# AD


**THE COMMUNITY AND MAKING ISSUE**

THE ARTFUL NATURE OF GRANBY FOUR STREETS

**KATIE PATERSON: POSTER AND INTERVIEW**

THINKING IS SCULPTURE

The National Society
for Education in Art
and Design magazine
**Autumn 2019, Issue 26**
£7.00 (members)

nsead

# Editorial

In 2015, Assemble won the Turner Prize and catapulted a small street in Liverpool, run by a super-strong community and land trust (CLT), into the international art limelight. There in an instant, we learned how Granby Four Streets CLT had succeeded where previous local authority 'regeneration' plans had failed. Indeed, previous plans had failed the entire local whole community and a generation of residents. With help from Assemble, a then small collective of artists and architects, the residents' own plans were ably converted into reality. In a second phase of building work completed this year, Assemble, again working with residents, helped to rebuild a derelict terraced house and create the Granby Winter Garden (p. 07).

And so, in a process that has involved planting, painting and rebuilding, powered by the community's resilience and creativity, a creative green space has been made by and for the community to meet and plan, repair and build. Dr Claire Penketh's feature, *The making of the Community* eloquently explores how a mix of people, spaces, making and art, when fused together with belief and vision, ensured not only the survival of this Liverpool community, but a flourishing and powerful community. This issue of *AD* pays tribute to a wide range of people and projects where communities make art and art makes communities.

This issue also includes an interview with the artist and collaborator Katie Paterson. She talks with Dr Peter Gregory and shares many of her influences, from her education and beyond. The cover of this issue is indeed graced with an image of a certificate from her *Future Library 20142114*. Over the next 100 years this project will see the planting of a 1000 trees, and the writings of a 100 authors. Future communities will be all the better for her collaborations and the library of the future.

Finally, and as always, thank you to everyone writing for or now reading this issue. Both your expertise and support of NSEAD, helps us to remain an independent national and increasingly international art, craft and design professional body and community. Here's to you, our subject and all the diverse communities in which you work.

**Sophie Leach**, Editor, *AD*
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Cover image
Katie Paterson, Future Library certificates, 2015. Photo © John McKenzie

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## Regulars



## Features



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# In conversation with Katie Paterson

***Katie Paterson** is an internationally renowned artist whose practice involves working across a wide range of disciplines. Her collaborations involve geologists, astrophysicists and, more recently, authors of fiction. Following her exhibition at Turner Contemporary, Katie met **Dr Peter Gregory**, immediate past-president of NSEAD, to discuss her academic and artistic journey, as well as her influences, challenges and inspirations*

**Dr Peter Gregory (PG): Could you tell me something about your background and what drew you into the world of creating art?**

**Katie Paterson (KP):** I was born in Glasgow and studied at Edinburgh College of Art. Back then the degree subject I did was called 'Tapestry' – it's since changed to 'Intermedia' which is a bit closer to what we were really doing. I studied for my master's degree at the Slade (part of University College London) before going to Iceland for a year. A lot of my inspiration came from that experience – being around volcanic landscapes, glaciers and so on.

**PG: So, something happened in your artistic journey that was influenced by scientific thinking?**

**KP:** A few things happened. The first was the relationship I experienced with the landscape in Iceland, and that's when I became interested in the geology. Whilst at the Slade I was interested in glaciers and one day wandered into the Rock and Ice Physics Laboratory. I discovered they were storing large sections of glaciers and I was sometimes able to use their larger freezers for my own experiments. That was one of those important aspects which helped my thinking. I grew in confidence to approach people in other fields and found I was welcomed. Since then that's developed into working with astrophysicists (also at UCL), as well as scientists at Cambridge. Over the years these opportunities grew into stronger relationships with scientists all over the world, including, more recently, at NASA.

**PG: So, would you say that there are distinctions between art and other fields and disciplines?**

**KP:** For me the old dividing lines have gone. I began exploring art at a time when the distinctions were already blurred, but now they are even more so. That's something that's been happening in recent years, and is the reason why the name 'Tapestry' needed to be changed as it needed to better reflect what students were doing. Of course, some people still work within clearly defined fields – crafts, painting and so on – but I've worked across them and not been bound by techniques. For me I've been happy to explore the opportunities for learning and collaboration, for instance with scientists and experts, as they've helped me to access knowledge from other areas.

> 'For me the old dividing lines have gone. I began exploring art at a time when the distinctions were already blurred, but now they are even more so'

**PG: If we were just meeting away from your artwork, and I asked you to tell me about your artwork, what would you say?**

**KP:** That's an interesting question, which I get asked quite a lot! I've moved back to Scotland recently and folk have asked me what kind of art do I do, i.e., make sculptures or paint, and I have to say 'well sort of, but no...' I then describe a few of the artworks that I've made, because it's a bit difficult to summarise exactly what I do. For instance, I often describe a lightning project where I made the lamps of a pier in a seaside town flicker every time lightning struck the earth (*Streetlight Storm*), or my art about the map showing the death of the stars in the universe (*All the Dead Stars*). I think that helps to show it's a wide-open field. People grasp the point and then say: 'Ok, so you make things and you make things happen'.

**PG: What about young people of school age? How readily do they understand your work?**

**KP:** When I talk to young people in school I usually do it in the same way as I would with older audiences. I describe some of the projects and the processes involved. I think if I was as at that point myself I'd be interested in how it all works. I try to 'say it as it is' to any age group really. What I find really exciting is that I've talked to some classes in primary schools too and I find the children are unbelievably receptive to ideas, and are willing to ask crazy questions about all manner of things in ways in which older folk, or even teenagers, might be too reserved to ask about. For older pupils in high school I think it's important for them to hear about the realities – in life, in school, after school, in art school and after that. For me it was a great mystery actually; there was such a jump from one stage to another. I think nowadays there's more of a blend between school and art school. It seems as though there's more of a creative journey which is acknowledged and celebrated.

**PG: Do you think that there have been changes in the ways that some children are allowed to develop their thinking?**

**KP:** Yes, although I've not experienced a great deal of this. I've now got a young son myself and it's interesting to see what children and young people do in school, from visits to galleries and using the Internet. I think they're helped to see so much more than I was when I was at school. My own access was through galleries and museums (there wasn't the Internet then!) but these visits then were a really a big thing. Nowadays children seem more aware of what's going on. I love the fact that primary kids from my village are taken to museums of modern art and are living around contemporary art a lot more. It opens their horizons and increases their sense of what might be possible. ▶

**Above** *Campo del Cielo, Field of the Sky,* 2012. Photo © Giorgia Polizzi, 2012. Commissioned by the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, London

**Below** Katie Paterson, *Fossil, Necklace,* 2013. Photo © MJC



**Top** *First There is a Mountain,* 2019. Image © Katie Paterson

**Above** *First There is a Mountain,* 2019. Image © Rosie Lonsdale

*First There is a Mountain* is supported by the National Lottery through Creative Scotland and Arts Council England


**PG: That's so interesting. I just heard you describe the ways that you see children respond with exactly the same enthusiasm that you talk about your own curiosity.**

**KP:** Yes! I think that's it! I love it when young children constantly question everything and they're like sponges taking in the world – I find it exciting. Children take things apart and they look at the relationship between colours, space and distance in a different way to adults. I think it's so important to develop curiosity. I know that some schools have developed amazing facilities and opportunities, but I appreciate that these might not represent all schools.

**PG: Sadly the picture that emerged from the last NSEAD survey was a very mixed one, between the nations of the UK, as well as between independent and state schools.**

**KP**: That's such a shame. I went to a regular state school in Glasgow and I think I was lucky in that I had great art teachers. We didn't have anything like talks from artists and looking back, modern art was something from over a hundred years ago. We had no idea really what contemporary artists were doing.

**PG: How did your own teachers influence you?**

**KP:** I was quite lucky. I had three different art teachers at high school, who all had an influence on me. I can only recall their surnames now – Mrs Patterson, Mr Burns and Mr Thorburn. I've lost contact with them so I don't know if they're now retired. I think it must be difficult for art teachers who are restricted by the curriculum, but I do remember that my own teachers allowed me to develop creatively. In the latter stages of school I managed to drop other subjects and just study art. My teachers gave me a large cupboard space and let me work there by myself. It was like a little studio where I could work with a range of interesting materials, from photocopying and plaster to wire and all sorts. They understood and supported my creative exploration as I travelled that route. I loved art, it was my passion and they supported that.

I then met some super teachers at art school. My master's degree also gave me new avenues of creativity and that was a special thing for me. There were several visiting tutors and I'd get to speak to people from very different fields, practices and opinions.

**PG: You seem to be talking about your academic journey in the same way as your artistic one.**

**KP:** Um... Yes! It should be the same, I suppose. There are aspects of the academic route that I've managed to separate in my mind – like the dissertation! I'm dyslexic and I had a mixed experience when it came to writing. I took a year out of art school as I was struggling so much with it. These days I'm lucky that I get to choose what I write and how long it has to be. Other than that, I would hope it's the same thing really, from studying to working to creating – just with a different set of people, groups and processes.

**PG: Do you mind talking about your dyslexia?**

**KP:** No, no. I think there's been a sea change in understanding dyslexia since I was a student and now it's recognised so much earlier. It affects a lot of people and especially in the arts. When I was studying I had no clue I was dyslexic, and neither did my family. I didn't find out until my fourth year at university after I'd struggled up till then. I'd like students today to know that dyslexia shouldn't be a hurdle. I mean, it has and it hasn't been for me. Before I found out I struggled through. Just about everything to do with language was difficult for me because I just didn't understand it. I found ways to work around it, memorised things and found methods to hide it or overcome it. Ever since I found out things are much easier and I got support. I would really urge students if they have an inkling that they struggle with language that they speak to someone to find out. There's support available. I would spend months and months writing something, instead of making the artwork, which is ▶

**Top left** *Campo del Cielo, Field of the Sky*, 2014. Photo © ESA, 2014

**Above** *A place that exists only in moonlight: Katie Paterson & JMW Turner.* Exhibition view Turner Contemporary, 2019 Photo © Stephen White

**Above** Katie Paterson, *Totality*, 2016, Photo © Flora Bartlett 2016. Installation view Somerset House. Courtesy of the Arts Council Collection

'I love it when young children constantly question everything and they're like sponges taking in the world – I find it exciting'

**Top right and right** Katie Paterson, *Totality*, 2016. Photo © Manu Palomeque. Exhibition view Turner Contemporary, 2019


what I should've been doing. But it hasn't held anything back since then; in fact, it's freed me to do what I do best, which is not writing but making artwork!

**PG: Thank you for your openness. Let me ask you now about your exhibition at Turner Contemporary, 'A place that exists only in moonlight: Katie Paterson & JMW Turner'.**

**KP:** We spent a long time working on the layout of the exhibition with 3D models and so on. One of the considerations was light, because of the paintings by JMW Turner being shown alongside my work. For example, direct light can't shine on them so we had to plan with quite a number of practicalities, so I'm really pleased with the way it worked out. For me the exhibition in three rooms represented a journey where you didn't really know what to expect. The final room, which I think was my favourite, was the one with Turner's watercolour paintings and the rotating mirror ball (*Totality*) reflecting 10,000 images of solar eclipses around the walls, and a piano playing the parts of Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata reflected back from the lunar surface. In that final space it's quite dark and you have the lights reflecting everywhere; the overall effect reminds us of the moon in many ways.

**PG: I saw a class of school pupils sitting on the floor in that room. An adult led a workshop about changing the colours of the projected light on the mirror ball – this generated many excited questions.**

**KP:** Oh wow! That's the kind of interaction I miss. I create the work, install it and at that time I'm so close to everyone at the gallery, but then I leave. What's nice is that at Turner Contemporary the artists spend an afternoon with everyone who works at the museum – and that's a lot of people – and we give a tour to everybody. They all receive the same information from the artist and then that can be communicated to the public. But it's impossible hear all the stories about what happens afterwards. It's lovely to learn about the workshop.

**PG: So, what are you working on next?**

**KP:** The Future Library handover is next - that's my project growing trees for the next hundred years, which will be used to manufacture a new library of books written by different authors in that time. We'll all take a walk through the specially planted forest in Norway, with this year's author Han Kang, so I'm now preparing for that. The other artwork is the sand pail project called *First There is a Mountain*, which involves a set of bucket and spades. The pails are in the shape of five mountains (from Uluru to Kilimanjaro) and they're touring to 25 venues. Using the sets of these mountains, people will build ranges of these mountains around the UK coastline. This website *firstthereisamountain.com* shows its schedule. ■

**Top left** Katie Paterson, Future Library certificates, 2015. Photo © John McKenzie

**Above** Katie Paterson, Future Library, 2014–2114. Photo © Katie Paterson

**Left** Katie Paterson and Margaret Attwood. Future Library Handover Day, 2015 Photo © Bjørvika Utvikling by Kristin von Hirsch

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# The making of the community

*In an area of Toxteth where a significant number of terraced streets had been scheduled for demolition, Granby Four Streets Community Land Trust was set up by the community to rebuild homes and in turn to rebuild a neighbourhood, where people could 'live, work and play'. Using art, green space and making, the area has thrived and prospered.* ***Dr Claire Penketh****, associate professor and head of disability and education at Liverpool Hope University, explains*

**The foundation stone for Liverpool Cathedral was laid in 1904, signalling a commitment to an ambitious architectural project that was to last 74 years. Around this time, and less than a mile away, Toxteth was also being redeveloped, with terraced housing replacing the uninhabitable housing built in the former century. Yet, by the time the cathedral was completed in 1978, Toxteth had shifted from a thriving, multicultural community to a place in decline, marked by economic hardship and rising unemployment. By the mid 2000s many families were moved out of the area and empty streets were marked down for demolition. Granby Street was one of them.**

Some places are valued and protected, while others are allowed to disappear. The question of who gets to decide which of these places flourish and which are allowed to fail is a significant one. Some places are protected and encouraged to retain strong links to their past, whilst others lose their collective memory through each phase of redevelopment – architects of amnesia continuously work with a 'clean sheet'.

This was not the story of Granby Street and its surrounding area, however. This and neighbouring streets of terraced housing have become the focus of a regeneration project, known as Granby Four Streets, a community land trust for affordable housing and shared ownership in Toxteth. The project has been well reported in the national media ever since Assemble, a group of architects associated with the ▶


**Right** Cairns Street

project, were announced as winners of the 2015 Turner prize. However, this formal and prestigious recognition underlines only one aspect of the ways in which art is implicated in the social, political and environmental regeneration. By the mid-2000s the area was in serious decline – despite a significant number of houses standing empty the community did not disappear. People stayed, making artful signs for their houses to show they were still there and this was their home. They marked Granby Street out for others, showing, through making, that they mattered. Art in its many guises was central to the redevelopment of Granby Four Streets and it is an essential part of its plans for the future.

**Artful nature**

It's Sunday lunchtime in May 2019. Granby Street is bright and colourful in the rain, and exudes a street party feel. Cars are parked up both sides of Cairns Street and lilac bins have been set out for recycling. This is clearly a living place. On one tree-lined street, large wire pockets are hooked over fences, bulging with harvested leaves and soil to aid their compost. In spring, when humankind is perhaps just starting to acknowledge the importance of co-existing with our natural world, these are clear signs of a desire to live more sympathetically. In the noughties, Eleanor Lee, chair of the Granby Community Land Trust, made an important first act to reconnect the homes of those who had stayed by hacking a hole in the concrete to plant a train of ivy: art or horticulture? These distinctions seem insignificant as creative acts are marshalled into acts of daily living.

Granby Four Streets combines art and artful living in the development of green spaces. Art and nature are complementary to the facades of the 'empties' – the uninhabited houses – and their partially tended front gardens. Each act of making and cultivation lays claim to the buildings, owning them, bringing them back in to the fold, making living spaces where others failed to acknowledge them. Rambling weeds and decayed fronts merge with planted spaces, poppies and other wildflowers. Alliums and mint, peeled paint and metal shutters are juxtaposed with brightly painted doors and gateposts. Uninhabited and uninhabitable places are acknowledged, marked and claimed as part of Granby Four Streets. Above all, the painting and greening show that this place is valued, and that these are visible acts of care.

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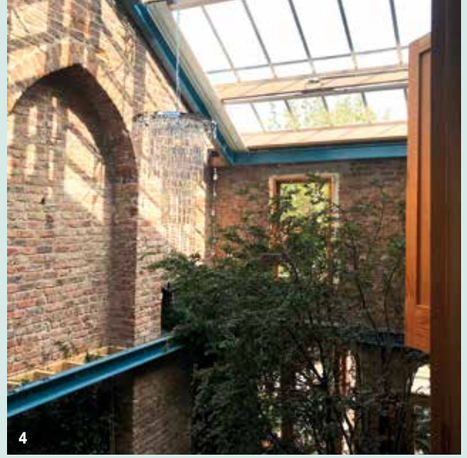

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'Above all, the painting and greening show that this place is valued, and that these are visible acts of care'

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**1** Cairns Street, 2019

**2** Cairns Street, 2015

**3** Tiles used in the Winter Garden, 2019, and made by the Granby Workshop

**4** Granby Winter Garden, 2019

**5** Eleanor Lee, Chair of Granby Four Streets CLT

The shift between inside and outside space is apparent in some properties that have lost parts of their roof. Plants trail in and out of windowless holes, but the relationship between built and natural environments is perhaps most evident in Granby Winter Garden, a community centre opened in March of this year. Built between the skins of two derelict houses that were 'too far gone', architects proposed an ambitious open space as an indoor garden, community space and artist studio. This is a place for community that is literally at the centre, almost hidden in the middle of a terrace. Again, the relationship between arts practice and the natural world is evident in a space designed to enable the community to experience both, whilst furthering their work in meetings and discussion. It is reminiscent of the social sculpture, *Honey Pump* (1977), an installation by Joseph Beuys designed to infuse energy through a Free University discussion space with the rich sweet smell of warm honey and melted butter. These connections between art, politics and social action are enacted in the boldest architectural project so far. Granby Winter Garden is designed as a working space for an artist in residence and Nina Edge, artist, local community activist and gardener, will take up the first artist in residence role.

**An Assembly of arts**

The high profile award of The Turner Prize for Assemble in 2015 marked the first time that the art prize was awarded to a group. Assemble is a collective, working across architecture, art, craft and design, and in this case with the community in Liverpool, building on the work that had already taken place by residents. The Granby Workshop, an architectural ceramics studio, is well established near the corner of Cairns Street. It produces handles, knobs and tiles, re-using materials from inside from inside homes, to make interiors distinctive in the refurbishments of the houses that are still taking shape.

'This is the making of a space where art signals life'

Art as assembly is evident in the collective nature of the project, in that art, craft and design appear to work and function together in models reminiscent of other social applications of art craft and design, such as the Omega workshops, and the Arts and Crafts movement. The politics of Granby is evident in designs for life that encourage communal space and the importance of green space, alongside more overtly political graphic texts such as 'Games Please', a poster representing a commitment to 'Let Children Be Children', and another depicting David Cameron and George Osborne in hard hats as 'poverty developers'. Art, craft and design are all marshalled in multiple forms, messages of local and personal politics that have emerged from global concerns. Designs for assembly are also cultivated in a monthly street market, a means of bringing people together and others into the streets to regenerate commercial possibilities for the area.

There are then these outward spaces, reclaimed by small acts of artful planting, crafting and painting, but as you walk down the streets you are aware that these are, first and foremost, places for people to live, where curtained windows keep the stuff of life in and restrict the eye of voyeuristic passers-by. Those who have their homes here must also have a choice in determining the extent of their private and public space.

We cannot know what lives people lead. We can only imagine that they are a little more or less like our own and so perhaps in many ways unremarkable. However, their commitment to making in this place is clearly tangible in the planted doorsteps and brightly coloured decorations, where personal and political aesthetics prevail. This is the making of a space where art signals life. Manmade buildings, nature's ability to reclaim its own and the artist gardener are all statements of a cultural affinity through a show of community caring. Art is essential here in drawing attention to the presence of this vital group of inhabitants as purposeful and creative agents at work on their home. ■

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# Past, present and future communities: Between utopia and dystopia

***Dr Marsha Bradfield**, director of Artfield Projects Limited, and **Shibboleth Shechter**, senior lecturer in Interior and Spatial Design at the Chelsea College of Arts, discuss the existence between space and time, and the concept of spatiotemporality within the borough of Westminster and Millbank*


**Our students' activity in the 2017 - 2018 academic year was spatiotemporality, the existence between space and time. Here we reflect on this work with our second and third year students doing BA (Hons) Interior and Spatial Design at Chelsea College of Arts. Our curriculum brief was titled 'Millbank Communities Past, Present and Future: Between Utopia and Dystopia'. It was predicated on spatiotemporality as a way into this neighbourhood, part of the London borough of Westminster. In keeping with our long-term interest in Millbank, our curriculum aimed to understand what it meant for Chelsea College of Arts as an institution and those who study, live and otherwise operate here to call this area home. A constituent college of the University of the Arts London, Chelsea College sits on the banks of the River Thames beside Tate Britain and between the Houses of Parliament and MI6.**

Our spatiotemporal approach considered Millbank's past and speculated about its future to better grasp and contribute to the neighbourhood's present. This three-phase temporality was both a framework to organise our teaching and learning, and a means of comparing and contrasting the rich history of this particular local. This approach asked of our students an attitude to travelling more through time than across distance. We began by reaching back into Millbank's complex past — think plague pits, the first panoptic prison, river trade and flooding, and then, in the early twentieth century, utopian housing developments.

Our historical enquiry was anchored in the Thorney Island Archive, which is run by the Thorney Island Society, a voluntary organisation that works to safeguard local buildings and promote the area's rich heritage. Each student chose an object from the archives as a fulcrum for their research into the lived experience of past communities or an historical figure. They approached the life and times of nineteenth-century societies from the perspective of material culture. In this regard an eighteenth-century embroidered purse proved especially intriguing. It contained an invitation to one Lady Gerrard to attend the Queen's coronation. Though at first the archives advised this was of Elizabeth II in 1953, a strong intuition and dogged enquiry by one of our students, Gabriela Aleksandrova, involved contacting an expert at Victoria and Albert Museum to confirm the coronation in question was in fact Victoria's in 1838.

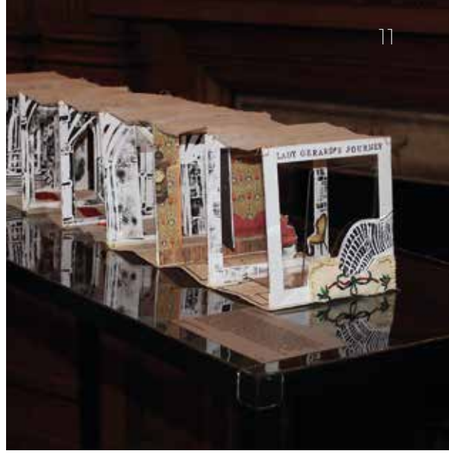
The second phase of our curriculum took place at Tate Modern's Tate Exchange. This was an education-based experiment that explored how art makes a difference to society. Our students worked with the public to build a model of London in 2068, at a scale of roughly 1:200. We collectively constructed architectures and infrastructures for future communities and discussed how dystopias, utopias and heterotopias (which Michel Foucault describes as utopias that *are* 'actually localisable') will shape and be shaped by the worlds of tomorrow. For instance, Gugulethu Thaka and Wilson Aguirre Jaramillo imagined how waste could be turned into a form of currency. In their words: 'with this new system, all landfills would be cleared by 2050. And since rubbish has become a currency, we also set up a trading centre'. Aspirational thinking like this proved a watershed for many students. They began to grasp at a deeper level, and with much greater nuance, that our actions today impact our futures, individual and shared.


> 'Our actions today impact our futures, individual and shared'

Another turning point was a walk from Tate Britain, its historical collection saturated with empire and industry, to Tate Modern as an architectural and artistic pivot for London as a contemporary capital of culture. Circulation inspired our sojourn; how some people and artefacts can move between institutions, while others are excluded from these circuits of valorization, or the increase in capital assets. Our students experimented with this by carrying with them on the walk tiny handmade models of infrastructure. We called these 'seeds' because they were brought into Tate Modern and 'planted' on the fifth floor, the area designated to Tate Exchange. From these we grew our collectively built model of London in 2068, fifty years into the future.

To highlight the cause and effect between our present (in)action and its consequences, we asked our students to imagine life back in 1968, long before their living memory. None had any knowledge of the civil unrest that wracked France that year, making it a touchstone for so many critical and creative practitioners. This generation gap has compelled us to reinvigorate our commitment to sharing counter narratives, as well as historically and culturally diverse precedents of alternative ways of doing and being.

Having considered Millbank's past through their work in the archives and having speculated about London's future via an experimental build, our students had a much stronger sense of the ways in which their work as designers today fits into a broader scheme. Simply put, they began to appreciate what it means to be part of a project that is much larger than oneself. This found concrete expression in the curriculum's final stage, which focused on the present via self-directed projects. Many of these were explicitly committed to making a difference. For instance, Anthea Suffell tackled overcrowded educational provision by proposing a learner-centred space distribution at Chelsea College. And, galvanised by the water shortages in Cape Town, Tao Zheng imagined a system to recycle and purify this precious resource on campus.




It is not by accident that these examples tackle problems that our students either personally face at present or anticipate doing so. Our teaching philosophy holds that local contexts – the ones where we live, work or otherwise frequent – are valid subjects of enquiry. For many at Chelsea College, Millbank is effectively a non-place, a passageway in and out of our daily business. Recasting this context proved a core benefit of our spatiotemporal approach, which was catalysed in large part by its versatility. The breadth of time and space as interdependent phenomena afforded students myriad points of access, interest and collaboration. As with the temporality of time travelling through research, the spatial dimension of our curriculum encouraged problem solving through reorientation. Telescoping in and out – shifting between micro details and large-scale complexity – is the kind of scope required to tackle wicked problems. Although it seems obvious to say, design is about producing outcomes that draw on the past and anticipate the future by effectively considering disparate and often conflicted forces. Otherwise, why bother? ■

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**Above** Tate Exchange, London in 2068 – Architectures and infrastructures for future communities @ Dan Weill

**Left** Infrastructure Seeds on the Steps of Tate Britain @ Marsha Bradfield

**Above** Model of Lady Gerrard's Journey to Queen's Elizabeth's Coronation @ Gabriela Aleksandrova

# Japanese art:

## Shaping communities both here and there

*Researching Japanese art to prepare for teaching A Level history of art revealed far more potential than expected. As head of art history,* ***Sarah Phillips*** *shares how the stories and techniques from Japan have extended learning and developed a sense of community at Godalming College*

**There has long been a keen interest in widening the History of Art A level beyond the confines of European art, so the design of a new specification presented an exciting opportunity. 'Art beyond the European tradition' is now a compulsory element of study and includes three themes – Identities, War and Nature – within the Pearson A level. Japanese art and architecture, both traditional and contemporary, offers huge potential for all students.**

At Godalming College we introduced a Japanese Masterclass (as an inclusive opportunity for students from any academic field) in pen and ink calligraphy (known as shodo) and hiragana (the basic Japanese phonetic alphabet). Our sessions include stories from Japanese art and architecture, asking how art has been used to build and rebuild communities after the devastation of Hiroshima, and how it's continuing to transform lives and economies today. One of our year 13 students (aged 18) made this event the centre of her Arts Award and took responsibility for organising and promoting the event across our community. Some year 12 students (ages 16–17) went on to write Japanese-related Extended Project Qualification (EPQ), so we now have our first student heading for a BA in Japanese at Durham University.

We began with the story of *The Hiroshima Panels* by Iri and Toshi Maruki. The panels have helped to rebuild communities across Japan and inspire cooperation globally. Iri Maruki arrived three days after the bombing of Hiroshima (6 August 1945) in order to search for his parents and siblings. His wife, Toshi, arrived at the end of the week. Both lost family and friends among the 260,000 people who died as a result of the nuclear bomb. After three weeks of helping the injured, cremating the dead and repairing damaged buildings, they returned to Tokyo.

Three years later, they began working together on *The Hiroshima Panels*, as little information about the bombings had been made public. They believed in the need for art to open up a channel of communication between those who had experienced the bombs and those who had not, and to help the children of future generations to imagine the horrors of nuclear bombs and war, and so to fight for their elimination. Their work shares a similar motivation with Picasso's *Guernica*, which records the shocking assault by Hitler's newly formed Luftwaffe on the Basque town during the Spanish Civil War in 1937.

The first three panels were exhibited in a variety of temporary settings, including schools, temples and civic centres, so that people could gain an insight into the devastation caused. As so many of the first responders were killed by the radiation, the Marukis' eyewitness accounts are vital. By 1951, the first five panels had been exhibited in 350 locations in Japan and seen by approximately nine million people. In 1953, *The Hiroshima Panels* were toured internationally and shown in Hungary, China, Romania and Denmark. The Marukis were awarded a Gold Medal by the World Peace Council, and in 1970, some of the panels toured the USA to continue the idea of art building communication and communities. Students would find similar ideas in the mobile artworks by contemporary artists, Jeremy Deller's *It Is What It Is* and Michael Rakowitz's *Enemy Kitchen*.

Students also found the story of Sadako Sasaki inspiring. Aged just two when the bomb fell on her hometown, she contracted leukaemia as a result of the radiation. Admitted to hospital when she was 11, she began folding 1000 origami cranes, often using discarded medical papers. Her paper crane has become a universal symbol of peace. All Japanese school classes visit her memorial statue in Hiroshima to sing, which is an extraordinary and moving sight.

The small island in the middle of Japan's Inland Sea, Naoshima, offers another great story of how art can build communities. In 1992, the Benesse House Naoshima Contemporary Art Museum opened with a mission to link 'Nature and Art' and 'History and Art'. The museum was designed by Tadao Ando and its collection and ongoing commissioning project have placed the island in the international arena. Works by Richard Long, James Turrell, Claude Monet, Yayoi Kusama, Walter de la Maria and many others, not only challenge ideas of outside/inside boundaries but also of art's ability to regenerate, and to contribute to business enterprise, as well as to inspire and think outside the box.

As well as offering material for almost the entire global Nature in Art and Architecture module for our Masterclass and the History of Art A Level, the island offers rich pickings for students in other disciplines. The story of Yayoi Kusama, for example, has engaged our psychology students. This East Asian female artist reflects on the idea of her voluntary home in the Seiwa Hospital, while her colourful work and life story reinforces, yet again, the extraordinary and essential need for art.

Finally, we used stories of Japanese architecture to inform and extend the discussions of our newly formed Architecture Society at Godalming College. Tadao Ando's work at Naoshima is almost invisible from the sea. Most of the museum is underground, yet natural light fills all the galleries. His ideas of low impact design struck a chord with many of our students, keen to ensure that the future of architecture supports, rather than threatens, our planet. Hands-on model making has engaged our students and also helped build portfolios in readiness for university interviews.

We have given students 'briefs' before revealing the shape and structure of the final building. It's a great way to encourage students to think laterally and to empower their ability to critique and challenge. At a British Council training day, organised with the Japan Foundation for teachers of Japanese in British schools, I tried this task with adults and the results demonstrated that creative tasks inspire all ages.

Art builds communities and provides the glue to keep them together. It stimulates originality and creativity, while also developing resilience and self-esteem. The lessons learnt from Japanese art inspired many of our students across a wide range of study and demonstrates how the benefits of art, though perhaps less measurable in data terms, should not be underestimated. The lack of support and awareness of this in our schools makes us all the poorer. ■

*Sarah Phillips is the author of the Art History A Level, Pearson's 'Ask the Expert' subject adviser, a Council member for NSEAD, Advisory Board member for ART UK and a teacher and writer for Art History in Schools.*

> 'Our sessions include stories from Japanese art and architecture, asking how art has been used to build and rebuild communities after the devastation of Hiroshima, and how it's continuing to transform lives and economies today'

My research trip to Japan in 2018 could not have happened without the generosity of the Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation. Information sheets on the Japanese works mentioned here can be downloaded by teachers, free of charge, from Art History in Schools: *arthistoryinschools.org.uk*. The same organisation also provides mentors, advice and CPD for any school or teacher wanting to introduce Art History A Level.

**1** Students exploring Japanese characters and techniques

**2** Iri and Toshi Maruki's *Fire* one of the Hiroshima Panels provides an excellent insight into both modern handling of Japanese techniques as well as understanding the power of art to rebuild communities

**3** Richard Long's model for the museum inspired our students to experiment with their own designs and models

**4** Yayoi Kusama's *Pumpkin* is sited on an old wharf, making visitors relate nature to the wide perspectives of Japan's Inland Sea.

**4** Richard Long's *Inland Driftwood Circle*


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*A new provision-for-all arts workshop in Keighley, West Yorkshire, is opening conversations about community, the arts and arts education. Here, **Gemma Hobbs**, art and design teacher and co-director of Keighley Creative Space, shares her highlights and hopes for The Orange Room*

**Based in an old department store in Keighley, West Yorkshire, The Orange Room is not your traditional arts space, and its unusual location is one of the reasons participants are engaging. Built alongside 14 other artist and maker's studios, and situated directly opposite an independent charity shop (which brings in an often overlooked demographic when it comes to arts participation), we are known collectively as Keighley Creative Space. Although we came together by chance, we share an understanding about the arts and Keighley which drives us forward and is strengthening connections across the town, feeding back into conversations about community, the arts and arts education.**


4


5


6

# The Orange Room

I chose the name before I painted the kitchen a bright, hot orange – prior to this there wasn't a patch of the colour anywhere. When visitors ask why 'The Orange Room' I am playful in my responses, often bringing up the traits attributed symbolically to the colour such as warmth, transformation, joy, energy and creativity, or mentioning glasshouses, fruit and growth. All of these ideas link back into the ethos of the space and to its adaptable nature.

I designed the education space as a provision for all and the room is suitable for school groups or individuals, for children or adults, for learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and for a variety of different creative activities and teaching styles. Although the room has only been open a couple of months, it is already evolving, changing to meet the needs of participants, the locality and Keighley Creative Space.

We are a community interest company, working in partnership with the charity East St Arts who provide affordable workspace and professional development for creatives. This partnership, combined with multiple funding applications, has allowed us to grow, build and expand what we offer.

Recent sessions have involved other artists from the space, linking into Arts Award with school groups and skill share sessions for makers.

> 'Art education can explore these links between agency, subject and self with a fluidity that is to be championed'

I run free monthly Meet & Make sessions for adults linked to art history and weekly sessions for arts-based research. Regular life drawing classes have begun and soon our after-school children's club, the Doodle-Doers, will begin. Keighley Creative Space and The Orange Room takes pride in being approachable and it is this, along with the diversity of creative pursuits on offer, that is bringing people in.

In light of this I increasingly find myself liaising with other community organisations and schools to help develop their creative programmes, offering practical support when new provisions are trialled or finding the right creative practitioners to work on a programme. As such The Orange Room is on tour as often as it is at home, and building these links in the town is key to the success of the enterprise and to the arts as a whole in Keighley.

Keighley is very important to me – the seeds of my career were sown here a decade ago when I facilitated a teenage girls-only arts programme for Small World, a local youth arts charity. This was a fantastic opportunity, opening my eyes to the potential of alternative provisions and fuelling an interest to find out more about how and why we learn. These were at risk children and I frequently asked myself why should the particular students care about the session I was about to deliver? What was in it for them? I learnt that the best approach was to run emergent curriculums that adapted to the individual, listening to their stories, enabling them to have control, and using creativity to transform and reinvent.

Art education can explore these links between agency, subject and self with a fluidity that is to be championed. As a result we have to make the argument for time and funding to be put back into the arts in our education system. Across all sectors and phases we are stronger together and I want The Orange Room to join in this debate, to become a springboard for everyone linked to the space to have their say about the arts and arts education, and about the wider socio-economic factors our subject, our town and our lives face.

Since returning to Keighley I have met some amazing people who are global in their thinking and making internationally recognised work. Joining the conversation about Keighley means developing these connections, and extending the town's reach and aspirations. There is an appetite for socially inclusive cultural change in the district and I want The Orange Room to be part of this positive momentum.

I am currently studying on the Developing Teacher's Research and Practice PG Cert at Leeds University, and it is through this programme that I learnt about other art teacher networks in the country, including NSEAD. I am keen to start a quarterly meet-up event for art teachers in the Bradford District and these informal skill shares will be supported by an eclectic group of artists and educators. If any teachers reading this article are interested in attending, or learning more about the Orange Room, please contact me. It would be great to hear from you! ■

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*theorangeroom.space*

**1** The department store corner pre Orange Room

**2** Steve Bishop, Keighley Creative Space, giving time, labour and expertise to the build

**3** The completed space

**4** 'Meet and Make', a women's art history group

**5** Naseem Darbey's recent work and students drawing

**6** Gemma in The Orange Room

# Thinking is sculpting

***Andy Ash**, artist, educator and researcher, proposes that far more people are 'form-blind' than 'colour-blind', and in the words of Joseph Beuys 'thinking in sculpture'. Andy argues that working in three-dimensions is neglected in some schools. Here he shares potential ways to plan, practice and develop a curriculum for sculpture*

**'Many more people are form-blind than colour-blind' is a response I remember giving recently to a very eager PGCE secondary art and design student teacher. We were discussing why so few art departments offer their pupils the opportunity to make sculpture, and why two-dimensional production dominated the school art and design curriculum. The student was concerned about the 'school art' orthodoxy in their placement department and the dominant two-dimensional assumption of what is important in a school art curriculum. We continued discussing my previous research on sculpture, particularly how it has been a neglected discipline in some schools, which is partly due to suppositions about what it is, what it entails and how to teach it; too much bother, too much to learn, too much time taken are the usual responses!**

**As a practising artist teacher who specialises in sculpture, this neglect has been an ongoing concern. It is also why generating a dialogue with trainee art teachers and their mentors about the place of sculpture in the secondary art curriculum can be helpful. In this article I share ideas and practice about how to develop your own curriculum for sculpture.**

I have embraced the concept of sculpture in a broad sense and use the work of Rosalind Krauss (1979) who talks of this artistic practice in terms of the 'expanded field' and an all-encompassing terminology meaning for sculpture: three-dimensional (3D) works which can be seen 'in the round', created using materials shaped or positioned primarily by the artist. It includes installation, new technologies, and staging events and performances. Sculpture could be more than a carved or modelled object:

*it could be constructed*
*it could consist of many parts*
*it could represent an idea*
*it could be made from found objects*
*it could be a performance, an action event*
*it could use words, sounds, smells*
*it could use rooms, buildings, landscapes*
*it could be the artist's own body*
*it could be people*
*it could be you!*
*THIS IS SCULPTURE*

If you think of sculpture as a living and growing entity rather than fixed and static body, you can appreciate that it changes with the addition of each new 'thing'. This is why definitions of sculpture are problematic as they are confounded by experience. I believe that attempting a definition is not futile. By saying what sculpture is or is not, in setting out its limits, you are inviting others to break the law. It is important that pupils understand that orthodoxies can and should be challenged. Therefore, it is necessary to include ongoing developments in contemporary sculpture and this I think is why contemporary practice is always a good starting point for a conversation with pupils when approaching sculpture.

Other start points I have used to plan a sculpture programme include trying to establish what the 'key elements' (fig. 1) of your sculpture curriculum might be. What are the aspects you want pupils to learn which relate to sculpture? What would you identify as key to a 3D education? What also makes sculpture different to 2D learning? Below (fig. 1) is an attempt to give an example of the kinds of aspects particular to sculpture:

These twelve elements are by no means definitive. I'm sure you would want to include a number of other elements, perhaps elements that relate more to contemporary practice like 'time', 'movement', 'sound' or 'place'. I see them again as a platform from which your discourse on sculpture might orientate.

In learning about these elements it is not necessary to produce finished outcomes. Some might be investigated more meaningfully through problem-solving or play, such as stacking blocks, rearranging and re-siting objects, balancing weights, pushing materials to their limits, placing things under tension or making in collaboration (a sculptural dialogue) and so on (figs. 2–4). Importantly, the will to discover and inquire is retained, while the will to invent, try out and experiment avoids the stifling effect pure instruction can have on learning. By moving away from the mass production of skills-oriented artefacts to speculating and taking risks, a closer relationship to contemporary practice and learning in sculpture can take place.

Another starting point I have used to plan a sculpture curriculum was inspired by the sculptor Richard Serra (1967/8). Serra famously produced lists of infinitives of 84 verbs (to roll, to crease, to fold, to store etc.) and 24 possible contexts (of gravity, of entropy, of nature etc.) in four columns of script. Serra described the list as a series of 'actions to relate to oneself, material, place and process' and employed it as a kind of guide for his subsequent practice in multiple mediums.

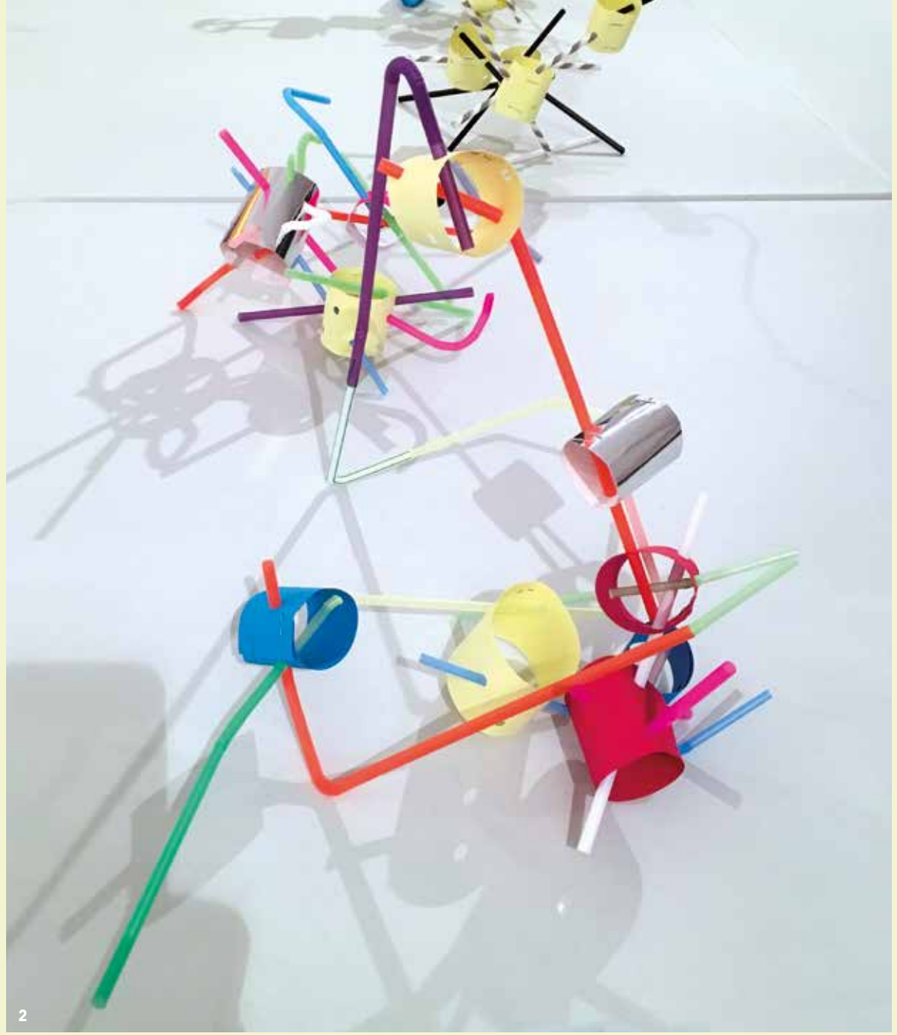
Serra has talked at length, for example, about the central place this language-based making occupied in the development of his early sculpture. 'When I first started, what was very, very important to me was dealing with the nature of process,' he said. 'So what I had done is I'd written a verb list – to roll, to fold, to cut, to dangle, to twist – and I really just worked out pieces in relation to the verb list physically in a space.' A sort of linguistic laying out of possible artistic options, this work on paper functioned for the artist 'as a way of applying various activities to unspecified materials'.

I would suggest these can be used in combination with your elements, media, processes, themes, verbs, and critical and contextual references. For instance, the table in fig. 5 shows a way of integrating sculpture vocabulary. Here the handling of found objects encourages associative connections, such as personal interpretations, tangential links and familiar points of reference. ▶

'We continued discussing my previous research on sculpture, particularly how it has been a neglected discipline in some schools, which is partly due to suppositions about what it is, what it entails and how to teach it; too much bother, too much to learn, too much time taken are the usual responses!'

**1. Elements of sculpture**

| | |
|---|---|
| form | volume |
| space | rhythm |
| material | (composition) |
| process | gravity |
| surface | scale |
| colour | environment |
| weight (balance) | |



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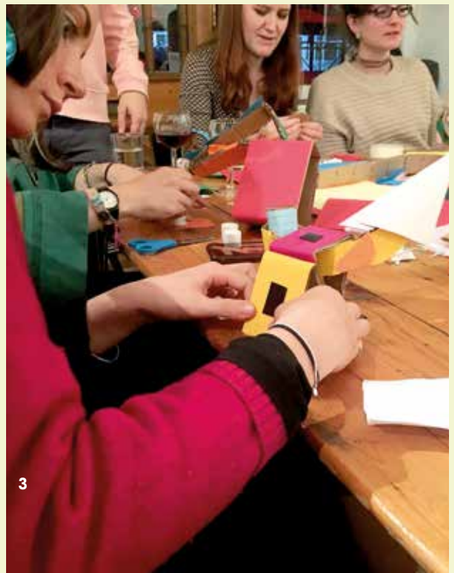

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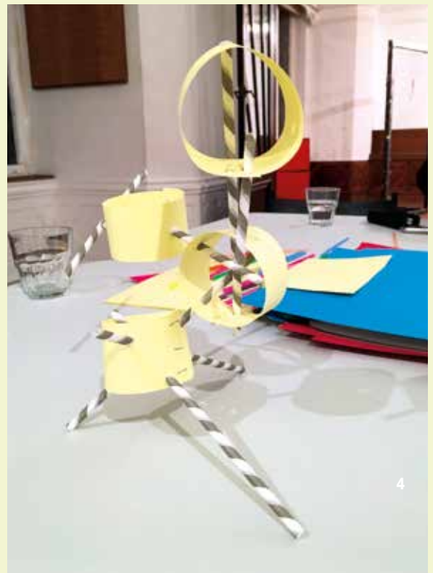

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**1–3** Royal Society of Sculptors and UCL IOE workshop 2019

**5. Sculpture vocabulary**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Media** | Found objects |
| **Processes** | Assemblage |
| **Tools and Equipment** | Nothing needed! |
| **Elements** | Colour mixing, materials |
| **Areas of Exploration/ Themes/ Concepts** | Anthropomorphic and transformation. Household waste, environment and recycle. Curation. |
| **Verbs** | To arrange, to compile, to organise, to match… |
| **Artist reference** | Tong Cragg |


6


7

**6–7** Found objects workshop considering colour

The colour project (figs. 6–7) using the 'sculpture vocabulary' came from a problem a student posed. He asked: 'How can I teach colour theory without having any paint?' A workshop was devised which involved conversations about colour mixing with household waste as its media. Everyday found plastic objects were brought in by pupils.

'Address the imbalance, challenge the orthodoxy, and produce meaningful making and discourse for your pupils'

Their objects became the stimulus for exploring colour qualities, colour mixing, curation, objects and colour theory. The workshop was designed to be active and collaborative in nature, it involved a lot of discussion and debate, with active handling and re-evaluating of the objects, their placement and relationships to each other. At the end of the session the work was photographed and the objects put back in a big black bin bag ready to be used again in the future.

It is here that pupils can engage and ask questions, fundamental questions perhaps, questions about the very nature of sculpture, and to wonder how we can define the unique experience of this art form. I would advocate the importance of politely, but relentlessly, confronting and advocating for the place of sculpture in secondary schools. I have seen how the current situation of neglect has continued for many years and, I suspect, will proliferate, as long as you tolerate it. Address the imbalance, challenge the orthodoxy, and produce meaningful making and discourse for your pupils. In the words of Joseph Beuys: 'Thinking is sculpting'. ■

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# What Does Peace Mean To You?

*'What Does Peace Mean To You?' asks Bob and Roberta Smith OBE. Here,* ***Erin Barnes****, joint head of learning at 14–18 NOW, explains the provocation and how the 14–18 NOW Make Art Not War project might be used*

**In *The Future of Jobs* report published by the World Economic Forum, the skills required in the future are that of creativity, problem solving and critical thinking that are mostly developed in the arts subjects. With this focus on creativity required in the future workplace across the world, what are we going to do if schools and our curriculum do not see the arts as a priority?**

14–18 NOW Make Art Not War is an online learning resource created to encourage young people to nurture essential creative skills fundamental to wider learning, and matched to future social and economic demands. The project was led by renowned artist Bob and Roberta Smith and based on the ideas of Franz Cisek and the Child Art Movement. Coupled with Bob and Roberta Smith's own celebrated artwork *Make Art Not War*, this gave rise to the idea of a new provocation for students to explore: 'What Does Peace Mean To You?'

Among the curriculum resources is a gallery of short films from the 14–18 NOW programme made by artists who include Jeremy Deller, Rachel Whiteread CBE and Yinka Shonibare CBE. These give insight into each artist's commission and unearth their own creative processes. The resources put the learner in the driving seat, offering open-ended activities, questions to prompt dialogue, debate, activities to drive an emotional response, and a 'make and do' creative task.

Over 44,000 students were given the project as an assessed study option in collaboration with the UAL Awarding Body. Creative & Cultural Skills drew in artist mentors to work with over 1,000 students across a term in 12 FE colleges and the Sixth Form Colleges Association rolled out the project as an Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) pathway. Appetite for open-ended creative response opportunity within curriculum design was welcomed among tutors and teachers, and in this autumn, the programme will broaden its reach with Creative & Cultural Skills to champion the programme for college and school networks UK-wide.

What happens next is on all our minds just as it was in 1918. This final 14–18 NOW project addressed this question with optimism. What happens next is in the creative hands of our young people. ■

To find and use the 2019–20 resources visit: *makeartnotwar.org.uk*

**Top left** Bob & Roberta Smith in his studio
**Top right** *Nissen Hut*, Rachel Whiteread
**Above** 4–18 NOW Make Art Not War workshops

# Our sketchbook circle community

*Communities of practice take many different shapes and forms. Here, **Elinor Brass**, director of art at Oakham School, Rutland, shares how the Sketchbook Circle's growing community first evolved, and describes its purpose and potential. **Susan Coles**, past-president of NSEAD and a member of the Sketchbook Circle's community of practice, follows and reflects on the Circle's past and its more recent explorations in Berlin*

**Sketchbook Circle is a collaborative project that first came about nearly ten years ago. After completing an Artist Teacher Masters in Painting, I was seeking a way to continue making and collaborating. I was keen to find a way to maintain a creative discipline in order to keep making work alongside my busy life as a teacher. I also wanted to remain part of an art practitioner community. With artist educator Tanya Paget, we decided to organise a circle of interested fellow artist educators where each month we would make and exchange work with our creative partners either side of us in the circle. So began our first sketchbook circle.**

Over the course of a year the circle would allow us to have an in-depth, visual conversation with two people, pushing us as artists by having to react to someone else's work, with a deadline to exchange work each month. At this time, in 2012, Susan Coles asked if we could set up a circle for NSEAD off the back of the successful TEA (Thinking, Expression, Action) drawing project. With this welcome invite Sketchbook Circle has continued to thrive.

I am lucky enough to now run the project with artist educator Georgia Naish. We have both gained a great deal by collaborating together and working with so many talented artists and educators. The Circle now offers a monthly mailout with ideas and prompts, a newsletter, a Facebook group and a blog.

The Sketchbook Circle community is extremely positive and as a teacher I have benefited enormously from the support of the group. One element of the Circle that gives Georgia and myself the most pleasure is running events. Over the last few years the events present the chance to meet others who are in the Circle, to learn new things and to forge friendships. That coming together of the community is particularly powerful in a busy life of a teacher and we have been lucky enough to run workshops at The Arnolfini in Bristol, BALTIC in Gateshead, Gerald Moore Gallery in London and, earlier this year, in Berlin.

I have known Harriet Poole since we collaborated in the first Sketchbook Circle. Harriet, who now lives in Berlin, is an artist educator, creativity mentor and founder of *little art* (*thelittleartlab.com*). Out of vintage suitcases *little art* devises curiosity-driven 'Art LABs' in museum and festivals, as well as for international school trips visiting Berlin. Harriet's expertise and knowledge of Berlin led to our first Sketchbook Circle residential in Berlin.

Earlier this year 19 art and design teachers made their way to Berlin to take part in three days of creative activities. Starting each day at Harriet's studio in the heart of the city, the group were invited to a *kickstart creativity* breakfast, making and exploring hands and minds in flow-creating marks and textures in sketchbooks. Harriet created itineraries for the trip inspired by her regular haunts across the city, from the Gropius Bau gallery to a Street Art tour. One very successful element of the trip was Harriet's 'wearable viewfinders', which aided our explorations of Berlin, its culture and history. Georgia led an experimental workshop working with Gelli plates (a form of monoprinting), acrylic painting, collage and paper materials gathered from the Berlin streets, which gave those involved a way of reflecting on the own visual connections with the city.

The three-day residential was a chance to make work alongside fellow creatives and to be immersed in and revitalised through making, conversation and community. It was a very sociable trip, with new friends made, a chance for some people to meet their sketchbook partners for the first time and a chance for others to reconnect.

*sketchbookcircle.com, elinorbrass.com*

**It is April 2019 and 19 art educators and artists are sitting around a table in Berlin. We are working on our sketchbooks as part of the Sketchbook Circle project and this is our first residential outside the UK. So, how did we get here? By flying, yes, but also through the conviction held by individuals in the power of drawing, collaborating and being part of a community.**

As Elinor explains, TEA (Thinking, Expression, Action) had been co-ordinated by NSEAD, The Campaign for Drawing and The Arts Society, and facilitated by Eileen Adams and myself. It had resulted in a large group of educators. With opportunity for practice research, with face-to-face drawing days, with a sketchbook circle, and online debate and projects, all focused on the purpose of drawing, a large group of committed artist educators had formed.

'Elisa also talked about the often-neglected 'f' word – fun – reminding us of the importance of playfulness in making'

The TEA project ended with a celebratory symposium at The National Gallery in London, where with Elinor and I discussed ways to continue TEA's welcome visual collaborations. A sketchbook circle would allow for further drawing dialogues. And so, led by both Elinor and Georgia, the TEA Sketchbook Circle began. Now hundreds of people have taken part.

Fast-forward to the Berlin Sketchbook Circle residential, where the artwork made and the workshops organised as part of the Berlin residential soon became part of the working life of participants. Elinor went on to exhibit some of her work made during the residential in her school's art exhibition, while artist teacher Sara Noble shared her sketchbook with her classes in order 'to inspire them and to express how I had been working within a group'.

Subject leader Linda Tucker said of the three days: 'It certainly is what every busy art teacher needs, a chance to be themselves, recharge their creative juices, and leave with inspiration and the energy to continue as artists as well as facilitators. Elisa Irwin shared the importance and benefits of working collaboratively: 'The community widens as we both make and create. We inspire children and adults with our infectious passion for making.' Elisa also talked about the often-neglected 'f' word – fun – reminding us of the importance of playfulness in making.

Although we had all met online, meeting face to face creates a new sense of being part of a community. Artist teacher and NSEAD member Petra Matthews Crow sums it up as: 'Being part of the Berlin Sketchbook Circle residential enabled me to meet one of my sketchbook partners for this year. Immediately there was a sense of intimacy forged through our collaboration so far. We all had our own teaching stories, but the residential enabled us to put aside our day jobs as we focused on enjoying each other's company whilst we responded to the workshops and travelled around Berlin visiting exhibitions and galleries.' Everyone went home with a sense of self worth and personal wellbeing heightened by this experience. These comments from fellow participants remind me that Pablo Picasso once said: 'Art washes from the soul the dust of everyday life.'

I was given some time to talk about the benefits of the NSEAD community but didn't have to say much as almost everyone there was a member. Our art educator communities take many shapes and forms and those involved the TEA, NSEAD and Sketchbook Circle will agree, what an invaluable community we are! ■

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Visit *nsead.org* to find out more about TEA drawing projects

# Exchange through participation, agency and action

‘Artist Education Exchange was born of a belief that creative learning through the arts is positioned perfectly to resist the detrimental impact of educational policy, which has progressively eroded arts and cultural education in many schools’

*Thanks to a successful crowdfunding campaign Arts Education Exchange has moved into premises in Margate and their ‘creative learning interventions’ have already begun.* ***Ollie Briggs,*** *Arts Education Exchange director, shares how their three-stage model will build skills, experience and confidence in young people*

**In Margate, where I’m based, art *is* shaping and shifting the culture of the town, which has seen considerable investment in the arts in recent years. Turner Contemporary will host the Turner Prize this year and the pilgrimage from London for cheap housing has nurtured a haven for ‘creatives’. But, my response in the context of Margate is to ask which communities really benefit from this investment? Despite all the well-meaning and socially motivated initiatives, many people in Margate still face inequalities based on economic, social and educational disadvantage. One of the aims of Arts Education Exchange (AEE) is to connect these two narratives through creative practice and build new communities based on equality and shared power.**

AEE was born of a belief that creative learning through the arts is positioned perfectly to resist the detrimental impact of educational policy, which has progressively eroded arts and cultural education in many schools. Both NSEAD and Cultural Learning Alliance highlight the consequences of the EBacc, which is symptomatic of wider ideological motive. What we are seeing due to the progressive shift towards the hegemony of neoliberalism in education is a system fraught with inequality, which will impact on generations of young people to come. Cuts to youth services, which according to the Local Government Association have seen a 50 per cent in six years, mean access to social and creative opportunities beyond the institution are diminishing, with demographics of low income affected most negatively.

In the last six months, following our successful crowdfunding campaign, we have taken a lease on a shop and basement on Northdown Road in Cliftonville West, a ward that consistently reports the highest levels of deprivation in the UK. From here we are delivering ‘Creative Learning Interventions’ for young people from challenging circumstances, guided by our engagement and progression framework; what we call the AEE Model. We have identified three stages which encompass our educational values and enables young people to develop the skills, experience and confidence needed to make their next steps. The stages are Participation, Agency and Action. We are also developing a template for a personalised learning plan, written by young people and tutors, which embeds our evaluation and monitoring framework to provide reflective evidence of each individual’s journey.

The Participation phase is about access to creative learning opportunities for young people from challenging circumstances. Often the creative learning intervention is implemented for young people who have found it difficult to engage in mainstream education. It is, therefore, essential that this stage, as the first point of contact, that we provide a safe environment in which young people feel able to play with and express opinions and identities. The objective of doing so is to foster a democratic learning space in which all views are respected or, where necessary, challenged. The space aims to facilitate the co-production of values and knowledge in order to empower those involved to become socially active and personally fulfilled. Participation in contemporary art practice is concerned with the appropriation of the social and relational dimensions of human experiences, blurring the boundary between art and life, and aiming to restore a political balance. These are exactly the values we foster through this stage.

Through the process of participation, there are multiple moments where we may encounter Agency and find the means to act independently – AEE aims to cultivate the conditions that enable young people to initiate their own ideas.

Lastly, Action is about supporting young people to connect with the wider community by organising a public-facing moment where their ideas and values are shared with others. Events, performances, exhibitions and online dissemination provide a platform for youth voice and by doing so a dialogue is created between otherwise separated groups. The aim of such events is to build new communities that include multiple voices. A recent evaluation report provides evidence that our programmes develop creative skills, have a positive impact on relationships both with peers and adults, develops self-awareness and helps to formulate next steps.

Art’s role in society has been overshadowed by commercialism and capitalism. What we should continue to fight for is the right for everyone to lead an artful life, one that includes the opportunity to explore our sense of identity, culture and community. In the words of Bob and Roberta Smith: ‘All schools should be art schools’. Not with the aim of everyone becoming ‘artists’ but with the intention of connecting people and building communities through art.

*artsedex.org*
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# What am I getting into?

1

‘In schools, architecture is rarely taught as a subject and some pupils may never have the opportunity to realise their passion for it, whilst others may be unprepared for the long study that they subscribe to’

*Working collaboratively with architects,* ***Debbie Hillyerd,*** *director of education at Hauser & Wirth Somerset, shares how one group of students have gained insights about the architecture as a profession through drawing and learning*

**This summer at Hauser & Wirth Somerset we took part in our third Architectural Drawing Summer School, organised in collaboration with Drawing Matter, Kingston University and Bruton School for Girls, with support from the Royal Fine Art Commission Trust. This one-week course provided a unique opportunity for 30 or more A-Level students, with an interest in studying architecture, to learn more about the subject at a fully-funded summer school.**

The Architecture Drawing Summer School is the brainchild of Niall Hobhouse, creator of Drawing Matter (*drawingmatter.org*) which was initiated in 2017 with the support of Robert Bargery of the Royal Fine Art Commission Trust. The course stems from our conversations with other key protagonists in the field of drawing and architecture, such as Professor Andrew Clancy (professor of architecture, Kingston University) and Professor Anita Taylor (executive dean of Bath School of Art and Design). We felt a shared concern for students’ understanding of what the study of architecture might actually entail. The built environment surrounds us all; it can shape who we are and how we behave and yet it remains distinct from other forms of creative practice. In schools, architecture is rarely taught as a subject and some pupils may never have the opportunity to realise their passion for it, whilst others may be unprepared for the long study that they subscribe to.

As director of education at Hauser & Wirth Somerset, I believe that the role of drawing is central to a visual articulation of the world around us. It can be used to foster an understanding of the world before we develop a verbal capacity to describe what we see and it is one of the ways in which we can continue to develop our communication skills. The summer school focuses on architectural sketching and drawing, offering students a defining experience at a crucial point in their intellectual and personal development. Drawing is used to demystify the language and process of architectural education, allowing for a more immersive and creative introduction to the subject than what is available from open days or university websites.

During the week students are exposed to conversations and exercises set by many of the lead thinkers in architectural education today. They stress the ways in which drawing can be a conversation in itself, representing things that cannot be spoken. The creative process of drawing negotiates a relationship between the hand and eye, which is not the same as the voice and eyes; through drawing we can find fresh methods of articulation. The location of Hauser & Wirth in Bruton provides the architectural setting for visual and verbal conversations, and spending an extended length of time here allows the student to develop a sense of ownership, as well as a physical and emotional journey, which is then articulated through the observational and gestural act of drawing.

With the guidance of young architects, students have the opportunity to identify more directly with the role, and to draw on their tutors’ experiences of studying and practicing architecture. In their approach to the project, and by using architecture to practise visual literacy, the tutors create a dialogue about architecture and education, and the central role that drawing can play in it.

According to Niall Hobhouse: ‘In this collaborative endeavour our intention is to provide an opportunity for students to gain insights from professionals about how we see, how we record what we see, and how we use what we see when we make things. The opportunity is designed to suit young people who are thinking about a career in architecture or the built environment. Our ambition with this course was not to try to solve the world, but to set in motion something which might allow us to test and develop the idea – to see if it had value.’

At the end of each summer school, Hauser & Wirth Somerset holds an Open Review exhibition where visitors have the chance to view the work that has been produced, and to meet the students and staff who took part. Such attitudes and collaborative practices are central to the ethos of Hauser & Wirth Somerset; our education programme celebrates art, architecture and community though its activities and strives especially to provide enrichment opportunities for all. ■

*hauserwirth.com*

2

3

4

Since its launch in 2014, Hauser & Wirth Somerset has developed a rich education programme, providing opportunities for individuals, schools, special interest groups, families and outreach work, as well as building meaningful partnerships with public, private, community and charitable organisations. At the heart of their education programme are the gallery artists and exhibitions. Their programme is concerned with ensuring that high-quality art can be shared with as wide an audience as possible – all ages, backgrounds and abilities.

**1-3** Architectural Drawing Summer School at Hauser & Wirth Somerset, August 2017. Photo © Ed Dowding

**4** Architectural Drawing Summer School at Hauser & Wirth Somerset, August 2018

# Queering the Art Classroom

*Queering the Art Classroom began as a research programme looking at how art was taught in schools and their failure to explore popular GCSE topics such as 'identity' outside of heteronormative and figurative models. Here,* ***Tabitha Millett****, senior teaching associate at Cambridge University and Queering the Classroom founder, outlines the concepts underpinning her project*

**Queering the Art Classroom is part doctoral research, part non-profit organisation. The research was driven by my time spent as an art teacher in London schools since 2014. I felt restricted with how art was taught and by the failure to explore popular GCSE topics such as 'identity' outside of heteronormative and figurative models. The research was conducted in a comprehensive school in North London between 2017 and 2018 and focused on exploring gender and sexuality with students for one unit of their GCSE coursework.**

The artwork the students produced was later exhibited in the National Trust's Sutton House in July 2018, alongside a public programme of workshops and talks. The partnership with the National Trust has developed the Queering the Art Classroom research so we now work as a small organisation, working with a number of primary and secondary schools, making and exhibiting their artwork. Queering the Art Classroom is also working with local artists in Hackney, who have been responding to the students' artwork. The artists' work aims to forge a connection with contemporary artists and school students in the hope that the gap between 'school art' and current art practice can be bridged. The artists' work will be on display in Sutton House in September 2019. New schools will be brought into the fold to respond to the artists' work and so the cycle continues, creating artistic dialogue between local artists and students, all exploring gender and sexuality through making.

Since 2003, successive British governments have taken steps to develop legislation supporting lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people, as well as those who are questioning/queer, intersex, asexual and gender/sexuality non-conforming (LGBTQIA+). In doing so, they have foregrounded the need for educational institutions to respond proactively. There is evidence to suggest that homophobia is prominent in UK schools. However, any measures to address the issue have largely rested on schools and LGBTQIA+ charities, reducing discussions of homosexuality to anti-bullying and victim discourses, which often homogenises all LGBTQIA+ youth as experiencing the same plight. Introductions to LGBTQIA+ subjects also tend to be overwhelmingly homonormative. For example, current resources often push positive imagery that represent happy and 'normal/homonormative' gay people, which usually consists of successful gay celebrities, gender-conforming gay athletes and gay parents. This is problematic as it does little to disrupt heteronormativity. Instead, it creates an environment where LGBTQIA+ youth can only be accepted through certain standards and norms, which are largely heteronormative, e.g. gender-conforming/monogamy/marriage/child-rearing. This equates certain norms with success/happiness and further supports heteronormativity, as heterosexual norms are viewed as standards to aspire to. This can silence and exclude LGBTQIA+ youth who cannot conform, or do not want to conform, in such heteronormative ways. Consequently, Queering the Art Classroom argues that the curriculum needs 'queering', which means addressing its inherent normativity and discussing the construction of normativity, instead of just simply adding in topics on LGBTQIA+ people into the curriculum.

But how can this be achieved in the curriculum? And how can this be explored in the art classroom? Do we just simply explore LGBTQIA+ artists with students? But who or what is LGBTQIA+ art? And, how do we explore this artwork without further stereotyping LGBTQIA+ people?

A majority of these questions cannot be explored in this short piece. There is undeniably a dilemma with presenting artwork to students that has LGBTQIA+ identities depicted in the content as examples of LGBTQIA+ artwork, as this could lead to essentialism. Yet, I am not wholeheartedly opposed to presenting this artwork to students, as this would, to some extent, reclaim certain histories that have been ignored in the curriculum in the past. It may also be an accessible way for students to understand and discuss what gender and sexual norms are and look like.

However, for reasons I have mentioned above, the presentation and usage of this work needs to be handled carefully, as the ways in which teachers introduce artwork influence what students may understand. Perhaps questions with students could centre on troubling the idea of what being LGBTQIA+ is by asking what is LGBTQIA+ art? For example, whilst looking at a Catherine Opie artwork, teachers could ask students, what is lesbian art? Do you have to be a lesbian to create it? Or why do you think somebody would want to present in a more masculine fashion if they are born female? Do you think they are born like that? Are you born gay? Questions such as these have been fruitful to my research, as they push to trouble the notion of a fixed and inherent identity. Instead, the questions aim to cultivate spaces for ideas of the fluidity of the self.

Yet, a large majority of artwork deemed LGBTQIA+ tends to reduce sexuality or difference to figurative and recognisable depictions, such as gender bending or same sex acts/coupling. The restriction to the human form can be problematic as we tend to hold cultural assumptions with the body leading to stereotypes. Thus, in my research, I designed the GCSE unit of work centring on 'gender and sexuality' (notably not using identity labels) where I introduced and produced artwork with students that resisted literal and easily identifiable depictions of sexuality and gender in artwork. Instead, I showed abstract artwork with students that had no intended association with gender and sexuality, such as that produced by Eva Hesse, and asked them to look at the work through its materials and processes. For example, materials and processes within abstract work may evoke the complexities of subjectivity instead of a representational subject/figure. Abstraction/ambiguity is believed to have a potential for a queer stance, as non-representational objects/depictions produce less determined ways of seeing bodies and identities.

> 'The idea of ambiguity was explored by students making sculptures that focused on considering genders and sexualities outside of the body'

The idea of ambiguity was explored by students making sculptures that focused on considering genders and sexualities outside of the body. This involved investigating, with a heteronormative lens, the social discourses, materials and forms that surround everyday objects. For example, hairbrush = feminine, metal = masculine or round shapes = feminine. By doing so, students were able to make sculptures that troubled these associations by breaking the form through making. The unit aimed to not only introduce the breaking of normative genders and sexualities outside of the figurative realm, but also to trouble the normativity within art practice currently functioning in schools. As many reputable scholars have noted, art practice in schools tends to underpin formalist and representational agendas through an aesthetic discourse against an assessment framework. Therefore, during the exploration, students were invited to produce and experiment with any materials of their choosing in order to create their sculptures. The prerequisite to their sculpture was that there was no prerequisite, but to only experiment with the materials and to see where it led them.

Interestingly, the majority of the students did not like this freedom and kept asking if they were doing the 'right thing', as there was no clear outcome to meet. Most of them felt ambivalent about their work as they thought the work 'didn't look very nice' and had 'no skill'. I like to think it was not only the curriculum that was queered, but also the students, as they were troubled out of their normative art practice.

Queering the Art Classroom aims to continue its work with schools and local artists in a bid to explore gender and sexuality in art classrooms. Our goal is to keep exhibiting student work in established institutions, such as the National Trust and to encourage institutes to become more inclusive. The work created and exhibited between the students and local artists hopes to bridge the gap between 'school art', galleries and contemporary art practice. The dialogue and artwork produced with the students and local artists will undoubtedly develop and change as the cyclical pattern unfolds – an art practice which I see as truly queer. Currently, we have only been working with schools in London, but wish to work outside of the capital and have Queering the Art Classroom in schools nationwide. ■

*queeringtheartclassroom.com*
*@queertheartroom*



All artwork was made by students aged 14–15 and was exhibited in Sutton House in February 2018

If you and your school would like to get involved or learn more about Queering the Classroom and upcoming events, please contact us or follow us on social media
*queeringtheartclassroom.com*
*@queertheartroom*

# It's assembly time; you'll need your sketchbooks

*In order to create more opportunities for art at Wyvil Primary School in Lambeth, subject leader for art and design,* ***Sue Armitage****, devised a system of bringing observational drawing into the assembly hall*

**Sketchbook Assemblies was borne out of our school Big Draw and Black History Month in 2015. The theme was 'Every Picture Tells a Story' and I linked the two events by organising activities which 'told the story' of migration through art. In a whole-school assembly the children learned about the artist Stephen Wiltshire and we discussed strategies towards making a successful line drawing of a building. Our executive head, Chris Toye, who enjoys drawing, demonstrated making a sketch of St Paul's Cathedral. To show the children how the sketch was developing, a visualiser was used to project the image onto the screen. The audience were fascinated and very happy when they were told that the following day it would be their turn to draw.**

There was a real buzz about the event. All children aged 5–11 gathered in the three large halls where long rolls of paper had been laid out for them on the floor, along with photographs of famous landmarks. The young enthusiastic artists engaged with the task and, at the end of the session, a notable number stayed behind during playtime to continue to develop their drawings. We agreed to hold this event every half term, focussing on different formal elements of drawing each time.

The assemblies are now in their fourth year at Wyvil and the system has been adopted by two other primary schools in our federation. Although the skills-focus and the context vary, we always follow this regular structure:

- On the first day, there is a whole school assembly where the learning objective and three steps to success are introduced.
- An expert demonstrates using the visualiser, usually an adult but sometimes a confident child, as lead learner. During the live drawing demonstration I maintain a dialogue with the artist to externalise their thought process as they sketch.
- The work of a famous artist is also shared, highlighting this artist's attention to formal elements. For example, Rubens' directional marks to show the texture of fur on his *Lion*.
- Finally, I share exemplary children's work from the previous term's work.
- The following day, during assembly time, the children meet in phases to make observational drawings.

Sketchbook assemblies are not designed as a quick-fix replacement for classroom art lessons. Rather, they supplement and enrich children's art learning by systematically building their knowledge of techniques. Taking place during assembly time, the system is very much designed to fulfil the criteria of communal learning and contemplation: we create a sense of awe and wonder about the world; we teach children about culture and inspiring individuals; we affirm the positive values of endeavour; we celebrate achievement.

Where possible the children draw from life. Natural objects such as pine cones and seashells are good subjects for tone, and even the harvest festival donations of boxes and tins have found their way into the children's sketchbooks! When it isn't possible to draw from life, children draw from photographs: for example, images of animals to show the visual texture of fur. They become aware of the respective challenges of drawing from a real 3D object and a photograph.

It is important to keep the formula fresh. The assemblies regularly revisit line, shape, tone and texture, but in a recent assembly the children were introduced to 'drawing with scissors', like Henri Matisse. On another occasion we received a donation of flowers from nearby New Covent Garden Market and invited parents along to join in.

There is a strong focus on metacognition and being aware of the thought processes experienced whilst drawing. During the demonstration I maintain a dialogue with the artist and they share with the children the challenges they are anticipating and what they feel satisfied with in their work. Similarly, when the children draw, they are encouraged to vocalise their thinking, to persist and to recognise when they've had a breakthrough.

An indicator of the positive impact of our sketchbook assemblies is that children have adopted good practices. For example, tone bars were introduced when we drew pinecones, but now I find that some children are making them in their books independently at the start of each session before starting their main sketch. We had a very specific session on evaluation and annotation and now children are annotating their work independently. As 72 per cent of children at Wyvil are learning English as an additional language, we are always mindful that every lesson should present valuable language-learning opportunities. Observational drawing is a very powerful tool in the acquisition of English for our children, because key vocabulary is taught in a unique context of visually experiencing the word.

The experience of spending 30 minutes becoming closely acquainted with a small, often overlooked, object is beneficial to all children growing up in the digital age. With the regular call to pick up a pencil and draw, children are given an opportunity to engage with the real world in an unmitigated way. Like all analogue process, it has its inherent challenges: it may be frustrating as there is no easy one-key fix. But perseverance leads to a true sense of ownership of one's work. A child's sketch is a record of their own thoughts. ■

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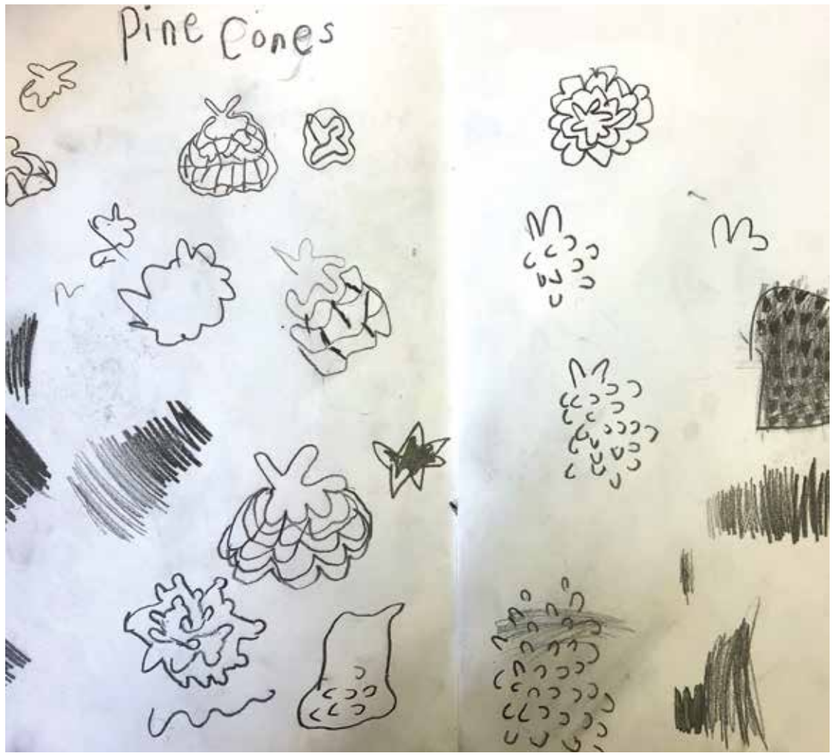
'The experience of spending 30 minutes becoming closely acquainted with a small, often overlooked, object is beneficial to all children growing up in the digital age'




# Ways of painting

***Maggie Stewart,*** *teacher of art and history of art at the West London Free School, shares how a pedagogy of painting can help us better understand contemporary art practice and access to our subject*

**When I 'teach' painting I aspire to challenge ideas of ownership, expression, representation and skill. By treating painting as a type of mark-making and set of materials, we can all relate to what the medium and what we see, without understanding the canon of painting or history of art. Here I explain how painting is arguably a very democratic medium and, negating the idea of its 'death', can, within contemporary art practice, have many lessons to teach us.**

For the past two years I have led workshops on the PGCE course at Goldsmiths College, London, to examine how we teach painting. These workshops generate discussions about how we teach, what painting is, what 'quality' means, and what 'autonomy' and 'ownership' are. On each occasion the outcomes of this dialogue have differed.

The workshop provides students with the equipment and materials to make a painting. Students enter the space set up for the task. Students are then given a set of 30 instructions, ranging in detail and specificity, which they are then asked to follow. The instructions are designed to do a number of things:

- Firstly, they aim to explore different ways of mark-making, offering practical experimentation to students who may be unfamiliar with working in paint, and loosely based on ideas like Richard Serra's *Verb List*, (1967–68) where he complied 'actions to relate to oneself, material, place and process'.
- Secondly, they aim to make students question their own relationship to the space of canvas and the physical act of painting by repositioning the work in front of them and moving themselves in relation to it.
- Thirdly, the instructions take away control from the individual both in terms of the actions they take, and the painting they work on, as they move around the space to work on different pieces.
- Finally, the instructions mirror those given by some teachers in a lesson, where the sheer amount of information being given is often overwhelming.

I first led the workshop in 2017. Reading from a sheet in chronological order I aimed to give each instruction a set amount of time, mirroring a very 'traditional' classroom-led, teacher-led approach. Each artist interpreted the instruction differently, many asking for confirmation of what the instructions meant for fear of doing the wrong thing. Last year I split the group of 30 in half, with one group going into a second room where the instructions were taped to the wall next to the paper and workspaces. In the first room (1) I delivered the instructions in much the same way as before, refusing to clarify the meaning of the words, aiming to insight an instinctive response.

We in turn reviewed both rooms as a group, finding parallels and also points of divergence. Although not present in the second room (2), I was told that, for a long time, the students worked in silence until they came to the instruction to swap paintings. The artists in this room were also able to read all 30 instructions at once, planning their responses and managing their time. Despite this, many did not swap paintings and spent time considering each 'move' or gesture. At the end of the 30-minute process some had not reached the 30th point. They later described their outcomes as careful and refined.

While the artworks in the first room 1 looked similar, they were comparatively more instinctive. Instructions were read out one by one, meaning that students responded quickly or fell behind. They were not able to pre-process ideas or think about what would happen next – it came as a surprise when they were asked to move. Their work suddenly no longer belonged to them.

When asked which room they would have preferred to be in, many stated a preference for the room 1, feeling they would have been part of a more collective, energetic project. Equally some from the first room would have preferred the sanctuary of room 2. The students found working on different paintings both a liberating and frustrating experience, not feeling responsibility for a given outcome while feeling collectively motivated.

In both rooms, who did the work belong to? The artist who started the painting, the artist was told by the final instruction 30. Alternatively, with instructions such as: 'Improve the painting in front of you' was 'I' the 'artist', the benign dictator, or master of 30 assistants? Or, did the work collectively belong to all of us? If collaborative art is the interactions and participation, we are all the creators. Or is the democracy of the experience always limited by the intent of the facilitator? In terms of our wider professional practice, whose work is being produced in the classroom?

Many of the discoveries hinted at the experiences of learners in the classroom and the differing contexts we will work in as teachers. Students will have different preferences, some for more lively environments and others more contemplative spaces. Whether read or spoken, the interpretation of language and reference points has a huge impact of a learner's ability to access the curriculum. When talking about 'mark-making' and 'gesture', learners do not have an equality of experiences to access or understand what is being taught.

In many ways art, with no defined answer, means all learners can achieve, the variations in outcomes being valued over a concrete result. However, making a piece of art is also, unlike writing an essay, a very public experience creating new pressures and conflicts. Taking that pressure away by giving a list of tasks to complete can be freeing, allowing for creativity to flourish within the confines of given limitations.

> 'Painting may still be associated with traditional concepts of an individual's ability to represent or express the world around them, with skill or even accuracy, but could the way we teach painting also reflect what is happening in global contemporary art practice?'

Painting may still be associated with traditional concepts of an individual's ability to represent or express the world around them, with skill or even accuracy, but could the way we teach painting also reflect what is happening in global contemporary art practice? Could the pedagogy of painting draw attention to the action of the collective, social experience, the role of participants and their relationship to the work; a pedagogy that prioritises process and dialogue beyond outcomes? Could this both act as an opening to enhance our understanding of contemporary art practices and learning in our subject? ■

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# Linking schools and communities through design

*Every year the RSA's social design competition encourages students to deepen links between schools and communities. Beginning in October every year,* ***Sam Grinstead,*** *formally creative learning development co-ordinator at the RSA, explains why and how teachers and students can get involved*

**Top row** St Ambrose Barlow RC High School students taking part in an RSA Pupil Design Awards workshop

**The RSA Pupil Design Awards is a social design competition for secondary school students. It is a fun and rewarding competition which, through its focus on design-thinking and soft skills, offers a fully packaged programme for schools wanting to champion creativity. It gives schools a chance for their students to discover the value of art and design and creative thinking to not only themselves, but also the world around them.**

Students work together in teams of up to five, using human-centred design principles and processes to identify a social issue in their community. They then design a product, service or campaign to address that issue. Projects must be focused on an issue found within one of the three briefs we release in October each year. Last year the briefs focused on the relationship between food and ill health, meaningful work experience for school students, and social isolation and loneliness.

Teachers from either art and design or D&T run the competition as a scheme of learning in the curriculum, which means the students get a sustained amount of time in each lesson to work on the competition. Teachers tell us that one benefit of running it in the class is that they get more focused time with the groups and students work at a quicker pace. Others run the competition as an extracurricular club. This allows students more time to think between the different design stages, and gives them the time to research the briefs properly and to really discover the problem they're trying to solve.

The Pupil Design Awards aims to deepen schools' links with their local communities through human-centred research. This enables learners to develop skills crucial to success in adulthood, including cognitive skills such as problem solving, creativity, and communication and 'soft' skills such as confidence, perseverance and conscientiousness. We want students who take part to become the social innovators of the future.

A free full day's teacher training is provided for two teachers from each participating school. This is delivered in the first term of the school year by the RSA and Fixperts, a partner organisation who have a history in running human-centred design teacher training. Teachers will try out practical approaches they can use to introduce design thinking in class.

A mentor workshop will take place in each participating school. All the mentors are previous winners of an RSA Student Design Award, now studying during their final year at university or working as design professionals. Teachers tell us that their students love to hear encouragement and supportive challenge from a relatable external voice, and regularly tell us how the mentor visit has galvanised the students to make their designs as good as they can be.

All of the above is supported by the teaching resources that are distributed to schools taking part at the start of the year. There are two packs aimed at students and two packs for teachers. The teacher packs contain a scheme of work and seven lesson plans, as well as other teaching resources that can be used as a source of activities to familiarise students with human-centred design techniques.

Students submit their entries in the form of six A3 'design boards'. Entries are judged in three age categories; Years 7 and 8 (ages 11–13), Years 9 and 10 (ages 13–15) and Years 11–13 (ages 16–18). Each age category has a separate judging panel comprised of former RSA Student Design Award winners, design professionals, design educators and RSA staff, who create a shortlist of entries.

Shortlisted teams are invited to pitch their design solution in person to the judging panel at a full-day event, with the winners announced on the day. Last year's event was held alongside the D&AD New Blood Awards in the heart of London's creative district.

If you think your students would benefit from the opportunity to see how art and design relates to the world outside the school gates – and to pit their skills against students from around the country – get in touch to register your interest! ■

## Mentor Profile

**Name:** Rebecca Penmore
**Title:** Studio Rebecca Penmore and co-founder of Eight Years

I won an RSA Student Design Award in 2012 and I have been a mentor on the RSA Pupil Design Awards for the past two years.

As mentors there are two main things we bring to the classroom. The first is that our visit helps promote enthusiasm amongst the students. Having an external visitor disrupting the usual lesson format and having a 'real life designer' coming in and validating the students' ideas is exciting and motivating. The second thing is that we support the structuring of the students' entries. We can help come up with ideas for the structure of the submission boards, as they can be quite confusing and daunting.

I like to ask thought-provoking questions to make connections between the entries and real life. I do this to encourage students to be a bit braver in their design choices rather than settling on the first idea that they come up with. Often at the beginning of the session students can be shy and unsure, but by the end they're throwing ideas at you saying: 'We're going to do this' or 'Do you think we could do that?' You can feel the energy pouring out of them.

I think having a design professional in the classroom can help expand their awareness of design, both in terms of it as a viable career choice and thinking about the impact design can have on the world rather than just being a subject at school. I had a girl come up to me and ask: 'Do you think I could do what you do?' She wasn't studying design but was really enjoying the design thinking process. It's really rewarding to think that you've sparked an interest in design outside of the classroom. I think the competition really opens up what design can be: it's solving real life problems and I think that's what really appeals to young people.



# Comment

## #NSEAD19

Conference is always a special time in the NSEAD year and 2019 at the Hepworth Wakefield was no exception, offering a fantastic programme and a wonderful venue. Delegates praised the balance of inspiration, information, debate and hands-on making. Our speakers were superb, our workshops productive and our delegates engaged – all vital ingredients for conference.

Key-note presentations from Dr Rachel Payne, Ofsted's Katrina Guelli and patron Keith Brymer-Jones reminded us why we do what we do. We explored themes of opportunity - to take risks, to collaborate and to stand up for our subject.

Education continues to face real challenges – in all sectors and stages throughout the UK. Educators from the four nations discussed the issues that influence our subject; the growing gender gap, lack of teacher development, under-investment, lost curriculum time, no bursaries for trainee teachers, the postcode lottery that surrounds cultural entitlement, and access to quality learning in art, craft and design. But, whilst the landscape is bleak, at conference we have the chance to share ideas and seek creative solutions.

The joy of NSEAD is the diversity and breadth of experience of our members. Events where we come together allow us to celebrate the wonderful spirit of art, craft and design education. From new entrants to seasoned professionals and academics, artists, practitioners and classroom warriors we can see what a uniquely broad church NSEAD is. You will always find somebody to connect with, someone to learn from and someone to teach.

Thank you all for a brilliant conference and another productive NSEAD year.

**Michele Gregson, General Secretary**
*michelegregson@nsead.org*

# SCHOOLS & COLLEGES PROGRAMME 2019/20

AD MAGAZINE: ISSN 2046-3138

'Club' armchair, model B3. Designed by Marcel Breuer. Germany, 1925


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