



REEP

Religions & Environment
Education Projects

Creating Textiles for the REEP Shore to Shore Project in Essaouira and Marrakech

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During the first week [of the Shore to Shore project in Morocco], I met so many people, musicians, photographers, actors, gardeners – a big handful of creative minds. Like myself, these creative people came to Morocco from England, the majority came from London to get involved with the Shore to Shore organisation. The organisation put on events/festivals every year in Morocco, this year the theme was 'Shakespeare'. The exhibition displayed the history of links between Manchester and Essaouira during Shakespeare's time, as well as the creating of the gardens. A few days of hard work and working as a team, the exhibition comes together nicely...

3 hours of patience, Emma and I created a miniature Tudor house, our team work and efforts made it worthwhile.

I have some strange obsession with washing lines which I might have mentioned before. The idea of pegging work up is an ideal form of display in my eyes. I was determined to display something from the exhibition as a washing line, and so I did. Space was designated for the display of the upcoming school gardens, I had the idea of creating a 'washing line' to display the flower seeds...

The display told a story going from the left side of the exhibition entrance continuing along the parameter of the room ending on the right side. The architecture was beautiful, the arch shape ceiling created an enjoyable cosy space. After hours of work, the exhibition was complete and the public joined us with great interest.

February 3, 2014

Going back to the OAPAM school in Marrakech, we were given the opportunity to enter a competition to design a sensory garden, an

opportunity not to be missed. REEP the charity who are making this wonderful garden happen, were looking for a moodboard that illustrated cost effective sustainable design ideas. They thought it would be great for us art and design students to get involved, graphic design, textiles, fine art, anyone with a creative mind. Before reading on any further, get yourself a cup of tea, I have lots to get excited about and share!

After meeting the blind and partially blind students in Marrakech this year, I felt eager to come up with sensory design ideas and really think about what would suit their needs. A key aspect of the designs was to revolve around their strong senses, touch, smell and sound, it was important to take them into account. I looked through a few gardening books such as:

'Your garden makeover, The complete guide to garden renewal'
by Liz Dobbs and Sarah Wood

'Perfect plants for your garden' by Andrew Mikolajski

'Growing plants and flower' by Wendy Boase

for inspiration triggering an array of ideas. For touch, I thought about creating textured paths with either pebbles, cobbles, grass, sand or bamboo, something that would be safe enough for the children to walk bare footed on and really enjoy the different textures. A water path came into mind, a few inches deep almost like a paddling pool for them to walk through with a bar on one side to guide them along the refreshing experience.

I want to make the most of their beautiful orange trees so I thought about hanging a range of different shaped beads to a plank of wood hung between branches of the tree, acting as a curtain that you can walk through and feel would be appealing for them. Also, wrapping trees with brightly coloured wool for them to touch and for the partially blind to see.

Another idea I had with regards to touch, was for the children to get involved by creating a wall full of their hand prints using a thick layer of paint placed onto their hands, then printing it onto the wall. Thick enough so they can retrace their hand print and recognize their own print.

Braille signs placed around the garden indicating what was there, plant names and vegetable names was another idea. These signs would be

placed symmetrically around the garden as an easy way of remembering where they are.

For sound, I instantly thought about the trees and what I could do with them, creating wind chimes. Going with the up-cycling approach I wanted to use what I already had, a collection of bottle tops, why have I collected them? I couldn't tell you, I had a feeling they would come in handy one day, it looks like today is the day. I found that they made a lovely light sound as they collided, my idea was to paint them individually using red blue and yellow – the colours that I have chosen to use throughout, inspired by Jardin Majorelle in Marrakech. They would be attached to a plank of wood and hung up on a higher section of the tree as not to be touched but only to be heard.

Wooden wind chimes painted with splashes of colour hanging from the trees with an added touch, braille. How lovely would it be reading uplifting sentences to make you smile? Sentences like, have a nice day, you look wonderful or smile it's a beautiful day. I had the idea of having Braille written on acetate sheets (something waterproof and sustainable) cut to fit and wrap around the wooden wind chimes so the children could feel read and smile.

Running on the sound ideas, I was thinking about how in Marrakech we were always welcomed with their mint Tea. I wanted to thank them without traditional Tea by creating a water feature where Teacups attached to saucers, hung from trees positioned in a way where water could fall from cup to cup landing in a bird bath, the sounds of a mini waterfall would complete the garden, I feel.

Also, Islamic patterned teapots that are positioned on a post at a slight incline to water plants/vegetables as it rained, pleasing to the eye as well as having a purpose.

For smell, flowers were an essential part of my design ideas. Flowers such as Jasmine and Magnolia with strong scents would be ideal. I had an idea of having a simple wooden bench that has been cut in half giving enough room for an orange crate filled with flowers, that would fit in between the two sections of the bench for you to sit either side of the flowers enjoying the smells.

Growing Mint would be of good use and smell, used for the enjoyment of picking and the drinking of Mint Tea. There you have it, a burst of ideas that I've enjoyed thinking about. Below you will find a visual diagram of my plan and ideas.