

# Sensory Journeys

## Teacher Resource

**BALTIC  
STARS**



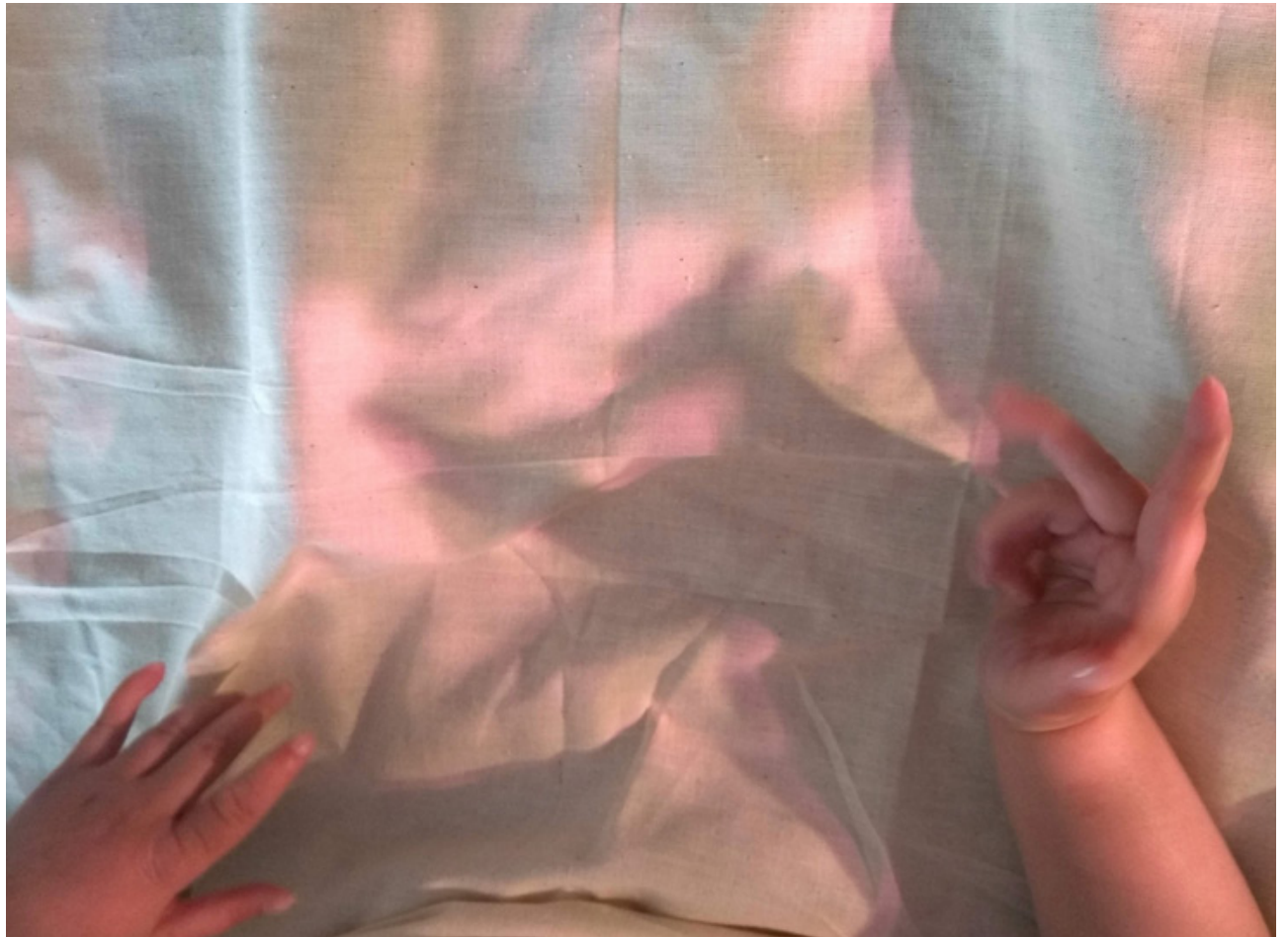
# About this resource

## What are we doing?

## Why are we doing it?

This resource introduces creative activities suitable for children and young people with profound multiple learning disabilities (PMLD). This series of activities explore the idea of journeys: short ones like going to school and going home again, and long ones to new places, different countries and to see different cultures.

This resource is for SEND teachers but can also be used in an Early Years Foundation Stage setting.



# How to use this resource

The activities in this resource have been created by BALTIC Freelance Artist Megan Randall and focus on sensory exploration with a playful approach.

For this Sensory Journeys Teacher Resource, Megan has created written activities and an accompanying film designed to be used together. These resources can be used as part of a lesson, for a full lesson or as a longer project.

You can watch the film as a whole or skip to the activities you would like to work with. Before starting each activity, Megan shares with you the ideas and thinking behind each of the mini workshops. When the prompt slide “Let’s Start!” appears on your screen, you are ready to get creative!

## Activity Film Times:

Activity 1	On my way to school	00:20 seconds
Activity 2	Swirls and smells in playdoh	04:50 seconds
Activity 3	Swirls and light	10:51 seconds
Activity 4	Clay houses	16:03 seconds
Activity 5	Weaving your way home	17:31 seconds

Teachers can deliver the activities in this resource in two ways. You can watch the film and read the resource alone, then deliver the activities back in class. You can also watch the film alongside your pupils, as the film provides opportunities to pause, think, make and reflect.

**Watch the film [here](#)**

**Activity 1 Sound effects [here](#)**



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# About the artist

Megan Randall's practice combines contemporary ceramics, installation and civic engagement. Megan is interested in traditions of clay, including domestic ware such as willow pattern, houses, the ground beneath our feet and event based making – making things to be eaten off or to be smashed.

Megan often combines materials other than ceramics such as textiles and metals to create installations and spaces which can be activated and engaged with. Megan works with a wide range of materials to create objects, environments and installations, letting materials guide activities, allowing for a sensory and creative exploration of practical techniques.



# Before starting your sensory journeys...

Reading a story to your class is an easy way to start exploring a new topic. Below are some recommended books on the theme of journeys, different places and people:

- *We're Going on a Bear Hunt*, Michael Rosen
- *Oh, The Places You'll Go!*, Dr Seuss
- *All Are Welcome*, Alexandra Penfold
- *The Snail and the Whale*, Julia Donaldson
- *Where the Wild Things Are*, Maurice Sendak
- *Rosie's Walk*, Pat Hutchins

## Let's start!





# Activity 1: On my way to school

**Film start time: 00:20 seconds**

## **What you will need:**

- Herbs and leaves. Megan\* recommends using herbs with different sized and shaped leaves, For example; mint, rosemary, lemon balm, oregano, and dill or fennel.
- An overhead projector or a strong light source
- Bubble machine
- A hand held fan
- Water spray bottle
- Umbrella
- Masking tape
- A phone, iPad or computer with access to sounds (pre-recorded or you can use YouTube. There are a variety of sounds at the end of the video which accompanies this resource)

\*Megan prefers using herbs in all sensory activities as they add an extra layer of stimulation and are safe if they are eaten.





# We are going to begin our imaginary journey...

Start by laying all the materials out. Place a few herbs on the overhead projector or in front of the strong light source and shine this at the ceiling.

Now, describe a narrative of leaving home, putting on coats and shutting a door (you could shut the classroom door to make a sound effect). Begin your imaginary walk to school by walking through a park, smell the flowers and trees. Hand out herbs and use them to brush on the back of children's hands. Hold different herbs to everyone's noses and see how they react.

Next, you leave the park. Use the masking tape to tape a road which everyone can follow, play road noises, and talk pupils through this part of their journey. Turn the projector off, turn on the fan and talk about the wind blowing. Hold it close to children's hands and gauge reactions before holding it further away and blowing at hair or clothing.

### It's starting to rain!

With the wind comes a rainstorm, use some sound effects of rain and put the bubble machine on. If suitable for your pupils, try using the water spray bottle to mimic rain and spray water onto pupil's hands or on the top of the open umbrella.

### Hello sunshine!

Now it's sunny again! Put your projector back on and shut the door to signify being back in the classroom.



# Related artworks and artists to explore

## **Sky Mirror, Anish Kapoor**

A massive concave mirror reflecting the sky back at you.

## **Rebecca Louise Law**

Large installations (artworks you can walk around in) of flowers and plants suspended from the ceiling.

## **Abel Rodríguez**

Colourful and detailed paintings and drawings of the Amazon Rainforest.



Abel Rodríguez installation view, BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead. Photo: Rob Harris © 2020 BALTIC



# Activity 2: Swirls and smells in playdoh

Film start time: 04:50 seconds

## What you will need:

- Blank Playdoh (See below for a recipe)
- Gel food colouring
- Different flavourings – Megan recommends lavender flowers, ground cardamom, thyme, grated orange zest, cinnamon and mint extract.
- Plastic wallets – useful to put the materials in if anyone in the class has an aversion to touching Playdoh.
- Printed out world maps

## Ingredients for your Playdoh:

- 1 cup water
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1/2 cup salt
- 1 tablespoon cream of tartar
- 1 cup flour



With a wooden spoon, combine all ingredients in a saucepan. Over a low heat keep stirring until the mixture has formed into a ball. Remove from the pan and knead the mixture until smooth. Store this dough in an airtight container or a sandwich bag in the fridge.

### With your Playdoh made, you are ready to begin...

Give each pupil a small ball of Playdoh for them to see, feel and smell.

Pop your flavourings into individual bowls and pass to each pupil to look, feel and have a sniff...

How do your pupils react? Does it smell beautiful or super stinky?

Gauge reactions and see if pupils want to take pinches of different 'smells' to add to their Playdoh.

### Now we are ready to add colour to our Playdoh!

Have a chat with your pupils, which colours could go with each smell?

Help pupils make choices on food colouring and apply a small amount of colouring to the centre of the child's dough. Pinch in the dough to cover the colouring up to ensure it avoids getting sticky and messy.

Lay out your maps onto a table and encourage pupils to squish, smear, roll and coil their Playdoh onto the maps to make patterns.\*

For pupils who are tactile defensive, you can place the map and Playdoh in either a plastic wallet or a zip lock bag and mould the Playdoh into the map this way.

Try making marks, shapes or patterns in your clay using cocktails sticks or anything else to hand that makes a mark.

\*Talk about where the different spices used in scenting the dough come from.  
Take your class on a journey through different countries.

### Related artworks and artists to explore

#### Juan Downey

Chilean artist Juan Downey uses swirls of colours to represent different places around the world.





# Activity 3: Swirls and light

Film start time: 10:51 seconds

What you will need:

- Pots of flavourings and spices (as used in Activity 2)
- Paint
- PVA glue
- Rice, sawdust, glitter – anything that can add texture to the paint
- Sponges
- Bamboo sticks
- Clear plastic sheet or roll of paper.



Start by taping sponges to both ends of the bamboo sticks (this is to avoid poked eyes when used in action!). Snip a small hole in the sponge, poke the bamboo stick into the hole and then use tape to secure them in place.

Lay out and tape the plastic/paper sheet on the floor. Mix tubs of paint, PVA, spices and herbs, and place the tubs on top of the plastic or paper.

Hand each child a bamboo stick with a sponge. You may have to start off doing hand over hand to help get the movement going. Encourage all mark making; spots, swirls, scrubbing paint off and reapplying, stripes.





Explore the effects of painting with a glue/paint mixture on clear plastic: does it look similar to stained glass? Once dry, attach the artwork to the window and see how the light can transform the painting.

If needed, you can make a bigger handle on the bamboo stick by taping a roll of newspaper or a bit of foam so it is easier to hold.





# Related artworks and artists to explore

## Daniel Buren

In *Catch as catch can: works in situ* artist Daniel Buren created puddles of colourful light all over the gallery floor at BALTIC and mirrors to reflect some of the light. Scale is really important in his work.



Daniel Buren, *Catch as catch can works in situ* 2014, BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead. Photo: John McKenzie.

# Activity 4: Clay houses

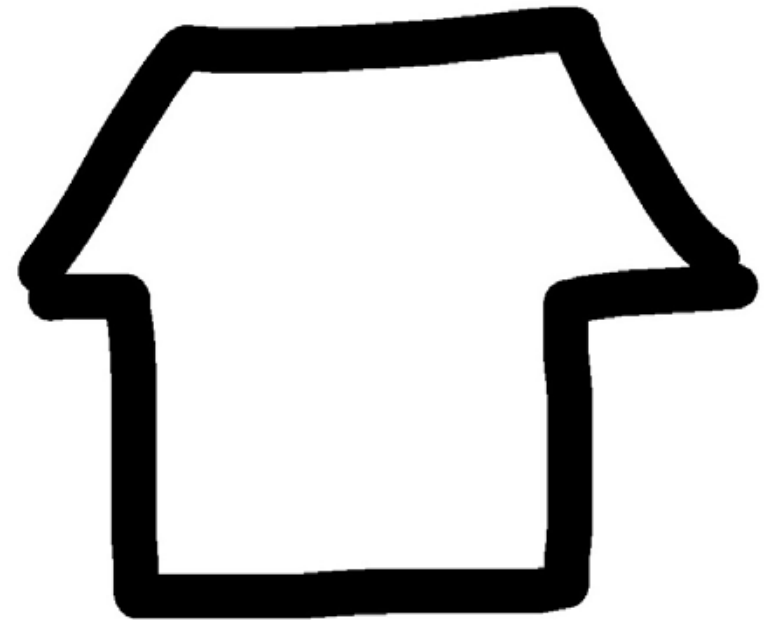
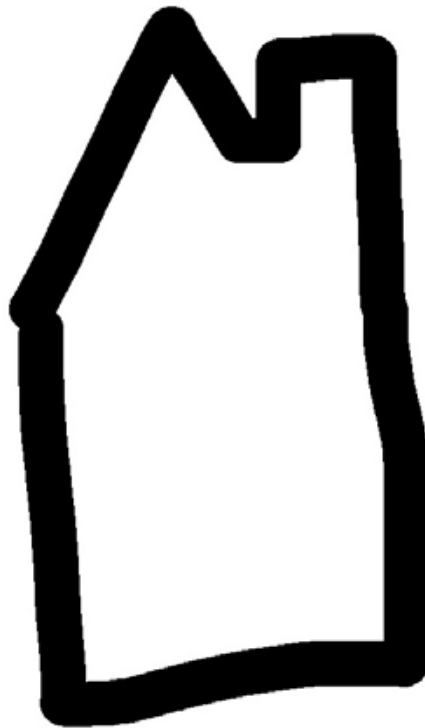
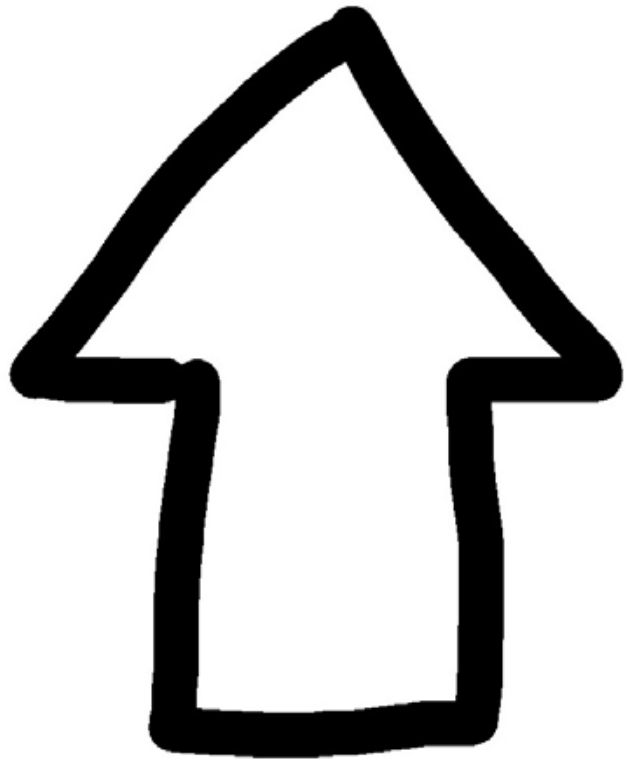
Film start time: 16:03 seconds

## What you will need:

- Air dry clay
- Kitchen/household items for mark making: potato mashers, spoons, forks, slotted spoons, combs, clips for bags, really anything you can use to make a mark in clay
- Clay tools or a butter knife
- Newspaper
- Rolling pin
- Paper templates of houses, basic outlines of different types of houses
- Card



Start this activity talking about the sounds and smells of home. Give everyone a lump of clay to start investigating the clay, what does feel like? Smell like? Sound like?



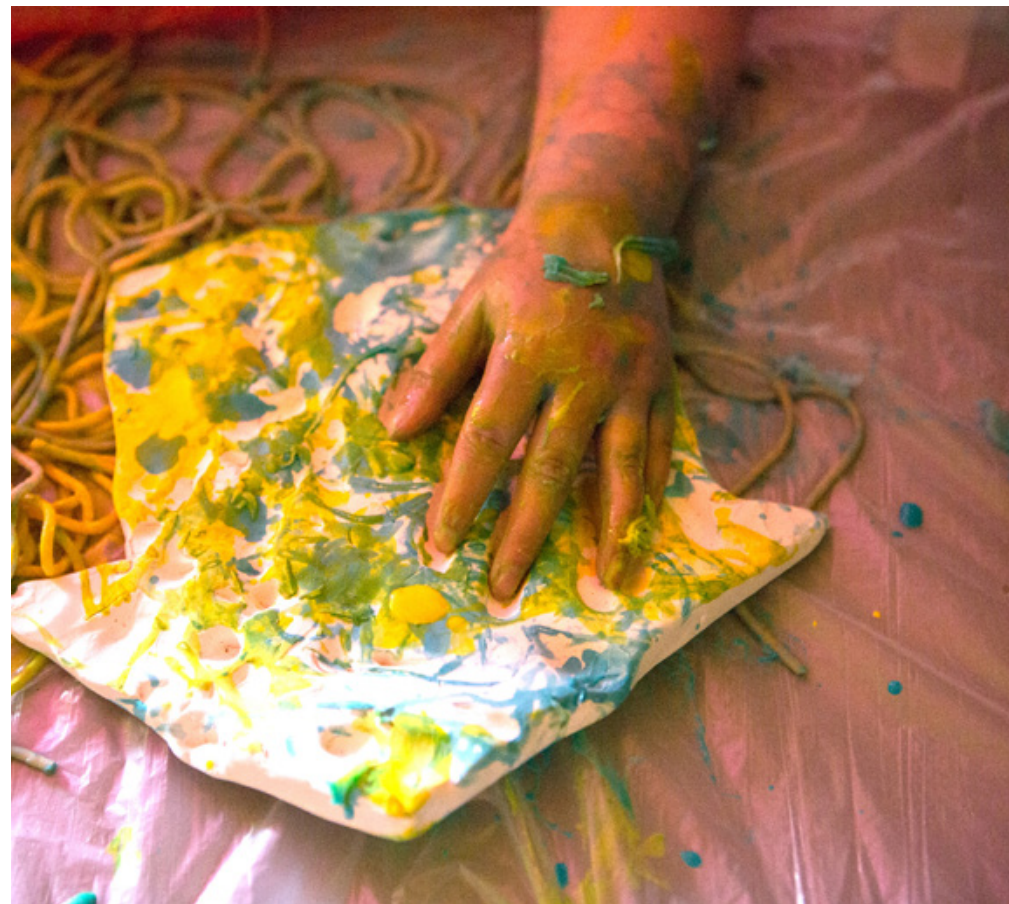
This image here shows some examples of templates for houses. Help your pupils to choose their house template and draw it out on a piece of card.



### Top tip!

Investigate which other kitchen ingredients or tools could be used as paint brushes: salad leaves, herbs, cooked pasta, silicone pastry brushes.

Place cooked spaghetti in paint and throw onto the dry houses to create beautiful splatter effects.







# Related artworks and artists to explore

## **Barnaby Barford**

Made a tower of ceramic shops *The Tower of Babel* which was displayed at the V&A.

## **Rachel Whiteread**

*Ghost* is a plaster cast of the inside of a house. The cast shows a fireplace and skirting boards and holds a memory of a place.



# Activity 5: Weaving your way home

**Film start time: 17:31 seconds**

## **What you will need:**

- A large net – this needs to be strung up in a classroom. If you are working outside, you may find that there are already things you can use to work with: a football net or mesh fences around school make great things to weave through.
- A mixture of found materials: wet seaweed (rinse it a couple of times before use) twigs, grasses, leaves and plant life.
- Strips of paper and fabric
- String
- Wool
- Ribbons

Start by choosing a journey, such as going to the beach or walking through a wood, and collect materials associated with each journey.

Next, show pupils how to weave, it can start by just posting different materials through holes. Talk about pattern, should it just be horizontal or can you weave in a vertical direction, what about a diagonal, how does this change the pattern? Should you create pattern by colour or texture?

Encourage pupils to help each other with this task with organising materials and which weaving method they wish to use.







# Related artworks and artists to explore

## Caroline Achaintre

Achaintre creates colourful playful works using textiles and ceramics.

## Sarah Sze

Sze creates sculptures and installations using everyday objects to create multimedia landscapes.



Caroline Achaintre, *Lord Lard*, 2016. Installation view, BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead. Photo: John McKenzie © 2016 BALTIC



Sarah Sze, *Tilting Planet*, BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, 2009. Photo: Colin Davison



# Share your creations with us!

We would love to see your artworks. Teachers and Home Educators can share these with us by email:

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