

Alice Anna Ford

I grew up closely alongside my sisters, Emily and Maxi, spending our days constantly talking and making art together under the guidance and mentorship of our mum, who is an avid painter, drawer, and architect.

We had regular sessions called *Art Attack*—named after the popular kids' show of the time—where we would create a series of artworks using found materials within a set amount of time at home. A work from this period has been inserted below for your review. There are many layers you could unpack in this piece.



As a child, I was always moving between multiple projects at once, with other concerned mothers asking mum, “How do you deal with Alice...?” My sisters and I shared a room until I was about 12. As tiny children, we had two bunk beds in one room, and later, one long linear room mum designed, with desks to divide the space into three distinct zones. We would spend weekends turning our room into tiny worlds, posting signs all around the house to guide visitors into our life-sized dioramas. A personal favourite was a snowy landscape made entirely out of shredded toilet paper. I grew up loving how design could shape worlds.

Discussing these experiences with mum as an adult, I found out that these activities, spaces, and practices were not constructed accidentally. [The Reggio Emilia philosophy](#) inspired mum’s methods of creativity when we were kids. She assigned one wall in the living room just for drawing as we grew up together, trying to foster a ‘limitless potential’ approach for creating new drawings and ideas.

‘It was just a wall anyway.

This approach was sometimes viewed strangely by other parents. When we moved to the neighbourhood, mum met another parent in the grocery shop who said, “Did you hear, there's an architect who just moved in and he lets his kids draw all over the walls...”

Mum also included regular trips to [REmida](#), where we used forgotten materials and recycled them into different sculptures and objects. She connected deeply with the poem *The Hundred Languages of Children* from Reggio Emilia. She told me that children can find uses in what we, as adults, can no longer see.

So, I was constantly animating, writing books, and making films—designing small inventions to help mum find ease in everyday tasks. My inventions included a self-washing dishwashing drawer. My films featured Polly Pockets and dinosaurs in stop motion and cardboard. My books were tiny (about 5 x 5 cm) and laminated in plastic tape for longevity. Following in mum’s footsteps, I pursued architecture at university for several years.

My love for worldmaking, inventing codes, films, and books has been returning in recent years, slowly and surely. Mum and my sisters remain regular guides and creative compasses for my projects.