena Kalu**



[Explore artist Nnena Kalu](#)

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## **Composite Still Life Studies in Candlelight**

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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

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## **Making an Ink and Wax Village with Pupils in Mansfield**

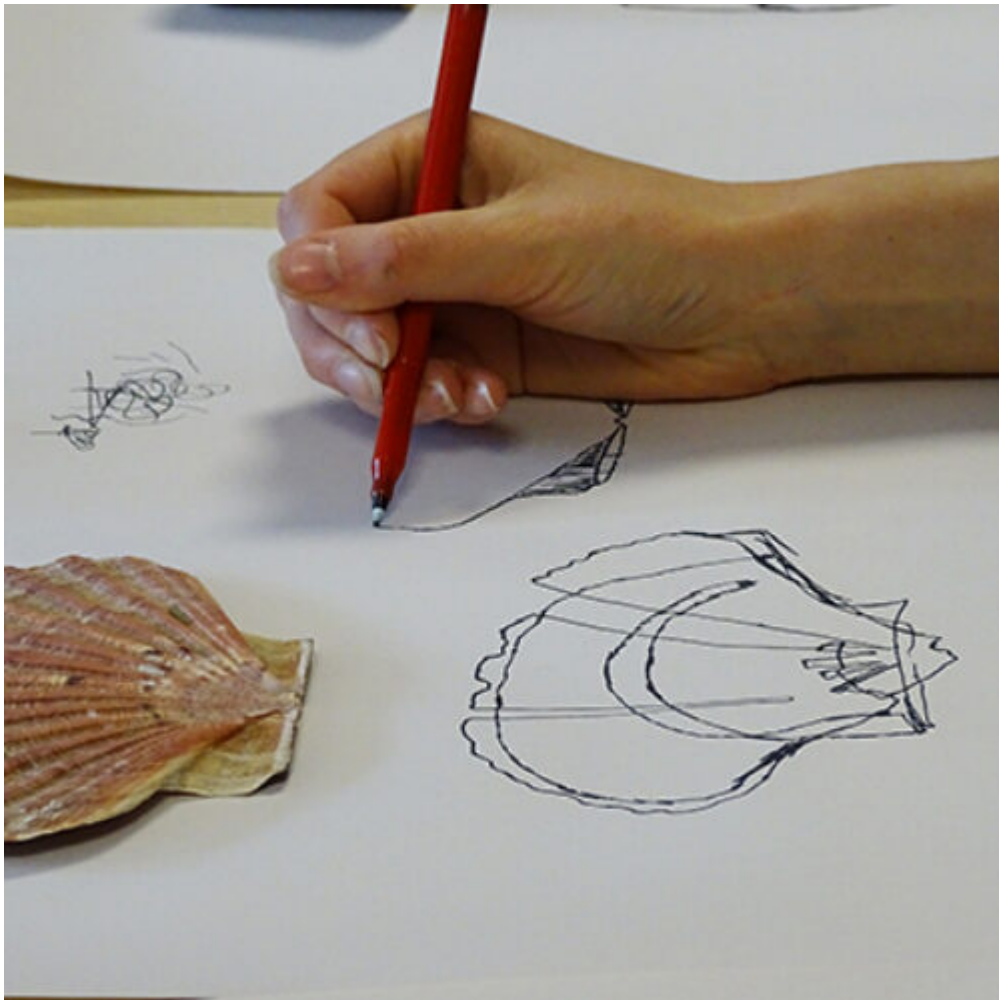


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# Explore and Draw

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## Ten Minutes, Five Times a Week



Ten Minutes, Five Times a Week is a simple set of drawing exercises designed to get people drawing.

The resources are aimed at a broad audience, but designed particularly with educators in mind.

Each exercise is designed to give non-specialist educators the confidence to approach drawing, by committing to regular, brief drawing activities for just one week.

Find a 45-minute [session recording](#) demonstrating the exercises and approaches you'll find on the page below.

## WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS AND HOW DO WE FIT THE EXERCISES INTO THE DAY?

### • Who can I use the exercises with?

The exercises are adaptable and suitable to learners in all settings, including EYFS, Primary and Secondary Schools, Health & Community Care, Home Education, Lifelong Learning and Museum and Gallery Education.

### • What might the benefits be?

Our experience has shown the following benefits from similar projects:

1. Opening minds as to what a drawing activity can be as both an activity and an outcome
2. .



Improved dexterity (which also helps with handwriting).

- Helps learners transition between parts of the day.
  - Improved concentration.
  - Improved sense of wellbeing through the mindful element to the exercises.
  - Improved drawing skills and improved creative confidence.
  - Improved confidence amongst non-specialist educators teaching art.
- How might you fit the exercises into the day?

Ten Minutes, Five Times a Week would make a great activity to start any session in your educational setting. Try swapping your usual morning activity with this challenge, and see how it impacts the week. You could also use the exercises immediately before any other art session as a way of helping learners transition and tap into their creativity.

It's worth noting that it doesn't need to be a one-off venture: you can repeat the exercises as often as you want, as repetition provides an opportunity for learners to gain meaningful drawing skills over time.

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## **Before you start...**

### **Before Each Session: Set Expectations**

The following exercises work best if the learners work quietly and with concentration. A quiet atmosphere will help learners tune into close seeing and set a calm and mindful intention for the session.

### **After Each Session: Reflect**

At the end of each session, it's worth investing two minutes in getting learners to walk around the room to look at each other's work. This will help them focus and reflect on their experiences and the experiences of others. Reflection also gives learners space to recognise the value of the work that has been made. Learners might comment on what they like about their peer's work.

### **At the End of the Week: Revisit**

Please make time to revisit the exercises to allow learners to articulate and reflect upon their progress over the week. You may like to ask some questions...

- What was their favourite exercise to do?
- Which outcome do they feel was the most successful and why?
- Is there something they would like to try next, for example, a new material?

You might like to give them a chance to repeat an exercise to allow them to consolidate their experiences and reflections.

## The Five Drawing exercises...

### Day 1. Continuous Line Drawing



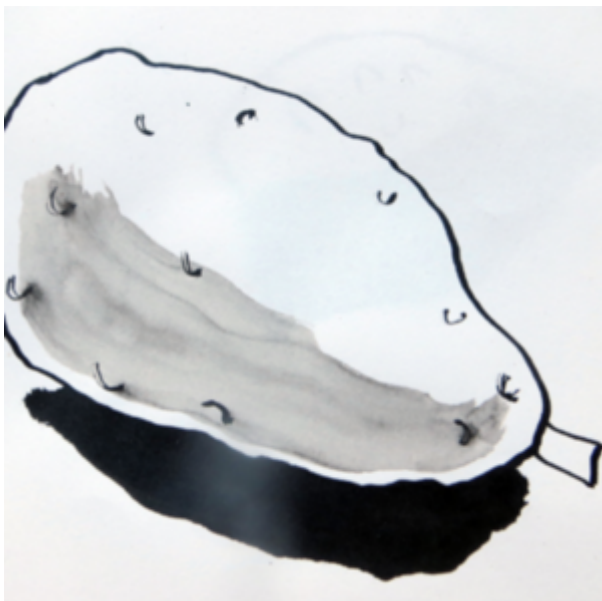
Find out how to do a simple continuous line drawing exercise to start the week.

## Day 2. Backwards Forwards Drawing



The backwards forwards drawing exercise helps develop looking and sketching skills.

## Day 3. See 3 Shapes



Explore how to get children to describe an object in just three lines or shapes.

## **Day 4. Thoughtful Mark Making**



Find out how encouraging diverse mark making will improve drawing outcomes.

## **Day 5. Making Stronger Drawings**





Explore how drawing on different surfaces helps encourage stronger mark making.

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**Inspirational PDF's to Nurture Creativity!**

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**Show Me What You See: Drawing Inspired by Anglo Saxon Architecture**

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**Sculptures with Personality, Inspired by Anglo Saxon Houses**

This resource shares a 3 hour session with Year 6 children from Barton Church of England Primary School. Children were studying the Anglo Saxons and we thought it would be a good opportunity to explore making skills.

Led by Paula Briggs, children to “make sculptures inspired by” an Anglo Saxon Village.

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## To Connect...

## You May Also Like...

**Talking Points: Linda BELL**



[Explore how Linda Bell creates sculptures](#)

**Talking Points: Nnena Kalu**



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## Making a Lyre Inspired by the Ancient Greeks

Here, Portia, aged ten and in year five, shows, step by step, how she approached a creative homework to learn more about the Ancient Greeks.

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## Wax Resist Autumn Leaves by

# Rosie James

## See This Resource Used In Schools...







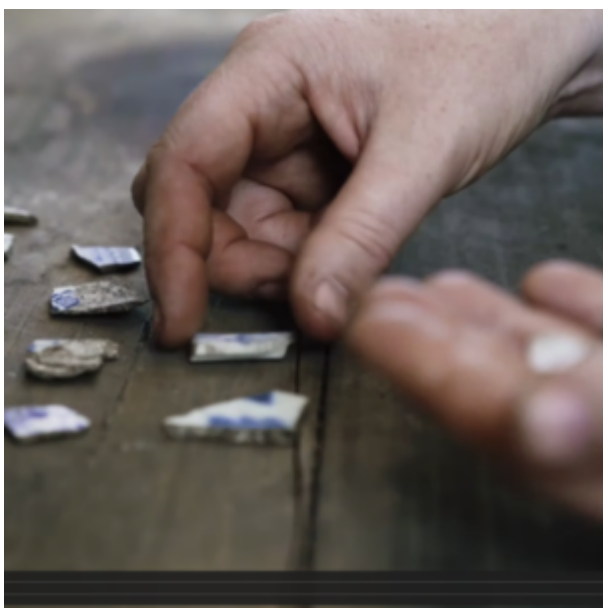
# You May Also Like...

## Pathway: Explore and Draw



## [Featured in the 'Explore and Draw' Pathway](#)

## Talking Points: Artists as Collectors and explorers





## Talking Points: What is Composition



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## Sculpture Project Inspired by Egyptian Wall Painting

This resource shares a project which explored mould making, casting and painting in the creation of a sculpture inspired by Egyptian wallpainting, in particular Nebamun hunting in the marshes, Nebamun's tomb-chapel, which can be seen in the British Museum, London

The project can be adapted for use in KS 2 and 3, and can be used to accompany a study of Egyptian Art / Hieroglyphics.

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## Watercolour Portrait

# You May Also Like...

Visual Arts Planning Collections:  
Portraits



watercolour



foreshortened sketches



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## 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.

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## Drawing as a Tool for Wellbeing at Chesterton

# Community College, Cambridge

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## Why we Need to Teach Drawing in School

If you are new to teaching drawing in schools, please don't think for a moment that drawing is a nice activity but one which serves little purpose in the real world.

The following film was made by [The Big Draw](#)

[Straight from the horses mouth, the awards body OCR](#) stresses why we need to encourage pupils to study creative subjects:

- 1. The arts make self starters and develop emotional intelligence**

All require the student to set their own agenda from within themselves, rather than follow set topics as in other subjects. They have to make independent decisions all the way, and be self-critical. They also need to be brave in exposing their creations, and accept criticism. Working in teams makes students into good communicators.

- 2. The arts stretch...**

Music, art and drama require long hours of hard work and dedication. Students have to pay great attention to detail, to perfect and redo. Putting on a play, exhibition or concert takes strong organisational skills.

- 3. Arts students are highly sought-after by employers**

Many employers now actively seek those who have studied the arts. Steve Jobs, founder of Apple, was fond of

saying his success was due to his hiring artists and musicians fascinated by technology rather than computer geeks. Top talent management agency, The Curve Group specialising in financial and business services, concurs: “Employees with an arts degree have developed more quickly in their roles from the start. They have discipline, confidence and can accept criticism.”

**4. Arts ‘reach the parts other subjects can’t reach’**

The arts develop the broader dimensions of the human being – mind, body and soul. The arts can express the inexpressible and make sense of things that otherwise do not seem to. This can be very fulfilling and helps us function as human beings – which can only be good for society as a whole.

**5. Arts ‘reach the students other subjects can’t reach’**

Teachers find arts subjects particularly beneficial for two groups: those who struggle with traditional subjects and those who are high achieving. Less academic students can become defeatist if they feel they can’t achieve: drama, music or art can be the place they blossom. With studious students, the arts can bring them out of themselves and be a release.

Watch how learning about art and design can lead to work in [this inspirational video by Creative Journey UK](#):



**2.8 MILLION JOBS**

And finally, pls listen to Bob and Roberta Smith in this film by [The Big Draw](#), explaining why we teach art in schools:

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## **Continuous Line Drawing Exercise**

Many thanks to AccessArt Young Artist Alex Tunstall for composing the music for the video in the Continuous Line Drawing Resource.

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## **Style and Aesthetic**