

Mindful Art Activities

What is creative mindfulness?



Have you ever been so engrossed in an activity that you have lost track of time, only concentrating on the activity? That could be described as a form of meditation.

Traditional meditation focusses on the body and breathing, emotions and thoughts. By creating art and focussing only on the process and moment, we can have fun, and forget about the 'end result'. You may find that you start to relax, and enjoy the movements your brush or pen makes, the mixing of colours and the making of marks.

The following activities, inspired by the collections at, and images of the Roman Baths are designed to be for everyone – you don't need any artistic skill, or specialist equipment, just the willingness to have a go!

For further information about creative mindfulness you may find the following article interesting:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/27/well/mind/how-to-be-mindful-when-making-art.html>

For further information about mindfulness and mental health, the following link may be useful: <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/drugs-and-treatments/mindfulness/about-mindfulness/>

Paintings and images of the Roman Baths can be searched for and viewed at: <http://art.bathnes.gov.uk/ow23/collections/index.xsp>

Activity One: Mark Making

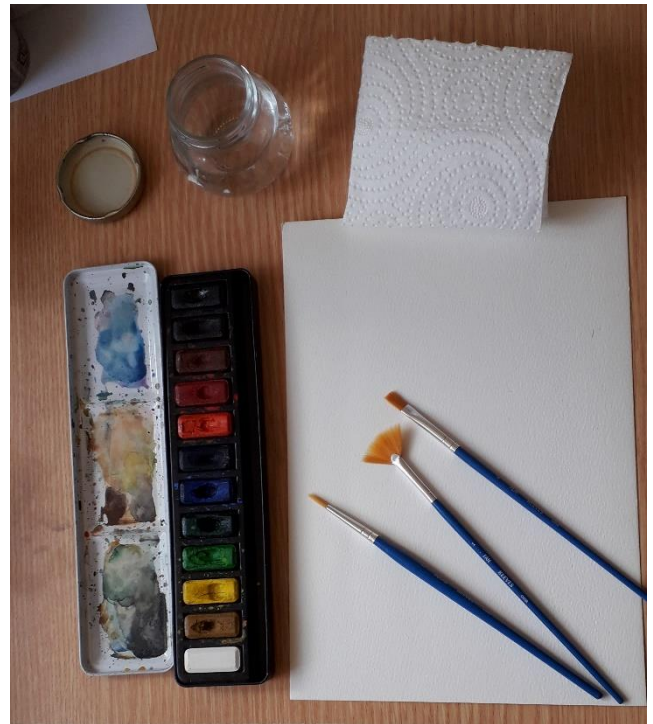
Inspired by: North East View of the Roman Bath by Ann Peddar, Circa 1823.

This watercolour is part of the Roman Baths is in the Victoria Art Gallery Collection. Looking closely you can see how different types of brush strokes have created different textures such as leaves, stone and water.



What you will need:

- A set of paints – watercolours were used in this activity
- Different sizes of paintbrush
- Paper suitable for your paints
- A jam jar of water to wash your brushes
- Kitchen roll to dry your paint brushes.

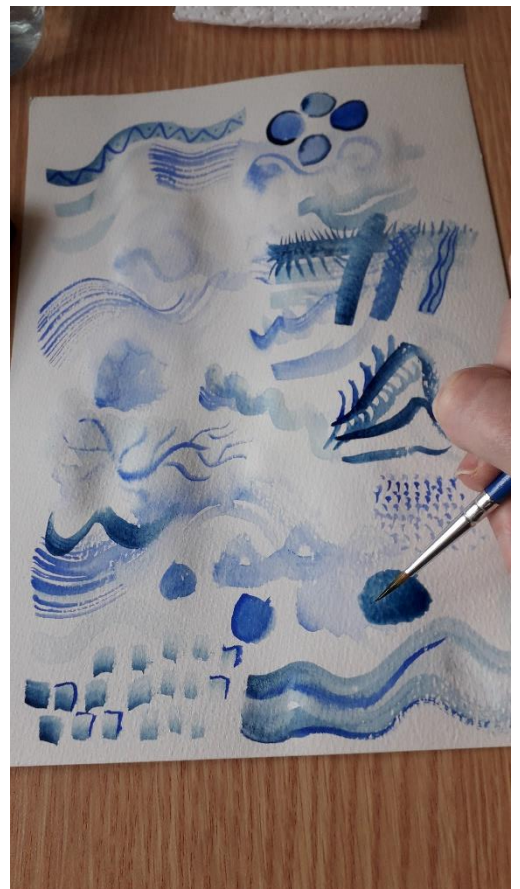


Mark Making : Continued.

- Choose a colour (s) from your paint box. I chose to use 2 shades of blue, but any colour is fine.
- Experiment with making marks on your paper.
- You could try:
 - Painting onto dry paper
 - Wetting the paper with your brush and then adding paint
 - Layering colours
 - Blending colours
 - Using different brushes
 - Creating pattern
 - Making marks by holding your brush in a different way – close to the tip, at the end, with a different hand
 - Applying different amounts of pressure to the brush

There are no 'rights or wrongs', and the aim of this exercise is not to work towards a finished piece, instead enjoying the movement of brush and paint.

You may find that you enjoy working with the brush in a certain way – this may give you ideas for your next paintings– do more of what you like!



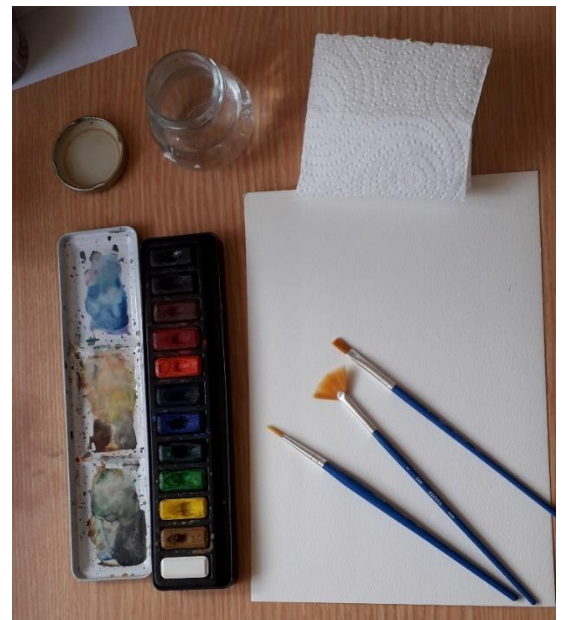
Activity Two: Mixing colours

The first part of this activity was again inspired by the water colour paintings of Ann Peddar, Circa 1823. The colours of stone are similar, but they have subtle differences in shade.

What you will need:

- A set of paints – watercolours were used in this activity
- Something to mix your paints on – the paint tin lid was used here.
- Paper suitable for your paints
- A jam jar of water to wash your brushes
- Kitchen roll to dry your paint brushes

- Choose two similar colours to mix. I chose to use the yellow and light brown.
- Mix them together and paint a splodge on your paper
- Repeat to paint more splodges but now vary by:
 - Adding more / less water
 - Adding a different colour to the mix – what happens when you add red, brown, orange etc?
- You don't need to mix together all of the paint on your palette, so you can vary the range of colours you get.
- Continue painting splodges and then leave to dry – you can use it for the next activity.
- What shades or colours do you feel drawn to?



Activity Three: Line Doodles

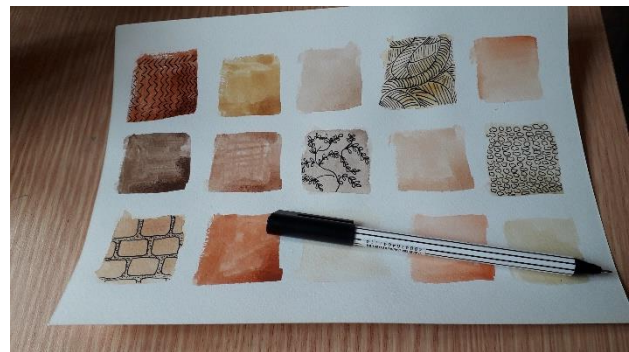
This activity was inspired by the many line drawings and sketches of Bath in the Victoria Art Gallery collection.

This View of the Hot baths, King's bath and Queen's bath was printed by John Fayram in 1739. By using lines in different shapes and directions, a variety of buildings and textures have been depicted.



What you will need:

- Your 'coloured splodges' from the previous activity.
- A thin black pen. (you can use a different colour if you wish, but you may want to test to make sure it will show up on your paint).
- Take a look at the surfaces, textures and patterns on the objects, plants, and views around you. What shapes do you see?
- Using your black pen, doodle over the coloured splodges that you produced in the previous activity.
- You may want to try:
 - Repeating patterns
 - Different shapes of marks
 - A random swirl
- An arrangement of items you see in front of you
- You don't need to fill up the splodges in any particular order – choose whichever one you feel drawn to.



Activity Four: Blending colours

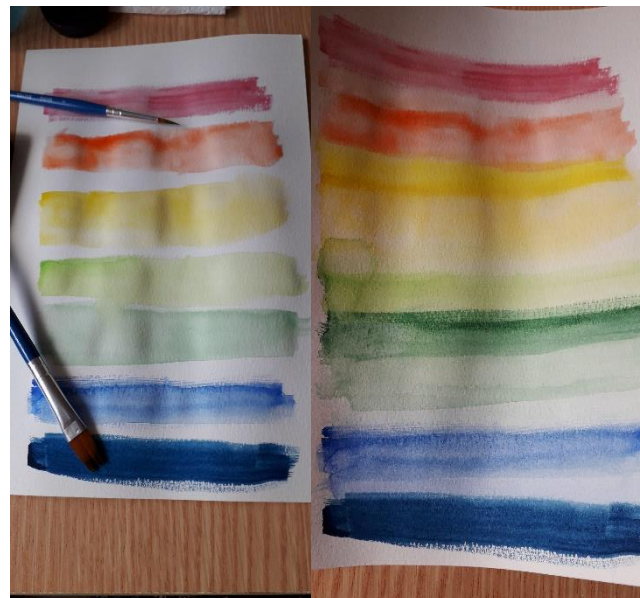
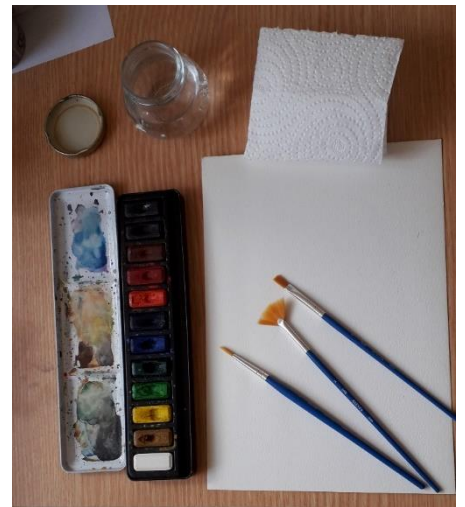
If you look closely at water colour paintings, such as this one from the Victoria Art Gallery of the Excavations at the Roman Baths in 1888 (Artist Unknown), you can see that the various colours have been blended together to create different effects.



What you will need:

- A set of paints – watercolours were used in this activity
- Paint brushes
- Paper suitable for your paints
- A jam jar of water to wash your brushes
- Kitchen roll to dry your paint brushes

- Choose a colour and paint a stripe across your paper
- Choose another colour and repeat.
- Continue down your page. You can vary colours and stripe width.
- Using water on your brush, you can experiment with blending the colours together.
- Experiment with the amount of water you use, how wet your paper is and the amount of paint on your brush.
- What new colours and shades can you make?



Activity Five: Line drawings

When you look closely at paintings, such as this watercolour by George Hobson in the 19th Century, you can see that the painting is made up of bands of colour – in this case, blues, browns, oranges, grey and beige.



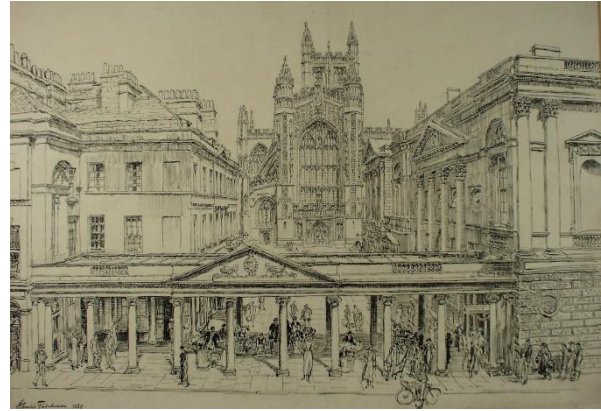
What you will need:

- Your dry blended stripes from the previous activity.
- A black pen.
- Look at your stripes. Can you imagine them as the background of a picture? It could be real or imagined.
- Using your black pen, start to add detail to the stripes you have created.
- You may like to experiment with the marks, patterns and textures that you created in the previous activities.



Activity Six: Continuous Line Drawing

Looking closely at line drawings such as this one of a View of Bath Abbey and the Pump Room by Hanslip Fletcher in 1935, you can see that lots of lines connect and merge together.



What you will need:

- A piece of paper – smooth texture works best
- A pen that is smooth to draw / write with – a rollerball or Biro works well

This activity was based on the Head of Minerva that you can see in the roman Baths at : <https://www.romanbaths.co.uk/walkthroughs/temple-courtyard-and-minerva>



With your pen, draw what you see in front of you, without taking your pen from the paper. Consider how you will take your pen line from one part of your drawing to the other. You can create detail and line from one single line.

