

Magic Caring Box

By [Hannah Moshtael](#).

In this post, Early Years educator Hannah Moshtael uses children's picture book '[Mog's Mumps](#)' written by Helen Nicoll and illustrated by [Jan Pienkowski](#) as a starting point to encourage children to think about feelings and how we care for others when they are feeling unwell. Children use their imaginations to make items for a 'Magic Caring Box', using recycled cardboard. As well as helping children consider the needs of other people, this activity also engages them with the simple principles of creating a design.



The activity is suitable for children aged 3-5 (although older primary school aged children may also enjoy it) and took us about 2.5 hours in total, broken up into three sessions. In

the first hour, we read and discussed *Mog's Mumps* and painted the rainbow box covering. After a break, we took about 30 minutes to cover the box. In a final session, we made items for the Magic Caring Box and filled it.

To extend the learning we took the Magic Caring Box with us to visit a family member and talked about how we made it. This is something that children could do at a later time, if they take their box home with an accompanying note to their parent or carer.

Materials needed:

- A copy of the picture book *Mog's Mumps* (Helen Nicoll & Jan Pienkowski) to read with the children. You might want some extra copies of the book for reference, or photocopies of pages 5, 9-10, 13-14, depending on the number of participants
- White A3 sheets of paper or wide paper roll
- A selection of coloured tissue paper sheets
- Crayons or felt tip pens
- Poster paints
- Small sponges
- Old cardboard packaging
- Glue spreaders and PVA glue
- Child-friendly scissors

To begin:

When sickness strikes, for a humorous take on being ill and the idea of caring for each other, we like reading *Mog's Mumps* at home. Mog the cat does not feel very well, so his witch owner Meg, and friend Owl, look after him. Using plants, things she finds in the woods and a bit of magic, Meg makes a healing medicine.

My three year old and I began the workshop by reading *Mog's Mumps* and talking about Pienkowski's illustrations. We paused at the pictures of a hot water bottle and cup of mint tea that

Meg gives to Mog (page 5). My daughter exclaimed 'Wow!' at the rainbow coloured pages, which show Meg making the magic spell (pages 9-10, 13-14).

We took time to talk about the story. I asked, 'What does Meg give Mog to help him feel better?', 'What helps you to feel better when you're sick?' and 'Is there anyone we know who is not feeling well?'.

We decided to make a Magic Caring Box for a family member who is unwell. Inspired by the colourful magic medicine spell illustration, we created a rainbow box covering by using watered down poster paints and thick sponges on a large white sheet of paper. Using two colours at a time, we mixed the paints and discovered the different colours that can be made, as if by magic.







After a break, we tore up and glued the dried rainbow paper onto the outside of the box. A point of learning for my daughter was remembering to press the paper firmly onto the box and smooth down the edges.







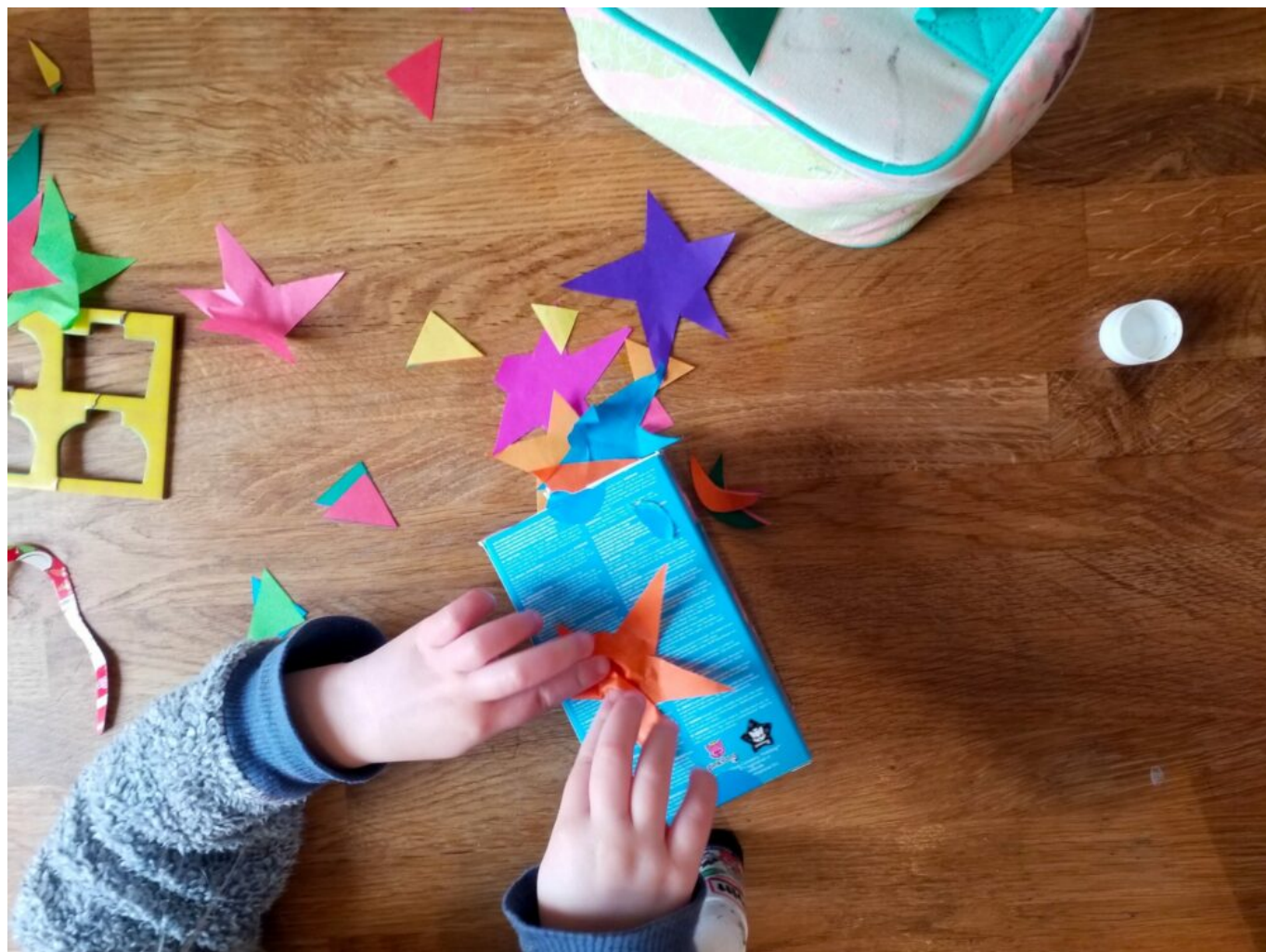
Later, we looked through the recycled cardboard packaging. We thought about what the different shapes and sizes reminded us of, and decided what to make for the Magic Caring Box contents.

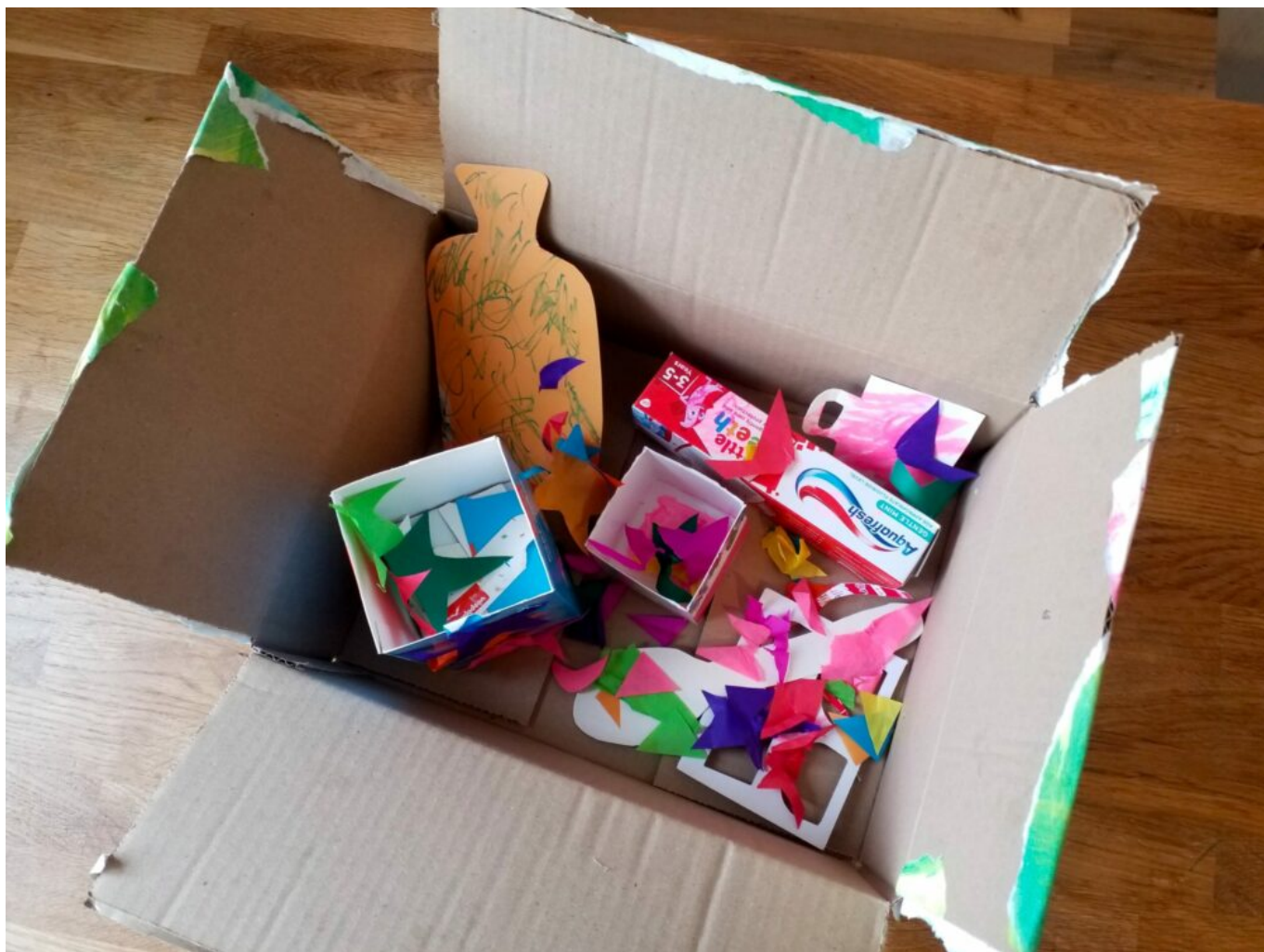
My daughter enjoyed cutting, ripping up and sticking together pieces of cardboard, imagining that they were cups of tea, toothpaste and a hot water bottle. It was tricky for her to cut the cardboard up in the way she wanted, so I scaffolded her work by cutting as she directed and by making suggestions. I focussed on the imaginative aspect of the process, playing with the cardboard and showing that it didn't need to look realistic in order for us to enjoy making the items. For example, we cut out a thin wavy string of card to represent a bowl of spaghetti.





We decorated some of the items by drawing on them. We then cut up coloured tissue paper into small shapes to add some more magic to the box. We filled it with the cardboard items and the tissue paper shapes.





As an extension to this activity, we visited the family member for whom we'd made the box, and brought the box along. We told the story of Mog's Mumps, and talked about how we made each item as we took it out of the box. This helped my daughter start to develop the skill of describing a creative process. It also brought some fun and lightness to the visit and our host felt moved by the activity.





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.

Talking Points: Samantha Bryan

A collection of sources and imagery to explore the work of Samantha Bryan.

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

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.

AGES 5-8

AGES 9-11

AGES 11-14

FREE TO ACCESS

Samantha Bryan

“Working from her garden studio in Mirfield, West Yorkshire, Samantha Bryan has produced a new body of work for her exhibition at [YSP](#) celebrating 20 years of making. Known for creating distinctive figures, she has gained a worldwide cult following.

For two decades Bryan has been making humorous yet industrious fairy-like creatures; adorned with items from her eclectic hoard of buttons, spotted feathers, seed pods, dyed leathers, and

contraptions influenced by Victorian flying machines. She combines these materials and found objects to inform their intriguing personalities.”
– [Yorkshire Sculpture Park](#)



Introducing the BAAV Blimp

Brain's Ariel Application Vehicle is a new cutting edge tool welcomed by the Fairy Dust Industry. This aircraft can do in minutes what it would take ground-based workers days to complete. Its increased capacity makes dust spreading incredibly efficient. It's hopper can hold 120 pounds of dust and can sprinkle around 80 acres per hour. Revolutionary for fairy life.

51 x 41 x 21cm (w,h,d) 2022 Image: Red Photograpgy



Introducing... Brain's Bottom Warming Garments for fairies. Vital for high altitude flying. 36 x 12cm x 10cm (h,w,d) 2022 Image: Joanne Crawford

Fairies often find themselves flying at high altitude. A dangerous pursuit with its many risks. The most obvious and most disastrous outcome would be 'wing or limb freeze'. The consequence of which is high speed plummeting fairies. This is easily preventable if body temperature is maintained.

Bottom Warming Garments for fairies © were first developed in 2008. Rolled out in 2009, the revolutionary bottom warming garment has prevented numerous fairy injuries to date.



Brain's Crash Helmet, designed specifically for accident prone fairies...

36 x 12cm x 10cm (h,w,d) 2015 Image: Jess Petrie

The clumsier variety of fairy would always be advised to wear a crash helmet rather than a standard issue helmet. The Crash Helmet offer greater head coverage and substantial inner padding for increased protection.

The fairy is wearing a tan leather flight suit, hand stitched with patch detail. It stands securely on a wooden base that can be easily mounted on the wall should you wish to do so. It features a typed label and is signed on the reverse



Brain's Dust Distribution Vehicle (Glider)

35 x 31 x 35cm (w,h,d) 2014 Image: Edward Chadwick

Designed to enable a busy fairy to spread dust easily and efficiently

Questions to Ask Children

What objects can you see in Samantha's fairies and inventions?

What do you like about the fairies and why?

Which fairy is your favourite and why?

How has Samantha created personalities for the fairies? Consider accessories, outfits and props.

Do you think the personality grows as she creates the fairies or she plans it in advance? Why?

If you were going to design a fairy based on you, what personality traits might it have? And how could you highlight those traits through accessories, outfits and props?

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Show me what you see



Enable close looking and drawing with this exercise

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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**

CPD Recording: Typography and Maps