

**This activity is from a series on a site called [Access Art](#). If you don't have all the necessary materials think about what you could use instead.**

**[Peg people](#) is another idea although these can't be shaped and moulded in the same way.**

### **Preparation**

Many times in our art club the children are asked to battle with making sculptures which stand. I like to stress that making sculpture can be "hard": that transforming the materials of the world is a physical process which can make your hands ache and be frustrating. I remind the children that just because there is a struggle, doesn't mean that they aren't good at it. It's OK to find it tricky... it just means you're going through the processes of trying to make real what you imagine in your mind – you're making sculpture.

In this session however, I wanted to give the children a slight break from that struggle by starting them off with a balanced object which they could then manipulate and add to. I wanted to free them up and enable them to make dynamic figures which would stand however they wished.

Before the session, I made for each child a small plinth, with a single wire cast into it:



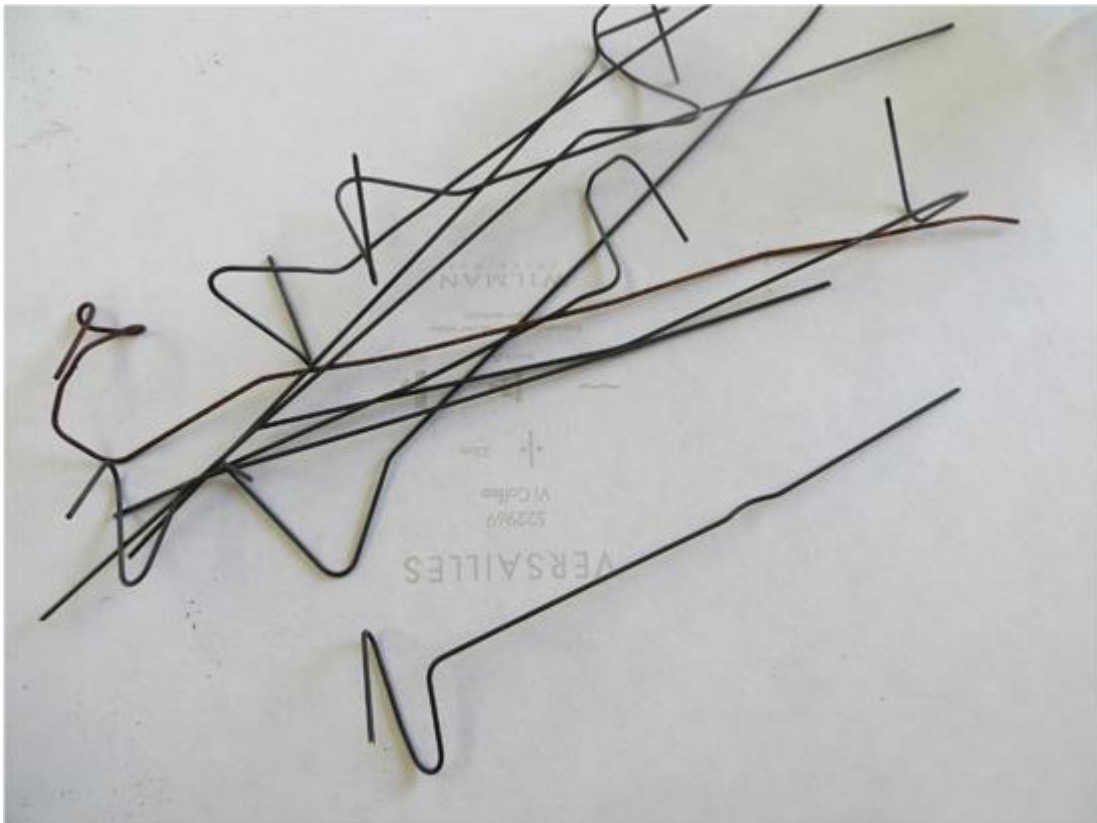
Card cut ready to make a mould for the plinths



Card taped into a cylinder with a base



Cardboard moulds ready for plaster



Wires bent into shape at the bottom (so that they could key into the plaster). The wires were stood in the cardboard moulds prior to plaster being poured



Fine casting plaster was mixed and poured into the moulds  
If you haven't got access to plaster you could use a piece of wood and a nail then wind the wire around the nail.



Once the plaster was set the cardboard was removed. The corrugations gave the plinths an architectural feel

### **To Begin**

Each was then invited to build up from the single wire to form a figure. I asked them to think carefully about the position of their figures – to take full advantage of the fact that they could make really dynamic poses which shouldn't fall over.

I gave children a very quick reminder about which part of the pliers cut the wire, and how to leave long ends on the wire to help them attach the wire tightly (and use pliers again to help them twist and bend the wire).



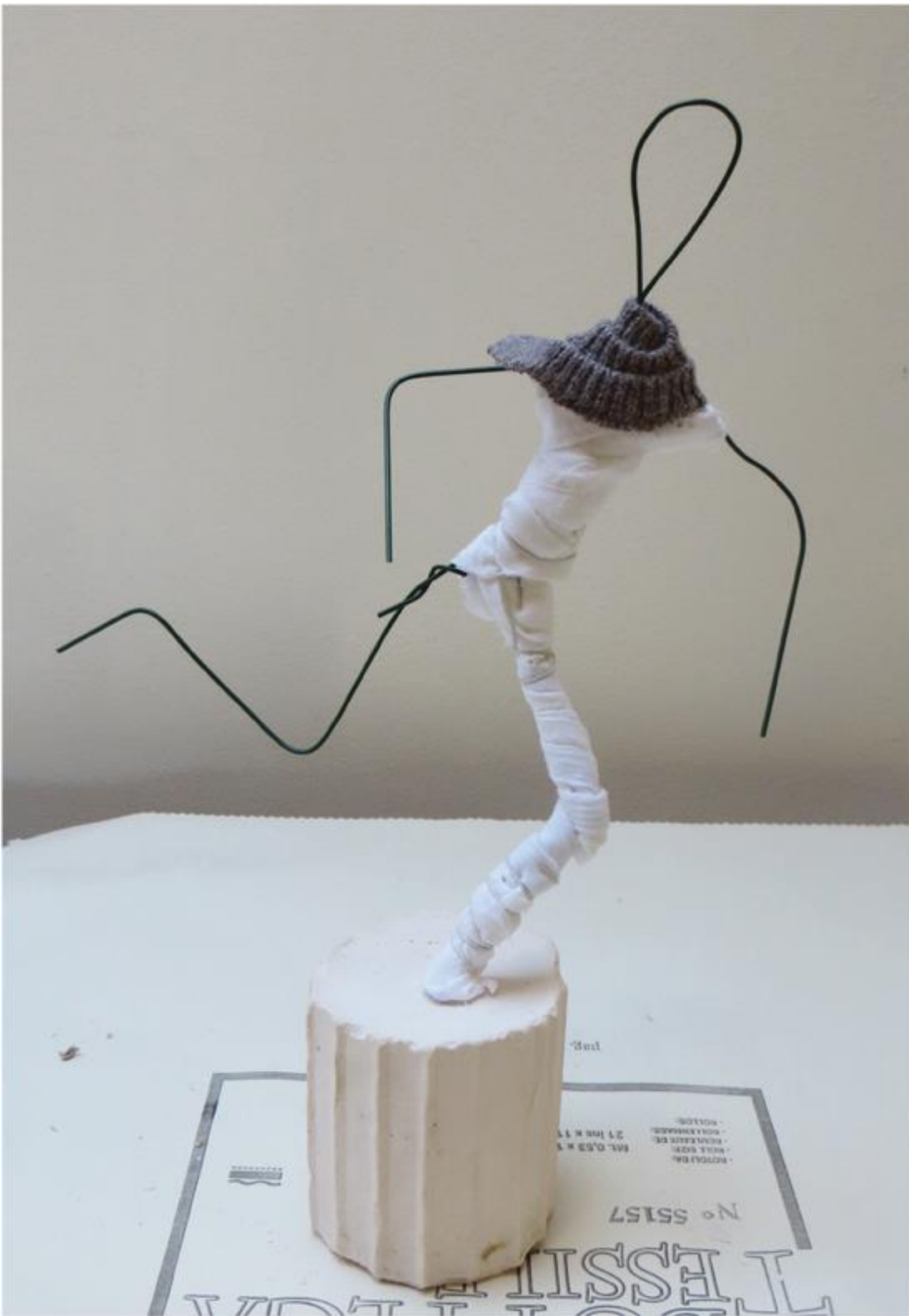
Building up from

the single wire

Once the children had built the figures with wire, and bent them into shape, they began to cover the wire using long, thin strips of cloth. These were to be used to give the figures mass. The strips of cloth were secured with knots, and if necessary, a small amount of glue.



Binding the figures with strips of cloth



Binding the figures with strips of cloth

Our next task was to stop the figures looking like mummies. Using fabric to create very sculptural items of clothing instantly helped give the sculptures an identity. Fabric was bound, knotted, folded, pleated and sewn or stuck in place.





Using clothes to add form and identity



Dancer



Constructing clothes on the sculpture



Lady



Finished "Runner"



Girl doing a handstand



Japanese painter



Parkour person





Detail

