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The National Society for Education in Art and Design

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Oriel Myrddin Gallery, Carmarthen: warp + weft
Poster
Oriel Myrddin Gallery, Carmarthen: warp + weft

Cover image: Make time for art
Please note: While every effort is made to check websites mentioned in SIME, some may contain images unsuitable for young children. Please check any references prior to use in the classroom. Please note that the username to access units of work on the NSEAD website has changed to ‘patchwork’ and the password to ‘quilt’
OPPORTUNITIES FOR SCHOOLS TO USE TATE ST IVES
9 October 2010 – 23 January 2011
This season Tate St Ives is showing the first in-depth retrospective of Peter Lanyon’s work for over thirty years, as well as a display of ceramics in the Heron Mall and an exhibition celebrating the centenary of the St Ives Times in the cafe.
A range of opportunities exist for Cornish schools visiting the gallery this season ranging from simply admissions (costing nothing) to bespoke tours and sketchbook sessions. If you would like to bring a group to visit during the quieter winter months call 01736 796226, email education.stives@tate.org.uk You can book online and download free teacher resource notes via: www.tate.org.uk/schoolsteachers
SIGHTSAVERS JUNIOR PAINTER OF THE YEAR EXHIBITION 2010
Three aspiring young artists from UK primary schools have won an annual painting competition run by development charity Sightsavers. Josh Cara aged eleven from Northampton, Lily Brown aged nine from North Yorkshire, and seven-year-old Charlie Jones from Bristol have all been awarded a first prize in the three age categories of the competition. Each pupil painted using this year’s theme ‘Visions of the Future’ and the winners were selected from over 5,000 entries by a judging panel, led by the Royal Academy Schools, for their use of colour, creativity, expression and originality.
The competition aims to encourage creativity with paint in the classroom whilst raising awareness of the scale of avoidable blindness throughout the world. You can find out more about the competition and view the winning paintings by going to www.sightsavers.org and clicking on the link to Nicola Davies Flickr page. For the latest news, campaigns, competitions and activity ideas visit Sightsavers’ Teacherzone and Kidzone websites at www.sightsavers.org/schools. Next year’s competition will be launched in spring 2011.
Adventures in Printmaking
Wednesday 3 April – 12 April 2011
Abingdon Preparatory School, Abingdon, Oxford. Adventures in monoprints, collographs, linoprints, drypoint prints and experimental work. Each course will provide lots of ideas for projects in the classroom and are suitable for specialist and non-specialist teachers and teaching assistants.
Each course costs £110, which includes lunch and materials. To book, please contact Pat Harrison on 01371 856823, or via admin@satsips.com
A NOTE FROM THE PUBLISHER
From January, START and A.T.W (the broadsheet newsletter for NSEAD members) are joining together to enable early years, primary and secondary educators to share, inform and exchange ideas and best practice from around the UK and further afield. We are grateful to Michele for her energy and commitment, and wish her every success in her future work at Prep School, and in the classroom.
We are delighted to announce that Michele has just been awarded a fellowship of the society for her outstanding work as editor of this magazine, and as a vice-president of NSEAD. We look forward to welcoming Sophie Leach (assistant general secretary of NSEAD) as the editor of the new joint publication. John Bowden will be co-editing with Sophie on the early years and primary school aspects of the new magazine. John is a lecturer in primary art and design and the author of The Primary Art and Design Subject Leaders Handbook (NSEAD, 2008).
NSEAD hopes that the joined-up and extended magazine will continue to offer an informative and an inspirational view of the best art and design teaching and learning across the UK. Any existing START subscriptions will be transferred to the new publication.
If you have ideas to share or questions to ask please contact sophieleach@nsead.org
From the Editor
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**ROYAL ACADEMY OF ARTS**

**Modern British Sculpture**

22 January 2011 – 7 April 2011

In 2011 the Royal Academy of Arts will present the first exhibition for 30 years to examine British sculpture of the twentieth century. The show will present a unique view of the development of British sculpture, exploring what we mean by the terms British and sculpture by bringing the two together in a chronological series of strongly themed galleries, each making its own visual argument.

Key British works include: Alfred Gilbert Queen Victoria, Phillip King Genghis Khan, Jacob Epstein Adam, Barbara Hepworth Single Form, Leon Underwood Toem to the Artist, Henry Moore Festival Figure, Anthony Cans Early One Morning, Richard Long Chalk Line, Julian Opie W-Y and Damien Hirst Let’s Eat Outdoors Today.

The exhibition is designed to be site-specific in relation to its own location at the Royal Academy in London. It will show how, for over 100 years, London and its museums have had a powerful appeal for sculptors, and how the Royal Academy itself has played a significant and controversial role in shaping modern British sculpture. To highlight the extent of the Royal Academy’s influence, the exhibition will also feature sculptures by three of its former presidents: Frederick Leighton, Charles Wheeler and Philip King.

**Ikon Gallery, Birmingham**

Len Lye: The body electric

24 November 2010 – 6 February 2011

Ikon presents the first retrospective exhibition in the UK of work by New Zealand-born artist Len Lye (1901–80). Comprising film, sculpture, painting and drawing and often influenced by indigenous Antipodean traditions, his art conveys the complexity as well as the simple joys that inspired the artist. Lye’s art conveys the complexity as well as the simple joys that inspired the artist. Lye’s art conveys the complexity as well as the simple joys that inspired the artist.

**The British Museum**

Journey through the afterlife: ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead

4 November 2010 – 6 March 2011

Journey through the afterlife: ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead will showcase the rich textual and visual material from the British Museum’s unparalleled collection of Book of the Dead papyri. The ‘Book’, used for over 1500 years between about 1600 BC and 100 AD, is not a single text but a compilation of spells thought to equip the dead with knowledge and power which would guide them safely through the dangers of the hereafter and ultimately ensure eternal life.

The British Museum has one of the most comprehensive collections of Book of the Dead manuscripts on papyrus in the world. and this exhibition will be the first opportunity to see so many examples displayed together. Due to the fragility of the papyri and their sensitivity to light it is extremely rare for any of these manuscripts to be displayed so this is a truly unique opportunity to view them. The exhibition is open exclusively for free teachers’ private view Tuesday 11 January 2011 from 6pm until 8pm, booking required. Details from: www.tate.org

**Tate Britain**

Watercolour

16 February 2011 – 21 August 2011

In 2011 Tate Britain will present a fresh assessment of the history of watercolour in Britain from its emergence in the Middle Ages through to the present day. This major exhibition will show around 200 works including pieces by historic artists such as William Blake, Thomas Girtin and JMW Turner, through to modern and contemporary artists including Patrick Heron, Peter Doig and Tracey Emin.

Drawing out a grand history which traces the origins of watercolour back to medieval illuminated manuscripts, the exhibition will reassess the commonly held belief that the medium first flourished during a ‘golden age’ of British watercolour, from roughly 1750 to 1850.

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Our Learning Department can tailor visits to all age groups and all group visits are free. In addition, we offer Meet the Learning Team’ sessions on the opening days of our exhibitions (23 November for Len Lye) when teachers can meet our education team and discuss opportunities to visit or lead projects. Places are free.

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Scintillating cells

Anne Wilford, head of art at Queen’s College Preparatory School in central London, shares her enthusiasm for working with an imaginative laminated tissue-effect technique.

‘Scintillating Cells’ was a project undertaken with children aged between seven- and eleven-years old, and proved to be an excellent project for fostering cross-curricular links with science, creativity, and the ability to work co-operatively to create a single piece of art.

Starting point

We used an interactive whiteboard to capture – using a brainstorming technique and a spider web diagram – what the children already knew about cell forms and structures. We used Wikipedia (www.wikipedia.org) to extend our knowledge of cells, and found this a very good visual and contextual resource. After discussion, we decided that our cells would be from an imaginary, exotic plant and would be composed of circles of bright, vibrant colour. The children would be free to express their own personalities and creative urges. Some children were very precise and created highly patterned repeating formations and other were more haphazard and experimental.

The collection of collage pieces is arranged within the circle of willow and small amounts of coloured inks can be dropped onto the surface of the cell using teat-pipettes. The second layer of tissue is pressed forcefully down to seal and trap the objects between the two layers of tissue. As the PVA dries, the objects in the centre become visible. Once dry, the cells can be peeled off the plastic sheeting and excess paper can be trimmed away with pinking shears to create a crisp circular form. Further decoration can be applied to the external surface using PVA glue, glitter and sequins.

The individual cells were then brought to a large surface and arranged to create an effective conglomeration. They were fixed together by slightly overlapping and fixing each cell to its neighbours. Once dry the group of cells can be displayed on a wall or hung from the ceiling. Alternatively smaller clusters of cells can be created and hung accordingly.

The project helps children to physically explore the notion of cell structure. By layering and adding other objects they form an awareness of the fact that cells are living and contain a set of instructions which are represented by the collection of collage materials. They begin to reflect on the process by which artists can use creative media to replicate and interpret the very fundamental aspects of living organisms. The end result was unique and exciting, it stimulated a great deal of interest and speculation throughout the school community.

Extension activities

Children can complete small ink drawings of the final structure of cells. Colour can be added with wax crayons to represent the collage materials and then a watercolour wash can be applied to make a resist effect.

Resources

Plastic sheeting, coils of willow canes, masking tape, PVA glue, large paintbrushes, tissue papers, inks with teat-pipettes, a collection of different papers, sweet wrappers, sequins, feathers, threads and found materials.

The method

It is important to model the process of constructing the tissue cells at the beginning of the session and to put brief bullet point notes on the interactive whiteboard. The idea is to create an eventual sandwich with tissue above and below the circle of willow using a variety of papers, feathers and threads trapped in the circle. The cane is cut into a circle and joined with masking tape with the ends overlapping slightly. A piece of tissue paper is placed on the plastic sheeting and the cane circle is then put on the tissue and both covered with watered-down PVA glue. It is a good idea to use a large decorating paintbrush and to brush in one direction to avoid wrinkled tissue paper.

In our project, the children planned their own collection of materials before adding them to the cells. In addition to found objects, some children decided to draw their own objects or shapes and these were cut out and added to the collection. It is important that children are free to express their own personalities and creative urges. Some children were very precise and created highly patterned repeating formations and other were more haphazard and experimental.

The collection of collage pieces is arranged within the circle of willow and small amounts of coloured inks can be dropped onto the surface of the cell using teat-pipettes. The second layer of tissue is pressed forcefully down to seal and trap the objects between the two layers of tissue. As the PVA dries, the objects in the centre become visible. Once dry, the cells can be peeled off the plastic sheeting and excess paper can be trimmed away with pinking shears to create a crisp circular form. Further decoration can be applied to the external surface using PVA glue, glitter and sequins.

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Children can discuss and imagine what sort of exotic plant the structure of cells would come from and complete sketches of it. Colour can be added using paint or oil pastels.
Paula Hunt, subject leader and artist, explains how she has tackled continuity and progression through teaching looking and drawing at Harewood Junior School, Gloucester.

In order for drawing to be developed to the highest standard, children have to learn to focus their whole attention on whatever it is that they are drawing. Here at Harewood we give sustained attention to drawing. We encourage children to look carefully and in this way we stimulate and develop their observational skills.

Children come to us having invented their own ways of drawing a variety of common objects. They have often developed a formula – or schema – for each object: the classic tree, flower, person, sunshine and, so on. This characteristically simplistic way of drawing is later replaced by more detailed mark-making in the first year of our Junior school when students are seven- and eight-years-old. We introduce children to different grades of pencil and encourage them to make small, controlled marks having closely observed objects that link to our learning themes for this year.

In drawing a woodlouse, for example, children fill in each segment with marks using H, B and 2B pencils having studied woodlice under a lens and noted the details they will include in their drawings. It is absolutely vital that children are given time to complete their drawings. If after looking any still cannot see any marks or patterns, I give them a sheet showing a range of different marks they could use. But most of the time children do actually observe marks.

Our seven- to eight-year-olds have studied lace, leaves, shells, wood, coral and bread using this method. To encourage children to focus on one small area of the subject I produce ‘windows’, or view-finders, of various sizes. These windows may be either placed on the subject to isolate an area on which to focus or they may be placed on the drawing itself to isolate a small area in which to place marks. This works particularly well for those children who find it hard to concentrate on the entire drawing and enables them to achieve success in small steps.

The skills identified for drawing for ages seven and eight are as follows:• to be able to hold a pencil,• to use different grades of pencil, and• to use a sketchbook to record ideas.

Within those basic skills I teach drawing techniques such as mark-making, tonal value and how to sketch an outline.

Progression

Harewood allocates time in the curriculum for art and design and our success in the subject has been built up over several years with the core skill of drawing taking centre-stage. I am in the fortunate position of being able to teach art and design to all year groups on a rolling programme which enables each year group to have a block of six or seven weeks of teaching covering skills in all areas. Progress, in drawing for example, can be observed lesson by lesson. Termly progression is clear in both sketchbooks and end of theme portfolios.

Indeed, sketchbooks are a very useful record of progress and the children keep one high-quality sketchbook throughout their four years at the school. The children enjoy browsing through previous work and are able to self-assess, comparing their own progress, week-by-week. We have a clear policy for the use of sketchbooks and teachers have received training in how to use them. They are used in lessons and for homework and they are marked regularly, with comments on how work can be improved.

One activity that helps to develop drawing skills and focus attention is to cut up a picture or photograph into equal size pieces and ask each child to copy the lines, marks and patterns on it. Once reassembled and fixed together to make a picture the children are impressed with their achievement.

I have used this activity with a gifted and talented art group (it can become quite time consuming with a whole class). 

Assessment

At the end of each theme, a selection of work from all abilities is placed in a portfolio. These pieces of work are used for assessment, with a selection of work being levelled, whether it is in line with, above or below a particular National Curriculum level. Good quality work is always displayed, reinforcing standards and recognising achievement. I have found this method of assessment very manageable without occupying valuable teaching time. Photographic evidence of children’s work showing skills in art and design at every level is kept on the school computer system for staff to access. These photographs are often incorporated into an interactive slideshow for children at the beginning or end of a lesson giving them the opportunity to make thoughtful observations on the work of others and to suggest ways in which they might improve their own work.

In their second year with us we build upon the skills learned in the previous year and progress on to more detailed observation. Drawing with pencil is still a priority but other drawing media are introduced. High quality artist’s crayons are used and different colour-blending techniques are taught or discovered. Pastels and pen and ink are also used. I cannot stress enough the importance of using good quality resources and of keeping those valuable resources in good order. Children produce their best work with the sharpest pencils, the finest brushes and the cleanest paint pallettes.

By the time children reach upper school they are able to produce drawings of the highest quality and, significantly, when asked they all said they enjoyed drawing and believed that they were good at it.
Uncovering and using secret collections

Giles Hughes is deputy head at Colmore Junior School in Birmingham. Here he shares his passion for inspiring art teaching using the resources on his doorstep.

In the closing scenes of the Indiana Jones film Raiders of the Lost Ark we see the Ark of the Covenant being wheeled into a vast government warehouse brimming with wooden cases and boxes. What wouldn’t you give for the opportunity to root and rummage through that warehouse? What other treasures and artefacts might be lying forgotten and neglected?

Warehouses like this are common in films, television series and novels, but they also exist in the real world. The Great Library of Alexandria held a huge collection of written records before its destruction in the first millennium AD, the Vatican Secret Archives are said to hold many secrets, and the Egyptian Museum of Cairo housed thousands of artefacts that lay forgotten for decades before being rediscovered in 2002.

What you might not realise is that most British towns and cities have their own warehouses packed with unwanted, unused, forgotten or unfashionable objects. Birmingham is home to many museums, art galleries and sites of historical interest and what you see in these locations is only a fraction of what exists in the real world. The Great Library of Alexandria held a huge collection of written records before its destruction in 2002, and the Egyptian Museum of Cairo housed thousands of artefacts that lay forgotten for decades before being rediscovered in 2002. Warehouses like this are common in films, television series and novels, but they also exist in the real world. The Great Library of Alexandria held a huge collection of written records before its destruction in the first millennium AD, the Vatican Secret Archives are said to hold many secrets, and the Egyptian Museum of Cairo housed thousands of artefacts that lay forgotten for decades before being rediscovered in 2002.

Each day I took a different bus load of children to the Collections Centre where they were given a short tour of the site and were allowed to explore. We then spent the rest of the morning drawing and sketching. Ours is a large school and unfortunately I wasn’t able to take every child. But I was able to target those children whom I felt would benefit most from the experience – including children identified as Gifted and Talented in art. I gave each day a different theme and selected different media for the children to work with. This meant that the artworks produced during the week varied both in content and in visual quality. For example, one day a group would sketch machines and engines using graphite pencils, while the next group used pen and ink to draw toys and models. The objects on display changed on a daily basis, as some were sent out on loan or as new exhibits and others were returned and put back into storage. This was fascinating and meant there were new things to discover and talk about each day.

The trips proved to be highly inspirational to the children who relished the opportunity to fill their sketchbooks with the weird and wonderful objects they found themselves surrounded by. Boredom was not a factor! The museum also provided us with a short-term loan of artefacts – including examples of taxidermy – that were used back in school each afternoon during art lessons. This meant that children who were unable to attend the trips got the opportunity to work with something special too.

However, the most successful aspect of the project came on the last day. On Friday the Collections Centre was opened for a ‘Family Drawing Day’ where we invited parents and grandparents to join their children at the warehouse and spend the morning drawing and sketching together. Over 150 people attended this special event, relishing the opportunity to spend time together simply exploring, talking about and drawing the amazing objects they found. This kind of event was a first for us but is something we’d love to run again as the feedback from both parents and children showed how much they valued the chance to work together on something so creative and inspiring.

Why not contact your local museum and see what they have to offer behind closed doors, or contact the Birmingham’s Museum Collections Centre – where the children’s work stood beside pieces produced by their own family members, making it a true community project.

The resulting pieces of artwork were framed and displayed in school and at the Collections Centre – where the children’s work stood beside pieces produced by their own family members, making it a true community project.

START FOR THE BEST IN ART, CRAFT AND DESIGN TEACHING, FROM 3 TO 14 YEARS OLD

Dollman Street, Birmingham B7 4RQ
(0121 303 0190; www.bmag.org.uk/museum-collections-centre).
From drawing to print

Ian Shearman explains how a group of twenty gifted and talented pupils aged eleven and twelve from the Cumberland School Specialist Sports College, Newark were inspired by visiting an exhibition – Fra Angelico to Leonardo: Italian Renaissance Drawings – at the British Museum and by taking part in an outreach workshop in their own school. The workshops were part of the British Museum schools programme that was funded by BP, the exhibition sponsor.

Background

Between April and July 2010 the British Museum, in collaboration with the Uffizi Gallery in Florence, held a unique exhibition of Italian Renaissance Drawings. The exhibition featured 100 exquisite works created by Italian masters between 1400 and 1510. The exhibition beautifully illustrated the importance of drawing and its place within the development of art during the Renaissance. It charted the complex relationships that developed between the realisation of form and space in two and three dimensions. The freedom shown in the selected drawings in the exhibition clearly demonstrated the evolution of the visual revolution that was central to the Italian Renaissance, a revolution that culminated in the High Renaissance style exemplified by Michelangelo and Raphael.

This visually exciting collection of drawings was the basis for a printmaking project involving two schools in London, Cumberland School and The Grey Coat Hospital School. This was a collaboration between the staff and two practising artist–educators, Ian Shearman and Michele Kito. The brief was to produce a series of drypoint prints in response to the exhibition with a class of gifted and talented Year 7s, and a group of sixth form students. This article expands on the experience of the younger pupils.

The fifteenth century was a time of exciting artistic, technical and intellectual developments. Amongst these, the printing press is arguably one of the most important inventions ever and it played a major part in creating the modern world. The process of printing and printmaking was a most appropriate technique to study in conjunction with this exhibition.

Before the pupils visited the exhibition, Stuart Rose, their art teacher, visited the exhibition and created a booklet which was to be used as part of the trip. This was a great way for the students to write notes and create drawings of their experience of the Renaissance work. Ian Shearman visited Cumberland school and showed the pupils a PowerPoint presentation covering different drawing techniques, and undertook some quick practical drawing exercises to prepare them. On their visit to the British Museum, they went to the Enlightenment gallery before entering the exhibition in order to learn more about the context of drawing and the way in which objects in history interact and are linked by technologies. The students looked at surface decoration and the development of mark making. They also considered how colour and tone play an important part in the meaning of objects. They looked at the source of colour and at how minerals and oxides have been used in a variety of artistic processes to develop surface decoration.

All this preparatory work helped the students understand how Renaissance artists used tone and texture to develop form and meaning. They were encouraged to develop an analytical approach, to look beyond the obvious and to question what they were looking at. They were intrigued by the small scale of most of the drawings. It was explained to them that the size of paper produced was limited by cost and material availability and that it was not until printing and commercial publishing became commonplace that paper was universally used. Venetian ‘oil’ or ‘oil-skil’ was an alternative and expensive drawing surface that was looked at and investigated.

From drawing to printing through drypoint

Intaglio is a printing process that means ‘below the surface’. Rather than the traditional material of copper or zinc the students worked with plastic plates. This had the added bonus of being able to be placed over their drawing, thus simplifying the transfer of the image into a print. A drypoint needle was used to scratch the design into the plastic while crosshatches, dots and lines were used to create a broad tonal range.

The day-long workshop that was held in the school began with the students responding to images from the exhibition and creating small enlargements of sections of the drawings using viewfinders. They were asked to focus on texture, tone and marking in their selection, which were to become the design for the prints.

They made a series of prints during the day, adding more detail and learning experimenting with tonal adjustments using a variety of inking techniques. Many of the students commented that they ‘had so much fun working with an artist’, that ‘they really enjoyed the practical aspect’ and that they enjoyed getting inky and using a print press for the first time.

The prints created during the workshop day were exhibited by the school at the Newham Arts Festival exhibition in July 2010 and then at the British Museum in September/October 2010. They are now on permanent display in the school in the Learning Resource Base, with photographs of the pupils at work to contextualise both the project and the process of printing.

Inspired by this experience, art teacher Stuart Rose wanted to develop printing within the school’s art department. He approached the senior management and the school’s governing body and, through his efforts, the department is to purchase a small printing press. He intends to introduce printmaking as part of GCSE coursework, and will create a printing studio in the school to facilitate this.

The drawings and prints produced by the students as a result of the visit to the British Museum were impressive, and the impact the Renaissance drawings had on the students was unexpected. This was a challenging exhibition, a unique opportunity to view at close proximity drawings of such importance but one which at the same time was received with enthusiasm and generated some excellent contemporary prints. Traditions from such classical origins have a powerful influence on what we consider modernity.

The British Museum launches a new secondary art and design programme in January 2011. For more details please look at the museum’s website www.britishmuseum.org/schools – and follow the link to the secondary section.
Shakespeare through sculpture

Sarah Baker, creative arts leader at Longlevens Junior School in Gloucester, shares a recently introduced creative intervention programme that she runs. The idea is to provide support to groups of children with learning difficulties or disabilities, outside the normal class, in a creative way.

The creative intervention programme I run works with groups of children formed from identified needs arising from each pupil’s individual education plan, from data analysis, or to support issues that have been identified by the class teacher. For instance, I am currently working with a group of nine- and ten-year-olds who are struggling to recall their times tables. We are creating beautiful stencils of the numbers, which will be printed onto fabric and embellished - the end result being a square number patchwork. I have also just completed a large-scale harvest mural, with a speaking and listening group of pupils aged seven and eight: the idea was to improve their confidence when communicating through working collaboratively.

The project I am describing here was born out of the need to support some of our ten- and eleven-year-olds by giving them an introduction to the work of William Shakespeare. Their class was due to start a unit of work on Shakespeare and class teachers were worried that some would struggle with the Shakespearean language. The teachers were concerned that in class these students would be at risk of ‘shutting down’, or sitting back and allowing the rest of the class to carry them through without getting involved themselves.

Having initially mind-mapped what they knew about Shakespeare (which turned out to be very little, except that his first name was William and he wrote plays), we set about exploring his background a little more. In a small group of eight their confidence grew, along with their interest levels. They were fascinated by the fact that one of Shakespeare’s daughters could write her name and the other couldn’t and they found it hilarious that he left his second best bed to his wife. At this point, I introduced Macbeth. After a brief introduction, we read the witches’ spell from Act I:

Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire burn, and cauldron bubble.
Fillet of a fenny snake,
In the cauldron boil and bake;
Eye of newt, and toe of frog,
Wool of bat, and tongue of dog,
Adder’s fork, and blind-worm’s sting,
Lizard’s leg, and owl’s wing.

For a charm of powerful trouble,
Like a hell-broth boil and bubble.

We listed the witches’ ingredients on a whiteboard and then we used watercolours to attempt to paint the colour of those ingredients in sketchbooks. It took some pupils a while to think in blocks of colour, rather than painting the actual frog’s toe or dog’s tongue, but once they got the hang of it, it was a usual lesson in abstraction for the rest of the project.

Having identified and shared these ideas, the pupils were given a larger piece of cartridge paper on which to recreate the smells they might imagine to be escaping from the surface of the cauldron. They worked from the bottom of the page up, taking one ingredient and its imagined aroma. Some smells started out as a wispy whiff (represented by a slim fragile line), building to a revolting pong after time (which was shown by a great cloud of scribbles and a riot of colour close to the top of the page). Others were the other way around. Some smells simply hung around all the time, which pupils found very comforting.

We had identified and shared these ideas in mind, I hid the glue gun and surface. While I let them loose with these ingredients to each side of the wood.

Rough-hewn wood seemed so we kept things small. Rough-hewn wood seemed a good basis to work upon so I had small wooden blocks cut to about 12cm by 8cm by 5cm. (Some DIY chains are happy to do this at no cost if you purchase the wood there.) The pupils sanded them enough to avoid splinters while still keeping their rough character. I then armed them with a wealth of collage material which included acrylic paints, tissue paper, textured wallpaper, charcoal, oil pastels, magazine pages, metallic spray, PVA, a glue gun and an equal quantity of PVA glue to gain texture – and thickly – mixing the paint with an equal quantity of PVA glue to gain texture – and thickly – mixing the paint with an equal quantity of PVA glue to gain texture – and thickly – mixing the paint with an equal quantity of PVA glue to gain texture – and thickly – mixing the paint with an equal quantity of PVA glue to gain texture – and thickly – mixing the paint with an equal quantity of PVA glue to gain texture – and thickly – mixing the paint with an equal quantity of PVA glue to gain texture – and thickly – mixing the paint with an equal quantity of PVA glue to gain texture – and thickly – mixing the paint with an equal quantity of PVA glue to gain texture – and thickly – mixing the paint with an equal quantity of PVA glue to gain texture – and thickly – mixing the paint with an equal quantity of PVA glue to gain texture – and thickly – mixing the paint with an equal quantity of PVA glue to gain texture – and thickly – mixing the paint with an equal quantity of PVA glue to gain texture – and thickly – mixing the paint with an equal quantity of PVA glue to gain texture – and thickly – mixing the paint with an equal quantity of PVA glue to gain texture – and thickly – mixing the paint with an equal quantity of PVA glue to gain texture – and thickly – mixing the paint with an equal quantity of PVA glue to gain texture – and thickly – mixing the paint with an equal quantity of PVA glue to gain texture – and thickly – mixing the paint with an equal quantity of PVA glue to gain texture – and thickly – mixing the paint with an equal quantity of PVA glue to gain texture. The pupils were given a little strip of each ingredient to the detail and earthiness of the paintings so we kept things small.

The pupils quickly got the idea of allocating the smell of different ingredients to each side of the wood. We collaged all the sides of the blocks except the bottom. By this stage in the project, the children had lost all inhibitions; they had stopped worrying about what they were doing and were fully embracing the range of materials on offer. Charcoal was drawn into wet paint; text was glued on and painted over. Under very careful supervision, they added liquid glue from a glue gun – not to stick anything on but to create a further texture. Due to its transparent, plastic nature, they could then paint over it, with the glue acting as a resist. Finally, once again under careful supervision, pupils added a light sprinkling of silver lacquer if they felt it was appropriate.

The final results were wonderful. The pupils involved wrote about their creations. One student wrote:

Shameful, cruel and hard-hearted are a few words to describe the three witches in Macbeth. Through creating this sculpture, I explored the smells escaping from their cauldron. I tried to imagine what the revolting reek of a lizard’s leg or the vile stink of a dog tongue might be like.

Their explanations, along with their painting and sculpture have been displayed in a prominent place in school. They have attracted many compliments from pupils and adults alike. The pupils involved have been able to proudly assert ownership and the feedback from class is positive: one has already chosen a Shakespeare reworking as a reading book and I look forward to hearing more of their contributions in class.

The next stage was to transform their paintings into sculpture. I wanted to keep the detail and earthiness of the paintings but also to give them some sculptural qualities. The pupils were happy to ‘explain’ to anyone who asked.

The next stage was to transform their paintings into sculpture. I wanted to keep the detail and earthiness of the paintings...
A space for art?

Debbie Carmichael, art co-ordinator and advanced skills teacher for art and design at Willerby Carr Lane Primary School, talks about raising standards of art in her school.

What is it that limits our ability to teach art to a high standard? After questioning the staff for a recent subject review, three things came to the top of the list: shortage of resources, lack of confidence in teaching certain strands of art and design, and lack of space. In order to raise staff confidence in teaching art and design, a planned programme of staff development is required. As for the other two points, well, who hasn’t wished they were in a bigger classroom or had the room to leave work out to dry properly? And who doesn’t long for an unlimited supply of quality resources exactly when you want them without having to preorder them half a term in advance?

And who doesn’t long for an unlimited room to leave work out to dry properly?

The space available in our classrooms certainly restricts what art we teach and how we teach it, so could a designated art space be the way forward?

The recent merger of Carr Lane Infant and Carr Lane Junior schools resulted in a new building for a new school: Willerby Carr Lane Primary School. As the old junior building was set to be demolished, thoughts turned into a use for the old library which had been a more recent addition to the old building and a space we were allowed to keep. The head teacher had been thinking about its development into a specially designed art room, and gave me the job of project managing its transformation.

At Carr Lane, we are continually developing our curriculum so that it gives our pupils scope to develop and define their own creativity. Well on the way to the delivery of the new proposed Primary Curriculum, we are providing more opportunities for the pupils to take their learning in a personal direction which excites and inspires them.

The revised level descriptors for ‘Understanding the Arts’ show a shift towards pupils steering their art work in their own direction, being expected to make informed decisions about which materials, tools and techniques to use in order to achieve level two. This means that a range of resources needs to be readily available for pupils to select and use. I wanted the art space to build on the excellent arts provision in the first two years of schooling, where four-, five-, six- and seven-year-olds have full continuous access to a wide range of art materials, developing their ability to choose and use appropriately.

Our five- and six-year-old pupils, for example, make links in their learning by developing a creative approach, often making their own artefacts for small world and role play without adult direction. The new art space needed to offer this choice and independence in selecting resources, yet had to cater for pupils from the ages of four right up to eleven.

Where to start?

I began by taking measurements of the room and looking at the space available during different times of the day. With no buildings surrounding it now, the room was flooded with natural light from all aspects, which gave a fantastic blank canvas to work from. We decided to paint the walls white and fitted wipe-clean vertical blinds at all the windows and doors. The carpets were replaced with an easy-to-clean floor. Having measured and drawn-up scale floor plans, I set about defining areas into zones. There needed to be an ICT zone with computer and whiteboard, a reference area to display books and space for pupils to sit and read them, an area for a sink and washing facilities, adequate paper storage, and above all lots and lots of space for resources! This storage space was clearly defined into two zones: a self-select zone with everything the children could access freely in clearly labelled transparent boxes, and a more controlled zone with resources that needed adult supervision, such as the sewing machine, bath pots and adhesives. We also defined an area for technology, with a woodworking bench and storage for a range of tools.

As I was lucky enough to have been granted a budget to commission purpose-built furniture, I liaised with a team who were able to put my ideas into practice.

The result is that every bit of space is used to its best advantage. Adjustable tables and chairs were ordered so each child can work at furniture that fits them: the only way to cater for all children in the school (some of whom are taller than me).

The resulting room is a fabulous light and airy space, which has been very generously stocked with everything our pupils could possibly need to fulfil their creative ideas.

At a whole school staff meeting, I shared with the staff the philosophy behind the room and they were given time to become acquainted with the new resources. The room accommodates a whole class of children, and can be booked for a class or group for single lessons, whole sessions or days. It is not designed to take the place of teaching art in the classrooms and each classroom still carries its own stock of basic art materials. What it does do is offer more scope to work on long term projects and large pieces of work. Pupils often commented on how they disliked having to pack away at the end of the lesson and how frustrating it could be to have to wait until the next scheduled art lesson to complete their work. Now they have a space where they can leave things out until they come back to it, at which point they can restart work immediately: none of their enthusiasm drains away in the clear up and preparation time. Pupils can become absorbed in their work without their creativity being ruined by the constraints of the timetable.

The future looks bright for our pupils. Increasing staff confidence in delivering the arts curriculum will now result in higher standards being achieved, now that we are the proud owners of our very own ‘space for art’.

Using the outdoors

The grounds surrounding the room are still in development. Planting and landscaping has begun so that the outside area becomes an integral part of the art space. Double doors open out onto a seated area perfect for outside drawing activities, and amphitheatre style seating is now being created.

Teachers are working hard to show their pupils how to make the most of the room, going back to basics in order to teach them how to properly care for and store materials and tools. This emphasis on everyone taking responsibility for the room is important as it will be a school-wide resource. The room has already been earmarked as a place to deliver art and design in-service training days for the whole of the local education authority. In addition it provides a space for a local art group for our gifted and talented pupils.

The future looks bright for our pupils, increasing staff confidence in delivering the arts curriculum will now result in higher standards being achieved, now that we are the proud owners of our very own ‘space for art’.

The space for art is an integral part of the school development and transformation.
A tree for all seasons

Gillian Bathe shares the story of the creation of an altar front made from felt by all the children at Salisbury Cathedral School. The work was inspired by the work of the Victorian poet Gerard Manley Hopkins and came about through a rich collaboration with the school’s English department.

At the heart of the creative activities at Salisbury Cathedral School is the quest for first-hand information. As we were working upon close observation of seasonal material I became aware of the Chaplain’s need for a new altar cloth. The old idea of the tree of life developed: an apple tree in felt following the seasons in an ancient orchard with plants and animals thriving and participating around it.

This piece took about a month to make and is informed by drawings and paintings that the children have made during other seasons. These include the speckled Devon apples from autumn and the snowflakes and snowdrops from January. June brings dog roses just too late for this project but we have our visual and sensory experiences recorded in our books. So here is a proper example of the use of good sketchbook practice.

Photographs would deliver form and colour but only partial memory. The activity of personal drawing encapsulates feelings and senses beyond the visual. Paper patterns for cutting the felt were made by nine- and ten-year-olds from their drawings. These shapes were cut from partially felted colour samples that had been prepared by eight-year-olds.

We had to avoid intermediary drying out and storing of the vast sheet of laid-out fleece (it was 3 metres by 1.75 metres) as we were worried that this would risk disturbing the felt picture as it developed. The schedule became important.

On Wednesday Working on low tables that allowed the smallest children to reach to the middle, our seven-year-olds were entrusted with the construction of the foundation felt white merino tops. They laid out (roof-tile-wise) crossing, cobweb-thin layers of merino. At last they dampened the whole down to a thin, firmly with clear images still in place (luckily). It had shrunk by about 30 per cent and was firm with clear images still in place (luckily). Further shrinking might have been achieved but this would have also caused more wrinkling of the surface, which would have spoiled the picture.

Over the next days the detail of the picture was needle felted into place. Older children worked with sharp, brittle harpoons, piercing through the whole thickness of the fabric into a sponge beneath. They looked fine strands of further colours into the basic shapes, in essence they were drawing with wool. I wanted to avoid stylization and so during this stage of our work we maintained the principle of direct reference by having sketches and fresh material to hand. I had planned to use embroidery on the altar cloth but it was clearly unnecessary.

Interested parents were able to contribute alongside their offspring but the children were doing all the design work very effectively by this stage. The eleven-year-olds went on to prepare animals as separate units to be added later. It kept everyone occupied and gave the cloth-workers more elbow room. (A class of about 16 smallish people were involved.)

In this way we have arrived at a strongly ornament piece that has rapidly been completed. The Bishop visited on 14 June for his retirement service and blessed our new altar front. The twelve-year-olds prepared a leather-bound album set with embossed copper Celtic motifs including a never-ending cross. A couple of boys have used pyrography to tool fern crosiers around the medallions. In the album we will stick photographs and pieces of writing about the making both of our altar front and the Archangel Michael, which we constructed for Michaelmas last year (see START 35).

Felt making and the use of fleece are ideal activities for young children. A huge array of coloured merino tips are available from Wingham Wools or Forest Fibres. Silk fibres can be incorporated to reflect light and to give a sheen to petals and wings. It is economical and easily transported and stored. Lavender bags and cedar wood can also be incorporated to repel moths.

We are producing a panoramic postcard of the piece to sell and pay for the materials (the total cost of which was £30). The piece will be backed with cotton sheeting and attached to the altar canopy with velcro. We would like to take it to the New Forest Show where they celebrate trees.

And, for all this, nature is never spent; There lives the dearest freshness deep down things.

From ‘Pied Beauty’ by GM Hopkins (1844–89)

For the best in art, craft and design teaching, from 3 to 14 years old.
Karen Lloyd is a visual artist working in schools and museums in Cumbria and Lancashire. She tells us how getting involved in the ‘Creative Futures Cumbria Mentoring Programme’ project has helped to get artists into schools.

In 2007 I was fortunate to be selected as a trainee on a mentoring scheme run by Creative Futures Cumbria (CFC). The scheme provided training that would help creative practitioners develop their work in educational settings. As an artist and a parent I had run art activities in my boys’ schools on a voluntary basis but now I wanted to become more formally involved in schools. For me the scheme was invaluable. I was matched with a mentor and was able to plan and run a two-day project in a primary school with support. I also attended facilitator-led training days to look at subjects such as how to negotiate with schools as an individual artist, and how to plan and manage projects.

Three years later a call went out for creative practitioners to apply for the role of mentors to the new round of students so, having gained a fair amount of relevant experience, I applied and was accepted. Twelve mentors from a range of creative disciplines were matched with twelve artists/makers. Included were visual artists, musicians and drama practitioners.

Each pair was given the task of preparing and delivering a three-day project in an educational setting. There was a generous lead-in time, and projects were delivered in the summer term. I was matched with Liam Costa, a fine art graduate specialising in printmaking.

CFC has been developing the scheme so that it is now more formal than when I was a ‘student’. Cumbria is a large geographic area and so a certain level of commitment was needed on the part of the mentees to regularly attend the Penrith-based training sessions. This year’s trainees attended 15 sessions, each focusing on a specific area relevant to working in schools. Negotiations have been taking place to see if the scheme could become accredited by the University of Cumbria.

At our first meeting Liam and I discussed our interests lay and, as we both have strong interests in printmaking, we began to develop ideas for a print-based project. Liam has spent the last year volunteering in a number of secondary schools’ art departments, in order to gain experience working with me on another new project. He was therefore familiar with the children to make large stencils and screen-printing using paper stencils. As we both have strong interests in printmaking, we began to develop ideas for a print-based project. Liam has spent the last year volunteering in a number of secondary schools’ art departments, in order to gain experience working with me on another new project. He was therefore familiar with different. By the conclusion of the project before, having equipped children with paper, clipboards and pencils, we went out into the school grounds to begin our observational drawings. Later in the morning, as promised, the school governor escorted us on a visit to her wonderful allotment which was adjacent to the school. Here a huge amount of learning took place and more observational drawings happened. The children were offered vegetables and fruit to taste and they also gathered materials to be used in constructing their collograph prints. (A collograph is a very simple form of printing using found materials arranged in collage form.)

During the afternoon of the first day, we worked together with the children to construct their collograph blocks from a huge array of materials ranging from textured wallpaper to rhubarb leaves. The blocks were then left to dry.

Liam led small groups of children in making hand-made paper. This was fantastic squelchy hands-on stuff. Liam had borrowed an industrial-size blender and soon had the children ripping up paper from the schools’ recycling boxes and adding it to water. Liam then operated the blender before passing the gloopy substance back to the students to squash to deckles (paper-making frames). The results were put in the sun to dry with the intention of using the paper for printing the next day.

None of the children had done any extended printmaking before but they were all enthusiastic about trying a new activity. In addition to the collographs, the children also made monoprints based on their drawings, and Liam also introduced them to simple screen-printing using paper stencils. As the screens were quite large Liam asked the children to make large stencils and when the prints were peeled off the
The strong, dramatic nature of the prints was extremely enjoyed by the children. Although the school felt that process was the most important part of the experience, they were very happy to be left with an end result. Clearly the children enjoyed having such an impressive, collaborative piece of work to display.

At the end of the three days, Liam and I were able to review both practical and theoretical considerations: what worked well, what worked less well, what would be done differently next time and so on. We both felt that the project had gone well, what worked less well, what would be done differently next time and so on.

The project was managed as whole-class activities – such as preparing the collograph blocks – and some were carried out in small groups. The teaching and other staff were extremely supportive of the way we worked and so, during the course of the three days, each child had the opportunity to undertake each part of the process. Although the school felt that process was the most important part of the experience, they were very happy to be left with an end result. Clearly the children enjoyed having such an impressive, collaborative piece of work to display.

Once all the projects had been delivered an evaluation session was held back in Penrith to discuss how things had gone and to acknowledge the learning that had taken place. This was really useful as it gave a wider context to the work. Liam wrote in his evaluation: ‘I think the whole experience was challenging, but this was a good and positive thing.’ Liam has been successful in applying to teacher training college and started his studies there in September.

CFC has recently produced a toolkit called Creative Dynamics which provides guidance on setting up partnerships between schools and artists, and assessing creative development. This toolkit, and other information about professional development opportunities, can be downloaded from the CFC website: www.creativetuturescumbria.org.
13 Women Artists
Children Should Know
Published by Prestel
Hardcover, £9.99
48 pages with c.50 colour illustrations
24 x 28 cm
978-3-7913-4333-4

This is a colourful, well-illustrated and informative book that focuses on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The book covers a wide range of women artists, with a double page full of varied examples for each of the artist’s work. The book is visually stimulating with good quality images. There is a timeline for each artist, which is helpful for setting her work and life in context. There is a profile of each artist with bibliographical information and details of who and what influenced them. The book is suitable for a wide range of ages and could be used with from seven-year-olds upwards. The book lends itself to use as a starting point for self-directed research as the text is easy to read and the facts are clearly presented. My only criticism is that at times the information is a little on the narrative side; more critical analysis would make the book more useful.

Alex Hucks
Paragon School, Bath.

“What Do You Feel?”
Emotional Learning Cards
co-published by A Space and Iniva
RRP £12.95
www.iniva.org

This neat box contains 20 square, laminated cards. On one side of each card is the colour image of a piece of contemporary art drawn from a variety of cultures and media. Photography, sculpture, painting and collage are all reflected in the selection of images. Each card presents an artwork that is deeply thought provoking and still accessible for pupils from age seven upwards. Many of the cards could provoke a discussion on the basis of the image itself but, if prompts are required, each card has a range of questions and starting points on the back. Suggested topics for discussion or activity include: emotions, feelings, memories, fear, loss and friendship.

The cards could be used in a huge variety of ways; as a starting point to explore issues with an individual or small group of pupils within a class. Asking children to consider the image would have great value in itself, but these cards could also go on to inspire a child’s own piece of original art. The pack is accompanied by detailed information on the artists themselves while the staged photographic images are particularly useful for inspiring drama or digital media work.

Sarah Baker
Longlevens Junior School, Gloucester

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