

## Stone Child

### An exhibition by Mhairi Corr

An Lanntair is currently showing *Stone Child*, an exhibition of sculptures made by Mhairi Corr.

This gallery pack is made to accompany the exhibition and has suggested activities and tasks that you may wish to complete with your class. Where possible, join in on the activity yourself and allow the pupils to see how you engage with the tasks. We are all learners.

We hope that these activities will assist you and your pupils to engage in looking and thinking about the sculptures Mhairi has made.

An Lanntair is happy to supply your school with materials should you require them.

#### **Expressive Arts**

I have the opportunity to choose and explore a range of media and technologies to create images and objects, discovering their effects and suitability for specific tasks. **EXA 1-02a**

I have the opportunity to choose and explore an extended range of media and technologies to create images and objects, comparing and combining them for specific tasks. **EXA 2-02a**

Inspired by a range of stimuli, I can express and communicate my ideas, thoughts and feelings through activities within art and design. **EXA 1-05a / EXA 2-05a**

I can respond to the work of artists and designers by discussing my thoughts and feelings. I can give and accept constructive comment on my own and others' work. **EXA 1-07a / EXA 2-07a**

Inspired by a range of stimuli, I can express and communicate my ideas, thoughts and feelings through drama. **EXA 1-13a / EXA 2-13a**

#### **Health and Wellbeing : Mental and emotional wellbeing**

I know that we all experience a variety of thoughts and emotions that affect how we feel and behave and I am learning ways of managing them. **HWB 1-02a / HWB 2-02a**

I understand that my feelings and reactions can change depending upon what is happening within and around me. This helps me to understand my own behaviour and the way others behave. **HWB 1-04a / HWB 2-04a**

I understand that people can feel alone and can be misunderstood and left out by others. I am learning how to give appropriate support. **HWB 1-08a / HWB 2-08a**

#### **Literacy : Listening and Talking**

When I engage with others, I know when and how to listen, when to talk, how much to say, when to ask questions and how to respond with respect. **LIT 1-02a**

## Stone child - Schools resource pack

When I engage with others, I can respond in ways appropriate to my role, show that I value others' contributions and use these to build on thinking. **LIT 2-02a**

### Literacy : Writing

I can describe and share my experiences and how they made me feel. **ENG 1-30a / GAI 1-30a**

As I write for different purposes and readers, I can describe and share my experiences, expressing what they made me think about and how they made me feel. **ENG 2-30a / GAI 2-30a**

### Religious and Moral education

I can show my understanding of values such as caring, sharing, fairness, equality and love. **RME 1-09b**

I can explain why different people think that values such as honesty, respect and compassion are important, and I show respect for others. **RME 2-09c**

### Overview of exhibition

Mhairi's sculptures are made by taking a frame made from wood and wire and covering it in a special kind of clay she makes. This is made from newspaper, sawdust, glue, junk mail and sweepings off the floor!

When they are dry, Mhairi sometimes paints them.

Mhairi makes in an intuitive way – feeling the personalities of the stone children coming to her rather than thinking about them or planning them beforehand.

The personalities of the stone children come through while she is making them.

Mhairi says "Even though they contain such quantities of text, the Stone Children are wordless. Their silence leaves them open to interpretation. They know more than they can say. Spending some time with them and with a little patience we can intuit their stories. Their characters and their challenges are our starting points, the prompts, the clues to what comes next".

Stone child - Schools resource pack  
Figurative Sculpture

In this task we offer pupils a chance to make a figurative sculpture. There are various options for what materials to use from messy paper mâché fun to a homemade clay recipe or the cleanest, quickest plasticene option. This activity could be spread over several lessons or simplified to a one-off activity.

Task

Start by looking at the sculptures Mhairi has made in the online exhibition.

Paper mâché sculptures require – newspaper, wallpaper paste, cardboard, masking tape, wire, scissors.

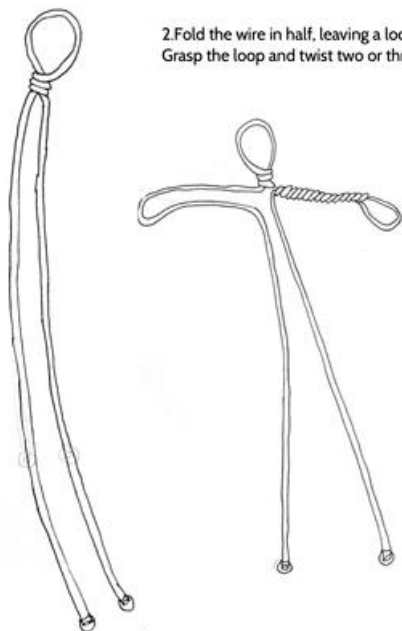
Start by making a wire figure this is called an ‘armature’ it will be the internal support for the sculptures:

1. Start with one long piece of 18 gauge copper wire.  
*Teachers should try this project once to decide how large they'd like the final figures to be, then measure their wire for students afterwards. (put a dot of hot glue on the sharp ends when working with younger students)*



learn more about this lesson @  
emilyjanevalenza.com

2. Fold the wire in half, leaving a loop in the middle.  
Grasp the loop and twist two or three times.



3. Take each long piece of wire and fold about 1/4 of it, leaving a loop near the fold. Grasp the loop and twist until the entire folded section is coiled. Repeat with the other long piece of wire to make a second arm.

4. Leave about an inch of space for the torso, twist twice for the waist. You can add another shape for the hips and twist again.



5. Create the legs with the same process used for the arms. Fold each remaining wire piece in half leaving a loop at the crease, then twist until the entire leg is coiled.

6. Strike a pose! Once you choose a dynamic pose for your figure, you can cover them with plaster gauze, clay, papier-mâché, or paint the wire with acrylic paint.

7. To display, you can mount the finished pieces on wooden blocks or hang them with fishing line!

Next, tape the feet onto a thick piece of cardboard so it can stand.

Then wrap this in paper and masking tape to bulk up the body parts.

Cover this in paper mâché (either strips wrapped around and dipped in wallpaper paste or make your own paper mâché clay).

Leave to dry fully before painting.

If you would like to include measuring and weighing in your activity you can involve pupils in making paper mâché clay. This can be added to the wire armature and will dry hard.

A recipe is available here - <https://www.instructables.com/Paper-Mache-Clay-Recipe/>

## Stone child - Schools resource pack

For a quick, clean version of making figurative sculptures you can make plasticene sculptures, with or without any internal support.

### *Questions.*

What do you first notice when you look at the sculptures? What kinds of shapes are they made up from? Do they look 'real'? Why?

What do you notice when you look at their faces? What shapes make up our faces?

Think about what shape you would like your person to be in – this is called a 'pose'. Are they running, sitting or standing?

When Mhairi is making her sculptures she says 'somebody lands in her head'! She can feel their personality coming through when she is making them.

Get pupils to ask themselves who that person is and what that person is feeling as they are making them.

### *Observations.*

Mhairi has made lots of figurative sculptures – 'figurative' means a shape taken from real life.

Mhairi makes sculptures of children and sometimes paints them.

Remind pupils not to worry too much about what their sculptures look like – see if they can get their sculpture's feelings to show on the outside like Mhairi's do.

Are they excited or tired, get pupils to think about how we show our feelings in the way we stand or sit and that we can affect how our sculptures look by the poses we place them in.

If you paint the sculptures you can also talk about the language of colour – how would we feel if we looked at Mairi's sculptures and they were brightly coloured? Would they look funnier? Sadder? Friendlier? What does that tell us? That colours can affect the way we see things and the way we feel.

Is there a colour that makes us feel happy or sad? These can be different for different people. That's ok.

## Stone child - Schools resource pack

### Creative writing

In this task we offer pupils a chance to look and reflect on Mhairi's artworks. The stone children sculptures all look unhappy, aggrieved or angry. There are different ways of seeing and interpreting the same views. This activity opens dialogue as to why this might be.

### Materials required

Paper and pencils or print out the activity sheet on the next page.

### Task

Start by showing the class Mhairi's sculptures in the online exhibition.

Ask pupils to choose one sculpture or group of sculptures to write about. They can work in small groups, pairs or independently.

### *Questions:*

Have a look at the child sculptures and choose one or two to write about. Choose names for them and write those names here:

What do they look like?

What do you think they like doing?

Can you tell from the way they look how they are feeling?

Imagine what you would do if you met them in the playground? What would they say to you or tell you?

Write a few sentences about what would happen if you took them home with you:

### *Observations:*

Allow children some time to complete the questions – if some are finished before others, they can illustrate their story of taking the stone child home.

Go round the class and ask pupils to share their Stone child stories. What name did they give them and what can they tell us about them? What kind of person are they?

Ask if any other pupils chose the same sculpture and what their stories are?

We can all look at the same person and have a different idea of who they are. No one view is right or wrong, each are of value.

Stone Child, creative writing, pupil activity sheet.

NAME

Have a look at the child sculptures and choose one or two to write about. Choose names for them and write those names here:

What do they look like?

What do you think they like doing?

Can you tell from the way they look how they are feeling?

Imagine what you would do if you met them in the playground? What would they say to you or tell you?

Write a story about what would happen if you took them home with you:

Performing arts

This task encourages pupils to move, expressive body awareness, to think and talk about feelings and other people's perspectives.

Materials required

Space to move.

Task

Work your way through the following prompts and questions with the pupils.

Start by looking as a group at Mhairi's sculptures in the online exhibition. She has called them 'stone children'. We are going to explore what it is like to be one of Mhairi's stone children sculptures.

Start by moving into some space and choosing a sculpture. Can you make your face look like theirs? The way you move and hold your face is called an 'expression'.

Move into a new space and choose a different sculpture and stand in the same way as that stone child. The way they stand is called a 'pose'. Notice how they hold their hands or the shape of their body.

Now take turns to choose one and stand in the same 'pose' and pull the same 'expression'. Now HOLD STILL like a stone sculpture and see if someone else can guess which sculpture you are being?

How did it feel being like that sculpture- did you make you laugh? Or maybe feel a little cross or sad?

All of Mhairi's sculptures look a bit unhappy don't they – some look a little sad, or grumpy or a little left out or lost.

What we could do to help them? What cheers you up if you're ever feeling unhappy? Take turns to answer.

Notice that most of the children are standing in groups, with other sculptures. Working in pairs choose a wee group of sculptures to look at. Help your partner to get into the right pose with the same expression.

Do you think those sculptures look like good friends? Are they being kind and looking after each other?

What does make a good friend?

It's interesting to notice that the way we feel can sometimes show itself on the outside.

How can you show on the outside that you are:

Excited?

Scared?

Happy?

Sad?

Do you think Mhairi's sculptures are showing some of their inside feelings on the outside?

Group work: Extended the activity now into group work where half the pupils takes on a stone child sculpture's persona and stay rigid in place but able to talk. The other pupils can move around the space meeting and talking to the stone children.

## Stone child - Schools resource pack

Now swap over.

Get the stone children pupils to really focus on facial expressions of the sculptures and how a pursed lip changes the way you speak or how a hunched shoulder affects the way you stand.

To conclude the activity ask the pupils to show you the opposite. So ask them to 'turn that frown upside down and move your pose and expression into happy, smiley, fun, caring, lovely children again'!

Again, half pupils will be statues and unmoving except to talk and the other half will move through them and meet them.

Then swap.

Give pupils time to now walk around experiencing what it feels like to be surrounded by these happy, sunny figures.

### *Observations*

It's good that these funny little sculptures are artworks and not a gallery full of real children isn't it.

Everybody feels unhappy sometimes – if you fall and bang your knee or if you don't get something you want or if someone is unkind to you, these are some things that can make people feel sad.

Talking about your feelings and having someone to listen to you and care for you helps.

Sometimes having a giggle and a laugh can help too.

We all have different ways of feeling on the inside and the outside.

It's ok for all of us to be different – that means we are all special.