

“Acts of Kindness” Workshop

By [Paula Briggs](#)



Portrait of Jan Brueghel I (1568-1625) and his family, by Peter Paul Rubens (Detail)

The day after Trump and Zelenskyy stunned the world with their televised argument in the Oval Office, AccessArt ran a “Constructing Positive Social Stories: Acts of Kindness” workshop session at the [AccessArt Lab](#).

The event was one of a number of “[Artists & Teachers Exploring Together](#)” sessions, devised by AccessArt to give us an opportunity to think about some of the more philosophical issues behind art education. By working with artists and educators who are open to holding ideas lightly, we hope to collaboratively discover new arts educational approaches and activities, transferable to a variety of settings.

The idea behind this particular session was to explore how we can use making as a tool to help us focus more closely on the positives which surround us everyday, no matter how small. By creating a shared space for making and conversation, we hoped to lift spirits and create a sense of shared experience.

This post shares the session aims, some of the conversational highlights, and observations of the workshop attendees, and my own as facilitator. Thank you to all who attended, and for your generosity.

“A timely workshop this Saturday morning led by AccessArt. Reflecting individually on our own experiences of small kindnesses, and then choosing

from a table of materials to abstractly or literally depict these, prompted conversation that magnified the acts beyond their original intent. The joy of creating by hand alongside others, of talking and making sense whilst sculpting and glueing, of sharing in stories of the smallest of acts that had made a difference to someone else... about people feeling seen, loved, heard. I left feeling lighter, more hopeful about the world, and with more generosity towards other drivers on my journey home."

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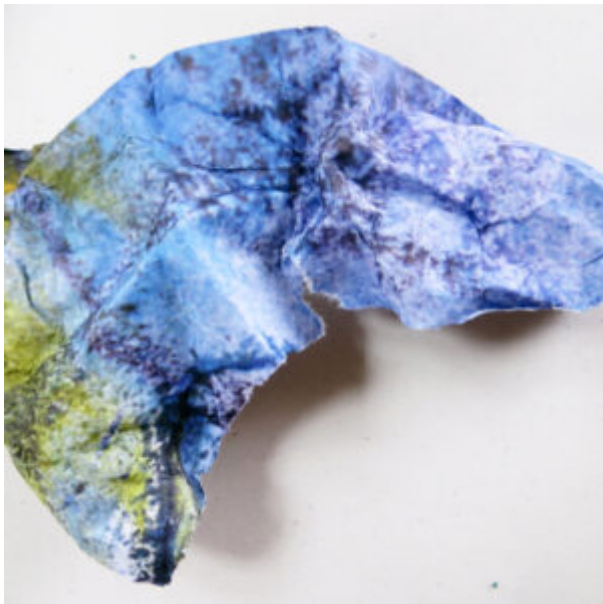
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Adapting AccessArt: From 2D to 3D

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Manipulating Paper: Turning 2D into 3D



Making Prompt cards



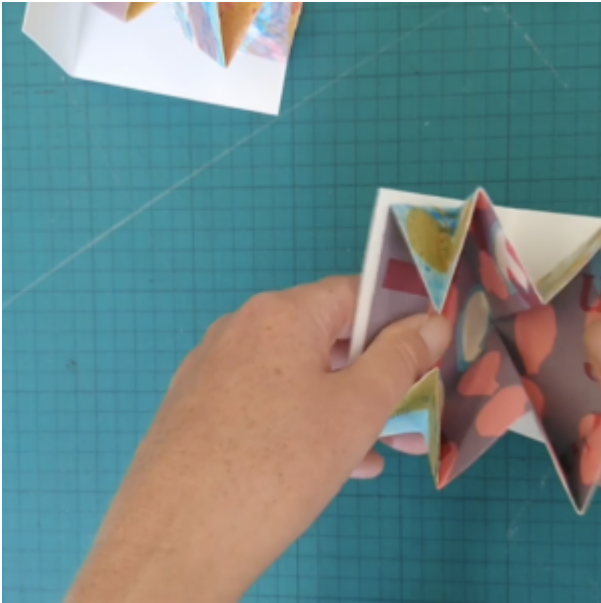
playful making pathway



ASTRONAUT PAPER BODY CASTS



Turkish map fold



Adapting AccessArt: Playful Making Inspired by Nnena Kalu



AccessArt

Olympics:

Sculptural Sneakers

[<<Explore Other Olympic Themes](#)

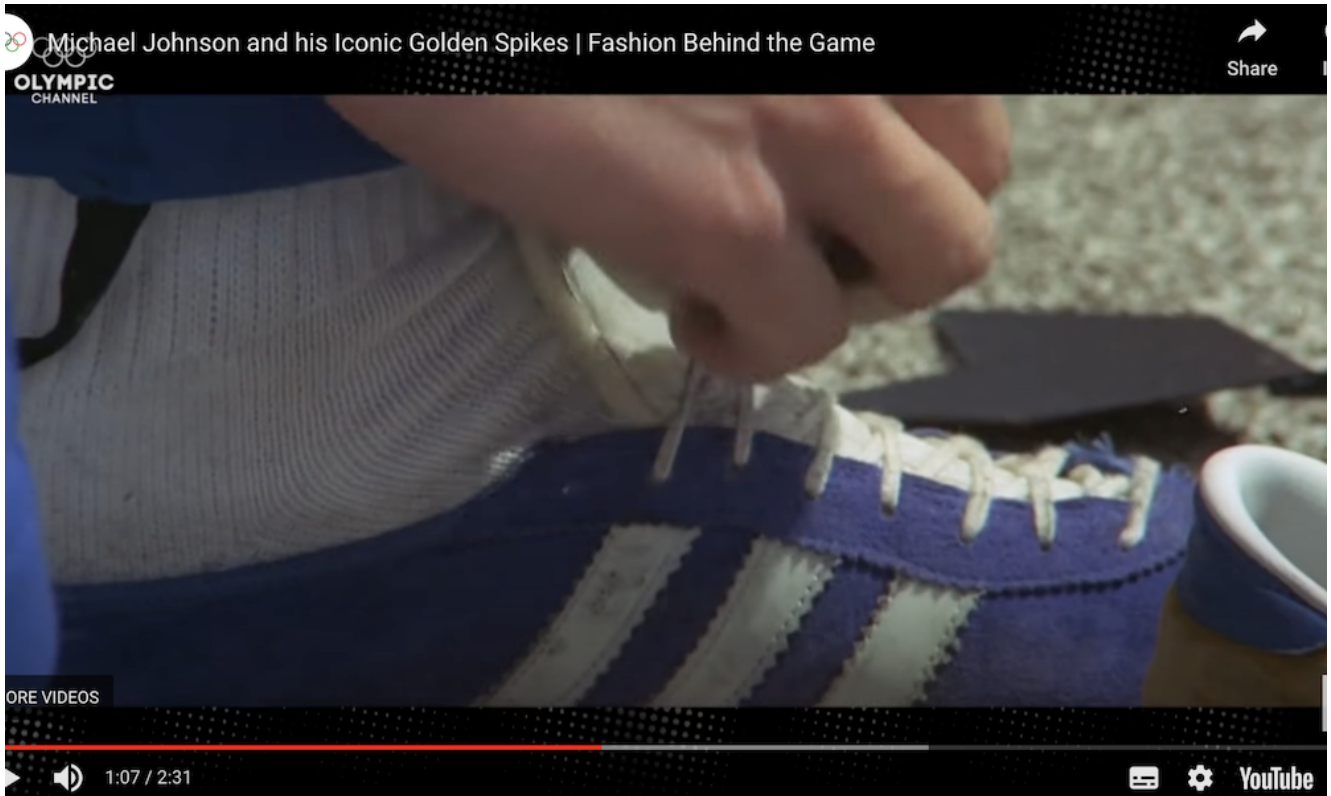
Explore the project below to help pupils consider how they might design trainers based on either Olympic [Athletics](#).

Trainer Design

Aim: To introduce pupils to shoe design with a focus on athletics and trainers. Pupils will get the opportunity to explore innovation and design through drawing and making.

Step 1: Introduce in Sketchbooks

Begin by introducing pupils to trainer design with the “[Talking Points: Trainer Design](#)” resource. Show them a series of videos which aim to prompt discussion around innovation, design and environmental implications of shoe design. Invite pupils to create “[Visual Notes](#)” in their sketchbooks inspired by what they see.



Step 2: Drawing and Sketchbooks

Place a trainer on each table. Invite pupils to create their own “[Folded Sketchbook](#)” and set them drawing challenges by adapting the “[Using a Folded Sketchbook to Get Drawing](#)” using the shoe as the subject matter. For each different drawing exercise swap the shoes around.

Next, invite pupils to make annotations and adjustments to their drawings based on any invented shoe technology they would like to add to their trainers.



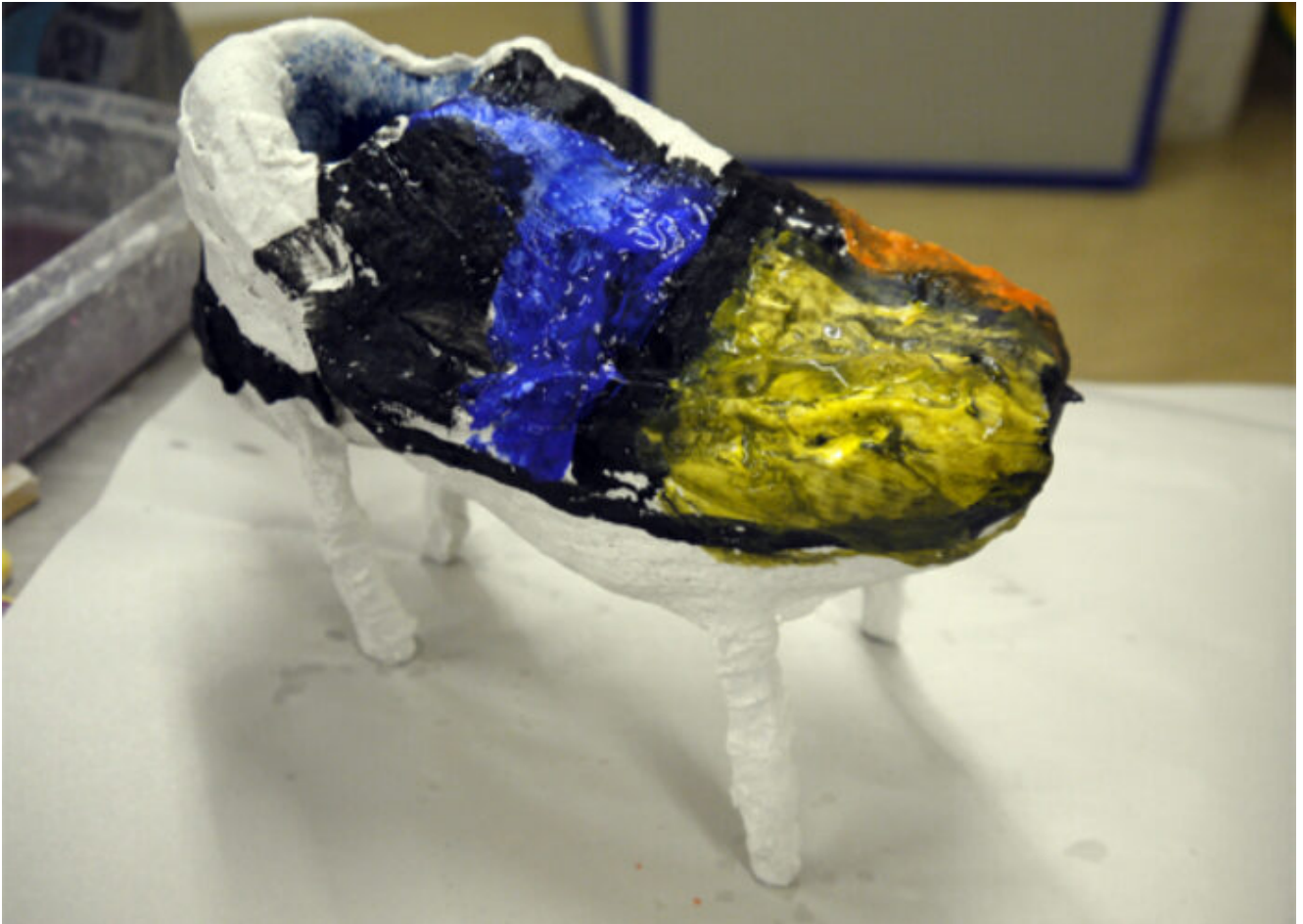
Step 3: Making

Use air-dry clay to create trainers using the "[Shoe La-La](#)" resource. Bring in trainers as inspiration for the clay shoes. Use some of the techniques from the last step to build up the shoes.



Or..

You may like to try creating “[Sculptural Modroc Shoes](#)” instead. Ask children to bring in old trainers, or pick up some from charity shops to use at the base for new trainer designs. Make additional features by [creating small armatures](#) and incorporating them into the shoe design.



Step 4: Reflect

[Use the resource here to help you run a class "crit" to finish the project.](#)

Invite children to display the work in a clear space on tables or on the wall. Recap with them about the exploration – where they started, what they discovered and what they enjoyed.

If you have class cameras or tablets, invite the children to document their work, working in pairs or teams.



ACCESSART OLYMPIC RESOURCES

AGES 5-8

AGES 9-11

AGES 11-14

Materials:

Trainers as subject matter

Sketchbooks

A2 Paper

Drawing materials

For Shoe La-La:

Air-drying clay

Rolling pins

Burlap/hessian mat

Wooden battens

Tools for clay

Clay Slip (mix a lump of clay with water to create a creamy consistency and store in a jar with a sealed lid)

Acrylic Paint

PV Glue

For Sculptural Modroc Shoes:

Modroc

An old trainer

Acrylic Paint

Extra materials such as lollysticks or newspaper to make armatures

PVA glue

Adaptations:

You could look into shoe design for sports that don't require trainers, for example dancing shoes or winter sports shoes.

Explore Other Resources in Athletics:



Making Medals



Sporting Sculptures

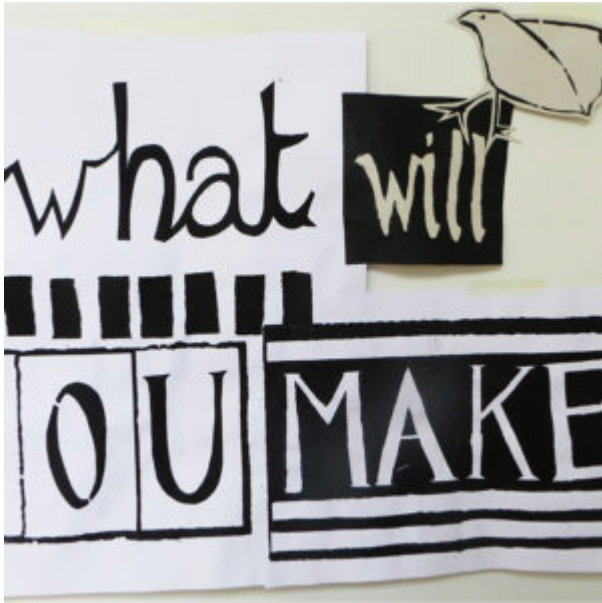


Sportswear Design

Explore other olympic themes
history



Values



ceremony



Talking Points: Trainer
Design

A collection of imagery and sources designed to explore trainer design.

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AGES 5-8

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FREE TO ACCESS

Trainer Design

Explore the resources below to start discussions based on design, innovation and the environmental implications of trainer design.

Golden Trainers

Questions to Ask Children

What are the features of these track shoes?

Do you like the gold shoes? Why?

What colour would you like your trainers to be if you were an Olympian?

Tinker Hatfield: Footwear Design

Find highlights of the documentary by exploring the suggested clips below:

Innovation: Predicting Needs for the Future

- Minute 7:41 – 11:23

- Minute 16:00 – 18:45

- Minute 24:36 – 26:20

- Minute 36:36 – 38:00

Working with Athletes

- Minute 19:33 – 24:36

- Minute 27:33 – 29:04

Questions to Ask Children

Which shoe did you like the best? Why?

How can trainer design help with sports performance?

If you could invent some shoes right now, what would they do? Who would they be for?

Sustainability

Find out how manufacturing trainers impacts our environment.

See how design innovation can provide solutions to ease the environmental impact of shoes.

Questions to Ask Children

In pairs, invent some sustainable alternatives that you could use to replace the toxic chemicals used in the production of trainers, e.g. fabrics made from grass – get creative with your

inventions!

You May Also Like...

AccessArt Olympic resources



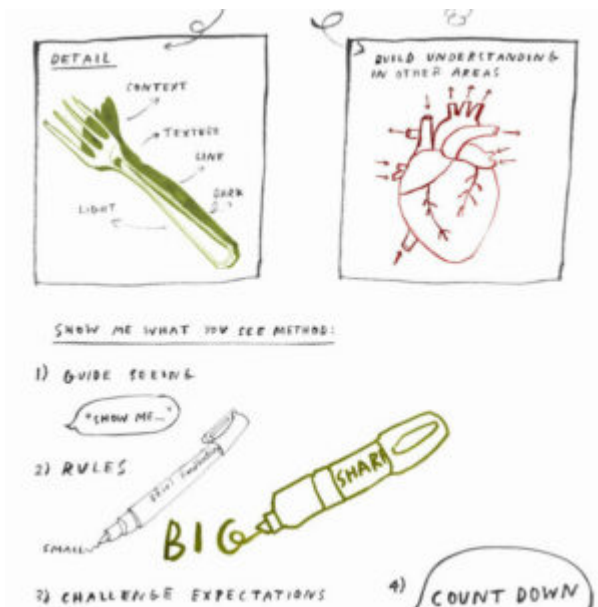
[Explore projects to celebrate the 2024 Olympics](#)

Visual Notes



Find out how pupils can respond to artists work in sketchbooks

Show me what you see



Enable close looking and drawing with this exercise

AccessArt Olympics: Sporting Sculptures

<<Explore Other Olympic Themes

Explore the project below to help pupils create a sculptural figure inspired by Olympic Athletics.

Sporting Sculptures

Aim: To introduce pupils to the work of sculptors and painters inspired by human form with a focus on athleticism. Pupils will get the opportunity to create figurative drawings and develop their work through to sculpture.

Step 1: Introduce

Begin by introducing pupils to the sculptures made by Rosa Serra, commissioned for the Seoul 1988 Olympics, with “[Talking points: Rosa Serra](#)”.

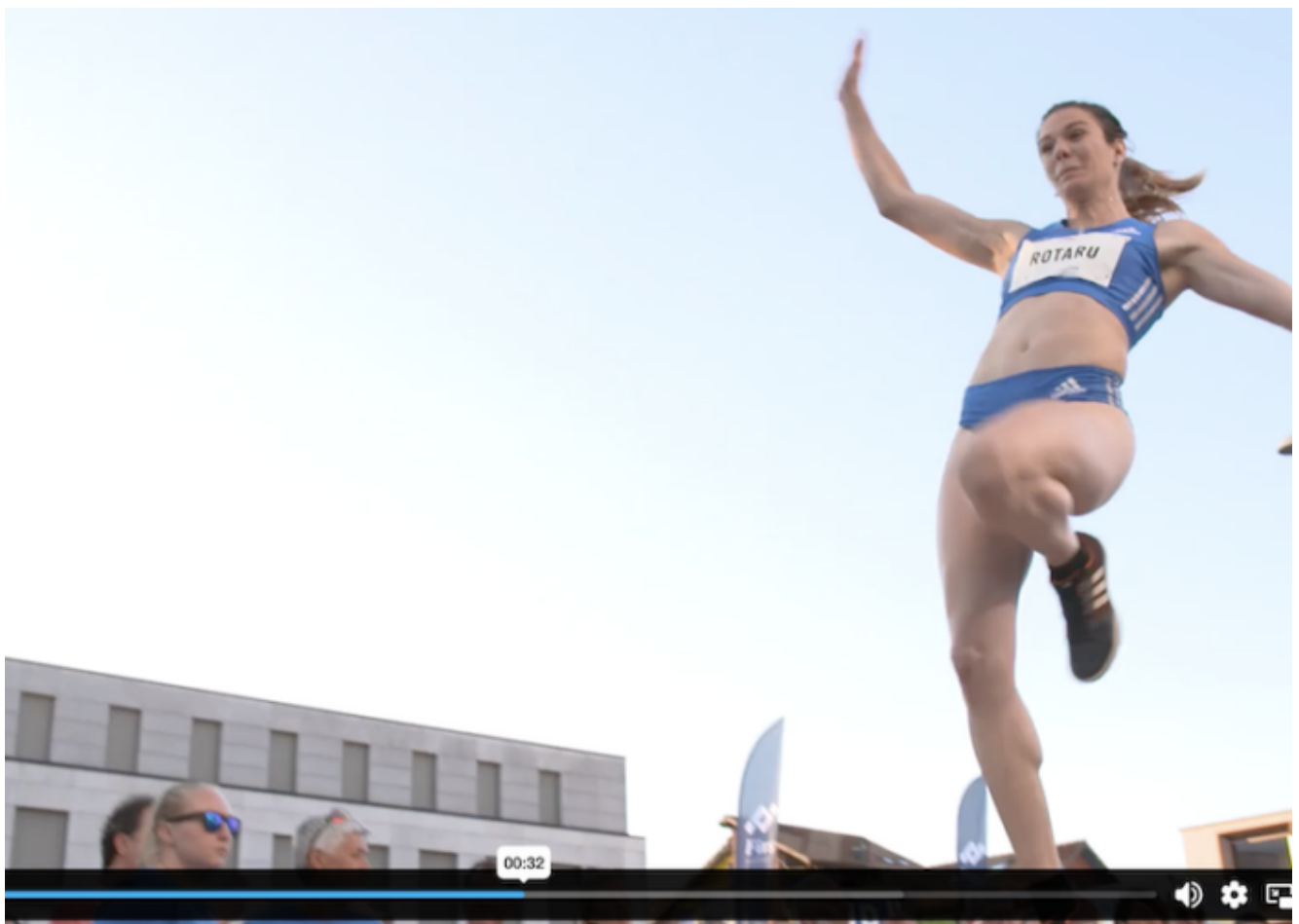
Invite pupils to create “[Visual Notes](#)” in their sketchbooks inspired by the information they see.



Use “[Drawing Source Material: Athletes in Action](#)” material for pupils exploring the human form during sports. In the first instance you might want to pause the videos as suitable points to enable the children to carefully look at the main forms and details.

Encourage close and slow looking by talking as they draw – use your voice to attract their attention to features of the athletes.

Invite pupils to draw what they can see in their sketchbooks. See “[Show Me What You See](#)” to find out how to run the guided session.



Step 2: Drawing and Sketchbooks

Start the session by introducing choreographer and painter Serge Lifar to pupils using “[Talking Points: Serge Lifar](#)”. Use the questions to prompt discussions about how he captures moving forms through line and colour.

Follow on by using the “[Exaggerating To Communicate](#)” resource to help children draw from life, and explore how we might use exaggeration as a tool to help us convey the intention of our drawing. Invite children to get into a position relating to a sport they like or they saw in the [Drawing Source Material](#) above. You might like to introduce props.

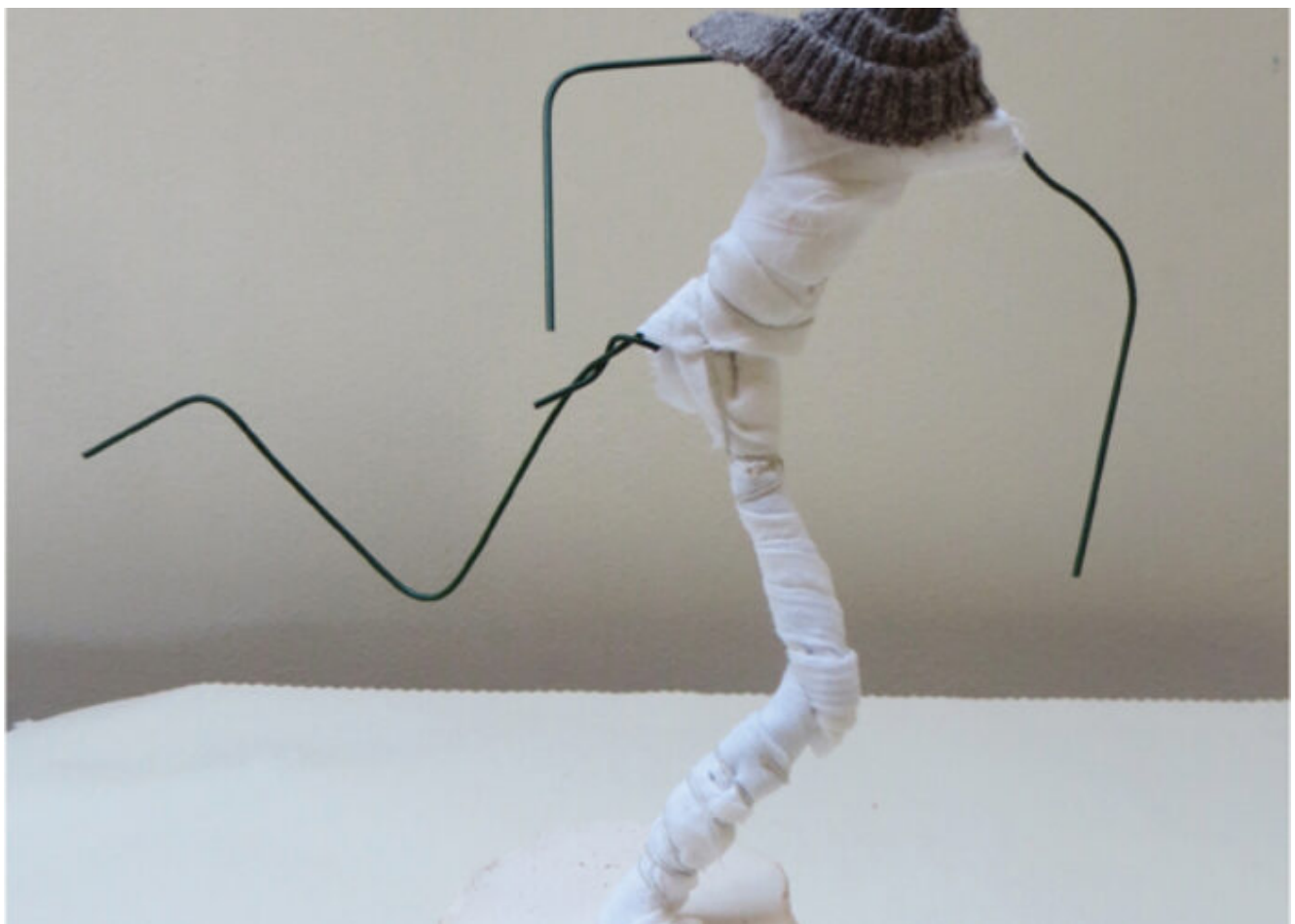


Step 3: Making

Follow on by adapting the “[Plinth People](#)” resource, inspired by the work done so far.

Invite pupils to think about a movement they would like to capture in their sculptures and whether this is reflected in a particular sport.

Encourage pupils to think about how they can bring exaggerated form, colour and shape to their sculptures.



Step 4: Reflect

[Use the resource here to help you run a class “crit” to finish the project.](#)

Invite children to display the work in a clear

space on tables or on the wall. Recap with them about the exploration – where they started, what they discovered and what they enjoyed.

If you have class cameras or tablets, invite the children to document their work, working in pairs or teams.



ACCESSART OLYMPIC RESOURCES

AGES 9-11

AGES 11-14

Materials:

Sketchbooks

A3 Cartridge Paper

Drawing materials

Watercolour

Soft wire

Wire cutters

Plaster for the plinth

Cardboard

Scrap fabric strips

PVA glue

Adaptations:

If you are working with younger children and would prefer to use modroc instead of clay you can adapt the “[Friendship Tower](#)” resource.

Explore Other Resources in Athletics:



Making Medals



Sculptural Sneakers

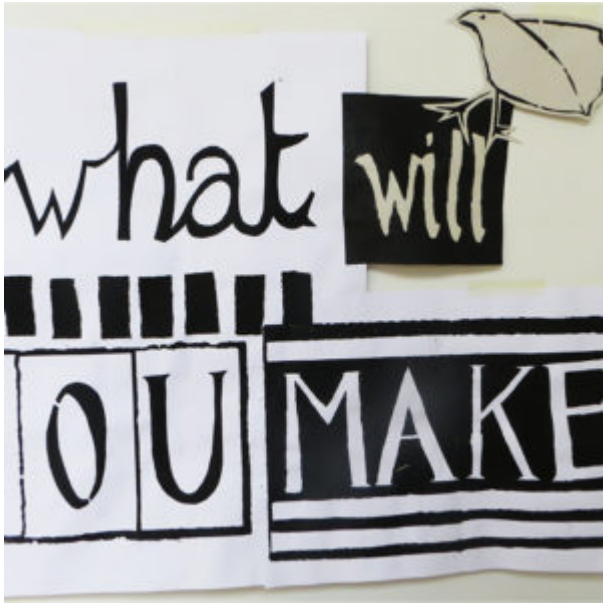


Sportswear Design

Explore other olympic themes
history



Values



ceremony



**AccessArt Olympics: Making
Medals**

[<<Explore Other Olympic Themes](#)

Explore the project below to help pupils consider how they might design an Olympic and Paralympic Medal based on either [Athletics](#), [History](#) or [Olympic Values](#).

Medal Design

Aim: To introduce pupils to the Olympic and Paralympic Medals. Pupils will get the opportunity to design and make their own medals through drawing and sculpture.

Step 1: Introduce in Sketchbooks

Consider asking pupils to make an Olympic project sketchbook using one of the “[Making Sketchbooks](#)” resources.

Begin by introducing pupils to medals designed for the Olympics and Paralympics with “[Talking Points: Olympic and Paralympic Medals](#)”. Invite pupils to create “[Visual Notes](#)” in their sketchbooks inspired by the information they see.

ALL MEDALS

All Past Games

Olympic Games

Olympic Winter Games

Youth Olympic Games



Beijing 2022



Tokyo 2020



PyeongChang 2018



Rio 2016



Step 2: Drawing and Sketchbooks

Use the medals from the previous session as inspiration for “[Making Money! Drawing and Making](#)”. Adapt the resource slightly, inviting pupils to design a medal for their own Olympics/Paralympics. You may like to focus the design process by making links to your local area or individual values/personalities.



Step 3: Making

Make connections between 2D and 3D by transforming the drawn medal designs in clay.

Adapt the "[Clay Portrait Miniatures](#)" resource to accommodate the focus of the project. Pupils might like to create medals to celebrate their favourite sport or hobby.



Step 4: Reflect

[Use the resource here to help you run a class "crit" to finish the project.](#)

Invite children to display the work in a clear space on tables or on the wall. Recap with them about the exploration – where they started, what they discovered and what they enjoyed.

If you have class cameras or tablets, invite the children to document their work, working in pairs or teams.



ACCESSART OLYMPIC RESOURCES

AGES 5-8

AGES 9-11

Materials:

Sketchbooks

A3/A2 Paper

Drawing materials

Foam board

Card template

Air-drying clay

Rolling pins

Burlap/hessian mat

Wooden battens

Tools for clay

Clay Slip ([see preparation in advance](#))

Soft wire to make a hanging loop

Wire cutters

Small pliers

Adaptations:

You may like to include a historical context, for example Ancient Greece. Use the "[Clay Art Medals](#)" resource and create profiles on the medals inspired by [Ancient Greek coins](#).

If you would like to explore [the Values](#) of the Olympics you might like to look at War Medals to see how medals can be designed to represent a specific Value.

Explore Other Resources in Values:



Mascot Design



Friendship Towers



An Olympic Poster

Explore other olympic themes
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Athletics



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How to use modroc



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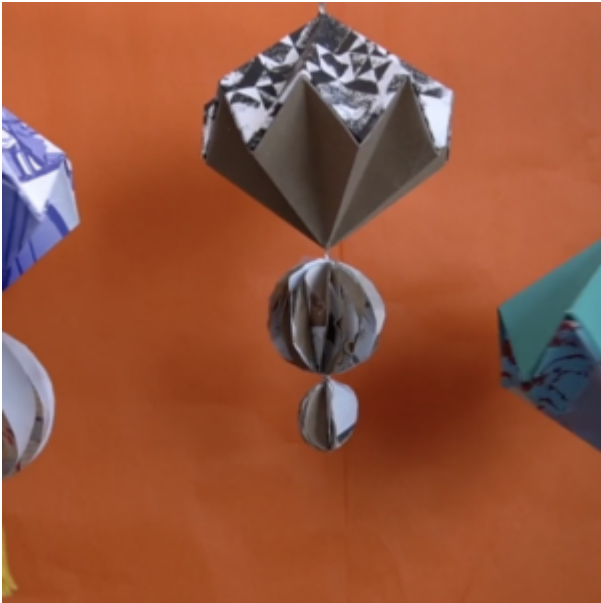
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explore paper weaving



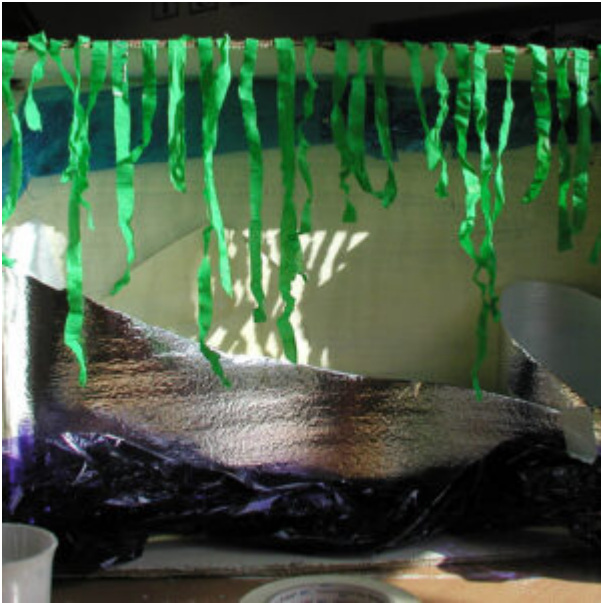
recycled baubles



CPD Recording: Exploring Modroc

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Pathway: Telling Stories Through Drawing

and Making



This is featured in the 'Telling Stories Through Drawing and Making' pathway

Pathway: Drawing and Making Inspired by Illustrators



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[Making Inspired by Illustrators' pathway](#)

accessart modroc resources



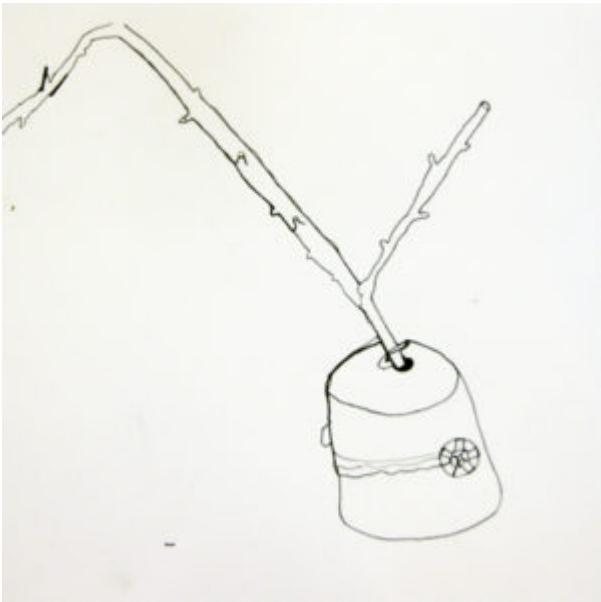
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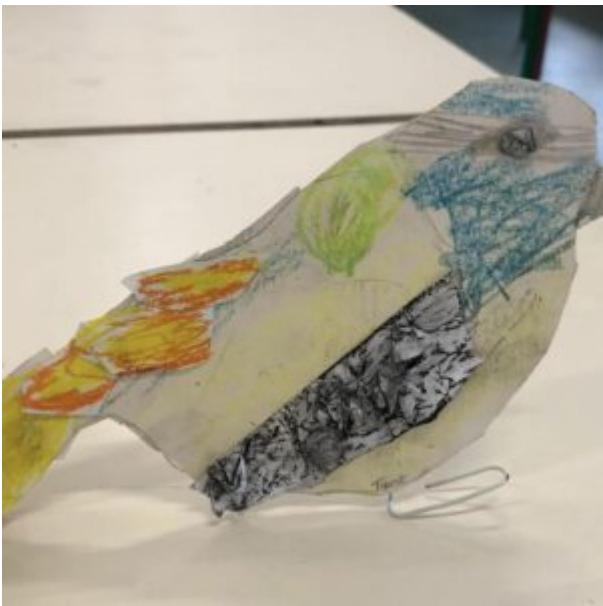
Talking Points: treehouses



Making Sculptural Birds

**See This Resource Used In
Schools...**













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Pathway: Making Birds



[Featured in the 'Making Birds' pathway](#)

Talking Points: Inspired by Birds



Talking Points: What Is A Plinth?

A collection of imagery and sources designed to encourage children to consider what role a plinth may play in creating or displaying artwork.

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AGES 9-11

AGES 11-14

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What Is A Plinth?



“Limestone plinth with the feet of a male statuette” Licensed under CC0 1.0

In the traditional sculptural sense, plinths are usually heavy boxes or bases made from stone, wood or metal, which raise a sculpture above the ground.

Plinths sometimes protect the sculpture from the

elements, such as a sculpture raised out of the way of puddles of rain in the street.

More often, the role of a plinth is to give the sculpture some kind of status. By raising the sculpture to a certain level, the sculptor can decide how the viewer interacts with the artwork.

Plinths also help create a separation between the ordinary everyday world around us and the art “object”.

Seeing an object on a plinth might encourage us to view that object as an artwork – as something special.

Questions to Ask Children

Have you seen any sculpture on a plinth in and around the place where you live?

Why do you think those sculptures are on plinths? How does the way the sculpture is displayed affect how you think about the sculpture?

Imagine two peas. One is on the kitchen floor, but an identical pea is on a plinth in a gallery. How does it change how you think about the pea?

The Fourth Plinth



Photo of “Nelson’s Ship in a Bottle,” by Yinka Shonibare, Fourth Plinth, Trafalgar Square, London by Andy Hay

What is The Fourth Plinth?

The Fourth Plinth is considered to be one of the world’s largest ongoing public art commissions. Its main aim is to bring contemporary art to the public and to encourage debate about what art is.



The “fourth plinth” was originally intended to hold a sculpture of a horse belonging to William IV, but the sculpture was never displayed due to lack of money. For over 150 years the plinth remained empty, until in 1998, the Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (RSA) commissioned three contemporary sculptures to be displayed temporarily on the plinth. The legacy of those three sculptures was a rolling programme called the Fourth Plinth.

[Take a look at the Fourth Plinth website](#) to explore some recent commissions and explore the work of one Fourth Plinth artist, Antony Gormley

below.

Antony Gormley, The Fourth Plinth



“One and Other” by Antony Gormley, Image by Feggy Art

Whilst [Antony Gormley](#) usually makes sculpture out of more traditional materials like steel, he was commissioned as part of the Fourth Plinth to produce a rather different kind of art.

Instead of working in traditional materials, Gormley used the plinth as a focus for creating an artwork which “became a portrait of the UK, now”. For 100 days in 2009, 24 hours a day, Gormley and the team coordinated members of the public to take stage on the plinth for an hour at a time. They could do whatever they liked, using the plinth to give their expression a literal and metaphorical platform.

Through “One & Other”, Gormley hoped that by giving the public free will to express their hopes and fears for what might be, a “portrait of the nation” would be revealed.

Questions to Ask Children

How would you use your time if you were given an hour on the plinth?

The Fourth Plinth Challenge

Can you find a “plinth” at school and coordinate a similar project?

How would children and teachers “apply” for a slot on your plinth?

Who would decide who gets a slot and what would your criteria be?

How long would each slot last?

How would you encourage an audience?

How would you document the event?

This Talking Points Is Used In...

Pathway: The Art of Display



[This is featured in the 'The Art of Display' pathway](#)

using sketchbooks to make visual notes



Show me what you see

