

CG0013 Canfod a'i Danio (Found and Fired)

Denbighshire based artist and ceramicist, Judith Wood, submitted an application in early 2021 for funds to enable her to deliver a project based around natural clay and the landscape around Corwen in north-east Wales.

Her project involved sourcing natural clay from the ground, processing it and then guiding local school children in learning how to handle clay, develop their own designs and then realize them in clay.

Judith teamed up with Corwen's primary school, Ysgol Caer Drewyn, and the project started in September 2021.

The workshops with the school pupils also included processing the clay so they understood clay was from the ground and learning how to glaze.

Covid did its best to interrupt progress so plans to display the children's artwork were delayed from November 2021 until April 2022 when the local museum, Amgueddfa Corwen re-opened.

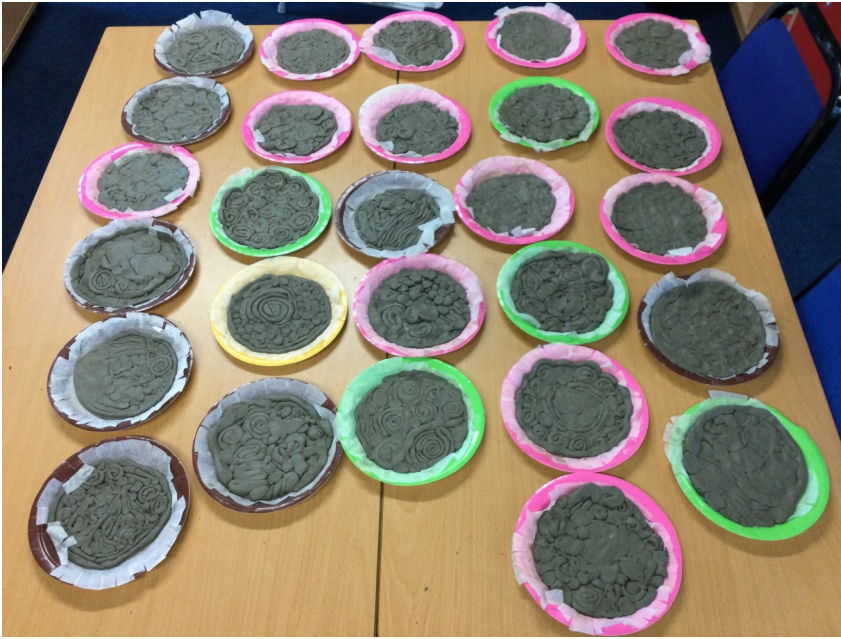
Judith summed up how she thought the children benefited from the project:

The class I worked with, had a number of pupils with various additional needs, so the sensory nature of clay was really enjoyed by many of the children. The clay wasn't easy to work with, and the children showed real perseverance while creating their work.

We had some really good class discussions around who we were and where we live. It was heartwarming to see their words and drawings depicting the things that were important to them. There was lots of family, climbing trees, walking, playing in the river etc."



The children learned a lot about clay as their replies to the artist's question prove:



Is there anything about pottery you know now, but didn't know before?

Their answers: "That you can get clay from a field, and not a shop."

"It can never go back to clay once its cooked."

"How long it went in the kiln!"

"Clay comes from underground."

"I thought you could only do pottery on a wheel. That's not true."

"I didn't know you had to make the clay wet, and wait a long time, and put it in a kiln."

"I didn't know clay was natural."

"I didn't know it could blow up in the kiln."

The artist also learned from the project:

I've only ever used commercial clay, where the clay body is already more or less the colour of the final fired clay, so I'm absolutely loving the alchemy of using this raw clay.

The attached picture of the cat is made of a clay that I dug up on a walk on the other side of the Caer Drewyn hill fort. So less than half a mile from the clay we are using for the project, and yet a similar process and firing has created two slightly different colours."



The children's artwork went on show in early April 2022 and the project culminated in May 2022 with a visit by the school pupils involved to see their fired clay designs on show at the museum.

Foundation support: £1,350

