

Relaxing morning with Resorting to the Coast half-term activity for families:

A morning was spent in peaceful productivity by a small group of families at Resorting to the Coast's half-term workshop for budding artists. The workshop was guided by local community artist, Angenita Hardy-Teekens, and one of her several talents are specialising in blue print photography and artwork. The blue print method was first used by a Victorian photographer called Anna Atkins who was also a botanist. The cyanotype, a photographic way of printmaking using sunlight and chemistry leaves shadows on the paper. The result is original Prussian-blue prints!

Angenita began the workshop by showing us the materials and equipment we'd be using for the morning – a specially dipped fabric in a cocktail of chemicals to enable the magic to happen in the sun and turn our objects into photo prints; a special 'press' of cardboard and glass to place our foraged objects from the shoreline, a UVA sun lamp and a pristine shoreline of Harwich beachfront.

We began with a tranquil stroll along the shore to collect seaside treasures to use for our photo prints. The weather was gorgeous, clear light, sun rays and warm for this time of year in late October. Returning to the 1912 Centre which was our base, we began assembling the treasures into our themes for Resorting to the Coast.

Once we were happy with our art work we took the glass frames outside to 'develop' into a photo print in the autumn sunlight. If it had been a cloudy day we could have put them under the sun lamp instead to speed up the process. The whole thing only took ten minutes. At this point in the creation the fabric is still a cream/beige colour but it turns a pale green colour after several minutes in the sun. Once we brought them inside and rinsed off the chemicals (wearing disposable gloves) under cold running water the fabric turns a gorgeous Prussian-blue colour. You can see the various activities of our morning in the photos below.

Thanks to Angenita, Donna, Isobel, Monika and Paul Henry for making this a relaxing and different event.

Juliana Vandegrift

(Photo credit Juliana Vandegrift)

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