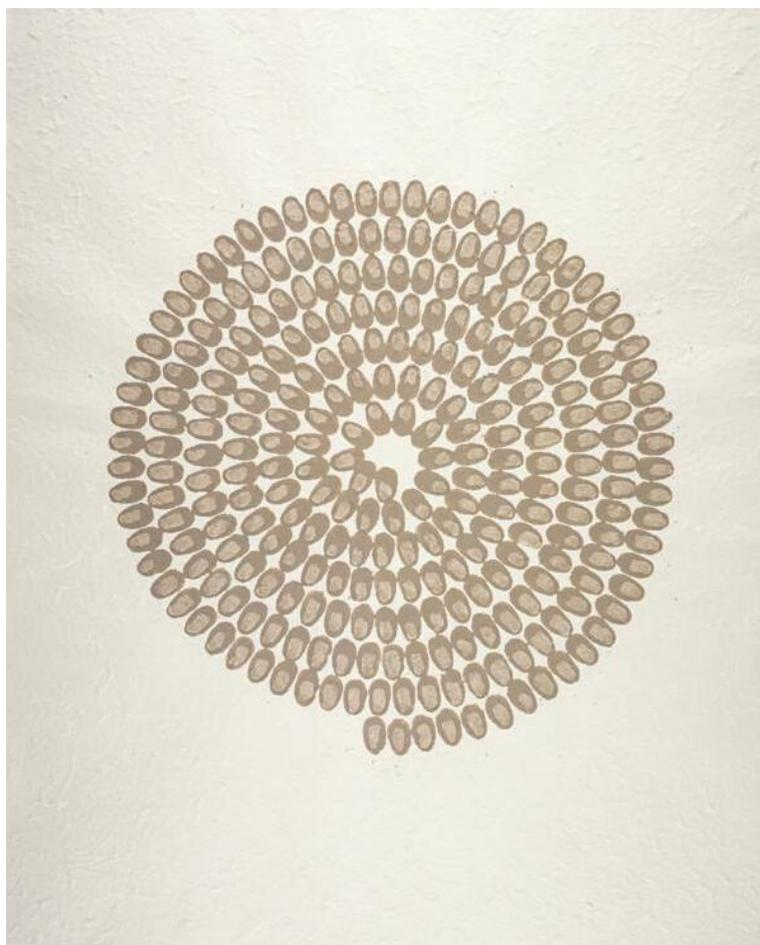


Mindful marks: Richard Long

River Avon Mud Fingerprints Spiral

This week's activities revolve around the natural world. They're inspired by the artist Richard Long, who often uses nature as the subject AND as the material when he makes art. His fascinating creations take on many different forms, including photographs, maps, pieces of writing, sculptures, walks, and mud-patterns such as the one pictured here.

The activities below include mud painting, spiral finding, map drawing, and bangle making. They bring with them the health benefits that come from both engaging with nature and being creative!



Activity 1: Glorious mud!

To create this week's inspirational artwork, Richard Long collected mud from the River Avon in England and made a spiral using his own fingerprints. For our first activity we want you to make your own artwork using mud!

Please do check with your grown-up before you start mixing your mud, as it might get messy!

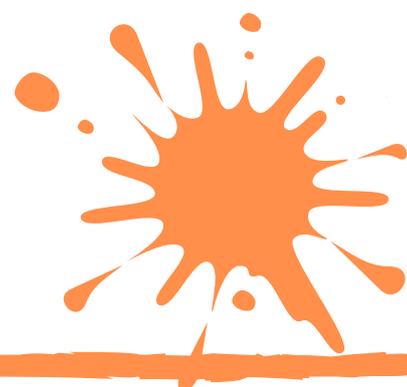
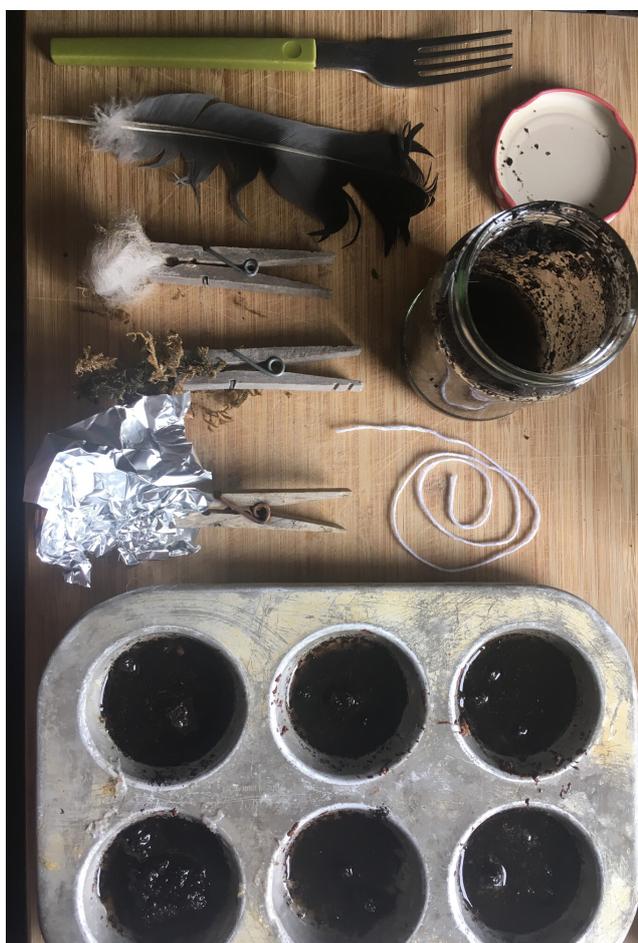
To keep things a bit tidier, you could do your mud-painting outside, on a big tray, in a sink, or even in an empty shower- just make sure there are no pesky stones in your mud!



Make your mark!

Once you've made your mud, it's time to start making patterns with it. What can you find from nature, or around your house, to make different marks, lines, textures? If you're stuck, here are some ideas for excellent mark-making tools:

- A fork or a potato masher for dots and lines
- A spatula for spreading
- An old toothbrush for splattering
- Different sponges for dabbing
- Lego bricks and pen lids for dots and circles
- Cut lines into cardboard for textures and lines
- Feathers and sticks for light lines



Get painting!

After you've mixed your mud with a bit of water, and found your tools, it's time to make your mud-painting. You could make spiral shapes like Richard Long, you could create a unique self-portrait of your face out of your finger-prints, you could draw/paint something you can see around you... anything!

If you're painting outside, you can be a bit looser and try different techniques. How about putting your paper on a washing line and applying mud to it using a spray-bottle? Or by flicking a brush? Or even by just chucking mud using your hands! Create your own mud-painting techniques!



Activity 2: See, Think, Wonder

Look at this week's artwork by Richard Long.

- What do you see?
- Where has the artist positioned everything?
- Describe the shapes, pattern, colours and textures
- What would you add, remove or change about the painting?

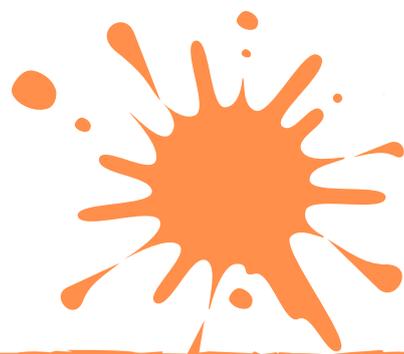
These questions are about the artist's technique:

- What materials, tools and techniques were used to make this?
- Do you think the subject matter was directly observed, imagined or remembered? Why?
- What stages do you think the artist went through?

These questions are about your response to the artwork:

- How does the painting make you feel and why?
- What kind of person do you think made it?
- Where would be a good place to hang it?
- What do you think/love/hate about it?
- When, where, why do you think this was created?
- Can you see any symbols or metaphors?
- What's it about? What could it mean?

If you have a really good question for us, drop us a message via the National Galleries of Scotland Facebook or Twitter pages and we'll try our best to answer it!



Activity 3: a mid-week challenge for all the family

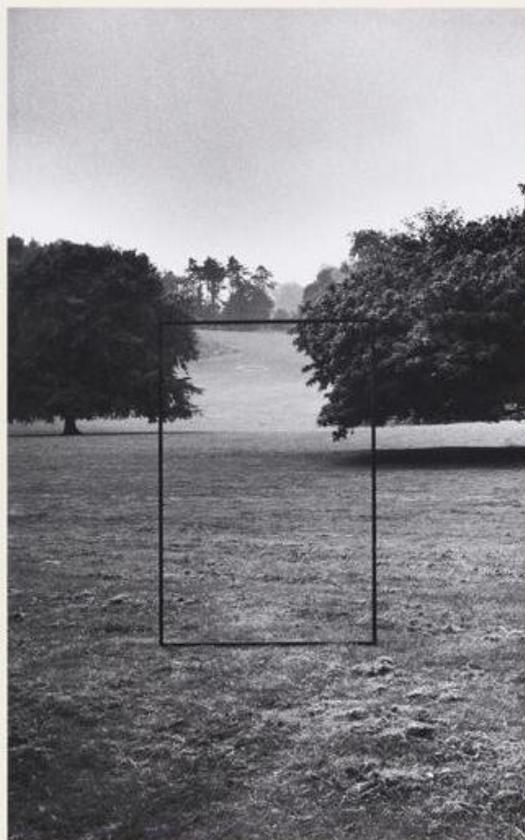
Inspired by the spiral shape of this week's artwork, can you think of three spirals you might find in the natural world? How about a shell, a ram's horn, or a whirlpool? Can you find any circular or spiral shapes in and around your house?

For this activity we want you to create your own spiral using things you find outside or around the house. You could leave your spiral for others to find, or you could take a picture of it to share with your friends!



Activity 4: describe

Have a look at another artwork by Richard Long. Based on what you see, describe it to another person to draw. Was their drawing similar? What do you think is the most important part of this photograph to the artist?



ENGLAND, 1987

Activity 5: mindful maps!

Think of a route that you take often. It could be from your bedroom to the kitchen in your house, your front door to your school, a new route that you've recently discovered during lockdown... anything!

Now, close your eyes and draw the route you're thinking of. Let your pencil walk across a piece of paper while you think of the route, from start to finish. Then, draw at least 3 things that you always see along your route. It doesn't have to be accurate - you're just trying to capture a movement and a memory through lines! Why not make lots of maps- some true to life, some make-believe?

Especially for Under 5s: Gems in nature

Just like Richard Long, we want you and your wee ones to be inspired BY nature to make art ABOUT nature, using materials you can find IN nature!

Before you go out on your daily walk, cut a piece of paper or card so it fits around your wee ones' wrist while still being easily removable. Then turn this into a sticky bangle by covering it with tape, sticky side facing up.

During your walk, look for nature's 'gems', the things your wee one is interested in. Leaves, grass, moss, wee stones, feathers, bark, daisies are just some of the gems you might find! As you find your gems, stick them onto the surface of your bangle to make your own work of wearable art!

If you don't want to make a bangle, you could instead make a sculpture during your walk. How about a stick or stone sculpture? You can make a sculpture out of almost anything you can find in nature!

