



In the summertime...

Judith Harries has some inspiring, seasonal suggestions for activities to stretch little ones' creativity and spark their imaginations...

In the new EYFS framework, the specific area of expressive arts and design challenges practitioners to enable children to “safely use and explore a variety of materials, tools and techniques, experimenting with colour, design, texture, form and function,” and “to represent their own ideas, thoughts and feelings through art”.

Here, in the first of a series of articles exploring different visual art activities, the idea of summer is used as a stimulus for a selection of creative adventures, including drawing, painting, printing, collage, modelling and sculpture; choose your favourites, and enjoy the journeys of mutual discovery that develop as a result!

Drawing & colouring! Outdoor patterns

Go outside with plain paper and wax crayons. Show the children how to make rubbings of different raised textures on walls and pavements. Look for interesting bricks and manhole covers with patterns. Ask them to work with a partner who can hold the paper in place while they rub with the crayons. Does it work better using the crayons held on their side? Try making some rubbings of bark on trees in the outside area or park.

Treasure island

Make a simple map of your outside area. Hide some treasure – gold coins, wine gums or chocolate money. Mark the hiding place with an X on your map and ask children to help you find the treasure.

Let children draw their own treasure maps. Doodle a large island shape on some cream paper. Show them how to represent different landmarks such as trees, churches, houses, rivers, lakes, and of course a cross marking the spot where their treasure is hidden. Use in some imaginative drama activities.

Looking closer

Go outside with clipboards, paper and sketching pencils or charcoal sticks. Look around for suitable plants, flowers, and sights to draw. Show children how to make soft, sketchy lines on their paper rather than pressing hard. Can they make a close up picture of a plant or flower?

Frame it

On a fine day use thick pavement chalk to draw differently sized and shaped frames onto the outside paved area. Let children take turns to draw pictures in them, and arrange for parents and carers to view the pavement gallery before the end of the day in case rain washes all the masterpieces away!

Get shirty!

Let children create their own designs for special t-shirts to wear at sports day or to celebrate the Olympics. Ask them to practise their design first



on paper and then draw it onto their shirts using coloured fabric pens. Arrange a fashion show or photo shoot for them to show off their work and/or to raise funds for charity.

Painting & printing!

Water painting

Go outside on a sunny day and let children paint using H₂O. Provide containers of water and lots of different-sized brushes. Let the children paint on walls or on the ground. Record the results by taking photographs of their pictures before the sun evaporates the artwork!

Pictures of you

Set up an easel outside and invite children to sit and paint portraits of each other. Help them to decide whether to paint just head and shoulders in profile or face on, or the whole body, matching colours to the subject's skin, eyes, and hair.

A blank canvas

Make your own tent from a large, pale-coloured sheet. Fill up plastic bottles with watered down fabric paint and spray patterns onto the material. Leave to dry, before draping it over a tree, tent poles or climbing frame to create a tent space.

Olympic art

Show children a picture of the Olympic rings. Point out the colours of the different circles. Provide trays of paint in the five shades and use upturned plastic cups or tubes to print the Olympic rings and decorate your setting ready for the start of the games on July 27th.

Fingerprint flowers

Use lots of different coloured fingerpaints and print flowers using digits to create the shapes of the petals and leaves. Draw in stalks with green felt pens or stick down thin strips of paper.

Making & modelling!

Secret gardens

Provide magazines, flowery wrapping paper and seed catalogues from which children can cut out pictures of plants and flowers. Combine them with wool, string, netting, lolly sticks, straws and floral fabric to create a textured collage garden.

Pebble people

Collect some large, smooth, rounded stones. Show children how to paint them in bright colours. Apply a coat of PVA glue as a varnish and stick on googly eyes, crazy felt feet and hilarious hats! Let children think up names for their Pebble People. Can they paint some animals to be their pets?

Beach hut town

Show children images of beach huts. Use recycled tea bag boxes that are all the same size, and let each child choose a different colour to paint his or her 'hut' (some boxes



Making Money

Art activities offer opportunities aplenty for fun and learning, but combine your art activity with fundraising and it ticks even more boxes! 'My Art Project' makes this easy: there's no cost, no minimum order, and every child receives a card of their design free! Visit myartproject.co.uk or call 0845 408 5194.



Free Resources

If you're struggling with art and crafts ideas, fear not – the Creation Station has all the inspiration you need! Find free downloadable Create & Collage activities on their online shop at thecreationstationstore.co.uk, or email ian@thecreationstation.co.uk or call 0844 854 9100 for details. Childcare providers can receive 10% off with the code 'CHESS1'.



Inspirational images!

YOU CAN USE THE WORK OF THESE FAMOUS ARTISTS TO INSPIRE YOUR CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES...

MARY CASSATT

Show the children *Summertime* by Mary Cassatt. Help them to experiment with different ways of painting water. Try a blue paint wash with movement created by cotton wool balls gently pressed onto the wet paint. Or use lots of different depths of blue and paint stripes onto the paper. Add zigzag wave patterns in another shade.



JACKSON POLLOCK

Show the children Jackson Pollock's painting *Summertime*. Fill squeeze bottles or cardboard cones with coloured sand and powder paint – blue, black and yellow. Suspend the bottles or cones upside down and hang on pieces of string. Let children swing the bottles over a length of lining paper smothered in PVA glue and see a picture emerge.

about the author

Judith Harries is an author and teacher of music and drama, with experience of working with children aged nine months to 11 years.

may need covering in plain paper before painting so the colour will stay on). Stick lolly sticks to the front of each box and paint them in colourful stripes. Make triangle cardboard roofs and display the beach huts standing in a long line.

Summer bugs

Provide children with different materials to make their own model bugs. Use pipe cleaners, netting, buttons, beads, sweet wrappers, pompoms, etc. Show them how to join various materials together to make some fantasy minibeasts. Display the bugs by suspending from the ceiling or attaching to a branch or bundle of twigs.

Clay-dough! Shell tiles

Let children handle, knead and punch some clay until softened. Roll it out into a square-shaped tile. Show the children how to press different shells into the clay and create imprints. Can they make a symmetrical pattern? Leave the tiles to dry and stick a smaller square of felt on the base.

Squeezy dough

Whisk together one cup each of salt, water, and flour until it is a pouring consistency. Add some ready-mixed paint and pour into squeeze bottles. Let children squirt out the mixture and create shapes and patterns. When dry the dough/paint should look puffed up and fluffy!

Sweet scents

Spray some pink, yellow, red or orange playdough with a floral perfume. Let children use shaped cutters to create flowers and decorate with beads and sequins. Alternatively, make five or six separate petal shapes and one centre circle, then stick them together into a flower shape.

VINCENT VAN GOGH

Van Gogh's *Sunflowers* is one of the world's most famous paintings. Look at the picture, then show the children some real sunflowers too. Let them try to paint some sunflowers in a vase. Make a collage using yellow salt flour dough or clay cut into a flower shape and sunflower seeds pressed into the middle.



ANDY GOLDSWORTHY

Show the children images of the work of this artist who uses objects from nature to create pieces of art and photographs the results. Try going for a walk and collecting together sticks, moss, stones, leaves, rocks, ferns, seeds, etc. Set the children the challenge of arranging their found objects on a tree trunk outdoors or on the grass. Can they think of ways to join any of the materials together? Photograph the finished sculptures in place.

PAUL KLEE

Look at the painting *Castle and Sun* by Paul Klee. Provide children with lots of different-sized triangles, squares and rectangles in bright colours and let them create their own castle collage. Can they choose where to put one yellow or gold circle to be the sun?



GEORGIA O'KEEFE

Look at images of Georgia O'Keefe's seashell paintings. Compare with some real life shells. Practise drawing giant spirals with chalk or pastels on large pieces of paper. Let children have a go at painting pictures of seashells.