

**A Creative Activity
Booklet from City Arts**

**CREATE TO
CONNECT**

Hello!

We hope you enjoy the activities in this booklet. They are designed to help you feel more connected to others and to boost your wellbeing.

Throughout, you'll find hints and tips helping you to think positively, reduce your stress levels and channel your creativity. Specially devised by 10 professional artists, these creative activities will help you explore nature and practice mindfulness. You'll learn about free writing, poetry, drawing and painting. We hope that you enjoy experimenting and being creative!

Each of these activities can be done alone, with a friend or as part of a group. You'll find a series of supporting videos on City Arts' website.

Nature Connection: Tune into Details

AN ACTIVITY BY RACHEL MASSEY

Connecting with nature can improve our sense of wellbeing and studies have shown that regular connection with nature can boost our immune system, improve sleep and reduce stress.

Notice Three Good Things in Nature every day - a beautiful feather, birdsong or the colour of the sky. Record your discoveries through writing or drawing. Noticing nature, helps us override the automatic pilot of our brains.

It doesn't need to take very long and you don't have to go anywhere special – you can even do it through a window or while walking through a city centre. There are signs of nature everywhere once you start to look for them. To deepen your experience, try tuning into your senses, hearing, smell or touch. Listen to the wind in the trees, smell new blossom or explore the textures of different leaves. Most importantly enjoy your daily nature discoveries – you might even want to record how they make you feel in your notebook.

Activity

Step 1: Find a natural object small enough to hold. You could go for a walk and find an object, or you might have something at home e.g. a feather, conker, shell, apple or leaf.

Step 2: Spend some time being curious and getting to know your object.

- Feel the weight and texture of it in your hand. Are some parts rougher or smoother than others?
- Does it have a smell?
- What colours can you find in your object – does the colour become lighter or darker or does it change to another?
- Hold it to your ear, see if you can make a sound with it
- Taking your time, slowly trace the edges of the object with your eye, noticing lines, colours, patterns, textures
- Imagine the life it had before it arrived in your hand
- If it had a message for you, what would it say?

Step 3: Think about how you now feel about the object. Tuning in to the tiny details of colour and beauty in nature can help boost mood and improve our wellbeing.

Step 4 (optional): You could do a series of observational drawings of your chosen object, or use some other drawing techniques to explore it. Use the drawing instructions from another activity in this booklet.



Tune in to

DETAILS

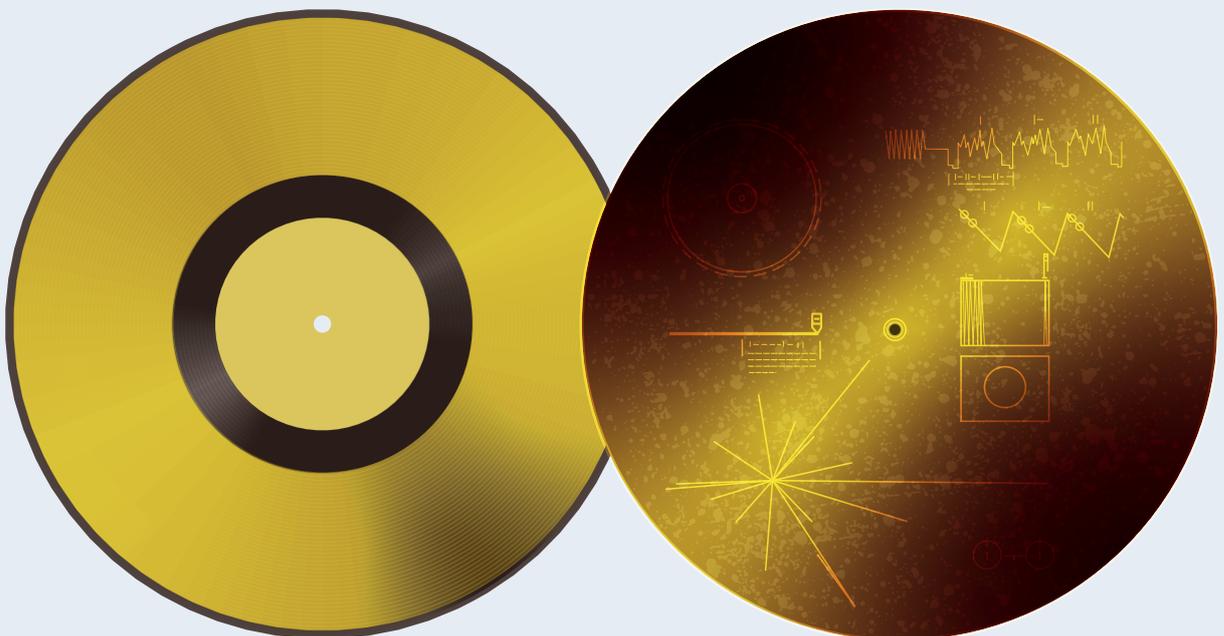
Sounds in Space: Remixing the Golden Record

AN ACTIVITY BY DAN MAYFIELD

In 1977, NASA launched a once in a lifetime mission to visit the outer edges of our solar system. Spacecrafts Voyager 1 and 2, set out to explore the planets Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune, as they aligned for the first time in 176 years. Voyager 1 has travelled the farthest of any man-made object. It is currently 22.3 billion km from the Sun.

On the side of each spacecraft there is a 12" gold plated disc. It contains a collection of sounds, music and images from Earth. It's like an interstellar message in a bottle!

The contents are greetings from mankind to other possible civilisations in the Universe. The chances of them finding their way to other civilisations are slim but they have been heard by millions of people on Earth. They can help remind us who we are. They can make us more aware of the wonderful world of sound that surrounds us. The sounds on the discs include: thunder, rain, frogs, birds, elephants, footsteps, a heartbeat and laughter. They feature diverse genres of music including Peruvian panpipes, rock 'n' roll, classical, baroque, blues, gamelan and Indian ragas.



Activity

We would like you to think about the sounds and music that are important in your life, and the sounds you think best represent our planet.

There are some prompts below. Try to write down five choices for each prompt. When you've finished, why not make a playlist from your musical choices?

What sounds are important to you?

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

What music is most important to you?

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

What sounds from Earth would you choose to send into space for extra-terrestrials to discover?

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

What music would you send into space for other life forms to listen to?

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

And finally, what greeting would you send to an alien?

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Holding on to Hope

AN ACTIVITY BY REBEKAH PORTER

This activity focuses on HOPE. It will remind you that positive thinking can help us take stock in our lives, and help us set realistic goals, without being too hard on ourselves.

Activity

Step 1: Measuring your jars, cut your paper to fit all around them like a label. You could also use wrapping paper, in which case, skip *Step 2*.

Step 2: Paint, colour and or draw a design on the label. You could do a green leaf design symbolising new life and hope. Also make a 'night sky' design, with stars on a dark background.

Step 3: Glue the reverse of the paper and stick each design on to a jar.

Step 4: Cut small strips of paper. They should be big enough to write on and small enough to fit in the jar when folded.

Step 5: Think about things you can do now, however small or simple. Things that you don't have to wait for, but can easily help make you feel better. It could be as simple as 'phone a friend' or 'go for a walk'. It might be an activity you would like to commit to, such as sowing some seeds or taking up a craft activity, or finishing something you have started. Add these to your 'night sky' jar.

Step 6: Think about things you would like to do in the future. Things like meeting up with family, taking a walk with friends, going out to a café with friends or family. Write each thing down on a separate strip. Fold them and put them in your green jar.

Step 7: Use your jars to lift your spirits when you need to - either adding something that you can do now or hope to do in the future. Add new things to your jars and take them out to look at. If you are able to, try doing one of the activities.

Materials

TWO EMPTY JAM JARS

PLAIN PAPER

PATTERNED WRAPPING PAPER (OPTIONAL)

PEN

SCISSORS

RULER

GLUE OR DOUBLE-SIDED STICKY TAPE

PAINTS

FELT TIP/METALLIC PENS

CRAYONS



Connecting to the Earth

AN ACTIVITY BY LORNA MCNEILL & LUKE BROWN

Reflection about the natural element Earth can comfort and still us in times of anxiety. In this activity, you will discover how movement, meditation and art can help connect us to the earth and gain stability.

Activity

Step 1: Find a calm space where you won't be interrupted, this is your time! We recommend putting on some relaxing music. If you don't have any, try tuning the radio to something like Classic FM.

Step 2 - Contemplation: Read this Celtic prayer out loud and write down or draw your responses...

“Deep peace of the quiet earth to you, who, herself unmoving, harbours the movements and facilitates the life of the ten thousand creatures, while resting contented, stable, tranquil. Deep peace of the quiet earth to you!”

Step 3 - Mindfulness: With your music playing, get yourself into a standing or seated position...

- Anchor yourself through your feet and bottom finding a solid position. Feel comfort from the earth below you, knowing it supports you regardless of what is happening.
- Focusing on breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth. Repeat this 5 times.
- Lift your arms above your head, interlace your fingers and stretch. Continue to focus on your breathing, spread your toes like roots they are roots reaching into the earth.
- Hold this stretch for 10-15 seconds. Repeat it 5 times

Step 4 - Painting: When you do this, we'd like you to try and stay 'in the moment'. Let your inspiration flow through your hand. Don't aim for perfection. Try things out and experiment.

- Look at or imagine your favourite things in nature. Trees, flowers, hills, a special place or a natural process, for example.
- Use your pastels or paints to paint freely. How does this make you feel?
- What colours do you find comforting from nature? Enjoy applying these to paper.
- What shapes and movements inspire you? Allow yourself to paint these freely.
- What textures excite you? How can you capture them in your painting?

Step 5: Think about the qualities of nature that help you. Is it peaceful, refreshing, invigorating? Write them down. How can you remind yourself to bring more of these qualities into your daily life? You might use your favourite colours to paint with. You could contemplate a flower, and breathe in its beautiful scent.

Materials

PAINTS (OF ANY TYPE)

BRUSHES

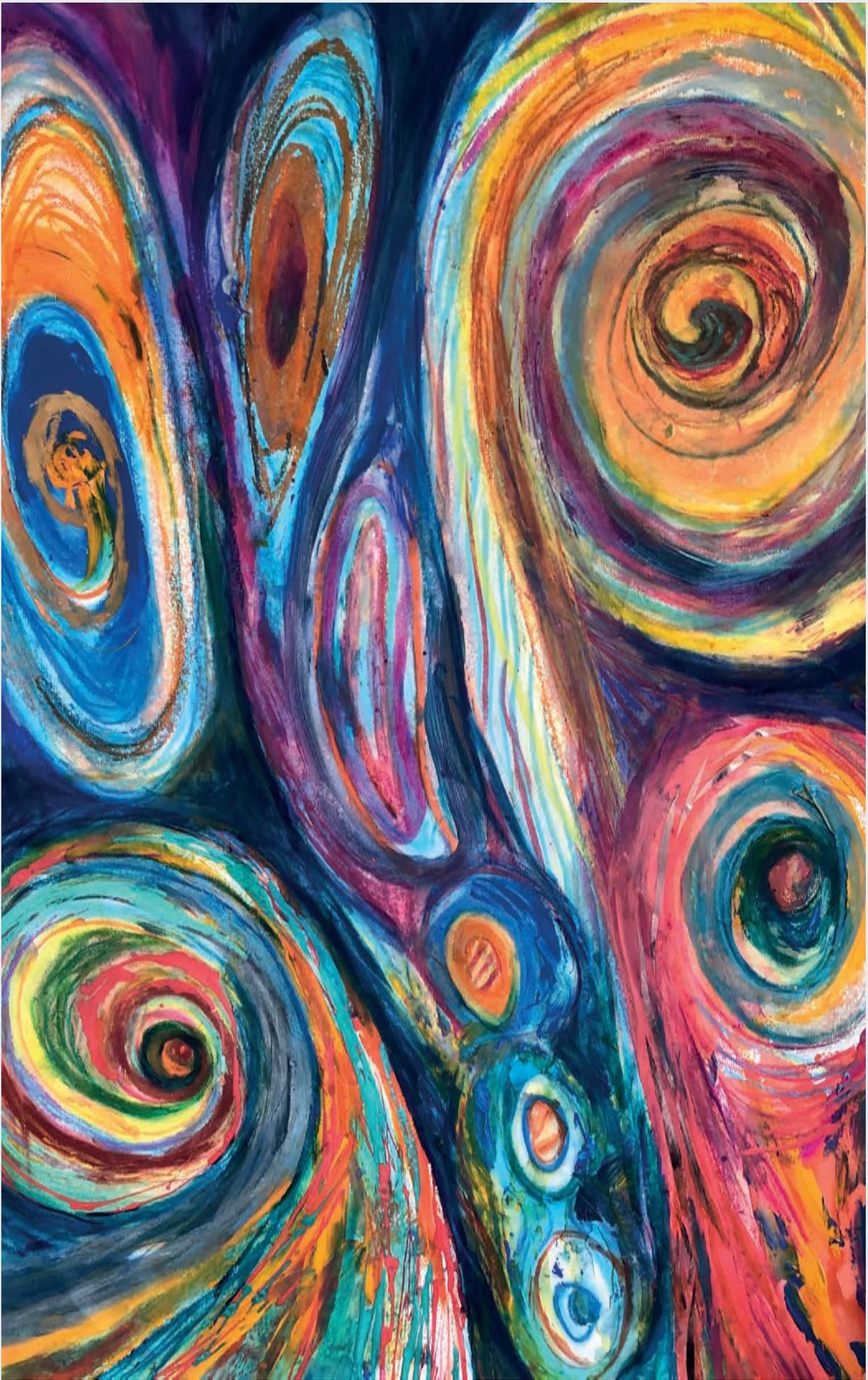
WATER

A PALETTE OR PLATE FOR MIXING COLOURS

WATERPROOF COVERING FOR YOUR WORK AREA

NOTEBOOK

PEN



Drawing for Wellbeing

AN ACTIVITY BY ELAINE WINTER

Mindfulness is a mental state achieved by focusing your awareness on the present moment, while calmly acknowledging and accepting your feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations. It is used as a therapeutic technique. Mindful drawings can be done quickly and can also be a lot of fun.

This activity will improve your hand-eye co-ordination and boost your wellbeing.

Activity

Step 1: Choose something to draw. It should be something of interest to you. Put all other distractions away and sit in a quiet space. Spend at least 10 minutes on your drawing.

Step 2: Start drawing using the prompts below. Don't aim for perfection. Select the ones you find interesting. You don't have to do them all in one go.

- Look and draw your subject in the time it takes to breathe in and breathe out, without holding your breath!
- Draw using your non-dominant hand (e.g. left-handers draw with your right).
- Attempt a continuous line drawing. Once your pencil is on the paper, don't lift it, you can go backwards and forwards over lines.
- Draw using only 3 lines, then again using only 5
- Hold your pencil lightly from the top (with all 5 fingers), dangle it over the paper and draw.
- Look at your subject and draw it without looking at your paper.
- Draw using only dots and specks.
- Draw the outline of your subject in one strong gesture.
- Draw without blinking.
- Draw using only shadow.
- Draw around the outside of your subject only using shading.

Materials

PENCIL

RUBBER

SHARPENER

WHITE PAPER – ANY SIZE

AN OBJECT OR PERSON TO DRAW



360 Drawing

AN ACTIVITY BY JANE STOCKLEY

Experiment with different drawing skills to create an unusual 360 drawing. You can choose any object to draw, but we recommend starting with something simple.

Activity

Select an interesting object to draw. It should have a good shape and one that you can create strong lines with. Undistracted, get to know your object and think about 4 different angles that you can draw on each side of your 360 paper.

Focus on the shapes of your object, rather than details or textures. You could add shadows to give your drawing more depth. Don't worry about reaching perfection. Experiment with different objects and angles. Experiment with different drawing materials, or colour, and different techniques. You could repeat the task to achieve different outcomes.

Materials

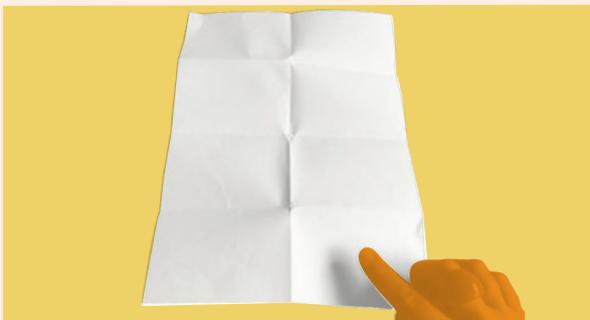
PENCIL

PAPER

SCISSORS

PEGS

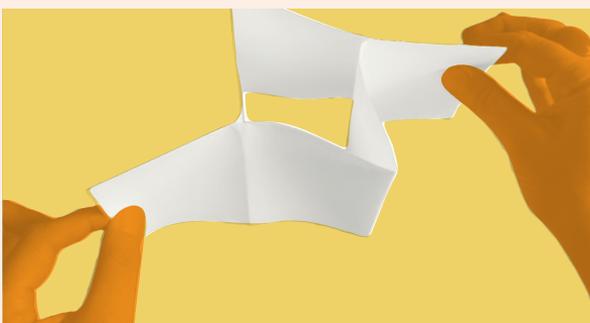
GLUE STICK



Step 1: Fold an A4 piece of paper into 8 equal parts.



Step 2: Fold in half, then cut from the fold to the next crease on your paper where my finger is pointing.



Step 3: Open the paper up and fold length ways.



Step 4: Push the left and right edges all the way to the centre to make a cross.



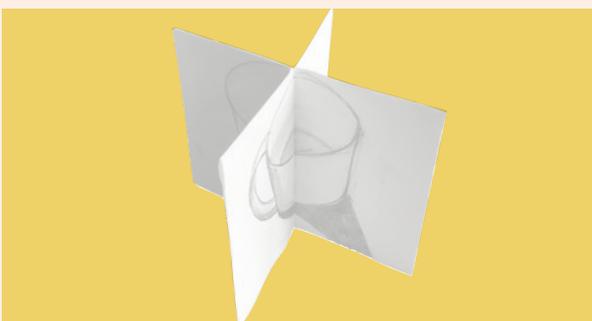
Step 5: If you were making an origami book there would be no need to glue. However, as we want our book to stand up, glue the sections together in the cross shape.



Step 6 - Drawing: Take one object, plant or tree and draw it from different angles.



Step 7: Try different drawing styles, continuous line, shaded or just the shadow.



Step 8: As you turn your book around you should see a slight change in the object you've been observing.

With practice, creating a booklet will take around 5 mins. Your drawings can take as long as you need. Relax.

Keeping a Journal

AN ACTIVITY BY KATIE SONE

Writing for Wellbeing is a bit different to creative writing. Writing can be used as a way to manage your mental health. It can help to unclutter your mind, and give you tools to become more mindful. Keeping a journal is a good way to do this.

This activity is best done without any distractions, in a calm environment.

Activity

Free Writing: Set a timer for 20 minutes and write until it sounds. Gratitude or golden moments are good to write about. Focus on the good things, what we have rather than what we don't have. This can help you keep a positive outlook and improve your wellbeing.

Prompts for the morning: Set goals, intentions and to do lists. For example, "Today,

- I'm going to...
- What I really need is...
- I will focus on...
- I am grateful for...
- I would like to..."

Prompts for an evening: Write three good things or golden moments you have had today. For example,

- Things you are grateful for
- A good day – how has your day been?
- How are you feeling?
- What went well today?
- What might you need to do tomorrow?

Top tips for writing your journal

- 1 When journaling, find the best time of day for you to write. Get everything you need and ready yourself in a quiet place for 20 minutes. You could write first thing in the morning, setting your intentions and hopes for the day. Or at the end of the day, reflecting on the day that has passed.
- 2 Starting with a blank page can be daunting. Start with your name, date, a quote or a doodle. For example, "I can't think what to write". You could write about what you are feeling in that moment, describing the place or room you are in, or any objects you notice. What are your plans for the day? You could write about yesterday's events. Anything you like. This is your writing time, to empty your head onto paper. You are writing 'for you' and no one else has to see it.
- 3 Write until you come to a natural stop.

Telling Your Story: What if...?

AN ACTIVITY BY LUKE PEARSON

Humans have been telling stories forever. You're no different, you're already a story teller. Every day you tell stories to your friends, family, and the people you meet. When someone asks you 'how was your day?', they're inviting you to tell them a story. The following activity will help you create, structure and then tell a good story.

Activity

Step 1: Children are inquisitive, constantly asking questions, exploring and wondering. Channel your inner child and let your imagination run riot. For 2 minutes, use 'What If...?' to write down as many questions as you can think of.

Step 2: Read back what you've written. Think about which questions inspire you, and which you want to explore more.

Step 3: Good stories have Conflict, Action and Resolution:

- A character needs to go on a quest to retrieve something (like in *Indiana Jones* or *Lord of the Rings*)
- A character falls in love but then something stops them pursuing this love something (like in *Romeo and Juliet*)
- An event happens and a character must solve a mystery and work out what happened, or who did it (like an *Inspector Calls*)

Choose one of your 'What Ifs' and think of the Conflict, Action and Resolution for that story. What does your character want? What steps do they take to achieve this? What is the outcome?

Step 4: Structuring your story using the following prompts. Finish each sentence:

- Once upon a time...
- Because of that...
- And ever since then...
- Until...
- Until finally...

Step 5 (optional): Perform your story to family, friends or neighbours, or you could record it using music and props.

Top tips for performing

- 1 Think about the pace at which you tell the story. Which bits need to be delivered fast for suspense, which bits need to be delivered slowly and more carefully?
- 2 Think about your audience. This will help you adopt the right tone when you tell your story.
- 3 Is there anything else you can do to enhance your story? Background music or sound effects? Costume, props or other visual cues?

Dada Poetry

AN ACTIVITY BY CHLOE ELMS

The Dada Movement started in Zurich after the atrocities of World War One. Artists like Hugo Ball felt that art should express the abstract, the innocence, the anti-art of society. 'Dada' has multiple definitions across the world, including 'Mother', and 'Rocking Horse'. The movement used it to describe everything and nothing at the same time.

One mode of creating Dada art and poetry was autonomous crafting, practices known today as freewriting, doodling and improvisation.

Activity

Step 1: Using the prompt TODAY, spend 2 minutes continuously writing words or phrases that come to mind. Don't stop or think about what you are writing. This is called Freewriting.

Step 2: Jumble up your words:

- Using scissors, cut out each word/phrase
- Turn them over so you cannot see them
- Mix them up randomly
- Turn them back over and place them into lines of 3-6 words each
- Re-write your autonomous poem and read it aloud

What happened to the words in your poem? Did their meanings change? Did the themes or emotions change?

Step 3: Using arts materials, close your eyes for 30 seconds and let your hand guide your pencil/brush around the page. Focus on the speed and pressure of your line:

- Hard pressure might represent anger
- Moving quickly might represent chaos
- Moving slowly might represent relaxation or tranquillity

Step 4: Repeat step 3 using a different technique. What visual differences can you see? What emotion do you see in each picture? How do they relate to how you feel today?

Step 5: Reflect on what you've done. What feelings did it bring up? Did they change over the course of the task?

Step 6 (optional): Try practicing these steps using other materials.

- Make a poem using pages from a newspaper, magazine, or old book.
- Create a picture using found material, like coffee grains or food colouring
- Listen to music whilst doing the task, what happens then?

Materials

PEN

PAPER

SCISSORS

COLOURED PENS OR
PENCILS

PAINT (OPTIONAL)

Today, dark skies, beautiful green grass from rainy days, before doors open, droplets fallen, happiness with the love of my life beside me. Work again, tiredness but excitement, when will I see you again? Hugs and kisses, friends and wine, drinking into the evening. The art of war. In the east. Faraway but close to home. Death is near, I am scared. Scared for our friends out there. Helplessness and guilt. Today is rare.



I of me is again?
kisses hugs friends will
Today when green fallen beautiful grass
Scared wine Faraway drinking guilt
the before - my there.
our friends and Helplessness to open evening.
In beside doors and rainy the tiredness love
happiness home.
for The droplets from war
of scared. See am rare. again but work
art the close out dark days
I but east. Skies is near

Make a Puppet

AN ACTIVITY BY NIKKI CHARLESWORTH

Bunraku is an ancient form of traditional Japanese puppetry. It continues to influence and inspire modern puppet theatres across the world.

This activity will teach you to make your own Bunraku inspired puppet using found objects. It will help you to 'think like a puppet maker'. Take your time with the task, it can be therapeutic and rewarding. Use your imagination and nourish your creative side, rather than seeking perfection.

Activity

Step 1: Gather your materials. Think about what the recycled materials you've chosen will say about the character and backstory of your puppet.

Step 2: Think about your materials, draw a picture to help you make your puppet. Look at your own body. How does your arm move? How might you replicate this with your materials?

Step 3: Experiment with your materials and the layout of your puppet. When you are happy, assemble it and secure the pieces together.

Materials

PEN

PAPER

A WIDE RANGE OF RECYCLED MATERIALS

SCISSORS

TAPE OR GLUE

Top tips for manipulating your puppet

Focus: The head is like the beam of the torch and must always be used to lead the way, directing the movement and travel of the puppet. A good tip to remember is that the puppet's head is the brain of the puppet i.e. the decision is made in the head before a hand is raised for instance.

Breath: In puppetry, you are putting life into an inanimate object. This involves giving the puppet breath. Even when static, gently move your puppet to show it is alive.

Teamwork: If you are working with others to make a puppet move, you will need to practice this as 'one being'. To be successful, it is vital that cohesive movements are made. This protects the puppet from damage and makes the movement look convincing and realistic.



Notes

Use this space for notes
or doodling!

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