Inspiration and information for potential Big Draw Organisers

Manchester Art Gallery, 2019

24 Hour Drawing Lab, 2019
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What is The Big Draw?

Founded in 2000, The Big Draw is a visual literacy charity that promotes the universal language of drawing as a tool for learning, expression and invention. The charity leads a diverse programme of advocacy, empowerment and engagement, and is the founder and driving force behind The Big Draw Festival – the world’s biggest celebration of drawing. The Big Draw manages collaborative research projects, campaigns and educational conferences on visual literacy, digital technology and STEAM. The charity supports professional and emerging artists through its national contemporary art prize, The John Ruskin Prize and exhibition, and through events, awards, and competitions, creates platforms for each and everyone who wants to draw.

What is The Big Draw Festival?

The Big Draw Festival is a worldwide celebration of drawing! The Festival has encouraged over four million people back to the drawing board since 2000. It has notched up two world records – for the longest drawing in the world (one kilometre) and the greatest number of people drawing simultaneously (over 7,000). The first Big Draw Festival in 2000 attracted 180 partner organisations. Since then, the number has risen to more than 1,000, with over 500,000 people participating each year!

The Festival is made up of thousands of digital and physical events, activities, creative courses, workshops and more across the globe hosted by organisations big and small; from individuals to entire cities!

DISCLAIMER:

At this moment in time, in light of COVID-19, it is not possible to arrange group events. Therefore, the intention of this Minimag is to be used mostly as inspiration for planning future events to be run once we are all able to draw together once more. Meanwhile, it is still possible to run online events! See more on pages 18 - 25.

Want to find out more?

Visit our website: thebigdraw.org
It’s Time to go Green.

2020 marks the 20th anniversary of The Big Draw and the campaign which shines a light on the need for drawing – making a mark with meaning – and its role as a tool for expression, creativity, learning and sharing ideas. Drawing, in all its forms, helps us make sense of a rapidly changing world around us. It is a global language which cuts across all barriers of culture, race and identity.

In this special anniversary year, it is apt that we, alongside many other voices, also lend our own voice to help increase awareness and understanding of the emergency situation unfolding across all ecosystems. This universal language of drawing is the perfect narrator helping to document, report and share thinking around the seismic shifts taking place in our society. Everywhere are visual manifestations of positive activism from people wanting to help make change.

We hope this year’s festival will help support all those change-makers, and all those interested in advocating for the positive and healthy impact on accessing outdoor green spaces and working ‘collaboratively’ alongside nature. We hope this theme will draw attention to the pioneers and innovators adopting new more sustainable materials and working practises – as well as more holistic ways of living in our cities and urban environments.

- Kate Mason, Director of The Big Draw
Getting involved in The Big Draw Festival

“How do I sign up to The Big Draw Festival?”

Anyone can organise a Big Draw event, whether you’re a national museum looking to engage your audience in an online sketch club using your museum collection or you may be an individual artist, test marketing a potential course -sharing your creative talents with the world.

Firstly, head on over to: www.thebigdraw.org/login and register if you’ve not created an account. Once you’re logged in, fill in your organiser details and pay the subscription fee. You can find out more about the tiers and which category you’d fall into here. You can make payment via PayPal or we can send an invoice.

Once you’ve paid, then bonza... you’re now an official organiser!

Adding events to The Big Draw Map

As a 2020 organiser you can add as many events as you like up until February 2021 which is when we reset the festival subscription. Once you’ve logged in, click the ‘EVENTS’ tab at the top of the page and the green ‘ADD AN EVENT’ button in the top right-hand corner. You’ll be able to add all your event details and any links to purchase tickets if your event incurs a fee & your website. You can also add images to your listing, so make sure they are of good quality and bright. We encourage all organisers to add photos as we often use these in our newsletters and social media channels. All your events will be listed in ‘YOUR EVENTS’ and you’ll be able to make any edits throughout your subscription. Please note that once you click SAVE, your event will be submitted to The Big Draw Team for approval and once checked, will be added to The Big Draw Listings and World Map. Once you’re on the map, your event will be promoted through our social media channels and in our newsletter to all our subscribers.

Promoting Your Event:

Once you’ve added your Big Draw event to our world map and listing, you can start sharing this with the world. All Big Draw events will be shared online through a combination of Twitter, Facebook, Instagram Stories and posts. Make sure you use images that are sharp and clear, as we are more likely to use these in our main posts. You’ll also have access to an auto-tweet function button for your listed event which can be shared with our Twitter audience (38k combined at present).

Consider promoting your event on Facebook. You could opt to run an advert or get your friends and followers to share your upcoming work. Maybe run a Facebook Live video to build up some excitement to your event or course? Tag @TheBigDrawOfficial so we can share your events with our audience.

Are you test marketing a course or event? Why not offer a free session in return for reviews? This can form the basis of building up your audience and gain some traction for future events. Please note, events do not have to be free. You’ll be able to add a link to tickets in your listings, so think about which platform you’ll need to use for tickets - e.g. EventBrite. If you’re hosting on a number of platforms, why not ask for donations? This can be via a site such as Patreon, PayPal or Ko-Fi.

You can also promote your event on Twitter, Instagram, through a Podcast and even create a YouTube video. Think about creating a hashtag that your followers can join in with too!

The Marketing Toolkit includes press release templates and a sample sponsorship letter to help with promoting your work. Your event will be listed in our weekly newsletter, so make sure you add your events as soon as possible!

As you’re able to run events till February 2021, feel free to experiment and see what works for you. Good Luck!

Organiser Backend Resources

Once you’ve logged into your account, you’ll be able to access some wonderful tools. On the homepage by clicking ‘BRAND RESOURCES’ you’ll have access to the electronic versions of the Marketing Toolkit, Stickers, Posters, Certificates, Branding Guidelines and logos! You can also order a Welcome Pack filled with all of the above, including your choice of either a compostable bag or a packet of seeds! The ‘RESOURCES’ tab is filled with information to inspire you, including a whopping 50% off on selected items in our Big Draw Shop.
Some of our Festival Organisers go into planning their programmes with a clear idea in mind of what they would like to achieve. Others are less clear. It can be overwhelming trying to think of activities that are imaginative and unique! The truth of the matter is that you simply need not overthink this part of the process. It is enough to have one very simple aim: Fun.

Mispillion Art League’s mission in taking part in The Big Draw Festival was simple! They wanted participants to remember just how fun creating is without any critiques, judging and worry. From traditional drawing to pottery to painting pumpkins, Mispillion Art League successfully delivered a programme of events that were enjoyable and accessible for all.

“Establish what you want to achieve

No critiques, no judging, no worry about the outcome – just lose yourself in the act of creating.”

- Sonja from Mispillion Arts League, Delaware
Attract a new audience

“...We come to Chatsworth quite often, but we never knew you were here. It’s a brilliant facility to offer. Something extra for families to do. Thank you!”

- Participant at Chatsworth House

Big Draw event 2019

Events at Chatsworth House as part of The Big Draw Festival 2019

Raise awareness of a new initiative

Chatsworth House launched a new drawing campaign, ‘Get Drawing at Chatsworth’, in May 2019 as part of the build up to hosting their first ever Big Draw event in their newly refurbished learning centre. Their aim in taking part in The Big Draw Festival was to raise the profile of their new arts provision and to attract a new audience.
Raise Money, Raise Awareness.

The Big Draw Festival [...] links back to the importance that the school puts on efficient and sustainable community service, wellbeing and sensitivity towards the environment.

The British School New Delhi ran a diverse and varied programme of Big Draw events from September to December of 2019. One of their art projects was developed around an existing water initiative developed by a Year 12 student of the school. The initiative aims to bring safe and clean drinking water to over 3,000 people in Garwad, a village in Maharashtra, India that suffers from frequent and severe water shortages. This particular art project was inspired by a Ancient Greek fable, The Crow and the Pitcher, which tells of a crow that draws out water from a pitcher using pebbles to raise the water level. The school ran a pebble painting workshop with students of all ages where the pebbles were later sold as paper weights to raise funds for the ongoing student-led water initiative project.

Students worked on a variety of collaborative murals, expressing their hopes for the future, and reflecting on their views of their homes and of the world. They were also encouraged to explore the links between Art and Science and gain a greater appreciation of the Natural World through creating illustrations of imaginary insects, coral patterns, microscopic cells and leaf patterns.

The collaborative drawing in particular allowed us to explore multiculturalism and identity through image, [...] students demonstrated a sensitivity towards the making of this unified work.
For their Big Draw programme of events in 2019, Qube’s aims were three-fold. They hoped to: introduce more people to the arts by providing a range of drawing-based activities aimed at all levels; help to combat loneliness and rural isolation; and highlight issues around climate change to provide a focus for discussion and debate, and an opportunity for positive action.

“Use drawing to highlight important issues

For many people, environmental issues are too distant or too remote and may not register in the daily stresses of life... This art project gave every participant a visual voice in coming together to create a positive, collaborative, visual symbol of commitment for change in dealing with the environment crisis.”

- Elain from Qube, Shropshire

Local environmental artist, Tim Pugh, was invited to run three, free events where participants of all ages were given the opportunity to help create a large artwork with a strong message about the environment. Participants were invited to either bring along old, unwanted toys or to select a toy from the giant pile of abandoned toys collected by Tim Pugh from the North Wales and Cumbria coastline over the last three years. The participants were given a choice of drawing materials and invited to draw any toy – or part of a toy. The drawings were cut-out and incorporated into a giant and colourful mosaic turtle, representing the fragile planet.
Get outside

From Sketchcrawls to Forest trails to Urban Street Doodling, getting outside is a good way to get the creative juices flowing. Consider different ways in which people will get around: by foot? By bus? By boat? Consider the time of day! Bright and early is most appropriate for an inner-city sketchcrawl with a cup of coffee, or a nature trail... Dusk is the perfect time for a spooky ghost tour, or a historical walk! Would you like people to be drawing in their own sketchbooks? Or would you rather they were working on one big collaborative project? If so, will it be permanent? Consider the number of participants that you want to take part; outdoor drawing activities in busy areas such as local town centres are likely to garner attention from passers-by, so be prepared to bring extra drawing equipment for potentially more people to take part!

Make use of the Great Outdoors

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It was a wonderful experience that taught me many things: about drawing, about community, and about me.

- Participant at Marigold the Maker’s Online Sketching Challenge

Create an online community of creatives

Whether you are an individual, a museum, a school or a library, you may not have the space to host events, or you may wish to make your events as accessible as possible to as many people as possible. Well, this is where the digital age steps in. There is absolutely nothing stopping you from running your events, workshops and campaigns online!

Marigold the Maker took part in The Big Draw Festival 2019, running ‘The Still Point Sketching Challenge’, a 30 day online drawing challenge. Marigold created a hashtag specific to the event: #stillpointsketchingchallenge. The challenge included an A-Z of drawing techniques and mindful drawing suggestions, downloadable challenge calendars and live online drawing events. All those taking part were invited to join a private Facebook group run by Marigold, offering participants access to a thriving online community of like-minded creatives. This platform was used by both Marigold and participants alike to share information, advice, development work and finished pieces.

...so much fun, and so incredibly uplifting and motivating.

- Participant at Marigold the Maker’s Online Sketching Challenge

Sketchbook work by Marigold the Maker
Online events are inclusive and accessible to all

The Open College of the Arts (OCA) is an open access, distance learning provider of higher education courses based in Barnsley, UK. The College offers high quality arts courses as a means to transform lives, with the opportunity to develop and express creative talents under the guidance of experienced artists. For their Big Draw event, OCA developed a month-long online drawing course encouraging people to push the concept of drawing and mark-making through invention, innovation and exploration. Through a series of activities, participants were prompted to imagine, design and test their own drawing ‘machine’ and to reflect on their results. Access to the course remained open all year-round, giving participants the opportunity to drop in at their own pace, and in their own time - and event to invite friends to join in!

OCA wanted to make it as easy as possible for participants to join in, adapting the language used to ensure that it was accessible to people of all ages and from all backgrounds. They used video, animation and forums to create an environment that was welcoming, and used ‘Padlet’ as their online gallery space for students to share their process work and finished pieces.

"...we wanted to design an activity that was inclusive, open and online - staying true to who we are as an organisation."

- Joanna from the Open College of the Arts
Running online events: a guide

Course & Event Structure Ideas

- Who are you and what is your event / course about?
- Is this a worldwide event streamed live or a practical online course?
- Think about the length of your event or course. Is this a one off or a 12 part program for your audience to learn new skills?
- If you’re doing an online course, design an engaging spec to show potential sign ups what they can expect from your program.
- Will you be showcasing the work? If so, will this be through social media accounts, through your platform or an online exhibition? You can add images to The Big Draw Gallery which showcases uploaded images on our front page.

- How will you add value? Think about adding resources and downloadables. You can offer PDFs with instructions, patterns and send all attendees a Big Draw Artist Certificate for taking part in your event.
- Build a community before, during and after your event/course. This could be through exercises, prizes, competitions and sharing information.
- If you’re planning an online course and trying to appeal to different markets, could you add subtitles to engage with those of a different language?

“What platform should I use?”

There are many different platforms you can use for your online event/course. The best one is the one that you feel most comfortable navigating and suitable for your event. Here is a list of suggestions:

- Email. This could be a daily, weekly, monthly email course and is pretty easy to set up.
- Webinars
- Slideshows with V/O or video
- Facebook Group / Facebook Live
- Instagram / Instagram Live.
- Zoom
- Host on your own site
- Create a membership site with a platform like Kajabi.
- Use a marketplace platform such as Udemy or Teachable
- Online collaborative Gallery/Document platform such as Padlet - perfect for educational establishments.

Equipment

Running an online event need not be expensive or tech heavy. Depending on what platform you choose to use, you may only need to have access to a smartphone, tripod or laptop.

One thing we think is important if you’re running a live event, is to make sure you have good lighting so your audience can see you clearly. Do you need to get lights or can you make sure you’re facing a window, so the light fills the frame? Another important aspect is sound.

Do you need an external microphone or does your inbuilt one work sufficiently? Test your equipment online with friends to make sure everything is working well before you go live. If you’re running a pre-recorded event you may need access to some editing software. Many computers have basic features for you to edit video footage so look around and see what works for your needs. If you’re a museum and taking a tour of your collection for lets say, a sketchcrawl- make sure you give the audience enough time to see the item and a chance to draw. Think about different angles and maybe using a voice over/presenter to engage with your item and showcase it’s history verbally.

Ready to begin?
Visit: thebigdraw.org/login
Running online events: some ideas

- Create your own online art magazine or blog. Get your community involved, and encourage them to send you their artwork, poetry, videos...
- Run Online Workshops - from doodling to book making.
- Make art from recycled products.
- Organise an Online Sketchcrawl using travel photos or videos.
- Create stop motion animation. Maybe assign a scene to each person and create a world wide animation!
- Art Pub Quiz!
- Screen Printing.
- Drawing with light... grab your camera and torch and create some art!
- Organise still life sessions filmed within your Museum/Gallery, or use your collection for people to sketch and learn from.
- You can consider doing live stream videos walking people through your collection and talking to them about some of the history of your organisation.
- Explore Sun Printing (otherwise known as Cyanotype) - on a sunny day, this can even be done on window sills!
Explore alternative drawing methods.

Inspire commissioned kinetic sculptor Jim Bond to create and build a new innovative drawing machine just for their Big Draw workshops! Jim worked with pupils to create kinetic artworks for a touring library exhibition. By using a drawing machine, the process of drawing was made accessible to all no matter what age or ability.

Put the ‘active’ in your activities.

It’s often easier to get kids engaged if they are moving around and putting their creativity into action. Why not build a car out of cardboard and race, or build kites and go outside for a ‘test fly’? Whatever it is that you are doing, try to make sure everyone is moving every now and then - like musical chairs, but with drawing... Now there’s an idea.

Make daily routines fun!

Consider how you might be able to bring an element of creativity and fun to daily routines. Teach kids about healthy eating by crafting your own meal plans, or build your own dream catchers to make night times a little less scary!

Use drawing as a learning tool.

Drawing is a fantastic tool for making sense of the world around us. For kids, drawing is a fantastic opportunity to understand the way things work: how do birds fly? How do cars move? How do plants grow? So why not help kids to explore and make sense of this weird and wonderful world by getting creative?
Transform your space...

Make art from recycled products

This Spanish Market experimented with recycling old plastic bottles to create wonderful works of art hanging from the ceiling. It is a good idea to think of imaginative ways to exhibit participants' work. Using it to transform your space is pretty wonderful! We think this looks like colourful sea life - what do you see?

Use windows and walls as your canvas

A blank piece of paper can often be a daunting thing. There is something very freeing about allowing participants to draw on unusual surfaces. As part of The 2019 Big Draw Festival Launch in Manchester Art Gallery, all visitors were given Posca Pens* to draw on any glass surface that they could find in the Gallery. Throughout the day, the space was transformed into a canvas for everyone's dazzling doodles.

*It is worth noting that Posca Pens can be cleaned off of glass. It is a wonderful activity, but be prepared for the clean-up!
“Just wanted to thank you for such a brilliant day yesterday... Lots of inspiration. Looking forward to more!

- Participant at Art Hoppers’ Big Draw event

Encourage thought and conversation

Art Hoppers, in partnership with Rich Mix, invited participants to paint pictures, design stamps, write messages and draw little declarations of happiness ready for the post! They chose to run their event on World Post Day (9th Oct) in gratitude of the global system which launches our intimate stories and helps so many conversations take flight across the world...

They decorated their space with colourful postcards strung from beam to post-box, creating a welcoming atmosphere, encouraging conversation about what truly makes us happy, and the value of creativity.

‘Postcards from a Happy Place’
Get back to basics

Some things never fail. It doesn’t hurt to go back to basics sometimes! You can’t go wrong with a Life Drawing event, or Still Life drawing class. Why not make it a drink-and-draw? Include a glass of bubbly to add to the sense of occasion...

Sherwood Grange, a Care Home in South West London, did exactly this. For their Big Draw event they went the ‘full monty’, inviting a model to take part in a nude life drawing class at the care home! Everyone who took part were full of praise for the event; Marion Nevil, a resident at Sherwood Grange, said: “I always loved art at school, and when I left at age 16 to go into pre-student nursing I didn’t have much time because of the long hours, but I tried to keep my hand in… I was very proud of my drawing as I find the human body a challenge, so this opportunity was a great experience for me.”
You can organise Still Life drawing sessions, Life Drawing sessions and virtual tours that take place within your organisation, taking inspiration from various elements of your collection. This is a great opportunity to engage your audience and teach them a bit about your collection along the way. These can be done in person and online; film your collection for people to sketch and learn from - you can even organise live stream video tours of your space!
Celebrate your community!

Mispillion Art League, Big Draw Sponsor Partners, 2019

Want to find out more?
Visit our website: thebigdraw.org

The Big Draw Festival is a great opportunity to bring your community together! Big Draw Sponsor Partners are able to have multiple event partners which is a brilliant way to celebrate your community and make the most of your local resources.

Mispillion Art League organised an extraordinary programme of events involving local organisations: the local coffee shop, shipyard, dance academy and the Town Museum to name a few! The Art League also encouraged locals to take part as volunteers - this not only made the running of these events far smoother, but also brought individuals within the community together. “We could not have managed a Festival of this size and duration... without the active participation of almost 70 volunteers, who helped make our first Big Draw more successful than we dared to hope.”

“...The unexpected part was just how engaged the community was... We were enthusiastically embraced by our community, our volunteers exhibited great teamwork and encouragement, and we garnered a large amount of media attention for the state-wide event, exactly as we had hoped!”

- Sonja from Mispillion Art League, Delaware, USA
Use drawing as a means of protest

Drawing is the perfect narrator to document, report and share thinking around the seismic shifts taking place in our society and across our ecosystems. Everywhere, you can see visual manifestations of positive activism from people wanting to help make change! Why not use your Big Draw event as an opportunity to embrace positive activism? Encourage participants to share their thoughts and use drawing as a means of communication and protest.
World Awareness Days...

MAC Birmingham, The Big Draw event 2019

Ready to begin?
Visit: thebigdraw.org/login

Key dates throughout the Festival

Why not combine your Big Draw event with a World Awareness Day for extra impact? You can run your Big Draw events all year round, but here are some of the key dates throughout the month of October to get your creative cogs turning...

1st Oct  International Day of Older Persons
2nd Oct  International Day of Non-Violence
4th Oct  World Animals Day
5th Oct  World Teachers’ Day / World Habitat Day
9th Oct  World Post Day
10th Oct World Mental Health Day / World Homeless Day
13th Oct International Day for Disaster Reduction
15th Oct International Day of Rural Women
16th Oct World Food Day
17th Oct International Day for the Eradication of Poverty
20th Oct World Statistics Day
24th Oct United Nations Day
25th Oct International Artists’ Day
27th Oct World Day for Audiovisual Heritage
31st Oct World Cities Day