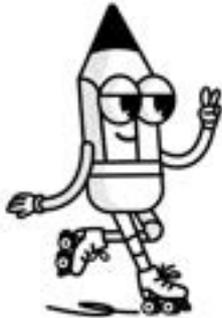


# Invitations to Create

10 quick set-up, self-managing,  
no mess alternatives to colouring in



**OUTSIDE**  
*The* **LINES**

# Overview

These simple, low-prep art activities are designed to spark curiosity, imagination and artistic expression; without a fixed outcome. By offering a thoughtful selection of materials, ākonga are free to engage in self-directed creative exploration.

Begin by clearing the table of any unrelated items, then arrange the materials in an inviting, accessible way that encourages engagement. While some activities may include prompts or challenges to support Visual Art learning outcomes, most can be offered as open invitations, allowing the materials themselves to guide the experience.

Remember, ākonga may approach the activity in unexpected ways. Let them! This freedom to explore often leads to the most meaningful creative moments.

# 1. Blank Paper

Provide clean, blank copy paper alongside drawing materials such as coloured pencils, crayons, and felt tip pens.

To support creative thinking, you can include a list of open-ended drawing prompts to spark ideas. Keep the prompts broad and flexible as this allows ākonga to revisit them and explore new outcomes each time.



# Invitation



## Materials and Resources

- Blank paper
- Drawing materials
- *What Should I Draw.pdf*

# Examples



Lines, patterns and shapes: *Ākonga, Year 1*



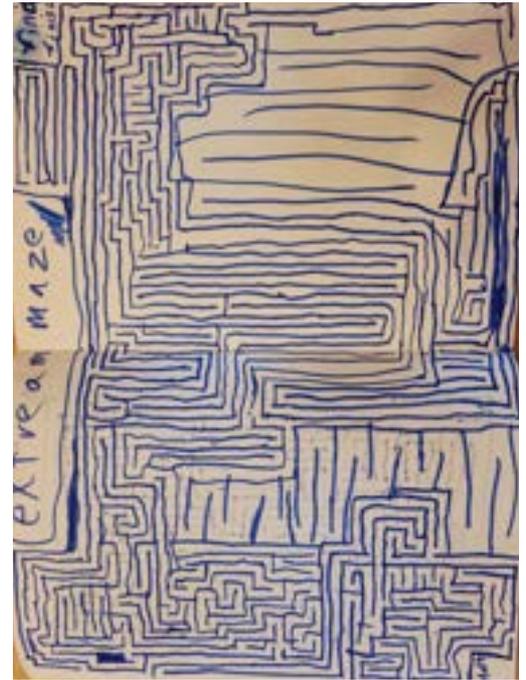
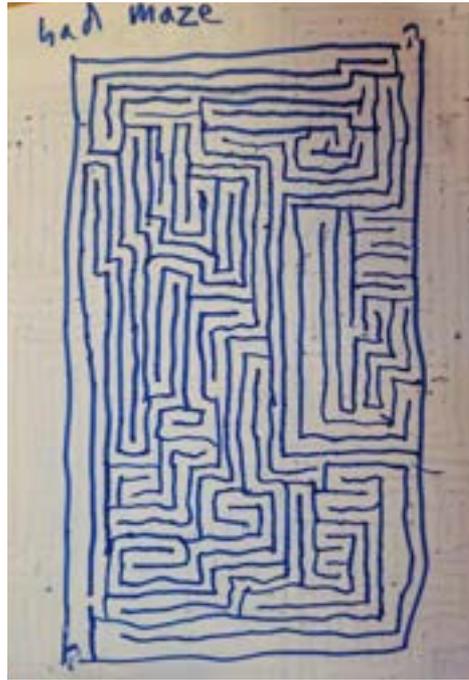
A magical land: *Ākonga, Year 2*



Animals dressed as people: Ākonga, Year 5



What you can see right now: Ākonga, Year 4



Maze Series: Ākonga, Year 3

## 2. Themed Drawing

**Description:** Set up a simple, themed invitation to draw by presenting books related to the theme, printed photographs or images, along with a few physical objects that connect to the topic.

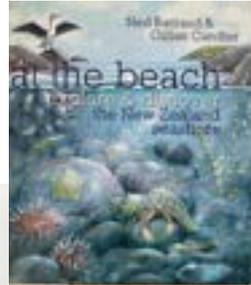
Offer drawing materials for ākonga to explore and respond in their own way.

### Theme Inspiration

- Inquiry topics
- The seasons
- Recent class trip
- Culture
- Nature
- Current events
- Celebrations
- Everyday space
- Book or poem
- An environment



# Invitation



## Materials and Resources

- Blank paper
- Drawing materials
- Books
- Printed images or photographs
- Physical objects

Barrard, N., & Candler, G. (2012). *At the Beach*.

# Examples



Rock pool: Ākonga, Year 5



Shell: Ākonga, Year 1

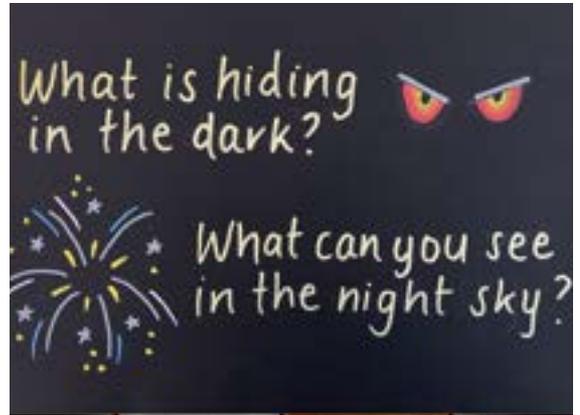
### 3. Black Paper

**Description:** Set up an invitation to draw using black paper as the base. Provide light or contrasting drawing materials, such as chalk pastels, metallic markers, oil pastels, gel pens or acrylic paint pens.

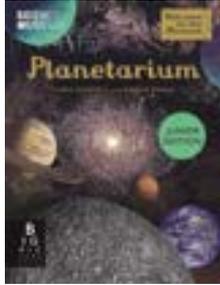
Use questions to prompt drawing ideas

- *What can you see in the night sky?*
- *What is hiding in the dark?*

Include themed books that feature nighttime imagery or explore topics such as space, shadows, mythological creatures to provide a range of references for generating ideas.



# Invitation



## Materials and Resources

- Black paper
- Drawing materials: paint pens, pastels, gel pens
- Prompt questions
- Themed books

Wormell, C. (2018). *Planetarium*. Templar Publishing.

Krensky, S., & Pham Quang Phuc. (2020). *The book of mythical beasts & magical creatures*. Dk.

# Examples



Outer Space: Ākonga, Year 6



Nighttime Nature: Ākonga, Year 7



What is hiding in the dark?: Ākonga, Year 2



Nebula: Ākonga, Year 5

## 4. Self Portraiture

**Description:** Invite ākonga to create self-portraits by observing themselves directly in mirrors. Use the guideline to build understanding of facial proportions, shapes, distance and the relationship between features.

Select and print a variety of artist self-portraits for inspiration. Consider how artists use unique styles and diverse techniques to express themselves.

Remember, a self-portrait doesn't have to be a perfect copy. It's about exploring how you see yourself and experimenting with how to represent that on paper.



# Invitation



## Materials and Resources

- Blank paper
- Drawing materials
- Mirrors
- *Basic Face Proportions.pdf*
- *Self Portrait Examples.pdf*

# Examples



Self-portrait: Ākonga, Year 2



Self-portrait: Ākonga, Year 6



Self-portrait: Ākonga, Year 5

# 5. Cutting Shapes

**Description:** Create collages using cut shapes with only scissors, paper and glue. No pencils allowed.

This activity encourages the use of bold, simplified forms. It challenges ākonga to embrace imperfections, move away from details and explore different arrangements through layering shapes.

Include prompts or challenges to encourage experimentation with how shapes can interact and overlap and to introduce related art terminology such as ‘composition’ and ‘negative space’.



# Invitation



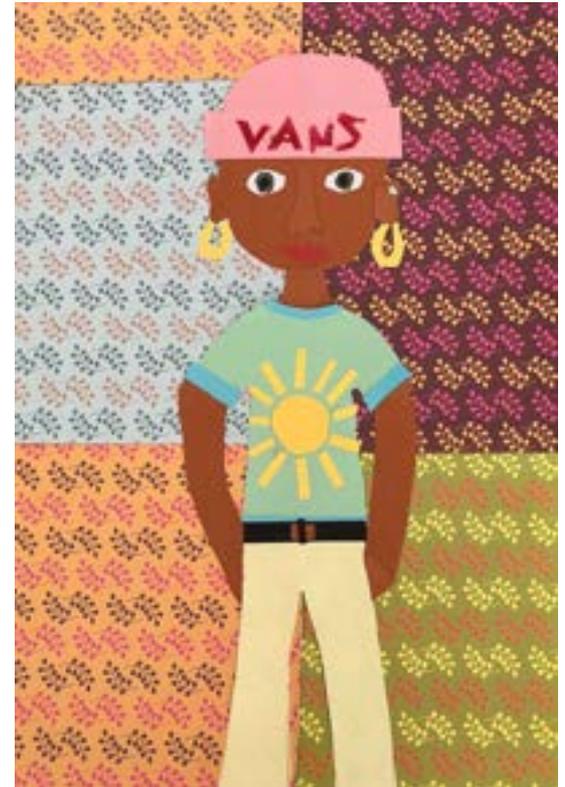
## Materials and Resources

- Card
- Scissors
- Glue
- Selection of colour and patterned paper
- Collage prompts (optional)
- Collage challenges (optional)

# Examples



Collage: Ākonga, Year 2



Portrait: Ākonga, Year 5



Cityscape: Ākonga, Year 8



Explosion: Ākonga, Year 5

## 6. The Shape Game

**Description:** Find a friend and play *The Shape Game*, inspired by author and illustrator Anthony Browne and his book *Frida and Bear*.

Working in pairs, ākonga use their imagination to turn shapes or found objects into pictures by adding line, detail, texture and colour.

This activity encourages them to think creatively, take risks, and know there's no right or wrong. More complex drawings can be made by continuing to pass the same piece of paper back and forth.

It can also be led by a teacher with the whole class or larger group. Each student draws a shape, then passes left (or right) for others to transform.



# Invitation

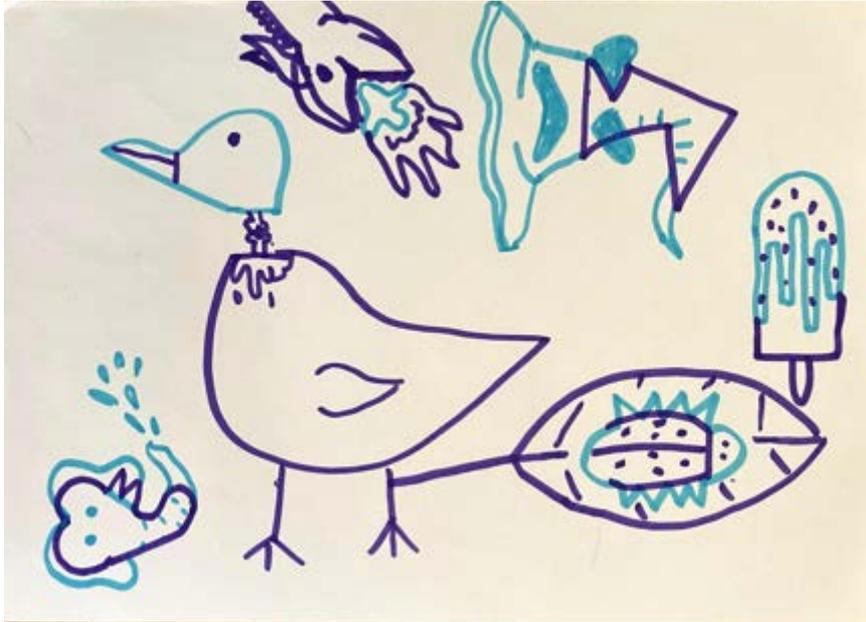


## Materials and Resources

- Paper
- Felt pens
- *Frida and Bear* book by Anthony Browne
- *Shape Game - Anthony Browne.pdf*
- Game prompts (optional)

Browne, A., & Hanne Bartholin. (2016). *Frida and Bear*. Walker Books And Subsidiaries.

# Examples

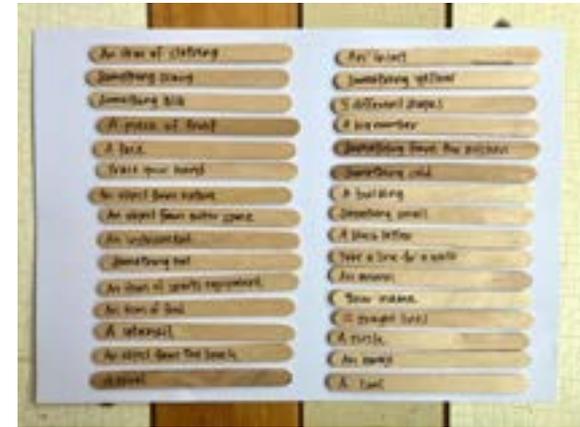


Ākonga, Year 8

# 7. Assemblage Drawing

**Description:** This activity uses popsicle stick prompts to develop visual imagery. Ākonga begin with a blank page and build their drawing step by step. Artworks may become a random collection of drawings or built upon to form a narrative.

Keep the prompts open ended so ākonga can respond with different imagery each time they play.



# Invitation



## Materials and Resources

- Paper
- Felt pens
- Popsicle stick prompts
- Blank popsicle sticks
- Ultra fine tip Sharpie

# Examples



Ākonga, Year 2



Ākonga, Year 5

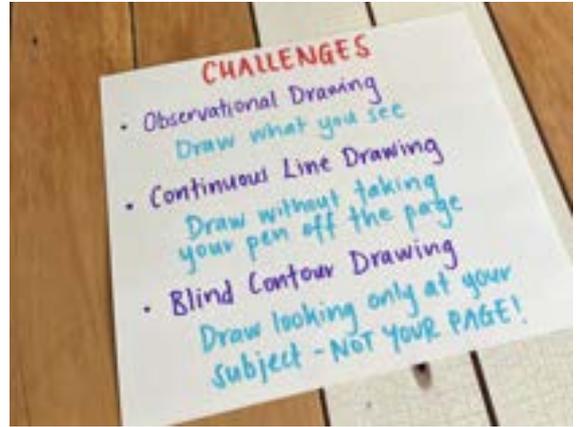
## 8. Still Life Drawing

**Description:** Set up a still life for ākonga to draw or allow ākonga to set up a still life of their own.

This activity can be explored using a variety of different drawing materials.

Ākonga can draw freely or try these challenges:

- Observational Drawing:  
*Draw what you see*
- Continuous Line Drawing:  
*Draw without taking the pen off the page*
- Blind Contour Drawing:  
*Draw looking at the subject, NOT THE PAGE*



## Still Life Ideas

### Natural objects

- a flower arrangement
- fruit or vegetables with some cut in half
- a themed collection of objects from one environment such as shells and driftwood from the beach or pinecones, sticks and leaves from the forest

### Everyday objects

- toy-themed: action figures, soft toys, lego creations, vehicles
- classroom items: stationery, books, art materials, sports equipment
- kitchen items: cups, bowls, utensils, teapot, appliances

### Mystery box

- fill a box with random items
- ākonga choose 5 objects to arrange their own still life

# Invitation



## Materials and Resources

- Paper
- Felt pens
- Still life set up
- Drawing challenges (optional)

# Examples



Observational: *Ākonga*, Year 2



Continuous Line:  
*Ākonga*, Year 6



Blind Contour: *Ākonga*, Year 5

## 9. Loose Parts Mandalas

**Description:** Ākonga create mandalas using loose parts arranged in circular patterns on a base. The artwork can be **temporary**, allowing for rearrangement and exploration, or made **permanent** by gluing pieces onto old records or black cardstock circles using hot glue. You can take a photo of any temporary artworks for documentation and display.

### Loose Part Objects

- Craft supplies
- Buttons and beads
- Popsicle sticks
- Paper clips
- Pens and pencils
- Nuts, bolts, nails
- Shells
- Feathers
- Stones and gems
- Sticks and twigs
- Flowers and leaves
- Seeds and acorns



## Links to Numeracy

### Fractions

- Divide a circle into halves, quarters or eighths etc. to design the mandala

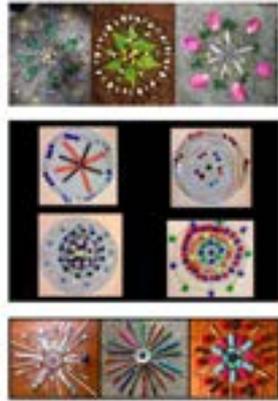
### Geometry

- Explore reflective symmetry with mirror lines. *Ask: How many lines of symmetry can you find?*
- Explore rotational symmetry and repeating patterns. *Ask: How many times does the pattern repeat?*
- Show how a circle is  $360^\circ$  and can be divided into equal parts: half =  $180^\circ$ , quarter =  $90^\circ$ , an eighth =  $45^\circ$  etc. *Ask: What is the angle of rotation?*

### Measurement

- Use rulers to divide the mandala into equal segments
- Discuss radius, diameter, circumference and area of the circle/mandala

# Invitation



## Materials and Resources

- Craft supplies
- Natural materials
- Circular placemats, cut card or records
- Bowls for objects
- *Mandala Art Examples.pdf*

# Examples



*Ākonga, Year 5*



*Ākonga, Year 6*

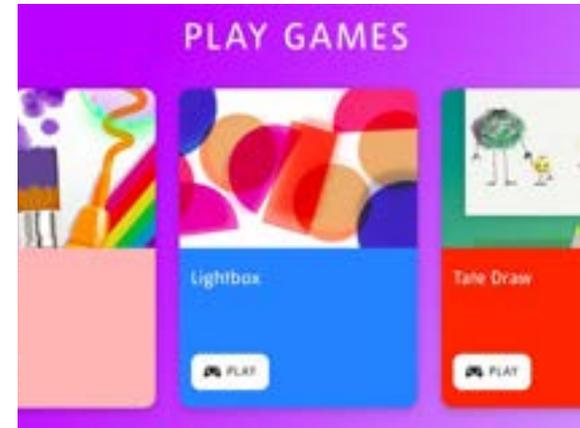
# 10. Digital Art

**Description:** The Tate Modern website hosts online teaching and learning resources. In their games section you can access different interactive art-themed games where ākonga can create digital artworks including Pixel Draw, Tate Draw, Tate Paint and Street Art. Ākonga can experiment with a range of drawing tools and after creating, save then print their artwork and even display it in the Tate Kids Gallery.

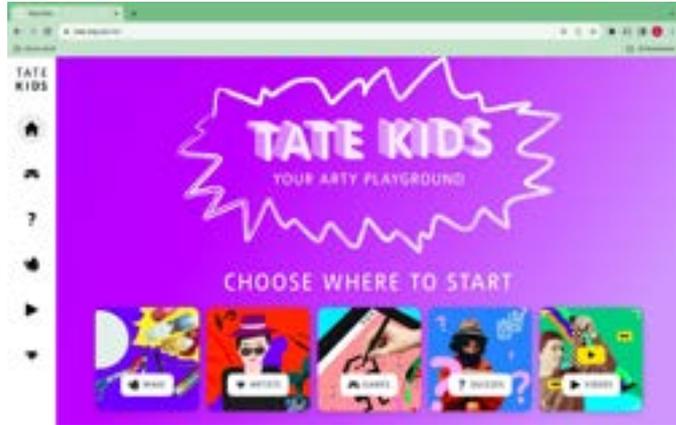
<https://www.tate.org.uk/kids>

There are also quizzes, artist profiles, instructional art-making activities, and a whole section of resources for teachers!

<https://www.tate.org.uk/schools/resources>

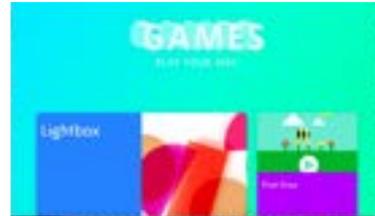
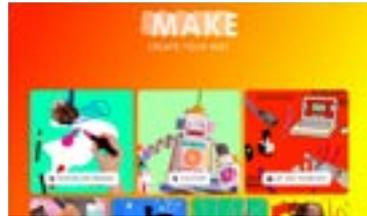


# Invitation



## Materials and Resources

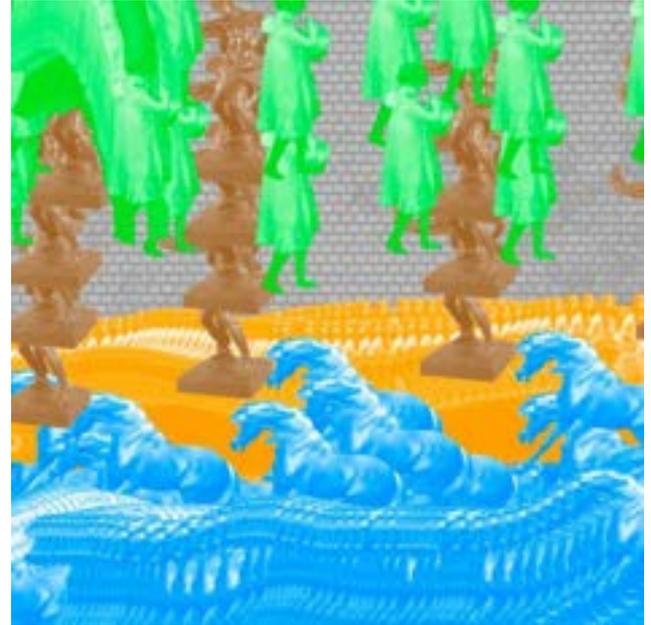
- Computer
- Internet access
- Printer



# Examples



Tate Paint: *Ākongā, Year 5*



Tate Street Art: *Ākongā, Year 5*



Tate Street Art: *Ākonga, Year 8*



Tate Pixel Art: *Ākonga, Year 2*

# Sourcing Materials

## Kmart

- Colour and printed paper
- Self portrait mirrors
- Sketching pencils
- Paint pens
- Baskets
- Cups and bowls

## \$2 Things

- Desk organiser
- Craft/mandala supplies
- Popsicle sticks

## Qizzle

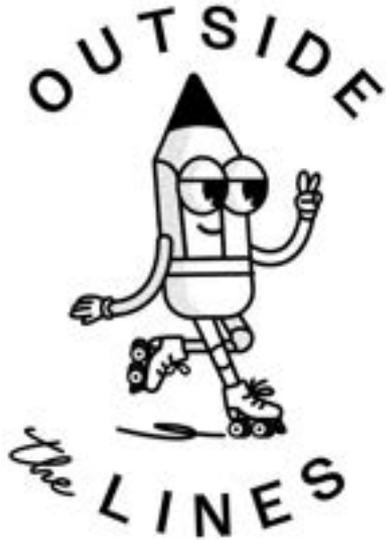
- *Giotto* felt pens
- Drawing materials
- Sharpies
- Scissors

## Look Sharp

- Black card
- Craft/mandala supplies

## Playcentre Shop

- Craft/mandala supplies



*Empowering teachers with new skills,  
fresh perspectives and innovative  
approaches to enhance classroom  
teaching and learning.*

**Sarah Ackerley**  
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