



BALTIC

ART LAB
EXPERIMENTS
IN CREATIVITY

SPRING 2021

Caring for ourselves, each other and our world is really important. Be inspired by biodiversity in the world around you and get creative at home with these activities from artist Isabella Carerras.

Biodiversity refers to the many different types of life on Earth and the communities and habitats that they make. Everything is connected and works together; even the tiniest bug is important to keep the planet healthy. As an example, think about how worms make our soil fertile; this means we can grow fruit and vegetables to eat.

You might notice that lots of these activities use recycled or foraged materials. That's because we love the planet and hate waste! Let's find ways to make amazing art out of the kind of things you would normally throw away. Switch on your artist's imagination and turn them into something brilliant.

Share these instructions with your friends so they can be creative too. You can send us pictures of your creative makes by email: learning@balticmill.com

Ask an adult where you can work on your ideas and what to wear when you do, especially when working with messy materials like paint and glue.

Micro Green Mini Farm

You can make a mini farm using seeds, peas or parts of vegetables you might usually throw away. Growing your own crops will cut your carbon footprint down too because your food doesn't have to travel to you! #foodmilesmatter #farmlife

What you will need:

- Recycled Plastic Tray
- Recycled Plastic Bottle
- Compost/ Soil
- Seeds: Dried peas, Radish seeds, Coriander seeds, Mustard seeds (pssst... if you want to speed up the growing process you can soak your seeds first for up to 24 hours)
- Optional: Carrot tops, tops of spring onions
- Optional: Lolly Sticks, Cocktail Sticks, Twigs, Paper scraps, String, Pebbles

Look out for a plastic container in your recycling to make your farm in. A clean takeaway tray would be perfect. Start by filling the container with compost. Think about whether your mini farmland will be flat with neat, straight rows of crops or wild with mounds of compost like hills.

Now sow your seeds. Use a pencil or a twig to make little holes for them just below the surface of the soil. Will you sow the same kinds of seeds in neat lines? Or will you arrange lots of different seeds in interesting patterns? Gently cover the seeds with more compost. You can also grow a carrot top (the part you usually throw away) or spring onion by planting it just at the surface of the soil.

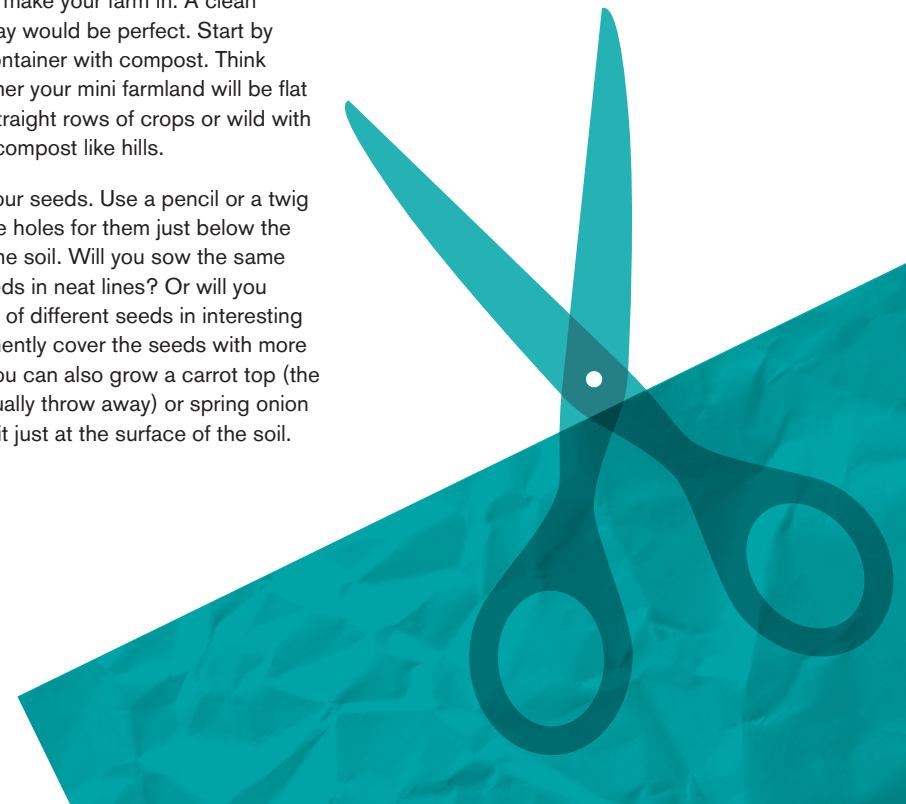
Gently sprinkle water onto your crops - you can make tiny holes in the lid of a recycled water or milk bottle to make a watering can!

What kinds of things do you see on a farm? Get creative to make paths, fences, perhaps a scarecrow. Twigs or lolly sticks could make a fence, while cocktail sticks and paper could make signs so you know which crops are planted.

Put your farm on a tray on the windowsill and watch it grow!

Psst...

Did you know some plants help each other grow and thrive? For example, tomatoes grow better with marigolds close by because marigolds naturally keep away beetles that eat tomato plants. Can you think of other ways that plants or animals support each other?



Tasty Grubs and Bugs

Put on your imaginary chef hat and apron! Pasta does not just come from a packet at the supermarket... it can be homemade by you with just two ingredients! As we're thinking about biodiversity, why not shape your pasta into edible bugs and grubs?

What you will need:

- Plain Flour or Pasta Flour
- Fork
- Cup for measuring or Kitchen Scales
- Tea Towel or Cling Film
- Rolling Pin
- Knife

To make your pasta dough:

- Weigh out 300 grams (or 3 cups) of flour and put it in one mound on a clean surface
- Make a hole or well in the middle and pour in 1 cup (or 250ml) of warm water (make sure it can't escape out the sides!)
- Use a fork to mix the flour into the water bit by bit
- Keep mixing slowly until all the flour is used up
- For 2 minutes roll, move, push, pull and stretch the dough (this is called kneading) until it feels soft, smooth, elastic and not sticky
- If it is sticky add a little bit more flour
- Roll the dough up in a damp tea towel or cling film and let it sit for 5-10 minutes

While you are waiting for your dough, think about what kind of shapes you'd like your pasta to be.

Could you make... wiggly worms or little beetle bodies, leaves or petals? If you don't fancy eating pasta bugs, you could try making other shapes like bows, twists or long thin strips.

Roll out the dough as flat as possible then get cutting and shaping. Ask an adult to help if you are using a knife. It's good to make sure all of your pieces are a very similar size, otherwise they take different times to cook.

When you're ready to cook your pasta, ask an adult to help you boil it in water for about 4-5 minutes or until it starts to float. Do you feel like a chef? Was it cooking or was it art?

Psst...

If you don't have a rolling pin get creative to get rolling. Why not use a glass or a sturdy plastic bottle?



Twig Worry Dolls

Worry dolls are small handmade dolls first made by the Indigenous Mayan people of Guatemala. Ancient legend says that a Mayan princess, Ixmucane received a gift from the sun god that allowed her to take away anybody's worries. You can tell the doll your worry, put it under your pillow and the worry will go away overnight!

What you will need:

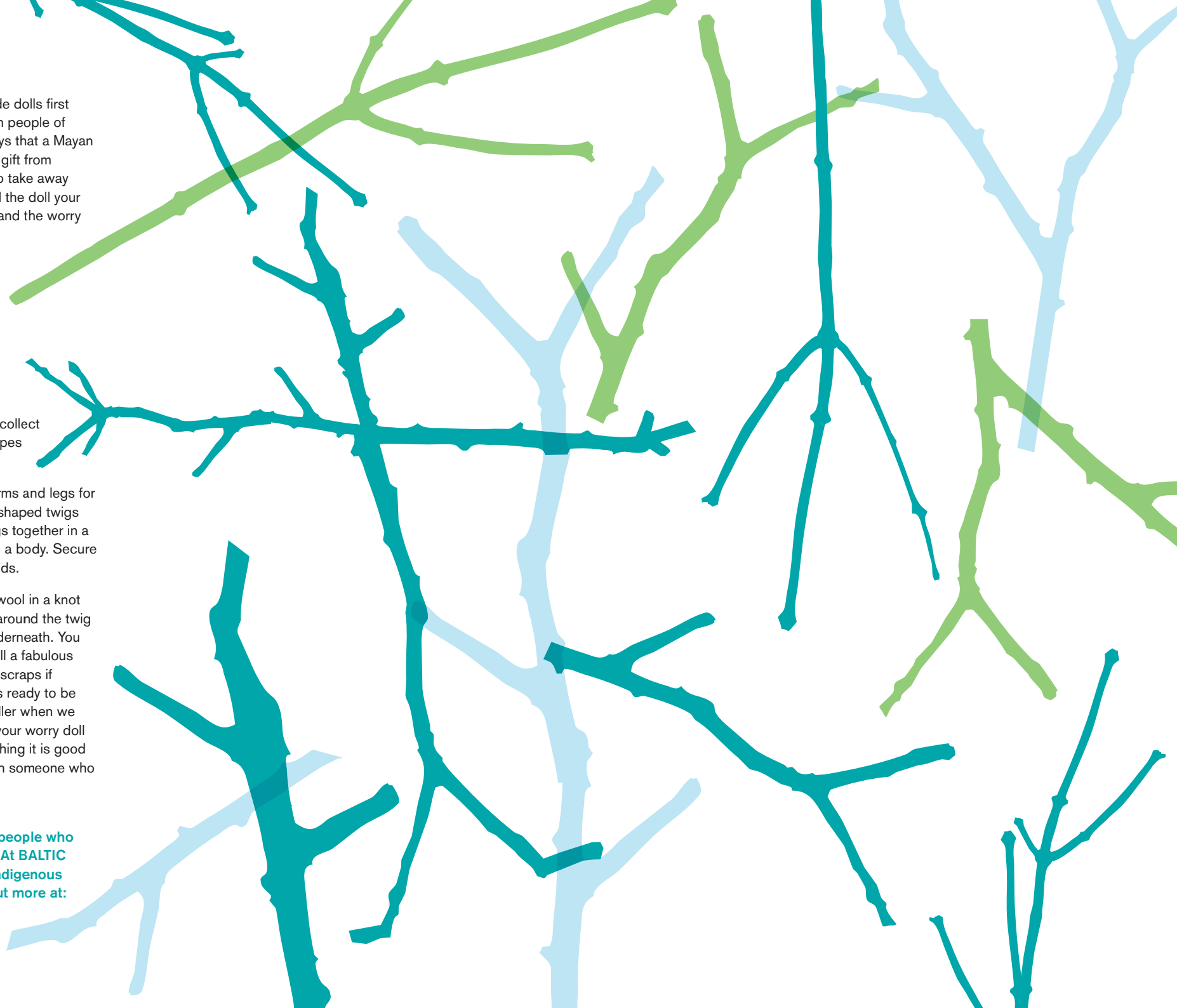
- Twigs
- Wool/ string/ thread
- Fabric Scraps
- Glue
- Scissors
- Elastic Bands

To make your doll you need to collect twigs. Here are some twig shapes that could be handy.

Think about how you'll make arms and legs for your doll. You could lay two Y shaped twigs over each other or lay two twigs together in a cross shape to make arms and a body. Secure twigs together with elastic bands.

Tie the end of a long piece of wool in a knot onto the twig. Wrap the wool around the twig until you can't see the bark underneath. You could also make your worry doll a fabulous outfit or football kit from fabric scraps if you like! Now your worry doll is ready to be whispered to, worries get smaller when we share them. As well as telling your worry doll if you are worried about something it is good to share it and talk about it with someone who cares for you.

Psst...
Indigenous peoples are the people who first lived in a specific place. At BALTIC there was an exhibition by Indigenous artist Abel Rodríguez, find out more at: www.baltic.art/abel



Painting Nature with a Twist

Some artists make paintings inspired by nature that are intentionally not realistic.

Yayoi Kusama is a Japanese artist who makes very colourful paintings of patterns and natural objects like flowers, mushrooms, pumpkins, fish, fruit and birds. She covers them all in dots and is sometimes called 'the princess of polka dots'. Research her work to get inspired.

You will need:

- Paper
- Paints
- Paint brush

Would a tree look amazing with purple polka dots? Would an apple be more exciting if it was covered in zig-zag patterns? Use your imagination to make your own paintings of nature with a twist.

Recycled Bug Home

Help boost biodiversity by making a cosy home for some local bugs. Think about which bugs you might like to visit or live in your bug home. Research what they like or where they usually live so you can make the home ideal for them.

What you will need:

- Recycled bottle – a milk carton or water bottle would work well
- Scrap paper/ newspaper, recycled cardboard
- Scissors
- Optional: String

Collect recycled materials like plastic water or milk bottles. After rinsing and drying, stand your bottle upright and draw a horizontal line all the way around its middle. Cut along this line to make two bug homes; one from each half.

Fill your bug home up with small rolled up newspaper or paper tubes, making sure there is a little hole in the middle so the bugs can crawl in.

Find a place outside to put your bug home. Think about where it will be safest or you could use string to secure it. A yard, garden, doorstep or balcony would be perfect. Come back to check on it regularly to see if anyone has moved in.

Water Fountain Design

A spring is the point where water that is usually underground comes to the surface. Springs naturally occur and are an important part of freshwater habitats for many creatures. They can also provide fresh drinking water for humans. Fountains are like human-made springs and were first invented for collecting water to drink or for bathing in. They can be very beautiful and even have sculptures or mosaics that tell stories.

What you will need:

- Pens/ pencils
- Paper

Can you design 3 fountains - one for adults, one for children and one for animals?

Some fountains are made from stone or shiny metal. Can you think of a new material to use? Think about colour and shape. Will your fountain be able to do something; move, change colour, be played on? How will the adult fountain be different from the animal fountain?

Write some notes on the back of each drawing to describe your designs.

Psst...

You don't need to use fresh paper for your art, you can rescue some scrap paper from the recycling and make it your canvas. The back of an old envelope can be perfect for doodling.

DIY (Salt) Dough

Salt dough is good for making sculptures and is great for the environment too because it's only made from natural ingredients. You can use it just like clay but you can make it yourself!

You will need:

- Flour
- Table salt / fine salt
- Big bowl
- Optional: Paint / PVA glue
- Optional: Plastic bag

In a big bowl mix together:

- 1 cup of plain flour (250g)
- 1/2 cup of salt (125g)
- 1/2 cup of water (125ml)

Double these quantities to make more if there are a few people you are making dough for.

Once it starts to form a dough you will need to knead it, just like we did with pasta dough. Your dough should be smooth without too many bumps or lumps. You might need to experiment when making your dough, if it feels a little too dry add a little bit more water and knead some more.

Once you have formed your dough into a ball decide what you want to make! You could shape beads to make jewellery by rolling balls or making other shapes before making a hole (for threading) with a toothpick. Or you could make a sculpture of something you care about and want to tell people about. If you want to keep some salt dough to sculpt later, put it in a sealed plastic bag or airtight container.

When you're finished leave your creation to dry in the air overnight. Once it is totally dry you can paint it! You can also seal your creations to make them last longer by painting them with PVA glue.

Salt Dough Fountain

Now you're a salt dough expert it is time to bring your fountain design to life (but not life-sized!).

You will need:

- Salt Dough

Choose your favourite design from the sketches you made and make it 3D in salt dough.

Think about all the different shapes you might need to build your fountain.

Psst...

**What will you do with the things you make?
Could it be a gift to show someone that
you care for them?**





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