

for ages  
14 +

START  
ONLINE



An arts and creativity programme for children and young people

# START...Symbols

'Symbols convey a meaning beyond what we see on the surface'.

Artist Ali Atkins.

In this session we're going to look at how artists use symbols  
and how you can create a symbolic portrait.

Artists use symbols to convey ideas...,

Here, the possessions symbolise  
the personality of circus  
performer Maudeline Spacks.



*Time Capsule* (2010-18)  
Will Teather

Here, the scales symbolise fair  
and equal law and the sword  
symbolises the power of the law.



*Portrait of  
Justice* (1792)  
John  
Theodrick  
Norwich  
Castle  
Museum

## 1. Explore

In the introductory video, Ali shows us a wonky screwdriver which belonged to her dad. To her, it symbolises his resourceful and creative character.

Which of your possessions best symbolise you?  
Ask your friends or family what they think.



## 2. Arrange

Where things are placed within a frame can also be seen as symbolic.

Artists might play with the position, size, scale, colour and lighting of objects in order to draw attention or to make subtle suggestions - all depending on the importance and meaning of the objects to the overall piece.

Experiment and play around with a few different arrangements; think carefully about what it is you want to convey...



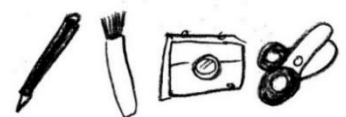
### Did you know...

In a daring piece of performance art, the artist Michael Landy gathered all 7,227 of his personal possessions and destroyed them! (*Break Down*, 2001). This was symbolic of his dislike of consumerism.

## 3. Make

Now, gather your symbols and playfully arrange them to create your own symbolic portrait.

Record your various arrangements!



You could draw, paint, photograph or simply memorise them.

Why not create a symbolic portrait of your favourite cat or best friend?

## Share!

We would love to see your symbolic portraits.

Head to the SHARE section on our website to find out how:

[www.museums.norfolk.gov.uk/startonline](http://www.museums.norfolk.gov.uk/startonline)