



Sculpting Nature: Exploring 3D Art and Clay Creations in the Forest

Clay Creations in Nature

Objective:

Children will explore the natural environment and use clay to create 3D models inspired by the textures, shapes, and patterns they find in the forest, fostering creativity, fine motor skills, and a connection to nature.

Age Group: Key Stage 1

Duration: 1 hour

Links to National Curriculum:

- **Art and Design:**
 - Use a range of materials creatively to design and make products.
 - Develop a wide range of art and design techniques in using colour, pattern, texture, shape, form, and space.
 - **Science (Seasonal Changes/Plants):**
 - Identify and describe the basic structure of common plants and trees.
 - Observe and explore the natural world.
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Materials Needed:

- Natural, air-drying clay.
 - Small wooden boards or cloths to work on.
 - Natural objects found in the forest (leaves, twigs, bark, stones).
 - Water in small containers for smoothing clay.
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Activity Plan:

1. Introduction (10 minutes):

- **Discussion:**
 - Talk about how artists use natural materials for inspiration and creation.
 - Show examples of natural shapes and textures, such as the veins of a leaf or the ridges of bark.
 - **Safety Reminder:**
 - Emphasise respecting nature by only using fallen or readily available items.
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2. Nature Exploration (15 minutes):

- Guide the children on a short forest walk to collect small, safe, natural items.
 - Encourage them to observe and touch textures, such as rough bark, smooth stones, or soft moss.
 - Ask them to think about which shapes and patterns they would like to use in their artwork.
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3. Clay Modelling (30 minutes):

- **Step 1:** Provide each child with a lump of clay and a board to work on.
 - **Step 2:** Encourage them to press natural items into the clay to create patterns or use the clay to sculpt shapes inspired by their collected materials (e.g., leaves, flowers, or small animals).
 - **Step 3:** Demonstrate how to attach clay pieces using water as "glue."
 - **Challenge:** Ask children to tell a story about their creation, imagining what it could be used for in nature (e.g., a bird's perch or a magical creature's home).
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4. Reflection and Sharing (5 minutes):

- Children present their creations to the group.
 - Discuss what they enjoyed and learned about nature during the activity.
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Outcomes:

- Development of fine motor skills through handling clay.
 - Increased awareness of natural textures and patterns.
 - Encouragement of creativity and self-expression.
 - Connection to the natural environment and understanding of how materials from nature can inspire art.
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Extension Ideas:

- Display the clay models in the forest as part of a temporary outdoor art gallery.
- Take rubbings of natural textures (e.g., bark, leaves) to incorporate into future art projects.
- Discuss how clay comes from the earth, linking the activity to sustainable practices and materials.

