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Think inside the sketchbook

Gillian Robinson, Alison Mountain, David Hulston

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Ad magazine itself is a further example of collective practice and we are all indebted to each and every one of its contributors. The aim is that AD continues to be an informative and inspirational view of the best art, craft and design, and that it will encourage more authors to share their practice and research – online, in the classroom, in galleries and museums and of course in future issues. Sophie Leach, Editor AD

Twitter: @nsead_sophie
Facebook: http://on.fb.me/1ASD1Q

Please send submissions to sophieleach@nsead.org or if they are primary-related to John Bowden johnbowden@btinternet.com

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New – out now!

Think inside the sketchbook

Gillian Robinson, Alison Mountain, David Hulston

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In many ways, the future of craft and the digital industries are intertwined

individuals and communities develop skills and knowledge, making significant contributions to society and the economy. We must ensure that future generations have access to those empowering life-enhancing skills.

Rosy Greenlees, Executive Director and Katy Bevan, Participation and Learning Manager, Crafts Council

Craft Action Network: A national learning and participation network for contemporary craft (CAN)
www.craft-action.org.uk

Next Gen: Transforming the UK: into the world’s leading talent hub for the video games and visual effects industries
www.nesta.org.uk

David Gauntlett, Making is Connecting: The social meaning of creativity from DIY and knitting to YouTube and Web 2.0, Polity Press, 2011

Craft Club: The Crafts Council and the UK Hand Knitting Association launched Craft Club to provide young people with the opportunity to learn craft skills from members of their community via free after-school clubs. Through the support of schools, teachers and the enthusiasm and skills of the local community, craft skills and techniques are being taught.

The Craft Club website www.craftclub.org.uk provides volunteers with access to teaching tools, practical tips and project ideas and participants with a forum to communicate.

Firing Up: Firing Up provides teachers with the skills to teach ceramics in a creative and enjoyable way, finance for the maintenance of kilns, training for staff on how to use them and delivery of inspiring schools workshops.

With funding from the Ecclese Fairburn Foundation and Paul Hamlyn Foundations, Firing Up uses a ‘cluster’ format where an ambassador, a technician and up to ten undergraduate students from the ceramics department of a HEI work with teachers and children from local secondary schools on creative and engaging ceramic projects.

Above images 1–2: Lindens Primary School
Above images 3–4: Ceramic Jenny Beaven digging clay with pupils from Lisenced Community College, Cambridge © J Beaven, 2011
Learning through Looking

A good practice case study

‘Exploiting visual communication to promote inclusion and achievement’: Ian Middleton HMI investigates how the shared principle of ‘learning through looking’ impacts on a whole school

Enabling a strong visual arts department to impact on the whole school community requires passion and commitment at all levels. Chris Dean the head teacher at Icknield High School, provides an insight into the factors contributing to the continuous rise in students’ achievement in the visual arts at the school; 95% of students left the school with an A*-C GCSE grade in the subject in 2010, more than three times the national average. ‘At a time when the curriculum offered by schools to their students is under scrutiny and questions are being raised as to the worth of the subjects on offer, it is important to remember the importance of the arts and their impact on students’ inclusion and achievement.

While we all value the appearance and display of an art room as being of the highest quality. The basics need to be taught, but we want more than this for our young people. We want them to be filled with awe and wonder, to bring with confidence and higher self-esteem and to appreciate the beauty of the world around and the brilliance of those who have created and continue to create the society in which we live. It is for these reasons that Icknield High School has dedicated itself to the development and promotion of the visual arts for the last two decades and why it took the opportunity to be a specialist school at the earliest opportunity. Over this period we have had the privilege to work with inspirational people from across the arts world, who, in turn, have passed on their passion and knowledge to generation after generation of young people. In their turn these young people have flourished and gone on to great things in the arts industries, thereby ensuring that the legacy, which this country has for being a centre for the arts and media, continues. In school the impact of the arts has been increasingly relevant in a world dominated by visual communication’.

The changing focus of displays at the school ensures that learning environments remain stimulating and suited to learning objectives. Staff excel in using visual communication in different ways, but all share a belief that students’ observation, analysis and interpretation of visual information, ideas and individual examples complement the wider work of the teacher. Teachers have explained how their approaches help students understand what is expected in their specialist area. The first examples are provided by textiles specialists Jane Corbett and Pav Mann whose displays focus on concepts of particular relevance to the media used; colour, pattern and surface.

‘I believe the appearance and display of an art room is extremely vital to stimulate creativity in students’ work, sometimes subconsciously. The colour and vibrancy of a display can be particularly inspiring. Students are always commenting on the displays in my room, they notice the colour, embroidery, different textures and the feel of the work displayed, especially if it is a fabric based. They notice if the displays have changed and always say if they approve or disapprove of the work and why.’

‘The students are inspired when they see a diverse range of work produced by their peers and this gives them the confidence to produce something of their own. Students respond positively to seeing the high standards of work and are intrigued by the materials that have been used. This in turn motivates them to try out new skills and approaches in their own practice’.

Ellie Jackson, a specialist teacher in three-dimensional work, explains how the emphasis of displays on structure, form and spatial concepts are used:

‘I have found my 3D processes wall particularly useful. I have included examples of different materials used in 3D and different techniques. When I am talking to the whole class about a particular material or technique I can refer to the example on the wall, or take the example down so that students can touch and feel the material… Some of my examples are intentionally incomplete. This
Film is another popular option at the school but use static displays to supplement an extensive resource of moving images used in lessons. Neil Joyce, Subject Leader – Film, notes:

‘To enable static displays of a moving image, exemplary elements of film displaying the correct current images are displayed in snapshot on an A3 board. Subject specific vocabulary is indicated where and why the scenes are used. The use of past exam papers helps to improve new students’ previously baffled face.

The students recognise and relate personally to the individuals in the movie, which proves to be immensely motivational to learners.’

The school is also using film increasingly to advance the principle of ‘learning through looking’ to a higher level of sophistication, and student participation. The supplementary subject specific guidelines published by Ofsted indicates that outstanding achievement in the subject is evident where students participate actively in lessons, are committed to optimal activities in and out of class and show intense interest and understand that creative practice is often challenging, purposeful and collaborative. Stemming from analysis of digital technology particularly popular with boys, innovative engaging and students more actively. Matt Trotman, Subject Leader – Digital Art explains:

‘The Digital Wonder Wall is a multifunctional learning aid that inspires male and female students in an interactive and fully inclusive way. This interpretation of ‘learning through looking’ as a starting point is totally digital, totally real and supports my future vision of art education. These are the features: Inclusive Learning: The digital wonder wall can be viewed by everyone in just a few seconds. It is available in many different forms including browser-based, screen-based, portable media and projection. It can be viewed on a mobile device, iPad and any platform that allows access to the internet or school MLE. The teacher can use her or his interactive whiteboard, or they could share the wall on twenty individual screens and they could provide a link for students to access the wall from home and not be limited by the classroom. Interactive learning: The digital wonder wall has been developed in such a way that you can only get the maximum results from it by interacting with it. Most paper-based displays involve looking; the digital wonder wall goes one step further by using sound, videos and clicks to create a truly immersive experience. Students can view work and then click on a video to see how that particular piece of work was created, interact with games or puzzles or just simply comment on ‘how about this’.

Unability: It has been designed with the teacher in mind who in turn knows each student and how to create dynamic display that is differentiated for them. So for instance, the teacher could also use the display on ‘The Fly’ quite readily and then have few variations of the display to meet five different learning styles or provide relevant material for the needs of the student.’

The impact of visual communication is not only confined to the students. Staff regularly review and modify their teaching by analysing students’ responses to the stimulus provided. An example that directly involves the use of the learning environment, is provided by Nadia Samuels, a teacher who is researching students’ perceptions as part of a Masters degree:

‘In a school where all students are required to study visual arts as a subject, I found it particularly important that I build confidence about drawing. I displayed examples of drawing that challenge stereotypes about drawing and aid students in developing their own work, including the many ways to approach drawing without putting pencil to paper, through stitch, wire, birch, collage, felt.’

Highly reflective teaching, informed by external research, is developed by art teacher Angela McDonald:

‘Hanging displays can adjust the height of your room giving maximum impact and a focal point for students. A visually exciting classroom stimulates students and promotes learning, supporting research that refers to complex web of energy between students and teacher’. Bouding Berger’s ‘Ways of Seeing’ reinforced my view that there is little room for the humble classroom’.

Staff regularly review and modify their teaching by analysing students’ responses during whole class discussion and individual follow-up. However, Keri Hans, Subject Leader – Art, makes an important point about the use of displays by individual students, as and when required:

‘The observation and intervention of the teacher is critical in ensuring that students’ responses are highly original and support their personal development. Students are also encouraged to develop their independence in learning through utilizing the displays to help answer questions and other challenges within their own work. The value of involving students in the process of display assembly as the outcome is also emphasised by Natalie Mays, Subject Leader – Creative Design:

‘It is important to make displays meaningful for students. Many teachers use their displays as a learning tool, involving students in the process of making a display. Involving the students in representing current events, topics and themes helps to keep learning current and interesting’. The features that underpin the effectiveness of the ‘Learning through Looking’ strategy can be summarised as:

• Shared vision: At all levels, in this instance, the value of visual communication
• Opportunities for staff to contribute individually and creatively to innovation
• Continuous reflection, revision and refreshment of different approaches used
• Strategies to embed a subject-based initiative across the school

There are many other aspects of provision at Icknield High School that contribute to students’ outstanding achievement. Fundamentally, the ‘Learning through Looking’ strategy can be summarised as:

• Strategies to embed a subject-based initiative across the school
• Continuous reflection, revision and refreshment of different approaches used
• Opportunities for staff to contribute individually and creatively to innovation
• A high value given to observation underpins the needs, interests and aspirations of a diverse student population. Staff are aware of the needs, interests and aspirations of a diverse student population.

Secondary Schools

At secondary school there was opportunity to do projects which were engaging. I started to see that art and technology go hand-in-hand, and that if wanted to pursue a career in design, be it automotive, textiles or animation, then art, design and technology could help develop the skills and thinking needed.

We also had both male and female art and design teachers and technicians, all of whom were role models and were helpful when discussing ideas. Male role models and sex differences. Now, when we had in my secondary school were good positive role models and were highly regarded and respected by students.

Family

Thankfully my mother encouraged me to pick up a pen and start drawing from a younger age than most – this gave me a love of art and made me feel that I was good at it. She had initiated sense that art was something I enjoyed and should children could cope and manage their money well enough for their way of life.

New Directions and the Next Generation of Students:

Students are more likely to achieve and excel when pursuing what they enjoy and have an interest in. Being forced to study either history or geography seems ridiculous when something more relevant or important to them. Students interested could be more focused.

Having a wide range of skills will be useful. As more and more businesses become global, foreign languages will give bilingual students an advantage in the employment. I would not however consider prioritising the study of languages over what you are actually interested in.

And now…

I’m currently studying for an MDes Automotive Design at Coventry University. The University is known not only for producing excellent technical designers but also ‘design thinkers’. I believe the role of the designer is not only to have ability to make things look aesthetically pleasing but for the product to have an emotional connection with the user.

During my time at university I have had extensive practical user embodiment experience. Several of your projects involved evaluating public transport – I used props such as ‘pregnancy bellies’, wheelchairs, arthritis gloves and low vision glasses to simulate the difficulties a wide range of users may experience. Research further dictates all my projects. In this final year, I am reviewing challenges and reduce a vehicle’s footprint on the environment through roadressing the conventional life-cycle of a vehicle. From production to disposal.

Akeah Patel, www.biromotive.co.uk
Turrell’s practice is primarily concerned with light and space and he has been building Skyspaces since 1974. A Skyspace is a chamber containing only existing lighting, an aperture and an environment to raise awareness and inspire people to look and not focus, what are you looking at? You are looking at you looking.’

Turrell has created the Deer Shelter Skyspace at YSP within an Eighteenth Century building – the deer shelter. His work does not alter the shape of the landscape or disturb the tranquility of the site but creates a place of contemplation and revelation, harnessing the changing light of the Yorkshire sky.

‘First, I am dealing with no subject. Perception is the object. Secondly, I am dealing with no image, because I want to avoid associative, symbolic thought. Thirdly, I am dealing with no focus or particular place to look. With no object, no image and no focus, what are you looking at? You are looking at you looking.’

Taking Turrell’s words as inspiration, YSP artist educators invited teachers and their Year 4 (age 4-10) pupils to document personal observations and associations within the space. Questions were as to the science and meteorology of what was being observed, such as cloud classifications and the process by which clouds and precipitation develop: the contrast of the same sky appearing bright blue through the aperture of the Skyspace yet becoming a solid grey when stood outside at dusk the blue turned black and appeared to become a solid ceiling that could be touched this effect, known as ‘vauling’ (often noted in scientific literature); the peace and sense of a ‘meeting place’ was also discussed – an acknowledgement of Turrell’s practice as a Quaker.

David Nash, b: 1942 UK

Seventy One Steps, 2010, Oxley Bank

‘With wood sculpture content to see wood’, a warm familiar material, before realising the form first, form around. Churning radically changes this experience. The surface is transformed from a vegetable material to mineral – carbon – and one sees the form before the mineral. The sense of time and scale are strongly changed, the charred form feels compacted yet distanced in an expanded space.’

David Nash returned in 2010 to YSP following his redundancy in 1984-85, for what he described as the most important project of his career. He created a site specific commission within YSP on the walking route to Longside via Oxley Bank. Seventy One Steps climbs from the lake up to the top of the bank, connecting the two sides of the valley and four galleries. Seventy-one huge oak steps, carefully charred and oiled, follow the line of the land on the hill. The steps are completed by thirty tons of coal embedded between the steps to create a stunning installation that will erode and change over time. The installation is also sensitive to the woodland setting which becomes covered in bluebells in the spring. Referring to the natural cycle of wood, this ‘going’ work will contain only seating, lighting and an aperture to the sky. The installation creates a symbiotic link between the past and the present, referring to the estate’s history as a pleasure ground and sporting venue and its role today.

Key stage 3 (ages 11-14) pupils worked alongside expert charcoal makers and artists at YSP. Large scale charcoal retorts were made and the characteristics of different trees were learnt, an important focus of Nash’s work.

Individuals sourced natural objects found in the parkland to carbonise: pine cones, mouse skeletons, hooves, mushrooms and more were placed in individual tins on hot embers in a fire bowl. Fragile blackened forms emerged in 5-10 minutes. The self made charcoal was used to draw the trees from which they came.

Greyworld UK, Artist Collective formed 1990

Playground, 1999; YSP Collection, Lower Park

Greyworld’s work challenges the traditional barriers between art and audiences, creating public-activated installations and sculptures. Playground’s was built in what is believed to be an Eighteenth Century stable or poppy. Sensors embedded in the floor and benches respond to motion, translating it into gentle tones. As people play, their movement creates a unique soundscape, each note determined by the actions of the viewer. It is through this interaction, and the architectural elements, that the installation creates a symbiotic link between the school for projects at school.

Andy Goldsworthy b: 1956, UK

Shadow Stone Fold, 2007, Country Park

“The physical aspect of making stuff, the resistance of it is vital for me. For me, it can’t exist solely in the mind. It has to be made; it has to come out of some physical process.”

During his exhibition at YSP in 2007, Goldsworthy consulted a tenant farmer at YSP to design and replace a wooden fold in the Country Park with a permanent stone structure. The Fold contains a large stone, which was cut from a local quarry. Goldsworthy intended that people should make ‘shadows’ on the stone. He made his first ‘shadow’ in St. Abbs in 1984 by lying on the ground when it began to rain, waiting for the shower to pass, and leaving behind a dry ‘shadow’. The Shadow Stone Fold at YSP was installed on 6 February 2007, and in the late afternoon Goldsworthy lay in the first snowfall of the year, making and recording the work’s first ‘shadow’ Subsequently many people’s ‘shadows’ and memories have added meaning to the stone.

For Andy Goldsworthy’s contact with the dynamics of changing landscape is essential, rather than what he calls the ‘dead space’ of the studio. The dialogue between ephemeral and permanent artworks alongside works of the photograph was explored with the Key stage 2 (ages 7-11) pupils who created and documented their own time-based sculptures. The ‘shadow’ sculpture ‘wroters’ were created in teams using pupils’ own bodies to form a single sculpture within the site. Their photographs became the sculpture providing further stimulus for projects at school.

In November 2010, eight students and two members of staff from Thomas Tallis School travelled to Oklahoma in the United States to present our thoughts about creative learning and the future of schools at the Creativity World Forum. This was an annual event engaging representatives from the 14 districts of creativity worldwide in a conversation about creativity and entrepreneurship. The trip was the culmination of a three-month-long project coordinated by A New Direction, the London delivery organisation for the national Creative Partnerships programme, designed to promote collaboration between schools in London and Oklahoma. Representatives from three London schools (Tallis, Shornmote House and Gallions) collaborated with partner schools in Oklahoma (Howe High, Harding Fine Arts Academy and Stanley Hufield Academy).

We began our collaboration virtually, using a variety of social networking tools to explore our shared understanding of creative learning. These tools included Tumblr blogs, Facebook, Twitter, Ning and Skype. Eventually, a suggestion emerged that we might attempt to create a pop-up school at the conference in order to demonstrate some of our thoughts about creative learning in the twenty-first century. This idea resulted from our investigation of the Pop Up phenomenon in London and beyond during the summer of 2010. Across the city dance, architecture, shops, galleries, had all appeared and disappeared as quickly as the trend for temporary, ephemeral galleries, had all appeared and disappeared as commodities in the imminent move to a new school building (November 2010).

‘In order to give our students access to twenty-first-century learning they have harnessed the power of the internet and the skills of broadcast journalism to connect them with the rest of the world.

We were interested in the conceptual space between the words ‘school’ and ‘learning’ and that the internet had radically expanded our notion of what a school could be. Our Tallis Lab curriculum is concerned with exploring the benefits of Web 2.0 tools and a more project based approach to learning and we had begun to make really effective use of blogging, web design and social media. We admired the work of visionaries like Sugata Mitra and the research of Charlie Leadbeater on education innovation. We were also inspired by John Darvill’s use of Google Docs to create a Twitter school in 30 minutes at the 2010 Handelshuld Conference. We were determined to carve out a significant space for ourselves at the conference so that young learners could showcase their ability to work collaboratively using new media.

We established our Pop Up School in an unoccupied corner of the conference hall (Booth 1005) and engaged delegates with a variety of tasks hosted on our @popupschool website and hashtag. We used Twitcam to broadcast live from the stage during our presentation. We made films, did research, created podcasts – mostly from our new iPod Touch devices equipped with the relevant apps iMovie, Audiboo, Tumble etc. The younger students (age 9-10) sang songs in the foyer (rather as if a Flashmob event) or asked a series of challenging, open-ended questions. We aimed to give our learners an opportunity to engage with adults as equals, co-learners and to publish their thoughts and reflections to a real audience online.

A variety of bloggers at the conference wrote complimentary pieces on their sites and, thanks to Twitter, we were able to follow them. In between our activities on the conference floor, we took turns to watch the keynote addresses of various influential figures. We had the privilege of meeting and chatting to Sir Ken Robinson, who was very keen to find out about the changing taking place in the UK education system.

The most valuable lesson we learned was just how easy and powerful it is to connect with other learners and learning professionals and how social networking and new handheld devices like the iPod Touch and iPad to engage in an international creative learning collaboration.

Our Pop Up School Adventure

Crossing continents, collaborations and new directions: how the Pop Up phenomenon and Web 2.0 tools are changing both schools and galleries

Leti Ning, Twitter and Tumblr blogs

Left: A member of Tangled Feet Theatre Company engages a Tallis student in The Measurement Shop, July 2010

Rebecca Chenoweth and Joseph taking centre stage

The most valuable lesson we learned was just how easy and powerful it is to connect with other learners and learning professionals

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Old habits die hard and having taught for 20 years before becoming Museums Education Officer I am still an early riser. This means that I enter Kelvingrove with the cleaners and restaurant staff at 8am. The building holds a magic at this time of day especially as the organ player has started his rehearsal for the one o'clock performance. As I make my way to the office the strains of a classical masterpiece follow me. It can give delusions of grandeur when the Arrival of the Queen of Sheba starts as I cross the Centre Hall!

Sometimes I can’t believe my luck that I have bagged the job in a place that has meant so much to me since childhood. Not many people can pass a Rembrandt on the way to the loo at work!

My first job, as with most, is to check my emails. Although I am based at Kelvingrove I work with seven other venues including the Gallery of Modern Art and the Burrell Collection. If people ask me to describe my job I usually say it’s looking at ways in which our collections can inspire and support the school curriculum across all sectors, and believe me they do!

At the moment we have over 100 workshops across the venues. So it’s not only art, but all other curricular areas that I have to consider. My primary teaching background has stood me in good stead.

One of the privileges of this job has been the opportunity to work with artists whom I have admired. Very often I have to take a deep breath before phoning them to ask them to work with us or to speak at one of our monthly talks as I am a bit star struck and nervous!

One such artist was Steven Campbell. He began by doing a talk for us and went on to lead many successful workshops until his untimely death in 2007. The Steven Campbell Trust is keeping his legacy alive by continuing to support masterclasses led by new artists in the museum. When I first met the job I knew as soon as I realised I could keep these talks for secondary pupils with interesting and talented artists but that there was shortage in and around Glasgow. Glasgow Museums has a regular programme of temporary exhibitions such as The Glasgow Boys this year. It was hugely successful which gave the Learning and Access team new challenges, mainly trying to get 60 children around an exhibition already bulging at the seams with tour groups and other visitors!

I attend many meetings. Most recently the museums curatorial staff have been looking at the re-display of Salvador Dali’s painting Christ of St John on the Cross which has lots of interesting material telling its colourful history such as newspaper cuttings of protests after its purchase. There are also photographs of the Hollywood stunt man who posed for the painting and interesting links with the film industry at the time.

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Glasgow Museums have rigorous design standards and it is partly the role of Learning and Access to ensure that text labels and interpretation are accessible to all. My particular role will be to interview some of the protagonists in the story such as the student protesters (now retired!) for a little DVD within the display.

The job has so far been full of laughs, especially when I get the opportunity to work with children again. The biggest fascination is always with the mounted specimens of birds and animals (or stuffed animals as our audiences prefer to call them). The most commonly asked question from children is “are these things dead?” which immediately leads to a description of the art of taxidermy. After one such explanation I came across two children-curiously inspecting the fibreglass sculpture of Elvis outside the Natural History gallery.

“We’re just looking to see where he’s stitched up!” they told me.

Ultimately my goal is to make objects and paintings not only relevant to the school curriculum, but to try and open up the excitement of seeing original objects and works of art in the flesh. I want teachers and children to have the same experiences that have made my own life so rich. They say: “Find a job you love and you’ll never have to work another day in your life.” That just about sums it up.

Anne Wallace
I have always enjoyed the challenge of creating a fun environment through art and display. We have a dynamic department in drama, music and art. I am able to be creative at heart and I have many skills that I can flex on my job. Melrose School is a beautiful, listed Georgian building but the display space is limited. Last year, when year 5 (age 9-10) was studying the Tudor monarchs, we created large-scale portraits that were placed on the walls of the staircase: the perfect place to hang a ‘rogues’ gallery’. They have been well admired and bring a smile to anyone who visits the school – Henry VIII’s cheeky grin cheers me up every day.

Using paintings and photographs from books and the web, 21 girls worked collaboratively in small groups, choosing and matching fabric, braid, wool and other materials to produce their collage king or queen. The girls went to London during the summer term and visited the National Portrait Gallery – an opportunity to compare their efforts with the masters.

This year, the impending royal wedding provided the perfect opportunity to follow last year’s success and a new challenge was set. Queen Elizabeth, the Duke of Edinburgh, Prince Charles, William and Kate made the perfect subjects for our latest project. We found some brilliant caricature images on the internet and set to work.

The girls, in groups again, started by painting backgrounds on large sheets of card. Working on such a large scale can be difficult for children and they needed help to get the proportions right. Once they had an idea of how big their work was going to be, they were off.

They drew face shapes on separate pieces of card and then cut them out, creating the face by sticking toy stuffing on the shapes to build up the foreheads, cheeks and chins. Next they covered the faces of the ‘more mature’ royals with Mod Roc creating the wrinkles, crow’s feet and other saggy bits!

When this had dried and hardened, the faces were covered with pink cotton jersey soaked in PVA glue (I’d dyed some old white T-shirts which we used to make the bodies of marionettes for another project). Again, the children worked the fabric, pinching it to create the wrinkles, then left it to dry completely. The ears were made on separate pieces of card using Mod Roc. Meanwhile, the noses for The Queen, Prince Philip and Prince Charles were formed by fixing corks together, covering them with toy stuffing, then wrapping them with the jersey fabric. William’s and Kate’s noses were made from stiff material then glued in place.

The faces were assembled, then painted and glued onto the backgrounds and polystyrene eyes were added. The girls enjoyed rummaging to find the perfect fabrics and materials for the clothes and other details. Kate’s eyelashes were made from curled black card. Thick wool made great hair for her and William, and fur fabric worked really well for Charles and Prince Philip. The Queen’s hair was made from grey knitting wool and pieces of natural un- spun wool tops. The crowns were cut from silver and gold card, bejewelled and stuck down.

Real coins made Prince Philip’s medals (showing the Queen’s head, of course!) including an old two-shilling piece and a local coin showing our famous Guernsey cow.

To make the picture frames, each girl designed her own panel. Then each group created a final panel using a part of each girl’s design. They painted their frames and then glued them into place.

When the project was finished I asked the girls to evaluate their work. Sophie, 9, said ‘It was really good fun. I worked on the portrait of Prince Philip and learned how to mould the Mod roc. I hadn’t used it before and I liked the way it hardened quickly so that we could work on it without having to wait. Sasha, 10, was pleased with the results. She said “I worked on the Queen and liked making her hair. We used toy guns and I liked making the crowns. We all did it together. It was good working on all project.” Ella, 10, added, “I worked on Prince Charles and enjoyed making the wrinkles. I liked working out the patterns for the frame. It was good that everyone managed to combine their ideas.

So we now have new faces looking down from our portrait gallery.

Meg Bailey is art co-ordinator at Melrose, the Junior Department of The Ladies’ College in Guernsey.

The Royal Portraits

The Royal Wedding provided perfect focus for Melrose Junior School’s ‘rogues’ gallery

‘Once they had an idea of how big their work was going to be, they were off’
‘We started with the understanding that the network could operate and grow through social media, but that, to have inclusivity, would need to offer face-to-face and email communication. We had no funding for the network so had to rely on goodwill and pro bono writers. We started to build a social media presence, which we used to network, and we had the help of Denise Taylor who was then Director of Specialism at Lord Lawson of Beamish Arts College in Sunderland. We contacted her to see if she could continue that and also offer an opportunity for other people in other areas to be part of a network.

Being a lifelong divergent thinker, my idea was huge and my reality check was low. But, I slowly believed we could do something. So, I enlisted the help of Denise Taylor who was then Director of Specialism at Lord Lawson of Beamish Arts College in Sunderland and we decided to work together on creating a network. Next, I visited across the North East of England, working with multiple people on the North East Art Teacher Educator Network (NEATEN), started in 2007, when I became a Consultant. It is a network of FE, artists, or gallery and museum educators. We invited colleagues in FE, and gallery and museum educators. Our presenters might be researchers, practitioners from varied subject disciplines, and more specifically with observational/figurative sketchbooks, visual diaries and journals not only for themselves and for their students on the Northumbria PGCE Art course. We have ‘members’ from over eight local authorities and have people who travel long distances to attend sessions. We are currently setting up a new network in other regions. We now have a Facebook page, we plan to have a day trip to London art galleries and also get a twitter presence alongside our Facebook one. News and events also travel the network via our large email list. It is a community of practice, a vibrant, happy, inspirational group of people passionately involved in art, craft and design education. Let’s end with a quote from Denise Taylor: ‘It just love the community feeling ‘we’re all in this together’ (High School Musical).’

At a time when the Government is hell bent on pushing art and design education to the margins of the school curriculum, it is very possible to know that self-help is at hand in the form of Think inside the sketchbook. The authors are from a sketchbook and journals are more than just a few lines in a notebook. They are the tools for expressing, working through trial and error, asking and answering questions... they provide an aura of the professional world to children as researchers. This book aims to capture the spirit of sketchbooks and keeps them, and offers a number of practical strategies to use for their implementation.’

Below: prizewinning workshop

**Book review**

**Think inside the sketchbook**

Gillian Robinson, Alison Mountain and David Holston

Published by HarperCollins in association with NSEAD (2011)

It identifies the kinds of thinking that sketchbooks and journals promote, explaining the what, why, and how of keeping sketchbooks.

Think inside the sketchbook makes very helpful connections between the work of professionals and that of schoolchildren. It is a clearly illustrated and very readable book that will have additional value to educators. It identifies the kinds of thinking that sketchbooks and journals promote, explaining the what, why, and how of keeping sketchbooks. It is dominated by the artist’s voice, but also includes examples by designers and other professionals, muses on philosophy, and encourages the reader to keep journals. There is an excellent section on education which details the benefits of sketchbooks for increasing the understanding of children’s work and encourages the use of sketchbooks in schools. The section on professional development is very comprehensive and includes examples from a wide range of arts and education professionals. It reminds us of the potential of sketchbooks' power for encouraging teachers, students and the general public to think outside the box.

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Because it is primarily an advocacy document, where the intention is to inspire and enthuse, the text does not criticize the use of sketchbooks by young people.

The book is a welcome addition to the growing range of publications that throw light on the use of sketchbooks. In this particular book, a key feature is the wealth of approaches possible. It identifies the kinds of thinking that sketchbooks and journals promote, explaining the what, why, and how of keeping sketchbooks. It is dominated by the artist’s voice, but also includes examples by designers and other professionals, muses on philosophy, and encourages the reader to keep journals. There is an excellent section on education which details the benefits of sketchbooks for increasing the understanding of children’s work and encourages the use of sketchbooks in schools. The section on professional development is very comprehensive and includes examples from a wide range of arts and education professionals. It reminds us of the potential of sketchbooks' power for encouraging teachers, students and the general public to think outside the box.

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Primary trainee teachers and ‘The Making’

Susan Ogier on the importance of training and making

The NSEAD annual conference is an important and refreshing experience for many reasons. Not only that it is the opportunity to meet old friends and make new ones, all with one thing in common, which is a passion for art, craft and design, and inspires new audiences to engage with the art of ‘making’. It promotes high quality contemporary art, craft and designing for education.

A conversation here, an idea there – anything can happen. Before you know it a whole new project is beginning. That is what happened to the students from Oxford Brookes, working with ‘makers’ during their taught course to increase their knowledge and understanding of practical skills. The project was funded by the Paul Hamlyn Trust specifically to introduce ‘making’ and craft skills to ITE students. The second stage of the three-year project was to monitor the impact of artists and craftspersons working with primary students. It quickly became apparent that my second year BA(QTS) art and design subject specialists would be ideal candidates for the second stage.

On this course, students work as arts-in-schools collaborating with a designated class teacher to formulate an open-ended art experience for children. They are often short of time and resources – especially receiving a piece of Mail Art that has been handcrafted and made by a fellow student or, even by correspondence with old friends from the same medium. It is an earnest and beneficial practice for use in the classroom, but they were also offered a glimpse of what their own CPD might, and should, consist of in the future. Teachers were free to facilitate the practical work by inspiring the students. In the spirit of collaboration and reciprocation the art subject leaders from host schools were invited along to the workshops. The students were able to meet the teachers in a relaxed way on their own home territory, and begin to discuss projects with them from a framework of shared experience.

How Roehampton students stayed in touch during their placements

It all started when our Course Tutor, Jo Davies, introduced us to Andy Hoang, e-learning tutor for PGCE Secondary at Roehampton University. Andy was due to show us the new e-portfolio facility on our VLE and how we might use it to stay in touch, share ideas and support each other when we are out on school placements. Although all of the group are IT literate, we wished to do something more practical and not put too fine a point on it – arty! Luckily for us, Andy Hoang is much more than a web expert and, as an artist himself, asked if we might instead like to get involved in ‘Mail Art’ – a phenomenon set up to counter the prevalence of online social networking sites. Mail Art is an attempt to communicate through a much more ‘old-fashioned’ and tactile way. It involves sending an actual postcard, handmade or at the very least hand-armed so that some art practice is going on, and completed with personal messages. Mail Art, it seemed, would provide the perfect platform for our tight-knit group of PGCE students to stay connected throughout our first and rather daunting teaching experience.

We used a system whereby everyone was to send and receive a piece of Mail Art each week. Of course, this didn’t always go to plan, as the workload increased and the network took its toll, some of us sent Mail Art temporarily to the side. But most weeks I received a postcard, and boy did I look forward to each one. There is no such thing as ‘selfish sending’ and, as an artist myself, asked if we might instead like to get involved in ‘Mail Art’ – a phenomenon set up to counter the prevalence of online social networking sites. Mail Art is an attempt to communicate through a much more ‘old-fashioned’ and tactile way. It involves sending an actual postcard, handmade or at the very least hand-armed so that some art practice is going on, and completed with personal messages. Mail Art, it seemed, would provide the perfect platform for our tight-knit group of PGCE students to stay connected throughout our first and rather daunting teaching experience.

The students were all extremely positive about the experiences. They had not only realised the potential of excellent art-teaching practice for use in the classroom, but they were also offered a glimpse of what their own CPD might, and should, consist of in the future. They were in their very teaching posts.

Find out more about The Making at www.themaking.org.uk

Susan Ogier is a senior lecturer in primary art and design education at Roehampton University

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Remaining connected with Mail Art

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In March this year Brian True-May, producer of Midsomer Murders, got into trouble for declaring that he preferred to keep the culture of his fictional village completely white, in order to reflect the lack of real cultural diversity in the countryside. Argument raged in the press and online proving once again how stereotypically white persists to hold the countryside back, but also revealing many people who value the countryside as being by no means monocultural.

We have done so, however, not through direct approaches to local material, but by lateral reflection and comparison, using objects as a starting point. At the Sainsbury Centre we have substantial art collections from around the world representing considerable diversity of times, places and peoples. So we have begun with objects from largely rural situations from other parts of the world, such as a collection of artifacts from rainforests of Papua New Guinea donated by a former British Council administrator who settled in Suifli. Those objects act as surrogates for an elsewhere from which we begin a process of analysis and reflection and comparison, and which gives us the benchmarks against which to view ourselves, often in novel and unexpected ways. The objects were made by people who are intensely sensitive to their local environments, and participants are encouraged to ask a myriad of questions about them, to begin a process of research and inquiry, which then forms the template for further development.

One of our favourite objects is thin wooden and round, with a handle formed as an alligator, and curiously described by cataloguing as a ‘Fan-like object’ (fig 1). An incised, almost but not quite asymmetrical pattern filled with lime-paste, covers both sides. The pattern takes the appearance of watery-looking swirls, opposed and interlocking faces of humans or animals, fish or leaf-like trails. It perfectly exemplifies the complete assimilation of nature in a system which is mysterious, decorative and clearly symbolic and has consistently stimulated both curiosity and imagination. Ultimately it helped to the creation of huge pattern boards and performative festival events: stories invented to the creation of huge pattern boards and performative festival events; stories invented by the participants. These objects act as surrogates for an elsewhere from which we begin a process of analysis and reflection and comparison, and which, gives us the benchmarks against which to view ourselves, often in novel and unexpected ways. The objects were made by people who are intensely sensitive to their local environments, and participants are encouraged to ask a myriad of questions about them, to begin a process of research and inquiry, which then forms the template for further development.

For schools our project has enabled a focus on cultural diversity in the countryside takes centre stage in this innovative project run by the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts. It was designed to encourage schools to step outside the boundaries of their immediate environment, to ask questions about objects that are not their own, to develop ideas; we have been joined by artists, writers, actors and producers, musicians, film-makers and researchers, who have helped us to take ideas forward into the public realm as concrete projects, exhibitions and performances. All kinds of skills have been developed, from drawing to sewing, hand-made brick-making to concrete projects, exhibitions and performances.

We and our participants have responded creatively to many different contexts and developing ideas; we have been joined by artists, writers, actors and producers, musicians, film-makers and researchers, who have helped us to take ideas forward into the public realm as concrete projects, exhibitions and performances. All kinds of skills have been developed, from drawing to sewing, hand-made brick-making to concrete projects, exhibitions and performances. All kinds of skills have been developed, from drawing to sewing, hand-made brick-making to concrete projects, exhibitions and performances. All kinds of skills have been developed, from drawing to sewing, hand-made brick-making to concrete projects, exhibitions and performances. All kinds of skills have been developed, from drawing to sewing, hand-made brick-making to concrete projects, exhibitions and performances. All kinds of skills have been developed, from drawing to sewing, hand-made brick-making to concrete projects, exhibitions and performances.

For many this has led to much further exploration and the building of community relationships. Because of our emphasis at the heart of the project, on questioning and using the questions for development of the next phase of ideas, children have often taken the lead. In a number of cases, teachers have told us that the children have had a real sense of their own culture over which they have potential control. This, we feel, has been one of our main aims and achievement to reveal to people, the power they have under their noses, both to understand their own area and to affect their own local destinies.

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Andrew Mutter, President of NSEAD, shares his best...

Project
Taking the Borough’s year 10 (ages 14-15) Gifted and Talented to Wales for the very first time, I determined to get a group together after hearing David Firmin tell about the wonderful trip he made to the Conwy Castle (Anglesey) in the 90s. He made an impact on my practice – on this trip we spent eight hours on the coach with the students falling in love with each other and then making fantastic work.

Exhibition
‘British Art in the 20th Century’ at the Royal Academy of Arts (1987) – always think British art is so underated and had second fiddle to the Europeans and the Americas. This show was magnificent!

Sculpture
The Rock Eel (1913-14) by Sir Jacob Epstein astounds me because it was the first piece of sculpture to use a real object, many years before Duchamp exhibited the urinal. The torso is perched on top of a tripod and the entire figure is operating a drill if it was a machine gun. I empathize with this position – drilling forever symbolizing an eternal struggle.

Teachers
My English teacher called Dave Towner, who I recently found on Facebook, was the second was my art teacher Vic Kelly. They both encouraged me to think and to work things out for myself. They encouraged me to articulate what I thought and I thank them for it, argument has always played a significant part in my life.

Galleries
The first gallery I went to was the Whitechapel Gallery when I was in school in year 10 (age 14) – they had an exhibition of Ian Hamilton Finlay and I’ll never forget it. I started to go to the Tate Gallery in the sixth form at school – I still go to this day. Visiting the Tate Britain is like going to an old friend’s house. Some of the paintings I’ve looked at 100 or more times. I love walking up the stairs never knowing what I might see when I go through their revolving doors.

Artists
Both of my favourite painters. In the late 1960s, Botero gave nine paintings which were intended for the ‘Four Seasons’ restaurant at the Tate, a gift. I’ve sat in the room at Tate Modern and formally Tate Britain for hours and hours and hours...

Installation
Victorian Philanthropist’s Parlour (1997). Yinka Shonibare’s cloth is a metaphor for the entangled relationship between Africa and Europe. The fabric (sometimes referred to as Dutch Wax). Isoko, ‘African’, but in fact fabric based on Indonesian batik, manufactured in the Netherlands and Britain and then re-exported to West Africa. Shonibare’s installation led me to make Culture Box.

School Artwork
‘Culture Box’, it illustrated in the 2000 revision of the Art and Design Curriculum (fig 1). I worked on the project in partnership with the African and Asian Visual Arts Archive and the Art Department at Sarah Bonnell School.

Bike
My Valkyrie (fig 2) is a fantastic motorcycle, more of the bikes were custom made, making each Brough a unique piece of art. Perhaps two of the most famous owners of Brough Superior motorcycles were the Irish author and socialist George Bernard Shaw, and Lieutenant-Colonel T.E. Lawrence, of Lawrence of Arabia fame. Lawrence referred to his Brough as a bike ‘with a touch of blood in it that is rather than all the riding animals on earth’.

President of NSEAD
It is a privilege to be President of NSEAD, and I thank you for allowing me to take this office. I have worked in art education for more than 35 years – most of that time has been spent in Newham.

After a fantastic fine art education at Cambridge (Dip AIB, Birmingham (MA) and Cheltenham (Fellow) I wondered what I should do. It was then that I saw that Goldsmiths offered an Art Teachers Certificate with an Art Therapy option. There, I worked in the Maudsley Hospital and on my teaching practice I met Peter MacKessis who stressed the importance being an artist AND educator and that my own art practice was a vital aspect of my teaching.

I suppose there are moments in your life that stand clear when you look back over your career. The first has to be my experience at Lansbury School where as a young art teacher I instigated some memorable projects, such as making full size amphitheatre dimensions and floating them in the school swimming pool.

At Catford County Girls’ school I ran life drawing classes based on my Saturday morning experiences at Camberwell School of Art; what a lasting impact those classes had on me. When I moved to Monoga Art and Drama Centre the mix of creative teachers was addictive and many, many ground-breaking projects came at that time. Then at Eastlea School I had probably my most challenging time working to get a technology faculty out of special measures, desperately trying to ensure that there were progressive schemes of work in place.

Whilst at Newham Arts Education Centre I studied for a management-marketing qualification. This enabled me to understand the importance of networking, communication and collaboration and I have used the skills learnt on this two-year course since in all I do.

Over the years I have worked with countless dedicated and inspiring arts teachers and would like to thank them all for their support. During the last 14 years I have been responsible for delivering the Newham young people’s Arts Festival: ‘Bringing it – a fantastic learning experience for all involved. During the festivals we celebrated the artistic talent of Newham’s young people and worked alongside schools and other educational settings to recognise the valuable contribution the arts make to our lives and economy. This achievement was recognised when Ian Middleton, Art and Design HMI, who launched the publication Drawing together art, craft and design in schools at the opening of the festival.

I have also been privileged to lead parties of teachers through TPFD to India and Dominica looking at the way those countries investigate and teach creativity as part of their curriculum.

I hope that my time in office during this challenging time for the arts will result in a fresh move forward building on the valuable work of the past, but also embracing the new educational world we find ourselves in.

Where did those two years go?

Thoughts from John Childs, Past President

Wow! A professional development opportunity that was relevant, interesting and related to my subject. At last I found art ideas, inspiration and like-minded people: where was I?

My first NSEAD conference, was in Bath (1983). I think. It was the beginning of the critical status movement, I was 10 years into teaching and head of department in a rural comprehensive, but lacking in quality contact with others of the mind. The conference is still fresh in my mind and many conferences have followed – York, Cardiff, Glasgow and Liverpool – no name a few – all interesting, most enlightening, some providing me with ideas that were directly transferable into the classroom and teaching.

For me, membership leads to involvement, so I had I was sitting on the NSEAD’s Council as a secondary representative, then East Midlands Representative, as well as working a moderator for OCR and Edexcel. The Council meetings provided the essential education for understanding the way in which the society functioned and the aspect that financial management has into workings. Good friendships were formed with many members providing monitoring and guidance.

My belief in the Society and its potential was people finding a forum where the arts make to our lives and economy. This achievement was recognised when Ian Middleton, Art and Design HMI, who launched the publication Drawing together art, craft and design in schools at the opening of the festival.

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And my best...
One project, three perspectives: an artist-educator, teacher and designer. Our intention is to bridge the gap between what students learn in the classroom and how their skills can be applied to the 'industry' of art, craft and design.

When the opportunity arose for selection of post-16 students to take part in a Student Lead Project, we saw it as an ideal opportunity for Fine Art and Photography A Level students to work independently, planning and curating their own exhibition within a professional environment. It was a welcome opportunity for students to have full rein of their own project, with few boundaries in comparison to A Level exam restrictions they had recently encountered. It was also an opportunity to promote their work to an external and wider audience.

Student’s view

The Student Lead Project was my first chance to organise and present an exhibition. Our main concern was creating a show that would appeal to people our age – we wanted to make it relaxed and inviting and therefore tried to treat it more as an event not just a private view. What I found fascinating, and I had not realised, was how much there is to organise – as well as conceptual ideas there are also the administrative and technical aspects which we didn’t take into account at first.

We met weekly and our first meetings dealt with the more creative side of things and refining what was going to be put into the exhibition. As we got closer to the show we focused on the more technical side such as organising advertising and lighting. The timing of the exhibition meant that using our coursework was inevitable. It was too late to do the project again then the timing is something I would change, as it was hard to give the project our full attention when started into a busy time of the year. Throughout the planning process we worked together but individually took priority over areas we knew we could bring the most to. What finally bought all the aspects together was putting our pieces into the space and judging whether we had carried out our intentions with regard to our work.

On the evening of the show we felt we had succeeded in creating a relaxed atmosphere. The exhibition seemed to engage people, especially our own age – they interacted with the work and asked questions. Aside from engaging our audience, I found myself thinking about my work in more depth. The critique and ‘salon’ encouraged me to really evaluate why we were doing certain things and this in turn allowed our work to become more purposeful.

Rhonda Boating (A Level Art student at The Charter School)
Partnerships between galleries, artists and teachers lead to extensive participation in art and design by young people and have an ongoing impact on their education and career options. This is highlighted in a recently published report about two programmes managed by engage, the National Association for Gallery Education. An independent evaluation, ‘Inspiring Education in Galleries’ contains information and case studies that illustrate the impact of the two programmes on the young people, teachers, artists and organisations involved.

The ‘enquire’ and ‘Watch this Space’ programmes ran from 2004-2011. The initiative aimed to develop capacity in the sector to deliver increasingly effective educational opportunities for young people by building long-term partnerships that would increase visits to museums and galleries.

The ‘enquire’ research programme asked the questions ‘what do young people learn from working with galleries, art and artists?’ and ‘what are the best conditions for learning?’ Clusters of galleries worked with local teachers, to devise artist-led projects in galleries, that enabled them to describe, test and analyse the ways galleries support learning.

‘Watch this Space’ supported galleries to invite teachers from non-visiting schools to collaborate and develop projects that involved gallery visits. It also funded placements for early career gallery educators and artists to spend time in schools.

Over the life of the programmes more than 18,000 young people visited galleries, often for the first time. Hundreds of teachers and gallery educators benefited from professional development that led to sustained school-galley partnerships.

Impact of the ‘Watch this Space’ and ‘enquire’ programmes

Partnerships between schools and galleries helped raise the profile of school art and design departments. Teachers and teacher trainees reported increased confidence in working with contemporary art and that their practice was refreshed through new approaches to working. Some trainees reported that the experience directly contributed to the offer of work after college.

Participating artists and gallery educators reported finding new ways of working which contributed to the development of gallery programmes, resources and artistic practice. Everyone involved reported new and strengthened relationships and networks across the fields of visual arts and education.

The key legacies for young people included increased visits to galleries and involvement in young people’s programmes in and out of school, and increased opportunities for work-related learning and placements in the arts and creative industries. Equally significant are the findings that working with artists and educators in galleries improved confidence and independent learning, enhanced team working, speaking and listening, and encouraged mutual respect and reflection.

This was especially evident among young people who do less well when working with established pedagogies.

Partnerships have delivered work at all key stages. Among projects carried out in 2010-11 was a transition project, conceived by Amy Coopertbhwaite, a freelance artist educator, in partnership with the Knowle West Media Centre and the Bridge Learning Campus in Bristol which enabled KS2 and 3 students (age 7-14) to explore sense of self through a response to a photography exhibition (figs 1-4). The Shire Hall Gallery, Stafford, worked with the head of art and design from the Priory School Lichfield, and a GTP student to expand the craft and work-related learning elements of the Year 8 (age 13-14) art and design curriculum by organising workshops at the glass department at Wolverhampton University and by enabling students to curate an exhibition at the gallery (figs 5-7). Citizenship and textiles at KS4 (age 14-16) were addressed by students from two Devon schools through the exhibition ‘Fashion Footprints: sustainable approaches at The Centre for Contemporary Art and the Natural World’ (fig 6-9). engage is seeking partnerships and resources to build on the legacies of the programmes. In the current challenging funding climate and changing educational context we want to encourage local authorities to commission youth services from galleries. It is also increasingly important to offer flexible support for teachers and teacher trainees to work with galleries and artists. More independence for schools may bring new opportunities for some teachers to work with galleries, and we will continue to support the development of informed gallery/education partnerships for all young people. engage welcomes members from across the arts, education and children’s workforce. Professional development and networking opportunities are delivered nationally which will align with the emerging NSEAD Regional Teacher Networks. engage looks forward to sharing skills and expertise with teachers through joint professional development and networking events.

Teachers and teacher regional networks wishing to make contact with galleries in their region should contact engage: info@engage.org


Watch this Space 7 case studies visit: www.engage.org/watchthespace/studies.aspx
Andy Warhol had many cats and he called them all Sam. He created many drawings and prints of them using a variety of colour schemes and poses. His drawings of cats are compelling and redolent with personality, and appeal to children of all ages. We decided that ‘Sam’ would be a fantastic starting point for a Year 6 (age 10-11) project, which would involve both screen-printing and batik. This was a challenging and focused project, which allowed pupils to move a simple theme through a range of experimental methods and techniques. The children were thrilled to see their prints emerging with eyes and details. What an exciting array of cats were to be seen once all the prints were dry and ready to be displayed!

The children then used their original Sam outlines of cats and about the process of silkscreen printing and batik too!

In our school we teach a variety of learners who find themselves with us for various reasons. Some may have been permanently excluded, others are school refusers who have phobias or have been bullied; there are Gypsy Roma Travellers, looked-after children and refugees. These learners are often in classes together with nothing in common, who would never normally encounter each other.

For me art and design is a brilliant way to allow people to communicate with each other visually, to explore ideas and concepts of identity and difference, sometimes without being able to speak or, most often, not wanting to.

I often try to make my lessons more like therapy sessions. I am definitely a believer that the journey is more important than a final outcome. Students often come for one lesson but I don’t see them for weeks – or ever again. Therefore we do not know how long someone will be with us for, so my projects last for a week (often two, one hour lessons).

Frequently, I hear that boys will not do practical lessons, that boys from Muslim cultures will not do ‘women’s work’ and that modern girls do not enjoy traditional crafts such as sewing and knitting. For these reasons I choose to do a lot of group making projects with my students just to prove to those who say ‘I can’t do art’, that they can go away thinking ‘I can do art’.

In our school sock monkey project summarises everything that I try to do: every student took part, all participated in the making process, and the outcomes were highly individual without being prompted. For example, one student from Afghanistan, who had a history of self-harming, chose to design his sock monkey as a girl with a pink dress. In Afghanistan, there is a tradition called ‘Bacha Bazi’, in which young Afghan boys are sold to warlords and powerful businessmen to be trained as dancers who perform for male audiences in women’s clothing and are then used and traded for sex. We suspected that this might have been the case with him. His sock monkey said more than he would ever tell us.

Another 15-year-old student who was removed from her mother because she was at risk of getting pregnant depicted her sock monkey in a bikini with a protruding belly. She has now had a baby. The same pupil also asked if she could make another sock monkey that she could leave on the bus for a small child to find which I thought was a lovely gesture.

Many things are disclosed in these lessons. There is something unique about art and design in which a focussed making task allows students to think, talk and discuss in a safe small group setting. Each student’s sock monkey is on permanent display in our corridor. Queen’s College Prep School has an annual art exhibition in the summer term and Sam will hold pride of place at this event.

Instructions and planning sheets can be found at:
www.makeasockmonkey.co.uk
www.monkeyofsock.com
www.baat.org.uk

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Monoprinting has been used by many artists to make exciting ‘one-off’ prints. The most familiar method is really simple, involving mark-making into printing ink which has been rollerd onto a non-porous surface; the print is taken by simply laying a sheet of paper onto this and applying pressure before removing it – it is so accessible that I find it frequently introduced to young pupils at the foundation stage with striking effect. There is though a more complex method, requiring greater control and understanding which, when coupled with the opportunity for detailed drawing, makes it an ideal key stage 2 activity – it dries far too rapidly – it dries far too rapidly.

One of the main points arising from recent research into the role of the primary Art Subject Leader is that many feel a sense of professional isolation. So if you have any questions about issues that have arisen in your school, technical problems or need advice on available resources, and don’t have an informed colleague to discuss it with, you can have your questions directly answered by John Bowden. Just email him to jf@artinset.com – whatever questions you have will be answered here through your name and school will not be featured, but all queries will get a mail response. Alternatively join NSEAD’s network for Primary Subject Leaders on Facebook http://on.fb.me/e6NCJr

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Don’ts
• Try to save money by using ready-mixed paint
• Buy expensive plastic printing trays on which to roll-out the ink – a sheet of plastic coated hardboard cut into sections, or a pack of cheap floor tiles from your local DIY store will serve bigger and better surfaces for this purpose.

Thanks to Tony Jackson, an art education consultant, for sending an alternative outcome of the triangular pyramid construction method described in this latest printing method, do email me an example – it was a beautiful and satisfying piece of work by a pupil of year 3.

A parent of a child in my class is most insistant that her son is gifted in art. He copies cartoon images with some skill but I am not sure if this is a significant sign. Is it if this should be targeting him in some way? What percentage of pupils would fall into the Gifted and Talented category anyway?

Provisioning extra opportunities for each interested pupil is essential but equally it is important to address the needs of particularly ‘gifted and talented’ pupils: leaving this to the secondary stage may well be too late. I preferred to use the term ‘exceptional ability’ which was lead writer on the NESTA arts project which developed a range of indicators and exemplar teaching in identifying those pupils who were outstanding in the subject. Florence in the production of accurate drawings from observation is only one, there are several others specific to art and design together with a number of other generic indicators which are applicable to all subjects.

I would suggest that in the case you describe, the more revealing indicator of his ability in representational drawing from a first-hand source rather than copying a cartoon image, which is not a challenging task.

I would not like to put a percentage on the number of pupils who have exceptional ability – they will not be spread evenly across schools anyway. Though there are many pupils who excel in art and design, exceptional ability is rare.

Though most differentiation in art and design is outcome there are some activities where the task can be structured to offer additional challenges for the more able. The guidance provided some examples. If you want to read the detail that has been produced so far, send me an email and I can provide the source. Currently I am extending this area of research into both the indicia and how primary teachers offer support to the exceptionally able in art and design pupil – there is a request on the Facebook NSEAD primary page where I look for your participation by providing case-study information.

John Bowden
Thoughts from the NSEAD Annual Conference and AGM, 19-20 March 2011

Peter Carr reflects on this year’s conference and its significance during a period of rapidly changing policies in education.

I am sure that I am not alone among delegates to the NSEAD Annual Conference and AGM 2011 in thinking that this was the most important NSEAD conference of recent times. At this conference the process began of addressing the new and radically different political landscape that is very quickly being created in England by the Coalition government. To those of us who have been educators and more recently administrators within the legacy of the 1944 Education Act, this new landscape is a fragmented and incomprehensible one. Our education system has been confidently and clearly stated desires for a direct relationship between education and market forces. The process of dismantling the legacy of 1944, which was started in the 1980s, is being completed. The world is now against those of us who hold alongside our love of the material products of our subject, the special pedagogy that goes with it and a passion for the educational idealism inherent in the state funding system instigated by Herbert Read and others.

No doubt there will be a mourning process as we deal with the disappointment of seeing that which we hold dear as falling away into the past. True, this government will one day be gone, but it is unlikely that the damage currently being done to our public service as we know it, including state education, can in any real sense be undone, at least not with the same universality as 1944, particularly if one examines the recent records of left-leaning administrations in unpicking their predecessors’ legacies. During this mourning process there will no doubt be many debates about the differing levels of resistance or pragmatism that those involved in art and design education should adopt in relation to the current political tide. Alongside these debates will come a re-examination of the core values underpinning our subject as it is taught in schools. After this re-examination we may find that these values remain fundamentally the same as before, or we may find they have changed in response to the new political framework that we find ourselves in. However, for good or for ill, much of the current negative situation is now right for this internalised searching to take place.

On the last day of the conference, during the session given by the members of the Sorrell Foundation, it became evident that the work of the Hornsey College of Art, Saturday Art School, founded in 1956 and 50s was crucial not just to Sir John Sorrell’s own career as an artist, but also as the model for some aspects of the Foundation’s current work, but it was also crucial to the careers as artists and teachers of a significant number of the audience. Of course, either through group enquiry or generation, missed this very special moment in the history of art and design education. As the discussion progressed, we may have begun to regret this. I myself attended the same institution as an undergraduate, but Post. Bobbins and after the student occupation of 1968 by which time it had become a part of Middlesex Polytechnic. By the time I arrived there the college had become a joyful collaborator, along with its central London cousin, the London College of Printing, in the birth of punk’s extravagant theatrical disillusionment. It is not that we will now serve us well to look back at the values of the previous generation and remind ourselves of just what we can achieve through a vibrant and well-thought-through idealism.

Alongside that re-examination of our core values will come debates about the funding of a language of advocacy for our subject that can be understood by government. It may well be a tortuous debate as we look for ways of upholding our deep-seated beliefs in inter-cultural and multicultural values, individual and group endeavor in the pursuit of a better environment, education of the citizen and the individual, meaning in visual language and the formal elements, and the special pedagogy of the studio. There will be much internal debate in the pursuit of the best way of presenting a language of advocacy that upholds these values with a government that seems intent on erosioning them away, but hopefully a strong and coherent message can be fashioned from it.

John Steen’s closing comments reminded us that the way we live and work in UK schools and universities, including our approach to digital media and social networking, is fully embedded in First World economics, and as such is enormously privileged. His mention of Herbert Read in the context of the complex moral and political dilemmas of our time was interesting. Perhaps our goal is to look for the universal human values of art and design education in a world which appears to be about to extinguish them in favour of universal market forces, and when we may to some extent have lost touch with them ourselves. We also have the issue of looking for structures through which to implement these values without the governmental support systems, both national and local, that we are used to. In the closing comments mention was made from the floor of an upcoming guerrilla action. The statement of resistance from Lee Kuan Yew’s Third World to the First, ‘You have the watches, but we have the time’ may be one that we as art and design educators could now consider useful. If we are to sustain our subject and the values held within it for the long term we will need to create a space for debate and draw on all the anger and determination that we can find.

Peter Carr, Subject Head of Art PECE Art and Design, Birmingham City University

Marlene Wylie and Maria Arundo present their work with Autograph ABP at this year’s annual conference.

Annual Programme for secondary schools.

Autumn Term, with architect partnering and pre-programme training in June/July.

Each year, Open-City engages over 2000 young people with the built environment, using Architecture as a stimulating vehicle through which to explore curriculum related subjects.

Applications should be made by e-mail to the secretary of the Trust Susan Ogier at susan-ogier@hotmail.co.uk. Informal enquiries may be made to John Bowden on 07947582012.

There will be an on-going funding process but applicants wishing to be considered for the first tranche of funding should make their submission by 1 November 2011. It will not be possible to provide feedback for unsuccessful applicants.

The Trust values a wide range of inquiry into art and design education to support both the work of teachers in schools, teachers and teacher trainers in higher education and those extending their qualifications through further study.

The application should state the following:

• The focus of the curriculum development/ research and the proposed/expected outcomes of this project and how the outcomes of the project in an article in the NSEAD magazine ‘AD’.

• The context of the research (i.e. institutions or outside agencies involved if any)

• The research strategy/methodology

• The financial budget including the contribution of the researcher, if any

• Other funding sources are involved and a statement of how the contribution from the Trust will be spent.

(Minimum 500 words)

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NSEAD Regional Network Groups

Our definition of a regional network group is a group of teachers, from any phase, meeting together regularly to share information, skills and local knowledge and generally enthuse each other about art, craft and design education.

NSEAD is seeking to identify and support existing groups and to encourage and support new groups to develop and thrive.

If you have already contacted NSEAD about your existing group, or indeed your intent to set up or join an existing group in your region, then thank you, a strong national picture is emerging. If you have not yet made contact please do get in touch and we will add you to our map.

In September 2011 we are seeking to launch some new services to support regional network groups. Make sure your group is included!

Lesley Butterworth, Assistant General Secretary, NSEAD

lesley@nsead.org