

# ART AS EXCHANGE WORKSHOP

Renaissance watercolours were made by grinding and combining pigment with water containing gum. Similarly, you can make your own watercolour paint by sourcing and mixing pigments with the sap of an acacia or grevillea tree.

Before you begin gathering suitable materials, research your local area to learn about its Indigenous story.

Consciously plan to leave an exchange for anything that you take. For instance, you might:

- remove rubbish you find on the walk
- water a small plant as you go
- take the time to be still and listen closely to your surroundings



Learn how to identify acacias (also known as wattle) and grevilleas (also known as silky oaks). Both of these species are prominent in Australia and you should be able to find some around your local area. Collect crystallised sap from a tree or research how to tap a tree for sap.

Alternatively, you can use gum arabic, available for most art supply stores.

Search for pigments that are readily available within your local, urban context. This could include friable rocks, red brick or iron oxides.

Scrape the pigment into a bowl for mixing. Be sure to follow health and safety guidelines when collecting your pigments. Use the back of a spoon to crush the material into a powder. A consistently fine powder will produce a paint that is easy to apply.





Place the sap collected from an acacia or grevillea into a separate container and crush into smaller pieces if needed.

If you are using gum arabic, this often comes as a fine powder. Simply place a small amount into a separate container.

Soften the crystals into a gel by pouring in a small quantity of hot water. Allow time for the crystals to melt and add water as required – be careful not to dilute your mix. Stir the mixture together to form a gel.

Mix the gel with the pigment to create your own paint.



You can work directly with the pigment immediately after mixing or allow them to set to form watercolour pans. Repeat the process with other pigments to create more colours.

With a supply of paints you can revisit the area where you sourced the pigment and paint what you see there.



Explore the potential of your pigments by working into different surfaces and using different techniques, such as etching or monoprinting.

### SHARE WITH US

Share your responses to this workshop with us via [groupbookings@qagoma.qld.gov.au](mailto:groupbookings@qagoma.qld.gov.au)