

# SALLY MATTHEWS

## About the Artist



Photo: Sally Matthews

Sally Matthews grew up surrounded by animals on her family's farm and was fascinated by her father's veterinary and animal anatomy books. She loves animals and has created sculptures of cows, horses, sheep, deer, dogs and many more. She is always trying to show their spirit and wants her work to remind people of the importance of these creatures in our lives.

Sally sketches animals from life, trying to gain knowledge of the animal by looking closely at them – the eye setting, how they move, the flare of the nostrils or the strength of bone. She then uses these sketches both to inform the sculptures she makes, as well as to create larger drawings.

In these larger drawings she uses lots of interesting materials such as earth pigments and ash, making playful marks on the paper and leaving in any drips or mistakes.

When making her sculptures, Sally starts by making the metal armature - like the lines in a drawing - and builds on to it with chicken wire and wood. She will also use found objects in her sculptures and loves experimenting with materials such as feathers, coal dust, earth and bracken.

When finished, these sculptures are displayed in different locations, which changes the way the viewer interacts with them. Perhaps they feel more natural when displayed outside, but when shown in an art gallery there is more of a stark contrast, bringing some of the natural environment of the animal into the space.

For further information about Sally Matthews please visit her website <https://www.sallymatthews.uk/> and Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/sallymatthewsanimals/>

**Themes: Agriculture, animals, living things, nature, form, shape, line, scale, movement, drawing, sculpture**

## Curriculum for Wales

This resource supports the **Expressive Arts Area of Learning and Experience** and its **Statements of What Matters** which are as follows:

- Exploring the expressive arts is essential to developing artistic skills and knowledge and it enables learners to become curious and creative individuals.
- Responding and reflecting, both as artist and audience, is a fundamental part of learning in the expressive arts.
- Creating combines skills and knowledge, drawing on the senses, inspiration and imagination.



Photo: Sally Matthews

For further details of the curriculum visit <https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/expressive-arts>

The activities outlined in this resource are aimed at years 5-9 but may also be adapted to younger and older pupils in line with the Principles of Progression.

# Exercises in response to the Artist's work

Consider the local environment and what kind of creatures and animals are nearby. For example; are there sheep, cows, spiders, ducks, cats, sparrows, seagulls?

- If possible, go on location to draw, sketch and photograph some of the creatures you can see. Use drawing as a learning process – how long are the legs? How tiny are the ears? How many claws are there?
- Encourage learners to think about and describe why or how are these creatures important to the local area.
- Invite learners to write down some words to describe them, for example; what kind of personality does this creature have; how does seeing this creature make you feel; are they fast, slow, friendly, frightening?
- Use the words collected as inspiration for a 3D sculpture of a creature.

## Creating a sculpture

- Choose wire, cardboard or rolled up newspaper as starting materials for the sculpture. As the sculpture develops add any other materials preferred.
- Look carefully at the chosen creature and think about how to represent proportions and scale.
- Experiment with using natural materials to make marks on the muslin squares, or paper; try smearing with soil or using berries to make an inky purple. Learners can include these materials in their sculpture as they wish.
- Consider putting the materials: on top, inside, around, under, through, or over.
- Photograph the sculpture from different angles and close up.

*When choosing materials, learners should be encouraged to think about how they relate to the creatures they have chosen.*

**Materials and resources:**  
*Natural materials and objects e.g. sticks, rocks, soil, leaves, charcoal, edible berries, moss, wool, found wood, tree bark, feathers, mud, clay, sand, grog, twigs, earth, ash, willow, stones, hessian, compost*



Photo: Sally Matthews

**Other materials:** Wire, wire wool, cardboard, masking tape, mod rock, plaster, paper, newspaper, paper mache, steel, rods, copper, sandpaper, wet & dry, air dry clay, plasticine, mesh, chicken wire, aluminium, found objects, recycling objects, fabric, glue, paper, white muslin or cotton fabric squares, glue guns or PVA

# Delving deeper

- Scale up the sculptures by work in pairs or as a group - why not create a life size one?
- Choose another subject matter - something from the natural environment, an object, or a character, someone you know, a family member.
- Looking at movement, record an animal moving or a person running, and use this as a basis to draw and capture movement. Learners might work in groups and draw each other moving.
- Develop further to create a flic book, a zoetrope or an animation.
- Sally uses a lot of metal within her work - this could be a basis to explore different traditional techniques such as blacksmithing, casting and the use of different metals.

## Other artists to explore

- [The Singh Twins](#) are famed for their intricate, brightly coloured artwork which combine traditions from both Eastern and Western art.
- [Marcia Baldwin](#) creates large format, vibrantly coloured oil paintings of natural forms such as animals, sea life, wildlife, landscapes and flowers.
- [Gordon Cheung](#) creates fantastic, strange and colourful mixed-media artworks that blur virtual and actual reality
- [Laura Ford](#) is a sculptor who portrays animals in her work, these animals often have human qualities too and can seem a little strange and out of place.

These resources are supported by Contemporary Art Society for Wales using art works from their distributed collection. They have been created by Engage Cymru and the National Arts Education Network in collaboration with artists Rhian Haf and Elly Strigner.