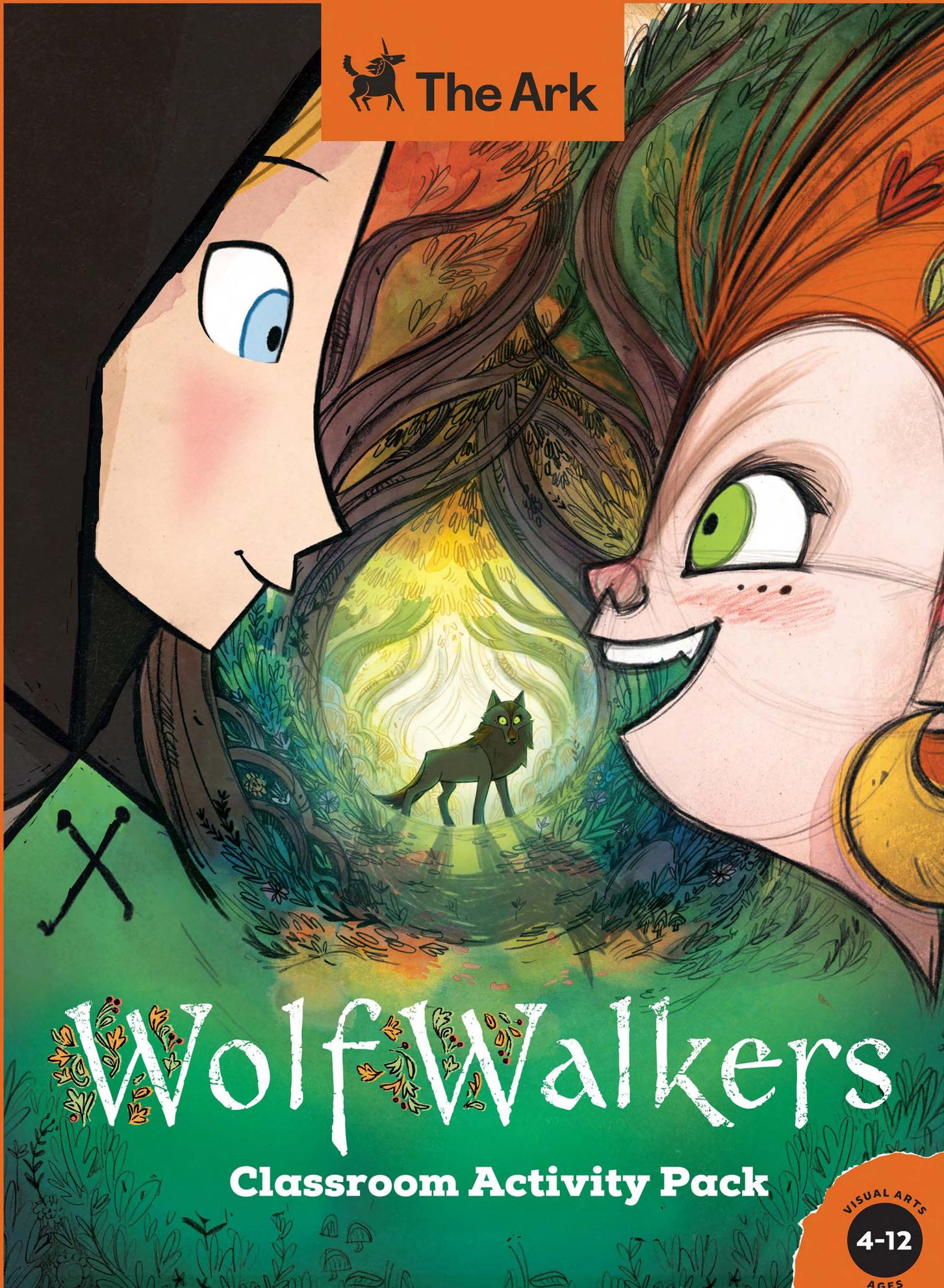




The Ark



# WolfWalkers

## Classroom Activity Pack

VISUAL ARTS  
4-12  
AGES



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## Welcome

The Ark is delighted to welcome *Wolfwalkers: The Exhibition* in summer 2023 for schools and families to enjoy. *Wolfwalkers* is a feature animation by academy award nominated Irish animation studio Cartoon Saloon, and follows main characters, Robyn and Mebh, on their shapeshifting adventures as wolves.

The visual art exhibition takes you behind the scenes to see how the animation was made, including initial concept drawings, draft character sketches, techniques used in animation and footage of actors voicing the characters. We encourage you to come along and see the exhibition, but if that's not possible it is not necessary to have visited to complete the activities in this pack.

We also encourage you to watch this beautiful film so your class has an understanding of its story and themes.

## How to Use this Pack

Though *Wolfwalkers* is an animation and the style of imagery used in the film is illustration this pack intends to use *Wolfwalkers* as inspiration in exploring ways of making and creating art in the classroom. The pack contains a range of activities devised by artist Jole Bortoli as well as drawing tutorials from Cartoon Saloon creators. This approach aims to provide teachers with numerous ways to create visual artworks with their pupils making the activities accessible and enjoyable to different ages, abilities and interests of children. Most of the activities in the pack can be adapted to suit all ages and can be integrated into lesson plans however one wishes. Each activity is a stand-alone activity so the pack can be started at any point.

## **Curricular Links**

The activities in this pack cover the drawing, paint & colour, and clay strands of the Visual Art curriculum. The activities also create opportunities to explore cross curricular links with History in the story and culture in the past strands, as well as story writing, oral and communication skills, listening and responding strands of the Primary Language curriculum.

## **Characters**

Developing the personalities of Robyn and Mebh was an important part of the creating the film's story. Their relationship and how they relate to one another is a key part of the story and its success. Robyn is from the city and a hunter, while Mebh is from the wilds of the wood and a shapeshifter.

At the beginning of any production, the Cartoon Saloon artists make hundreds of rough drawings of the characters as they explore different ideas for them. They draw and redraw until they are sure they have achieved the right look for the character.

# Activity 1

*Story making and drawing (suitable for group work)*

Ask each child or group to invent a character/s and make up a short story about them. Where is the story set? What would their character look like? What happens in the story?

**Make** - Each child will draw and colour in a character from the story and present it to the class.

## Material needed

A4 white paper white, pencils, colour pencils, markers, crayons.



## Shape-shifters

Shape-shifters are popular figures in myths and folktales around the world. They are not the werewolves of horror stories: cursed creatures who turn into ravening beasts when the moon is full. Shape-shifters alter their forms at will.

The Selkies in Cartoon Saloon's animated film, *Song of the Sea*, control when they transform; Sirius Black and Minerva McGonagall in the Harry Potter books can assume animal forms when they choose.

The most famous shape-shifters in Irish myths are the man-wolves of Ossory. These shape-shifters were the descendants of Laignech Fáelad, the ancestor of the kings of Ossory, whose medieval realm included most of County Kilkenny and County Laois.

## Activity 2

### Drawing and clay modelling

In *Wolfwalkers*, the free-spirited girl Mebh can transform into a wolf by night.

Imagine you could also shape-shift into an animal and take on this animal's powers. Which animal would you choose? A creature of the earth, the sea or the sky? How would you use your powers for?

#### 1. Drawing

Draw a line down the centre of the page to divide it in two. Make a drawing of your character in human form and one of the animals the character has transformed into.

Many craft artists around the world specialize in making small objects that are made from animal's antlers, bones, feathers. Some create

small animals from clay or carved from wood. These objects are often kept by people as safe keep as they believe it may protect them from harm or disease. They are called *amulets*.

## 2. Clay modelling

Make an amulet of your characters animal form for yourself or a friend using clay, wood sticks and feathers.

### Material needed

1 - A4 paper white or coloured, coloured pencils.

2 - Air dry modelling clay, wood sticks and feathers, string, scissors and glue.



## **The Forbidden Lands**

A long time ago, in a time of superstitions and magic, the land that lay outside the city walls or villages was thought to be dangerous, scary and mysterious. Children were forbidden to go into the woods on their own. This was especially true of forests as it was believed that not only animals but also spirits and creatures of all kinds lived there.

This was when Ireland was covered in forests and home to many different types of animals, plants and trees. Bears, wild boars and, of course, wolves roamed these forests.

In *Wolfwalkers*, the Irish forest is depicted in many different ways: at times dense with trees, dark and mysterious, at others with water flowing through: rivers, waterfalls and pools; verdant and dotted with boulders and rocks covered in moss; with bright shafts of light making it luminous. Some of these images are drawn and painted with many details and some with just brushstrokes of colour.

## **Activity 3**

### **Painting**

Look closely at the images from the movie (see below) and imagine you are walking in a forest. Perhaps you are a human or perhaps an animal. Are you moving through the woods close to the ground on all fours? What do you see from there? Or you are a bird flying over the treetops? What does the forest look like from above?

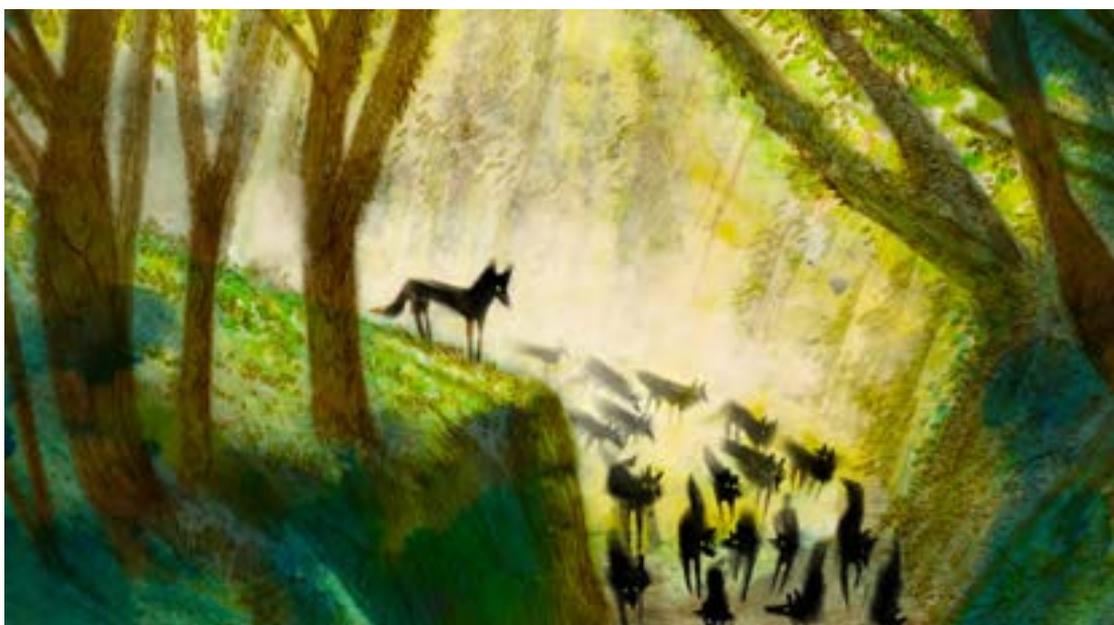
What time of the day is it? Or is it a night-time scene lit by moonlight? The colours you will use are important to convey special feelings and mood.

*“Everything you can't say in words, you have to say it with colours”* says Cartoon Saloon's artist Alice Dieudonné.

**Make:** Paint a forest for your character. You can paint directly using brushes and a sponges without drawing it first. You can always add some details with inks, markers or crayons once the painting is dry.

### **Material needed**

A3 paper white or coloured, paint, brushes, palettes, water containers, sponges, markers, inks and crayons.





## **Story board**

All animation movies begin with an artist drawing a storyboard. A storyboard is a panel of images that turn the words of the script into visual images. Each scene needs a storyboard that clearly shows what is happening in each part of the scene.

Storyboards are often drawn and redrawn multiple times until the directors, artists and editors are happy that the images convey the story correctly.

In storyboards the scenes are roughly drawn and are more like sketches, there is no need for details. Under each scene there is a short description of what happens.

## **Activity 3**

*This activity is aimed at older classes, either for individuals, pair or as group work*

### **Writing and Storyboards**

Ask the children to spend some time thinking up a short story with characters and a plot line. Spend some time writing these stories up and asking them to share them with the class.

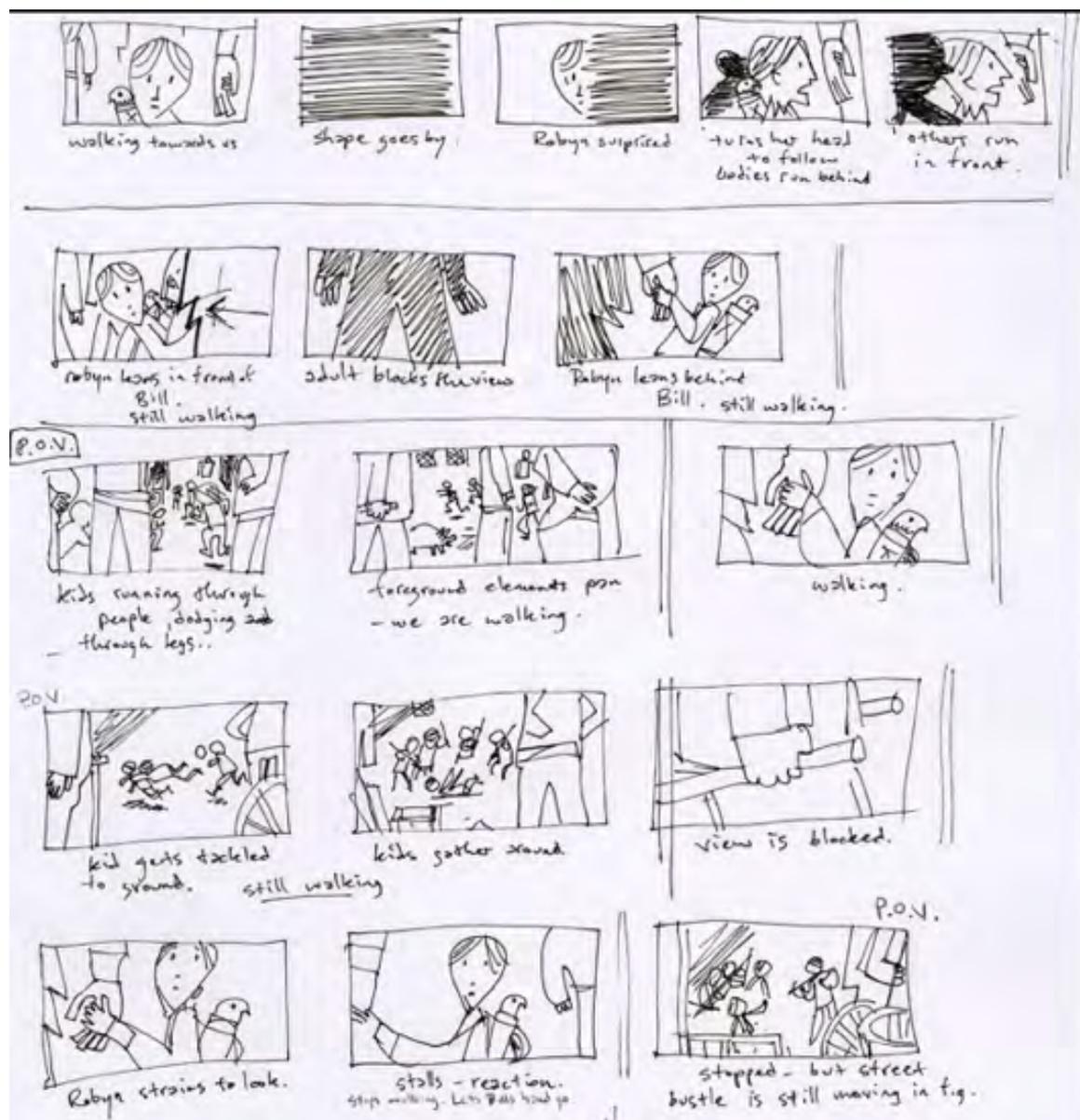
Once they have had time to complete a story ask them to create a storyboard for it.

If time is limited, ask them to use a story they already know, perhaps a common fairy tale. Or if they have completed Activity 1, they could use these stories.

**Make** - After looking at the examples of Cartoon Saloon's story boards below, ask the children to create their own storyboard for their story, breaking down the story scene by scene. If they are working in groups, each child can draw a different scene.

### Material needed

A4 or A3 white paper white, pencils, colour pencils, markers, crayons.





## Activity 4

### Drawing and illustration

Watch this video tutorial on YouTube [here](#) of Cartoon Saloon Co-founder and Director Tomm Moore as he shows you how the character of Robyn is drawn. See how he breaks down the character into simple shapes and structures.

**Make** - Try drawing Robyn. Watch the video again with the class, but this time try following along with Tomm as he draws Robyn. Stop the video at various points so the class has time to draw each section.

Now that the class has seen how illustrators draw characters' anatomy, ask the children to have a go at creating their own character, perhaps one that might also be part of the *Wolfwalkers* world. Start by drawing simple shapes for the body and then, using your sketch as a guide, place tracing paper on top and draw the body outline and add in the details.

For more tutorials by Cartoon Saloon artists visit

<https://ark.ie/projects/details/wolfwalkers-animation-tutorials>

### Material needed

Tracing paper, A4 white paper, pencils

# Wolfwalkers

## **The Exhibition**

**7 Jun - 26 Aug 2023**

**The Ark, Temple Bar**

We hope you and your class have enjoyed using this pack. We would love it if you shared with us some images of the work you have created.

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