



# Urban Tree Festival 2021 Signdance Creative Activity Pack



sign dance collective



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**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**



# *Create Your Own Urban Tree Signdance*

- Watch and join in with the Signdance workshop video. Pause the video after each participant to practice the different signs.
- Find a local tree, or a photo of an urban tree, that inspires you. The tree on our cover is a magnolia tree outside Wycombe Arts Centre. In the workshop you can see the cherry tree at the same location behind Soobie.
- Find a space inside or maybe outside near your favourite urban tree. Make sure it is fairly level and clear of any trip or fall hazards and spacious enough to move around safely.
- Experiment with recreating the shapes and movement of the branches, blossom and leaves.
- Combine together the signs that relate to your tree with transitory expansive movements. You can watch Soobie's Essence of Time video here for some ideas : <https://bit.ly/3xAfjEJ>

- Once you have created some short movement phrases, like the ones the participants have made in the video, you could develop these into a dance using the following ideas:
- **Repetition** - repeat one of the phrases several times or at different points in your dance.
- **Minimise or Maximise** - Expand or contract your movements so they are large and sweeping or tiny and intricate.
- **Change of levels and direction** - try facing different directions, alternate the planes of your movement or use different levels ( high, medium and low)
- **Dynamics** - play with the movement dynamics so sometimes you are soft , sustained , slow and at other times strong, bound or jerky, fluttery.
- **Add music or natural sounds** - the sound you choose will change the atmosphere of the Signdance.

We'd love to see what you created. Upload a short video or still image to social media @UrbanTreeFestival and @signdanceco

# **Workshop Leaders: Signdance Collective**

**Signdance Collective is an award winning, international touring performance company that was established in 2001. The company is culturally diverse with a team of experienced deaf and disabled artists at the helm.**

**Isolte Avila was born in Cuba and trained with the Cuban ballet and members of the Alwyn Ailey Dance Company. She has a degree in dance from California Institute of the Arts. She is the founder of the art form 'Signdance Theatre' and original pioneer of signdance™ created in 1987.**

**Soobie Whitfield ( Community Engagement) is a Laban trained dance artist and performing arts teacher who recently completed an MA in Applied Theatre . She started working with SDC in 2020 whilst on placement at Wycombe Arts Centre and values their collaborative practice.**

**For more information on Signdance please visit [www.signdancecollectiveinternational.com](http://www.signdancecollectiveinternational.com)**

# **Credits: Thank you to our Video workshop participants**

**Ruth Gunstone from Wycombe Arts Centre**

**Mariana Pimenprez from Mexico**

**Alison Rogers from High Wycombe**

**Caylia Wallace from New Jersey, USA**

**Peter Ositadinma from Italy**



Photo Credit: Magnolia Cover Page by Ruth Gunstone  
Design by Canva

Essence of Time Video Credits: Editor Rob Corcoran, Music Philip Roderick,  
Choreography Soobie Whitfield