

The Everyday School of Art

This is a duplicated post, available on both AccessArt and [The Everyday School of Art](#), to explain the thinking behind a new Substack venture aimed at creating a shared space to inspire personal creative exploration.



Creative cycles ebb and flow. There are times in your life when creative thought and action feels important and becomes all encompassing, and times in your life when leaving behind the pressure to create is a welcome relief. And then times in your life when you know creativity is part of you, but it seems to exist just behind or just in front of you, never quite with you now.

I've always been interested in why we are creative beings, and how we enable our creativity to flourish. For many years, as a child, teenager and young person, this manifested itself as a desire to actually make – enjoying tactile experiences shaping materials in the real world. But there came a point when I stopped making – and even at the time I knew why I stopped: I could no longer see the point. I knew I wasn't going to be a “great artist” (I thought in those terms back in 1995), and I didn't understand what the relevance was then of me making things, that no one needed or perhaps wanted – it felt too insular, too indulgent. We even had a tutor at The Royal College of Art who came round each studio and asked us “Do you really think the world needs another one of those?” It was a damning question and one to which I could only answer no. Not understanding the relevance or purpose of art to my life was a nail in the coffin, and I see the same pattern emerging today when others have no understanding of the importance of art in our lives: art tends not to flourish (let's say the

British Government 2010-2023+, or certain individuals, or certain sub-communities of people).

So, I stopped making my own work, and instead returned purposely to the child version of me, the kid who liked to make, and thought about how I could inspire and enable the next generation to make, and that endeavour became my creative outlet.

That venture – thinking how we could inspire and enable the next generation to make, became AccessArt, a registered UK Charity. We now have over 20,000 members, grown 7000 members since last September. Apparently 20,000 people will fill the O2 stadium – so that's a lot of people, and each of those members uses the AccessArt resources with their own pupils/students/audiences to inspire visual art education. Good stuff.

The people who use AccessArt; the teachers, artist educators and parents, spend a huge amount of time and energy nurturing creativity in others. Driven by their passion for art and their belief that art education can change lives, it's an exciting, stimulating role, but it takes energy, and often it takes the energy away from our own creativity – we just don't have enough hours in the day.

Time and again, through conversations, we hear how teachers and educators care so much about enabling their audiences or pupils with limited time and

resources that the educators themselves are often subsumed. Their own creativity is put on the back burner for the sake of some greater good. The same is true of my relationship with AccessArt, and that is why, together with my daughter, Rowan, who is at a very different stage in her life, we have decided to create [The Everyday School of Art](#).

We see The Everyday School of Art as being a place where all educators, parents and carers can finally emerge from behind their roles, and begin to see themselves as artists and creatives in their own right. We hope The Everyday School of Art will help us all identify and explore our individual creative potential, and feed our appetite to nurture ourselves, for once, alongside others.

So if there is a part of you which feels you would like to explore, or return to exploring, your own creative potential, then please join us over at The Everyday School of Art on Substack. Let's show who we are as individuals and create a rich community which will surely complete the circle.

[*Find out more and Register for free at The Everyday School of Art here*](#). Register before the 30th September and we will upgrade 10 registrants (chosen at random) to paid subscriber status free of charge.

Best wishes,

Paula Briggs

Co-Founder, CEO & Creative Director AccessArt

Co-Founder The Everyday School of Art 2023

AccessArt Has Over 20,000 Members!

We're thrilled and proud to start Autumn 2023 off with 20,000 members!

Thank you to the amazing AccessArt community of members, subscribers (35,000+), team (8), trustees (4) and facebook group (4,900) – it's a privilege to work with you.

Be Inspired!

**Paula Briggs, CEO & Creative Director
September 2023**

Session Recording: Typography and Maps

Angry Cat, Calm Cat

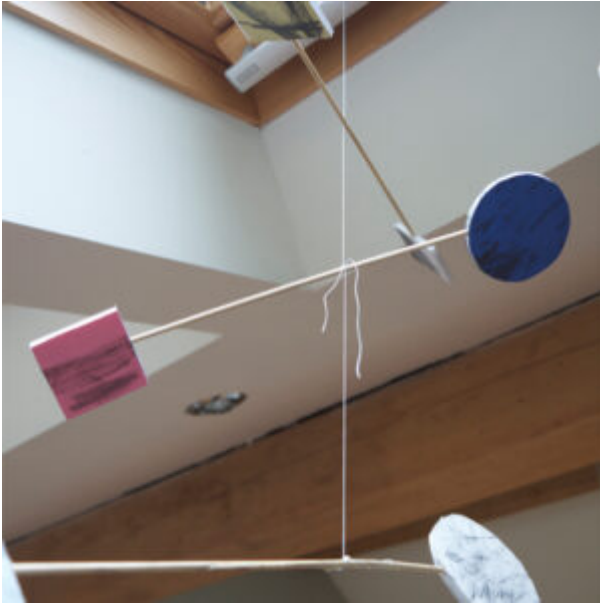
Mobile Construction Methods

You May Also Like...

Pathway: Explore Sculpture Through Making a Mobile



Heavy/Light Mobile – Drawing and Making



Coat-hanger Shells



Pathway: Explore Sculpture by Making a Mobile

Pathway for Years 5 & 6

Disciplines:

Design, Making, Drawing, Sketchbooks

Key Concepts:

- That a mobile is a kinetic sculpture which relies on balance and counter balance of materials.
- That through 'Design through Making' we can explore how we can create objects which balance and move.
- That we can be inventive and playful exploring sculptural elements which are both abstract and representational when creating a mobile.

In this pathway, suitable for ages 9-11, we explore the work of Alexander Calder. Calder created sculptures and mobiles using solid blocks of colour and simple shapes, exploring the relationships between the objects and lines.

This pathway encourages children explore the relationships between line, shape, form and colour when working in three dimensions. Pupils explore the relationships between design and fine art, and practise Design through Making. They have the opportunity to explore balance and counter balance, and learn to take creative risks and solve problems.

This pathway will take approximately half a term, based upon a weekly art lesson.

Medium:

Construction Materials (card, wood, wire, string), Drawing & Painting media.

Artist:
Alexander Calder

If you use this resource in your setting, please tag us on social media: #InspiredBy @accessart (facebook, twitter) @accessart.org.uk (instagram) and share the url. Thank you!



Additional Pathway

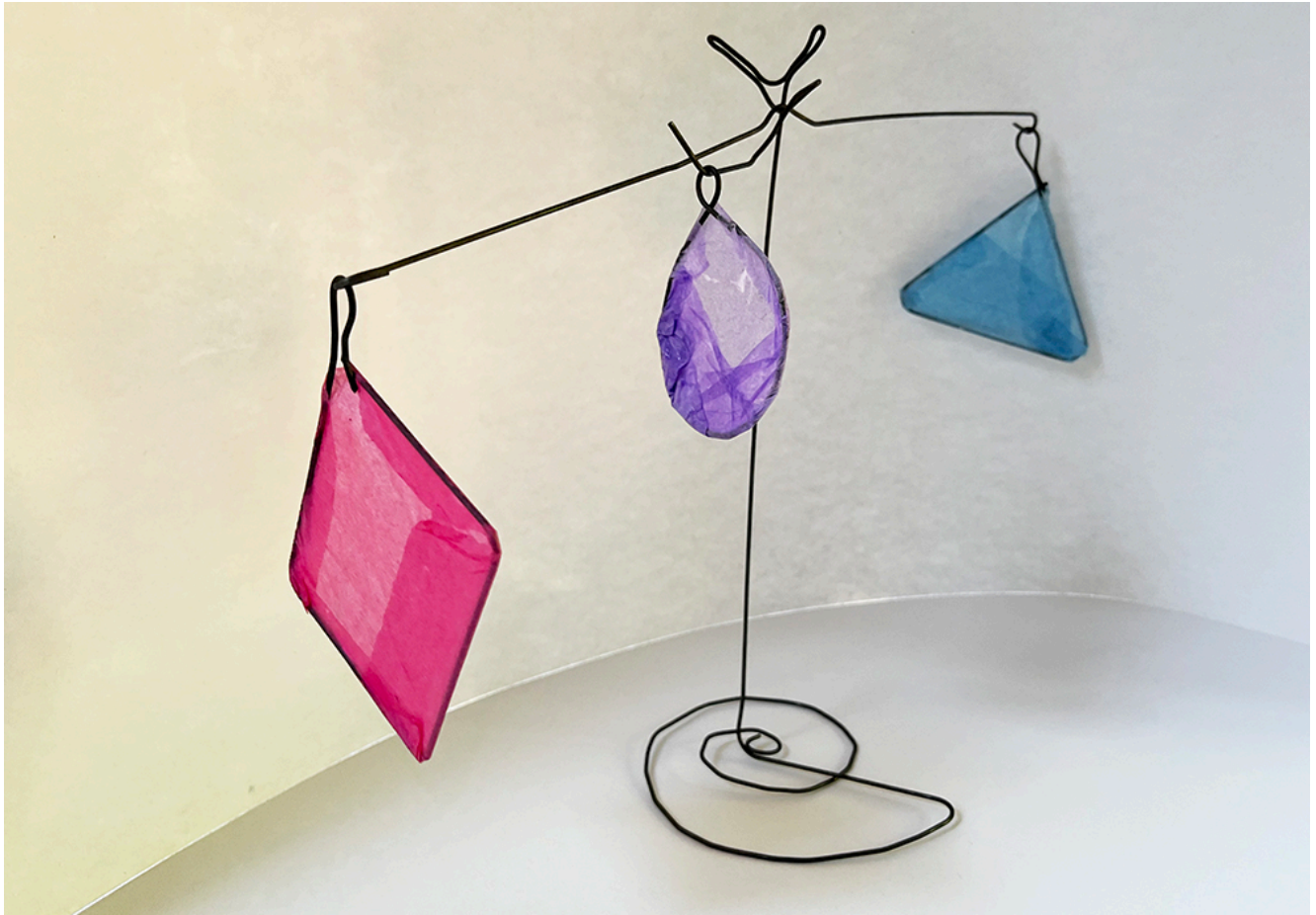
This pathway is an additional pathway to help you extend, develop or further personalise the [AccessArt Primary Art](https://www.accessart.org.uk)

Curriculum.

We suggest this pathway is used to replace a “Working in 3 Dimensions” (Blue) or a “Drawing and Sketchbooks” (Orange) pathway for ages 9 and above. This pathway could replace the “[Shadow Puppets](#)” or “[2D Drawing to 3D Making](#)” (Years 5 & 6).

Please note the activities in this pathway are best suited to more confident teachers who are happy with a higher level of interaction with the work, and more able or experienced pupils.

You may also like to use the activities in this pathway with a smaller group of children in an after school club or community context.



AGES 9-11

Teaching Notes

Find the MTP for this pathway [here](#).

[Pedagogy in 250 Words: Making is Hard](#)

Curriculum Links

Maths: Measuring, 2D and 3D Shapes

Science: Weight, Position, Direction & Movement, Shadows, Forces and Gravity

I Can...

- I have explored the work of a sculptor/designer and seen they explore shape, form, line, colour and balance to make mobiles (kinetic sculptures).
- I can use my sketchbook to make visual notes to record and reflect. I can progress these notes into drawings in their own right.
- I can use my sketchbook to research the types of elements I might make, linking to an appropriate topic or idea.
- I can use the Design Through Making technique to create elements (shapes or forms) using colour, marks, etc, and see how these elements balance

as a mobile. I can handle materials and tools and I can persevere when I need to.

- I can present and share my work, talk about it with my classmates, and listen to their responses to my work. I can review my own work and think about what I might do differently.
- I can respond to the work made by my classmates and I can share my thoughts.
- I can take photographs of my work, thinking about focus, light and composition.

Time

This pathway takes 6 weeks, with an hour per week. Shorten or lengthen the suggested pathway according to time and experience.

Materials

Drawing materials, Large sheets of cartridge paper, Glue sticks, Foam board or Cardboard, Wooden kebab skewers (or Dowling or thin green garden canes), String.

Pathway: Explore Sculpture Through Making a Mobile

A PDF of this pathway can be found [here](#).

. Aim of the Pathway

The aim of the pathway is to give children the opportunity to explore line, shape, form and colour in

**three dimensions, challenging
themselves to make a sculpture which
balances and moves.**

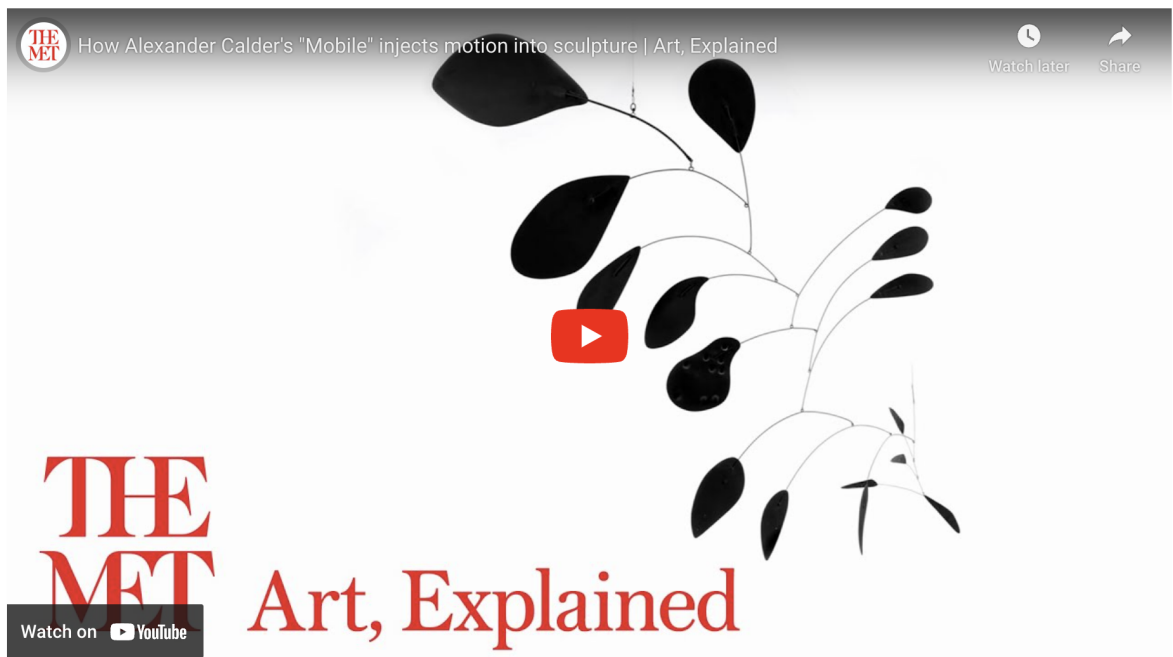
• Week

1:

Introduce

**Introduce
Calder**

Alexander



Introduce children to the work of Alexander Calder with “[Talking Points: Alexander Calder](#)”.

Follow the prompts on the “Discussion & Sketchbook Work” part of the “[Talking Points: Alexander Calder](#)” to develop understanding through sketchbooks and conversation. Encourage children to create “[Visual Notes](#)” in their sketchbooks as they watch.

• Week 2: Sketchbooks & Prep

Show Me What You See

Revisit “[Talking Points: Alexander Calder](#)” and this time make a series of drawings in sketchbooks based upon the “Sketchbook Development Work” section.

You may like to use the resource ["Show Me What You See"](#) for guidance on running the session. Encourage the children to not just make drawings of Calder's mobiles, but also to understand how these drawings can begin to exist in their own right as images.

• Week 3, 4 & 5: Draw, Paint, Cut, Build

Drawing & Making

Explore the “[Mobile Construction Methods](#)” post and the “[Heavy/Light Mobile – Drawing and Making](#)” resource. You may also like to see the “[Kinetic Mobile Sculpture](#)” resource – switching the knives for scissors.

Decide which method is right for your class. You can also tie the project into an existing classroom theme, for example an exploration of weather, or colour, or costume...



Spend one or two lessons researching

(use sketchbooks) and making the “elements” before going on to construct the elements into a mobile in the next week.

• Week 6: Share and discuss

Share, Reflect, Celebrate



End the pathway by taking time to appreciate the developmental stages and the final outcomes in a clear space.

Display the work appropriately including having open sketchbooks. Use the “[Crit in the Classroom](#)” resource to help you.

Encourage children to reflect upon all stages of the journey.

If available, children can use tablets or cameras to take

photographs of the work.

[Explore how children can take high quality photographs of 3d artwork with this resource.](#)

If You Use AccessArt Resources...

You might like to...

Join our Facebook Group



[Join the AccessArt Network group on Facebook and ask questions of](#)

[others using our resources](#)

Share and Tag



[Share photos of work made by tagging us on social media](#)

**Talking Points:
Alexander Calder**

A range of sources designed to

help you explore the work of sculptor, Alexander Calder.

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.

This resource is free to access and is not a part of AccessArt membership.

AGES 9-11

AGES 11-14

FREE TO ACCESS

Alexander Calder

Alexander Calder (July 22, 1898 – November 11, 1976) was an American sculptor known both for his innovative mobiles (kinetic sculptures powered by motors or air currents) that embrace chance in their aesthetic, his static “stabiles”, and his monumental public sculptures. Calder preferred not to analyse his work, saying, “Theories may be all very well for the artist himself, but they shouldn’t be broadcast to other people.” – [Wikipedia](#)

Explore his work at the [Calder](#)

Foundation.

Calder at the Tate.

Discussion & Sketchbook Work

Watch the video below to introduce children to the idea of “mobiles”. Stop the video frequently and use discussion to help children understand the ideas in the video. In particular draw the children’s’ attention to:

- The idea of slowing down
- The relationship of the elements to natural objects
- The relationship of a moving sculpture to dance and music.

Throughout the process, have sketchbooks open on desks with plenty of drawing materials, and pause during the conversations so that pupils can make visual notes.

Watch the video below to introduce children to the idea of “mobiles”. Stop the video frequently and use discussion to help children understand the ideas in the video. In particular draw the children’s’ attention to the idea of “trial and error” (or as we call it Design through Making) as a way of constructing the mobiles.

Throughout the process, have sketchbooks open on desks with plenty of drawing materials, and pause during the conversations so that pupils can make [visual notes](#).

Sketchbook Development Work

Turn the sound down on the video below, and choose certain frames to stop the video so that pupils can make drawings in their sketchbooks based upon the compositions they see.

At first, you as teacher can choose the freeze frame, but then let the pupils

make their own choices.

Encourage them to think of the paper of their sketchbook as the “stage” and invite them to draw the shapes, lines and colours they see, thinking carefully about the white space of the page as well as the shapes they draw.

Invite them to use a variety of different materials to capture the shapes. In particular you might want to invite them to use soft B pencils or graphite sticks in one drawing for example, handwriting pen in another, charcoal or collage in another....

Encourage them to work with momentum – for example tell them the film will be frozen for 1 minute/5 minutes etc. Set a clock and invite them to draw, before moving on.

Spend time looking at the drawings they create and invite them to share their thoughts:

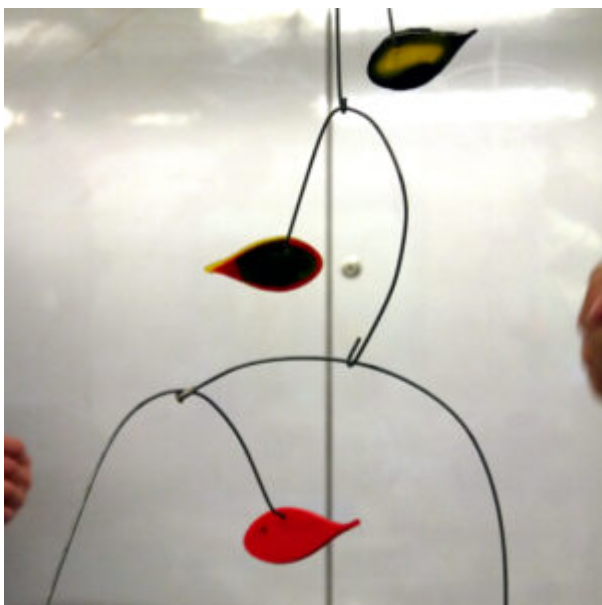
What did they think when they were drawing Calder's mobiles? How did they make them feel?

- What do they think when they see the shapes they have drawn? What do they remind them off?

You may like to show children [this drawing by Calder](#) of one of his own mobiles.

This Talking Points Is Used In...

Pathway: explore sculpture through making a mobile

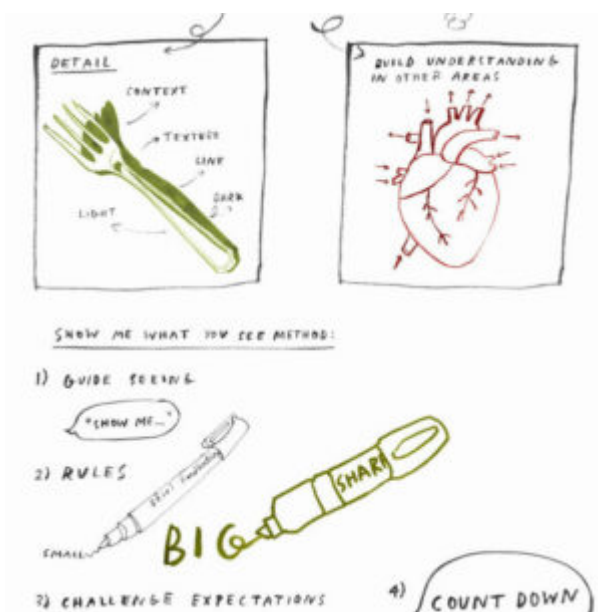


This is featured in the 'Explore Sculpture Through Making a Mobile' pathway

using sketchbooks to make visual notes



Show me what you see



Adapting AccessArt: Playful Making Inspired by Nnena Kalu

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Session

Recording:

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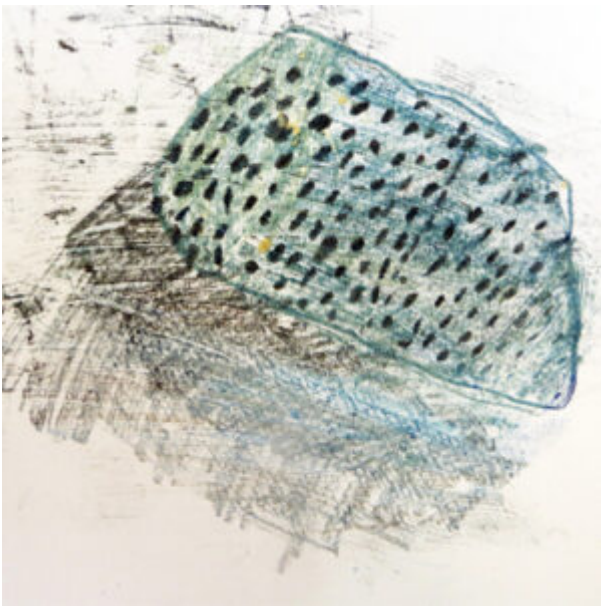
**Adapting AccessArt:
Monoprint and Painting:
The Great Fire of
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AccessArt Session Recording: Sketchbook Share

The Art Now Report

**AccessArt Value #3:
Having the Confidence
to Hold Ideas Lightly,
Enables us to Create
Space for Everyone to**

Reach their Potential

[AccessArt Core Value](#) #3 “Having the Confidence to Hold Ideas Lightly, Enables us to Create Space for Everyone to Reach their Potential” illustrated by [Jagoda Sadowska](#).



Jagoda is a Polish illustrator and designer based in Glasgow, Scotland. They are a big advocate of joyful colour palettes and a great enthusiast of textures. Jagoda's work is full of juvenile sense of humour and hopeless

romanticism. They enjoy exploring narrative abilities of illustration and tell absurd stories or complex feelings through their work. They find a lot of beauty and inspiration in mundane, day to day life.

At AccessArt we love the colour, energy and humour that Jagoda pours into their work. The playfulness of their artwork brings a real joy to the viewer and we are really excited by the clever way in which Jagoda has communicated the core value 'Having the confidence to hold ideas lightly, enables us to create space for everyone to reach their potential'.

We feel that this illustration really resonates with the AccessArt core value highlighting that there is importance in giving people the freedom to face the unknown, get lost in their ideas and pave their own path. Existing in a space of 'not knowing' and finding your own way will result in a journey that is

authentically yours.

AccessArt Value #3

When we feel threatened, or lack confidence, we have a tendency to hold things tightly. They might be entrenched ideas, beliefs, behaviours – even loved ones – fear of uncertainty keeps us tense, rigid, small.

But the opposite is also true. It's so much easier to be open and embracing towards others when we ourselves feel at ease. Think power pose – body open, strong, reaching outwards. Taking up as much space as can be taken up at that moment. But remember there is no aggression in power pose – the body is actually exposed and vulnerable, but there is no fear – instead there is courage to be open enough to be strong.

When exploring ideas and practices in art, holding ideas lightly is such a helpful process. When artists make work,

they often start from a position of “not knowing” – that is why they make the work – to explore, to find out, to uncover, and they can’t access that journey if they are not willing to hold their thoughts loosely, letting them ravel and unravel.

Through holding lightly, art can help us feel safe in the territory of “not yet knowing” which is a useful place to be, a place which helps us to learn to feel safe in the face of uncertainty.

And when we facilitate that exploration in others, holding ideas and preconceptions lightly allows space for our learners to make ideas their own. Art is all about experiential understanding. As facilitators we can help our audiences grow, and we can hint and tempt and signpost them towards discovery and understanding, but if we can do this by offering rather than telling, then we leave space for the learning to be truly theirs. By growing

our own knowledge as facilitators we build our confidence to not be afraid, not be threatened and not hold tightly. We are able to see the teaching of art for what it really is – a service which taps into fulfilling a human need for expression and empathy.

But few of us can thrive when there is too much space. We do need structures to help us think and operate, so the question for facilitators (and for AccessArt) is how do we provide enough structure to help people feel safe, and enough space to help facilitate exploration.

So next time you feel contraction from fear or uncertainty, think about the confidence and openness of power pose. Better still, visualise yourself holding your hand out, palm upwards. What sits on your palm? And how loosely can you hold it?

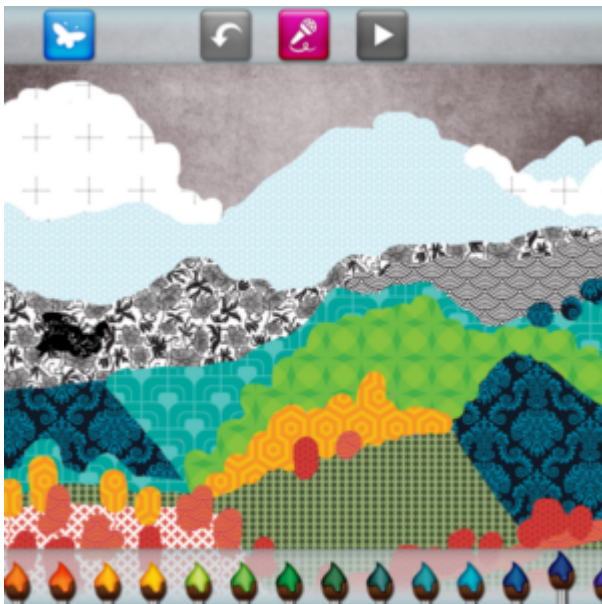
[See all our core values here.](#)

Paula Briggs, April 2023

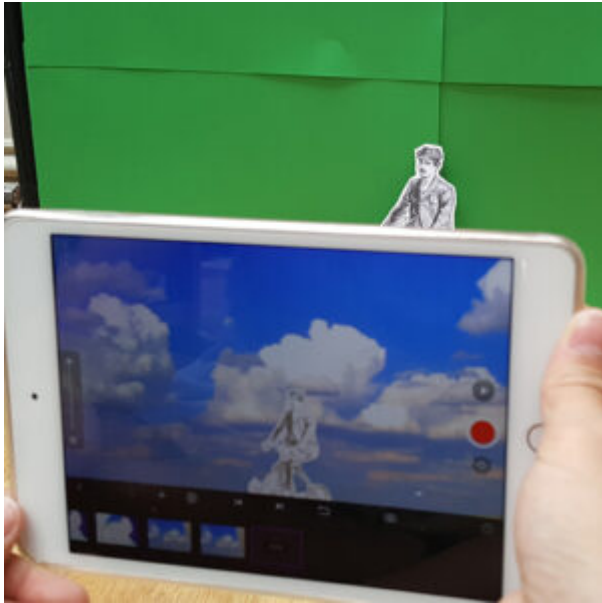
Exploring Scale with Green Screen

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Painting On Screen



Animating with a Green screen



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Making Digital Bookmarks



Taking Photos of 3D Artwork



**Making
Bookmarks**

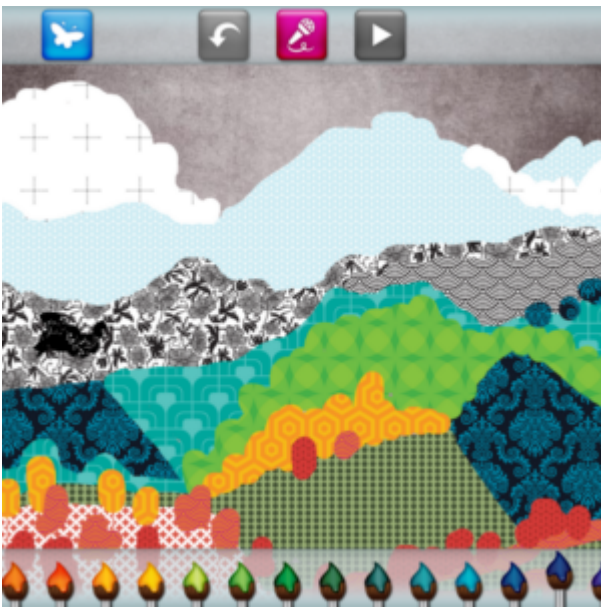
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Digital Collage and Image Manipulation



Session Recording: **Connecting Approaches**

AccessArt Value #2:
Enthusiasm is
Infectious and We Can

all Play a Role in Fuelling or Stalling the Creative Potential of Others

[AccessArt Core Value](#) #2 “Enthusiasm is
Infectious and We Can all Play a Role in
Fuelling or Stalling the Creative
Potential of Others” illustrated by
[Lizzie Lovejoy](#).



Lizzie Lovejoy is a North East based working-class Poet, Performer and Picture Maker who loves stories. They believe that everyone deserves to experience art and everyone has a tale to tell.

With community and culture being at the

core of Lizzie's work, we felt that they would be a perfect fit to work on the core value 'Enthusiasm is infection and we can all play a role in fuelling or stalling the creative potential of others'. We love the playful outcome of the illustration, symbolising the enthusiasm, playfulness and creative potential that can be found in all young people, and should be nurtured through the communities around them.

AccessArt Value #2

What is our individual responsibility to those around us? What do we do, to encourage or interrupt positivity? How might we enable a more curious and playful approach?

"85% of the men and women who I interviewed remembered an event in school that was so shaming, it changed how they thought of themselves for the rest of their lives. Fifty percent of that 85% percent, half of those people:

those shame wounds were around creativity. So fifty percent of those people have art scars. Have creativity scars.” – Brene Brown, Magic Lessons

The statistic from Brene Brown's research are staggering but not surprising – we all have examples in our own lives of when we have been “stopped” by an often casual comment by someone about the way we express ourselves. These stray comments about creativity seem to cut straight to the quick. For me, it was when I was eight. Until then I had sung out loud happily enough. But then one day, a boy I was sitting next to in assembly at school asked me why my voice had a weird “lining” to it when I sang (I imagine I was out of tune and merrily unaware). So from that day on – I mimed. Happy to say I'm over it now and singing to my baby daughter proved to me I could hold a tune “enough” and that was all that mattered.

But many of us are stopped before we

even get started, and we don't recover. Luckily the opposite is also true, and we can SO easily be enabled by others, and enable others, by thoughtful, careful approach.

It's easy to fall into the mindset whereby we wait for things to improve, but there is a greater reality at play: while we actively campaign and patiently wait for things in art education to bloom, we don't want to let down whole generations by not doing the very best we can do for them now.

So, positivity is important. Not a mindless positivity but an intentional and insightful positivity which makes people around feel safe, supported and carried.

For AccessArt, that means a few things. It means reassuring our users that their heartfelt instinct is to be followed, even if it doesn't always chime with the "systems" around us. It means

acknowledging overwhelm in the face of inexperience is valid and to be expected, but that there are people around who can support and guide. It means nurturing environments in which learners and educators have a safe space in which to explore their creativity, supported by stepping stones or a framework they can hold on to. And it means lightening up – remembering that as humans we are SO privileged to have access to this thing we call creativity – so let's be playful and celebratory – and most of all gentle. These are big aims, but they are made real by tiny everyday actions and intentions...

[See all our core values here.](#)

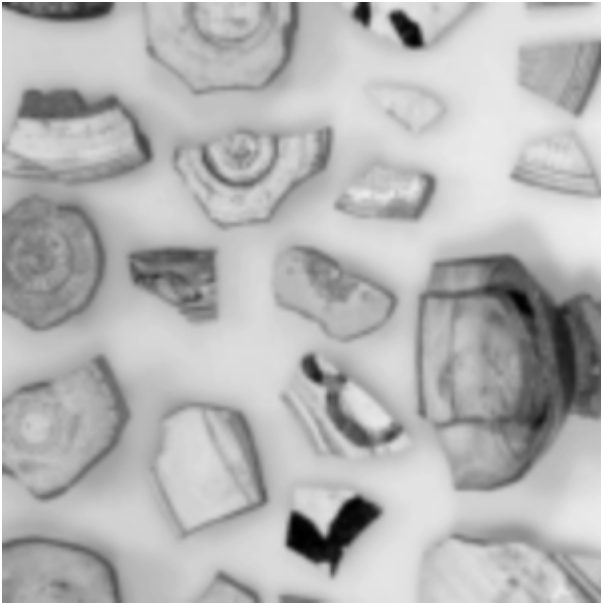
Working in a Studio

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Talking Points: Artists as Collectors and Explorers



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