

## Outdoor Shadow Drawing

As autumn deepens to winter the quality of the light changes, days shorten and shadows lengthen; I love the stark quality of winter sunlight.

Shadow tracing is a lovely activity to try in late autumn and winter.

You will need:

Paper - normal or greaseproof – or card

Pens, pencil, charcoal, chalk, pastels – whatever you like to draw with and will give interesting effects

Naked trees in winter cast amazing shadows; if you like to be outdoors in the elements this activity may be for you.

Wait for a bright sunny winter's day. Take your card or paper and whatever you're going to draw with, and walk around your garden or further afield, around your village or along a favourite footpath.

Look closely at the shadows cast by the trees – see how many interesting tree shadows you can find. Draw as many as you like, don't worry about getting it 'right', the shadow will be gone in a minute, so try to catch it now – from your point of view.

If you find a shadow you like that is cast over paving, concrete or a tarmac path you could try tracing the edges of the shadow with chalk or charcoal directly onto the ground. You could leave it as a silhouette or colour in the middle (positive space); either way, your ghostly shadow image will fade with time and the elements.

If you find a detailed tree or plant shadow that will fit your paper, place your paper or card on the ground so the shadow is cast upon it.

If it's a sharp, clearly defined shadow, use your pen, chalk or charcoal to carefully trace around the outlines. If it's more of a fuzzy edged shadow, then use chalk pastel or similar to trace its shapes

Once you get back home and into the warmth, you can extend this activity, by painting or colouring in the negative space, i.e. all the space around your shadow drawing.

Experiment with using either plain and solid colour, or a mixture of pattern, or other drawn or painted work. This will lead to some interesting abstract work and is a meditative and enjoyable way to work to help with artistic confidence and freeing up your mind from its inner critic.

