



REWILDING: PLAY IN NATURE

Exploring nature in winter, some family friendly activities for nature walks and at home, from theatre maker **Hannah McCormick**. These activities are the fruits of a week-long residency at Butler Gallery, funded by Artlinks Bursary 2020. The residency aimed to research and develop a new and original theatre piece for families, a winter based exploration of a journey in nature. Playing with water, earth, fire and air and the materials that nature has to offer in winter, I created small interactions with nature, offering ideas to use on nature walks and at home. The gathered materials used in the activities were foraged in Kilkenny city, take a walk and see what you can find....





ACTIVITY 1: LEAF FOLK



TO MAKE: Use your fingernails to make small holes in a leaf, poke through smaller leaves, berries or lichen to make eyes, mouths, tongues, moustaches or eyebrows – whatever you like! Watch the characters come to life. This can be done while out for a walk, or gather materials to make at home.

GATHERED MATERIALS:



ADDITIONAL MATERIALS: None!



ACTIVITY 2: MOSS JUNGLE



TO MAKE: Gather materials while out for a walk, moss grows in all sorts of places – on rocks, walls and roofs so you might find some at home too. Assemble your gathered materials, use rocks and moss to make islands and small branches to make connecting bridges. Having a variety of moss and grass, twigs and branches, pine cones and lichen will help bring it to life.

GATHERED MATERIALS:



ADDITIONAL MATERIALS:

Moss jungles look great on their own but you can decorate them with things you might have at home. I made a rope swing with string and a twig, a sign from a paper and twig, and added mushrooms and crystals. Lego figures are also a good scale for the mini jungle.



ACTIVITY 3: BOATS

All activities involving fire and water are **parent led activities** and should be supervised at all times.



TO MAKE: This is trial and error, gather anything you think will float – twigs, bark, large leaves, take it home and see if it sinks or swims. Tie small sticks together using string to make a raft, I used my leaf folk for sails, bare leaves work better. Sticky or modelling wax will help plug holes and hold things together. Walnut shells with candles for sails are an excellent addition and introduce the element of fire, bringing warmth and atmosphere.

GATHERED MATERIALS:



ADDITIONAL MATERIALS:

- String
- Cocktail sticks
- Walnut shells (not all will float)
- Birthday candle (cut the bottoms off to make them shorter and easier to float)
- Sticky wax (optional)



ACTIVITY 4: A WINTER LAKE

All activities involving fire and water are **parent led activities** and should be **supervised at all times**.



TO MAKE: Assemble your moss jungle in a basin or sand pit (the bigger the better), you may need some extra stones to elevate your moss jungle above water level. Top up with water so you have at least 2 inches depth. Place your boats in the water, let them float or gently help them navigate using a stick to push them along. Do be aware of naked flames, they must be supervised at all times.

This is a perfect activity for a dark winter evening. The smell of moss in water and the warmth of the candlelight fill your senses with the elements of earth, water and fire. Turn down the lights, tell a story or listen to some music and let the little ones imaginations run wild!

GATHERED MATERIALS:

None! Unless you haven't done activities 1, 2 and 3 – in that case you'll have to start from the start.

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS:

- A large basin or sand pit
- Dark cloth (optional -if your basin is light in colour, use a dark cloth to add a better tone to the water)
- Water