

Style and Aesthetic

The word Aesthetic refers to how we perceive and appreciate beauty. It can also be used to reference principles underlying artistic movements or artists.

We all have our own preferred aesthetic, shaped by our experiences, likes, dislikes, and by our personalities, too.

As a teacher facilitating art with pupils, we need to be aware of when we allow our own aesthetic to weigh too heavily on the experience we offer the children. The best and most inspirational art teachers are usually those who nurture a sense of openness in children that crosses a wide range of styles, aesthetics, cultures, and opinions.



The Trouble With Aesthetics...

In our experience, the following areas can become problematic when a teacher has too strong a sense of their own aesthetic, which they project onto the pupils:

- The messy scribbly child v the neat, accurate child**
- Assessment**
- Rigid outcomes**
- Fixed teaching as a result of fixed thinking**



How Do We Make Sure We Facilitate With Openness?

Here are some important points to consider:

- Attend [InSet](#) and visit galleries to build your own experience and confidence. This will widen your perspectives.
- If you use tools like Pinterest, you will already be familiar with the kind of words you type in. Try to widen your keywords. Deliberately challenge yourself to expose yourself to new ways of working.
- Always try the activity you are proposing

before delivering it to others. Which bits do you enjoy? Where did you struggle? Why?

- Help children understand that there are many different ways of being [an artist](#). How might they experiment with [materials](#)? Are they a precise realist? Or an experimental mark-maker? [Discipline](#) skillsets also vary, and the benefit of giving them a range of opportunities is that they can find a way of working that works for them.
- Devise and use [warm-up exercises](#) as a way of opening minds and establishing new ways of thinking about something - yourself included. Generally, when we *experience*, we begin a new understanding...

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.

Balancing Observational & Experimental Drawing

Teaching for the Journey not the Outcome

What Are Drawing Skills?

Jan Miller: Our “Talented Art

Teacher” Winner!

In 2016 AccessArt launched the [Children’s Art Competition](#), supported by Cass Art. Amongst the categories for children we had one for teachers, to acknowledge all the hard work and dedication we know you put in to inspiring and enabling children.

Thank you to all the teachers who entered – you filled us full of enthusiasm and passion!

We’re very pleased to announce the winner: Jan Miller from [Moreton Hall School](#) in Oswestry. Congratulations Jan!

Jan impressed us with the sheer energy and range of her work with the children – we’re sure the snapshot of images below will give you a flavour of the work she submitted. We hope Jan will be collaborating with AccessArt very soon to create some resources for us, so watch this space!

Jan Miller – Talented Teacher Award

“I completed my degree in Illustration at Kingston University followed by a PGCE at UCL. I have almost 20 years experience of teaching Art, across the full primary and secondary age spectrum. My interests particularly lie in the students’ development of observational drawing and mixed media. I strongly believe in the use of personal sketchbooks at all levels. I expect the older students to have the same confidence and spontaneity as their younger counterparts. Similarly, I encourage the younger pupils to develop large work, over several sessions, alongside the older students. For

several years I have been the Art Editor for SATIPS, a prep school magazine, to inspire Art teachers nationwide. I have recently developed Able, Gifted and Talented sessions for my own students and have extended this to a biannual event to other schools."

Using Drawing as a Way of Understanding: University of Liverpool Veterinary Science Schematic Drawing Task.

Art Rooms in KS1 & KS2 Schools

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.

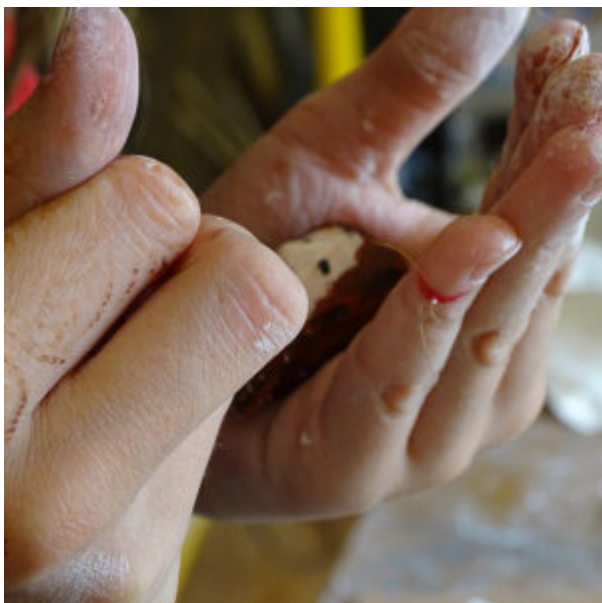
You May Also Like...

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](#)

Why use Warm Up Drawing Exercises?

Drawing in the National Curriculum

Taking Creative Risks

Is it important to get children to take risks in their artwork?

Reflect and Discuss: Crits in

the Classroom