



The Multi Sensory Art Project

an inspired collaboration between artists, educators & creative thinkers

The Roche Court
Educational Trust
NewArtCentre.



'Super Nature', bringing the natural world closer to all



Experiments from 'Super Nature' Research day at New Art Centre, Roche Court Sculpture Park, February 2020

Nature is a wonderful thing. A walk in the forest can focus the mind and sharpen the senses in ways that numerous creatives have tried to describe over hundreds of years. The sight of mildew on a leaf early in the morning, the smell of freshly cut grass, the sound of birdsong through the trees, the taste of icicles on the tongue and the textural touch of rough and smooth surfaces that evade our journeys through natural landscapes. Not all people have the privilege of such experiences.

The Multi-Sensory Art Project is an arts initiative to bring creative experiences to those with Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD). It is extremely unlikely that many

young people with PMLD will have ever been to the forest or a beach and that is why we are cultivating ways, through the 'Super Nature' project to bring the natural world to them.

Originally this project would have resulted in an arts installation set up at Larkrise School, featuring made and found things to evoke the senses and simulate the natural worlds these pupils have never inhabited. 'Super Nature' has been inspired by the ideas and artists featured in the 'Psychotropics' exhibition at the New Art Centre, curated by Iwona Blaswick. This bombastic group art exhibition displays the artists' relationships to nature in the prevalently digitally driven 21st century. However due to the current circumstance the world finds itself in we are testing how we share this project with you all. Can an experience that relies on touch and proximity translate through digital means? Can you exercise your sensory self through the computer? As a group of artists and people who are passionate about learning we have used the time to play, to try things out. We have listened to our partners who also work in Special Education Needs settings and heard how they too are experimenting with how to converge the sensory with the cyber.

We invite you to play and experiment with us. Now more than ever through necessity rather than election 'the hand has been replaced by the eye' as Iwona Blaswick quoted in her opening speech. Referring to our hands now the mere prop to hold an electrical device, that offers the eye a portal to infinity via our touchscreens. By ethos The Multi-Sensory Art Project preferences the hand to make, connect and communicate with our audiences but we have tested ourselves to dive into the digital portal and created virtual tasters of 'Super Nature'.

A message from the projects' founder Rebecca Churchill

Experience Explore Imagine

'Being a socially engaged artist, means that people and meaningful communication is at the heart of everything I do. I am always thinking about who might miss out, who I can't reach, who currently has access to the arts. Following inspiring conversations with teachers at Larkrise Special School, particularly Mandy Humpfreys and Lynne Davies I started to understand the lives of children with PMLD. As Artist in Residence I felt passionate that all children at the school, including those with PMLD should be able to access the Arts Curriculum and to make their experiences, unadulterated and playful. Partnering with the team at the Roche Court Educational Trust helps to make contemporary art accessible and breaks down barriers. Art must truly be for everyone and available every day.

Each year we create art installations inspired by the exhibitions at The New Art Centre, Roche Court. They are set up at Larkrise Special School, where students, families, carers and the local community can share an art experience for all the senses. We are continually indebted to the wealth of knowledge, talent, ideas that inform our ways of working. I wanted to create an initiative that invites us all to *experience, explore and imagine* the world around us, art for all and to be in tune with, and play through all our senses.'

Project Links:

The Multi-Sensory Art Project

<http://www.themultisensoryartproject.co.uk>

<http://rochecourteducationaltrust.co.uk/projects/multi-sensory-art-project/>

Roche Court Educational Trust

<http://rochecourteducationaltrust.co.uk/>

New Art Centre

<https://sculpture.uk.com>

Larkrise School

<http://www.larkriseschool.co.uk>

Further Reading:

Communicating with people with PMLD, Mencap

https://www.jpaget.nhs.uk/media/186401/Communicating_with_people_with_PMLD_a_guide_1.pdf

What is Arts in Health?

<https://www.artshealthandwellbeing.org.uk/what-is-arts-in-health>

'The Theory of Loose Parts, An Important Principle for Design Methodology'

By Simon Nicholson <https://ojs.lboro.ac.uk/SDEC/article/download/1204/1171>

Play Types

http://www.ultimateprimarysports.co.uk/www.ultimateprimarysports.co.uk/Breakfast_&_After_school_Clubs_files/play%20types.pdf