

‘Found’ Community Art Activity

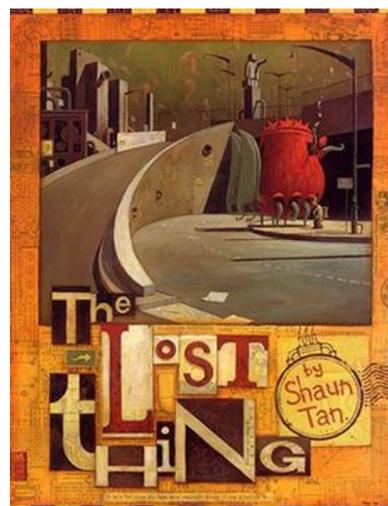
Students will create a shared collage mural of ‘a found community’ based on the book/video, *The Lost Thing*, by Shaun Tan. This activity is designed to both build on arts’ skills as well as encourage thoughtful creativity and reflection about belonging to a community. Students will reflect on ideas of community, such as what it is, what it looks like and how you belong to a community, whilst they complete the activity.

Students will create their own ‘Lost Things’ and then combine them on a large-scale mural which represents a shared community space.

In Preparation

To prepare for this activity you can,

1. Read or watch *The Lost Thing* by Shaun Tan.
2. Reflect on the themes in the story (see the Dialogue activity for help).
3. Discuss the visual elements of the story and characters.
4. Create a class visual map of these ideas.
5. Students choose the design for the shared space mural, i.e. is it a beach, a park, an island, the moon etc.
6. The background can then be drawn simply on a large piece of craft paper or something similar.



You could take a particular style for your mural, such as,

- Using cut-out coloured or recycled materials to construct the work.
- Limiting the materials, i.e. such as pens and markers, or pencils.

You will need to prepare a space for the final mural and consider what you will mount it on. It is important that it is visually unified rather than a series of artworks next to one another.

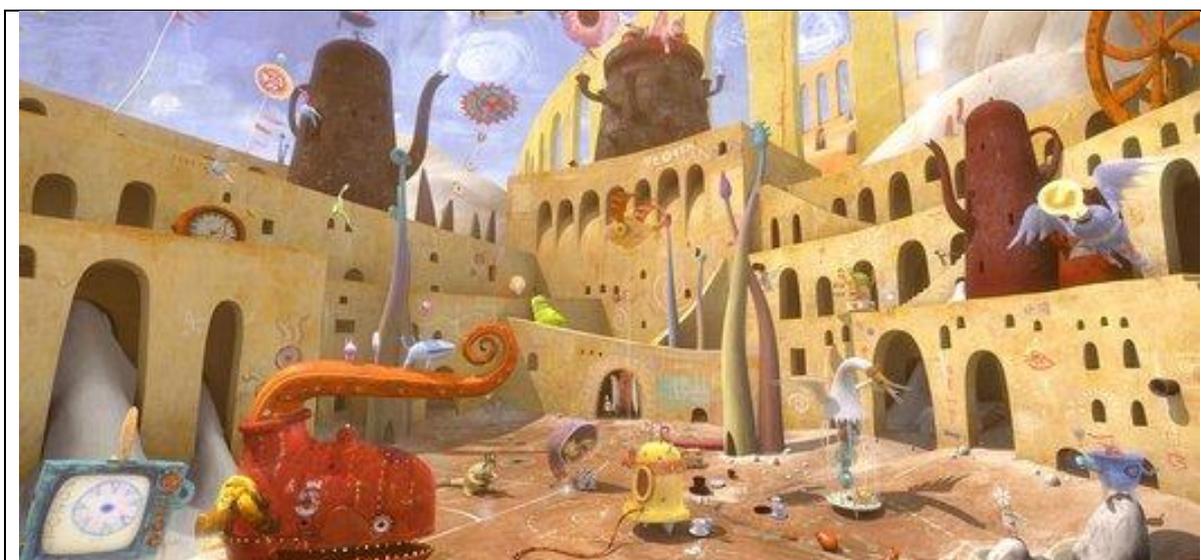
Prepare an example character to share with the class so they can see the possibilities and preferred dimensions.

Character Creation

1. Select a couple of pieces of paper/card. Think about the colours and textures and how they will work together.
2. Cut them into a few simple large shapes to create the base body of your creature.
3. Play with how the shapes might go together. The final piece should be around 25cm x 25cm max.
4. Connect the pieces using glue or tape, you may need to hide tabs underneath.
5. Then begin to add the details of you character with pens/ markers etc.
Remember to think about what hardware would be used to connect the different parts of the character.
6. Consider if you need to add more shapes, such as eye stalks, tentacles, bells etc.

Mural

1. Students can work on decorating the mural together. Paints or Markers or wool outlines can be effect to evoke to space.
2. When all the characters are complete students should talk to one another about how they will compose their mural.
 - a. How will the characters interact? Are they playing? Or Chatting?
 - b. Do you need to draw some simple connecting items, such as balls to show what is happening?
 - c. How is everyone included in a way that makes them happy?
3. Stick down the characters and draw all the extra details.



Shaun Tan, still from *The Lost Thing*, 2010

Reflection

The class should take time to reflect on this activity. This allows them to consider their actions and the way they used their thinking skills.

Whilst sitting in front of the collage ask the students to consider the following questions. Ask students to respond with thumbs up or thumbs down in response.

Are you happy with the results of our artwork?

Did you find parts of this activity challenging?

Was it easy to come up with your 'lost thing'?

Did you find it easy to talk to others?

Did you listen well to others?

Did you feel like others listened to you?

Would you like to add more parts to our 'found community'?

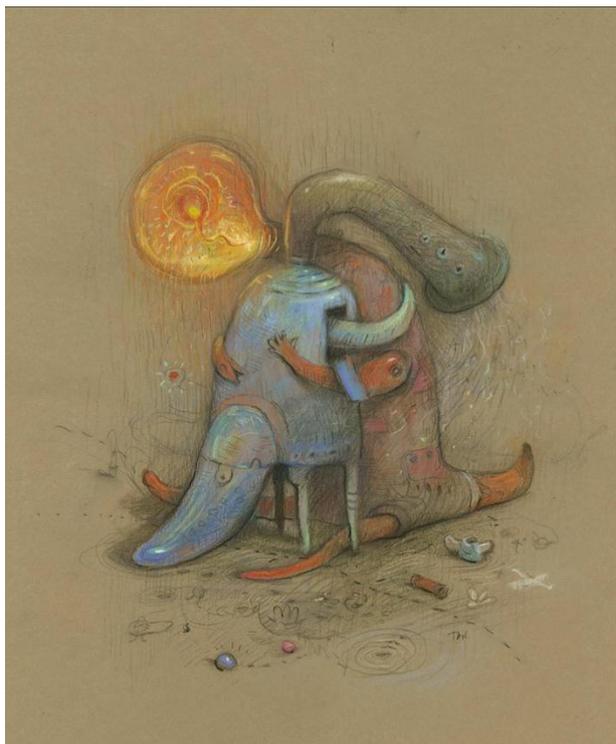
Does the final mural look like a real community? Why?

Resources

Tan, S. 2000 *The Lost Thing*, Lothian Books

Tan, S. and Ruhemann, A. (Directors) 2010 *The Lost Thing* [animated short film], Passion Pictures Australia.

Some Examples from the Book



Shaun Tan, *Found*, 2017, Pastel on Paper



Shaun Tan, *Lost Thing* film concept art, *Song Master*, 2007, Pencil on Paper



Shaun Tan, *Lost Thing* film concept art, *Cagebird and Obstetrician*, 2007, Pencil on Paper