



## A Guide to Making Mud Paint and Paintings

**First you will need to go outside to collect some earth or chalk. Please make sure you have permission to dig up your earth!**

**BE CAREFUL AND DON'T DIG near dog poo or broken glass!**

**You will also need:**

- An old spoon or garden trowel
- Clean recycled yoghurt pots, washed bread-bags (or similar) to collect earths
- Old paintbrushes (or why not make your own tools from sticks or feathers?)
- Water
- Old sieve (optional)
- PVA glue or matt acrylic varnish to mix into the earth to bind it
- The back of an 'Unearthing' postcard or other plain surface to use as your canvas

**What to do**

- Try to dig down at least 10cms below the surface of the ground. Easy places to access earths are edges of streams, puddles, vegetable patches and molehills where the subsoil is already exposed.
- Avoid collecting too much leaf-litter or roots.
- Place a handful of earth in a pot and mix with a little water to make a hot-chocolate-type consistency (but don't drink it!).
- **Optional:** Pass the mixture through a sieve if it's very lumpy, gritty or full of roots

- **Optional:** if you collect lumps of chalk, these will go soft when soaked in water\*, so leave them to soak for a while before trying to mix them into paint.
- Add PVA or varnish for a better flow of paint and to bind it (this stops it cracking and falling off).
- Experiment with different consistencies (add more or less water) to see the effect it has on your painting
- Collect different coloured earths from anywhere you have permission to dig. Have you noticed the brilliant white chalk? How different this is from the darker brown earth in your garden? Try making several different colour paints. Keep the different earths separate to enable you to have several colours to choose from.
- **Wash your hands when you've finished making your paint.**
- Give your paint a name based on where you dug the earth from
- Make a painting of flora or fauna (native plants or animals) on the back of the postcard.
- **If you don't feel confident to paint, then can you write a message using your paint on the postcard instead? Maybe a poem about earth or environment?**
- Paint away!
- When you've finished, photograph your artwork or writing and upload the picture to the Instagram Gallery, using the **#unearthingchaseandchalke** hashtag and include the name of your paint in your post too

\*gravel, flint and harder chinks and other stones are too hard to make into paint, so sieve these bits out.

### **Did you know?**

The first pigments for artists' paint came from the earth and there are still artists who make a living using actual mud for their art – like Sara Dudman's paintings.

Sara uses a description of where she found the earth to name each paint she makes, such as 'Fallen Tree, Roman Road' or 'Puddle Edge, Church Bottom'. What name will you give yours?

### **Extending the activity**

Experiment with drawing with lumps of chalk you can collect from the ground. Most chalk is quite soft and will make beautiful white marks – so you can draw using chalk from the earth as well as the sticks you can buy. Try this out on black paper or even on brown cardboard boxes. Just pick it up and draw – as easy as that!

Experiment with painting onto flat rocks outdoors. If you use the paint you've made, without adding the PVA glue, then this will wash away when it rains and leave no trace.

Try making drawings outside using lumps of chalk too. Drawings onto other rocks are great and will also wash away later.

***NB: always ask permission before you make your paintings and drawings outdoors!***

Together we will map the colours and geology of the Chase & Chalke Landscape Partnership area. Have fun!!