

## What's this all about?

**Barbara Long is a visual artist and art therapist who has been based in Madrid for the past 28 years. She works with recycled fabrics and found objects to create cocoon-like structures and large immersive installations as well as carrying out small ephemeral interventions in natural spaces. Many of her works explore notions of protection and shelter and our complicated feelings towards what we call home.**

**As an art therapist she works with refugees and families at risk of social exclusion. She joins us at Fresh Air for the full three weeks where she will be creating a site-specific sculpture under one of our apple trees and will be running the school's workshop programme, along with our team of tutors. The theme of the workshops will be "Cobijos", the Spanish term that refers to shelter in its very widest sense. She also brings with her two of her cocoon-like shelters made from recycled pink plastic used to cover bales of hay and to cover bricks for construction. They have been carefully sewn up using recycled baler twine and natural fibers and have been stuffed with a type of hay used in Spain in the construction industry.**



## Get creating!

This workshop gives everyone the opportunity to create a sculpture using natural and recycled materials and to think about what home and protection mean. Its suitable for anyone from 4 to 90 and it's a lot of fun done as a group. The great thing is that you can just use what you have around the house or garden or things you find in the park, so it costs nothing to do. As it's all about exploring materials it's not something you can do well or badly. In fact, generally the less perfectionist you are about it all the more interesting the result You just need to enjoy the process!

### What you will need:

Please note that these are all suggested materials to give you a general idea. You can of course use others, depending upon what you have around the house. The exercise is in two steps. You will need scissors for both steps.

#### For the first step:

- Small ball of wool
- Bits of wire or old pipe cleaners (I find bits of old electrical wiring in skips)
- Natural wool if you have it
- Rubber bands

Note: You can also add homemade or bought Paydoh. And if you are doing this as a group activity put all these items in a small box (for example a small teabag box or face cream box) and give everyone a box with their materials inside.



#### For the second step:

- Twigs and sticks
- Strips of cloth (from old clothes) and at least one square of cloth
- Bits of wire or old pipe cleaners that are wearing out a bit use these).
- Strips of plastic from plastic bags or plastic bin bags
- Bits of string and rubber bands
- Old egg boxes
- Bits of old wool
- Piece of cardboard , about 15 x 20 cm minimum – a bit of cardboard box is perfect.

## Step By Step:

1. Explore your materials in the little box. Use them to create a creature, anything from an ant to an elephant or a fantasy creature. If you are doing this with older people it can be fun if everyone has to think if I were a creature what sort of creature would I be? Everyone then has to create that creature.



2. Now that you have a little creature you are going to use all the other materials to create a shelter or a nest for this creature. Think about what this little creature really needs to help it to feel safe. Try just playing around with all the materials first and see what you can build. Try wrapping bits of cloth and wool around twigs or sticks for example. Use the bit of cardboard box to give your shelter or nest a really solid base.



3. There is no right or wrong way to do this and no prize for the prettiest looking home or cocoon. In fact, often the weirder and more makeshift the better. You have put all the materials in a shoe box then of course you can use this shoe box as part of your creation.

Here are some images of the creations from other people (from 4 to 90 years old) doing the same exercise. I bet you can't work out the ages of the people who made them!



## Want More?

How about thinking a bit further about what this creature needs? What do they need in their home or nest to make them feel comfortable and safe? And what about outside and around their homes? You can look around your own home for more recycled materials. You can even create a whole country for your creature!

Remember to clear up after you. One way to do this is to pick up all the bits of stuff that you haven't used and make a lucky charm out of it. Put it on a fence outside or attach a safety pin to it and wear it.

If you want to work more on your shelter how about taking a darning needle or other needle and doing some sewing with the wool or whatever thread you have at home. Look at Barbara's work and see what she does. Sometimes her stitching is really neat, sometimes it is deliberately a real mess. So enjoy messing around...

