

The Model

Make Your Own Fossil

Norah McGuinness was born in Derry in 1903. She studied painting at the Metropolitan School of Art in Dublin and then in the School of Art in London. In 1929 she went to Paris, where she saw the work of many exciting artists like Picasso and Cézanne, who were painting in a completely new way. This new style of painting was called Cubism, a process you can experiment with in Activity 3 on The Model Inside Out online programme - *Make Your Own Cubist Collage*.

After her time in Paris, Norah McGuinness moved back to Dublin, where she had many different jobs. She worked as an illustrator, drawing pictures for books, and as a designer for theatre, where she would create backgrounds and sets for plays. Every job that Norah did was creative. Even though she worked in design, she painted throughout her life.



Here is a painting Norah McGuinness made of the sea in Dublin, it is called *Tide Receding, Dublin Bay*. When the tide goes out it often leaves things behind on the shore that were once under water. What do you think has been left behind by the sea in this painting?

Sometimes when the tide goes out it leaves behind a natural treasure called a fossil. Fossils are the remains or traces of plants and animals that lived long ago and are found in the earth, rivers and the sea.

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Eventually from the build-up of earth and the pressure of the water, shells and bones are turned into rock and become fossilised.

You are going to make your very own homemade fossils!

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- 1 cup of plain flour (not self-raising!!)
- 1 cup of salt
- ½ cup of warm water
- Baking tray
- Large bowl
- Shells (if you do not have any shells lying around the house that you have collected from walks on the beach, you can also use different types of leaves that you might find in your back garden)

METHOD

- To make your fossils the first step is to make up your salt dough. In a large bowl mix together the flour and the salt, while mixing slowly add water until it forms a dough. **Note:** *If your dough is too sticky, add a tiny bit more flour also if it is too dry add a tiny bit more water. Your parents can help you create the perfect dough.*
- When it is ready, take the dough out of the bowl and knead for a minute. Then, tearing a small chunk off create a ball by rolling the dough in between the palm of your hands.
- Flatten the ball with the palm of your hand to make a disc. Keep doing this until all your dough is in little discs.
- Once all your dough is in discs, press your shells or leaves into the top of the discs and carefully pull them out to reveal the print they left in the dough.
- When all of your fossils are ready, line them up on a baking tray and with your parents help put them in the oven for 1 – 2 hours on 250 degrees.
- As the fossils are hardening rather than cooking in the oven, they may need to be turned over once or twice, or even go back in for another hour or two if still doughy after the time is up.
- After the fossils have hardened and cooled down look at them under a magnifying glass and see if you can see all the lines and patterns of the shells and leaves. You could also ask your parents to hide the fossils in your garden and you can go on a fossil hunt in your own back garden and dig them up out of the ground.

Ask a parent or guardian to take a picture of your fossils and share it with us. We will post your artwork on our website and Instagram account @modelsligo / #themodelinsideout