

Community Wall Tangling - going big with lots of people!

Thanks for your interest in learning about Wall Tangling, I have found that Community Wall tangling is so much fun, here are a few things I have learnt along the way.

- Paper: Fabriano Accademia paper roll 10m by 1.5m - weight 120gsm - they do a heavier weight too I believe - but that makes it heavy, when it comes to hanging it.
- Pens: Edding 300 permanent markers - they don't go through the paper and so won't transfer on to the wall behind when drawing - I am sure there are other markers on the market - but remember this is not a fine line we are drawing!
- Pencils: I use solid charcoal pencils 8B - these are excellent for big scale shading - I also use solid paper stumps - large size to do the blending - for 20 pens I have about 10 pencils and paper stumps on the go - found that has worked fine - if pressed you can just break the solid pencils in half to have more on the go.
- Erasers: I have two - a kneadable one - if someone gets totally carried away you can lift off graphite a bit - and also some Sakura Mono pen erasers - these are in a pen style format - which is great if you want to change a string line, or neaten up some shading on one side of the line - whatever you think about 'no mistakes', I talk about an eraser as another tool - to sharpen up a line or the shading, and you can also use them to put stripes in the shaded area too - pretty cool idea in my book!

If you want to test out pens you prefer, I suggest you buy one sheet of Fabriano Accademia paper, most good art shops will sell you a sheet, and test some favourite pens out - there are a few different brands who make big sheets of paper, ask at your local store.

Note: work out what size the wall is first - had a near miss with my first attempt as did the paper so wide I had to mount it round the corner! 😊

Background Info - it's what you never see in the video/ pictures!

- I have some reference sheets with easy beginner tangle step outs on them - laminated so I can re-use them.
- I have my library of Zentangle books out - people can be inspired or work from step outs in the books.
- Tangle Deck cards - held in a wee photo album - to stop people going off with one.
- My own step-out notebooks of tangles - I have 20+ of these from all the steps outs I have collected over the years. (I have over 900 different tangles in them!)
- A roll of 200 gsm kraft brown paper on a table - so people can have a practice go first - even if they are a seasoned tangler - going BIG in both paper and pen is pretty daunting - so I give them an option to try it on a big scale first.
- Sounds daft, but if you have someone who is new to tangling, I have sheets and written instructions (A4 and poster size) on how to do the Zentangle Method - I find people who know nothing are happy to follow along, and see how the creation of the structured patterns system works. Even creative people who might want to do their own thing are keen to try out something new to them.
- Don't worry if people do the same tangle, we all know how different the same tangle can look drawn by different people.

- Kids - I generally say it's from 5 upwards, as I find younger kids don't have the patience that mum or dad does, so for younger ones I have a big piece of paper on the floor with coloured felt tip pens - they seem to be attracted to the colour and I haven't had an issue with the younger ones.
- Kids tangling, I find they are the most creative, and sometimes need reigning in, as they can start making their own tanglations quite fast. I can solve this two ways - keep them focussed on choosing a pattern they choose - they are then invested to make it look like the tangle, and also explain to them if they want to do their own tangleation of it, give them options like adding aura, perfs, drama sparkle - making them think about these enhancements usually slows them down and allows them to think rather than just draw random.
- ZIA and other patterns - With so many tangles on offer, I haven't had an issue with going off tangling - people who are creative tend to find seeing examples of more advanced artwork in books can kick off how they can add their own twist and tanglations to a tangle - like I had an indian lady, who really wanted to get a paisley pattern in, because it is part of her culture - I made sure she started with 'Teardrops', and then do a border tangle, which she could then embellish with her paisley shapes - incorporated into the tangle. One child really wanted to draw a mushroom house - so we did a giant Poke-Root fungi-style and she added Crescent moon in the cap and then had lots of smaller ones around it - there was a door in the toadstool - but to be honest it's kinda cute - I wasn't going to worry there was a ZIA there - as long as there is an incorporation of the zentangle method in there, better to let it flow.
- Where a child wants to make their own tangle, I have no issues, (invariably it is a tangle anyway - and we discuss its name etc. but where they wrote "Hi" in the middle of it - or drew a face - it is amazing what a little bit of drama or aura, perfs and shading can disguise the words. One child drew a whale's tail and splashes around it - after they headed away, repeating the same shape in behind it, (either in pen or pencil) and it just looked like another tangle section filled. To be honest I don't get too stressed about it - it's one section in 7m - it's not a big deal.

Other things:

- I set up a border (filled with tangles) and the string beforehand - then it is easy for people to find an area they are going to fill comfortably and suits the tangle they have chosen. Some people like small sections, others want big!
- Get them to do their own shading - otherwise you have a big job later.
- I use an art fixative - give it three light coats, otherwise graphite is everywhere!
- I use my Inktense blocks to do some coloured shading on the border tangles that I drew before I started - that way the whole artwork has a frame. Also I painted the outside of this border with black indian ink (cheap) so it had a more definite frame - kinda depends on the wall colour it is being mounted on. But good to give it a visual 'frame'.
- Timescale - this 7m canvas was filled over 4 days I think 6 hrs per day - kinda depends on how many people you have and how fast people draw. If you have concerns - start smaller, and you can always whip out a second one if you get it finished. Or if working on a table, start at one end of the roll of paper, and work

your way up adding more string as you need it - you can always unravel more as more people turn up.

- I have done it whilst it was mounted on the wall (with Bluetac) and also laid out on various tables set together; maybe work out the space/ furniture you have available and see which way better suits.
- I set up mine for 5 days 6 hours per day, then I had a 'one off' day to fill up what was leftover, or what still might need shading or touching up.
- Advertise locally through my tangling network and art shops, and council events, - this is probably different for everybody - but you'll know your community.
- I find there might be the odd space or two to fill up after all is finished - if you have a keen tangler friend willing to help you all good, otherwise be prepared to invest a bit of time to finish it off afterwards - or make some tidy ups (if needed) in places.
- With different people doing different areas, it's good to mix up the spaces, so make people do their different tangles in different areas of the paper, so it doesn't look like one person has an area, sometimes different styles can be seen, do you don't want a block of one person's tangling altogether, especially if their style is distinctive.

Mounting:

- Make sure you know the dimensions of the wall!
- Make sure your paper is not too 'rolled' up before you mount so it will lie flat on the wall. (I used a big amount of blu tack to secure the edges and bottom corners so it won't roll up.)
- I ensure when I do the final roll up of the artwork, after it has had the fixative put on it, I roll it up 'artwork side' out. It helps with the mounting on the wall, as it wants to curve back to the wall, not curl out from the wall.
- Smaller bits of paper (2.5 x1.5m) usually stay up with blue tac - anything bigger probably needs to be hung - my space has hooks on strings, I use a row of bulldog clips attached to the top of the paper and use the metal handle part of the clip to hang from the hooks.
- Mount it high enough that small people can't touch it, and it looks epic from afar - but that maybe just depends on your space.
- Also I display a list of all the names of the contributing tanglers and a list of the different tangles included - as they add their name to another sheet of paper, make sure you have a list of the tangles they drew too. Nothing like seeing your own name up on the wall as part of the bigger piece. There is no room for everyone's chop on the piece, it's a collective piece of artwork after all.

Lastly:

You know your community, so there may be things in here that you know won't work for who you have in mind, so just go with what you know already works. I can get some people to embrace the big, other tanglers won't go near it, because it's not their thing at all - that's all good. I hope this helps and let me know how you get on!

Beate Winkler first introduced me to the concept of Wall tangling when she visited NZ as part of her world tour in 2020 (which wasn't without its perils of course). Although way back in Art College I did a 10m x 5m metre mural of different footstep patterns on a pavement, recording people's different walking routes and strides, so maybe I was always going to carry on the

big format in one way or another, but I have to say the joy out of a 'Community' piece with different people work on it together, is incredible. It's well worth the effort to arrange one for your community!

Happy BIG tangling,
Ildica

