



WINTER | Sun Playing With Sunshine: Shadow Puppets

Summary:

In winter, the days may be shorter and the shadows longer, but the opportunities to make art are plentiful. Let's play with some shadows!

Before Visiting the Garden:

Gather: Recycled cardboard, tape, wood skewers or foraged sticks, pencil, black tempera paint, a white sheet, clothespins and a flashlight.

Explore: *Icarus, plate VIII* from the illustrated book, *Jazz* by Henri Matisse

Read: *Flashlight* by Lizi Boyd

In the Garden:

As the Earth's axis tips away from the sun in the northern hemisphere during the winter months, it is easier to observe the opposites light and dark. Your tiny gardener loves high contrast colors and theater games so let's explore with shadow puppet play. Plan your visit to the garden later in the afternoon or early evening when shadows are the longest.

Questions to Explore:

- What is a shadow?
- Can you find any shadows in the garden? Is your shadow in the garden?
- Which plant or post makes the longest shadow?
- Can you make the shadows move or dance? Try shaking a leaf or stick to watch how the shadow dances and moves.

Activity:

1. Begin by talking with your gardener about the story you want to tell. Does it have birds? Bears? People? Talking shapes?
2. Once you have the main characters decided, trace the outlines of the characters onto the cardboard.
3. Cut out your shapes. Cardboard may be difficult for your tiny gardener to cut through so offer help if needed.
4. Paint your shapes black. The paint should dry quickly in the dry winter air.
5. Once dry, tape a skewer or stick to the back of your character and ta-da! You have your players.
6. Stretch the white sheet between two posts or attach to a chain-link fence using your clothespins. Take your characters behind the sheet and using the flashlight as a backlight, put on a puppet show!

Beyond the Garden | Shadow Stories

Continue your theater production at home. You can add to your puppet collection in the warmth of your kitchen. If you have cookie cutters, trace them to create additional characters. Hang your sheet in a doorframe or between two chairs to continue the fun. You can also try your hand at hand puppets! Can you create a bird to fly across the sheet? Play with shadow size as well by moving your flashlight closer and farther from the puppets.

Continue Exploring | Supporting Materials

Explore some of NASA's images of light and shadow on planet Earth: <http://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/IOTD/>