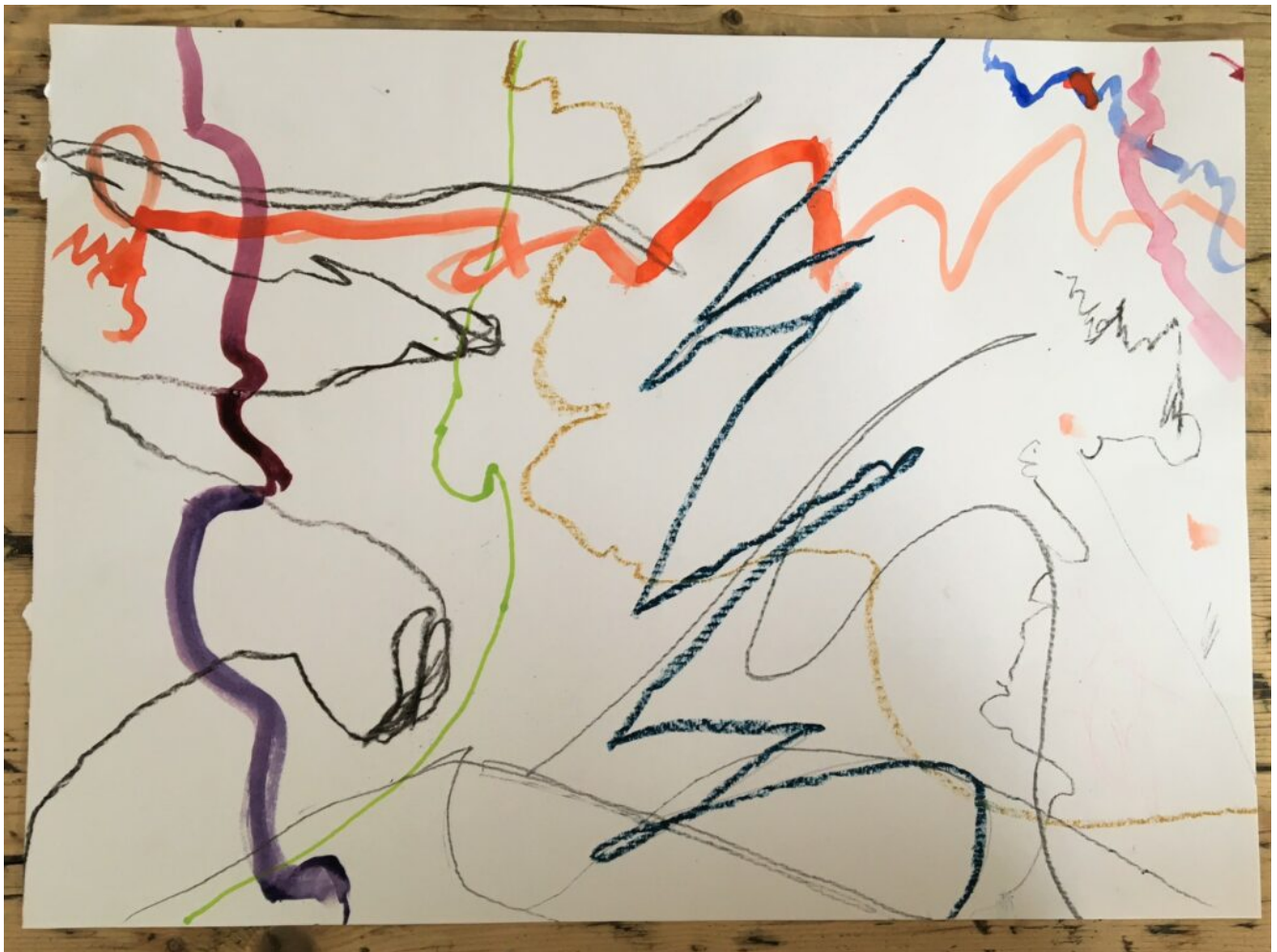


# Movement Maps

By [Rachel Thompson](#)

In this post, AccessArt team member Rachel Thompson develops a simple drawing concept into a large scale 'movement map', where movement and memories are translated into lines, marks and patterns. This resource is suitable for a wide range of ages and is an opportunity for children to engage with their creative voice, personal memories and feelings - as well as to express themselves through movement.



## Notes for Teachers

## **What is the aim of this exercises in terms of objectives and skill?**

The aim of this exercise is to introduce children to the idea of expressive and imaginative mark making.

The emphasis is on personal journeys and not on producing an art work that is predictable in its final form. The activity enables children to take ownership of their own work, as the stimulus they are starting from is their own.

The activity gives children time and opportunity to explore a range of drawing materials (the more the better) and to learn what effects each make and how they feel to use.

### **• What age range is this activity suitable for?**

The exercise can be used with ages 4 through to adult.

### **• What materials will we need?**

Small pieces of 'scrap' paper for the initial mark making activity. These should be smaller than A4 so they can be held easily whilst moving. Clip boards could be used as an addition, but otherwise, leaning on a small book is also fine.

A wide variety of drawing materials works well for this activity. Soft and hard pencils, charcoal, pastels, coloured pencils.

Water colour paints

A large sheet of paper (not smaller than A3 to really explore the concept)

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## • **How long does the activity take?**

The activity can be split into two 45-1 hour sessions, or run together as a longer approx 1.5 hour session.

If run over two sessions, the first session can be focussed on creating drawings from movement, and the second focussed on creating the final maps.

## • **What can we try after this activity or what can we do to extend our learning?**

There's scope for pushing this activity beyond the individual and creating a collaborative art work along the same theme. A large roll of paper can be pinned to a wall or rolled out on the floor/table for the children to work on together.

Consider other ways we think about journeys and maps. Take a look at the following resources:

[3-D Visual Maps for Children](#)

<https://www.accessart.org.uk/making-maps-with-thermochromic-paint-where-art-science-and-dt-meet/>

## • **Which artists might we look at to inform and inspire us?**

**Aims:** To introduce children to the idea of expressive and imaginative mark making.

The emphasis is on personal journeys and not on producing an art work that is predictable in its final form. The activity enables children to take ownership of their own work, as the stimulus they are starting from is their own.

The activity gives children time and opportunity to explore a range of drawing materials (the more the better) and to learn what effects each make and how they feel to use.

**Age Range:** All primary ages through to adult learners

**Duration:** Approx two 45-1 hour sessions

**Materials:** Small scrap paper (no bigger than A4), books to lean on, larger paper (A3 min), wide variety of drawing and painting materials such as charcoal, pastels, pencils, water colour.

### **To Begin**

Have a number of paper options ready - nothing larger than A4 for this first activity as the participants will need to be able to move around freely whilst drawing on the paper. The paper can be scrap, torn roughly and different colours. As long as it is plain and there is enough for each participant to have at least 7 or 8 pieces each.

Ask each participant to choose a piece of paper, something to lean on such as a book or sketchbook, and a drawing material.

The first part of this mini project will take approximately 45 mins - 1 hour.

### **Find a space.**

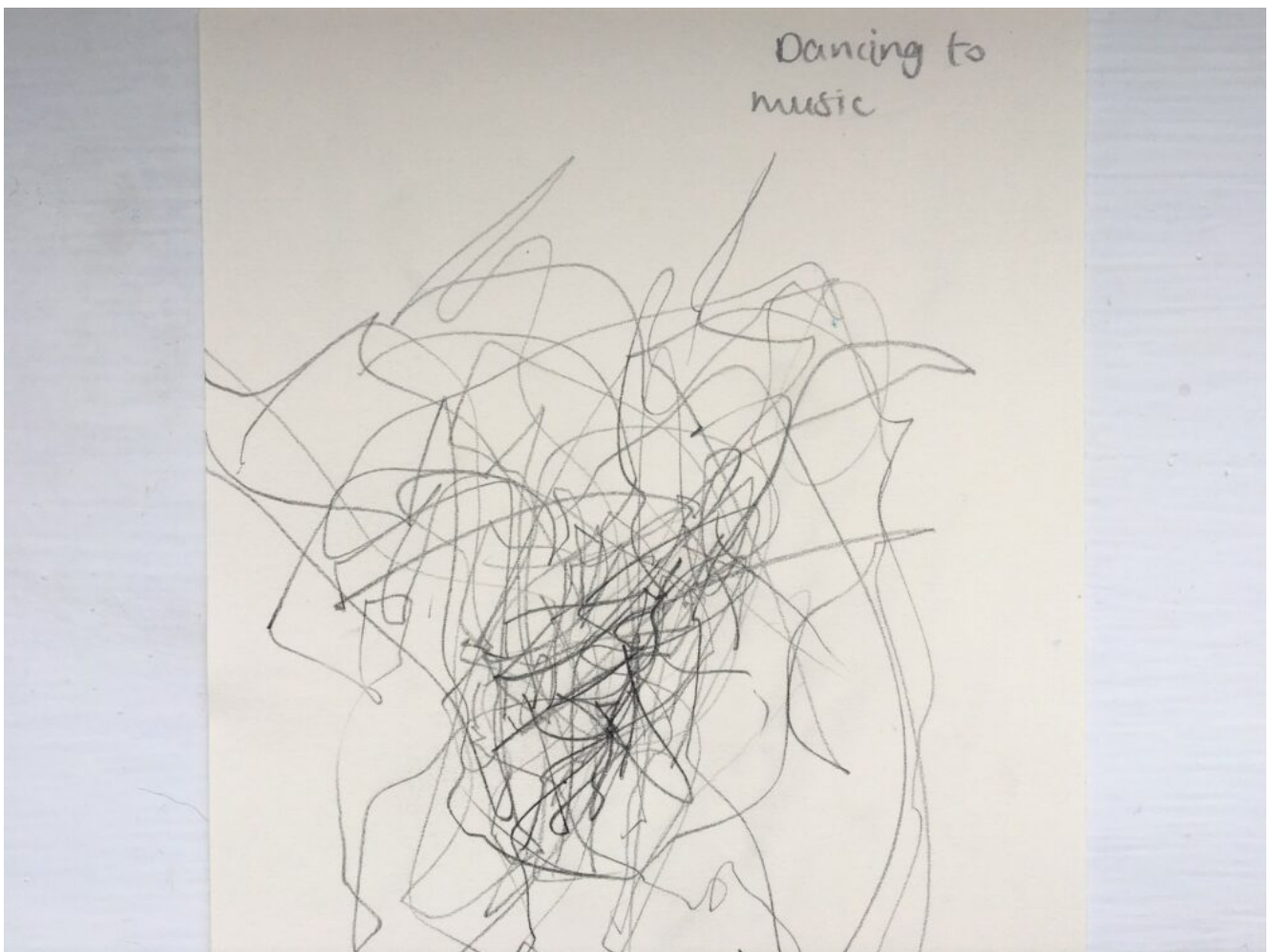
Choose from the list of prompts shown below that ask the participants to 'journey' through drawing. Some of the prompts are literal, and some from memory. Remind them that this is personal to their experience and that they should allow the pencil or drawing material to 'find its way' across the paper according to their movement and they shouldn't worry

where it ends up or how it looks.

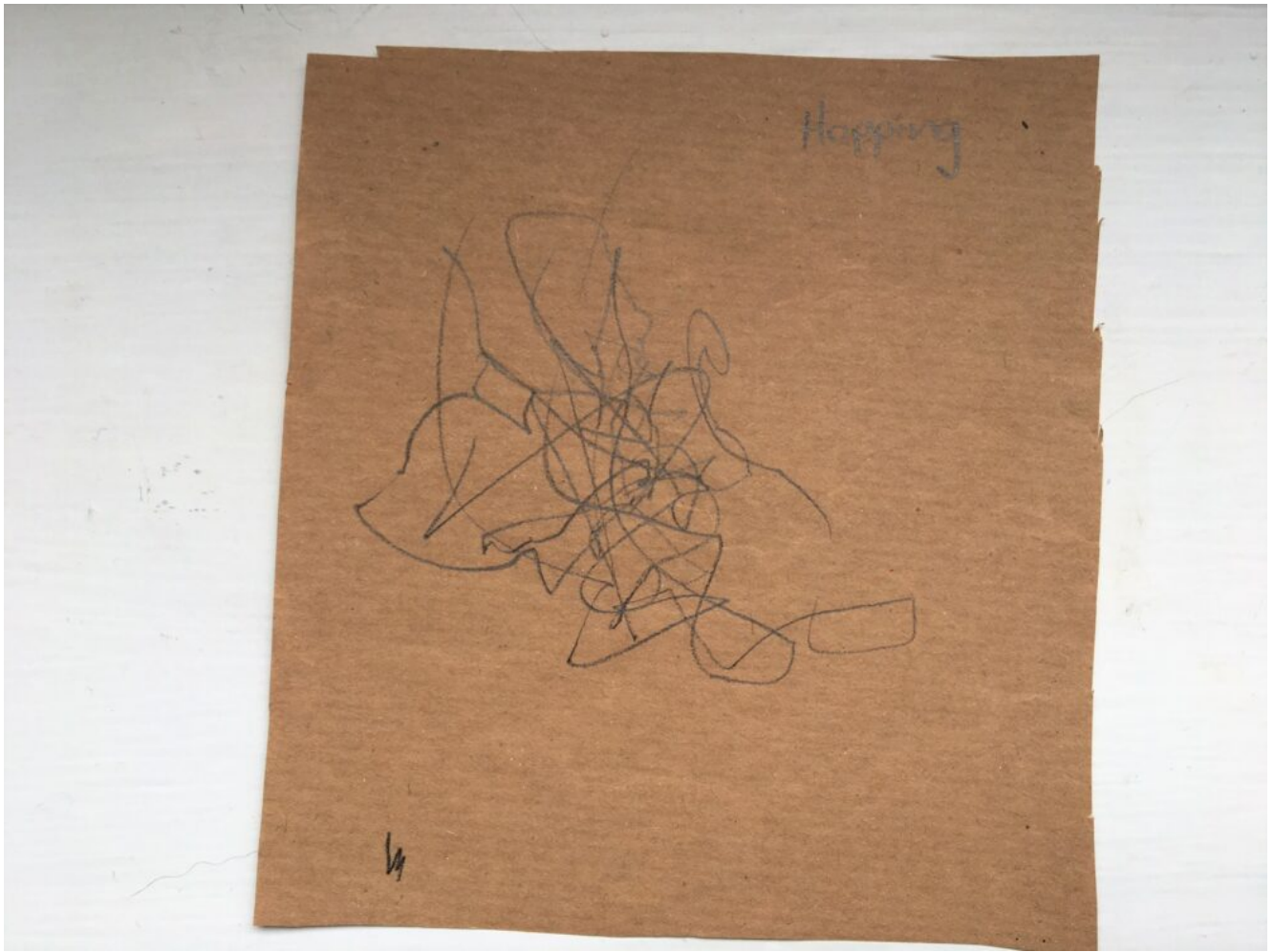
Spend approx 1-4 minutes on each prompt, with a fresh piece of paper for each one.

Suggestions of prompts are shown below, along with a photo example of each. The list is not exhaustive and you can think up your own or ask the participants to think of some too!

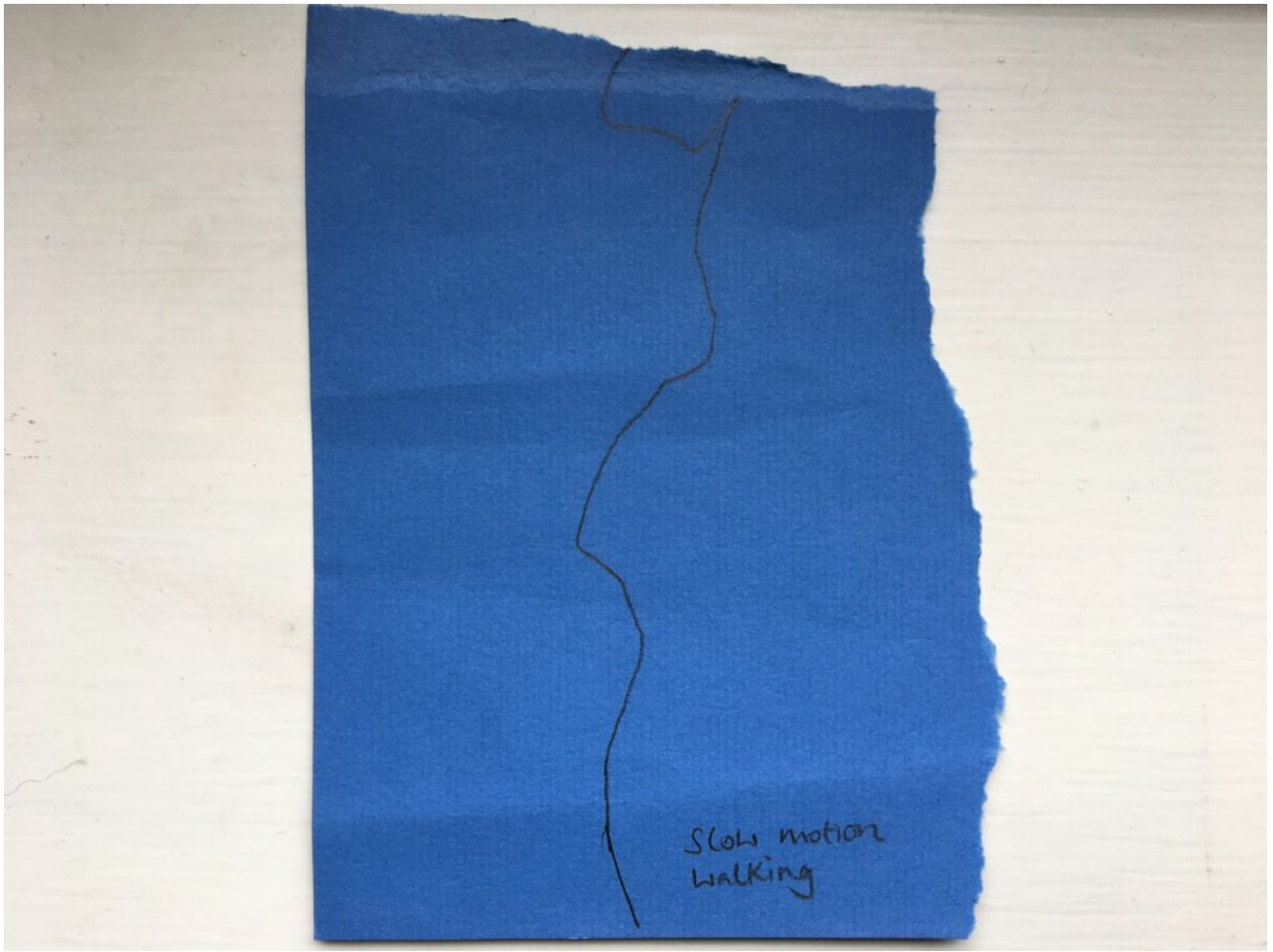
### **The Prompts:**



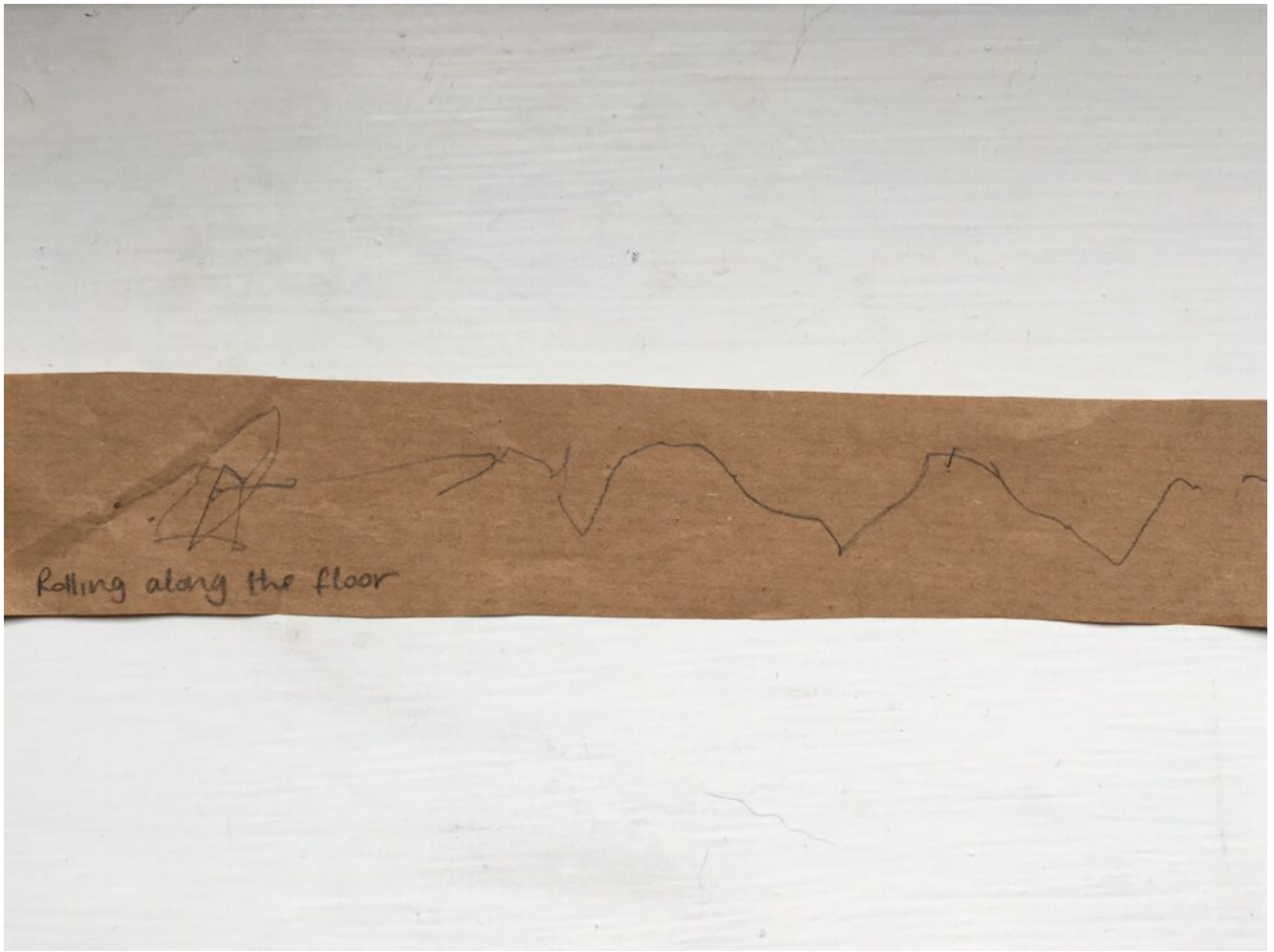
**Dancing to Music**



**Hopping**

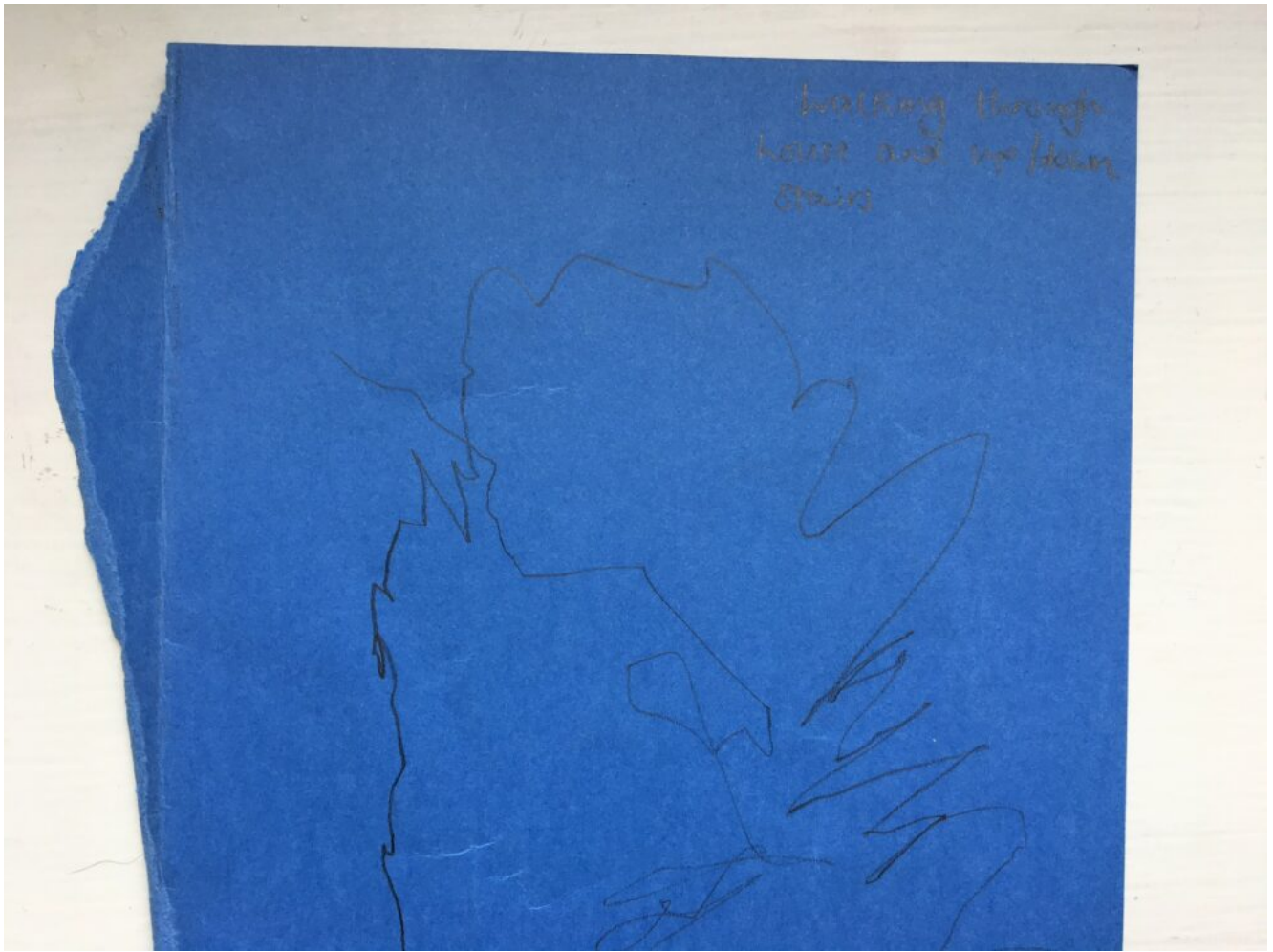


**Walking in Slow Motion**



**Rolling on the Floor**





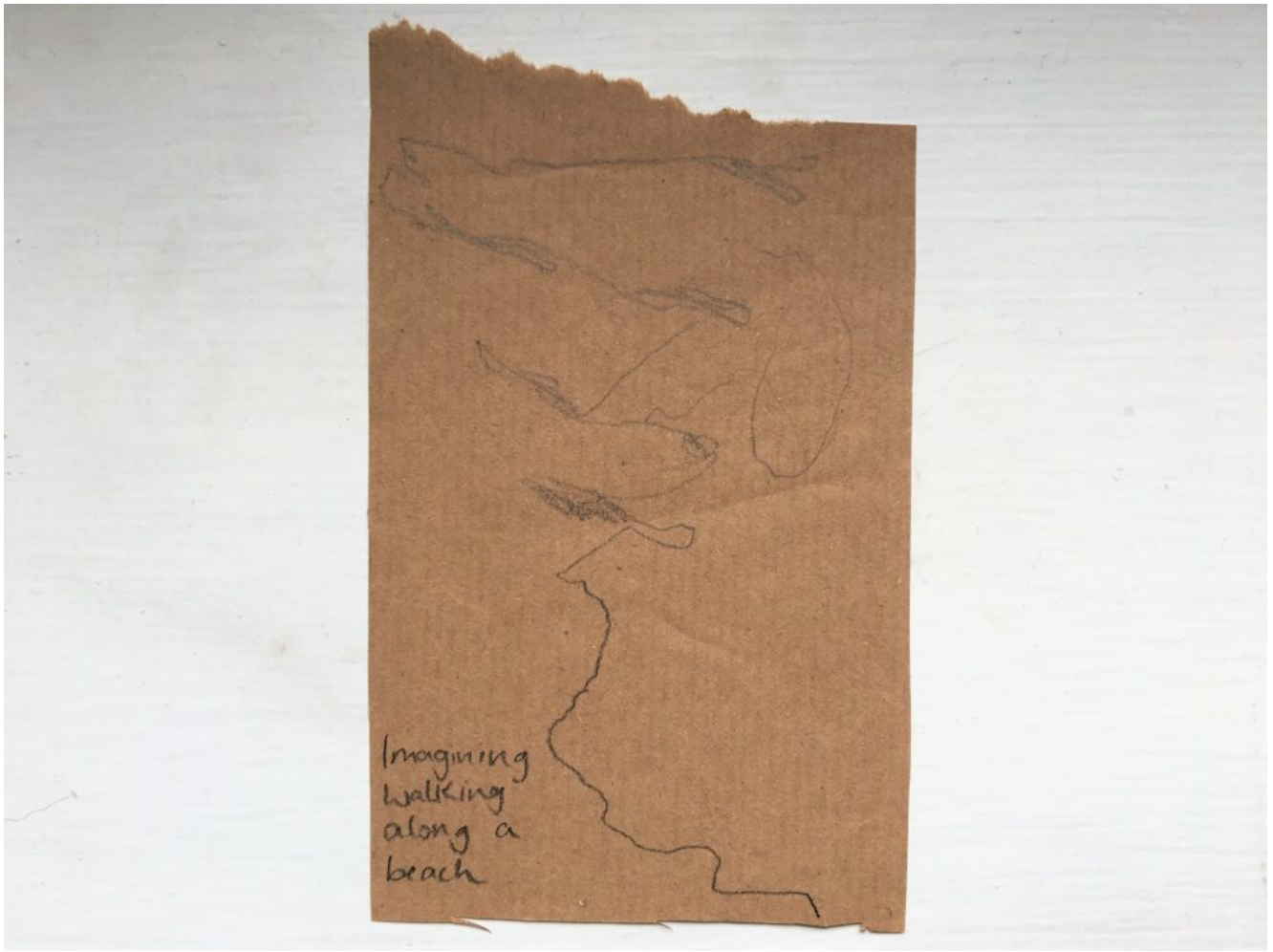
**Walking Up and Down Stairs (could also be walking over obstacles in the school hall or classroom)**



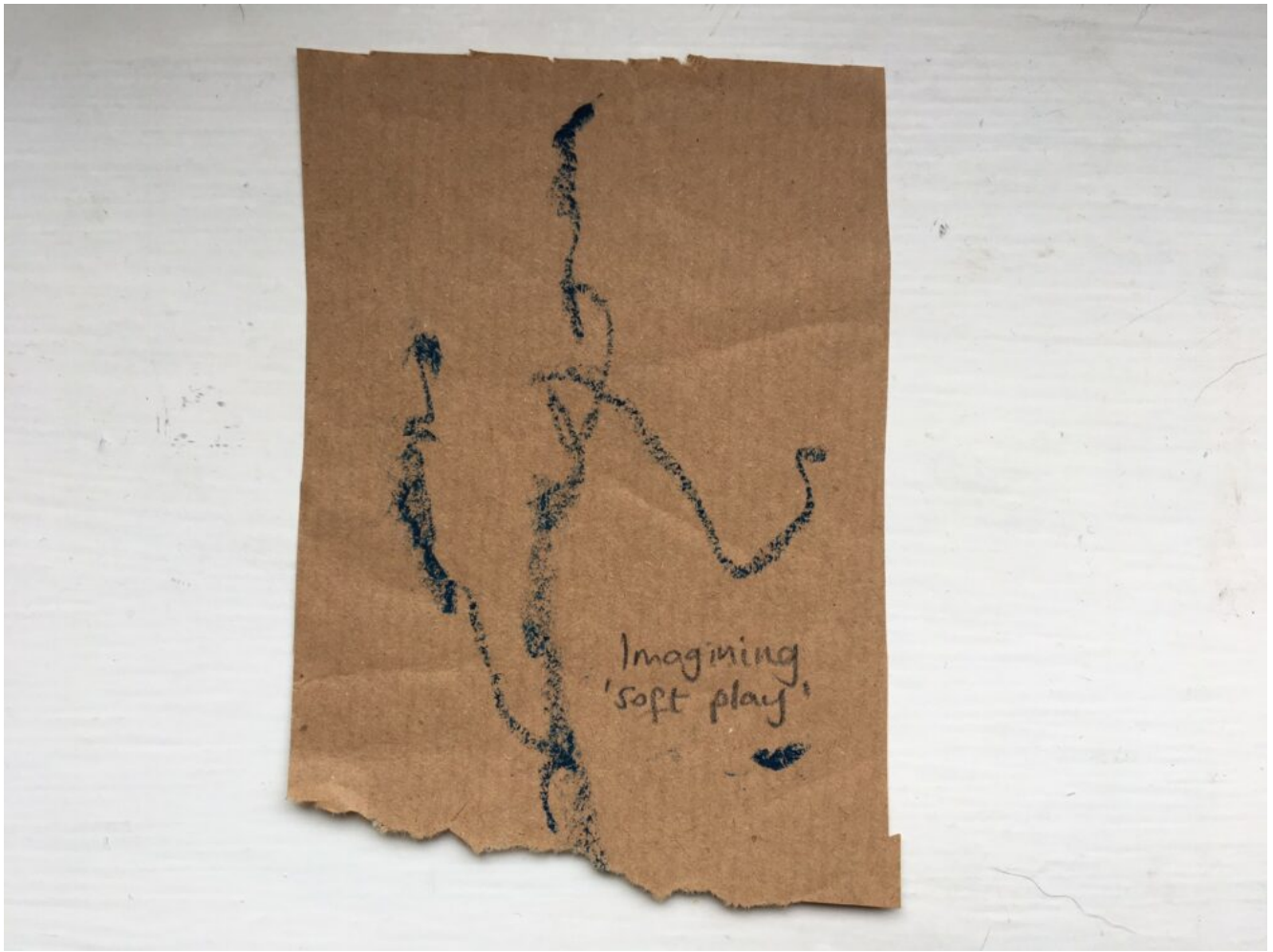
## **Spinning Around**

### **Next:**

Having drawn marks according to real time movement, you can now challenge participants to engage with their imaginations for the next few prompts. A chance to engage with happy memories of favourite places:



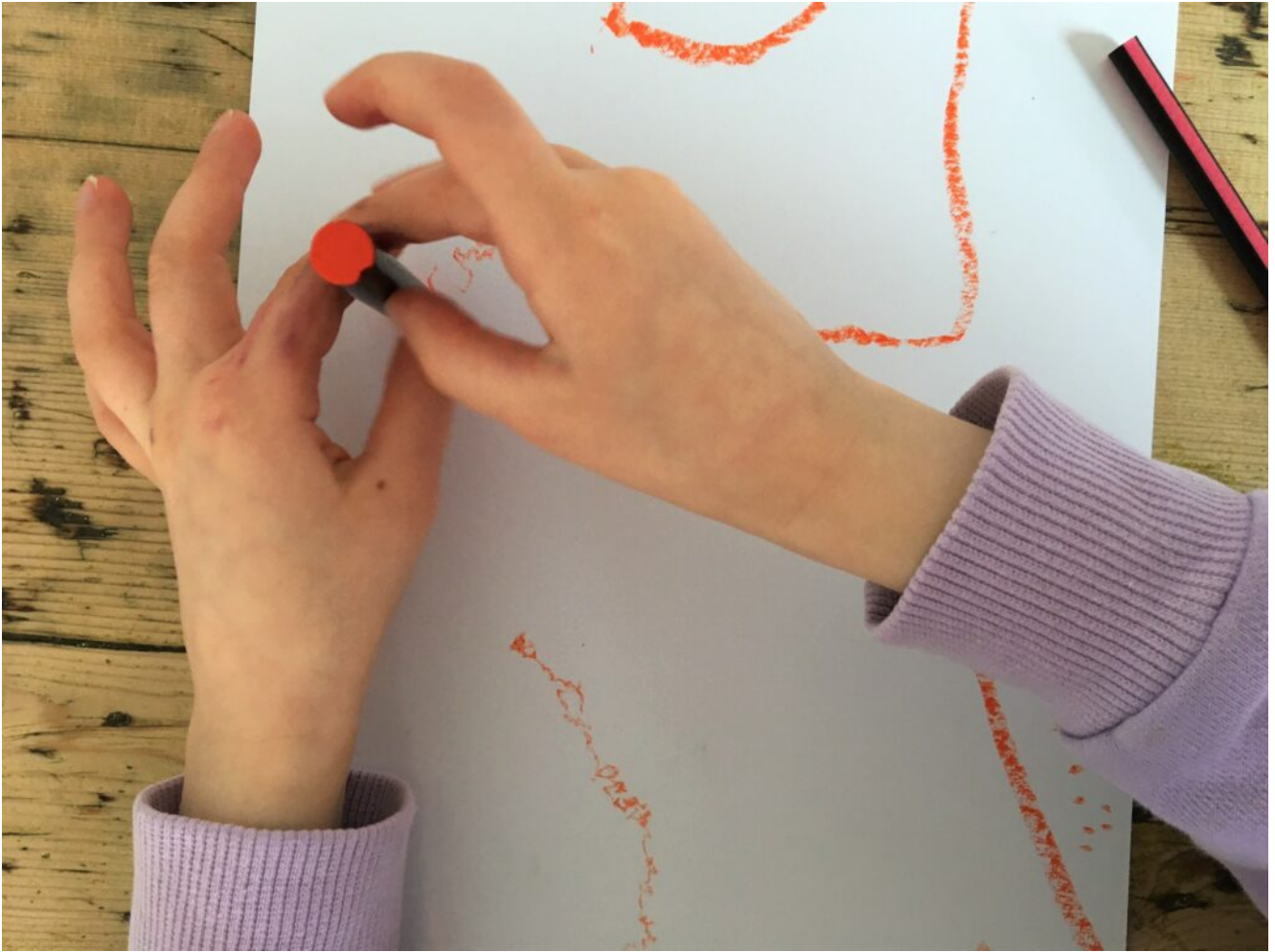
**Imagining Walking along the Beach**



## **Imagining Soft Play!**

If possible, ask participants to label the prompts on the back of each piece of paper.

Remember to give reminders on how different materials can behave, and how our grip on them can create different marks. This is about experiencing 'drawing in the moment'.



**Holding the oil pastel lightly.**



**Holding an oil pastel with a firm grip. How do the marks differ?**

**Reflection:**

Now you have had the chance to talk about movement, memories and imagination, and how this transfers to drawing - invite participants to put a selection up on the wall and consider the following discussion points:

- Can they guess which movement is which?
- How do drawings of the same movements or memories differ from one person to the next?
- Do you prefer drawing from movement or from memory? Why?
- Are there any particular drawing materials that lend themselves to a particular movement or memory? Why do you think that is?

- Can anyone think of some more prompts for this exercise?
- Consider how this activity could be built into your regular sketchbook practice.

### **Moving On...**

The second part of this mini project could take approximately one hour, although it could be built upon in new ways and we have suggestions for this in the 'Notes to Teachers' section at the top of this post.

The aim for this second part is for each participant to look at and reflect on their depictions of the above prompts and to take elements of them to create a larger scale abstract map.

Now, we are building on the materials being used. Where the first activity was about using simple drawing tools such as pencils or charcoal- this is about widening the options. Have as wide a selection of drawing materials available as possible. Being able to experience how pastels differ to charcoal and how water colour differs to chalk builds our materials vocabulary and develops creative confidence.



**Have a wide range of drawing and painting materials available.**

### **To Begin**

Invite participants to take a few moments to look at their previous movement pictures and observe any particular lines or sections that they like. Consider the following discussion points:

What is it that they like about the section they are looking at? The patterns? The chaos - or the order?

Can they pin point the exact movement or memory that particular line relates to?

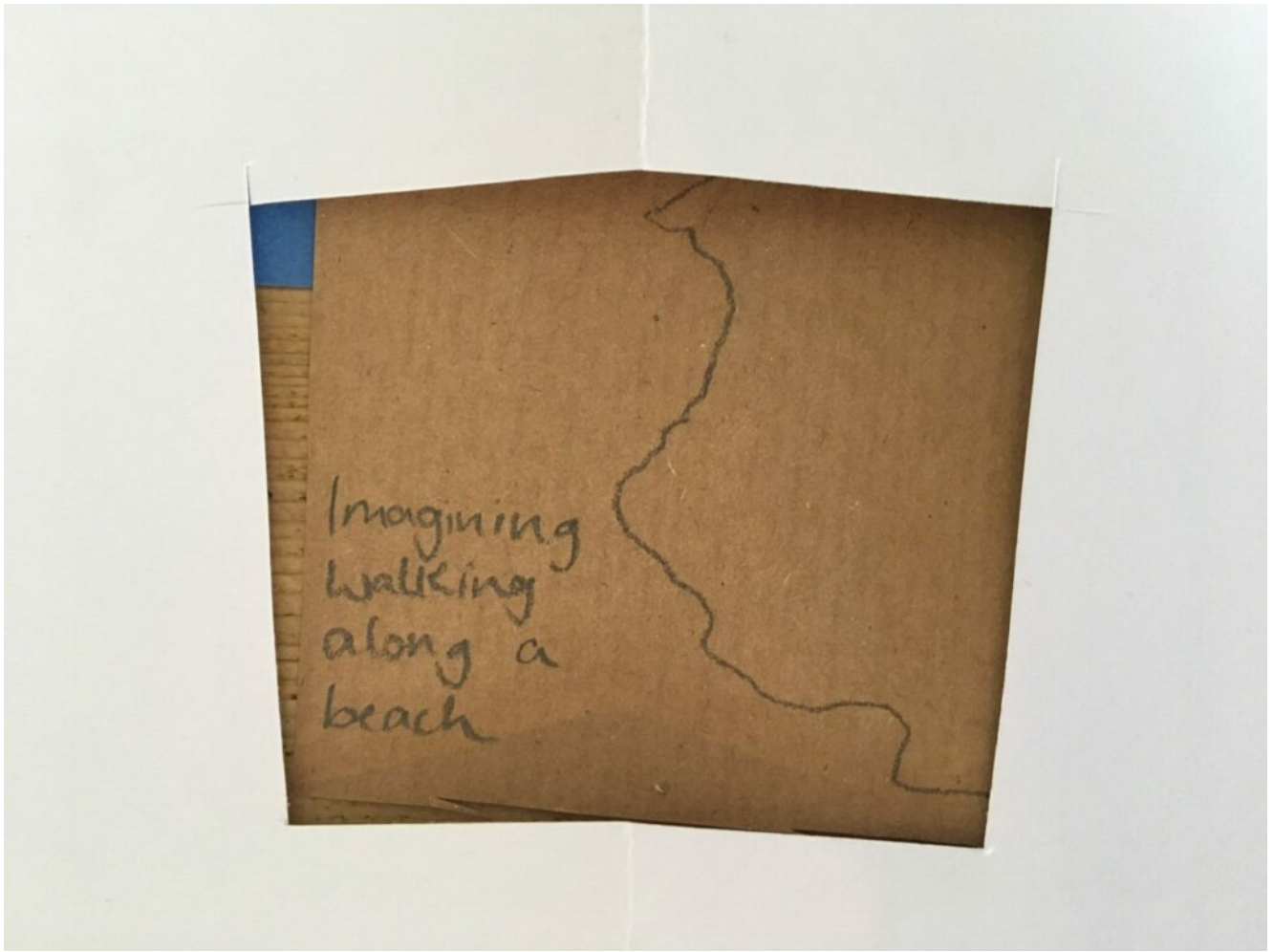
How could the marks and patterns they've created weave in and



out and around each other?

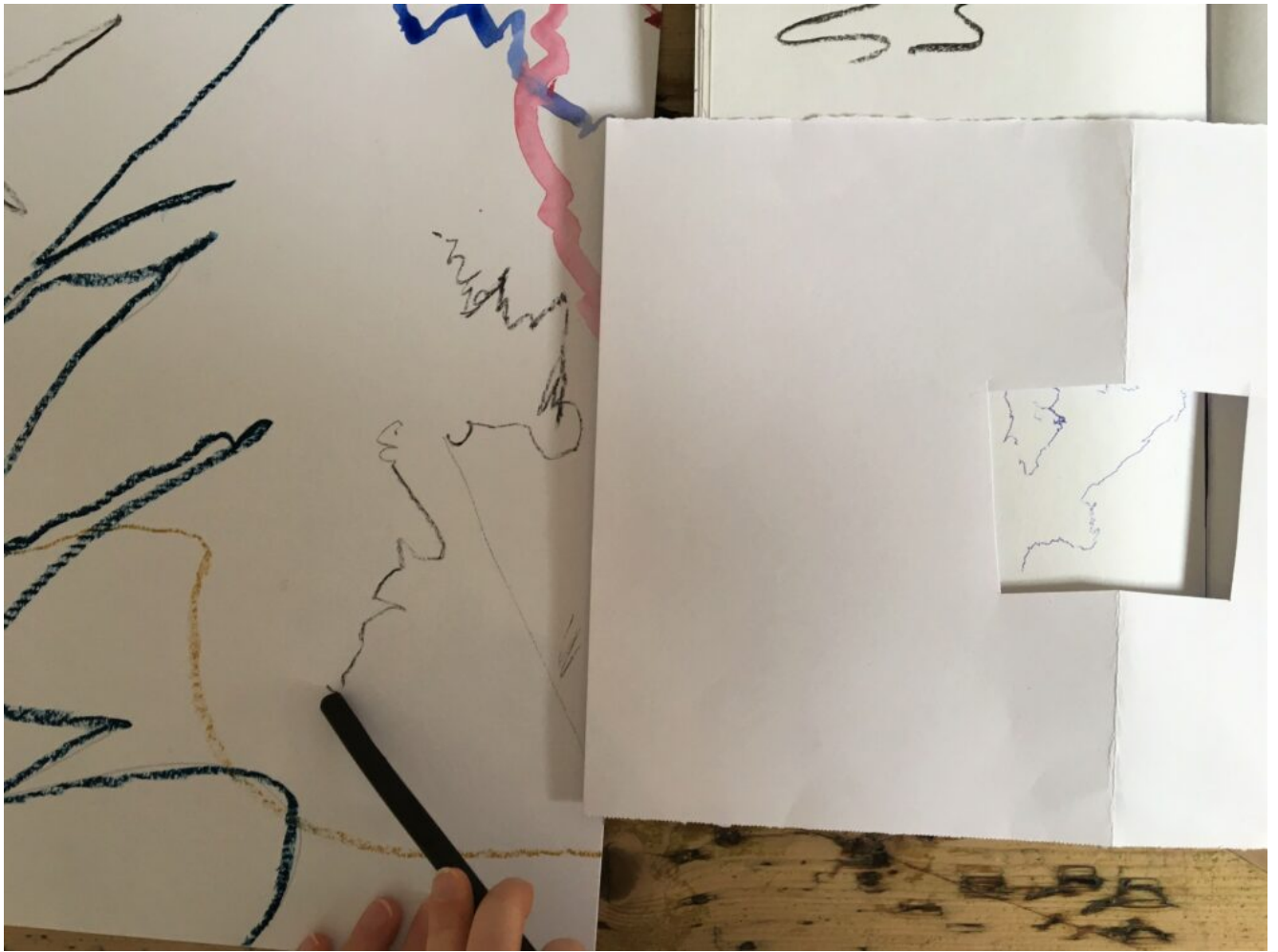
There are no right or wrong responses here. These discussions should be open ended but crucially, brief. The participants should transfer to a large sheet of cartridge or water colour paper (min A3) as soon as possible so that their exploration happens instinctively on the page without too much thinking involved!

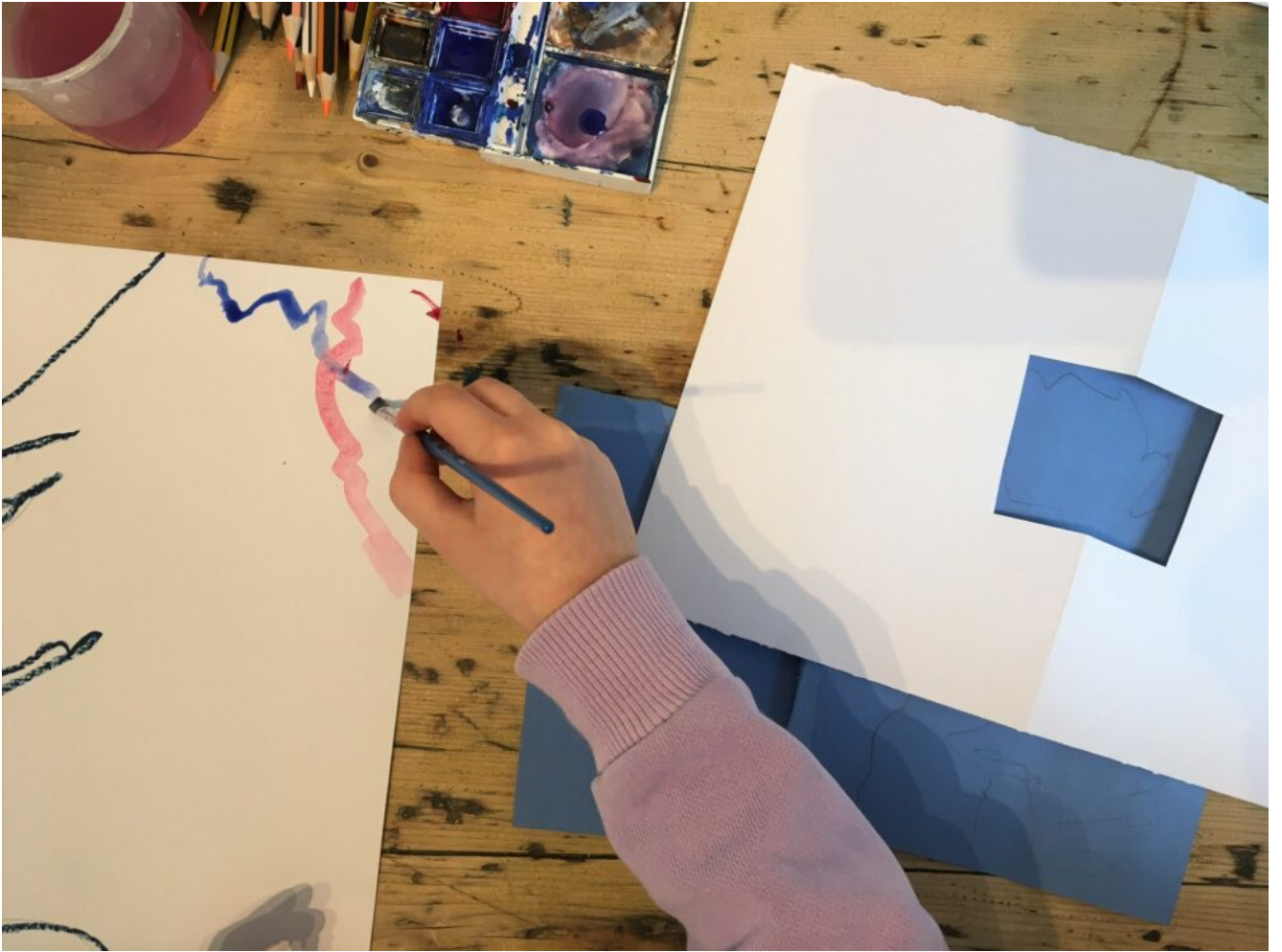
Invite participants to choose some paints or drawing materials and begin depicting elements of their earlier movement drawings on a larger scale, and in a way that means the marks interweave and overlap. Encourage them to vary colour, tone, materials etc to create interest on the page. For those finding it challenging to get started or 'zoom in' - try making a simple view finder by cutting out a square from a piece of card.



**Using a view finder to focus on elements of the drawing.**

The lines revealed through the view finder can then be enlarged and repeated onto the larger paper.



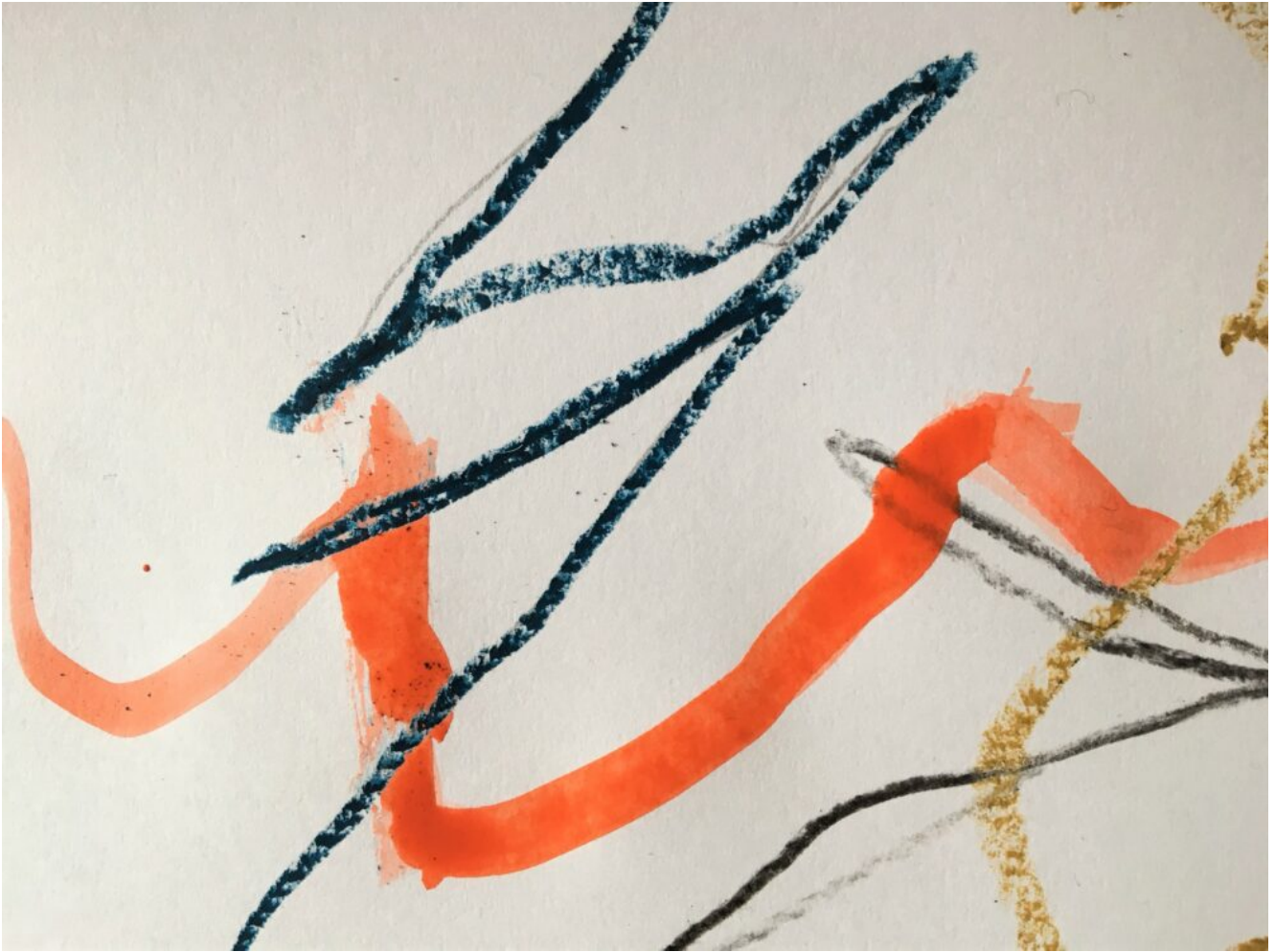




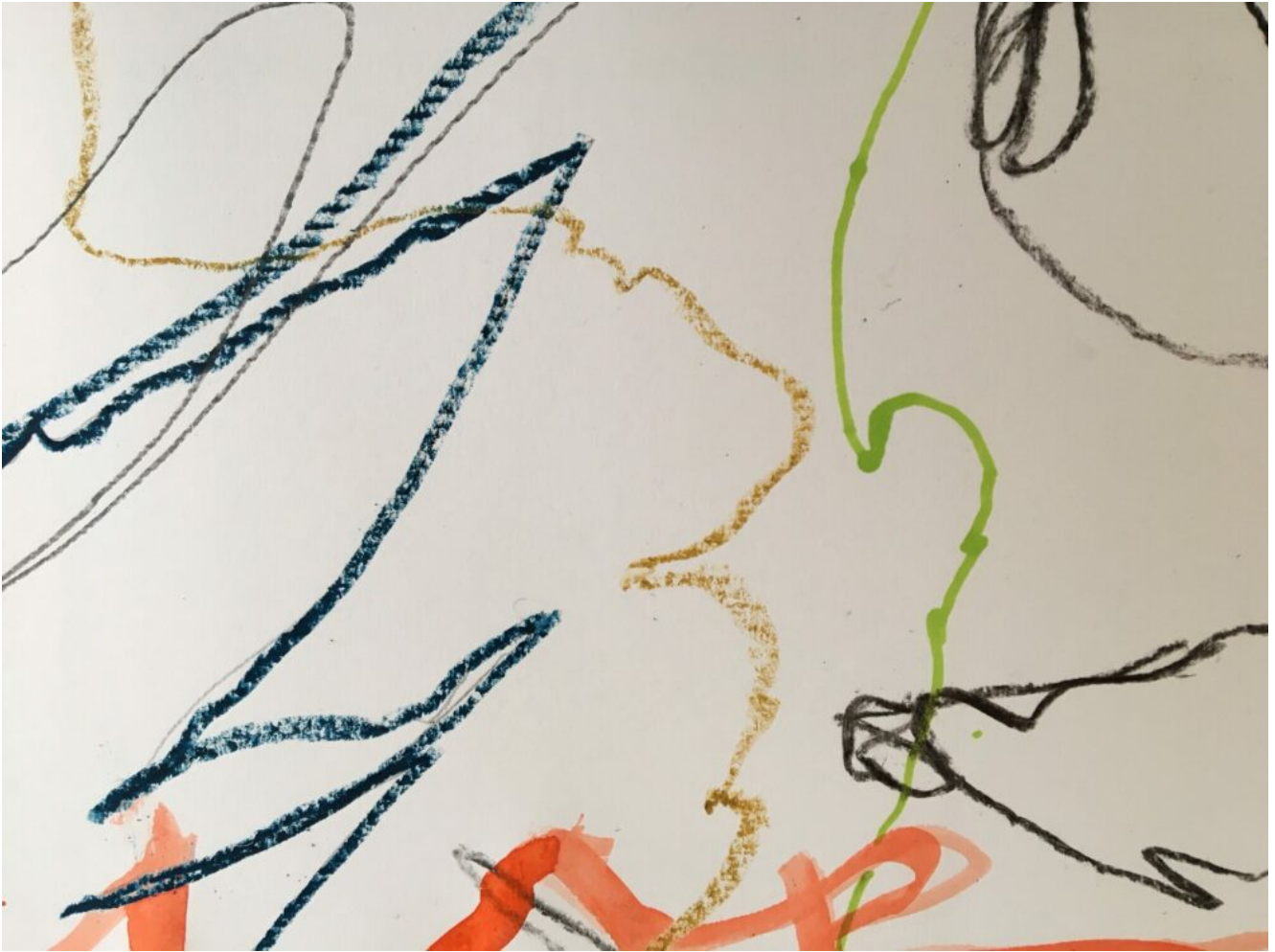
**Beginning to build up layers of lines and patterns: depictions of movements and memories.**

Younger children may find transferring marks from the movement drawings onto larger paper a bit tricky and so it's important to stress that it's not about creating a perfect copy of these drawings - but more about considering how we can *represent* rather than *replicate*.



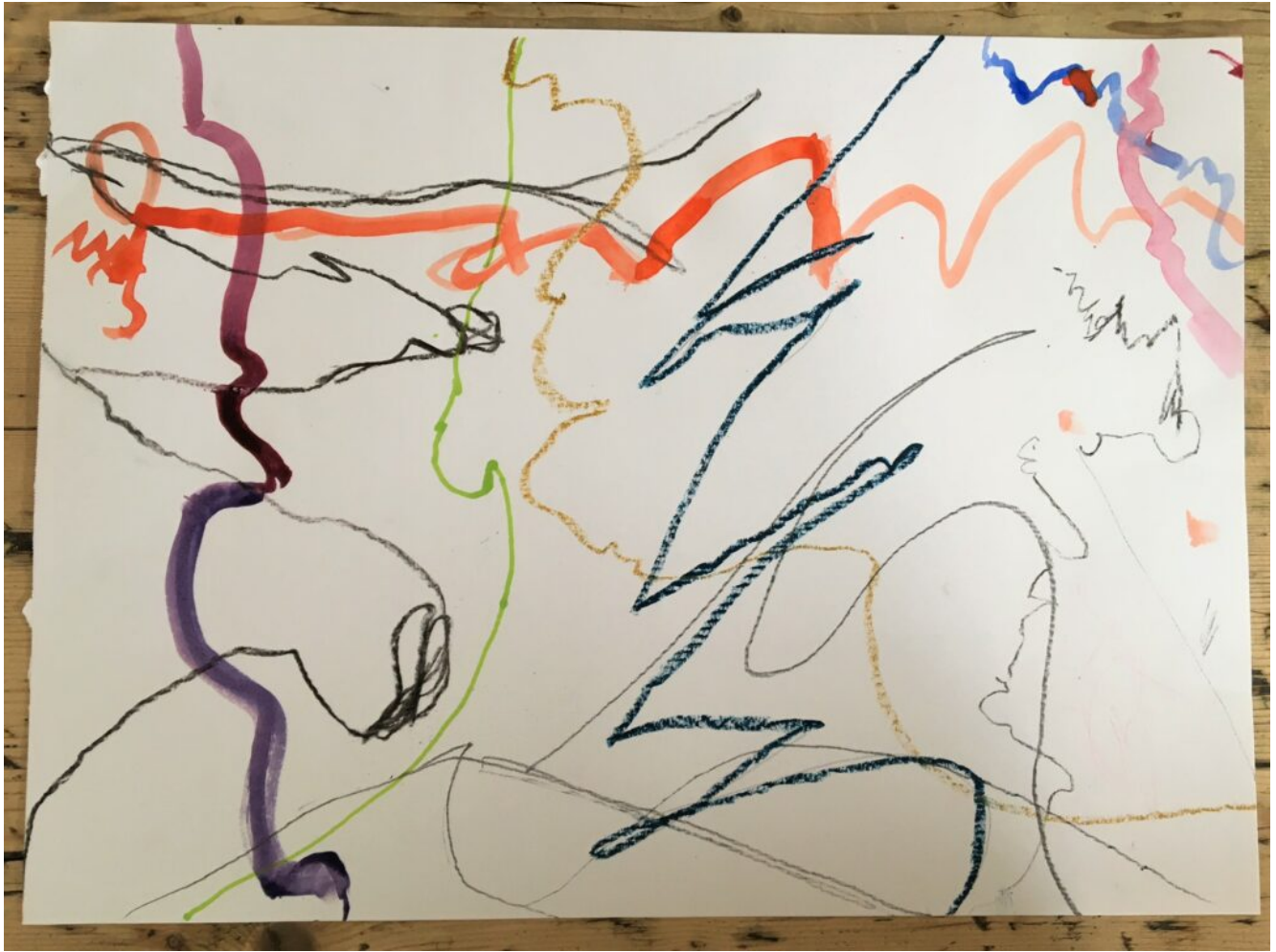


Observe how materials behave when in contact with one another.  
For example, oil pastel over water colour and vice versa.



Emphasise that this activity is about creating an art work that is truly unique and personal to each participant - and it is not about producing something finished or recognisable. Repeating activities similar to these and making them part of your classes' 'habits' can help participants to embrace this approach and relinquish any anxiety they may feel that a drawing must be 'perfect'.





### **Some final reflections:**

Open up a discussion at the end of the session and perhaps pin some of the drawings up on the wall. Would anyone like to share their experience?

Discuss how the drawings look next to each other - can you map any journeys that extend from one picture to another? Could an even larger map be created?!

Can anyone share any thoughts on memories and how else we can depict them? Through diaries? Poems? We have been *painting* and *drawing* them in an abstract way. How is this different?

Have a go yourself! Go on the journey with your participants - modelling in this way is a great way for children to build confidence.

You can find more of Rachel's resources [here](#).

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