Making materials, Karla Black

Art is so much more than just looking at paintings. Art can be made out of anything! And, with some art, you don’t just see it – you use your other senses too!

Karla Black is a Scottish artist who creates abstract sculptures that take over huge gallery spaces and stimulate all of our senses. She uses things like baby powder, soap, toothpaste, chalk, make-up, cotton wool and mud as the materials in her art-making, as well as traditional art materials like plaster, pigment and paint. As you walk into a room that has her artwork in it, you can often smell it before you see it!

For some artists the process of making is just as important (or more important!) than the final artwork created. This week we’re playing with this idea by finding, making and engaging our senses with lots of different materials.
Activity 1: use your senses

Karla Black said, ‘There’s not much difference between Boots the chemist and the art shop – you can put anything on your body or smear anything you want into a bit of paper.

‘This week we’re going to use stuff from around the house to make art that will activate all of our senses; see, smell, touch, hear and even taste! Below there’s one activity for each of the 5 senses.

IMPORTANT: make sure a grown-up helps you or knows exactly what you’re doing!
SEE! Colour

Make your own paint by mixing together the following ingredients:

- 1/2 cup flour
- 1/2 cup salt
- 1/2 cup water

Then add food colouring to make different paint colours!

SMELL! Paintings

Make your own scented paint by skooshing shaving foam (not gel!) into a tray or empty washing up bowl and then adding a couple of drops of food colouring.

Once you’ve made your scented paint you could swirl it to make interesting combinations of colour using your finger, spoon or any tool you like!

Make your own scented marble paper:

- Place a sheet of paper onto the shaving foam paint and press down.
- Lift the paper and, with a ruler, scrape off excess foam to leave your marbled design.
- Leave the paper to dry and use it as a base for a painting or drawing, to make into a card, to fold or scrunch into a paper sculpture like Karla Black... whatever you like!
TOUCH! Sculptures

EITHER make some salt-dough by mixing together the following ingredients:

- 1 cup of flour (about 250g)
- 1/2 a cup of salt (about 125g)
- 1/2 a cup of water (about 125ml)

OR make some cornflour-dough by mixing together the following ingredients:

- 2 cups of salt
- 2/3 cup water in a medium-sized pot
- 1 cup of cornflour

To make the cornflour-dough, (with your grown-up) heat the salt and water for about 3-4 minutes, then remove the mixture from the heat and add 1 cup of cornflour while stirring quickly. Add water gradually if it’s too stiff! Wait for it to cool before playing with it!

Once you’ve made your dough, you can:-

- Play with it
- Sculpt it into any shapes you like
- Squish things into it to see what textures you can create
- Leave it to dry then paint it
HOME IS WHERE THE ART IS
**HEAR! Sound walk**

Grab a sheet of paper and pencil, then...

EITHER sit in your kitchen and write down all the sounds that you can hear.

OR take the paper and pencil outside with you on your daily walk. Think of all the sounds that you can hear as a layered-up collage of noise and silence. Can you draw what your sound looks like? Would your sound have a wavy, excited, energetic line or a calm, straight line?

**TASTE! Edible canvas**

You’ll need a spare piece of bread and some food colouring for this activity.

Ask your grown-up if this is ok, and if there is any bread that’s going a bit stale!

Paint directly onto your bread using a tiny bit of food colouring and a clean paintbrush if you’ve got one. Or drop on shapes and make your bread-art a bit more abstract if you don’t!

Remember, less is more! Make sure that your bread isn’t too soggy with the food colouring.

When you’ve finished putting on the food-clouring, put the bread into your toaster or under the grill, and then watch the colours get brighter.

And finally - eat your art!
HOME IS WHERE THE ART IS
Activity 2: See, Think, Wonder

Karla Black’s artworks are based on the specific architectural features of the building that house them such as the size of the room, the position of doors, and the play of light in the building. If you have access to the internet, find some more examples of Karla Black’s artwork.

Think about:

- What materials she’s using and why she might have chosen to use them
- How the artworks take over the spaces
- How you think it would feel walking through one of her exhibitions, if you were the person holding the camera
- What you might smell, feel and hear, if you were there
- What questions you would ask the artist if you could meet her
Activity 3: a mid-week challenge for all the family

Are you missing visiting the gallery? We are! How about we create our own miniature galleries at home?!

Find a shoebox, cardboard box or empty container. Imagine this is a room in your own art gallery or museum. Create an artwork that fills your gallery. You can use ANY materials that you like. Have a think about the type of materials that Karla Black uses, if you get stuck.

Send us a picture of your gallery when you’re done, we’d love to have a virtual visit!
Activity 4: Shopping list!

Make a list of things that you could use, from around the house, to make art. How about lipstick, spices from the kitchen, nail varnish, mud from the garden?
Activity 5: paint what you feel

This week we’ve been exploring different textures and unusual materials for painting.

If you have bubble wrap or tin foil, a cardboard box or cellophane, try painting on them instead of paper!

Instead of brushes, how about using some art tools from week 9? Or a spare cotton wool bud, an old toothbrush or a sponge? Using different tools, textures, types of paper and paint are excellent way to get your creative juices flowing!