

What Did Your Child Make With Their Hands This Week? (and why it is important)

By Paula Briggs and Sheila Ceccarelli

If you are a parent of a primary-aged child, please ask yourself *“What did my child make with their hands this week?”*

For many years, AccessArt has been actively inspiring **making** through the sharing of [excellent practice](#). However small the making journey, and whether the outcome leans towards craft, fine art or design, the very act of transforming the materials of the world is one of empowerment, and the skills involved need time, space and input just like any other area of learning.



We are always so grateful to be in contact with the many

thousands of inspirational supporters of visual arts education – the advocates, teachers, artist-educators, facilitators, parents, arts organisations and of course the learners themselves, who all understand the value of visual arts education, and all of whom work so hard to help nurture creativity.

However, now more than ever AccessArt is becoming aware that many children are not being given the opportunities to explore making. Schools face great time pressure to deliver “more academic” subjects, and there is a shortage of specialist teachers. Whilst many children do benefit from fantastic art teaching, others do not have art lessons on a regular basis, and the teaching can be less rigorous than in other subjects.

Evidence suggests that in 2012, 1 in 12 people worked in the creative industries, and the cultural and creative industries are the fastest growing industries in the UK*. If we do not provide our children with the opportunity to develop their creativity, and we as parents do not demand a place for creativity within our schools, then we are failing to enable our children to meet their potential, and we are not preparing them adequately for the future:

“The pipeline to the creative industries begins at preschool, continues through primary school, through to secondary school and into HE and FE. At each of these stages, and every time we fail to provide an opportunity for children and young people to explore their relationship with the world through making and drawing, we weaken this pipeline, and potentially prevent the next generation of creative individuals from helping build the creative industries of the future.” Paula Briggs, AccessArt

As parents, we want to support our schools and our children’s education, and we recognise teachers work very hard to deliver the best education possible. However, if you feel your school might do more to support your child’s creativity, then there

are some simple positive things which can be done:

Show your Support and Interest

You probably know what your child is learning about in maths and english, but what about in art?

Take an active interest in art in school and find out what your child is learning about. How often do they have art lessons? What are the lessons like? What are they learning about? Which materials are they experiencing?

Ask!

Time spent making, or time spent drawing, is never time wasted: it is an investment. Art should have an equal weight to other curriculum areas, and in fact there is a body trying to move away from a focus on STEM (Science, Technology, English, Maths) towards STEAM (Science, Technology, English, Art, Maths).

If you do feel your child would benefit from more time spent on creativity, then do express your concerns to the school. There may be many reasons for the perceived lack:

- **Priority given to other subject areas**/time pressure on the school day. Some schools choose not to timetable art for a short time each week and instead choose to run art weeks. If a school offers pupils 1 hour art per week, that equates to approximately 39 hours of art per year. Find out how your school timetables art lessons, and if art seems thin on the ground due to time pressure, request art as a subject is given more weight. You might also want to contact the school governors with your concern.
- **Lack of specialist teaching/knowledge.** Most primary schools have an art or creativity coordinator who will help teachers plan the curriculum in this area. Subject knowledge can be built through organisations such as

AccessArt, which aims to inspire and enable schools through the [sharing of resources](#), or NSEAD, who have regional networks to support teachers. Make sure your school knows about these organisations and about how they support art teachers.

Please [get in touch](#) if you would like more help as a parent to help support creativity in children.

[Bob and Roberta Smith Message](#) from [Sophie Leach Nsead](#) on Vimeo.

You May Also Like...

Make, Build, Create: Sculpture Projects for Children by Paula Briggs



[Published by Black Dog Books](#)

#WHATDIDMYCHILDMAKE



[A collection of resources to consider how you can increase opportunities for making](#)

Plinth People: Sculptural Self Portraits

Join Paula Briggs and the AccessArt Art Club for ages 8, 9 and 10 to see how to make autobiographical sculptures.

Miniature Matchbox Museums by Anna Linch

See how artist Anna Linch gets children thinking about the purpose of museums and letting their imaginations run wild

with a brief to design their own museum, complete with a collection.

Street Drawing: Exploring Vanishing Points with Masking Tape

Animal Sculpture and Collage with Students at Philip Southcote School, Surrey

Exploring 'identity' by interpreting the characteristics, habitats and personalities of animals through making sculpture and collage with scrap store materials.

Teenagers Make Small Sculptures: Exploring Felt-

Making and Transforming Materials

**Paper Sculptures: Dipping
Objects in Paper Pulp**

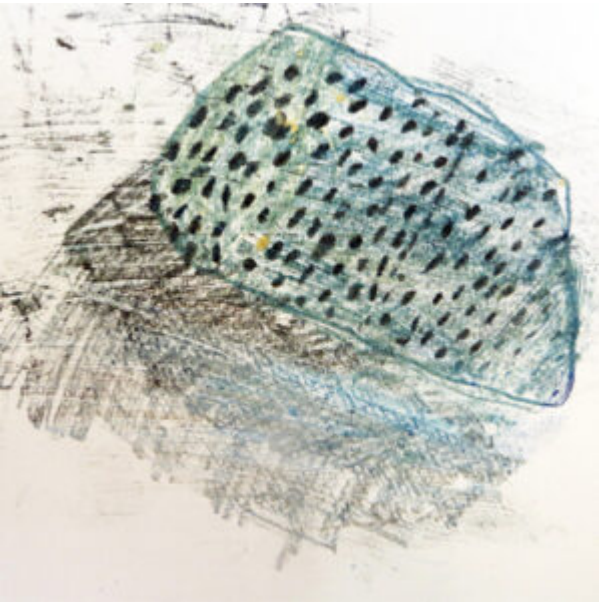
**Dragons & Birds in Eggs:
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Visual Arts Planning Collections: Birds



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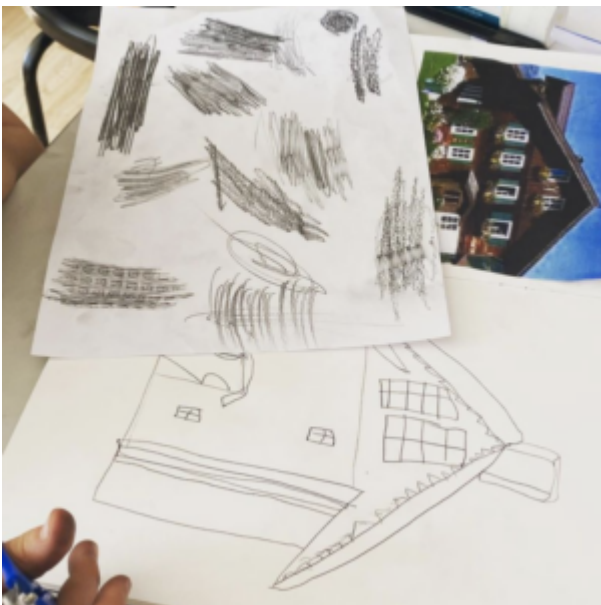


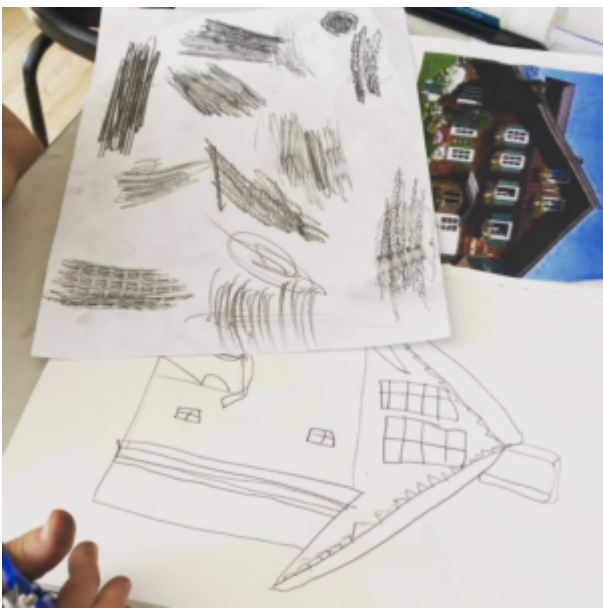
Inspired by Google Earth: Making

Making models inspired by images from Google Earth.

Houses from Around the World: International Day at Monkfield Primary School

See This Resource Used In Schools...







Recording & Communicating through Narrative with Degree Level Contemporary Craft

Students by Vanessa Marr

Exploring Materials: Merino Wool and Water and Making Felt

Talking Points: The Story of Cupid and Psyche by Jacopo del Sellaio

<< Back To: [Inspire: Fitzwilliam Museum](#)

An exploration of the painting 'The Story of Cupid and Psyche' by Jacapo del Sellaio, written by [Kate Noble](#).

Please note that this page contains links to external websites and has videos from external websites embedded. At the time of creating, AccessArt checked all links to ensure content is appropriate for teachers to access. However

external websites and videos are updated and that is beyond our control.

Please [let us know](#) if you find a 404 link, or if you feel content is no longer appropriate.

We strongly recommend as part of good teaching practice that teachers watch all videos and visit all websites before sharing with a class. On occasion there may be elements of a video you would prefer not to show to your class and it is the teacher's responsibility to ensure content is appropriate. Many thanks.

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AGES 9-11

AGES 11-14

AGES 14-16

This is one in a series of resources created in collaboration with [Kate Noble](#) from the [Fitzwilliam Museum](#). The 'Inspire 2020' project aims to encourage teachers to use collections in local galleries and museums as a source for exploration in art lessons.

The Story of Cupid and Psyche by Jacopo del Sellaio (1442 – 1493)



The Story of Cupid and Psyche. Sellaio, Jacopo del (Italian, 1441/2-1493). Egg tempera with gold on panel, height 59cm, width 178.8cm. Florentine School. One of a pair of cassone panels.

The painting above tells the first half of the ancient Greek story of a human princess, Psyche, who marries the god of love, Cupid. It was painted for a very grand bedroom in fifteenth-century Florence, which doubled as an entertaining space for the wife's friends. The bedchamber was furnished at the time of a wedding, with a bed and chests but also painted stories that celebrated the love of a newly married couple. This story highlights the loyalty of the bride to the groom, as was expected in the fifteenth century.

The Story of Cupid and Psyche

The story is read from left to right like a cartoon strip.



'Young Psyche with her courtiers when Cupid first sets eyes on her – a close up of Del Sellaio's Cupid and Psyche painted in 1473 in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.'

Cupid is sent to cast a spell on Psyche by his mother Venus, who is jealous of Psyche's beauty.



'Cupid sets eyes of Psyche and cannot follow through his mother, Venus's, evil plan – close up of Cupid and Psyche by Del Sellaio 1473 at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge'

Cupid falls in love with Psyche and is unable to carry out Venus' evil plan.



'Psyche is blown off the hill by Zephyrus the wind – a detail in a painting by Del Sellaio of Cupid and Psyche painted in 1473'

Psyche is blown off the top of a mountain by the god Zephyr who carries her safely down to rest in a soft bower.



‘Psyche lands on a soft bower’ – a detail from Cupid and Psyche by Del Sellaio painted in 1473

When she awakes, she finds herself at a beautiful palace where she is welcomed by an invisible, but kind, master (Cupid, in hiding from his mother). He invites Psyche to live with him on the condition that she will never ask his true identity. They are happy for a while but then Psyche’s sisters persuade her to look at him whilst he sleeps. A drop of oil lands on his skin, he wakes up and is angered by Psyche’s lack of trust.



Detail: Psyche lifting Cupid's wing; The Story of Cupid and Psyche c.1473; Sellaio, Jacopo del; painter; Italian artist, 1441/2-1493; Tempera and gold on a wooden panel

The story continues in a second panel (in a private collection). Cupid returns to his mother, Psyche searches for him and is captured and enslaved by Venus. Cupid pleads with Jupiter, king of the gods, to free Psyche. He agrees, and Cupid and Psyche are married.

Questions to Ask Children

Does this story remind you of any other fairy tales you know?

Exploring Materials: Plaster and String

As part of a series of workshops for AccessArt's Experimental Drawing Class on exploring materials, artist Rachel Wooller led a session on exploring plaster and string.

Printing Patterns on Jewellery Pieces

Inspired by Google Earth: Drawing

Flat Yet Sculptural? Drawing, Collage, Construction

Following on from using the grid method to scale up simple drawings, children worked on collage and construction to

transform their drawings into sculptures.

Exploring Materials: Paper and Water and Making Paper

Exploring Three Dimensions with Lego: Drawing and Collage

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Pathway: Exploring Form Through Drawing



[This is featured in the 'Exploring Form Through Drawing' pathway](#)

Adapting AccessArt: From 2D to 3D



Exploring Materials: Clay and Water