

Art & Craft Ideas – Outdoor Art Activities

Taking mark making outside instantly opens a wide range of creative possibilities as lack of space and mess are no longer a barrier. Sensory, physical and communication development can all be enhanced through the freedom of creative expression with a range of resources including those foraged from outdoor spaces. Here we explore a few ideas to help children's creativity flourish.



Big Outdoor Process Art

What You Will Need:

- [TTS Ready Mixed Paint](#)
- [Bristle Hair Large Area Paint Brushes](#)
- [Bell Cups](#)
- [Large Craft Lolly Sticks](#)
- [Natural Sea Sponge Variety Pack](#)
- [Clear Trigger Water Sprayers](#)
- [White Heavy Duty Cartridge Paper](#)
- Selection of 'found' textured resources
- Cardboard to make paint 'combs'
- Foraged materials eg sticks, Rosemary, moss, leaves, feathers etc



Big Outdoor Process Art Cont.

Making Big Beautiful Process Art:

It's not about the outcome, but the journey of how you get there with process art. Children can enjoy the freedom of mark making and creative exploration without the pressure of having to create a 'final' piece. It just so happens that with brightly coloured paints and a range of textured stampers, scrapers (including from nature!) and some enthusiastic little artists, a big, bold, beautiful piece of expressive artwork is created. Perfect as an outdoor group activity!



Step 1

Choose a range of colours you'd like to use, warm, cool, primary for colour mixing etc. Roll out a long sheet of paper and anchor down – windy days can be quite challenging (as I found out a few times when the paper acted like a sail!) but that's also part of the fun of working within the elements!

Step 2



Squirt plenty of paint around the paper and then encourage your children to paint and mark make experimenting with a range of resources to brush, stamp, scrape, dab, spray and splat. Throughout the process children will discover the range of marks that can be made, how the colours blend/ change and what new colours can be created.



Shadow Drawing & Painting

Whether using toys or 'found' resources shadow tracing is an absorbing activity that can support children's development in so many ways from fine-motor skills, hand-eye coordination, communication, drawing and painting skills etc. The effect of perspective, shape (positive and negative), time of day, changes in weather etc can all be observed in this activity as the outdoor environment and open space 'free's children's creativity and imagination.



What You Will Need:

- [Pisces Hardback Spiral Sketchbooks Kraft A3 140gsm](#)
- [Cartridge Paper Packs](#)
- [TTS Round Barrel Handwriting Pens Black or](#)
- [TTS Chunky HB Triangular Pencils 144pk Full Length](#)
- [6 Well Senior Block Palette with Paint](#)



How to Make:

Step 1 - Setting up Your 'Shadows' Scene

Gather resources for casting shadows and put your 'scene' together. Experiment with composition, angles of the sun and what 'layers' of shapes you can create before diving straight into drawing. Time of day, whether it's sunny/cloudy/slightly windy etc will all influence the shadow drawings, the finished artwork and how easy it is to complete. A slight wind moving some of the 'scene' can create challenges but it's all part of the fun of working outside!

Step 2

Begin to trace around the shadows and see the scene on the page come to life. Sunlight can shift shadows as the day moves on but just adapt the design if this happens. This is a calming activity that can challenge a child's hand-eye co-ordination and focus as they draw around the shapes completing the outline ready for painting.



Handy Tip!

*If you want to make a large amount of watercolour quickly and easily simply add a tempera paint block into a recycled pot and add water. As the block's surface slowly dissolves it creates a lovely colour wash perfect for group activities where larger amounts of watercolour are needed! **Later what's left of the undissolved block can be removed from the water and air dried to be used in the usual way.***



Step 4



Having completed the outline, the picture can be filled with colour - positive and negative shapes can be explored at this stage.

Splat Painting & Nature Inspired Transient Art

What You Will Need:

- [TTS Ready Mixed Paint](#)
- [Craft Pom Poms](#)
- [White Drawing Paper](#)
- [Paint and Inking White Plastic Tray](#)



Getting Set Up:

Step 1

Choose a flat sturdy surface that can withstand the 'force' of this type of paint splatting. A softer more absorbent base seems to slow the travel of paint down and you don't want that!

Step 2

If this is a group activity use a long roll of paper, similarly smaller sheet if being done by an individual (though smallest size, I'd say should be A3 as splatted paint can travel quite a distance and cover surrounding surfaces – but that's half the fun!). Stick or anchor down the paper to prevent shifting as the activity progresses.

Splat painting is a high-energy activity perfect for building fine-motor skills and creative expression. Worries of mess removed, children can enjoy the sensory experience of colour, texture, pattern making and being active in this highly enjoyable process using very simple art resources. Here there is no aim to produce a specific scene/picture just simply to enjoy the process and see what happens!

Step 3

Choose the colour range and squeeze plenty of ready mixed paint onto a tray. Grip a large pom pom and 'dunk' into the paint to 'load' with colour. Lay the paint filled pom on the paper and use something with a bit of weight eg large spoon to 'bang' over the top and spread the paint. Children will be amazed as patterns and colour blending occur instantly creating their own amazing piece of artwork.

Step 4

Whilst waiting for the artwork to dry, gather a range of natural resources to engage children's imagination and through transient art, transform the paintings from 2D to 3D characters. S range of magical characters/forest creatures/fairies perhaps? Take photographs, encourage children to weave their characters into stories?



Exploring Nature's Patterns & Silhouettes

A wonderfully simple hands-on project which encourages children to explore nature's shapes, patterns, colours/colour mixing and textures. Firstly, children get to enjoy searching their outdoor space to find a selection of leaf/flower shapes, secondly, they get to make beautiful artwork with them – what could be better! As no two pictures will ever be alike, children will be creating completely individual artwork they can be proud of.



What You Will Need:

- [TTS Ready Mixed Paint](#)
- [Kraft Sketchbook A4 140gsm](#)
- [Clear Trigger Water Sprayers 6pk](#)
- [Paint Palette - 6 Well 10pk](#)
- [Golden Nylon Round Paint Brushes Assorted 30pk](#)
- [Bristle Hair Large Area Paint Brushes 12pk](#)
- Plastic Pipettes
- Range of foraged leaves
- Course sea salt & rice



How to make:



Step 1

Using a large brush add a light wash of clean water over the paper's surface. This will encourage paint added to the surface to 'move/marble' and leaves to stick slightly to help with the silhouette creation. Look at the variety of leaves collected and decide on an arrangement pressing them onto the paper. Leave space between them so that the different shapes can be seen clearly and any background colour/pattern created can also be seen.



Step 2

Choose your main colours of paint for the background, add a squirt of paint into the empty spray bottle then fill with water and shake well to create a pastel 'watercolour' shade. Hold the spray bottles a distance away (to achieve a fine spray of colour) from the paper and spray a light mist of colour over the leaves. Repeat with other colours until the whole of the paper's surface is covered.



Step 3

Add more watercolour using different tools to aid fine motor skills using plastic pipettes, paint brushes, sponges etc. As the paper is damp, coarse sea salt and/or rice can be scattered over the surface to encourage further pattern and textures on the paper. 'Pooling' colour around the edges of the leaves can strengthen the silhouette left either where the edges of the leaves are or even underneath if the paint travels under then 'picks up' the veins of the leaves.



Step 4

Once complete, leave the paper to dry with leaves, salt etc still on it, removing any risks wet paint moving and then losing patterns. When dry carefully remove the leaves and 'brush off' any salt & rice to reveal the beautiful patterns they've created.



Natures Patterns - Crayon Rubbings

Ideal for all ages and abilities this fun, creative activity encourages children to learn about trees and leaf shapes found in their local environment and, with crayons, reveal their structural beauty as the shape and veins are highlighted using both wax crayons and watercolour paint. Over layering of different coloured crayons creates beautiful effects, using a contrasting watercolour paint on the surrounding paper make the wax colours and patterns jump off the page. This process art project is perfect for developing fine motor skills, dexterity and creative thinking.



What You Will Need:

- [First Mark Wax Crayons Assorted](#)
- [Tempera Paint Blocks](#)
- [All Media Value Brush Pack 50pk](#)
- [Pisces Hardback Spiral Sketchbooks Kraft A3 140gsm](#) or
- [ARISTO Cartridge Paper Packs](#)



How To Make:

Step 1

Select a range of leaf shapes and arrange on a board or sheet of paper. Lay another piece of the top trapping the leaves in place. It may take a little instruction and help as children learn that they feel for the leaves under the paper, press down to hold the leaves in place and rub the crayons over the paper's surface. NB. Masking tape could be used along the top of the paper to anchor in place. All actions support the development of hand-eye co-ordination and fine motor skills.



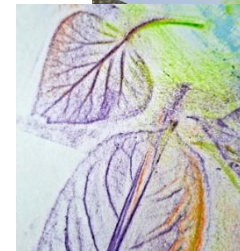
Step 2

Once all the leaves have been rubbed over and their beautiful patterns revealed it is time to add the background colour. Choose a colour/colours of watercolour paint to 'wash' over the page. Dip a wetted brush into clean water and wipe over a tempera paint block and transfer the colour picked up onto a palette or tray. Add more water/ paint to create enough paint to use as a wash for the whole page.



Step 3

Wash the paint over the page, paint is resisted where crayon has been used and 'sit's where there is blank paper to produce the final piece of beautiful artwork.



Mindfulness Leaf Doodling

Using nature this simple technique creates an opportunity for children to focus, slow down and be 'present' whilst exploring their creativity and pattern making skills. Here, colourful felt tips are used for drawing and watercolours using a wetted paint brush. There is no right or wrong, no expected outcome just the pens, paper, natural stencils and time.

What You Will Need:

- [TTS Assorted Colouring Pens](#)
- [Pisces Hardback Spiral Sketchbooks Kraft A3 140gsm](#)



How to Make:

Step 1

Choose the shapes of leaves you'd like to use on repeat and colours of felt tips. Work across the page tracing around the leaves thinking about direction, spacing, overlapping and the creation of further shapes. Colours overlap, shapes change and patterns immerge.

Step 2

When the page is covered either keep the lines 'crisp'/clear or using a paint brush add a light wash of clean water over the top of the felt tip lines (or in chosen areas) creating a watercolour softness/blurring to the design.

Step 3

Next begin to work into the design choosing shapes you'd like to fill and highlight whilst exploring a range of mark making and repetitive patterns. Keep working on the design until you feel you've done enough!

