STARCATCHERS

CREATIVE SKILLS ONLINE

The Creative Skills Podcast

Episode 2: Visual Arts Outdoors, Across Art-Forms and Beyond with Pearl Kinnear

**Transcript**

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# Transcript

**Heather Armstrong (00:27):**
Welcome to Creative Skills Online. I'm Heather from Starcatchers. On this podcast, we're hosting a series of chats with the amazing artists who usually deliver our Creative Skills programme for the Early Years Workforce in Scotland. And today I'm joined by Pearl Kinnear! Pearl how you doing?

**Pearl Kinnear (00:42):**
I'm doing well, how're you?

**Heather Armstrong (00:42):**
Good, good good! So we are obviously recording these podcasts during the summer of 2020. At the time of recording this one, we are not sure what the guidance is going to be for nurseries and other early years settings in Scotland.

But what I wanted to do was have a bit of a chat with you today - a bit about your practice and some of the ideas that we might be able to share with the early years workforce, that can be useful over the next few months, because I think that regardless of what the situation is going to be in terms of COVID there's still loads of creative ways that we can be engaging with wee ones and that's kind of what we're hoping to focus on today.

**Pearl Kinnear (01:18):**
Okay.

**Heather Armstrong (01:18):**
So can we start off, tell us about your practice as an artist, and what's special about working with wee ones for you?

**Pearl Kinnear (01:26):**
Well, I particularly love working with wee ones because drawing plays a really important part in my practice and the thing with children is that they're all about mark-making. So, it doesn't matter what they use, whether it's something three dimensional, whether it's like making movements or play, whether they're baking and manifesting things with their hands and mixing; everything comes down to drawing because children get caught up in that. It's almost like a performance: when they do things they get really caught up in the movements that they make which can be directly translated into marks.

And so, my drawing practice in particular is quite heavily based on that freedom of mark-making and playing with materials in particular - so experimenting with materials and trying to find new ways of using them.

So you may go down quite a traditional route and the way I would tend to do it personally is if [for example] I decide that I'm interested using gold leaf and my work, I might not want to use in a

traditional sense, but I'll approach from a traditional sense. So, I'll learn about the traditions of gold leaf, I'll learn how it's done properly. And then I'll try and break the way that it's done to suit my work. Does that make sense?

**Heather Armstrong (02:46):**
Yeah, absolutely. I mean, I'd like to think that in early years we're all kind of moving away from that now, but I know for a long time, we were very wedded to that kind of like step-by-step, kind of craft process when everyone was really focused on, you know, getting the same kinda result at the end, whether it was a Mother's Day card, or a sunflower paper plate - which people have heard me bang on a lot about before!

But what you're talking about sounds more like a kind of like play and exploration-based approach to visual art?

**Pearl Kinnear (03:14):**
For my work... I tend to want to want to know how the people that did it first - everything that they knew - so I can then take what they knew and apply it in a broken way. It's backwards working because for children, they apply it in the broken way first - they discover everything themselves first.

For me, because I do art and maybe sometimes that art is sold on, I have to make sure it's made as an actual art object, whereas with children it's much freer and it's much more about a discovery for them. So, it's like, I have to learn everything inside-out before I can then break it to discover what I can do differently with it - whereas children you're just introducing them to a material and letting them go straight into discovery.

And I think the joy of working with children is seeing how things that maybe you've done before... There's this idea that you have to bring something new, that parallel of where "it has to be A to B", and there has to be this end product - then people get scared because they think they have to bring a new thing in everyday - but each child will bring a new thing to everyday materials that you use, and you have to embrace that and then get involved in their end products and see where that idea takes you. An example of that would be like pipe cleaners, like, we all use pipe cleaners... or squiggly craft - they've got a new name now cause nobody smokes pipes anymore!

**Heather Armstrong (04:54):**
Bendy fluff straws? Or something? [laughs]

**Pearl Kinnear (04:57):**
[laughs] So let's say you make... you know, everybody knows how to make a pair of glasses, with pipe cleaners right? So, it's like... "Let's make a pair of glasses, and put them on,"... but, like, give them to a child and they make glasses - and then those glasses suddenly transform them into a superhero that can run really fast, you know? And so suddenly those glasses have brought another element to it that you didn't think they were going to bring you just thought "I'm going to make glasses".

There's this whole other thing involved. So, it's really as about embracing, how the child then takes those things and uses them, or what develops from the activity that they're doing with those materials.

I think it's not necessarily about bringing an end product all the time. It's about maybe re-exploring materials you already have and letting the children lead new ideas - because they *will* come up with ideas. And it's okay to re-visit ideas - I think people are a bit scared of re-visiting ideas sometimes, but if you're on the lookout for new ways of reacting to those materials, children are always going to bring that cause they're always going to react really individually to it. And you just have to get out of this "we have X amount of time to use this material and get to this end" [mentality]. It doesn't matter if you don't get to the end. It's about the experience of using the material.

**Heather Armstrong (06:22):**
Yeah. It sounds like there's a... I think there's a lot in your practice, actually a lot in the early years in general now where it's about... not just thinking about - to go back to your pipe cleaner glasses - it's not just about "we need to make the glasses" it's like "we could make the glasses - what else might happen during that?" and I think the real skill when it comes to encouraging young children to be creative is about being flexible.

So, you might go in with an idea and say “well let's see what we can make with some pipe cleaners today”, but then it's about if they then segway into imaginative play or, you know, something else, it's about being able to embrace that, isn't it? And not just say "well, this is about visual art right now, so that's what we're doing!"

**Pearl Kinnear (07:02):**
I think the thing is that... Arts is all encompassing. So if you then start moving about, do you then go, "no, I can't do that cause I'm not doing dance today"? It evolves into a dance scheme and that's great because that's part of the arts as well.

And we do talk about this in Starcatchers quite a lot about collaboration of the arts and the crossovers and how important those crossovers are - because the arts, all of the art forms, access that part of a child's character, that part of a child's brain to help them develop. So, it's not up to us to box them in to say "you're only doing visual art today", or "you're only doing dance today" or "only doing storytelling"- because all of the arts can easily filter in and out of each other and still enhance that aspects of character building that we aim for.

**Heather Armstrong (07:58):**
Yeah, absolutely. I think there's a kind of like a gateway role that can happen as well, whether it's about children who are naturally gravitating more towards visual art, maybe being inspired to do a bit more imaginative play or children who are really into imaginative play, but you know, maybe wouldn't want to like sit a table and mark-make and there's different ways to go from one art form to another isn't there?

**Pearl Kinnear (08:22):**
There is! And I think as well it's... I mean, if you're outside say and you're on a beach - beaches are great because you've instantly got a huge canvas right under your feet - and if the kids are moving then it is just a case of creating some sort of line for them to follow - and then they're suddenly making art without even knowing it! Or they're building in the sand and that's them making art - they're doing that, they're moving and maybe storytelling as well.

You know, there's just... everything just feeds each other and is just about kind of appreciating the fact that you can jump between art forms with children. They quite happily take on everything at the same time and explore. and I suppose as just about feeling *free* to explore.

**Heather Armstrong (09:12):**
Yeah. Brilliant!

So, back in the days when we could all be in a room together, and breathe the same air [laughs] it feels like a long time ago doesn't it? What were your favourite ideas for working with wee ones and through the Creative Skills programme?

**Pearl Kinnear (09:31):**
I mean, I think the biggest problem with art now is you can't just hand things over - that you're having to think constantly about whose hands been on something before you hand it to somebody. So, so that's a huge problem. I think just generally... So immediately that just impacts every art form that you would do inside with kids.

But my favourite? I suppose I love playing with light really. So, I love with... kids doing light stuff because they really enjoy that instant things change. So, if you're using light reactive paints and then put it inside a box and then light it up with UV lights and stuff. I think that was my favourite thing to do.

And using overhead projectors so you can have a dark space that you light up. I think that kind of interactive quick and instant non-permanent art works really well with kids. And you do get, you know... a lot of children that like to sit and make things but I think they all respond really well to this like, really temporary art. And you don't have to keep... maintaining - this idea that we keep talking about - this idea that you get to the end and there's an end product and they have to have that. You know what I mean?

I think if you, if you engage with kids and temporary art much bigger things can come out of that. That's when all the ideas build cause because the really respond to you. Sometimes you find when you go on with "here, here's, here's a plate, let's make a flower, let's add this, let's add that" - they can concentrate on it. But once they're finished it's like, you know, they're just *finished*.

Whereas if you get them engaged with art in their play then they will continue and continue and continue and re-visit and come back to it and change it. The art forms [e.g. something you can use to document the experience/show parents] come in other ways - and they may come in recording

what the kids do - may come in photographing them. [I love those] little, small things that you just... that are just sudden – like a child drops a light inside something and suddenly thinks "Oh my God, we can make lots of these things with that!" Those more impermanent kind of art practices are what I liked doing with young kids.

**Heather Armstrong (11:53):**
Yeah. You did a thing when I've been at some of your sessions before with the finger lights and an app. Can you talk us through that? Cause that was fascinating to me.

**Pearl Kinnear (12:03):**
That's light painting, basically! And you can actually get... there's specific phones that have light painting apps already on them. So they have it built into the cameras. So I think it is... and I always say this wrong! I think is it [mispronounces "Huawei"] Hoo... hoo... hoo... hoo-wow? Hoo-way? Hoo-ey?

**Heather Armstrong (12:25):**
Hoo-weh? Hoo-weh?

**Pearl Kinnear (12:25):**
[laughs] Yeah! Those particular phones have... Already have a light painting app in it which is great. Apple's can get quite good light painting apps and Android, but none of the apps work as well as, as SLR camera.

So you have access, which most people... you get one or two that work within a nursery settings or someone that works within a school or the partner of somebody that works in the nursery setting that will have access to one of these cameras and will actually know about light painting because it is a really good fun thing to do.

Then basically all you need is torches. So you don't even need finger torches - I use finger torches because for me - when a kid's around about four, they won't put it in their mouth and you do need to think about that - they'll point it right at the camera when you put it on their finger whereas if you give them a torch to hold, they'll point it to the ceiling. They just do - can't help it - and you kinda need it pointed at the camera to make it work.

But yeah, you can use torches. You can use any... Any light source and you need it to be quite bright though to get good pictures. And then it's just basically about setting a really slow, a slow setting on your camera for the lens. So, how a camera lens works is - what you want to do is you want the eye and the camera to stay open as long as possible. So, it's like when you write your name with sparklers...

**Heather Armstrong (13:55):**
Ah!

**Pearl Kinnear (13:55):**
You want the camera eye open as long as possible so it will capture the whole movement of the name. And then it shuts again. And what's nice about it with kids is they'll just run about. So, the kids wouldn't show up in the photograph at all, because they'll move the whole time and it will just be the light - cause that's the bright thing that's there - the constant that's there. But the kids are just kinda dimmer and they move about so you won't really see them.

And then you just basically up the contrast on it, when you get it home onto your computer and you end up these beautiful light paintings that are really abstract, but really lovely too!

**Heather Armstrong (14:29):**
Yeah!

**Pearl Kinnear (14:29):**
And you can mimic that with paint as well. They [children] can go back and revisit it - maybe with a piece of music that you're using - and they can re-visit that in real terms with paint and see if there's any similarities between the movements that they make with the lights and the movements of they make with the paint.

**Heather Armstrong (14:45):**
Yeah. It feels like quite nice progression to kind of like start with the torches - and it's that - what you were talking about earlier on isn't it? - about that kind of whole-body movement and visual art and being able to connect, connect the two, which is so important!

Particularly if kids are still working on gross motor skills, you know, I think - so often I talk to early years practitioners, and it was all "we've got, you know" (not always boys, but it seems to be boys that people talk about) "a lot of wee boy boys are just - they're just not arty! they just don't want a sit down at the art table." And it's just trying to get ideas that challenge that, isn't it and say, "well, actually, if you do want to run about, if you do want to make big movements, if that's where you are developmentally (or just personally) then you absolutely, you can engage in this and these are the amazing things that you can make!"

**Pearl Kinnear (15:29):**
Yeah. But see if you bring out water pistols in the summer and you're outside and you give them a big blank bit of paper and you fill the water pistols with paint, I bet you all those boys would want to play with those water pistols and make a picture. It's really about finding what it is that clicks with them. Unfortunately, we have this version of art being contained at a table with chairs, with art materials, sat in the middle of the table. There's this panic that if we take it anywhere else that it's going to make a mess. You know what I mean?

"It's going to take too long or it's going to, kids are going to just get wild" and you know, but they're going to get wild anyway. Then, then give them something to focus on when they get wild! And especially right now, because of what we're talking about, there is this issue where indoor play isn't really working at the moment, because we're dealing with COVID-19.

**Heather Armstrong (16:28):**
Yep.

**Pearl Kinnear (16:28):**
So outdoor play is probably going to be the way to go - and therefore, yeah, we have to work out... You have to work out where to see art when it's happening, because it is happening all the time, with kids you know?

**Heather Armstrong (16:42):**
Yeah.

**Pearl Kinnear (16:42):**
You know, if they make up a story as they go when they're jumping over puddles, then that's a form of art - it's a form of storytelling. It's about really taking advantage of the kids' imagination and you... you then engage them with that and see what ideas you can pull out of that!

**Heather Armstrong (17:00):**
Yeah, and I think that's what we've been encouraging all the early years practitioners to do now - and I know that a lot of them are doing it anyway as there's that kind of move towards child-led practice, it's about kind of scaffolding ideas on and seeing what children are naturally interested in then building on it.

So, I just want to go back a wee bit to this idea - the water pistol painting outside? Mostly, cause I wanna do it! It sounds like super good fun!

**Pearl Kinnear (17:35):**
[laughs] It's one I've done with my nieces, my own children, and I encourage lots of other people as well, but really as just about - I mean like lots of people in nurseries have probably done something similar except they've just used water on a hot day and they've got kids to make patterns with water - and then it dries off and it's fine.

Effectively it's just about getting a big bit of paper as many different market-making tools as possible: water pistols being one of them, you can have mops as well. So, you basically give them as big a canvas as possible and it's like action painting, really. So, it is just about whether they want use music, or whether they want to use a game, as, as a thing to have behind it. They can put things on top so that they create stencils, that the marks are all made around - and then when they take the stencils away, they will have kind of sprayed marks all round it.

You can do much smaller scale versions as well. You can use rubber bands and stuff. So if you get, you know, the big rubber bands that you would put round files and stuff together?

**Heather Armstrong (18:37):**
Yeah!

**Pearl Kinnear (18:37):**
You can get them online, they're quite cheap. And you get like maybe shoe boxes or plastic trays and you can basically just put loads of elastic bands over the top and just drip paint onto the elastic bands - have paper underneath - and you just play with elastic bands. So, there you've got music and painting!

**Heather Armstrong (18:56):**
[laughs]

**Pearl Kinnear (18:56):**
It's just, I mean, it's just spraying painting! So, it is just about how to actively engage with paint that isn't that traditional "here is a palette, here is a paintbrush - we have to keep it on this A4 bit of paper" because children tend to want to go off that A4 bit of paper and that's something to be encouraged. I think because the story will then grow and change into something else.

But yeah, big bits of paper, whatever things you can think of to add - you know, water pistols are great. Like I said, you can put things down and you can have mops, brushes so that when they spray paint down and they can move it about, they can mop it up with things, change their marks, they can do printing.

They can do anything they want really! They can drag, like, bits of material around as well, which will then change it. They can use their bikes, which are great. They can just roll over the top of it, you know, we can just go totally abstract.

And then what you can do - if you've got a big enough group of children, you can then join... You can then crop it all at the end, after you've recorded your picture and taken a big picture of it - you can, you can choose sections to give to the kids. So, they have a little thing to take home with them - that becomes a bigger thing when it's all together.

**Heather Armstrong (20:17):**
And it doesn't have to be expensive does it? Even just kind of like... Rolls of lining paper or things like that?

**Pearl Kinnear (20:24):**
Even see bedsheets, see bedsheets are quite inexpensive, but they take paint really, really well. So, you know, we can just get an old bed sheet and put it down on the ground and it, and it, it will take a lot more punishment than paper. So, and then you can even take that further where you get all the kids to bring in a t-shirt and they put the t-shirt down on top of the bed sheet and they all end up with a mad washing line of t-shirts! It's just really how you far you want to take it.

**Heather Armstrong (20:57):**
And with that... that kind of paint outside kind of idea - would it just be normal poster paint you would use, or?

**Pearl Kinnear (21:04):**
It depends if you want it to last. If it's a dry day poster paint is fine. If you want it to be something that you can wash, then you have to go with acrylic. If you're going with acrylic paint, you have to make sure the kids, even though it's water-based, you have to make sure the kids are wearing clothes that don't matter because acrylic paint - once it is on it will stay on.

You used to be able to get powder paint that's ready mixed that is washable, that's totally child safe, but they don't tend to make anymore. It's a bit of a shame because you could then just have wet paper and get the kids to throw coloured powder, which is quite nice. But, *but* because of the colour festivals that have happened recently, you can probably access a lot of these types of pigments. You'd have to check about the toxic-ness of them, but I'm assuming kind of food-colouring-type powders would be the best way to go. I'm assuming that the ones that they do in the colour runs and stuff that they throw at people have to be non-toxic. So, they must be available, but I'd have to look into that to find out!

**Heather Armstrong (22:09):**
What do you think people need to keep in mind when they're exploring visual art with very young children - and this is not specifically in a kind of COVID specific, but just kind of more generally, what kind of ethos are you wanting people to take away?

**Pearl Kinnear (22:20):**
Generally, I think when exploring- excuse me, two seconds 'til I sort these dogs! Right, just because I didn't think it was very child-friendly if all you could hear was [impersonates dogs] arr rarr rarr arr rarr rarr!

**Heather Armstrong (22:23):**

[laughs]

**Pearl Kinnear (22:34):**

[laughs] So, so yeah, I think really... if you're engaging with children and the arts anytime, regardless of now, you have to engage with the materials on their terms. So, it's not about an end product it's about experiential use of a material, which allows you to re-visit it lots and lots and lots. Things like foam, you know, kids will use foam in different ways - and will get out of it what they want to get out of it on that day. Making bubble pictures - they will get what they want out of it on that day. It doesn't mean you can't re-visit again. Because it's not always about... about the end products, it's about what's happening in between.

But working outdoors then - really, it's about letting them engage with outside and finding ways to maybe record what they're doing? Maybe they have packets of art materials that they each have, like a... when you go away on a school trip and you'll have your lunch bags that the school provides you and they all have a sandwich - a sandwich and a packet of crisps and a juice-box - so maybe it's like, you know, "today we're all going out with a bit of clay, and we're going out with a bit of greaseproof paper, and we're going out with some crayons - and...you're going to use them, whatever way you want!" [or] “We're going out with a bit of twine and we're going out and we

want you to find an object." [or] "We want you to, you know, find an object that you can make an impression of, finding an object you can make a rubbing with."

So maybe it's all just about that engaging outdoors by finding ways to explore outdoors with art materials!

**Heather Armstrong (24:11):**

Yeah. I think that's really exciting. I want a wee pack like that now! I want some clay and some greaseproof paper! [laughs]

**Pearl Kinnear (24:21):**

Cause I was... I did go in [to a setting] and was really conscious like: right we are really trying to be conscious of the COVID-19 - even though the setting we're in is kind of dictating to us that we can't be - we kind of have to be.

So, all the kids... I just did all these pots of art materials set up. So, when one or two children were in they had their own pots of art materials so that we started the way we meant - even though ultimately didn't end up that way - that the potential for it to be like that was there. And then when they finished with those pots, all those art materials were taken off the table and two new pots went on the table and two new children came in with two workers and that's how it went, which is quite strange.

And I think... I think in nursery settings... I mean, for us, it's about us trying to normalise [this]... and still play and still afford them affection in the play. It's about engaging with the outdoors, using art, and still giving them the affection through art and through activities and engaging with what they're discovering.

And there's even just really simple things like playing with bubbles that now, you know, teachers have to think, "well, we have to use bubble wands because it's not good maybe to be blowing". Do you know what I mean? There're really simple things like that that are suddenly coming in into play. But, in turn that actually affords a really nice movement exercise to come into it as well - it's about instead of looking at what we're getting given as a restriction - look at it as a creative opportunity, you know?

It's like, "I can't blow a bubble, so I'm gonna use a wand, but then that's great! Because then when I use that wand, I can go [impersonates a magical sound] *da-da-da-ling*!" Or "I can do a big twirly movement and all the kids can copy me!" And then, you know, you can make sure all the kids have their own wands, you know, and they get to do their own bubble thing as well.

So it is just...you know... We have what we have! So, it is just about taking those things and then seeing what comes out of it.

And going back to what you were saying about using clay and stuff as well - even just clay can be quite expensive - but [you can go] back to the old recipes and make play-dough yourself and give

kids their own recipe boxes, and sit in a circle and make their own clay themselves that they can then dry out once they've made what they're going to make. You know?

**Heather Armstrong (26:53):**
Yeah. And it then becomes kind of... it's more than - I mean, I know we don't like the word “activity” anymore - but it becomes more than one experience, doesn't it? So, there's, there's a kind of sensory experience of making the mixture in the first place, and then once it's done it's then saying "well actually, what else? What else can we do with that?" And I suppose the nice thing about natural materials is that, even if you are doing some of the mixing inside, you could also be outside. You can create kind of temporary art, around... around the place as well... which can-

**Pearl Kinnear (27:25):**
Yeah! I mean they could totally paper mâché over trees and stuff because the minute the rain comes, that's just gonna all wash away anyway! So, it is about... is about... affording them the freedom to explore maybe in a way that... that would be a little bit more apprehensive previously about.

There's all this "oh, don't mark, that don't damage that". So, if we give them things to use that are actually gonna kind of play on science as well - you know there is that whole... the scientific side of mixing things is really interesting! So, there's that... that whole experiential thing as well. The fact that they know, if they add too much liquid, it's going to go runny [or] if they don't add enough it's going to stay hard and solid. And so, so there is that whole joy of, you know, learning these different things and engaging in that.

There has been a real leaning towards children being scared of getting messy and instead - if they get messy, the whole hand cleaning thing comes naturally. Maybe we just have to gear them up for messy activities and then the whole hand-washing thing becomes much more integrated and much more enjoyable as well.

**Heather Armstrong (28:43):**
Yeah. Just when you mentioned science there actually it reminded me - we did a series of Creative Chats over the summer with an artist, Rebecca Fraser, who was engaged in her own community. So, it was kind of like six weeks of going and doing different kinds of art ideas with 0-5s who lived within a 1-kilometre range - but one of the things she spoke about was the fact that you can use different language to engage different children in the same activity.

So, you were talking about science and things that really reminded me - one of her own wee boys isn't "arty" at all, but as soon, she started talking about "design". It was all: "Amazing! Yeah. I'm up for that," [laughs]. Which I just thought was fascinating. There’re two thoughts that I'm just like... we maybe won't get answer to today!

One thought, is about that kind of language and saying - well, actually we don't always have to - particularly if children are a little resistant to kind of certain things - but we don't always need to call it what we think it is. If you see what I mean? We can talk about - we're going to do an

"experiment" or, you know, we're going to do some "design", what you were talking about earlier about the idea of like building structures for things to grow up, that's just some "architecture" in the garden! And that can be a way to kind of engage kids who wouldn't otherwise be, you know, elbowing their way out to be at the art table.

But I also wonder, you know, as Rebecca was doing things within the community, and then you were talking about paper mâché-ing trees and stuff, I think one of the advantages of the lockdown is that within communities there have been more instances of kind of transient art just kind of appearing.

**Pearl Kinnear (30:38):**
I've got a beautiful example of that I will actually send you, that I found this morning, where, the council have been repairing a pavement - you know they do that thing where they put the concrete in and they kind of dimple with this thing and it makes it fit in with the rest of the slabs? And when they've done that somebody who lives close by has come out with a gingerbread cutter and made a gingerbread imprint.

**Heather Armstrong (31:01):**
[laughs]

**Pearl Kinnear (31:01):**
I'm going to send you that picture! You can share it on Starcatchers.

**Heather Armstrong (31:09):**
[laughing] There we go, that's our next idea to share with everyone! Anyone got some wet concrete?

**Pearl Kinnear (31:19):**
[laughing] Yeah! Find some wet concrete, take out a cookie cutter, make an imprint! No, but it is beautiful. Yeah, I'll send that. In fact, I'll post it on the Starcatchers [Facebook group]. and you can lift it and post it whatever you want.

**Heather Armstrong (31:32):**
[laughing] That would be brilliant, thanks Pearl.

**Pearl Kinnear (31:32):**
It's a perfect example of that - I saw it this morning when I was walking back. I love all these little things that people have done!

And there was that project in Edinburgh, with the plasticine, I think? Where somebody has put little plasticine creatures on a wall and I think that they'd given plasticine to children in the area. And it was almost like a challenge. And when they saw them, they would add [to it]. So, this little kind of crazy plasticine subterranean world happened on these walls in Edinburgh which was brilliant!

And Victoria Park in Glasgow, there's a bit in the fern, near the fossil - the tree fossils in the museum - there's a bit in that people have decorated for fairies - and that's been there for ages! And there's always people adding wee things. So, it is a thing that, that kind of happens in society anyway, but I think people being stuck in one place has made them afford a little bit more attention to where they stay.

**Heather Armstrong (32:31):**
Yeah, absolutely. And I think when we talk about outdoor play often... in early years, they're thinking about forests, we're thinking about beaches, we're thinking about all these like lovely, rich, natural, environments, and I'm always really aware that actually there's a lot of children that are grown up in very urban environments and so being able to take these kind of visual art ideas within their own community - obviously if they have green spaces that's really valuable and really important, and if settings can access that, then they should - but I'm really excited about the visual art that's going to start to happen - that is already happening and will hopefully keep happening within communities.

And I hope that settings will maybe be able a wee bit brave about saying, "well, actually, you know, if we're a little bit limited in terms of the outdoor space that we've got, well actually as the space and the community that we can start to enhance?"

**Pearl Kinnear (33:24):**
There is loads of... I mean, what used to be waste ground that then became known as "gap sites", and I think they've got another name now... I think they've changed that name - it used to be "gap sites" for a while. And there is still lots of those little... just little patches of grass sitting about or little bits of concrete that - if they're adjacent to places where children are gathering and then why not, you know, add to them? Why not put things in?

But even then, just, you know, you... chalk is so, so accessible and just, you know, children having chalk on their journey and, doing the whole breadcrumb trail thing when they go from A-B. I do love a breadcrumb trail! [laughs] And I do think kids love it. They can map their way out and map their way back again. I do kind of like that type of thing. And then, and then once they've done it once, then they will start to explore it in other ways as well. So, it might be a case of you do it with ribbons one day, or you do with chalk the first day, you use something else next [day].

And then there's lots of street artists as well - there's that street artist that - I can't remember what part of the world they're in I'll try and find a link - but he goes around and he'll find bits of wall that's broken and he'll mend it with Lego brick and it's so lovely! And there was a school in Cadder that did a wee thing like that, they found him as an artist inspired the kids and they had this, kind of, old beat up bit of wall in their playground and the kids went out and fixed all the bits of the wall with Lego. And it looked amazing!

**Heather Armstrong (34:57):**
I now want to donate all the Duplo in my spare room [laughs].

**Pearl Kinnear (34:57):**
[laughs] I'll find that link and I'll send that link to you cause that's a lovely artist to look at! And I mean, that's an example of, you know, that's a beautiful bread crumb trail you know, you're just walking along, and you're like "Oh, look at that!" And then you see another one and you know, that's something kids can really engage with. Do you know what I mean? It's like lots of them love Lego it's just like "Oh, I'll just fix that".

It's very childlike as well, that ideas just come and fix something that they just stick a plaster over something and that's it mended! Or, you know, they, these Lego to fix it or they use play dough to fix it or plasticine, or whatever they've got to hand!

And then maybe that's what we do - maybe it is that we just give them materials and see how they engage with the world with those materials - the world around about them whether they engage with them in a - like we were saying - in a cooking fashion or whether it's a mending fashion or whether it's, you know, creating and designing something else from basic materials and what they've got to hand. You know kids... kids will a way of being creative with almost anything. So, it is just about giving them the freedom really... to kind of... be creative!

**Heather Armstrong (36:11):**
Yeah. Listen, this has been an absolute treat. I've loved speaking to you as ever. Thank you so much!

Just a wee reminder, for anybody who's been listening to this and who does want to use this podcast to kind of spark more creativity within their own setting: obviously you can share this with your colleagues. We're going to work on a Reflective Practice Worksheet with some questions that people can explore and we're going to do some little videos. Thank you so much Pearl!

**Pearl Kinnear (36:38):**
Thank you!

**Heather Armstrong (36:38):**
Thank you to all our listeners! If you've got any questions, then you can get us on the Starcatchers Twitter and on the Starcatchers website and we shall hopefully see you all soon!

**Catherine Wilson (36:51):**
The Creative Skills podcast was hosted by Heather Armstrong, and our guest was Pearl Kinnear. You can find out more about Pearl by visiting www.pearlkinnear.com.

Every episode of our podcast comes with resources you can access online to continue the creative conversation. To find this episode's videos, Reflective Practice Worksheet and more go to www.starcatchers.org.uk/episode2

Our intro music is "Road Building" composed by Abigail Sinar and performed by the RSNO

for "Hup" in 2014.

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