Inclusion, Diversity and Globalisation
19–20 March 2011, The British Museum

This year NSEAD tackles three substantial themes and seeks to explore and celebrate how teachers of art, craft and design have, and can engage with inclusion, diversity and globalisation in the classroom and beyond.

For the second year running the British Museum are kindly hosting our national conference, and where better to reinvigorate our debate around these issues than within the walls of a cultural institution that defines itself as ‘a museum of the world, for the world’.

As a teacher, or lecturer working with children and young people, as a teacher trainer or trainee and cultural sector educator the conference will offer you the opportunity to gain new strategies for improved classroom practice; to acquire new practical skills working with a professional designer maker; to update yourself with current policy and to network within an enthusiastic community of colleagues from across the UK.

Join us for our conference dinner at Belgo, Covent Garden on Saturday evening – please book in advance with us to attend.

For further information and booking forms visit www.nsead.org
Annual Architecture Programme for primary schools

Spring and Summer Term

Architecture and the built environment is something that has a profound impact on all our daily lives. Targeting inner-city state schools, Open-City aims to broaden horizons and enrich curriculum activities, especially in design education. All education programmes are FREE to schools.

Architecture in Schools: Primary is a programme for primary school students in years 5 and 6 (age 8-11). The programme brings students into contact with key pieces of exemplary London architecture. Building explorations encourage young people to become ‘architects’, to look for clues, learn design skills and see ways in which people use space.

This direct experience leads to creative workshops in the classroom.

At the end of the project, pupils are invited to submit their work to the Programme Awards competition. Winners receive prizes and have their work exhibited.

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If you are a primary school teacher and would like your school to take part in Architecture in Schools: Primary 2011, please contact education@open-city.org.uk or phone on 020 7383 5722

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Regulars

02 Interview
Sir Chris Frayling, Patron of NSEAD, is interviewed by John Stevens

06 Poster and features: British Museum
Inspiring Art: the British Museum makes links and connections through objects

09 Book Review
African Caribbean Pupils in Art Education, Paul Dash

Cover Image
100x100 Project - This year Coombeheath College leads the collaborative art project across Devon exploring Logomancy

Features

12 Two Years to Save the World.

14 100 x 100 Collaborations
Lawrence West from NSEAD/UK collaborates. Sam Frye

18 The Holocaust Project
Across-curricular, mixed-media collaboration. Katie Ashby

19 Art and Design Primary Schools
A research project summary. Peter Gregory

20 Control versus Chaos
Choices and Conflicts in a primary school. John Bembibre-Howe

24 Crossings Boundaries
Transitional Projects. Anna Drummer

Advice for NSEAD members and primary teachers who submit their work to the Programme Awards competition. Winners receive prizes and have their work exhibited. All education programmes are FREE to schools.

Welcome to the first issue of our new magazine for NSEAD members and primary teachers with a keen interest in art and design! AD magazine is the result of bringing together START magazine and the ADi newsletter. You will receive AD magazine three times a year; it is bigger than its predecessors but underpinned by the same key aims of sharing, informing and exchanging ideas within a community of practice across all phases of art, craft and design education.

AD magazine welcomes articles from around the UK and from abroad. We welcome you and your colleagues to submit your examples of effective practice and research for publication. Please send submissions to sophie.koch@nsead.org.uk. If you are primary-related, please send them to John.Bowden@nhs.net

Remember to join our NSEAD Members Online Facebook group too!

We hope that AD is, and will continue to be, an informative and inspirational view of the best art and design teaching and learning.

STAY UP TO DATE WITH NSEAD E-UPDATE

Don’t forget! Last year we introduced the NSEAD e-update, containing up-to-the-minute news and views on art and design education – an essential resource for all art and design educators. If you are not receiving it already, please ensure that we have your preferred email address by sending it to info@nsead.org.uk.

AD is published three times a year: Spring, Summer and Autumn. The Autumn edition includes an issue to coincide with the Annual General Meeting of the NSEAD at the University of Westminster, London. The Autumn edition also includes features on the Annual Exhibition, the Committee's Annual Report and a section on forthcoming events.

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Contact the NSEAD Secretariat with comments and suggestions or to enquire about advertising in AD magazine.

Stephen Aitken
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Features

African Caribbean Pupils in Art

New NSEAD Member

African Caribbean Pupils in Art

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African Caribbean Pupils in Art
Interview

Sir Christopher Frayling was the Rector of the Royal College of Art from 1996 to 2009. First appointed to the RCA in 1972 as a part-time tutor, he was Professor of Cultural History at the College from 1979. Beyond the RCA, he is well known as an historian, critic and an award-winning broadcaster, with his work appearing regularly on radio and television. He has published eighteen books and numerous articles on popular culture, design and the history of ideas, the most recent being his history of the early days of the Victoria and Albert Museum. He has served as Chair of the Arts Council England (2005-2010) and before that as Chair of the Design Council – the only permanent chair both these organisations. He has been a governor of the British Film Institute, a member of the Crafts Council and a Trustee of the V&A Museum. Sir Christopher is currently Chair of the Royal Mint Advisory Committee, a Fellow of Churchill College Cambridge, an 1851 Commissioner and a Trustee of the Design Museum.

John Steers (JS): I wonder what your thoughts are on the importance of art and design education in the school curriculum generally?

Sir Christopher (CF): I always find very useful in answering that, Herbert Read’s Education through Art, which is where your Society in part gets its name I guess. It’s a twofold answer: (i) education through art and (ii) education to art. Education to art is the skills, the aptitude, the deep learning that’s associated with doing art or design properly. Through art is the experiential, conceptual, visual and other skills that art seems to be particularly good at instilling. Where I worry about some arguments is the so-called ‘Mozart effect’ which takes it further and says not just teaching to art and through art but by having a designingly or artistic attitude to every subject it enhances your performance at everything else.
There is this understanding that technology, engineering and design are the root of British productivity... but not design which is the hyphen between them.

In other words if you are good in the music room it might make you better at maths - I love that idea and I have used it often but I think it requires two things.

CF Yes, but that suggests, it's like Russian for engineers, you have to go to the theatre every now and then and make sure you feel better about life.

JS Yes, me, too; really did. Well, what we really have in the White Paper is only a single reference to the arts at all. It does say that children should be given a rich menu of cultural experiences...

CF You, but that suggests, it's like Russian for engineers, you have to go to the theatre every now and then and make sure you feel better about life.

JS Well, you are exactly right because what it then goes on to say is we will support access to live theatre. There is a very considerable appreciation of the visual and plastic arts and work with our great museums and libraries to support their educational mission. It makes no reference to practice.

CF The assumption is that it's for academically bright students to enhance their experience at school.

JS We know one of the drivers, the growth of the present government, is E D Hirsch, the American philosopher of education, and the work of his Core Knowledge Foundation. What that suggests to me is they want people telling that technology, engineering and mathematics are the root of British productivity... but not design which is the hyphen between them.

Art and design seems to be particularly vulnerable at the moment. My disappointment is that since about 2003 onwards, there did seem to be a genuine debate about what the education for the 21st century should be like in schools and I think the new secondary curriculum when it came in was a reasonable answer to that question. Then it was... a broad consensus supporting it and I've been a bit shocked that it's all to be swept away without even ever being realised.

And we're back to the three pluses here and the core is the need to do serious thinking. I think that battle will be won, we have been won. There were a lot of pluses there weren't the icing on the cake they were just as integral as the three Rs. You know... I've been bashing on about this for years - that this was a serious venue of the arts, art and... a lot of years ago when I was trying to research the origins of the phrase the three Rs, because it worried him this was under Professor Bruce Archer he worried it was that the three Rs were really just the Rs, literacy and numeracy, reading and writing being two sides of the same coin. He eventually discovered that through his own research that there was a way through it, and this was... 

Dr John Steers, General Secretary of NSEAD
The British Museum is the perfect place to explore such themes and approaches. They tie in with the requirements of the Key Stage 2 (ages 7-11) National Curriculum and a host of past GCSE and A Level exam topics, but also inspire students and offer great potential for cross-curricular work. Through exploring how and why a range of cultures have approached a particular idea, material or style, it becomes apparent to the student that there is not just one way of doing things, but rather a myriad of solutions and points of view. By engaging with the British Museum, students can investigate how different cultures have explored perennial themes which continue to inspire contemporary artistic practice. These range from the human body, identity, sculpture, life and death to space, architecture, memory and power. In addition they can consider the nature and history of collecting itself – a theme which inspires many contemporary artists, designers and students alike.

Yet the British Museum is not just a resource for established artists. Both online and on-site, it is an exciting and inspirational learning destination for art and design students which can broaden their life experience, facilitate learning and support the curriculum in numerous ways, from the practical (sketchbooks and observational drawing) to the contextual and historical. From the breathtaking architecture of the building itself to the multitude of intriguing and diverse objects, the Museum can challenge students and open their eyes to new and different ways of developing their creative practice.

Students can draw, respond to and engage with a range of fascinating, complex objects. Using online resources or moving from room to room, they can explore the meaning, function and style of powerful but perhaps unfamiliar artefacts and images from a range of cultures and periods, both western and non-western. Working within a single culture, they can delve in depth into its values and artistic forms or investigate the many facets of one particular object, much as A History of the World in 100 Objects has done for BBC Radio 4 listeners.

At the same time, because of the cross-cultural nature of the objects brought together under one roof, students can travel through time and space, making exciting links and connections between cultures. As they explore the British Museum’s galleries or web resources, recording their findings and ideas in sketchbooks, students can investigate how different cultures have explored perennial themes which continue to inspire contemporary artistic practice. These range from the human body, identity, sculpture, life and death to space, architecture, memory and power. In addition they can consider the nature and history of collecting itself – a theme which inspires many contemporary artists working today. The scope of the collection also enables pupils to explore how and why style, from Realism to Abstraction and everything in between, has been used in differing ways by a range of cultures, or how materials, including marble and bronze, wood, textiles and even string have been employed by a variety of peoples. Contemporary artists experiment with materials, but as a visit to the British Museum helps to realize that artists and craftspeople from many other traditions have always done so.

As Antony Gormley remarks, the British Museum is indeed a laboratory of possibilities, a wonderkamer of cultural connections housing one of the most celebrated, diverse and inspirational collections of art and craft in the world. Objects in the collection date from prehistory to the present day and range from sculpture to prints and drawings, textiles and ceramics. The Museum spans many cultures and civilisations and, since its foundation in 1753, has continued to engage and inspire artists, designers and students alike.

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Secondary: The British Museum: inspiring art

The British Museum's potential for exploring the human form in world art is unsurpassed. Here is just a taste of the diversity of the Museum's collection: the abstract, the idealised and the naturalistic, 2-D and 3-D, carved, moulded and cast, in stone, ceramic, metal and on paper. Sculptor Marc Quinn's words are a testament to the Museum's contemporary relevance: "My sculpture of Alison Lapper on Trafalgar Square's Fourth Plinth was part of a series inspired by being in the Museum and seeing how people reacted to the works of art here."

The British Museum is launching a range of new taught programmes and resources to support art and design at secondary level and at AS/A2. Programmes include gallery-based workshops combining discussion with making activities. The workshops will explore themes such as identity, environments, collections and sketchbooks. Students will be encouraged to explore objects contextually as well as to make links with contemporary practice and society, so developing their ability to think laterally. Online resources will provide ideas for making the most of a visit to the Museum and include downloadable presentations on different themes and topics for classroom use. You can also find out about study days for older students and private views of exhibitions. www.britishmuseum.org/schools

This is a pioneering, hard-hitting book which offers new solutions to some of the most protracted issues relating to race and education in the art and design classroom, faced by both pupils and teachers. This work is clearly focused on a single theme, the learning of African Caribbean pupils in art and design classrooms in the United Kingdom. The author brings to this study a wealth of personal experience and reflection about the classroom. He also offers the results of a survey of children's and teachers' experiences which he undertook to expand his and understand the dynamics involved in multicultural and ethnically diverse classrooms, especially ones where black pupils form a significant majority. He also offers the reader some valuable resource materials and references that should inform the syllabus for all pupils.

Dash argues, it is in an issues-based pedagogy that future progress for the African Caribbean student lies. The author suggests that the black body represents for such students a unique and potent source of expressive possibilities. Whether it be in forms of walking, clothing or hair styling, new syncretic forms enable young people to create new expressive styles that are both aesthetic, fun and serious markers of identity.

"The absence of ruins" provides cultural space for new art forms, whether it be the historic inventions encapsulated in Marconovich's designs, the Caribbean Surrealist, Lamand Arozveda, the Caribbean Artist's Movement in the 1960s and 1970s, or the abstraction of Frank Bowling's paintings celebrated in Rasheed Araeen's exhibition catalogues entitled The Other Story. There is now, Dash reminds us, a vibrant recent history for black art history to explore, interrogate and even emulate. INIVA and Autograph provide a valuable and accessible entry to contemporary art such as the photography of Steyn, the barbershop art of Faisal Abdu' Allah. Despite the restrictive culture of the post-modern state'. As such they may make work that is not only aesthetically informed but is also of great social and political significance.

The author has a high distain for some of the curators at the British Museum. His analysis of the British Museum's pedagogy that respects and promotes art relevant to the African Caribbean pupil, and incidentally, their cultural heritage, reflects a deep concern for art education. He also offers the reader some valuable resource materials and references that should inform the syllabus for all pupils.

Nick Stanley, Research Fellow, Department of African, Oceanian and Americas, The British Museum
A typical day – if ever there is one – starts at the Evelina Children’s Hospital School with the sunshine streaming through the impressive glass atrium of the new hospital. Staff are gathering for the initial meeting of the day – where the lists of potential pupils are collected and information given by hospital staff is shared. No two days are the same. The register of names changes daily and staff check down their list of children to see what this ‘typical’ day might bring.

The Evelina Hospital School is located in the light and airy atrium of the Evelina Children’s Hospital, opened in October 2005, just behind St Thomas’ Hospital by Westminster Bridge. The building was designed in partnership with children and parents to give a state of the art open space, housing a hospital filled with light and colour.

The school caters for pupils aged two to 19 and is organised in three mini-schools – Dialysis School, Ward School, and Atrium School. Dialysis School provides education for children and young people who are receiving dialysis treatment for up to five or six hours a day. Many attend the school for three or more days a week and some for many years. Ward School is a mobile school which provides a one-to-one education by the bedside to children and young people unable to attend the Atrium School. Pupils attending the Atrium School join one of two classrooms – Sun or Moon. Sun Centre is an open plan classroom for children from early years to the end of Year 6 in primary school. Moon Classroom is for secondary aged pupils. Some pupils are here for just one day, while others attend the school for several days. There are also pupils who stay for weeks, months, sometimes many months. Last year 1,500 pupils attended the school.

Working in a children’s hospital is a uniquely satisfying job. Although there can be rare tragic moments, the ward teacher is often there to witness a child’s first smile after surgery, or their tentative first steps back to the classroom. To see children gain in strength and confidence after the doctors have done their work is heart-warming. On this particular morning two ward teachers examine their list. Amongst their group are children with a wide variety of special needs including pupils with cerebral palsy, children with dyslexia and others suffering recurring seizures. There are young patients recovering from heart surgery recently out of intensive care, children with breathing difficulties and children with visual or hearing impairments.

Today’s group includes seven children with complex learning needs, five primary children attending mainstream schools and five secondary pupils studying for GCSEs. The teachers go to the ward and meet with pupils and check with nurses when medical procedures such as physiotherapy, scans and visits to theatre might be taking place. Many pupils’ mobility is hampered by the medical paraphernalia that is needed during their treatment such as oxygen masks, tracheostomies, intravenous lines, feeding tubes and cardiac monitors. Despite such physical limitations, pupils’ resilience never seems to saturate.

Generally parents are at their children’s bedside. It is a useful time for teachers to chat with parents so that lessons can be tailored to individual needs. Some parents are happy to stay and watch the lesson – curious to see how their child will respond to the new teacher in this different environment. Others take this time to leave the ward. Meeting and chatting on a daily basis, parents of longer stay pupils often get to know teachers well. This distraction from the monotony of the bedside vigil can often be very welcome to anxious parents.

Following the ward visit it is found that several of the children with special needs would benefit from activities to help develop their fine motor skills, their concentration and their social/ communication skills. An art activity linked to our current planned theme Autumn is devised. Pupils select colours and use their hands to create their names and making gingerbread men inspired by the book they are reading. The primary pupils are in an ICT design workshop using SketchUp, a Google 3D modelling programme, to create three-dimensional buildings. Secondary pupils attending Moon Classroom are exploring the hospital environment – taking autumnal photos to complete the photography exhibition staged in the public area of the atrium.

Meanwhile in the Atrium School, early years pupils are working on salt dough sculptures, creating their names and making gingerbread men inspired by the book they are reading. The primary pupils are in an ICT design workshop using SketchUp, a Google 3D modelling programme, to create three-dimensional buildings.

Secondary pupils attending Moon Classroom are exploring the hospital environment – taking autumnal photos to complete the photography exhibition staged in the public area of the atrium.

While art and design form part of the curriculum, teachers also recognise the therapeutic value of these activities. Children in the hospital setting are often nervous, tense, in pain, and needing distraction and support. Art and design activities provide a way of taking the mind away from discomfort and often in their drawings, children are given the platform to voice worries and concerns. As the evening sun illuminates the glass walls and roof of the atrium, some excited children are packing away pyjamas and teddies for their journey home. Others are preparing for another night in a hospital bed. The teachers gather to reflect on the day’s experiences, to evaluate the children’s work and to display the artwork that has been created. The children’s work remains as evidence of another happy, busy, creative and healing day at the Evelina Hospital School.

Buste Ventham
Many people are asking what I think about the changes to the curriculum in these early days of the new government. The answer is simple: there are no changes yet.

True, the government has said that the three later diplomas will not be developed but we are to continue with those in train, including the Creative and Media Diploma. The secondary national curriculum was implemented from 2008 and continues; so nothing has changed in the day-to-day curriculum offer.

True, the government has said that A-levels will not be developed but we are to continue with those in train, including the Creative and Media Diploma. What needs to remain constant is our commitment to helping young people understand the value of their education, to see it as something never-ending, door opening, and threshold-crossing. What needs to remain constant is our commitment to helping young people understand the value of their education, to see it as something never-ending, door opening, and threshold-crossing. What needs to remain constant is our commitment to helping young people understand the value of their education, to see it as something never-ending, door opening, and threshold-crossing.

Some people believe that the myths that have been peddled about the national curriculum and some current ministers seem to believe them too. Perhaps these myths have been propagated for years by the press, the professional media, and the sector in order to maintain control over the curriculum. We know also that the art and design experiences of young people today, and the future they will face, will be shaped by the curriculum that we are creating now.

We know that the future is going to be different, with more pressure on some schools that their pupils become simply a number, with their results at GCSE or SATs put up in the press in a way that is not helpful for their development.

The secondary national curriculum was implemented from 1998 and was packed with almost everything available for our young people to learn. There was too much. After a very short time we adapted it and tried to hang on to the best while changing the rest. In the end, it comes down to some very simple values. Do we want our children to grow up and become responsible adults, accrue success in themselves and their futures, successful in learning? If we do, it has to be a wide-ranging, relevant, challenging, knowledge-seeking, skill-finding curriculum.

Teacher education has, in response to members’ concerns, engaged in discussions with Ofqual around the need to reconsider both controlled assessments and also the control systems put in place around the final unit at both GCSE and GCE. Advocacy for our subject is essential and NEACE has worked hard to make sure that the new curriculum and revised qualifications work.

So what does this mean for NEACE? It means that whilst growing increasingly aware that change is imminent we must work hard to make sure that those who are taking today. It means that we must remember our responsibility to make today’s curriculum and qualifications work well.

The primary art and design curriculum remains in place and the real challenge is not to tinkering with content or words but to seek to improve practice. Recognising the need to support professionals’ skills and understanding of art, craft and design so we become more confident in a wider range of practices.

Many people believe that the present 2008 art and design secondary programme of study and the sense of coherence across the curriculum as a whole. Also, the clarified attainment targets that supported schools in making the curriculum fit for purpose.

In twenty years’ time, children of today will not recall their curriculum in any detail, but they will recall the impact those who made the skills they learned, the knowledge they gained, the insights they had... and the moments that took their breath away.

Subjects matter, for their knowledge base and also for their employability. The world…

There are no changes yet! Mich Waters looks at what the curriculum is now, and to the future when he hopes young people will look back and know why it was worth learning.

In twenty years’ time, children of today will not recall their curriculum in any detail, but they will recall the impact those who made the skills they learned, the knowledge they gained, the insights they had... and the moments that took their breath away.

Subjects matter, for their knowledge base and also for their employability. The best schools ensure that the world has moved on from the passive childhood era of the 1960s, when people saw childhood as something never-ending, door opening, and threshold-crossing. The best schools ensure that the learning experience has to matter to the learner, and that the world has moved on from the passive childhood era of the 1960s, when people saw childhood as something never-ending, door opening, and threshold-crossing. The best schools ensure that the learning experience has to matter to the learner, and that the world has moved on from the passive childhood era of the 1960s, when people saw childhood as something never-ending, door opening, and threshold-crossing. The best schools ensure that the learning experience has to matter to the learner, and that the world has moved on from the passive childhood era of the 1960s, when people saw childhood as something never-ending, door opening, and threshold-crossing.

There is a lack of a real sense of coherence across the curriculum as a whole. Also, the clarified attainment targets that supported schools in making the curriculum fit for purpose.

In twenty years’ time, children of today will not recall their curriculum in any detail, but they will recall the impact those who made the skills they learned, the knowledge they gained, the insights they had... and the moments that took their breath away.

Subjects matter, for their knowledge base and also for their employability. The best schools ensure that the world has moved on from the passive childhood era of the 1960s, when people saw childhood as something never-ending, door opening, and threshold-crossing. The best schools ensure that the learning experience has to matter to the learner, and that the world has moved on from the passive childhood era of the 1960s, when people saw childhood as something never-ending, door opening, and threshold-crossing. The best schools ensure that the learning experience has to matter to the learner, and that the world has moved on from the passive childhood era of the 1960s, when people saw childhood as something never-ending, door opening, and threshold-crossing.
In 2007 the 100x100 project used technology to ‘Bridge the Gap’. Now in its third year, Sam Eyre describes the lessons learnt from 100x100’s creative collaborations.

The 100x100 Project was initiated in 2007 with the desire to create a collaborative exhibition with students in Devon using new media technologies.

In the first collection, titled ‘bridging the Gap’, students explored local identities using photography to document their favourite places in Devon. This was coupled with invitations to partner schools worldwide for students to send photographic work on the same theme. The images were both individually and collectively a stunning portrait of local villages, cities, rural and urban environments, all seen through the eyes of students.

The images reflected contrasting views and experiences from many settings including Indonesia, USA and Africa. The project worked on different levels. Students and teachers were able to take part in a similar way of working, initiating what the experience of networking across Devon and beyond. The project also became a vehicle for exploring the creative use of new technologies.

The second 100x100, launched at the Devon Art Teacher’s Conference, 2009, was titled ‘Faces of Devon’. Its aim was to create a portrait of Devon students. The project also encouraged students to work collaboratively and exchange ideas, photographs and feedback.

The third 100x100, launched at the Devon Art Teacher’s Conference, 2010, was called ‘100X100’. Its aim was to create a portrait of Devon students. The project also encouraged students to work collaboratively and exchange ideas, photographs and feedback.

The 100x100’s creative collaborations encouraged young people to exchange ideas, images and concepts. Teachers in Devon had an opportunity to network, to share expertise and technologies. For the next stage of the project, an open access 100x100 PROJECT Facebook group has been set up - its aim to encourage further creative collaborations.

Sam Eyre
My best...

Project

Taking my year 11 Art Club to Venice for a day trip in 2003. We flew from Teesside airport and had a wonderful day, whilst the Cornucopia was on, before flying back the same day. A unique and unforgettable experience.

Art website

I do like the Saatchi online site, as there is so much to see and follow up.

Art book

Alice in Sunderland, a graphic novel history, myth and story drawing in one beautifully drawn book. bryan-talbot.com

Film

The Tin Drum, Die Blechtrommel 1979 a black satirical comedy based on the Günter Grass novel. The scene of Oskar’s birth has burnt a mark in my memory for years – it’s small, quirky and fascinating. If you want to see this film when I went to see it. Got too close!

Music video

Bosch is one man’s vision, full of symbolism, and I totally agree with you Bill!

Artwork

I am particularly chuffed with the success of the AST work opened a door outside of the classroom and led to the opportunities that allowed me to become a freelance consultant in 2007. I now work across the United Kingdom for a wide variety of clients and organisations.

Young Artists, Craftpeople and Designers

Fallon shares a young person’s view of art and design education and offers some suggestions for the future.

What art and design was for me...

I don’t remember doing that much at art primary school. Art was very limited because they mainly focused on literacy and numeracy. I do remember making Tudor houses that linked in with history in year 6 we were drawing trees lots of the time. I didn’t know why art and design was important at all – it was just one thing we were told to do. We did some design work for special occasions such as posters and cards – especially for events around Easter and Christmas. I never thought of asking why. We weren’t given very much freedom to explore and find out what we thought of asking why. We weren’t given very much freedom to explore and find out what we liked best. How much we did depended on the teacher we had and whether they liked teaching art or not. Either way there really wasn’t too much to hate or enjoy.

At primary, most work was A4 size and flat so it could be kept in a folder in my school. We mostly did pencil drawings or used paints that really were not very good. We were often just told to draw but weren’t really taught how to do it. At secondary it changed and we had the opportunity to do many more different things and to work with materials like clay and acrylic that I never used before. We really didn’t look at the work of any other artists until we started our GCSE and then only looked at artists and really didn’t look at any designers or craftpeople. Now I’m in the sixth form, I have the opportunity to visit more galleries and to explore less known artists.

At GCSE we were told that we would have much more freedom – but the reality was that the teachers told us exactly what to do. I didn’t feel I was able to express what art was for me. We simply focused on these three projects that my teachers set and really didn’t do much else – there really wasn’t much space for my ideas at all. My teachers didn’t like me exploring my own ideas or working in my own way. It’s only since starting the sixth form that I began to like art as I consider why I was doing it. I am finally being encouraged to think for myself and develop my own ideas and to express myself as an artist and I know the world, art and craft is flourishing here in the area. They are inspirational folk. I network all the time – face-to-face and online.

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My top tips for teachers...

- show your enthusiasm and interest in the subject
- make it very much the student’s input, offering guidelines and help, rather than dictating what they have to do
- find time for us to explore artists, craftpeople and designers in galleries and other places out of school. Making these real and relevant to the us and not just their ideas
- be genuinely encouraging and think for myself and develop my own ideas and to express myself as an artist

My top tips for policymakers...

- I would like art and design curriculum that...
- is relevant because we then know why we are doing it and enjoy it more
- expects us to look at real works of art and not just the images on the computer
- encourages us to try out lots of materials and to develop new skills
- helps teachers to think about art and design for themselves and be creative and inventive themselves
- encourages us to work with real artists
- offers us more time to develop ideas and work on bigger projects

Art, Creativity and Educational Consultant

I started drawing as soon as I could hold anything that made a mark. My first ‘installation piece’ was on the wall all the way down the corridor in which I lived in my first year at school. I thought I would take the world of art and just become an artist. Idly, I thought it was the hill of students to pile up, so I joined the PGCE course in Newcastle and began to do art and earn a living. I intended just to be teaching for a few years but it was so rewarding and exciting and I couldn’t let go. I still can’t. I worked for the City of Sunderland for all of my teaching career, as a teacher, head of art, head of faculty and, finally, as an AST. The AST work opened a door outside of the classroom and led to the opportunities that allowed me to become a freelance consultant in 2007. I now work across the United Kingdom for a wide variety of clients and organisations.

Notes from a Small Island

Bill Bryson

I set the alarms off at The Prado when I went to see it. Got too close!

A Walk Through the baths

Jan Svankmajer and ‘Dimensions of Dialogue’ b5KHg&feature=related

Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art

The Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art, for being a key part in promoting and preserving Baltic artwork created in 1982.

The Toy Museum in Tynemouth

The Toy Museum in Tynemouth, is run by a marvellous old couple who have collected toys for years – it’s small, quirky and fascinating. If you have walked into a room and been startled by the display cabinets for you. Tony and Maureen have it at the centre of everything that I do.

Cross-phase

For being a physical and a spiritual refuge for me and that exists in the universe, yet remains unexplained.

The Saatchi gallery

I do like the Saatchi online site, as there is so much to see and follow up.

The Tin Drum/Die Blechtromme 1979

The Tin Drum/Die Blechtromme 1979, a black satirical comedy based on the Günter Grass novel. The scene of Oskar’s birth has burnt a mark in my memory for years – it’s small, quirky and fascinating. If you want to see this film when I went to see it. Got too close!

The Moai

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moai

I unhesitatingly gave Durham my vote for best place in my memory forever.

Art education

I completed the Artist Teacher MA in 2009 and now NSEAD, and will continue to get out there and be inspired by all the inspirational folk. I network all the time – face-to-face and online.

Arts, Creativity and Design

Now a little more discussion about how I view the work of artists. I have been interested in art and design and still am, from an early age. The Saatchi gallery is a must see and I regularly visit exhibitions and art fairs at the Saatchi gallery and the Baltic.

Film

The film is one man’s vision, full of symbolism, and I totally agree with you Bill!

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- encourages us to work with real artists
- offers us more time to develop ideas and work on bigger projects
Human existence is messy. Life is not categorised into neat little subjects. Artists make work that is gritty, often offends deals with real, actual things that happen in life. Religious Education (RE) is not about the existence of some distant God. It tackles the word ‘Faith’ and the hope, pain, despair and ultimate questions that this word, this life, and the Holocaust during the Second World War with empathy.

The Holocaust Project
Kathryn Ascroft, teaches art and design at The Dukeries College. Here she describes a cross-curricular, media-mix project that utilises an international art event to explore the possibilities of projecting images over the textured surfaces; it was then a logical progression to layer the images with music and the speak of holocaust survivors.

We worked with a group of 10 students (age 13-14). The focus was on empathy as a deeper-level thinking skill and discovering ways to communicate this visually. We were determined that the project should have integrity at every stage, and for this to happen we had to change the way we viewed ourselves as subject teachers, abandon our subject labels and become teachers of the project. We shared, with a particular specialism in art and design or RE. It was essential that each department had an intrinsic understanding of how the other worked so that ideas could be developed in a genuinely collaborative context.

We worked with a group of 10 students (age 13-14) who were recognised as being ‘gifted and talented’ in art and design or RE, and opened up the project with a study day at the nearby ‘Holocaust Centre’ in Newark. Here they had the opportunity to build upon learning from their RE lessons, and to meet a holocaust survivor. At this stage they seemed quite overwhelmed by the situation and the visit required thoughtfully planned follow-up sessions in school, in which the students began to grow in confidence, talk openly about how they felt and to begin to place themselves in the situation of the holocaust victims. The gradual development of a sense of empathy began to occur. The comments the students were making were thought-provoking and insightful, and supported by hard-hitting practical outcomes. We challenged their concepts about what causes art, by examining a range of contemporary installations, and introducing video, projections and text-based work.

The students worked together to explore their ideas and ultimately produced three large-scale canvases that showed ‘fragments of broken lives’. They collected and dismantled hundreds of personal objects digested them in plaster of Paris, and arranged them on the canvases to create ‘textures from people’s lives’, working intuitively and showing aesthetic awareness. It was felt by the group that the white finish helped to obscure the identity of the objects. From a distance the individual objects were unidentifiable – a visual metaphor for the stripping away of one’s identity. One student had been particularly skilled in IT and explored the possibilities of projecting images over the textured surfaces; it was then a logical progression to layer the images with music and the speech of holocaust survivors.

The students presented their work at a project-arranged school assembly, which led to being invited by the Holocaust Centre to present the work in front of an audience of international dignitaries and Holocaust survivors as part of the 15th anniversary celebrations of the centre. The work is now on loan there and is being shown to every school group that the centre visits.

Subject Leaders of Art and Design in Primary Schools
A research project summary

Peter Gregory summarises his research findings into the role of the primary art and design subject leader

Very little is published on the role of the art subject leader in primary schools. In fact I could only find three books – of those I would recommend that the Primary Art and Design Subject Leaders’ Handbook (Bowden, 2004) certainly should be on the shelf of every teacher holding that responsibility.

I started to consider what subject leaders were actually doing in a construct a questionnaire with extensive follow-up interviews, during which I showed a collection of images of art works and asked the subject leaders to respond on a personal level to what they saw, what further they would use with pupils and if so, what age ranges and in what way. This activity provided an insight to their experiences and attitudes as well as how those affected their teaching.

Almost half had started teaching in the past five years. In the main the subject leaders were female – a greater proportion than generally represented across primary education as a whole. The largest group were trained in the role. A third had been trained as art specialists but more than 50% undertook training in art and design subject. This is a challenge for all phases of education, as the majority of primary teachers seem to be found in the secondary row. They were faring better in primary education, as far as I could see, with regard to attainment, but in many other ways things were not as positive.

The relatively low value of education is given in schools was also evident; the vast majority of teachers received no financial reward for their art leadership role and few had funding for art equipment. For me, one of the most frustrating aspects was the general level of ignorance about artists, art works and the techniques and materials used.

I was most clearly shown during the discussions about the art works I showed them. I identified several concerning themes issues of personal belief, systems such as influence of colour, familiarity and sense of whether the teacher would or wouldn’t have the art work in their house. Some of the art works were clearly larger than most rooms or this seemed a particular odd criterion to use. The teachers often searched the works for stories and there was a strong sense of art being used to support the most important literary activities in the classroom.

Three-quarters of the schools had set their art curriculum on the QCA’s scheme of Work and 62 percent of subject leaders told me that they had not been involved in the curriculum that had been inherited. All these factors seemed to affect the choice of artists and examples of works used in the school.

Overall the sample’s definition of ‘powerlessness’ as subject leaders told me they were unable to affect the curriculum or challenge their colleagues. This was also compounded by the isolation they expressed. Very few subject leaders involved themselves with professional networks and spent their energies in the office or living largely unaware of what was happening around them in other schools.

A significant factor in the work of subject leaders could be the extent to which they described their appointment. It was a positive experience where the head teacher recognised their role and enabled them to take the role they generally felt more able to affect the school context. However the majority of teachers described a negative appointment experience – where no one else understood their role.

Having presented those outcomes at several conferences many have recognised the landscape I have described. It seems time to be honest about some of the result of factors beyond the control of subject leaders themselves – the near extinction of local authority support for art, the dominance of one subject measurements of progress and the minimal experiences provided in art in teacher training.

My study has challenged me to improve the situation. I would be delighted to hear from teachers who are tackling the lack of leadership in art and design in their area or from individuals who can articulate their own development in order to inform and inspire others.
I work in an inner London primary school teaching art and design to cover for class teachers’ PPA time. This year, for the second year running, I was teaching the QCDA unit ‘Take a Seat’ to parallel classes of year 4 (age 8–9) children.

I linked the project to literacy work on William Shakespeare, with groups of children designing and making a chair for a character in A Midsummer Night’s Dream. Although the children enjoyed the task and produced attractive finished chairs, I was concerned that they had not been given enough freedom of choice – I had made the decisions about almost all the variables such as the scale of work, construction methods, skills and techniques and materials. To minimise mess and storage problems, I had also organised the children to work in groups. This year, despite fearing the disorder and chaos that might ensue, I decided to approach the unit of work differently, allowing individual children to make most of these decisions.

We started the first session looking at chairs from different cultures and different historical periods, discussing the shapes, construction methods and materials used, and considered the materials we might be able to work with in school. We drew some initial designs, modelling our ideas incard (fig 5).

The children were enthusiastic about beginning construction. However, by the fourth session, many were experiencing problems and needed individual help and support. Unlike a controlled teacher-led project, where all the children require the same skills that can be taught in advance, every child needed to know something different. Several children, who had chosen to work on a large-scale, realised that they were not going to finish their chairs in the available time. I was becoming anxious. Storage of materials and half-finished models was also a problem. Chaos had descended!

...too much choice can limit children’s learning as severely as too little choice

Being a specialist art teacher covering for PPA time was a disadvantage – if this were my own class, I would have blocked the unit of work into a couple of days. I had to remind myself that I had chosen to work in this way because I was interested in everyone’s ideas, skills and abilities and for once I wanted the children to be totally free to create.

Happily, by the end of the fifth session, most chairs were finished and I was very encouraged by the diverse range of outcomes. All sixty chairs were very different. There was a life-size chair made from a huge reel of bubble wrap with a black shiny fabric cover (fig 3). There was a tiny, Eames inspired chair and footstool decorated with animal print (fig 2), and a chair which had been designed and made for a favourite teddy bear (fig 4). A large spotty cardboard chair had been filled with polystyrene pieces to reinforce it and make it strong enough to sit on and there was a prototype of a flower chair, which looked exactly like the original design.

Despite cluttered classrooms and huge, unfinished chairs, I have learnt a lot from this process and the evaluations suggested that the children had, too. I have discovered that too much choice can limit children’s learning as severely as too little choice. Some children relished the complete freedom and went on to make very successful pieces. Others were overwhelmed by the range of options and were unable to make their own decisions. ‘Choice’ will therefore be one of the ways in which I will consider differentiating art activities in the future. For appropriate projects, I will allow some children to make their own decisions about almost all the variables and for other children I will allow choice within set parameters. For a small third group, I will narrow the choices still further to allow me to teach the specific skills and knowledge necessary to enable children to make quicker progress. Most importantly, I have reminded myself that the process of making art is at least as important as the product.

Helen Brimblecombe

Control versus Chaos: Choices and Chairs

Helen Brimblecombe’s lessons were filled with choice and chairs. Would she do the same again?
How to build a large-scale lightweight triangular-based pyramid, linking art and maths—an activity for 7-10 year olds

This interesting structure relies on the fact that a triangle is a rigid shape. Pupils in pairs can each make one regular tetrahedron pyramid from six pieces of dowel, or plant supports that can be purchased in packs from a garden centre of standard length, around 2 ft long. The dowel can be joined together by using elastic bands wrapped around each end until tight (fig 1). First make a triangle using three pieces then add three more to make the complete module (fig 2). Build it in layers: 1, 3, 6, 10, 15 are triangular numbers so there is a clear mathematics learning opportunity here (fig 3): Start with the largest layer. In total, 25 of these are needed to make a five-layer structure several feet in height. Though you may want to be less ambitious than this at first (fig 4).

Though this construction may seem impressive in its own right, the potential for using it for more interesting art activities is enormous. For instance, some planes could be covered with reflective card or translucent tissue—when coloured light is projected from two different points onto it, interesting shadows will be cast. The effect will be enhanced if the structure is hung from the ceiling, as it will revolve slowly, casting changing coloured shadows and shapes on the walls (fig 5).

If you invent another innovative way of using this structure send me a photograph and it will appear in a later edition."

In this regular feature by John Bowden a process will be described that you can use as a starter for work with your class described that you can use as a model for work with your class. Bowden a process will be described that you can use as a model for work with your class. John Bowden is running a Primary Art, Craft and Design Subject Leaders Workshop at Pallant House Gallery, Chichester.

**Your Questions Answered**

What is your advice about reorganisation of the primary curriculum now that the Rose Report recommendations are not being implemented? Art is still being taught as a separate subject in my school though many cross-curricular links are made. The Rose Report, as you say, is no more, so some schools rather jumped the gun on reorganising on the ‘areas of learning’ principle, which grouped art and design with subjects such as music and drama. I think some schools have some reservations about this proposal, questioning whether links between these subjects were any more meaningful than links that might be made with other subjects outside this “umbrella” arrangement. Now it’s pretty obvious that the new coalition government is going to provide some alternative guidance about the curricula and organisation of the primary curriculum, so retaining your existing separate subject structure makes sense if you have not changed already—watch this space! The existing statutory programmes of study for art and design for KS1 – 3 remain in place at least until September 2013."

I am a new subject leader, enthusiastic about art and design from college days, but an over-zealous school where the subject is not prioritised, the head teacher is not interested and my role so far seems to be just reversing one. Many staff are that they are ‘no good at art so can’t teach it’. It is interesting that no teacher would dare say that they can’t teach reading or number! There’s a complete chapter in the research into the role of the primary Art Subject Leader in that many feel a sense of professional isolation. So if you have any questions about issues that have arisen in your school, technical problems or mindful use of available resources, and don’t have an informed colleague to discuss it with, you can have your questions directly answered by John Bowden. Just email them to jobs@artinset.com—selected questions will be answered here (though your name and school will not be featured), but all queries will get an e-mail response. Alternatively join NSEAD’s network for Primary Subject Leaders on Facebook—http://on.fb.me/e6NCJr

Lacking art with teaching literacy and numeracy will immediately increase the credibility of the subject in the eyes of the head teacher (one “how to” elsewhere). However your primary strategy should be to ensure that your pupils enjoy art activities and experiences that enthuse them. If they talk about this with excitement with their parents and you share the outcomes with them at parents’ evening, notice will start to be taken of your work. Ask the head teacher if time could be provided to work jointly with other staff to take the lead on joint art projects. Always make yourself available to make suggestions about new approaches and resources—more staff will probably join in when they think you provide encouragement and a non-threatening good example. At the right moment ask the head teacher if you can talk to the whole staff in order to better co-ordinate the provision for the subject and make teaching more systematic—most of all demonstrate by example. And remember to sign up to the Primary Subject Leader NSEAD Facebook group—the networking is a bigger source of support from outside your school will increase."

When my pupils do mono-printing the paint dries so quickly that the prints taken are poor. Why is this? When my pupils do mono-printing the paint dries so quickly that the prints taken are poor. Why is this? Almost certainly it is because you are using ready-mixed paint which is made to dry quickly. Though there are crude additives available that will slow down the drying process for this paint, I always use water-based printing inks which are available in good art catalogues. These might seem expensive but only a small amount is needed to produce a clear consistent monoprint. John Bowden.
As an artist and designer Anna Deamer is used to crossing boundaries. Now she’s crossing boundaries in schools.

How do transitional projects involving art and design nurture and inspire? By transitional projects I mean sessions that cross boundaries. These boundaries can be between year groups, subjects, schools or communities. They can be imposed or self-imposed by a group or individual. In my experience, transitional projects engender confidence and I’m interested in how this occurs.

This interest has arisen through my personal practice in art and design and as a teacher and session leader at various centres. I enjoy the cross fertilisation of subject areas; this informs my work, helps me develop new ideas and inspire the bold, intuitive images produced by younger children. Cross-age projects can be liberating. And annually ‘The Big Draw’ provides an opportunity for all Year 6 to collaborate. I’ve run many workshops involving pupils from Reception to Year 6 (ten-year olds) (figs 6-8). These back-to-back sessions (20-30 minutes) require little planning or funding and can be run with a large roll of paper, enough biros to go round and something to draw.

During my sessions participants contribute to one large drawing. They are asked not to sign or ‘frame’ their part of this collaboration and it initiates some resilience because of the need to mark territory and define space. We discuss visual collaborations and, when drawing begins and the group works together, resistance turns into focus. Students warm to shared experience.

At the session’s end I ask participants to walk around the piece. They enjoy the challenge of spotting their drawing among the hundred. I emphasise there is right or wrong, simply different ways of seeing and recording. Students observing the work understand this. Working with over 5,000 students on dozens of collaborative drawings, remarkably I’ve never heard older pupils criticise younger pupils work. Students offer praise and support each other.

Peer-support can be helpful in transitional projects. Working in unfamiliar groups reassures students, giving them confidence to cross barriers. Cross-curricular activities can be challenging but if students work in supportive groups fear can turn to excitement and this increases motivation.

Last Spring I worked on ‘Transformation’ with Year 6 (from several junior schools) who were referred to as ‘reluctant learners’. This project involved art and design, English and media studies (figs 9-11) and was initiated by Robyn Steer. ‘Transformation’ began with poetry workshops under the guidance of performance poet Paul Lyall; the poems were read at ‘Watchwords’. In my workshops the poems were story-boarded and illustrated; illustrations were exhibited in an art trail. Finally the images were animated and made into short films, premiered at the Duke of York’s Cinema, Brighton.

‘Transformation’ was cross-subject and cross-school. Emphasis was taken away from art and design and placed on communication ideas through word, image and moving image. Pupils experienced being part of a large project and were motivated partly because they had something concrete to aspire to and partly because they were crossing in to new subject areas. Students, eager to join in, worked hard and the results were funny, sad and poignant.

It’s highlighted it is a problem that not all junior school pupils know their upper school. I mean ‘know’, in two ways, which school or what it’s like. Undertakings involving both, ease the passage from Year 6 to 7 (age 10-11). Again working with Robyn Steer, ‘My Space’ united all Year 6 students attending several schools with one senior school (figs 12-13). In this project Year 6 students explored their place in their families, class, school and community. Children visualised their ‘space’ by painting a canvas. These were butted together into mirrored panels to form a ‘cube’ viewers could walk in, out and around whilst listening to a recording of interviews between Junior and Senior school pupils. Mirrors, intrinsic to the piece, reinforced the self-reflection of participants and viewers, uniting both.

Unification was central to the project. The private view held at the senior school, was attended by students from all schools, parents, tutors, professionals and the local press. Year 6’s felt they were being taken seriously, met future peers, tutors and crossed in to the world of Senior School. The ‘cube’ was then exhibited in Jube Library, Brighton, taking the work into the wider community. Robyn Steer described ‘My Space’ as ‘dynamic, enriching, multi-layered and insightful to everyone involved’. ‘My Space’ was an example of how traversing boundaries is inspiring.

There is no doubt that crossing boundaries, through whatever means, motivates learners and raises aspiration. Transitional projects can be enlightening in all involved. Cross boundaries in my professional work and also as an artist coming in to a school environment. I am constantly surprised by human beings’ flexibility. The difficulty lies in first identifying then attempting to cross self-imposed as well as imposed barriers, allowing ideas to flourish. If we create and traverse barriers in art and design we see increased confidence and motivation and the results can be surprising and inspiring.

Anna Deamer

Further Information
• Anna Deamer www.annadeamer.com
• Robyn Steer is a Community Media & Visual Arts Co-ordinator. In 2010 she won an award for her contribution to Arts & Culture in Sussex.
• For further information rsteer@patchamhigh.org.uk
• ‘The Big Draw’ is a national yearly campaign to encourage drawing www.campaignfordrawing.org

For information on art classes see www.beaconarts.co.uk
"Where would I be without Take One Picture?" It’s the best thing I’ve done at my school." It’s raised the bar." These are the verdicts of an NQT, a pupil and a headteacher from three very different schools on their experience of Take One Picture, the National Gallery’s flagship programme for primary schools.

So what is it all about?

Take One Picture, was established by the National Gallery in 1996 to promote the visual arts within education. Each year, primary schools across the United Kingdom are invited to take a different painting selected by the National Gallery as a rich and accessible context for learning about art and through art. The programme is now heralded for promoting and showcasing exemplary cross-curricular practice in response to paintings.

Some schools dedicate a week to the project while others explore themes prompted by the painting for much longer, up to a year. For some it is a stimulus for learning in a discreet subject, most often art and design or literacy. For others it is a springboard for cross-curricular learning. By taking lines of enquiry prompted by the painting as a starting point, knowledge, skills and understanding are developed between subjects as well as with the children’s lives and locality. In this way depth and coherence are brought to a potentially fragmented curriculum and learning becomes both enjoyable and meaningful.

Hundreds of schools take part each year. Teachers often begin by attending one of the CPD days on the focus painting at the Gallery and return again with their pupils to see the painting. Alternatively the National Gallery website provides access to all the resources that you need, including a zoomable image of the focus painting. A large number of schools go on to submit work to the display, which is held annually in one of the main Gallery spaces.

Placing art at the centre of the curriculum

The importance of developing creativity across the whole curriculum was explicitly stated in Sir Ken Robinson’s influential 1999 report ‘All Our Futures’. So too the findings and recommendations from a public consultation by the Culture and Learning Consortium, ‘Get it: The Power of Cultural Learning’, which concluded that ‘Cultural learning has the potential to transform people’s lives’. Take One Picture enables just this: the enriching, humanising experience of a holistic curriculum where meaningful connections both inside and outside the classroom are sought and found. By taking art and design from the edges of the curriculum and placing it firmly at its heart, everyone, and most importantly the children, benefits.

Above Children from Wellingborough Preparatory School in Northamptonshire explored the influence of Japanese prints on the Impressionists. They used Photoshop to add tone, colour and texture to their scanned drawings.

Left: Children from Grafton Primary School in Essex, were captured in action, as they created the set and characters they thought appropriate to Veronese’s painting. Veronese is famous for his use of rich and decorative colour. In Venice he had access to the best pigments and techniques by hand from countries such as modern day Afghanistan.

Take One Picture

Diana and Actaeon by Titian, 1566–59
© The National Gallery, London

The Family of Darius before Alexander by Paolo Veronese, 1565–67
© The National Gallery, London

One of the themes of the painting is the mercy which Alexander shows towards Darius’s defeated family. Veronese is famous for his use of rich and decorative colour. In Venice he had access to the best pigments available and by hand from countries such as modern day Afghanistan.

Left: The Umbrellas, set and characters they created through words and drawings. By the narrative they created by the school’s artist-in-residence and a writer-in-residence they created its heart, everyone, and most importantly the children, benefits.

The Family of Darius before Alexander is a triumph of the canvassing power of art. Produced between 1565 and 1567, it was probably made for one of Veronese’s patrons. At first glance these figures appear ghostly. In fact they show the scene developing from the floor up. The monkey is painted with great care and may well have satisfied a particular animal, possibly owned by one of Veronese’s patrons.

The scene takes place in Persia, outside in what is perhaps the courtyard of a grand palace or large house. Would the space work in reality?

At first glance these horses appear ghostly. In fact they show the scene developing from the floor up. The monkey is painted with great care and may well have satisfied a particular animal, possibly owned by one of Veronese’s patrons.
Creativity should be a democratic right

At a time of significant change across all phases of education it is important to consider both what policy makers and practitioners believe works. Penny Hay and Mary Fawcett share 5x5x5=creativity’s practice-based research findings

5x5x5=creativity originally involved five educational settings, five artists and five cultural centres (galleries, theatres, music and outdoor centres) working in a multi-professional research partnership to support children's creativity. The collective aim is to support children and young people in their exploration and expression of creative ideas. 5x5x5=creativity recognises the potential of art and design within their work and for children and young people to think and act as artists. At Bath, children worked with Edwina Bridgeeman, an artist who uses found materials to transform and tell stories. A visit was arranged to Edwina’s exhibition at the Victoria Art Gallery in Bath. The rights of children

Given an environment where rights are truly respected we have found that valuable learning dispositions can flourish, for example, concentration, collaboration, confidence, independence, imagination, perseverance and sustained shared thinking. Children are seen as creative knowledge builders from birth. They are explorers and co-constructors of their learning. Children are born equipped with creative capacities: the drive to explore, to hypothesise, to make connections and to communicate. Educators and artists are enablers and companions in the children’s learning with a culture of listening. Being a supporter of children’s enquiries means being prepared to ‘follow the smoke’. The really good parts of the EYFS, on the other hand, celebrate individuality and promote creativity as a way of learning for young children. There are clear indications that there will be a shift towards very early reading and writing (and testing at age six). Do remember you will have the opportunity to comment on any proposed changes.

The key principles are:

1. The rights of children
2. The drive to express themselves
3. The drive to problem-solve
4. The drive to engage in a culture of listening
5. The drive to be prepared to follow the smoke

Being a supporter of children’s enquiries means being prepared to ‘follow the smoke’. The open-ended exploration and imagination of children can lead them in surprising directions. Educators and artists are enablers and companions in the children’s learning with a culture of listening and working with children. Being a supporter of children’s enquiries means being prepared to ‘follow the smoke’. The really good parts of the EYFS, on the other hand, celebrate individuality and promote creativity as a way of learning for young children. There are clear indications that there will be a shift towards very early reading and writing (and testing at age six). Do remember you will have the opportunity to comment on any proposed changes.
A personal line of enquiry

Sophie Bower describes what shapes her work – both as artist and teacher

Current focus

It was in 1994, when I was a student living in a Pimlico bedsit that I noticed the way my brain involuntarily brings back seemingly unimportant childhood memories. I was cutting a vertically positioned carrot chunk into tall thin strips and ‘out of nowhere’ into my mind popped a snapshot of one of the tall thin streets in York. The odd thing was that I’d only ever been there once, on a school trip in the early 80s.

In Marcel Proust’s first volume of (À la Recherche du Temps Perdu) the narrator bits into a madeleine and its taste and smell instantly bring about a rush of happiness (though he then thought no more of it for half a lifetime) and it was only in the space that was left I eventually began to notice involuntary memories of places. It felt gentle, just noticing and feeling affection for my idiosyncratic ‘connectors’ to my memories and its trigger. It was well received and I planned to develop a series of them.

Sustaining the enquiry

I went through two black holes during the course – the first one when I had to re-examine what it is I do as an educator, and the second bigger one opened up once I had to start thinking about reconciling what I was creating with the second bigger one opened up once I had to start thinking about reconciling what I was creating with my strong belief in creating an artwork that I see the animation as a sketch and let it go.

I got stuck halfway through the second animation, not being able to divorce the planned set of animations from the (seemingly) inevitable white cube presentation. I just couldn’t bring together the objects that were the filmic representations of my memories with my strong belief in creating an artwork where engagement presides over the art object. One of my colleagues could sense this block and suggested that I see the animation as a sketch and let it go.

‘One of my colleagues could sense this block and suggested that I see the animation as a sketch and let it go’

Impact on the classroom

On the whole, the impact the ATS MA has made on the teaching and learning that takes place in my classroom is more of a subtle shift. It is my teacher stance that has changed rather than anything more specific. It has led me away from the need to force in control of my pupils’ responses to the lesson content.

In a recent year 10 (age 14-15) lesson on abortion, for example, I was frustrated at some of the pupils’ flippant responses towards what I naturally feel as an extremely difficult and personal decision. My urge was to pull them up on it and tell them this. Instead I trusted that given enough information and opportunity for challenging debate they would be much more likely to develop their own informed opinion. I don’t think I would have been able to hold back my frustration before whereas now I’m more aware of the learning opportunities these uncomfortable moments can offer.

I’ve also cut syllabus content in order to provide more time for deeper learning. This has encouraged an increased sense of the pupils’ ownership of their religious education. Given that the general range of our MLD pupils is from NC levels 1 to 3, I’ve been surprised at the depth of expression, creativity and empathy they’ve since shown. In a class of students (age 13-14), I invited one of our science teachers into the lesson so that the class could quiz and question him on his beliefs about the origins of our world and life within it. By the end of the lesson, the group understood and respected the difference between literalism and non-literalism reading of the Bible!

Impact on the ‘artist self’

One of the biggest impacts the ATMA had on me in my role as an artist is that I’ve become more comfortable in actually seeing myself as one (having felt like I was involved in the depth of expression, creativity and empathy they’ve since shown. In a class of students (age 13-14), I invited one of our science teachers into the lesson so that the class could quiz and question him on his beliefs about the origins of our world and life within it. By the end of the lesson, the group understood and respected the difference between literalism and non-literalism reading of the Bible!

Sam Bower teaches at Bank View High School in Bootle, Fazakerley, Liverpool. www.sophiebower.com

memory for them (fig 2). I then exhibited them in a mobile museum I created from a trailer, along with an accompanying audio piece of clips from the stories collected (figs 3-4).
The schools White Paper, The Importance of Teaching, sets out a radical reform programme for schools. Saied’s skill as a teacher is in the way he strips down to its fundamentals. And these fundamentals enable you to progress in your observation and drawing in a sure way. To hear him talk about the fundamentals of painting, colour mixing and composition is equally eye opening. As he talks – for his words are not all about doing. The first five of the days was for the most part a lecture – we only got as far as preparing a ground for the next day. But by the end of the class he was having on every word he scribbled notes furiously, noting that I return to again and again. It seems that he is well versed in traditional techniques and knowledge he acquires through his many years of study and practice. Throughout the week he repeats the fundamentals again and again calling back to the principles he espoused. And how was my painting? Better than I dared hope but still a long way to go – same place same time next year? – I hope so.

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