NSEAD National Conference 2012

Art and Design Education at the Crossroads: Developing outstanding practice

Incorporating the Artist Teacher Scheme Symposium

16, 17, 18 March 2012
The Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead, and other venues

Godfrey Worsdale, Director of Baltic will open the conference

We are privileged to be presenting the NSEAD Annual Conference and AGM 2012 at the Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead. Baltic provide an innovative and unique resource for teachers of art, craft and design in the region, and beyond, and NSEAD are delighted to be working with Baltic in their 10th anniversary year.

The conference will be of relevance to teachers of art, craft and design working in primary, secondary and further education; museum and gallery educators and initial teacher educators.

Art, craft and design education is at a crossroads. Why?

The introduction of the ‘English Baccalaureate’, a review of the National Curriculum and the Curriculum for Excellence in Scotland all stand to have a far reaching impact. The proposed changes to Initial Teacher Education across the UK, the outcome of the DCMS review of ‘Cultural Education’ and the consequences of the decision by the Department of Business, Education and Skills (BIS) to halt all money for teaching the arts and humanities in universities and specialist higher education institutes are challenging our subject.

Teachers of art, craft and design need to be exceptionally clear about their aims, objectives, curriculum content and pedagogy.

The conference will explore these issues, what it takes to develop outstanding practice and make explicit the value of art, craft and design on the curriculum and in education.

The conference will include presentations and practical sessions led by artists and teachers.

The conference will run over three days, packages and discounts will be available for NSEAD members, PGCE trainees, unemployed and Artist Teacher Scheme students.

RECLAIMING THE D IN ART AND DESIGN

NICK DANZIGER ON BECOMING A PHOTOGRAPHER

The National Society for Education in Art and Design magazine
Autumn 2011
Issue 3
This, the third issue of AD, completes the magazine’s first year. Every author and every contributor shares in the conviction of the intrinsic value of art and design education. Yet each of their journeys in art and design education varies widely. The internationally acclaimed photographer Nick Danziger describes how his career plan changed from fine artist to photographer; Marilyn Kyle, Head of Faculty of Art at Caterham School, didn’t ‘plan’ to set up a gallery; instead it was the response to opportunities which helped make it happen; and in ‘My Best...’ we find how one teacher’s comments unwittingly drove Andrew Shoben to make art works as accessible as possible. Andrew is now a Professor of Public Art.

Of the many varying career paths that we reflect in AD, we are left in no doubt that John Steers’ own journey has impacted on us all. As John retires as General Secretary of NSEAD in January 2012, it is a fitting tribute that this year he received the InSEA (International Society for Education through Art) Sir Herbert Read Award for ‘Significant and Lifelong Contribution to Art Education in School and Society’. John may not have planned to have such an impact, or even to remain elected in post for thirty years, but on behalf of every NSEAD member, we are truly grateful that he did.

In AD issue 4, John Steers will be writing on his 30 years as General Secretary of NSEAD.

Sophie Leach, Editor AD

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Facebook: http://on.fb.me/mYsh01

Cover Image: Nick Danziger, Mah-Bibi, 2001 © Nick Danziger/NB Pictures

This portrait is the cover of Nick Danziger’s recently published Onze Femmes. Mah-Bibi was one of 11 women he photographed on a project to document the effects of war on women for the International Committee of the Red Cross. Ghor Province, Central Afghanistan, 2001.
Life in a Year

Nick Danziger

On being and becoming a photographer

I always wanted to draw and paint. At thirteen I left home alone to travel to Paris to visit museums and galleries, inspired by the adventures of Tintin, and the works of several painters I had only seen in books.

I went to art school with one objective – to become a painter (I did my Foundation, BA and MA at Chelsea School of Art) and even after graduating I went back to teach at Chelsea and several other art schools and universities. I was also very fortunate to be taken up by the art dealer, Robert Fraser, who was about to open a gallery in Cork Street, and I had one of the first shows there.

At this point, in the mid-80s, I could never have imagined that I wouldn’t spend a life producing works of art and instead, the photography that reflects my interest in adventure, people and places – often on the margins of society.

On the rare occasions I am asked to talk to BA or MA photography students, I often suggest they look at Caravaggio, Pieter de Hooch, or Zubaran. ‘Who?’ they ask with blank stares, once I have told them who they are, there are always one or several students who tell me that they want to be photographers, not painters! Further to my initial suggestion to look at them for their use of light, composition, and storytelling, I suggest they take in some of David Lean’s work, read, research, etc…

Whether ‘producing’ work, which is what I like best, because it involves being somewhere and meeting people which means I am learning something new, or subsequent storytelling (talks, exhibitions or books), I want to keep challenging myself, keep fighting to get the images that ‘talk’ because it involves being somewhere and meeting people and places – often on the margins of society.

I am sure my interest in painting is part of the way I look at the world through my camera lens and my early interest in Tintin amongst others (Steinbeck, Jack London, C.S. Forester’s HornBlower series) is responsible for the part in the photography that reflects my interest in adventure, people and places – often on the margins of society.

Right: All Blacks in a classroom. Nick Danziger broke new ground with the All Blacks rugby team with a never before seen view of the team ‘behind the scenes’. Rugby has become infinitely more technical.

The All Blacks study at Hamilton Boys High School, Hamilton, New Zealand. June 2010

In fact some of my peers at art school who also dreamed of life in a Year

C.S. Forester’s interest in Tintin amongst others (Steinbeck, Jack London, to capture the world through my camera lens and my early interest in adventure, people and places – often on the margins of society.

life in a Year

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Right: All Blacks in a classroom. Nick Danziger broke new ground with the All Blacks rugby team with a never before seen view of the team ‘behind the scenes’. Rugby has become infinitely more technical.

Since the beginning of 2011 photographic projects have taken me to Honduras, Sierra Leone, Uganda and Afghanistan. I have also had assignments from the UK, Russia and France. Exhibition openings at museums have taken me to the USA and Canada, and a recent gallery opening in France. I have given talks in Hong Kong and Ottawa, and am due to give talks at the Leatherhead Institute, at the Women’s Forum, Deauville and in Montreal. I have also run a series of workshops for the British Council’s ‘Creative Enterprise Programme’ in Nigeria and for the sixth year have been programme director for the Summer School in ‘Cinema, Human Rights and Advocacy’ at the Huston School of Film and Digital Media at the National University of Ireland in Galway.

This year, as in most years, I have given the occasional talk at schools for children from five years old up to school leavers as well as to clients of Japanese and British banks. For the last 13 years I have been an advisory council member for the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust, which involves reading applications and sitting on an interview panel – this year has been no different and I spent three days in early January interviewing some remarkable people with extraordinary goals.

Although the writing, photography and occasionally documentary filming aspect of my work can often be lonely, all my work is the result of having an excellent team as part of the process. I often work with the same editors, researchers,
From art school to...
From his first solo journey to Paris to a recent return trip to Afghanistan with Oxfam, Nick Danziger has spent a life documenting what he sees. In 1982, having been awarded a Winston Churchill Memorial Trust Fellowship, he traced ancient trade routes from Turkey to China, documenting his adventures in Daméjee’s The British, in which he returns to his roots in a divided Britain; the first of many best-selling books. His third book, Danziger’s Travels, is a social and political commentary on Britain. In 1991 he made his first documentary, War Zones and Villages, about children abandoned in an Afghan mental asylum, which won the Prix Italia for best television documentary. His photographic books include the award-winning The British, in which he returns to his roots in a divided Britain; Missing Lives, about people who went missing during the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, and Mura, a unique behind-the-scenes look at New Zealand’s All Blacks rugby team. His latest book, Once Femmes, tracing the lives of 11 women from countries in conflict over the last 10 years was published in August 2011. His photographic work is held in museum collections worldwide and earned him the Royal Geographical Society’s Ness Award in recognition of raising public understanding of contemporary social, political and environmental issues. His ‘mirror’ image of Tony Blair and George W. Bush won the 2004 World Press Photo award. In 2007 he was awarded an Honorary Fellowship by the Royal Photographic Society.

Recent and current exhibitions include Between Heaven and Earth, a study of traditional Christian rituals and practices in Ethiopia, commissioned by the British Council and currently on a world tour, and Guerre et Paix, a celebration. Perhaps later. Perhaps never.

Below: Young boys are holding their own camera/film crew equipment. As part of a project on access to clean water and good governance for the non-governmental organisation One World Actory, Nick took many photos of daily life, here young boys who had been watching Nick and his colleagues shooting a documentary and taking stills, natural within moments with their own recording materials scavenged from a nearby rubbish tip. Luanda, Angola, 2003.

Left: Reception hall, Hillsborough Castle, Tuesday, 8 April 2003, 2.30pm. Tony Blair and George Bush bid their farewells. This is their last meeting of the first phase of the Iraq war. Within 24 hours, United States marines will famously topple Saddam Hussein’s statue on the outskirts of Baghdad. This is a brief discussion on the British side of a victory celebration. Perhaps later. Perhaps never.

Below: The burial of 500 recently identified remains are finally buried over a decade after they were massacred at Srebrenica, Potocari, Bosnia-Hercegovina, July 2008. All images © Nick Danziger/NB Pictures

And designers. Photography now dominates my work output and this year see the completion of two long-term projects. The first is about the effects of war on women, and was originally commissioned in 2001 as part of a study by the International Committee of the Red Cross – ten years later I wanted to know what had happened to the women I had photographed. I did manage to find all 11 women. Some, such as Dioua from Senegal, have become very attached to many of the people I meet, people who often face a lifetime of hardship and hurdles which they overcome on a daily basis. I have become very attached to many of the people I have photographed and friendships in distant places such as Afghanistan can go back over decades. I think of all the extraordinary places and events and people I have had access to, from heart transplant surgery to psychiatric wards, from victims of the Srebrenica massacre to Sierra Leonean Olympic hopefuls, from travelling with the Dalai Lama to seeing at close quarters the former British Prime Minister Tony Blair taking the decisions that took Britain and the United States to war in Iraq. But, as I write this and reflect, my happiest moments are with my family and children who are not on the other side of the planet but are currently sleeping soundly only a few feet away from me.
Secondary

In art and design curriculum questions whether we should be positioning design at the heart of the art and how we will teach this. Ged Gast, vice president and a school improvement consultant for creativity, following:

• Research – identifying all relevant information including customer/user profiles, markets, purpose, need, previous similar projects, stylistic influences, constraints, budget, time and available resources. Equally, I believe it is essential to teach creative thinking is also the outcome of restriction, often flourishing despite tight budgets and limited resources. Equally, I believe it is essential to teach students how to design, not just provide the time, resources. Equally, I believe it is essential to teach students how to design, not just provide the time, resources and support for the creative thinking that informed their processes, where we might gain greater insight into the thinking that informed their creative actions.

How also does encompass within our concept of art and design, the rapid evolution of digital media and multi-modal products e.g. web and game design, animation, advertising and film (live and screen-based media)? Indeed, their place in our curriculum expands the concept of design, broadens skills and understanding, increasing the social and cultural relevance of this curriculum. It would be very easy to place this within a box labelled ‘engagement’ and motivate the underperforming boys; but this is not always true and the ‘glostonliness’ of digital media for this purpose would be morally wrong. However, I do think we should understand why digital media should the attraction it does for many students, but all teachers must be fully prepared to embrace the scope of this media, so as to implement approaches that make visual language more relevant to all students. In particular, I believe it can help us to understand the complexity in performance between girls and boys in art and design examinations, proving at least one strand in our strategy to tackle this. These students will underperform for a variety of reasons, but what seems clear is their disinclination to a largely historical curriculum, which finds their discipline’s new and unproven outcomes, many of them are both technically skilled in aspects of digital media and hugely engaged as consumers of this work. This media is after all, a product of our time and our culture, speaking to us all through films, the TV screen, the internet and increasingly through our phones and portable devices.

When considering how educators might best utilise these digital tools, we must remember it is unlikely there any other creative medium. It encompasses many and growing range of processes and outcomes including the development of both presentation and distribution. It also provides us with a means of connecting with the work of the greats, both historical and contemporary.

It also has the potential to be interactive and will become increasingly ‘intelligent’, speaking to us directly in our leisure activities, as an overarching part of entertainment process. This environment is complex, but it is certainly creative, highly multi-modal and evolving. The digital design industry models this for us and demonstrates how successful can we be in establishing new digital industries on the back of these commercial successes, which also connects art and design with other subjects such as sciences and mathematics, as the routes into design and creative industries. This mirrors the breadth of employment opportunities across the growing design, creative and media industries. We need to ensure students are given the skills and knowledge that can engage us all as creators. However, we really need good designers who are highly skilled, innovative, creative, ethical, humorous, intelligent, political, social and morally minded.

We also need some elements of a reflection on how the artist as designer, digital games, product or media designer, interprets our world. This media is after all, a product of our time and our culture, speaking to us all through films, the TV screen, the internet and increasingly through our phones and portable devices. We need to ensure students are given the skills and knowledge that can engage us all as creators. However, we really need good designers who are highly skilled, innovative, creative, ethical, humorous, intelligent, political, social and morally minded.

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‘We may be misleading young people in schools if they do not see the ‘design in the ‘art, and vice versa’ the ‘big picture’ of design or understand the breadth of career opportunities available. In the design world, most ‘design briefs’ are designed to give the students an idea, to provoke thinking and design development for the creation of new artefacts and products to meet the purpose which may be aesthetic, functional or both. This process is both physical and intellectual, calling on the experience of the designer in the creation of new artefacts and products to meet the needs of users, or in the visual communication in art, ideas and meanings.

There are many different models of the design process, with variations that apply to diverse strands of activity across the enormous range of design industries. They mostly share many of the same stages although they place a different emphasis on these depending on the intended purpose and outcome. However, the principle of the thinking and actions underpinning these stages is important, and we will consider which design skills and design thinking approaches we will teach them as we will teach this.

These process stages can be summarised as the following:

• Define – the identification of need or specification including customer/user profiles, markets, purpose, need, previous similar projects, stylistic influences, constraints, budget, time and available resources. By the demands of updating our digital and creative thinking is also the outcome of restriction, often flourishing despite tight budgets and limited resources. Equally, I believe it is essential to teach students how to design, not just provide the time, resources and support for the creative thinking that informed their processes, where we might gain greater insight into the thinking that informed their creative actions.

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chasing mirrors
engaging hard-to-reach young people

How three West London organisations with Arabic cultural heritage explored concepts of self in the National Portrait Gallery

Chasing Mirrors is a three-year project funded by John Lyon’s Charity, developing partnerships between the National Portrait Gallery and three West London community organisations with Arabic cultural heritage. Young people from those groups have been working with a different contemporary artist each year to explore the Gallery’s Collections, and how the concept of self can be represented through portraiture. The collaborative artwork they produce is exhibited at the National Portrait Gallery each year, the exhibition this autumn marks the culmination of the project.

The community organisations are: An Nisa, a women-managed organisation established in 1985 to promote a British Muslim identity; Paiwand, an Afghan community organisation; and Taiib, a centre working with London’s Somali community.

We were keen to work with this audience because they were recognised as under-represented in our visitors and collections. We wanted to provide opportunities for intellectual access to the Collections of the National Portrait Gallery for groups who otherwise might not identify with them, or be inspired to visit.

The groups are based in West London and rarely venture into the Centre, so barriers of physical access were also significant. Most of the workshops took place at the meeting places of the community groups, and all visited the National Portrait Gallery at least once.

Exploring the concept of self

The main theme is exploring ‘self’ as defined by the young people, with reference to the groups’ Arabic heritage where they indicate that this is significant to them. ‘Self’ is a broad concept – to her practice. Her art form moves away from portraits as representations of physical appearance, instead exploring how aspects of self can be represented through words and personal objects. This is rooted in the concept of dual inner and outer identity expounded by Sufism, which resonated with the groups.

There is no word for ‘portrait’ in Arabic, and physical image is not represented in Islamic art. Some participants had visited museums and galleries before and understood the concept of portraiture, whilst others found the concept more of a challenge.

The young people took part in a series of creative workshops through which the artist used a variety of activities. On a world map each participant marked places with which they felt a connection – for example somewhere they had lived, an ancestral home, where they were born. They came out of those with lines and the map was soon covered in personal routes around the world, demonstrating the global nature of the group’s collective identity. They then chose yarns in colours associated with a country of choice – associations included green for countryside, yellow for sand, orange for spices. They were with these yarns, a simple process occupying hands and mind in a peaceful way which allowed participants to further discuss concepts of self.

The young people later interpreted the meanings behind their names and wrote them large-scale using calligraphic ink. These were included as a frieze in the exhibition, and below them were words about each participant written by the artist in response to conversations with the young people throughout the project.

Alinah explored portraits in the NPG collections which include objects to tell the viewer something about the sitter. This might be a personal possession or an item of clothing, and might convey a message about the sitter’s religion, personality, hobbies or political views. She used these examples to encourage participants to think about personal objects they would use to tell stories about themselves.

Alinah used different techniques with each of the groups – An Nisa thought deeply about their possessions they value in the present and their aspirations for the future.

‘The objects and written pieces were wrapped in coloured silks and yarns to conceal their outer appearance, to represent a sense of self which comes from within’

The young people later explored the meanings behind their names and the young people commented that this made them feel ‘proud’ and ‘honoured’. They enjoyed the opportunity to explore ‘what types of art there are out there in the world and how you can express your feelings through it’.

Louise Lamming, Participation Project Manager

www.npg.org.uk/chasingmirrors
For the last six years Battyeford CofE Primary School in Mirfield, West Yorkshire has been forging a relationship with their local professional arts organisation West Yorkshire Print Workshop. The partnership has been instrumental in developing a primary schools exhibition project with many benefits to all resultant partners.

In 2006 I joined Battyeford Primary School as a specialist art and design teacher and with a background in Local Authority Arts Development. It made sense to make immediate contact with local galleries, art venues, and creative practitioners as well as West Yorkshire Print Workshop (WYPW) a professional studio facility housing artists, print resources and a gallery.

During my first two years in post an exhibition programme was organised at WYPW where artwork by just Battyeford CE Primary School was exhibited. This showcased the outcomes from cross-curricular schemes of work based on renowned, historical and contemporary artists. For a period of two weeks each year I was also based at the WYPW and delivered practical sessions for our sixteen classes looking at, critically thinking about, and developing work based on the exhibition and the practice of studio member artists. These visits took place in the WYPW gallery and were assisted by a team of parent volunteers who began to spread the word of the facility amongst their peers.

My appointment in 2008 as an Advanced Skills Teacher across Kirklees local authority allowed for more developmental work to follow and the brokering of partnerships between WYPW and other schools. This led to several of the WYPW members being supported to develop their education skills through an authority-wide after-school arts programme entitled ‘Adopt an Artist’. In the Mirfield cluster of schools the intention was to bring together an exhibition as the final culmination of the scheme. The artist Catherine Green, who works with pupils developing textiles, commented on the mutual benefits: ‘It has given me confidence to transfer my skills and enthusiasm to the children who in turn become ambassadors for art and craft with their families and local community. It broadens the school’s curriculum because artists bring their own specialist skills, ways of working and different materials for pupils to experiment with and explore. I am so much more economically secure, exposure to my work has grown and I am much more confident as a result.

Working alongside creative practitioners has added ideas and skills to teacher’s knowledge banks and led to a ‘real life’ approach to the art and design curriculum. Children’s enhanced knowledge and enthusiasm can be witnessed through their high-level talk, confidence in developing individual ideas and tackling new techniques and materials for artworks that ultimately will be publicly exhibited.

West Yorkshire Print Workshop has also noticed many advantages. Centre Manager Pam Lonsdale reported that the annual ‘Adopt an Artist’ exhibition improved visitor numbers, attracted new audiences, which in turn enabled the school holiday education programme to develop. Pupils, parents, teachers and artist practitioners have raised aspirations, creativity and achievement through partnership working in this exciting visual art programme.

Natalie Deane, Advanced Skills Teacher for Primary Art & Design, Kirklees
nataliepower@yahoo.co.uk

The journey to excellence in art, craft and design
Battyeford CofE Primary School is available for download from the Ofsted good practice website: http://bit.ly/qAqt4q

‘It broadens the school’s curriculum because artists bring their own specialist skills, ways of working and different materials for pupils to experiment with and explore’
The Importance of Artists

Michele Gregson on We are Curious: Learning at Turner Contemporary

Something special happens when we journey to an unfamiliar environment and encounter the unexpected. We can transcend the limits of our daily routines and find new ways to learn. All teachers know the powerful effect of leaving the classroom. When we are given an opportunity to ‘walk in the shoes’ of others, our learning can be insightful. If those shoes belong to an artist, the learning could be no less than transformative. The potential for learning across the curriculum to be enriched by compelling learning experiences, driven by creative thinking, has been much discussed over the last decade. Many schools have embraced the notion of placing creativity at the heart of learning – and have seen a positive impact on standards. Good practice in the arts and design classroom and the artist or designer’s studio has provided a vivid model of divergent thinking in action. The schools programme at Turner Contemporary takes diversity and specifically divergent thinking as the focus for learning. I recently worked with the Head of Learning, Karen Ekea to research and develop the schools programme to coincide with the opening of the new gallery.

The new Turner Contemporary Gallery opened in Margate in April. It is a light, magical space where thoughts can flow and shift with the turning tides and changing light. That learning has always been central to the organisation can be seen in their investment in the Clore Learning Studio – an impressive, inspiring space at the very heart of the building. At once innovative and inclusive, celebrating the unique site and history of Turner Contemporary, our aim was to create a programme for schools, with schools. Teachers, children and young people have been involved in all aspects of the research and development. At all stages our work was driven by a belief that when learners behave like artists they are more successful in everything that they do.

The concept of the ‘Navigator’ in place of the Gallery expert evolved

As on any good ship, navigation in the gallery uses two forms of ‘instruments’ – human and instrument. The human Navigators lead inquiry-based discussions of the artwork, which encourage reflection and co-learning. Their working practice has been shaped through trials with teachers, students and gallery staff, led by Ayisha de Lanerolle of The Conversation Agency. The navigational ‘instruments’ are an artist-made handling collection. Inspired by the Gallery, its site and history, Arts partnership Hedsor objectdialoguebox.com have made a number of objects housed in a custom-made casing in the form of a navigational box. The objects are a perplexing blend of familiar and unfamiliar objects, making the ordinary extraordinary. They defy classification, opening up engagement with the artwork through creative questioning. When we handle one of the objects from a box, we have the freedom to follow the associations and questions that they provoke, unique to each person. Taking these thought processes and extending them to explore chosen artworks is genuinely liberating.

The concept of the Navigator in place of the Gallery expert evolved – a way of working with schools that is inspired by the curiosity of artists and offers a unique approach to learning in a gallery. Bringing together hands-on exploration with a philosophical structure, teachers and pupils learn together to develop creative questioning and thinking, building confidence and communication skills. Confidence, and the lack of it, emerged as a key issue for many of the teachers and pupils that we worked with. For some, there was an anxiety that comes with engaging with art – particularly where the work is perceived to be unfamiliar, difficult and challenging. We all agreed that the difficult places are where the learning really begins; we needed structures that would increase ownership and reduce apprehension.

The concept of the Navigator in place of the Gallery expert evolved – a way of using old knowledge to build personal learning journeys through the artworks. Adults, children, experts, novices learn together in the same way. Navigation is democratic – the starting point of reception child as they stand in front of a piece of art is as important as that of the curator.

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The concept of the Navigator in place of the Gallery expert evolved – a way of working with schools that is inspired by the curiosity of artists and offers a unique approach to learning in a gallery. Bringing together hands-on exploration with a philosophical structure, teachers and pupils learn together to develop creative questioning and thinking, building confidence and communication skills. Confidence, and the lack of it, emerged as a key issue for many of the teachers and pupils that we worked with. For some, there was an anxiety that comes with engaging with art – particularly where the work is perceived to be unfamiliar, difficult and challenging. We all agreed that the difficult places are where the learning really begins; we needed structures that would increase ownership and reduce apprehension.

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Perhaps the word that first comes to mind in thinking about Magdalene Odundo’s art is ‘poise’. Her terracotta vessels achieve the rare effect of being both profoundly grounded and light on their feet. If these works are ‘weighty’ then it is through a metaphorical significance: the markers of ancient time, the sensing of Africa, and of deep cultural inheritance. Sometimes bulbous, with wide necks and a curvaceous line; sometimes tall and statuesque, vessels that are markers for tradition. This is a slowly accumulated body of work (each clay piece many months in the making) at once severe in the chosen limitations of form and exultant in the possibilities of material: the burnished terracotta clay that is her hallmark.

And yet if Odundo is world-renowned for her epic and sculptural ceramic forms, she is also inquisitive and experimental. Drawing and (most recently) printmaking, blown glass, metalwork, photography and temporary installations direct on the gallery wall, all of these have been outcomes of her practice and they play an increasingly important part in enriching it: keeping the artist on her toes.

These artistic processes are a personal investment in stretching her ways of seeing, mark-making and completing work. But they are also the techniques of the experienced teacher and remind us that Odundo’s place in the University studio is a significant one. Her formal role as a University practice-led researcher and teacher supports the student experience but it also helps her own. Magdalene Odundo has worked at the University for the Creative Arts since 1997 (appointed Professor of Ceramics since 2001) with a three-year spell as Education Officer at the Commonwealth Institute in the 1970s. She has been based at the Crafts Study Centre since 2011.

‘She likes “the comradeship of teaching”. In this holistic way, Odundo finds the dialogue of multiple practices a key stimulus to her own settled vocabulary of ceramic form’

Here, in the University Museum of Modern Craft, Odundo finds the surrounding environment of the specialist museum and archive an added stimulus to her own research. There is a body of evidence in clay in her very workplace.

This integral connection with a specialist University that has grown out of an Art School enables her to challenge her students to think outside the box of their chosen material of clay. They must be artists first and potters second. She places a special emphasis on the ritual and necessity of drawing as a means of realising early or late ideas; and she is actively engaged in the warp and weft of dialogue with her professional practice colleagues. She likes ‘the comradeship of teaching’. In this holistic way, Odundo finds the dialogue of multiple practices a key stimulus to her own settled vocabulary of ceramic form. She says that drawing plays a very important part in my work... it is an aide memoire for thinking about practice that is equally significant for researchers as well as ceramic practitioners.

Odundo carries this conviction through regular collaborations at all levels of the education sector in both formal and informal settings with recent work and interest in Africa and Turkey. She also engages regularly with museums and specialist art centres. She undertook an important artist’s residency earlier in 2011 at the University of Ulster and at the time of writing was setting off to the Tacoma and Pilchuck Schools in America to work on a glass installation, the idea of which has already been located in the sketchbook.

A new series of lithographs from the residency in Northern Ireland has just been finished. They are bold in scale and execution. The intense and perfect edge of her ceramic work has gone. The line of these lithographs is gestural, marked down with a ferocious energy and the pull of bicep, untidy as well as forceful. It is as if a weight has transferred from her shoulders onto the page, marking each sheet with a tornado-drama of broad line. Out of these swirled black marks a female figure may be discerned: coiled and tense. This is work of an explosive motion about to happen, somehow akin to dance. Odundo remarks that: “observation,
drew and making are the route of choice for me’. This is a gradualist, reflective and interrogative approach. Her recent prints may be pacy; her ceramic work is in an older mode.

If based is an essential feature of other clay vessels, then so is the idea of ceremony. The works seem to be waiting. They are in the service of sound (for some have evocative, trump-like or joyous motion; some have asymmetric necks if so aid pouring). The works carry symbolic or human, some with carefully placed ‘vertebrae’ or spines. They are charged vessels, and vested in them are the notions and remembered rituals and landscapes of universal human experience.

Magdalene Odundo has spent a long and distinguished career as a practitioner, teacher and researcher. Her role at Farnham brought her back to her alma mater when she was taught by the highly-regarded potter in the Leach and ‘orientalist’ tradition, Henry Hammond (for whom I have much admiration).

‘It is through practice that you acquire knowledge’

who also loved to draw. The specialist since Art School setting has given Odundo her own roots in England. She regards ‘the experience of learning as a right for all’ and says that ‘it is through practice that you acquire knowledge’.

It is sometimes the mark of a master in art to realise that the journey of art can never stop. Magdalene Odundo’s ceramic work may be instantly recognisable. But her own journey to this symbolic watchfulness and the profound, light grace of her clay forms is also underpinned by a restless search for expression on paper, with metal or glass. In one of the sharpest and most discerning pieces of writing on Odundo’s work, Augustus Casely-Hayford says: ‘each pot is born unique; its finger-print-individual chemistry etched across its surface, its form mapped out as a negotiation between past and present; and the deep aesthetic coherence pulled from the wells of Odundo’s knowledge.” (Forms and Forces, 2006).

The Crafts Study Centre was founded as a charity in 1970 in order ‘to advance the education of the public in the artistic crafts’. It has done so since 2000 in a partnership with the University for the Creative Arts, and its remarkable collections and archives are exhibited alongside contemporary craft practice. It is the University Museum of Modern Craft. The current Chair of the Centre is the acclaimed writer and craft theorist Dr Glenn Adamson who has described Odundo as ‘Britain’s memory back for craft’.

www.csc.ucreative.ac.uk

The Society has the pleasure of announcing that Magdalene Odundo OBE has agreed to join the patrons of the NSCAD. On behalf of all our members we very much wish to welcome Magdalene Odundo in her new role as patron.

An invitation to be part of the 2012 celebrations

Face Britain is a 2012-inspired project that is being developed by The Prince’s Foundation for Children & the Arts, a charity founded by HRH The Prince of Wales, that champions the power of the arts to transform children’s lives.

Officially launched in September, Face Britain invites children and young people aged 4-16 years to create a self-portrait in any style they wish, for example a simple line drawing, painting, collage, graphics, 3-D, photomontage, cartoon or Pop Art. The project is open to everyone, regardless of drawing or learning ability. The aim is to provide a quiet platform to enable the nation’s children and teenagers to explore a significant part of the celebrations during the lead up to HM Queen’s Diamond Jubilee, The London Olympic and Paralympic Games. Jeremy Newton CEO of the charity says: ‘We are delighted that NSCAD is supporting Face Britain, and is mostly being drawn through schools and has been developed to work in the classroom with a wide range of online resource and study topics to support the primary and secondary curriculum. Links and images have been provided by The National Portrait Gallery and The National Archives.

The children’s self-portraits can be uploaded to an online gallery, brought to life by Photobox, until the end of March 2012, providing a unique snapshot of the 2012 generation. As an official Guinness World Records attempt, the portraits will be used as individual pixels to form a montage image of HM The Queen. This image will be displayed in April on the network of BBC Olympic Live Sites and digital screens nationwide, including major train stations and shopping malls. A head teachers’ mail-out, fronted by the author Michael Morpurgo, will be delivered in May to nearly 50,000 schools in the United Kingdom to enable schools to plan a term in advance of the September launch and the 2011/12 academic year.

The concept has been piloted in a small number of state schools, resulting in a diverse and inspiring range of self-portraiture styles and approaches. ‘When introducing the concept of Face Britain to students I produced a presentation to help them visualise the magnitude of the project,’ said Brimstead, secondary school art and design teacher says. ‘Like many art and design departments in schools, we introduce self-portraiture as a topic and we chose to introduce this project to Year 9 students. I deliberately decided not to start with drawing or experimenting with materials, I started with the subject matter. The students were asked to think about themselves and what makes them who they are. I encouraged this by debating discussions about their favourite things in life, their ambitions, role models and favourite places. The students loved this discussion not only did they share their opinions and interests with their peers, but they get to find out a lot more about others around them.

For further information and details on how to register to take part please visit facebritain.org.uk

Above: Neil Buchanan from CITV’s Art Attack and Daniel Roche from BBC TV’s Outnumbered join children and teenagers for the launch of Face Britain. Photo: James McCormick courtesy of Getty Images
As an Art and Design PGCE student at Goldsmiths University, you are pushed to question the principles by which teaching and learning are constructed and delivered to students in schools today. The artist teachers that we had become were asked at the end of the course to create an artwork in response to the question, What is Art and Design Pedagogy? We were not of course, given a formula for success in spite of the fact that there was still a set of criteria that we had to meet. Therefore, it felt pertinent to me to explore the notion of how we assess that we had become were asked at the end of the learning are constructed and delivered to students as creative beings in light of predetermined criteria.

My performance in response to What is Art and Design Pedagogy?* used a number of symbolic references to contest the status quo of institutional authority and its motives. I asked my peers to answer the question of the exhibition title, in silence. using a piece of toast and a tin of Alphabetii Spaghetti in an exam environment that was strongly reminiscent of institution. Each student sat at desks with identical components as if on a factory production line. The surmises of the system was subverted by symbolic juxtapositions - the typographical weight of the Alphabetii Spaghetti against its sugar-coated veneer lacked substance and nutrition and questioned the authority of canonical ranks of knowledge; traces of past authors' self-expression was evident in graffiti scrawled over examination desks but through its subtext, remained ignored; the grided seating plan represented the control of a subject which has at its very core a need to communicate; the students fidgeted and itched to talk, move and be independent. The chaos that ensued resulted in numerous responses, from protestations ending in food being splattered on the floor, to written work and sculptural pieces; a testimony to the power of art to challenge paradigms and find a voice in unfavourable circumstances.

The audience was also asked to remain silent until the exam was finished, when they were invited to engage in a debate in order to grade the results from a level 1 to "exceptional performance." Comments ranged from the derisory to the celebrated. For example, one outcome was criticised for being 'immature'; whilst someone else lauded the same piece for its Oldenburg-esque status. The obscure rationale for the marking of work and the various subjectivities of the audience members added to the absurdity and farce of the process.

So how does this relate to schools in reality? Although the National Curriculum is full of positive buzzwords and phrases, it is often undermined by opposing forces elsewhere. From my PGCE experience, it often appeared that when it came to examinations, the majority of students were not being challenged or asked to push boundaries. Teachers can feel compelled to play safe and toe the line so as not to fall foul of dreaded league tables and ranking job losses. Intense pressure to conform inhibits teachers from creating personalised learning environments that encourage risk-taking and critical thought, instead opting for a sick box culture where much is taught but little is learnt.

University education plays a major role in informing teachers of those blocks to progress, but if we are aware of them, we can change them. Successful models exist where critical frameworks are embraced and pupils are free to explore new concepts that are relevant to them such as Room 3, a set of studios run for and by students, artist residency initiatives in schools that bring contemporary issues into the classroom and schools like Welling School that embrace the contemporary through projects such as the Alternative Turner Prize (a). Teachers should be encouraged that successful models of progressive education exist and strive to implement their own examples in spite of governmental barriers.

Ben Frimet is now teaching in Valley Park school in Middlesbrough.

*Email bfrimet@gmail.com

Farce, frameworks and formulas: Ben Frimet questions how we assess students’ creativity
Storytelling plays a central role within all societies, communicating personal, social and cultural narratives and expressing our beliefs and values. Mythological studies like Campbell’s The Hero with a Thousand Faces reveal the universality of storytelling, from the creation of family myths and customs to grand narratives of citizenship, community and personal development. Vibrant performances featuring luminous characters such as Spider Ananse explored powerful themes humans’ relationship with nature, the animal kingdom, justice and loyalty, individuals’ contribution to society (Fig 4). The second-year students also experienced art and design, music, dance and drama workshops led by Iroko Company and PGCE trainees, responding strongly to the performance’s imagery and meanings (Fig 5).

Iroko’s residency was followed by a fortnight’s intensive art and design focus with the schools. Global themes were further addressed across the humanities curriculum. Workshops led by PGCE art and design trainees at Key Stage 3 and post-16 students, explored African narratives through art. Students across the spectrum of abilities and needs, including gifted and talented, GCSE, post-16 and students on the autistic spectrum, extended their knowledge of African performance and visual traditions, studying Ethiopian and West African artifacts, investigating imagery and cultural context (Fig 6). Students selected a focus for further development from the range of cultural narrative traditions featured, initially investigating imagery and used through individual printmaking and textiles alongside researching the diversity of African cultural backgrounds. Students’ depicted images from Iroko’s stories or from traditions such as Ethiopian Coptic culture, experimental with visual elements like comparative patterns were inspired by performance costumes and masks. Key Stage 3, and post-16 students’ two dimensional work was developed into a collaborative Life Stories sculpture trail at BSU facilitated by PGCE trainees. In ‘Stories of Africa’ Year 9 (age 13-14) gifted and talented students linked textual prints together creating a montage of diverse African cultural imagery across the project’s resources (Fig 7). Post-16 students worked with PGCE trainees producing suspended masks inspired by Ethiopian tribal and West African cultures (Fig 9), while KS4’s ‘Mighty Shield’ referenced Iroko’s animal and hunting tales (Fig 9).

Life Stories’ key learning focus was to enrich students’ cultural, critical and practical knowledge of the diversity of African arts traditions through extending awareness of its stories and imagery. In his evaluation a Key Stage 3 student remarked: ‘African culture is so much more interesting than I imagined – I now know the meaning of their art and stories.’ This project also provided CPD for both trainee teachers and staff working alongside students in participating schools, and a teacher commented: ‘Being involved in this workshop raised my awareness of the importance of developing children’s understanding of different cultures and how it promotes tolerance and acceptance of others.’ Life Stories subscribes to the Department for International Development’s Global Schools Partnership philosophy that the global dimension within education motivates young people’s commitment to a fairer, more sustainable world, encouraging their understanding of people’s and cultures and improving their practical and knowledge, working relations between students and teachers. They should always be fun. At their best, they kindle in students enthusiasm for art which will enrich their lives. Here are reports from a few of the trips supported last year: The ‘Young Artists in Tuscany’ course takes 6th Formers from a range of Cheshire schools and colleges to Tuscany. The students visited Siena, Florence and Arezzo, painted the Italian landscapes, ate, kept personal journals. All were bowled over by seeing great art: ‘Having the opportunity to see some of the most famous and renowned paintings in the world was overwhelming.’ ‘I instantly understood why the work of the artists is so loved, but no less important aspect of school trips when they reported ‘better friendships with classmates’.

In July the Eridge Trust announced its grants for 2011-12, supporting school trips to museums, galleries and centres of art at home and abroad. The scheme works with national and international schools and will benefit students in some 30 schools. The Trust’s grants encourage young people to enjoy and appreciate great works of art. They support day trips to a local art gallery, extended trips of a few days to museums or galleries in London, Edinburgh, or Manchester, trips of a week to Tuscany, Barcelona or Prague.

Sometimes they reduce costs for all, sometimes give special help to those who most need it.

School trips can be eye-opening. They give a boost to work back at school and promote good working relations between students and teachers. They should always be fun. At their best, they kindle in students enthusiasm for art which will enrich their lives. Here are reports from a few of the trips supported last year:

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If you would like to organise a trip for your students, but are worried about cost, apply to the Eridge Trust. Applications for trips or projects in the year beginning September 2012 can be made any time before the end of May 2012. See http://bit.ly/1qPjQO for more information on how to apply.
...Project (your own)

It has to be Rutland (1996). Is it depressing that I chose the first work I made? Not at all. It represents the embodiment of what greyworld is all about. It delights in the simple pleasures of running a stick along railings. Only in this instance, we have tuned them. So they play ‘The Girl from Ipanema’...Art website or blog

Homeland.co.uk. Keeps me up to date with all things geeky, and arty. Recent posts include In praise of the sci-fi corridor, Stephen Fry joins the...Film

Paul Shub, founding member of greyworld, shares his best...

Andrew Shoben

I distinctly remember the day when I realised that other kids at school did not have a father that played an Andrew’s going to school now’ song on the guitar, or sang an Andrew’s put his shoes on’ song. Sound has always been a major part of Shoben’s homelife.

I grew up in a house full of noise – my father was a musician in the film and everyone in the house needed to make some kind of noise to feel fully assimilated. Quality is not so important, much more that you get stuck in with whatever song we are singing along to or one that someone has rehearsed.

That ethos, I think, became a central part of greyworld’s work. Art shouldn’t only be for the intellectual, the educated. It should be for everyone, for people, and especially for those who have not made a conscious decision to go and find some art. Much of greyworld’s work has been created for those on the way to the supermarket or coming home from work. The sense of joy of making something happens.

Because of this background, much of greyworld’s early work was described as sound art – works like The Layer (1999) and Rutland (1996) were installations that allowed some kind of creative expression in urban space. As a child, we often delight in the simple pleasure of picking up a stick and running it along a set of railings, making a lovely ‘clack-clack-clack’ sound...Public Art

There’s a building in front of our studio, a huge blue hospital. At night, random lights are left on, and I’m convinced they are spelling out words in some unknown language. If I could only decipher them, I’d unlock the mystery. So far, no luck, but it’s keeping me occupied at night.

...Building

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...Artistic (1999) and...Museum

It has got to be the Victoria and Albert Museum. Ancient artifacts beside Raphael cartoons, design classics side by side in a hot pane. Almost...Public Art

I’m generally unhappy with public art – which public art is supposed to be? Not me. The inscription is often in Latin, and the work can’t be touched or played with...Teacher

I had a music teacher at school called Mr Harris. He was horrible. I said it was good for nothing and would be a street sweeper. Well, that certainly inspired me. I used that energy to drive myself forward, and make my work as accessible as possible.

...Building

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...Film

I probably haven’t seen the best film, but I have. The Girl from Ipanema. From the start, where they escape the city by making a balloon from women’s underwear to meeting The King and Queen of the Moon, it’s pure visual genius.

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Marilyn Kyle, Head of Faculty of Art and Design, at Caterham School explains

‘So how did we manage to set up an art gallery in a school?’

To gallery from classroom ago, we managed to move. The room remained unoccupied – but not for long. We decided to put up some boards, exhibited some work and declared it a gallery. By the end of the year we had removed the workbenches and had the walls painted white.

We initially exhibited students’ work and then put out a call to our students who had continued studying art and design. This became our first ‘internal’ show, and was met with much interest by the school community. By now we had an art-pupil working, voluntarily, as apart-time gallery admin. We invited some makers to sell craft work from a cabinet, giving a percentage of sales to divide between the gallery and school charity. We built on our already existing ‘Artists Workshop’ days and invited these artists to exhibit. So far we had called the space ‘The Gallery’, but now it felt it needed a name. Fortunately for us, a small trust fund exists, set up by an inspiring, 1950s, art teacher, the ‘Christine Walker Gallery’ came into being.

Moving into our second year, we invited Louise Pock and Bob Saich, partners of ‘Advanced Graphics London’ to show a selection of their artists’ prints. Their professional approach convinced our school bursar that the gallery needed upgrading! By the time the show opened we had newly boarded and painted walls, a renewed ceiling, lighting and tracks and spots. Our gallery administrator ran workshops. Bob Saich ran a screen printing workshop for sixth-formers and our students, clearly intrigued by the work, revisited the gallery during break-times. Students hosting the private view gave articulate and insightful exhibition tours as they spoke to visitors about the work. The following show was a GCSE mock exhibition! Pupils realised they were exhibiting in the same space as recognised artists, such as Albert Irvin, Craigie Aitchison and Anthony Frost.

Now in our third year, we have continued to show artist, designer and maker work as well as pupil exhibitions, including one by our junior school. The Faculty staff have also exhibited and catalogue have been designed by a sixth-form art students. We also held an ‘Educational Forum’, where exhibiting artists spoke about their work, education and practice.

It hasn’t all been plain sailing. Balancing the gallery and the school has not been straightforward. Gallery residencies in the school will be exhibiting, an exhibition of video artists is planned to support our A level photography course and film club. And dreams? To extend the space; provide a café, to encourage more and different visitors; and, most of all, more stuff! As we do what we put on art and design right at the heart of our school and local community.

‘Pupils realised they were exhibiting in the same space as recognised artists such as Albert Irvin, Craigie Aitchison and Anthony Frost’

‘The room remained unoccupied – but not for long. We decided to put up some boards, exhibited some work and declared it a gallery’

In just 10 images Karli, Elliott and Angus, students at The Hermitage School, Chesterle Street, County Durham, document their response to ‘What is Art?’

Our project was called ‘What is art?’ We were asked to reflect on this question in the context of contemporary art and come up with a response which addressed an issue and drew our ideas. We had looked at work by collaborative artist groups and pairs and also at performance art, and were inspired to go in this direction. We wanted our work to be creative and original. The theme we chose was to link colour, music and emotion.

1. We are a year 10 GCSE art group doing a project on contemporary art. We started with a think...

2. We decided to form a collaborative artist group called KARLOUSUS. Our expansive research led to a theme for the work – colour = music = emotion.

3. We planned a performance piece and as part of our research we entered into an email dialogue with artist Franko B (www.franko-b.com)

4. We wanted to create a new identity in a space of the art (just like Gillian Wearing)

5. After lots of discussion and planning our performance was set for 17 June, in front of a small invited audience in one of the art and design rooms.

6. Totally white and unable to move, the human figure lacked a ‘blank canvas’

7. But, we had a formula, an approach to our art creation – colour + music + emotion.

8. We began to add both music and colour

9. 20 minutes later we had created a new identity ‘A Soul on a Human Form’

10. At the end, we were able to evaluate our performance piece with the help of performance artist Suguna Laxmi Bhandari (left)

Teachers who supported the project were Rebecca Carr, Susan Colés and Anna Docherty

From classroom to gallery

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A Place in the Wood

‘David Nash: A Place in the Wood’ is both an artpack and book for schools. Susan Coles has reviewed the book and Eileen Adams the Artpack. They share in the delight of both

David Nash: A Place in the Wood

Artpack by Carolyn Davies and Lynne Bebb

It is refreshing to find a publication on art education for schools that deals with sculpture rather than painting and is about a living British artist (born in England, studio in Wales, works internationally). David Nash is the sculptor, and artist (born in England, studio in Wales, works rather than painting and is about a living British education for schools that deals with sculpture). Susan Coles

The teacher’s book is full of inspiration for art activities in the classroom and outdoors. Of particular interest are those that encourage children to explore nature, described as ‘Green Art’ – the Awe and Wonder Curriculum. This is informed by the philosophy of Forest School, which encourages children to learn from direct experience of natural settings. The art activities link with other areas of the curriculum, especially language and number. The photocards provide prompts for questions and discussion. So often, teachers find the thought of sculpture too daunting as an art activity, worried about sourcing materials and the fear of wet clay or cutting tools. However, they will be encouraged and reassured by the artpack and will find it very easy to use. Information, inspiration, ideas and activities are all there to prompt them and their pupils to work in 3D. Learning about the work of David Nash is a great introduction for children to contemporary art practice. As well as drawing, photographing and constructing, children will be involved sorting, matching and sequencing, or making dens or exploring the nature of natural materials and natural forces. The artpack shows that art is not only about techniques for using expressive media or about making things. It is about experience; it is about ideas; it is about making meaning.

Eileen Adams

The story of how the artist came to explore the woodlands in which he works, how he respects the wood and the trees and how he understands their life cycle. The book is also by Carolyn Davies and Lynne Bebb

When I was at school, my art teacher gave me my first art book, which was about Italian artists. I still have it and will always remember the thrill of turning the pages and seeing the images, many of which I have now travelled miles to see in the flesh. So, when I heard about the David Nash book, arrived in my post I had a similar feeling of excitement and an instant curiosity and urge to get in the car and go and see everything in the photographs! And, in years to come, I may even achieve this ambition. Firstly, I like the size of the book. 24cm x 17cm. It’s perfect for handling and the concise well designed pages, follow on from each other seamlessly. The images are extremely high quality and the work well and truly to life. You can almost smell the wood.

This book tells a story, economically and insistently. It explains what an artist is and how the artist becomes engaged with the immediacy of a natural material which can take in so many directions. This can be achieved by trusting the hand of David Nash and/or trusting the force of nature itself. There are so many different examples of the way that he works. His purposeful trajectory into the woods, through creating, the Ash Dome, with its living breathing space, is both moving and inspirational.

The story of how the artist came to explore the woods, and then find a space to match his size and shape in interesting and well documented in the lovely photos of his working space in the chapel which serves as a studio and a gallery. There are great little anecdotes, like the sculptor continuing to crouch and make noises and he constantly moving after being created in to shape and form. David’s working process is clearly explained, where the woods and how he works, how he respects the wood and the trees and how he understands their life cycle. The connection between man and nature is the main thread of this narrative. Seeing the drawings next to the sculptures in an added bonus. I love the two pages where his charcoal and pastel drawings are next to his sculpture. There is such energy and intensity in the drawing. The Family Tree also puts into perspective the way he plans and makes connections himself, or rather places use of pictograms to establish a pattern and a path of ideas.

The authors have been selective with the images and with the text. The descriptive words are clearly related to the art form and materials, words like ‘shattered slate’, ‘crumble and crumbs’ and ‘cracked and twisted wood’ draw pictures in the mind that complement the already explicit photographic images. The book itself is accessible to a wide audience and the book as part of the Artpack for teachers is engaging and useful to students of all abilities. In an increasingly digital world, more and more people are spending a lot of their free time indoors. Whilst there are many reasons for that it is important to have a balance in our lives, and enjoying outdoor space should be encouraged in both adults and children. The focus on outdoor spaces is therefore very important in this book. If you know the work of David Nash, you will enjoy seeing this delightful summary and if you are new to the artist, you will be drawn into finding out even more. It is indeed a narrative, a story, a must, a journey through an artist’s work, thoughts, rationale and legacy, and a celebration of art.

Susan M Coles www.artcrimes.org.uk

Art, Creativity, Educational Consultant, Vice President NSEAD

The Artpack David Nash: A Place in the Wood (includes the book), £15

ISBN: 9782884850975

The book is also by Carolyn Davies and Lynne Bebb


David Nash: A Place in the Wood (Book) £7.99

ISBN:9781848510982

Artpacks are available from NSEAD. Price £17 inclusive of p&p. www.nsead.org


The Brigstock Dragon

Sandy Etteridge and Jill Hedges on how a village school made a very large dragon

Brigstock Latham’s Primary is a small rural school with big ambitions. Set in the heart of Northamptonshire, it has strong links with the church and its local community.

Our project came about with the awareness that we could be making more creative and practical use of the spaces around us. At the time we had planned a cross-curricular unit of work entitled ‘Dragons’ and this provided the inspiration for our huge sculpture and the idea that it could be the centrepiece of a sculpture garden.

‘To involve as many children as possible we used a cross-phase organisation and worked on the project on four consecutive Friday mornings towards the end of the summer term. We talked about the idea of a sculpture garden with the children and discussed the materials available to us. Each group worked on a different stage of the large project, giving all the children a chance to experience working with the exciting, but very large project, giving all the children a chance to work collaboratively.’

‘They have learnt that art can evolve over time and ambitious outcomes can be achieved by working collaboratively.’

The next stage of the project was to add texture. Here we recycled old plastic toys, computer parts, and bottle tops and these have made our dragon quite unique. His tail is a work of art in itself, with every child having set in an old plastic toy. With a coating of outdoor adhesives great over the entire dragon we now have a sculpture that is not only great to look at but is also strong enough to climb and sit on. Courtney, who is seven, said ‘I never thought I would come to school and see a dragon in the garden.’

We feel the children have benefited on so many levels from modelling on this scale. They have learnt that art can evolve over time and ambitious outcomes can be achieved by working collaboratively. They have also seen how exciting it can be to experiment with a range of modelling materials. Now that the dragon is painted he has a distinctive personality, and the children have such strong ownership of the sculptures they have brought to life.

‘Tim Lewis, our head teacher, said ‘I don’t think anybody expected the dragon to be as striking or as imposing as it is. It has provided, and will continue to provide, some fabulously creative learning experiences for all our children’.

‘...our dragon was born! It looks like a real dragon said Sophie, aged nine...’

‘...and this provided the inspiration for our huge sculpture and the idea that it could be the centrepiece of a sculpture garden.

Our project came about with the awareness that we could be making more creative and practical use of the spaces around us’

Whilst the sculpture was valuable as an art and design project in its own right, we also felt that the dragon, and the sculpture garden itself, will provide creative inspiration across all curriculum areas. It has been an ambitious project combining so many skills, and we hope it leads to many more exciting developments for our outdoor grounds in the future.

Jill Hedges is a teaching assistant at Brigstock Primary School working with children across key stage 1 and 5-10, Sandy Etteridge is a year 2 teacher there.

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How to...  

...make a fantasy space island in clay, with real growing foliage!

In this regular feature John Bowden describes an activity – the direction you take it will depend on you and describes an activity – the direction you take it will depend on you and describes an activity – the direction you take it will depend on you and describes an activity – the direction you take it will depend on you and describes an activity – the direction you take it will depend on you.

The notion that clay is primarily for making small craft artifacts that harden when fired in a kiln, can constrain its use as a versatile and exciting large scale modelling medium with groups of young children. As a stimulus for a non-firing imaginative project, discuss with them what might be found on a fantasy island on a distant planet, encountered by a marooned ‘space shipwrecked’ explorer. Then provide two or three bags of clay loosely laid out on a large board.

Ask one group to make the basis for the futuristic landscape boat it onto interesting shapes with wooden battens or rolling pins; this will produce an interesting landscape, where they want to locate and grow inhabitants to be added to the island (fig 2).

This in itself will produce an interesting outcome, but the most exciting part for pupils is yet to come. Add to the experience by distributing cross and mustard seeds which they can impress lightly into parts of the clay landscape, where they want to locate and grow ‘space jungles’ (fig 3-4). Within a few days the seeds will start to sprout out of the clay (fig 5) and in less than a week the island will be covered with lush forests of cress that, which seen from above, will explode with disastrous results.

Don’ts
• Locate the island where your pupils can pick at it – clay is such a seductive medium its moist state that the temptation to touch will be impossible to resist in the time needed for the seeds to fully germinate and grow
• Attempt to fire this if you have a kiln, however large its chamber; damp and solid lumps of clay will explode with disastrous results.

A parent has offered to run an art club after school. She is a local landscape painter much admired by others in the village. I feel a little uneasy about this: is there anything I should bear in mind before accepting?

Parents helping out in classrooms are an important part of the establishment of any community school but this is a little different. There are several issues that need considering here, given that the parent will, I presume, be running this club in your absence, apart from the obvious need for a CRB check.

Who will be allowed to attend? Is it an open offer to all pupils who are interested or just those, as so often happens, deemed the Gifted and Talented? If it is to be the latter, how are they to be identified?

In this respect you might refer to my comments in the last AD magazine. What materials are needed and how will they be managed? Organisation and the distribution of materials and display of work in line with school policy or best practice are important. There is also the question of the numbers of pupils that can be dealt with and the problems that might be faced if all age ranges are to be accommodated.

The projects planned for the art club are of equal importance. Though the parent is a landscape painter and certainly will be well meaning in making this generous offer, unless primary trained they may not adopt a teaching strategy which encourages diverse outcomes, because of a perceived need to produce a ‘slick’ outcome.

Why not invite this parent into one of your sessions where you are teaching an art and design activity as a way of demonstrating good practice and then initially start the art club with her as a joint initiative, so that you can retain some control over what takes place?

Q
Your Questions Answered

One of the main points arising from recent research into the role of the primary Art Subject Leader is 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 need advice on 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 johnxb@artinset.com – selected questions will be answered here (though your name and school will not be featured), but all queries will get an email response. Alternatively join NSKA’s network for Primary Subject Leaders on Facebook.

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In a small school/where staff are required to take on more than subject responsibility with the exception being literacy and numeracy of course! I have been the art and design subject leader for some time but have now been asked to cover another Foundation subject. Whichever would you advise me to go for?

Why not Design and Technology? Both subjects have a common concern for design in their title. In the primary school each is likely to be integrated with wider activities and only occasionally taught separately anyway. At times in D&T the ‘making’ is taught well but exploration and discovery learning approaches can be sacrificed in the pursuit of producing a standardised end product; all the outcomes look similar. With your art background you could ensure that the ‘designing’ which should precede the materials and technology aspects is opened ended and individualised. Indeed practical problem-solving activities with materials, where the designing and making are integrated, can also be fostered. And if any readers have engaged in design activities with pupils that meet these criteria, do please share them with readers of AD.

If you have a question about your art club or design practice, email me at johnbowden@btinternet.com. All queries will receive a reply but only some will feature anonymously of course on this page. John Bowden.
Lesley Butterworth, NSEAD General Secretary Designate, looks ahead

I am delighted and privileged to be following Dr John Stevens as General Secretary of NSEAD, an organisation that has been sustaining my own professional practice for twenty five years, and I am very aware that as I come into post we are facing massive challenges for both art, craft and design education and the artistic, creative and cultural life of the UK.

Our Society, representing one strong, united voice for art, craft and design education across the United Kingdom is the means by which we take on these challenges and ensure that our subject is given the value it deserves, our teachers are given the authority and resources that they need, and our young people continue to access the very best of art, craft and design education.

I will bring a priority to the post. Our membership brings us independence which we must cherish, and factor back to our society as soon as possible by calling 01225 810134 or email info@nsead.org or calling NSEAD 01225810134. Please note: If as an existing member of the Society you regard receiving a print copy of the journal as absolutely essential please notify the journal as absolutely essential please notify the

Mr B. Laurette spends his lunchtime attempting to develop a combined project in Art, Music, P.E. And Design Technology!

Graham Jervis

Mr Jervis

For 30 years, the International Journal of Art & Design Education (iJADE) has provided an important forum for the dissemination of ideas, practical developments, and research findings in art and design education internationally.

The journal is an integral part of your NSEAD membership and from 2012 you will receive the essential peer-reviewed content three times per year online.

At a time when the Coalition’s cuts have impacted on our work, online provision of iJADE will allow NSEAD to reinvest any savings in services and resources which promote the interests of art, craft and design education. The move to publishing online follows similar moves by other professional journals and periodicals and will align our goals with those to be more environmentally responsible.

You will benefit from:

- The same high-quality articles and dynamic visual design that you have come to expect of the only art and design education journal recognised with prestigious Impact Factor ranking.
- Full access to all issues back to volume one – thirty years’ worth of content accessible anywhere, anytime through the members area of the NSEAD website at www.nsead.org
- Sophisticated search functionality to help you find articles relevant to your research or classroom practice
- The option to sign up for emailed New Content Alerts that drop into your inbox each time a new issue is available.

This also allows full access to all the back issues of the journal as absolutely essential please notify.

If the answer is NO please email sophieeach@nsead.org If they are primary-related, to John Bowden john.bowden@btinternet.com

NSEAD Elections 2011

Call for Nominations for President Elect and Members of Council

President Elect

John Childs, who served as President of the Society in 2009-2010, currently serves as Immediate Past President on Council and the Finance and General Purpose Committee. His tenures end on 31 December 2011. Consequently nominations are sought for a member to serve as President Elect from January 2012 President 2013-2014 and Immediate Past President 2015. Individuals nominated to serve as President of the Society will normally be serving members of Council, or have recently completed a term as a member of Council.

Council Membership

There are three vacancies arising for members of the NSEAD Council to serve for the period 2012-2014. Candidates seeking election to the Council must be paid-up Full Members, Associate Members or Honorary Members resident in the United Kingdom or Northern Ireland. Council normally meets on a Saturday three times each year.

Eligible members are encouraged to apply for any of those posts using an application form available on request, by emailing info@nsead.org or calling NSEAD 01225810134.

The deadline for the receipt of nominations is 12 noon on Friday 18 November 2011.

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Society as soon as possible please notify the

iJADE for the iPad age

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Memo from the Office

- Are you receiving our fortnightly e-update? If the answer is NO please email annepollard@nsead.org and you will be added to the database.
- It’s that time of year again… subscription renewal, if you haven’t paid yet please either send a cheque or pay online at www.nsead.org/home/payment.aspx quoting ‘Membership Renewal’ as the reason for payment.
- If you know someone who would like to subscribe to AD Magazine please forward them this link: http://bit.ly/JWQjd This also allows full access to all the resources on the NSEAD website.

Please send article submissions to johnxbowden@btinternet.com or if they are primary-related, to John Bowden john.bowden@btinternet.com

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Dr John Steers, General Secretary