

# Autobiographical Houses

By [Helena Lyons](#)

*This project is inspired by the work '[House](#)' by British contemporary artist [Rachel Whiteread](#), a monumental concrete cast of the inside of a Victorian terraced house made in the early 1990s.*

*In this activity, learners are invited to consider spaces where they feel safe, how those spaces make them feel, and the memories they associate with them. To ensure inclusion and sensitivity towards our different experiences of home, invite learners, where applicable, to consider other spaces that feel safe for them. This could be their home, a particular room in school, a house from a story, a friend's house, a den, a treehouse, or even a museum.*

*Using a range of techniques such as cardboard construction and frottage (rubblings), [monoprinting](#) and [collage](#), learners will create a freestanding structure of an 'autobiographical house' that communicates personal feelings and associations.*

*This activity is aimed at KS1 and KS2 children, but could be adapted and enjoyed by older age groups too. To engage fully with the range of techniques, you will need between 3 and 4 one hour sessions to complete this activity.*

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Sheila Ceccarelli from AccessArt leads year nine students from Frances Bardsley Academy for Girls on a collective drawing and collage experience exploring the #AccessArtVillage in BRG

Brentwood Road Gallery. Students absorb this stunning collection of sewn houses and inspired by thread and stitches, make their own creative responses.

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## **Making a “To Scale” Gallery**

This resource shares the process by which 6 twelve year old children created a shared architectural model working in foamboard, working alongside Paula Briggs. The model was based upon an existing house, which was measured and scaled down.

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## **Ink & Foamboard Architecture**

Inspired by “Amphis” by Folke Köbberling and Martin Kaltwasser at Wysing Arts Centre, this post shares how the children went on to make architectural models based upon their exploration with Paula Briggs.

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## **The Firm**

In 1862 Frederick Leach started F. R. Leach & Sons, artist-decorators who worked with the best-known Victorian architects/designers including William Morris, Charles Kempe and George Bodley.

Their expertise led the firm to work on ecclesiastical and civic arts, crafts and decoration as well as domestic architecture and interiors.

If their workshops could talk they would have told of stained glass being designed, painted and fired; stone statues carved; wooden decorations turned; panels chiselled, decorated and gilded; furniture crafted; metal forged; and tiles painted. In fact they could create anything that a well-decorated house, church or college would need.

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## **Pouncing**

Wall painting was a popular decoration for churches during the neo-gothic revival in the mid to late Victorian era.

The paint colour was mixed by hand and then often applied straight to the wall or ceiling. The design was often painted freehand or using stencils which included a technique called 'Pouncing'.

This technique is where the design is drawn out on paper and the outline is pricked all around to produce small holes.

Click on the image above to see [How to Make a Tessellated Design](#).

This is then placed on the wall and dabbed all over with a small bag of fabric filled with powdered graphite or chalk. The powder is forced through the holes so that when the paper is removed it leaves an outline of the pattern on the walls.

Click on the image above to see how teenagers used [‘Pouncing’ to Transfer Designs onto Plaster Tablets](#)

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## **Gilding**

Gilding was a popular finish for the ornaments that decorated the ceilings of neo-gothic churches.

These ornaments were made of lead or plaster and were often start that shone down from their great height once gilded in gold.

The first stage to gilding is when gold is pounded until it becomes as thin as tissue paper (25g can be beaten out to cover an area of 3m square).

The surface of the ornament to be gilded is prepared by brushing it all over with a glue called size.

This is left to dry until it reaches a ‘tacky’ state.

The gold sheets are then carefully laid onto the surface of the ornament and the size sticks it to the surface.

The gold is then worked into all the areas of the ornaments using a brush to push it down. There were special brushes made for doing this including one made from squirrel’s fur.

Click on the image below to see how to apply gold leaf to a plaster relief sculpture [Gilding and a Touch of Gold](#)

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## **Stained Glass**

The neo-gothic revival saw a resurgence in stained glass design for churches and domestic architecture of the day.

One technique used was that of Silver Staining Glass. This is where silver nitrate is painted onto clear glass and fired until the silver paint becomes part of the molecular structure of the glass and produces colours from a pale yellow to a rich orangey-amber.

Follow the link above to see [How to Print on Glass](#).

Motifs or designs were painted onto glass 'quarries' or shapes of glass that would be could together to form a leaded window.

For this reason diamonds, squares or other shapes that would tessellate were popular. This type of stained glass window also allowed a lot of light into the building which went well with the decoration of a neo-gothic church where the walls were decorated and deserved to be seen.

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