

The Lady of Shalott

A sunny day out in the field, harvesting the grains and playing in the grass...but someone is calling to you with her poem... The Lady of Shalott in the tower invites you to weave with her and create beautiful patterns. The boat arrives to take her down the river, sing farewell as she floats away.

Environment

Create the fields in one side of the space, using tall grasses to surround the space and place a large cloth down on the floor. Line the space with wooden bowls, baskets, cones and tambours which are filled with a variety of seeds and grains.

In the other side of the space is the tower. Use large mirrors on the wall for visual effect. Make a giant 'web'/loom using hoops and string and suspend in the space. Also used:

- Baskets of ribbons and wool
- Streamers of different colours, lengths and textures
- 'Lady' puppet sits by the loom
- Withy boat (suspended)
- Blue/ripple lighting (as boat descends)
- Tank drum and white chimes

Costume - coloured shawls and neckerchiefs

Music

Melodic, ambient music, with no great dynamic changes or language, just a beautiful sound, would complement this workshop. Whilst not strictly ambient music, *Gaillards* by John Dowland played by Paul O'Dette on the lute, has a mesmeric, continuously shifting presence that would also be worth considering.

Activities

Seeds and Grains - Out in the field, hear the sound of grasses rustling in the breeze. Play with the many textured seeds and grains, roll them in your fingers and bury your toes. Hear the sounds of pouring, sieving, dropping and falling into different containers. Roll and spin them around in tambours and stir them in bowls. Shake them and create rhythms. Make patterns, pictures and lines on the floor.

The Lady - Hear the words of the poem (voiceover) and find the lady at her loom. She greets participants and invites you to help her weave her beautiful tapestry. Explore the baskets of ribbons and wool, feel the varied textures. Choose your favourite colours then weave them through the web, in and out, tie them on, pass the strands through to the lady and create your own masterpieces.

Withy Boat - The magic sounds as the withy boat slowly descends. Feel the withies, see the shadow growing and feel the motion of the boat as it sways on the water. Help the Lady into the boat and gently rock her to and fro as she floats gently down the river. Play the chimes and sing and sway as the Lady sings her last song...

Links

Beans and Seeds

Puppets

Weaving activity

Video

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