

LEARNING RESOURCE



Surprising Spheres

Many contemporary artists choose to put aside traditional sculptural materials and instead utilize objects and materials designed for a different purpose. Chocolate, human hair, cutlery, shells - there is no end to the kinds of objects and materials that can be re-purposed and used as an Art material. Such materials might be chosen or collected for their physical properties, but also for their symbolic, narrative or functional associations.

This resource is designed to encourage a curiosity towards the collection of unusual materials, as well as a playful approach to construction. Through this project you will collect and then combine materials in inventive ways to create a group of 'Surprising Spheres'. It is a good idea to put aside plenty of time for the collection of materials, and then spend only a limited time constructing each sphere (try 15 minutes on each one) so that you can build up momentum and generate ideas without too much over-thinking.

What will I need for this project?

- A variety of collected objects and materials.
Objects can be collected from any number of places or locations, for example: a toolshed, a kitchen, a forest or a charity shop. Try to find and collect objects/materials with different physical qualities such as hard, soft, natural, man-made, rough, smooth, strong, fragile, rigid, elastic, heavy, light.
- A ball of clay or modeling material.

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Step one:

Gather together your collected materials and objects, making sure these items have a range of physical properties (such as hard, soft, rough, smooth etc.)



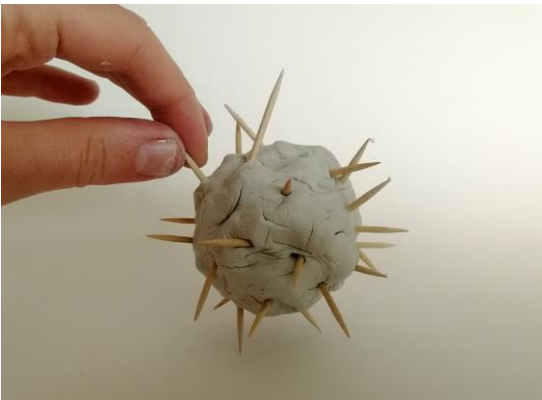
Step two:

Lay out your materials and consider which of these you would like to combine together. Can you find pairs of objects/materials with contrasting qualities, for example rough and smooth, sharp and squidgy, fragile and strong? Can you find other surprising combinations?



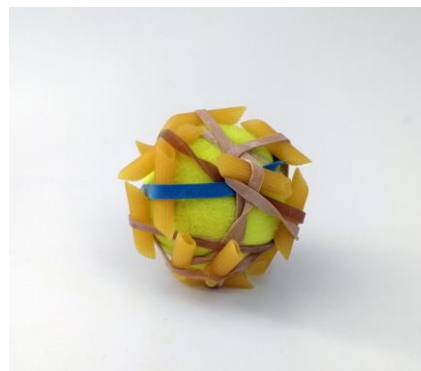
Step three:

Try combining two or more of your selected materials together to create a sphere. You might want to use a spherical 'base' such as ball of clay to help you get started.



Step four:

Instead of using glue or tape, could you combine your materials by wrapping, bending, weaving or balancing them together? How many other ways could you combine them? Keep experimenting as you create more surprising spheres.



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Question Points

- Gather together your spheres. What surprising combinations of materials have you used?
- What are the associations of the various objects/materials that you have used? For example, a balloon is associated with celebration and joy, but metal wire might be associated with cages and imprisonment.
- By taking objects and materials out of their normal context and combining them with another material, how has this changed their appearance or meaning?
- If you were to create a new set of spheres, how could you combine your materials in a different way?

