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Wearable Arts Information Pack

This information pack brings together resources, ideas and learnings from the Beautification Trust's Eye on Nature Wearable Arts programme to help your school plan and run its own wearable arts show.

Every school will bring its own creativity and flair to the experience.

We hope these resources inspire your students to think outside the box, work together and discover the possibilities of wearable art, while finding new ways to care for our environment.



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Suggested Judging Criteria

Every wearable art creation tells a story. Judging criteria can help celebrate the creativity, effort and thinking behind each design, while giving students clear goals to work towards.

We've included our judging criteria as a starting point for your school showcase. You can adapt it to suit your theme, age groups and the skills you want to celebrate. Consider recognising a range of achievements, from clever use of repurposed materials to storytelling, craftsmanship and confidence on the runway.

Including additional award categories such as Best Use of Repurposed Materials, Most Imaginative Design, Best Environmental Message and People's Choice can be a great way to let students be involved in judging through a voting system.



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Judging Matrix

Category	Description	Max Points
Interpretation	Demonstrate a strong interpretation of and engagement with the theme.	20
Materials	There are no restrictions on the materials you use, however, Wearable Arts is a sustainable fashion design challenge. The judges will be looking for entries that have considered the full life cycle of the garment and its impact on the environment, including what will happen to it after the final fashion show. Winning garments will be those that demonstrate the best use of sustainable materials. We have developed a Wearable Arts Material Guide and Wearable Arts Self Assessment Guide to help direct student reflection on this. The age level of the students will be considered in this section. Material sourced from pest plants is not permitted.	20
Designer Statement	The MC will read each Designer Statement while the garment is being modelled on the catwalk during the Dress Rehearsal and Fashion Show. Statement (70 words max) needs to include: • How your garment relates to the theme • How your choice of materials for your garment makes it sustainable or low impact on the environment • Any topic inquiries you undertook or new skills you developed in the design/construction process (such as learning about native species in our rivers, teaching yourself to weave flax etc). Designer Statements must be included in your garment registration form.	20
Originality & Innovation	The judges are looking for the "Wow!" factor, an entry that will make an impression. An original garment designed with a unique interpretation of the theme.	10
Construction	The garment must be comfortable and safe for the model to wear. Models must be able to see clearly and breathe easily whilst wearing it. All footwear must be robust, well-balanced and safe. NO sharp objects or scratchy surfaces, e.g.: staples. Garments must be of a size to fit through doorways backstage. Efforts towards green sections of the Wearable Arts Materials Guide in regards to joining or connecting elements of the garment will be favoured.	15
Artist effort	We accept that students will require adult help and supervision but the garment should primarily be constructed and designed by the students.	15

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Recipes, Checklists and Tips for Creating Sustianable Art

Wearable art is a chance to see everyday materials in a new way. Items that might otherwise be thrown away can become the building blocks for imaginative costumes, accessories and headpieces.

When planning your project, think about sustainability at every stage of the making process. Consider the materials you choose, how you join different elements together, and the details, embellishments and finishing touches that bring your design to life. Small changes in these choices can help reduce waste and make better use of the resources available.

We've compiled a collection of tips and recipes to help you approach your project a little differently. Explore alternative techniques, experiment with textures and shapes, and discover creative ways to transform repurposed materials into wearable art. Before you begin, make sure all materials are clean and safe to handle.



Sourcing Materials

Give everyday materials a new life! Wearable art is a chance to get creative with materials that might otherwise go to waste. Before buying new supplies, take a look at what you already have at home, in the classroom or in your community.

Before you collect

- Collect items that are clean, dry and in good condition.
- Ask permission before taking materials from home, businesses or community groups.
- Avoid sharp metal, broken glass, exposed wires and anything with rough or dangerous edges.
- Do not collect packaging that has held chemicals, cleaning products or other hazardous substances.
- Avoid materials with mould, strong smells, food residue or unknown contents.
- Check that natural materials are safe to handle and can be collected without harming living things or protected areas.
- Check school requirements for allergies, hygiene and age-appropriate tools.
- Make sure finished garments are comfortable, secure and safe to move in.

Remember, the aim is to make thoughtful use of available materials. You don't need to collect everything or buy new supplies to create something special.



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Materials Collection List

Use this checklist to collect materials for your wearable art creations. You don't need everything on the list. Choose items that suit your design, experiment with different textures and shapes, and see what you can make.

Fabric & Textiles

- [ ] Old clothing
- [ ] Fabric offcuts & scraps
- [ ] Unwanted curtains or sheets
- [ ] Ribbon, lace and trim
- [ ] Wool, yarn and string
- [ ] Reusable shopping bags

Packaging & Plastics

- [ ] Plastic bottles & containers
- [ ] Bottle lids
- [ ] Old bubble wrap
- [ ] Clean food trays
- [ ] Netting from fruit packaging
- [ ] Soft plastics

Paper & Cardboard

- [ ] Cardboard boxes & tubes
- [ ] Old packaging
- [ ] Newspaper & magazines
- [ ] Scrap paper
- [ ] Egg cartons
- [ ] Paper bags

Natural Materials

- [ ] Fallen leaves & twigs
- [ ] Old branches
- [ ] Feathers, found naturally
- [ ] Dried grasses or flowers
- [ ] Harakeke (flax)
- [ ] Collect bark & rocks

Everyday Items

- [ ] Old CDs or DVDS
- [ ] Old maps & posters
- [ ] Broken umbrellas
- [ ] Clean foil packaging
- [ ] Can tabs & metal cans
- [ ] Old shoelaces

Small Items

- [ ] Buttons
- [ ] Broken jewllery
- [ ] Old belts & buckles
- [ ] Old zips
- [ ] Old costume accessories
- [ ] Old decorations

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Choosing Sustainable Materials

The materials you choose can make a difference to the environmental impact of your wearable art project. Before buying anything new, think about what you already have, what can be reused, and what might otherwise go to waste.

This guide offers a simple way to compare material choices, from items to avoid to better alternatives that make use of repurposed and natural materials. Use it as a starting point to make thoughtful choices, reduce waste and explore creative ways to turn everyday materials into wearable art.

Avoid

Single use items that hurt the environment.

- New/bought items
- Cable ties and other disposable fasteners
- Hot glue or superglue
- Balloons
- Polystyrene
- Plastic flowers or plants

Good

Materials diverted from recycling.

- Second hand fabric and clothing
- Clean bottles, containers and plastic packagaing
- Reclaimed decorations, costumes and accessories
- Reusable items from home or school

Better

Materials diverted from landfill.

- Broken or worn-out items
- Clean coffee pods and other packaging waste that would end up in landfill.
- Bread tags, CDs or DVDs
- Offcuts and leftovers from other projects
- Items you can recycle after you are done with your garment, eg. soft plastic, e-waste.

Best

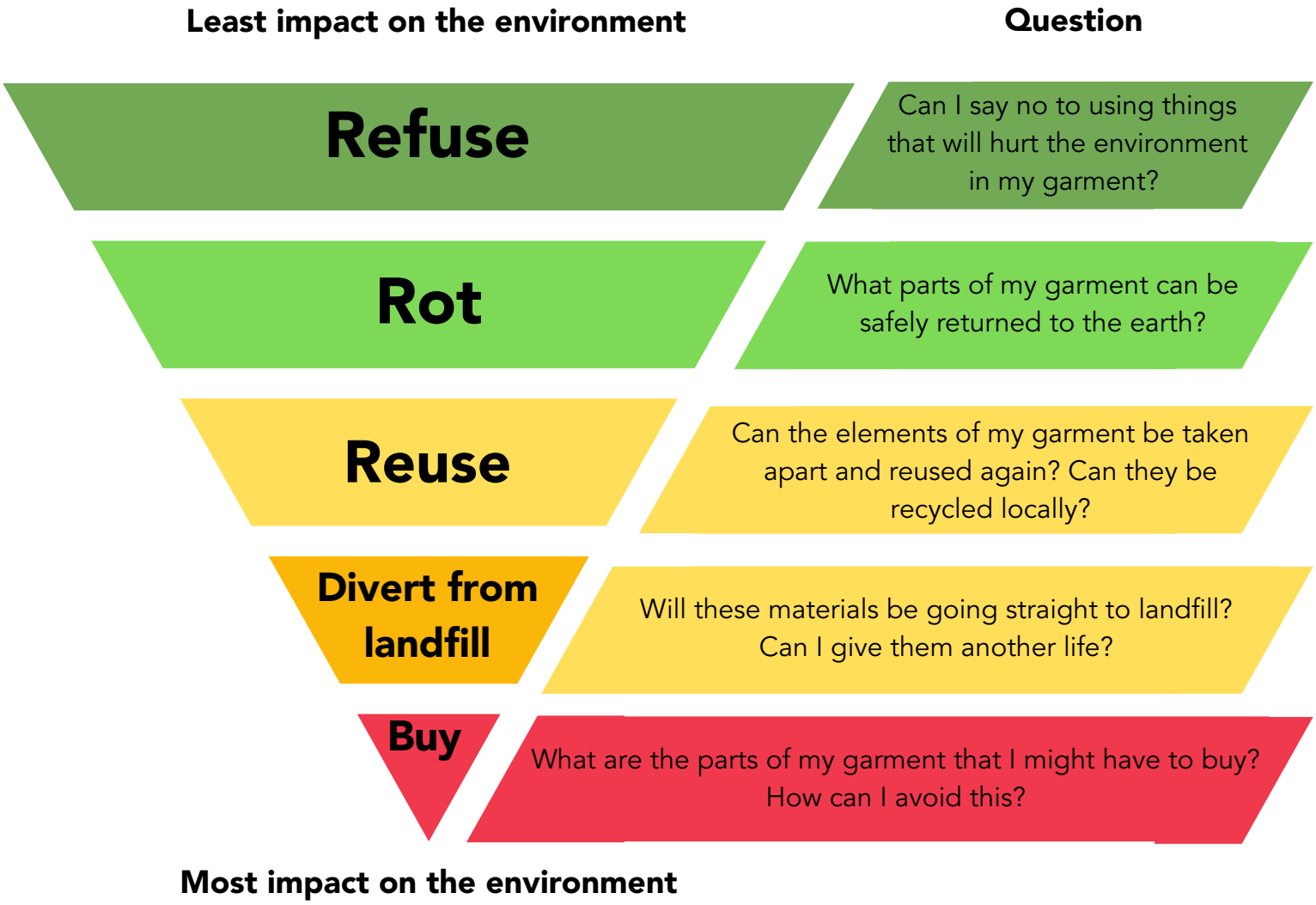
Materials that can be returned to the earth.

- Natural fibres like harakeke/flax, hessian, bamboo, leaves, shells and seeds.
- Fallen leaves, seed pods or twigs
- Cardboard & paper
- Dyes from plants, vegetables and fruits
- Natural glues and paints (eg. flour glue or milk paint)

Sustainable Design Self-Assessment

Making wearable art is a chance to get creative with materials while thinking about how our choices affect the environment. From the materials we choose to the way we join, decorate and finish our garments, there are lots of opportunities to reduce waste and make more sustainable choices.

Use this self-assessment guide to reflect on your design as you work. Ask yourself what you can avoid, reuse or repurpose, and whether your materials can be reused or returned to the earth after the showcase.



Example

Refuse - "I am going to challenge myself to use less hot glue and design my garment so that things can be woven/threaded together instead."

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Recipes for Sustainable Art

The materials and products we use to create wearable art can make a difference to our environmental impact. This collection of recipes explores alternatives to conventional dyes, glues and paints, helping you find new ways to colour, decorate and assemble your designs.

Gelatine Glue

This is an all round glue that can be used for fabrics, leather, paper and cardboard. It is non toxic and keeps a long time in a closed jar. You need:

- 7 grams gelatin powder
- 3 Tbsp boiling water
- 1 Tbsp white vinegar
- 1 tsp glycerin

In a pan, add the gelatin to the boiling water, stir until completely dissolved. Add vinegar and glycerin while stirring until mixture is well blended. Use this glue while it is still warm, apply a thin layer to one side of the materials you want to bond together with a brush and let it get slightly tacky before joining. Store the glue in a jar with a lid, it will solidify when it cools down and you can liqueify it by warming it up in a water bath.

Starch Paste

This glue is great for paper, cardboard and papermaché. Make a small batch because it doesn't keep well. You need:

- ¼ cup wheat flower
- 1 cup water

Mix the flour with a small amount of water to prevent any clumps. Heat up the remaining water in a saucepan and stir the flour-water mixture in. Carefully heat up until the mixture thickens, taken off the heat and let cool down. Apply in thin layers with a brush on one side of the materials you want to join.

Paperclay

Paperclay is a great material to shape elements and not have them be too heavy. It is cheap to make and fun to work with, allow some time to fully dry before painting or assembling pieces. You need:

- Egg cartons (or toilet paper for a smoother texture)
- Water
- Starch paste (recipe as above)

Rip the egg cartons into small pieces and soak them in water overnight. If you use toilet paper it only needs to soak for 30 minutes. Break up the paper fibers as much as you can, if you have an electric mixer you can use that to help with the process. The smaller the paper bits, the smoother your clay will be. Squeeze out as much water as you can and put the paper pulp into a container. For each cup of squeezed paper pulp you will need about a ⅓ cup of starch paste. Mix the two ingredients together, if it is too sticky you can either add more paper pulp or a bit of flour. If it is too dry, add a bit of water or more starch paste. You can now shape it into the elements you need, place them on some baking paper and let them dry for a few hours to a couple of days depending on how thick your pieces are.

Black Stain

For wood and some types of leather (vinegaroon) you can use this stain to achieve a black finish. You need:

- Small glass jar
- Steel wool, steel nails (not stainless steel), or other bits of steel
- White vinegar
- Black tea

In a small glass jar put some steel wool or few nails and cover with white vinegar. Let this mixture sit for a week, with the lid on. By this time it should have become cloudy and slightly brownish. Cook a cup of strong black tea and brush the part you want to stain with it. Let the tea soak in/dry off, then apply a layer of the vinegaroon and watch how it slowly turns darker. Repeat if you want an even darker color.

Dyes

Did you know that a lot of the vegetables, fruits and spices you have in your kitchen right now can be used to dye and color fabrics, wood, some plant fibers and some papers? The best part about it is, those colors can change depending on whether you add some vinegar or baking soda. You can add those directly to your dye or have a spray bottle with vinegar and water and/or baking soda and water to spritz on your materials after you applied the dye.

These dyes stick well to most materials, fabrics like cotton, hemp or bamboo might need a bit of help though: soak them overnight in a mix of 1/3 soy milk and 2/3 water, then spin or wring the excess liquid out and let it dry, don't rinse it out. The protein in the soymilk helps the color to bind to the fabric. Have fun with playing around and finding out what works best for your project!

Tumeric

Produces a vibrant yellow color, you can use the fresh root of the powder you can get in the supermarket in the spice section. Be careful though because it stains everything it gets in contact with. You can just mix it with water and dip your fabric, paper or wood pieces into it, or you can use a brush to apply it. Turmeric changes color from bright yellow to red if you mix it with baking soda.

Blueberries

Berries (not just blueberries, try out raspberries, strawberries or even cherries) can produce beautiful stains, squish them directly onto your material or squeeze the juice out of them to use with a brush. If you can find dried fruit powder you can also mix that with water to create a more paint like consistency. Blueberries give your project a blue-purple hue that turns to green when you add baking soda.

Beetroot

Cut the beetroot into small pieces and put them in a pan covered with water. Slowly heat up but don't let it boil, let it simmer for about 30 mins. After this is cooled you can dip your pieces or paint it on. Beetroot produces a vibrant pinkish red, that brightens up even more if you add a little bit of vinegar, it turns darker and a bit brownish grey if you add baking soda.

Paints

Paints are a bit different than dyes, they are thicker in consistency and tend to sit on the surface of the material, unlike dyes which penetrate deeper into the piece. But you can use all the elements you use for the dyes to make paints as well, you just add them to the base paint mix.

Here are two versions you can try out, they can be kept in the fridge for a few days, but you should use them as fast as possible, so start with making small batches.

Milk Paint

You need:

- Milk powder
- Water
- Your pigment or dye solution (the more concentrated, the more intense the paint will be)

Mix the milk powder with water to get the consistency of paint (mix it directly with the beetroot juice for example without added water, otherwise it ends up very light in color), then add your pigment, turmeric for example or fruit powder.

Starch Paint

You need:

- Starch paste (recipe above)
- Pigment or dye solution

Mix the two components together, you can add water to adjust to the right consistency.

Together for Te Taiao

Best of luck with your wearable arts projects and school showcases! We hope this pack has sparked ideas, encouraged creative thinking and inspired your akonga to see the possibilities in everyday materials.

We'd love to see what your tamariki and rangatahi create, so please share your showcase highlights with us on social media and tag the Beautification Trust.

Keep creating, keep questioning and keep learning. Every project is an opportunity to try something new, rethink how we use resources and inspire others to make more sustainable choices to care for te taiao.

