

CREATING A SHADOW THEATRE

with *Siobhań de Paor*
Creative Tutor for Kerry ETB

AGE: 10 - 14 years |



Step 1

Find a friend (not so easy these days) force a sibling or rope in an adult - one person behind the screen and one in front to give feedback on the effect. The ideal number is three, two to interact behind the screen and a third person as the audience.

Step 2

Find a spot in the house where you can hang a sheet. Pegging a sheet onto the rope might be the easiest. The sheet will sag a bit but perfection is not the name of this game. If you have a large Venetian blind - like I do, then the image will be straight.

Step 3

You need a dark room with the curtains pulled, or make it a night-time activity. Position the lamp behind the screen. Aim to put the light source at a place where it will illuminate your entire body to get the most out of your show. So using your friend move it up and down, back and forth. The more focussed the beam of light, the sharper the image. A strong led torch will work well and then you won't be limited by sockets.

Step 4

Go for a prow around the house and garden for anything that might cast an interesting shadow or shape or will catch or filter the light. Glass bowls and vases can be really cool. For a splash of color in your black and white show, use colored plastic or glass. Its worth buying sheets of colored cellophane to play with.

Step 5

Body contortions: Stick on some music to create the mood and let the shadow play commence. Experiment with body contortions - rotate your upper body in circles moving closer (becoming larger) and further away (becoming smaller) from the light source. Works best with two people behind the screen for the contrast. The more space you have between the light and the sheet, the more you will be able to play with size.





Step 6

Angling yourself unnaturally: the best looking profile is a side profile, if you are watching yourself in the screen or looking directly at the other person, you will lose this outline, so you are constantly adjusting and angling yourself to create the most defined shadow.

Step 7

Catching the Light: Cellophane is the best material for shadow play. As it flutters and can give the impression of wind, leaves and waves. Using a second torch inside the glass can add a cool effect.

Step 8

Water and Light: Adding water to the vessel refracts the light further. Adding a small drop of food coloring (or Ribena) makes a cool image. Attach a story line or a line of poetry. 'Last night while out walking, I found a fallen star ...'

Step 9

Twists and turns in the tale: Things that look like other things turned sideways. A spade can look like a knife if facing the light from the side side or a stick can be turned to reveal itself as a saw. A walking staff becomes a brush and the story can develop from there...

Now your ready for your first audience.
Let the shadow show commence ...