

Multisensory Visual Arts

Art can take many forms within multisensory workshops. It can be exactly what one expects i.e. drawing/painting etc, though it is always presented within a clear context with as wide a variety of materials as possible, using mediums that provide visual, tactile and even aural qualities themselves. Never impose your expectations onto a participant, they will be creative in their own way and probably surprise you. An arts activity can also combine and complement other artforms and sensory input which the following examples will demonstrate.

For many participants, who may have very limited movement and/or communication difficulties, even the opportunity to have time and space to communicate choices/preferences when contributing to 'the whole' means they are participating in creating art along with everyone else. Pushing a brick off your knee with the tip of your finger, as a contribution to building a structure, shows engagement and sharing the experience, even if you can't place it for yourself.

Here are some examples:

- Drawing/painting - give a context and motivation, without expectation. Making it fun, encourage participants to try painting/drawing in other ways, with fingers in sand, with facepaint on mirrors, with chalk on a cave wall, on paper plates or rice.
- Constructing spaces/building structures is a good way to utilise a variety of multisensory props both small and large. Building with carpet tubes, plastic fencing, empty boxes, not only allows sensory exploration of individual items, but encourages cooperative activities and socialisation.
- Decoration - again, a variety of materials, both from the natural world and man-made can be used for weaving and adding to large areas which have already been prepared to enable simple additions. Use unusual materials - poking in holes, weaving through wide gaps, attaching to a frame. This is all about making choices, colour, length, shape, texture, where things should go in relation to the whole. Adding lights makes it even more magical. Enable access at several levels for those in wheelchairs or who like to work on the floor.
- Pattern-making - rice, stones, seeds, conkers all have their own multisensory qualities and can be used in bulk to create patterns as well as enjoying them individually. Make patterns on different surfaces, on mirrors or sand for example.
- Coloured gels cut into shapes can simply be pressed onto a stretchwrap screen which has been sprayed with water to create Mondrian inspired masterpieces.

Links

Facepaint (Prop)

Weaving (Activity)

Workshops - Bob, Monument, Vision On, Saguaro

Videos

Blue rice patterns

Rice painting

Bob screen

Pasta threading

Sand projections