YINKA ILORI: POSTER AND INTERVIEW
DECOLONISING THE CURRICULUM
INCLUSIVITY AND ACCESS
SCIENCE, ART AND CULTURAL CAPITAL
Editorial

It’s AD’s birthday – we’re 10 years old! When our first issue was published in January 2011, we were told, ‘NSEAD’s new magazine is really accessible; a brilliant balance of celebration, information and provocation’. The AD team took this feedback to heart and, 10 issues later, we continue to strive to achieve those qualities and characteristics. But, what else should we be aiming for and what have we learnt?

Over the last 10 years we have witnessed political, economic, social and educational upheaval, the brutal killing of George Floyd, whose death reignited the Black Lives Matter campaign, and a catastrophic global pandemic. Through these events we have seen clearly that the playing fields of social justice, health and education are not level. And, if nothing else, the year 2020 has acutely illustrated that, without actions and activism, nothing will change.

NSEAD believes art, craft and design education can make the world a better place. This issue of AD examines ways in which we, as individuals, schools and partner organisations, can take actions to shape the world and make it more equitable. This open access issue not only celebrates best practice, but its authors individually and collectively show how our actions can both challenge and remove barriers that prevent participation and achievement in learning.

Many thanks to Yinka Ilori and Fiona MacDonald for their fascinating ‘In conversation’ interview, as well as the Design Museum and Dulwich Picture Gallery for helping to make Yinka’s wonderful poster possible. If you saw The Colour Palace in 2019 or Happy Street in West London, you’ll have experienced the joy of Yinka’s work and witnessed how art and design positively impacts on communities and the places in which we live.

Finally, a further thank you to all the authors in this and every previous issue of AD for your celebrations, provocations and actions, and for showing us how art, craft and design education can level the playing fields of learning and, in turn, enrich and shape the world.

Sophie Leach, Editor, AD
sophieleach@nsead.org
@nsead_sophie
@nsead1

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Yinka Ilori, artist and designer, in conversation

London-based, multidisciplinary artist and designer Yinka Ilori combines his Nigerian storytelling heritage and global themes with playful, colourful contemporary design, as seen in recent commissions The Colour Palace and Happy Street. Here, he discusses his work and the importance of design education for young people with Fiona MacDonald, head of learning at the Design Museum

Has your work evolved over time or has it stayed consistent?

I think what I want to say with my work has stayed quite consistent. I started by designing furniture and trying to give the audience an insight into my life and my cultural upbringing through that. Being born in London, but also having Nigerian heritage, I grew up with two cultures and I found that furniture was a good way to start a conversation about stories and culture.

I found that working with furniture in an exhibition space created an experience that was quite short-lived for people. When I went on to do bigger projects in public spaces such as The Colour Palace and Happy Street, I found these had a longer lasting impact on people's experiences. It allowed them to create memories that would stay with them for much longer. The stories have stayed the same, but the scale of the work has changed.

What have been the best and most challenging aspects of scaling up, of moving from the gallery to the public realm?

I started my studio 10 years ago and at that time it was just me. Going into the public realm, I started to work with engineers, architects, councils and surveyors. It was a different ball game and I was thrown in at the deep end. When I was just designing chairs in my studio, I didn’t have to get permission from anyone and there was no community engagement. Now, with the public work, I get to work with the community and that is something that I really love – understanding that, if my work is going to be in someone’s area or estate, these people have to love it and it needs to give them a sense of belonging. Hosting workshops and speaking to young people and families, and understanding what they want to see in their spaces, is something that I really enjoy.

How have you found collaborating with architects and other designers?

As I come from a furniture and product design background, my process is very different to that of an architect. I am used to making a model and then making the final chair that same day. The thing I didn’t realise was the process and the time it takes to construct a building! When I was just designing chairs in my studio, I didn’t have to put permission from anyone and there was no community engagement. Now, with the public work, I get to work with the community and that is something that I really love – understanding that, if my work is going to be in someone’s area or estate, these people have to love it and it needs to give them a sense of belonging. Hosting workshops and speaking to young people and families, and understanding what they want to see in their spaces, is something that I really enjoy.

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Do you have a highlight project?

Happy Street at Thessaly Road railway bridge in South West London was probably my favourite recent project, mostly because of the public engagement.
How central is storytelling to your work? Storytelling is the biggest part of my practice and colour comes second. Traditional Nigerian folklore was a big part of the storytelling in my house growing up. One example was, ‘No matter how long the neck of the giraffe, it still cannot tell the future.’ There are thousands of these parables. They are quite humorous at first, but if you read them more than once you get to a deeper meaning. They offer life lessons for how to be a better person. I didn’t understand their significance as a child, but as an adult I reflected on them and used them in my work.

My work is also inspired by my upbringing. I like to tell stories about the people I grew up with. For example, I created a collection of chairs entitled ‘Chairs Could Talk’ in 2015. Each chair was based on a person I went to secondary school with; one was called Captain Hook, while another was called Flower Bomb. I wanted to celebrate those people, who were perhaps considered unsuccessful, and let them know that you can make a career out of design.

Everything around us is designed. Designers can engage with, understand that, if my work is going to be in someone’s area or estate, those people have to love it and it needs to make them feel unloved and become derelict. Sometimes easy to lose in London – some spaces lack energy, but I want to have a positive impact on people’s lives.

When you were a student, were there any teachers at school that particularly inspired or influenced you? The architect Sir David Adjaye has been a mentor or key influence in my adult life. There was one teacher, Mr Doherty. He was very strict with me in art class. He always told me to focus, but he really believed in me. I've gone back to visit him a couple of times at my old secondary school.

There is talk of a crisis in creative education. Is there anyone you would still consider to be a mentor or key influence in your adult life? There is no one teacher, Mr Doherty. He was very strict with me in art class. He always told me to focus, but he really believed in me. I've gone back to visit him a couple of times at my old secondary school.

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Why did you choose to be the Design Ventura 2020 brief setter? I wish I had had a programme like Design Ventura when I was younger. I’m here now, but the young people behind me are the future of the industry and the future of design. We need to nurture that young creative talent and encourage and support those young people. They have incredible ideas. I want them to know that they can make a career out of design and that they can be entrepreneurs.


When were you a student, were there any teachers at school that particularly inspired or influenced you? What did they say? Or do? There was one teacher, Mr Doherty. He was very strict with me in art class. He always told me to focus, but he really believed in me. I’ve gone back to visit him a couple of times at my old secondary school.

If I look at old family photographs, my work is often a carbon copy in terms of the colour of the clothes they were wearing in the 80s or 90s. Colour comes quite naturally for me because it’s something I grew up with. My palette often comes from what my parents wore. If I look at old family photographs, my work is often a carbon copy in terms of the colour of the clothes they were wearing in the 80s or 90s. I have this amazing painting of my grandmother who was obsessed with lilac, pink, orange, blue and green. My favourite colour is pink and orange, so you see that a lot of that in my work.

Your work is very colourful. How do you go about choosing a colour palette? Colour comes quite naturally for me because it’s something I grew up with. My palette often comes from what my parents wore. If I look at old family photographs, my work is often a carbon copy in terms of the colour of the clothes they were wearing in the 80s or 90s. I have this amazing painting of my grandmother who was obsessed with lilac, pink, orange, blue and green. My favourite colour is pink and orange, so you see that a lot of that in my work.


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Last year’s winning student design for Design Ventura is a tool for tackling creative block. What do you do if you find yourself suffering from creative block?
I’ll find myself stuck for ideas, so I go for a run. When I am running, I block out everything and just focus on my breathing and the destination. I’ve only been running since lockdown in 2020, so I’m no Mo Farrah.

Finally, do you have any advice for those artists and designers who are just starting out?
My advice for any young up and coming designer would be, trust the process and don’t be greedy. There’s no such thing as an overnight success. I was working in retail when I started out, trying to build up a collection of work and investing money into my business before I got any commissions. It takes sacrifice and it’s not all glitz and glam, but it’s definitely worth it.

Yinka Ilori
Recent public commissions include The Colour Palace, housed in the gardens of Dulwich Picture Gallery in 2019, and Happy Street at Thosday Road railway bridge in the same year.
yinkailori.com

Design Ventura is the Design Museum’s national design and enterprise competition for schools, supported by Deutsche Bank as part of their global youth engagement programme Born to Be. Students aged 13-16 are invited to respond to a live brief set by a leading designer. They are challenged to design a new product for the Design Museum shop, with the winning product being made and sold, and the proceeds going to a charity of the students’ choice.
ventura.designmuseum.org

The resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement has motivated schools, colleges and universities to examine the cultural diversity of their curricula and move towards the decolonisation of subjects. Dianne Minnicucci, subject leader for photography and a teacher of art at Thomas Tallis school in London, asks how teachers of art, design, craft and photography can begin to diversify, decolonise and ‘make the invisible visible’

Following the resurgence of the global Black Lives Matter movement during 2020, many schools, colleges and universities have begun to examine the cultural diversity of their curricula. At the time, I felt fortunate that our school were openly discussing the need for diversity and beginning the process of decolonisation. Our visual arts department began to participate in wider reading and research, collating a list of articles. We also had discussions with our students about the importance of using a diverse range of exemplar artists.

Decolonisation was necessary for all of us. I am a black woman and I too had to decolonise my thoughts. I felt that I had been conditioned to accept the traditional canon of white, male, western artists as normal. It was uplifting and inspiring for me to unearth a wealth of black artists and photographers. I felt empowered by the work I had discovered during my research and keen to share my findings with the students so they too could be excited by it.
It is important for our students to know that they can engage with artists and photographers of all cultures. We recognised that the change to our curriculum would be ongoing and that decolonisation would take time.

From my perspective, photography and art at Thomas Tallis School, a large mixed comprehensive school in South East London, I began to read books about decolonisation, such as Decolonising the Camera by Mark Sealy, who writes, ‘Decolonising the camera functions as a critical dialogue with colonial and imperial photographic histories, and the social and visual spaces they occupy.’

Sealy goes on to describe the relative absence of people of colour in the histories of art as ‘cultural amnesia’ and says, ‘A key aspect of decolonising the camera is not to allow photography’s colonial past and its cultural legacies in the present to be unchallenged and un-agitated, or be simply left as the given norm within the history of the medium.’

Sealy is the director of Autograph ARP (formerly the Association of Black Photographers), which has produced The Missing Chapter: Black Chronicles. This is an ongoing archive and research programme which aims to popularise images of African, Caribbean and Asian people from the Victorian and early Edwardian periods.

Autograph has been exhibiting and archiving the work of a diverse group of photographers and artists since 1988. Their exhibitions explore issues of identity, representation and social justice. I have been visiting Autograph since the 1990s when it also housed the Institute of International Visual Arts (Iniva), another organisation dealing with identity and representation for artists of colour predominantly artists of the African and Asian diaspora.

In November 2017, I saw the exhibition In a Different Light, which included the work of many black photographers from the UK. I felt empowered – I was reliving my own childhood through these images, which I then wanted to share with my students.

As teachers and educators, we must be aware of the organisations and institutions that exist to celebrate the cultural contribution made by black/PoC artists such as Autograph, Iniva, and P+K Contemporary Arts and Learning, and find new ways to collaborate with them in order to build a rich and varied curriculum.

All this begins the question of what can we do as teachers of art, design, craft and photography in order to diversify and decolonise our curricula. How do we make the invisible visible? How do we ensure that artists of colour are fully visible to our students so that they can never again be erased from culture?

I believe we must, first and foremost, engage in deep research. Part of my own research involved discovering a range of contemporary black artists. What can I learn from them in order to design engaging schemes of work? My growing knowledge of their work helps me think about the relevance of art, craft and design for young people today so that they can understand the world and can change it for the better.

Social media, particularly Instagram, has been key in locating and promoting artists of colour, as well as organisations and galleries that are dedicated to exhibiting the work of Black, Asian and African artists. One example is the October Gallery in London, which exhibits work from international artists such as El Anatsui, Rachel Korichen, Romuald Hazoumè, Nnenna Okore and Aubrey Williams, and produces resources for educators. I have also invested time in reading the articles that my colleagues and I collated.

I then spoke to the writer and journalist Sean O’Hagan, who writes about photography for The Guardian. He was of the opinion that educators, curators and gallery staff share a collective responsibility to ensure that work from a diverse range of artists is exhibited and promoted.

He also said that writers and critics have an individual responsibility to consider the work of a much more diverse range of artists and photographers. He commented that there is a glaring problem with the striking lack of diversity among the staff of the big art institutions, with one exception. Ann Negroponte is the founder and director of the African Artists’ Foundation, an organisation based in Lagos that is dedicated to the promotion and development of contemporary African art.

There is a wealth of contemporary black artists at the moment and many have emerged from Africa’s thriving art scene. One such artist is Zanele Muholi, an activist whose work has reflected the lives and struggles of black lesbians and trans people in her native South Africa, first shown at Autograph in 2017.

Students from ethnically diverse communities have often been presented with negative images of themselves by the media. Teachers have a vital role to play in finding and sharing positive images of black creativity to offset this damaging legacy. How can we instil images of and by black people so that they are viewed as culturally rich and visually engaging rather than negative in any form?

The late cultural historian Stuart Hall was an eminent writer on race and representation within visual culture, specifically photography and film. In his essay New Ethnicities; 1988, he wrote, ‘The struggle to come into representation was predicated on a critique of the degrees of fetishisation, objectification and negative figuration which are so much a feature of representation of the black subject. There was a concern not simply with the absence or marginality of the black experience but with its simplification and its stereotypical character.’

This article, written over 30 years ago, highlights the issues of representation at that time. Sadly, not much has changed. How do we change the way in which white people look into the creativity of black people without ever allowing them the status, visibility and complexity that they deserve?

If I think about the term ‘decolonising the curriculum’, it is about much more than that. It is about accepting that the art history we have been presented with has excluded artists of colour and that the negative images of black people are not the ones that we need to engage with. It is crucial that we dive into the archives and uncover what is there that has been unjauntily overlooked or ignored. It is also about having uncomfortable conversations about privilege, addressing our preconceptions and promoting collaborations of colour in order to have a more diverse range of teachers.

We need to engage in unearthing the wealth of work by black artists and people of colour. And, in doing so, we have to think deeply about the kind of images that we use, ensuring that they are not negative or objectified images of the ‘other’. Above all, it means making the invisible visible, reclaiming our past history and culture, and actively engaging with the turbulent present.

Dianne Minnicucci is author of visiblediversity.com, a website dedicated to making diversity visible within the art, photography and curriculum.

How do we ensure that artists of colour are fully visible to our students so that they can never again be erased from culture?


Joanna Neil (2022) Fine Art BA Hons degree at University Centre at Blackburn College, looked at how digital communications and authoethnography could be used to encourage students to take a more critical approach to their work and develop ways in which to make their reflective activity visible. Sharing the experiences of an undergraduate with disabilities, she presents the results of her research.

The focus of this article is on how digital technologies and autoethnography can be used for arts-based research and reflective practice. It shares the experiences of a second year undergraduate with complex needs, who in 2020 was studying for a Fine Art degree at University Centre at Blackburn College, a higher education institution in further education and training in England, which questioned how digital technologies and autoethnography can be used to make hidden aspects of arts practice (reflection and mistakes) more visible, and asked whether students become more independent and liberated by this process.

Autoethnography is a process of ‘looking at and writing (graphy) about the self (auto) in a more independent and liberated way. It can usher in the feelings of anxiety being at a loss or lost, unable to see a way out or forward…not knowing is an active space within practice, wherein an artist hopes for an encounter with something new or unfamiliar, unrecognisable or unknown.’

Centred around the premise of Cocker’s ‘tactics for not knowing’, the level five module ‘Experimental Research’ asked second year students to employ strategies to help them become strangers to their practices and to find ways to become outsiders looking in to make the familiar unfamiliar. Students were asked to experiment with ways to observe and reflect on their work, encouraged to take a more critical approach and develop ways in which to make their reflective activity visible.

As an introduction to art practice as experimental research, the brief asked students to experiment with digital technology and other tactics for not knowing as a way to ‘know’. While the initial research had indicated that there were benefits for all students to use autoethnographic approaches, participants with specific educational needs and disability seemed to find unique ways to use digital autoethnography for their own purposes.

In her reflection on her blog, Juvairiyya explained her approach to the brief: ‘I have difficulty writing, and my way of expressing myself and communicating is through my signing and my artwork. I thought of combining these aspects and having my signing be the paintbrush in my canvas. I wanted to show the words in British Sign Language (BSL), as this is my language format and a part of my identity. I selected signs that are important to me and who I am.’

‘Thinking about how to work with, she discussed the symbolism and relevance of this in her work, saying, “This is representing the communication breakdown, as I do not understand English very well. The emotional connection to the colour blue is linked to growing up and the sense of being ill all of the time. The signs I used with the blue [paint] are signs such as “can’t access” and “communication breakdown”. This is where I feel the most. I have complicated emotions and I always associate blue with those feelings.”

Juvairiyya’s second response to the brief was in response to drawing as research, being a passenger in the car and removing another sensory ability in the studio. She says, “I used the idea of maps for something to put as it added to the idea of not knowing. I have never associated myself with a map before or drawn/painted one. I saw the roads and rivers possessing the waves and curves. I cannot drive myself and I want to be able to do so, so this is my way of connecting myself to the fact.”

Juvairiyya describes how she drew out the map of the journey: “to give myself a memory to start from whilst blindfolded.” Her account of what it felt like to make this work, rather than just describe, led to a more reflective account and the potential for in-depth discussions about her relationship to the work she makes.

“It took me a little while to get my bearings after first being blindfolded, she explains, “I slipped off of the paper somewhat. I could not feel the difference in contact between the paintbrush and the paper, therefore I did not know when I was on the page. However, I began to then acquire my whereabouts on the paper better and gained control over my strokes, and they became more refined and slower. I relied on my memory to create this piece… I prefer my memory to create this piece…I prefer my signs – they are her, translated directly.”

The work fully embraces the intention and ethos of experimental research and enabled Juvairiyya to explore new territory with her work and written reflection. Most importantly, as she enters the third and final year of her degree, she is working with increased independence and engagement with professional practice. Digital autoethnography has been useful way to frame artistic research, enabling students to see themselves and their practice as worthwhile subjects of enquiry. It highlights the importance of constituting into situations where we do not know what to expect, and that these spaces are potentially rich and surprising. Digital autoethnography provides Juvairiyya with an approach where she could investigate and reflect on her work and identity as a disabled artist with independence and autonomy. Juvairiyya goes beyond telling you about the visual qualities of her work, what she did and how she did it, as we gain insight into how she connected emotionally to making it, how the work made her feel and what it means conceptually.

Joanna Neil
Blackburn College

‘While the initial research had indicated that there were benefits for all students to use autoethnographic approaches, participants with specific educational needs and disability seemed to find unique ways to use digital autoethnography for their own purposes’

Synchronic communication in preparation for ‘sign painting’

Juvairiyya demonstrating her art for the application by using her hands as her paintbrushes, thus symbolising cutting out the middleman/ interpreter by applying her language directly to the canvas. Using a clear screen in front of the computer, Juvairiyya used signs that were important to her and was able to mark her drawings with the words ‘express’, ‘disability’, and creating movement which allowed the paint to leave her hands and fingers and connect with the canvas. These marks are her signs – they are her, translated directly.

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Joanna Neil@blackburn.ac.uk
Engaging boys in art and design has been an ongoing problem over the years and continues to fuel much research and analysis. Here, Amber Smith, a teacher of art, design and photography at Selston High School in Nottinghamshire, explains how she analysed teachers’ unconscious gender bias and initiated successful strategies to bridge the gender gap.

Undoubtedly, the strategy does make a difference to engagement and progress. In imago 2 and 4, you can see significantly less drawing has been achieved without applying the 10:2 strategy than progress using the 10:2 strategy, as shown in imago 1 and 3. I was now compelled to examine my strategy in greater depth to see the response across the genders. My assumption was that more boys than girls would choose to move around the room during the two-minute break, but as I counted over a wide range of variables, just as many girls as boys chose to move, supporting Roberts and Pinkett’s findings. The responses from the student voice was also a gender balanced. Of the 50 students aged 11-13 who completed a questionnaire, 80 percent of boys and 82 percent of girls said that the 10:2 strategy helped them to concentrate. In keeping with Roberts and Pinkett’s suggestion, it was reassuring to see that we were fostering an environment within our department where the expectation offered no alternative to hard work. Whilst I didn’t want to create a draconian environment, students’ response assured me that the approach was beneficial and productive. Student voice expressed that the calm environment was conducive to concentrated creativity.

Once I had ascertained that the 10:2 strategy was beneficial across the genders, I also started to look for strategies that would motivate and support learning. A simple approach was to create a focus sheet as we were marking, then guessed a focus sheet as we were marking, then guessed an asterisk was added if they engaged in the challenge activity. This created a positive and motivating learning environment. It was important that the praise and encouragement for both genders and subtly fed into this ethos. For some time now, we have been using a strategy that we have been termed ‘10:2’. The basic premise is that students work in silence for 10 minutes whilst doing independent practical work and then are offered a two-minute break to move around the room and talk.

If you are inspired to try out any of the strategies or approaches outlined, it would be great to hear your feedback:
ambermaysmith@hotmail.com
@shs_gets_creative

Creating a gender inclusive classroom

As I embarked on my lead practitioner accreditation qualification, I started asking myself some searching questions about potential research projects. Reflecting on my own teaching practice, I realised that, even though I have been teaching for 16 years, engaging and motivating boys remain one of the more challenging aspects of my job. I was, for example, issuing a lot more boys with detentions than girls. And my initial research into boys’ engagement in education began. My first port of call was reading Raising Boys’ Achievement by Gary Wilson. In summary, the points that resonated with me most were how many boys by Gary Wilson. In summary, the points that resonated with me most were how many boys were not used to manage behaviour. The effort board had value, high expectations, was consistent and apparent that whilst the boys were more engaged with boys than girls, but that they were often distracted interactions to refocus attention. It became apparent that whilst the boys were more engaged in taking creative risks and exploring new materials or techniques, some girls would hide their reluctance to break out of their comfort zone.

To explore unconscious gender bias further, we also tried blind marking. Firstly, we filled out a focus sheet as we were marking, then guessed an asterisk was added if they engaged in the challenge activity. This created a positive and motivating learning environment. It was important that the praise and encouragement for both genders and subtly fed into this ethos. For some time now, we have been using a strategy that we have been termed ‘10:2’. The basic premise is that students work in silence for 10 minutes whilst doing independent practical work and then are offered a two-minute break to move around the room and talk.

Do I accept a lower standard of classwork and homework from boys?

To explore unconscious gender bias further, we also tried blind marking. Firstly, we filled out a focus sheet as we were marking, then guessed an asterisk was added if they engaged in the challenge activity. This created a positive and motivating learning environment. It was important that the praise and encouragement for both genders and subtly fed into this ethos. For some time now, we have been using a strategy that we have been termed ‘10:2’. The basic premise is that students work in silence for 10 minutes whilst doing independent practical work and then are offered a two-minute break to move around the room and talk.
Dr Deborah Riding: When I had to write my first editorial as principal editor, I looked back at an interview that my predecessor, Professor Jeff Adams, had undertaken when he took over the role. The interview was with John Swift, another former editor of the journal. It’s a decade since that interview was done. What struck me was how relevant it still was and also how some hopes and ambitions for change remained unfulfilled. Reflecting on his steering of the journal in the 1990s, John describes where the focus was: “When we first took it over, it was to give academic rigour and voice to the members of NSEAD, rather than a broader commercial aspect; one felt as if one was writing for the membership of NSEAD.”

Before membership afforded online access to both AJM Magazine and iJADE, members opted for ‘hard copy’. At that point, they wanted to receive it. I always thought this not only presented a tough decision, but failed to recognise the importance of sharing and developing practice in art and design education in all forms to all who share an interest and passion for the subject.

When John’s tenure was up, there was an ambition for a more diverse and inclusive contribution, but articulating new experiences and embracing interdisciplinary, different perspectives and worldviews. It’s important that we search for those new experiences ourselves as educators, researchers, writers and collaborators. iJADE presents an ideal platform to support this.

iJADE has a strong and international academic community in art and design education, but who else might the journal embrace a ‘not-knowing’ paradigm?

Open access presents a number of opportunities and challenges for UADE as an arts-focused academic journal. Important to our navigation of this changing landscape is consideration of how to best serve a range of contributors and readers and ensure that the journal is accessible for both as possible.

There are parallels with the institutional authority of the gallery or museum that I’ve engaged with in my own research and that of an academic journal. When I developed the idea of a ‘not-knowing paradigm’, it was to challenge the conventional position of authority and the hierarchies of knowledge stemmed from that. I have worked in gallery education for a long time and came into the practice in the late 90s when the development of co-constructive methodologies were being widely adopted. However, I and many others experienced an uncertainty on behalf of the group we were working with about how much the new ideas and knowledge generated about the artworks on display were valued within the institution. That niggle became the impetus for my own PhD.

What draws me to research is the passion and the urge to investigate and explore. That journey can be undertaken in many ways, but often has to conform to specific conventions to be publishable in which journal. As Jeff has already mentioned, this can be restrictive for practice-based research but also sets up an environment where, once again, contributors have to step into a particular way of speaking about their research for it to be valued, much like the situation during Japan’s Meiji era. I’d like to see us as an editorial team really explore what we think of research, new knowledge and rigour, and welcome and support those who may be intimidated by or want to challenge those associated paradigms.

In your work in gallery education you have championed a ‘not-knowing’ paradigm of sharing and developing practice in art and design education, but who else might the journal embrace a ‘not-knowing’ paradigm?

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In conversation with general Secretary of NSEAD Michele Gregson, Dr Deborah Riding, Tate Liverpool programme manager of schools and families, and principal editor of UADE, discusses inclusivity and access in research and practice, and the ‘not knowing’ paradigm.

Dr Deborah Riding

I think we have to start at the heart of the journal. We are currently looking at the make-up of our editorial board and the pool of reviewers who support us. Since we set up our annual conference we have used that to provide a platform for early career researchers and other colleagues across the sectors you mention. We have provided training in academic writing and used the conference edition to profile new and emerging research, supporting those completely new to academic publication in many instances. Our conference has had to move to an online version this year, as have many. For some, this may make participation more difficult. I know, but for others this may be a more feasible way to get involved. I’d encourage all of your readers to get involved in the conference, which will take place 26–28 March this year.

iJADE is approaching its 40th year in 2022. In that time, we have built up a much valued and loyal academic community. But we have a duty as an international journal operating in 2021 to ensure that we are reaching out further and meeting the needs of the familiar friends, colleagues and existing community we operate in. We should be reflecting diversity in all senses of the word in terms of authors, reviewers, editors and research and practice. I’m really excited about the opportunities the journal has going forward and in involving NSEAD members in this next phase.

Michele Gregson: NSEAD strives to be an organisation that brings art, craft and design educators together, to share thinking and practice, to debate and lead innovation in our subject, and to be both learned and learning; expansive and collaborative are our core values. In your first editorial of the International Journal of Art and Design Education (iJADE), you shared your hope for the publication to be more inclusive in the research and practice that we profile and share. Can you tell me more about why you believe that is important for art and design education?

Jeff acknowledged that, although some balance was achieved as far as gender went, in terms of multicultural perspectives, there was still work to do. As Jeff shared in the interview, this was in 2011 and it is still a largely the case. Although the introduction of an international focus in 2013 has meant that we now receive papers from a wider range of countries, they are still predominantly situated within Western practices and paradigms, both in terms of artistic and creative cultural production and education. Creative practice thrives by experimenting and

Inclusivity and access

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Labelling matters

Questioning how we speak about, interpret and view objects and their associated cultures was key to the Pitt Rivers Museum’s Labelling Matters project, which sought to identify problematic language and look at how language is used to exclude. Here, Marenka Thompson-Odlum, research associate at the museum, explains:

Let’s begin with a mistake…

The museum is framed as two Oxford Spires Academy (OSA) students are stood in front of a Gabonese wooden door carved with a figure holding a machete and displaying signs of scarification. As they lean into the front of the Gabonese door carved with a figure holding a machete and displaying signs of scarification. As they lean into the

In April 2019, the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford started the Labelling Matters project aimed at investigating the use of language within the museum, identifying problematic language and looking at how language is used to exclude. Labelling Matters also sought to find innovative ways to subvert traditional labelling by re-imaging the definition of ‘label’, while also using the historic labels as a decolonial teaching tool. The project was conceived in the hope of making the museum a more inclusive place where a multitude of voices could be heard.

The process of decolonisation often suffers from a lack of praxis; the theory itself has been well-established, but the cross-over into practical measures often seems unclear and daunting. Decoloniality is the process and practice of dismantling and subverting coloniality. Coloniality is the invisible structure that upholds the physical process of colonisation, such as social constructions, racialisation, hierarchies and gendered economic systems, all created with Eurocentrism and patriarchy at the centre. I wanted this project to establish an initial decolonial methodological framework that could be utilised by teachers, students and the museum’s general audience. The framework utilises and simplifies Anibal Quijano’s concept of the ‘colonial matrix of power’ and implores visitors to look at museum labels with the following questions in mind:

- Why is the label used?
- How does it impose culture and create classifications?
- What is being left out?
- Why is the label considered important?

In these four questions I am asking the viewer to think of who has the power to produce knowledge, to impose culture and create classifications. In a nutshell, it prompts the viewer to question the notion of ‘expertise’. The Labelling Matters podcast series with Oxford Spires Academy was created to do just that; question the ‘expertise’ behind the museum’s labels and ask why some knowledge is deemed more important than others, and specifically why youth are seen as less important or not expert within the various subject areas.

In these workshops centred around my decolonial framework, object research and podcast production. All the workshops took place at the museum, during which the students investigated it from different perspectives, chose objects or concepts important to them, researched these objects using the museum’s Balfour Library and crafted their podcasts. Their podcasts illustrate how our discussions resounded deeply with each student as they teased out bigger issues of representation, cultural appropriation, colonialism and language.

Amber Frizzell connected with her New Zealand ancestry, and confronted the complex stories of cultural appropriation of Maori symbolism and contemporary New Zealand identity by re-examining the hot tiki pendant. Linnet Drury’s journey through Japanese noh masks drove home one of the key issues I believe a lot of museums face – an absence of visitors. Linnet stated in her blogpost that, ‘Before they were just artefacts and now, they are a person’s story’. Amaani Khan’s poem is a great example of how museums can inspire. She said, ‘The project prompted me to look more at history and how it relates to me and my identity, and it has made me see the museum as being more interesting as a result.’ Amaani, a British-Pakistani teenager, was able to connect and write about Indian anchor because of the stories told by her mother about her experiences or the stories of the museum being more interesting as a result. The two students who had accidentally misidentified the figure on the Gabonese door, Teoni Siani-Dush and Abigail Tucker, ended their podcast with this sentiment about the negative language used to describe the practice of scarification: ‘We can’t have one culture label another culture’s beauty when we all have different ideas of beauty.’

The podcasts are all works in progress, with some taking the personal route, some involving deep historical dives and others asking a question. No matter the finished product, these students have all proven that they have things to say and that they can be impactful.

Left top: Using historic labelling as a decolonial teaching tool
Left bottom: Labelling Matters podcast cohort. Left to right Max Baldock, Pamela Gomes, Teoni Siani-Dush, Linnet Drury, Amber Frizzell, Celeste Dewshi, Marenka Thompson-Odlum, Catriona Oliphant
Below: Oxford Spires Academy students create their podcast at the Pitt Rivers Museum

‘Their podcasts illustrate how our discussions resonated deeply with each student as they teased out bigger issues of representation, cultural appropriation, colonialism and language.’

Oliphant, who coached the students through the pitching, scripting and recording.

The podcast cohort consisted of eight Year 12 students (16–17 years old), run from November 2019 to March 2020 and consisted of four workshops centred around my decolonial framework, object research and podcast production. All the workshops took place at the museum, during which the students investigated it from different perspectives, chose objects or concepts important to them, researched these objects using the museum’s Balfour Library and crafted their podcasts. Their podcasts illustrate how our discussions resounded deeply with each student as they teased out bigger issues of representation, cultural appropriation, colonialism and language.

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In July 2019, I secured funding from the TORCH Knowledge Exchange seed fund in order to professionally produce the podcasts. The school and media partnerships were all thoughtfully selected. As a state school in the Oxford City Limits, OSA is one of the most diverse schools in the area, so it was key to highlight the plurivocality of that perspective, as well as the youthful aspect. As a knowledge exchange project, diversity is embraced and valued. The students had a great understanding of the practice of scarification; ‘We can’t have one culture label another culture’s beauty when we all have different ideas of beauty.’

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Despite being seen as two separate cultures, science and art share similar barriers to participation from certain areas of society, which can be understood through the notion of cultural and science capital.

Toby Parkin, head of learning and audience engagement at Turner Contemporary in Margate, explains the concept:

JMW Turner was captivated by the natural world and technology. He was rooted in scientific theory and approached his work with curiosity and the desire to experiment. Like many romantic-era artists, he was fascinated by science and the natural world, believing the art could be an agent for change in a similar way to science – both being tools for questioning and understanding the world.

A century later, the chemist CP Snow famously spoke about ‘two cultures’ when referring to science and art, highlighting the divide between the disciplines in order to further the progress of human knowledge and to benefit society.

As a scientist and keen art enthusiast, I’ve been fortunate enough to be in the position to research what has made this divide look like in practice. I’ve realised that the barriers that prevent participation with science and the arts are actually very similar. Both can speak of the status of capital, in particular cultural and science capital.

Although I work at Turner Contemporary in Margate, I initially trained as a scientist and then worked for many years at the Science Museum in London. Here, it came across the concept of science capital through the Enterprising Science project. This project was a partnership between the Science Museum, King’s College London and University College London. The idea of science capital was developed by Professor LSорсінсі Fairley and colleagues at Kings College London. It is a conceptual tool used to capture an individual’s science-related resources and dispositions.

Science capital was developed as a way to understand why science-related attitudes and aspirations lead some children to pursue science, while others don’t.

Research2 with 36,001 11–15 year olds showed that only five per cent of young people had high science capital. Those students were more likely to be male and socially advantaged. At the other end of the scale, 27 per cent had low science capital. They felt science wasn’t for them; these students were more likely to be female and socially disadvantaged. The research also revealed that students studying science post-16 fell into the same gender, ethnic and social groups as 25 years ago. What was truly useful to me as a science-education practitioner, such as I, could design projects with young people that took into account the right dimensions. For example, we linked students with working scientists who could act as appropriate role models and ensure that parents were fully engaged alongside their children.

The ultimate aim was to support all students to engage with, understand and appreciate science in their lives. This didn’t need to result in them becoming a working scientist as an adult, but the hope was that they would value how science affects their lives no matter what career they went on. What I understood about the approach was equity and social justice. The idea that all young people should have equal access to opportunity and the barriers that prevent participation should be identified and removed. Science capital helped my framework of practice towards valuing the interests and identities of under-served young people and challenging the elitism that has been rife in science traditionally.

How do science capital links with the arts?

And, more importantly, arts education? For that, the connection lay in the work of Pierre Bourdieu, who coined the term ‘cultural capital’ in the 1970s. It is from this work that the notion of science capital was formed. Bourdieu defined cultural capital as the access to the cultural sphere, the ability to understand it. The dimensions could be summarised by the following questions in relation to science:

- What do you know?
- What can you do?

These ideas have implications for education today as the term ‘cultural capital’ was added to Ofsted’s new Education Inspection Framework in 2019. It received a mixed response. Some practitioners linked Ofsted’s interest in cultural capital with the government’s commitment to social mobility and concern to ‘close the gap’ in education between children from disadvantaged and advantaged backgrounds. However, for others in education, it has caused confusion over how the term is defined, measured and assessed.

There has been much debate within academia over what is symbolic of cultural capital in today’s society and whether cultural capital can or can’t be acquired. The debate has also centred around how cultural capital is transferred to students via their family background and how that, in turn, is translated to the school environment. The result is that cultural capital is still a vague and imprecise concept in the context of education.

So how does science capital link with the arts?

We have seen in science the concept of capital being used to start to shape education practice to be more inclusive, working for improved life chances for all children. Why is the situation any different in the arts?

In 2019, I joined Turner Contemporary in Margate, an art gallery situated in one of the most deprived wards in the country. What I observe is that the barriers to participation in the arts and sciences are very similar. Both are historically elite fields that have favoured the privileged.

But, importantly, both have practitioners who are committed to widening participation, giving agency and a voice to the under-served and applying a social justice perspective to their work. Turner Contemporary, for instance, hosted a series of innovative projects around child-leadership where local children are given decision-making power and agency and are placed at the heart of arts-led community regeneration. These projects have given children a depth of engagement with arts and culture that is not normally available.

Art Inspiring Change, a child-led arts project that ran from 2015–17 at Turner Contemporary, worked with 70 primary-aged students, their parents and carers. Public art interventions and local events were led by the children, who selected the artists to work with, wrote job descriptions and ran interviews. Children became more confident, more resilient and more visible to their community through the project.

They reported that their engagement with art was deepened, supported by their parents, teachers and community. If you were to view this project through the lens of science capital, replacing science with art, it was building on all of the eight dimensions. It was innovative and equitable practice, a different way to represent and experience art that focused on changing and leveling the field rather than reversing a perceived deficit in young people. By then the end of the project, a lot of the families felt they belonged in an art gallery, a feeling they didn’t have at the start.

It is our sincere hope that the positive effect of this engagement will stay with these young people throughout their lives. However, whilst the children who participate develop a range of skills and attributes that can be observed, what lacks is a practical tool to define and measure the change in their perception of and engagement with the arts.

It could be argued that, in many ways, our education system broadens the divide between art and science and entrenches inbuilt elitism. The divide must not be one of identity and belonging or ‘science (or art) isn’t for me’. What underpins this view are the opportunities that are afforded to young people at home and at school. We have seen in science the concept of capital being used to start to shape education practice to be more inclusive, working for improved life chances for all children. Why is the situation any different in the arts? Can we overcome the current barriers and disadvantages to shape the concept of cultural capital into an idea that can be used to broaden participation with the arts?  

*1* //ucl.ac.uk/ioe/departments-and-centres/departments/enterprising-science  
*2* youtube.com/watch?v=A0t70bwPD6Y
Opening up opportunities – gaining experience and skills for pupils with visual impairment

As a PhD researcher in the Faculty of Arts, Professional and Social Studies at Liverpool John Moores University, Harriet Dunn explores PGCE secondary art and design trainees’ experiences of facilitating an art education project for pupils with visual impairment (VI) at a specialist school in the northwest of England. She shares the learning and outcomes gained by trainee teachers.

In the academic year 2017/18, an art project took place at a specialist school for visual impairment (VI). The project was first shared in AD Magazine by Sinead Dowdall and Charlotte Ball, students attending the PGCE in Art and Design, and came about as a result of a conversation between the PGCE tutor at Liverpool Hope University and Dr John Patterson, the headteacher at a specialist school for VI who invited trainees to facilitate a session for his pupils. My PhD research involves an examination of the project, based upon the focus group and the perspectives offered by the trainees.

The purpose of this opportunity was to provide a group project that could enhance trainees’ knowledge and experience. Sinead, Charlotte and the PGCE cohort as a whole described how they felt less secure in their capability to develop appropriate learning opportunities for pupils with VI. It was anticipated that trainees would become more aware of their responsibilities when working with pupils with VI. A key aspect of this training involved wearing simulation glasses, which aimed to imitate common eye conditions.

Prior to facilitating the art education project, PGCE trainees’ initial understanding and training in special educational needs and disability (SEND) took the form of a workshop provided by the Disability Studies head of department at Liverpool Hope University. To generate insights into the relationship between art education and special educational needs, there were opportunities for discussion and group work among PGCE trainees, who were encouraged to explore how these ideas might further their own teaching practice. The Carter Review of ITT (2013) indicated that this perspective is currently only occasionally offered to PGCE trainees, since time constraints on PGCE courses often mean there is little opportunity to address SEND issues.

In addition, the review noted that there is much variability across Initial Teacher Training programmes in what is covered on SEND. However, there is an expectation that trainees should gain experience of SEND issues in order to become better prepared in providing appropriate support to pupils with SEND.

Trainees were also required to participate in a VI awareness training session organised by the VI rehabilitation centre linked to the school. This provided a way of gaining experience of the appropriate sighted guiding techniques when working with pupils with VI. A key aspect of this training involved wearing simulation glasses, which aimed to imitate common eye conditions.

Following the project, I undertook a focus group with thirteen PGCE trainees – two male and 11 female. This was scheduled for a day when trainees were attending a university-based session. It was commented that the VI awareness training session provided an overview in which trainees could gain experience of SEND, albeit ‘superficial experience’, but noted that VI awareness training could not provide a genuine, lived experience. Despite this, trainees highlighted the ways they would put the skills learnt into practice. In essence, this enhanced trainees’ knowledge and they were able to develop greater empathy and understanding of the perspectives of those with SEND.

The principles of universal design for learning (UDL) were used to underpin trainees’ planning for the art education project to ensure it was accessible to all pupils. The art education project involved a small group of secondary pupils with VI. Trainees were required to expand upon a project already started by the school in relation to World War II.

‘Mainstream teaching practice placements would not necessarily provide trainees with the most appropriate advice and guidance in working with pupils with VI’

Discussion took place between trainees regarding the ability levels of pupils and the different materials they may be able to work with. As trainees were unsure of pupils’ capabilities, it was decided that the project must include an element of sculpture, thus providing what Sinead and Charlotte describe as a ‘fully sensory, tactile experience’. Modroc parachutes would incorporate a new material for pupils to work with. In addition to making and painting parachutes, pupils were given the opportunity to write keywords and poems in response to a soundscape based on the war. Many pupils were keen to share their poems with the group, which were hung from the parachutes in the form of an installation.

As trainees began to reflect upon their experiences at the end of the art education project, they explained that they were more comfortable about developing working relationships with pupils with VI. In turn, this meant trainees were able to take into account how their pupils’ needs could be met, thus helping them make progress with their education. Trainees also commented that this opportunity enabled them to think differently about working with pupils with VI and/or other needs.

Importantly, trainees have been able to think about planning learning experiences from different educational approaches. This opportunity has enabled trainees to learn new skills, bringing a fresh perspective to the dominant practices inherent within education.

Jr.dunn@ljmu.ac.uk

1. S. Dowdall and C. Ball (2019) ‘Painting the Modroc parachutes with colours the pupils associate with the war’.
Public art in art education

Last year, the role of public art in our lives was questioned in new and unprecedented ways. Anna Robb, lecturer in education at the University of Dundee, explores the value of public art in our lives and asks how teachers and art educators can respond through critical dialogue with pupils.

On Sunday 7 June 2020, in Bristol, the statue of Edward Colston was pulled down by a group of protestors and dumped in the docks. Edward Colston was a wealthy 17th-century merchant who made his money through the slave trade and went on to make significant financial contributions to the city of Bristol during his lifetime. It was his connection with the slave trade that led to the removal of the statue, a fact that has caused much debate in the city, with many arguing that a man such as Colston should not be commemorated in light of the systemic and institutional racism present in the world today.

The media were awash with images, reports and articles for weeks afterwards, as this action triggered a wave of protests against other commemorative statues sited across the country: see for example the global Black Lives Matter protests, the act of pulling down a public sculpture in a British city caused an outpouring of opinion as people tried to grapple with what this act meant. It thus raised questions about the role of public art in our lives today, particularly commemorative art. As an art historian and lecturer in initial teacher education, I was left contemplating how, as a primary teacher, would I have engaged with the issue in the classroom, assured that my pupils would have seen the images and maybe discussed it with parents. It also made me consider the role of public art in the art curriculum and how teachers could be exploring this with pupils in the future.

In my own work with children aged between 6 and 11, and exploring their visual art experiences in and out of the classroom, public art became an unexpected theme to emerge in the images that they shared and the discussions that took place.

Photo-elicitation activities, where children are given cameras and asked to take photos of their worlds and then share those with adults, offered a fascinating insight of what they were seeing and selecting as examples of visual art. The children shared photos of murals and public sculptures in their local community that I had been completely unaware of. Attached to these were narratives and explanations, some providing the background to the art itself, as in who created the art and why it was created. Some focused on personal anecdotes, such as examples of art that were passed on the journey to school or sculptures which became the focus of play. The children each demonstrated a form of attachment to the artwork.

Street art also emerged as a genre that was a feature of these lives, particularly older children aged 10–11. Examples were shared with children taking on the role of critic as they explained where the examples were located, how they were created and why they were created. They were also keen to explain the difference between street art and graffiti. Essentially the children became citizen guides to their communities as they communicated a sense of ownership to these examples.

Public art trails, where a number of blank, sculptural forms are sponsored, decorated by local artists and placed around a city for people to 'collect' in the form of digital photographs and through digital apps, also featured in the discussions. In those cases, stories regarding the completion of the trail and the people that they met while taking part were the main focus of discussion. Children also enjoyed describing their favourite sculptures. Interestingly, however, unlike the street art examples, they were unable to tell me anything about the art that was behind the sculptures or the designs themselves. Assessed that the important factor was the accessibility of taking part and the sense of community that arose as a result.

Public and street art are genres of art which serve an important function in the lives of children; they create a sense of place and belonging. Additionally, they are highly accessible as it is possible to engage with them without requiring the confidence to step over the threshold of a gallery space or engage with the implicit conditions that those spaces hold. It is, therefore, possible to engage with public and/or street art in any way that you wish. However, there is scope for misunderstanding and misinterpretation, often due to a lack of awareness of the context within which the art was created. For some public art examples, there will be few expectations from this, while for others, such as the Colston statue, the ramifications are more serious.

Critical literacy skills are essential tools for both children and adults in a world saturated with visual images. By exploring examples of visual art, children learn an alternative vocabulary with which they can engage to communicate with others, and this is why the viewing of art made by others is so important. Through art history we also learn about the world, its people and the present, as well as the other people, communities and societies we share this space with. Public art provides an avenue for these aspects to come together, while also being accessible, meaningful and relevant to the lives of children. Engagement with public art as part of the primary art history curriculum is, therefore, essential. This means that primary teachers and art educators, as well as placing children at the centre of the curriculum, need to engage with communities and encourage children to share their knowledge of those communities, so we do not overlook places, spaces and artworks which may seem unimportant to an adult eye, but which are extremely important to the child.

This means that primary teachers and art educators, as well as placing children at the centre of the curriculum, need to engage with communities and encourage children to share their knowledge of those communities, so we do not overlook places, spaces and artworks which may seem unimportant to an adult eye, but which are extremely important to the child. Art should be accessible to everyone. In an age where we rely more and more on digital reproductions, and the costs involved to take children on trips to galleries are ever increasing, we need to focus on the visual art that is on our doorstep. Public and street art provide avenues into this world that moves beyond what we see, opening up discussions about why it has been placed where it has, who created it and why, in addition to opening up meaningful and relevant interdisciplinary links. In the case of the Colston statue, it also means that, as teachers, we have opportunities to confront complex issues that affect our children’s everyday lives.
Celebrating Body Positivity

Art advisor Linda Copeland, and Eluaine Little, head of Visual Arts at Blackpool Sixth Form College, set out to mark International Women’s Day 2020 by celebrating female body positivity and challenging the issue of menstruation. Linda explains how the project came about:

As we approached lockdown and the ever-increasing danger of sharing art materials, we prepared our last workshop at Blackpool Sixth Form College, which was to celebrate International Women’s Day 2020. Apprehensive and armed with bacterial wipes and sanitiser, the aim was to offer a creative experience to year 9 students from across Blackpool’s secondary schools, inviting them in to celebrate female body positivity.

The inspiration for our workshop came from a chance meeting during an art conference I attended in London. A sanitary pad happened to be lying on the floor next to me, whereupon Dr Rachel Senn, a lecturer from University of Pretoria in South Africa, tapped my shoulder and alerted me to it. The pad didn't actually belong to me as I had a hysterectomy 10 years before, and the memory of periods had faded from mind. Yet, the image of the pad brought back the awareness of what I had missed until that moment. On reflection, my interest in the project was motivated by this re-engagement with sanitary products and the menstruation cycle.

Dr Senn then asked me if I could think of a way of celebrating the menstrual cycle, possibly using sculpture. She explained that her female students were aware of menstruation in other countries such as South Africa. Furthermore, the creative process challenged social attitudes, using art to change student’s perception of periods and the stigma.

The workshop consisted of four groups of year 9 students spending 45 minutes decorating pads and attaching them to the upcycled prom dress placed on a manikin at the front of the studio. The students were pleased to learn the shared experience of menstruation in other countries and were ready to return to their own studios to continue the project. By the end of the session, they were laughing, relaxed and sharing personal stories as we struggled to stretch the concept to introduce ideas such as additional adornment and period parties - which, without lockdown, could have been a reality.

The workshop was a creative success on a number of levels as it educated the students about upcycling and environmental damage, as well as offering an awareness about the experience of menstruation in other countries. Furthermore, the creative process challenged social attitudes and creativity was used as a vessel for self-awareness.

The prom dress, currently displayed to promote International Woman’s Day March 7th 2020, will remain part of our visual arts promotional work on body positivity, anti-abuse (traditions) and period poverty.

Top to bottom

The final normal art session on international Women’s Day, March 7th 2020. Secondary school pupils decorate pads at the workshop. The prom dress, currently displayed to promote the idea was conceived at Blackpool Sixth Form College.
Education through coffee, creativity and business

Images
Student designs for the Hundred House Coffee company

Over the last few years, with the help of our careers officer, our department has focused on providing the opportunity for collaborative live projects with local businesses, companies and creative professionals to allow students to fully understand and the skills taught in the classroom relate directly to industry and the world of work. Our work has helped to highlight the importance of not only the physical artwork itself but also so-called 'soft skills' which are increasingly requested as desirable traits in new employees. During this article I will share our successes, but also what we have learnt along the way to inspire you to develop your own projects in the future.

Recently, we have been working on a collaborative project with Hundred House Coffee, an award-winning coffee roastery based in Shropshire. Owners Anabelle do Gorgui and Matthew Wade both have backgrounds in art and business, so they have a lot of experience in community art initiatives under the title Art & Industry. Working with school and colleges is an extension of this ethos and offers the opportunity for students to understand the relationship between art and its application within industry and business. The project was fairly simple; create a logo based on a coffee producing nation (this year's country was Ethiopia) and the most original design would be used and printed on the bags of coffee. Students began by researching Ethiopia and then created a series of basic sketches which they formed into a final design.

The design was digitalised using Adobe Illustrator, after which the students had the freedom to explore how they could apply their designs to posters, packaging, t-shirts and a business card using both hand and digital means.

Throughout the project, Anabelle was on hand from the initial project introduction to leading follow-up feedback sessions. Her advice to the students was always constructive, insightful and practical.

One of the things that stopped me for several years working on ‘live’ projects was that most of them would be one-off. The time and effort spent developing resources and generally organising the project was unsustainable. So, I suggest working on projects which can be delivered over several years with maybe a slight twist each year to keep it fresh.

Crucially, what we have to ask ourselves is, do we want to teach the skills for students to just pass exams, or teach the skills needed to be authentic artists/designers who are able to fully function in employment and post 16 provision?

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Engage the support of your careers officer who can help with making initial contact with companies, as well as emailing and general administration (the stuff which generally takes the most time).

Don’t expect your students to be super confident when talking to ‘visitors’. To be honest, this was something which I completely overlooked. After reminding our students for several weeks that at some point they would have to stand up and share their ideas and work with the client, on the day some students froze and didn’t want to speak. Nowadays, I prepare students for this by building up their confidence before the actual pitch to the client.

Most businesses and companies are willing to support you in anyway they can. This could range from donating materials, a short talk to students or facilitating a whole project. So, contact local businesses which you think may be suitable and see what they can offer.

A lot of staff in your school will know people who work in the creative industries. Conduct a staff survey to identify who they know and if they would be willing to donate some time.

Most of the time the people we work with are donating their time for free. To show our appreciation, we often post details about the people and projects we are working with on our Academy website.

If you are interested in hearing more about the project, please contact ssharp@ppegusscademy.org.uk or if you are interested in working with Hundred House Coffee on a similar project, contact Anabelle or Matt at info@hundredhousecoffee.com
Big ideas and little people

For over 20 years now, I have been obsessed with the notion of using dioramas to convey my ideas and thoughts as an artist. Because the work is figurative in nature and, therefore, visually engaging, the figurines can be used to powerful effect when providing a commentary on all kinds of subjects.

The ideas for my macro photography series are normally formed in one of two ways. Sometimes I will look at an object and think to myself, “That would make a great prop to have a scene on with the Little People”, and I will then source figurines that interact well with it. Or, I will buy a set of figurines that I like the look of and then spend some time thinking about what objects would interact well with them in a scene.

During my time at art school, I was introduced to the genius work of David Levinthal (a master of figurine photography), which helped give my work more direction and impetus. He uses dioramas to convey his work and provide a commentary on a range of pertinent subjects, such as his most recent series Pandemic. Here, he describes the process that is inspired by world events such as Brexit, the devastating effects of plastic pollution and my most recent series Pandemic. I have been working on my Pandemic series since the start of lockdown and have incorporated objects within the work that have become iconic overnight, such as bottles of hand gel and face masks. My intention through making this work is not to trivialise matters, but instead to hopefully provide a creative commentary that we can all relate to and perhaps lighten the mood slightly, which is sorely needed during times like these.

The best thing about this type of photography is that you don't need much space to make the work because the sets are so tiny. I just use the back area of my studio where I have a small table and good light from a window. The miniature dioramas, therefore, make for an ideal subject matter at a time when our outdoor freedoms are being restricted.

The sets are made from materials that are inspired by world events such as Brexit, the devastating effects of plastic pollution and my most recent series Pandemic. I have been working on my Pandemic series since the start of lockdown and have incorporated objects within the work that have become iconic overnight, such as bottles of hand gel and face masks. My intention through making this work is not to trivialise matters, but instead to hopefully provide a creative commentary that we can all relate to and perhaps lighten the mood slightly, which is sorely needed during times like these.

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When the National Gallery closed its doors in March 2020, a traditionally busy summer of school enrichment activities was inevitably shut down. As a result, Caroline Smith, programmer for schools and teachers, decided to move the collection from Trafalgar Square into classrooms and homes nationwide.

On 18 March 2020, the National Gallery went digital, but how much of a gallery experience could we offer online?

We prioritised finishing existing projects, running scheduled placements for trainee teachers and the remaining Cross-phase sessions for the Take One Picture programme. It was empowering (and something of a relief) to discover how much could be achieved online with imagination, creative problem solving and a willingness to risk something not working as intended. Although it was still mediated through a screen, participants appreciated being part of a gallery experience, even if they couldn’t replicate the vastness of the space, but we notice the light making patterns on the floor. We hear footsteps, to look up at the ornate ceilings and notice the light making patterns on the floor. We could imagine our journey through the gallery while being part of a live event, as well as being able to discuss and contribute. The learning from these events and the continued uncertainty about school visits encouraged us to seize the opportunity and test ideas for teaching our main school programme. For the autumn term, all our sessions were online.

As opportunities to travel remained limited and young people’s learning environments potentially narrowed, it seemed even more important to ‘escape’ the classroom. During our live sessions we used photographs to lead students on a ‘walk’ from Trafalgar Square, up the steps into the gallery and around the space, focusing on sounds and textures, as well as sight. Using these visual prompts, we encouraged students to imagine and hear footsteps, to look up at the ornate ceilings and notice the light making patterns on the floor. We couldn’t replicate the vastness of the space, but we could imagine our journey through it and our arrival at a particular painting. Seeing it in situ gave context and scale. Students are often keen to show and talk about their own artworks, and an unexpected outcome of our ‘live’ sessions was being invited into classrooms to trace their own spaces. Gallery educators found teaching online more tiring, the need for ‘presence’ and variety of voice greater, but commented on how fantastic it was to connect with students again.

Exploring paintings together has always been at the centre of the schools’ programme, as we use investigative conversations to unpick a painting and prompt connections and further enquiry. While there are obvious subject links, paintings can also provide a safe distance and historical perspective for discussions on the world today and our place in it. These conversations felt particularly timely when students might be more anxious than usual and where creativity, critical thinking and complex problem solving seemed even more important for thriving in an uncertain future.

Ways of working online? Introducing a painting through a detail only or a soundscape is not possible in the gallery, but a great way of firing imagination or generating questions from the group to direct the session. Setting an initial brief or question for discussion, and using quick drawing games for looking or striking poses, helps maintain momentum and concentration. The opportunity to compare paintings side by side, to reference other works or sources, adds a helpful dimension. With a clear brief and straightforward materials agreed with the school in advance, there are opportunities for practical artist-led sessions. We haven’t made egg tempera online yet but there are plans!

What have we learnt? That the principle of good teaching remain the same online as elsewhere. The opportunity to compare paintings side by side, to reference other works or sources, adds a helpful dimension. With a clear brief and straightforward materials agreed with the school in advance, there are opportunities for practical artist-led sessions. We haven’t made egg tempera online yet but there are plans!

‘Students are often keen to show and talk about their own artworks, and an unexpected outcome of our ‘live’ session was being invited into the classrooms to see their own spaces’

How might this approach work in the future and how could we use the opportunity to try new ways of working online? Introducing a painting through a detail only or a soundscape is not possible in the gallery, but a great way of firing imagination or generating questions from the group to direct the session. Setting an initial brief or question for discussion, and using quick drawing games for looking or striking poses, helps maintain momentum and concentration.

Virtual visits are different. The vastness of the gallery, the sense of being part of a large community and the ‘wow factor of standing in front of a painting in the flesh’ are difficult to reproduce. Equally, there are advantages, such as the ability to see in close-up and to access works not on display, too small for a group or in rooms too busy to linger.

There is greater freedom to meet individual needs and encourage greater collaboration with teachers and input from students. Also, a chance to go away to visit their national collections can be accessed at facilitated workshops.

Looking at art is a once-in-a-lifetime experience, so an online session is useful as part of a mix of interactions which, for many, is a helpful starting point. It has allowed us to maintain — in some cases widen — access to the collection and has challenged us to think differently. As one student only half an hour away posted, ‘I’ve never been, but now I want to go.’ We might count that a success!

nationalgallery.org.uk/learning/teachers-and-schools
### Raising digital literacy

Ted Fox Joyce, head of visual arts at Langley Park School for Girls in Beckenham, discusses the importance of raising digital literacy skills within the department and building a sustainable programme of development, whilst addressing the concepts of the ‘sacred’ and the ‘profane’ within arts education

In issue 24 of AD (spring 2019), I wrote an article entitled “Action research and digital literacy” which described how I had started leading the department some 14 years ago, and how the digital literacy skills of our students have grown exponentially.

Through my previous action research, I had reflected on how digital art was growing and developing within our visual arts department. However, it was still being used as an add-on to our core curriculum. I wanted to see an embedding of digital art in our school, not just as an add-on to traditional, more hands-on techniques and processes.

To embed digital practices, we needed to bring about a change in our approach and delivery. When I first started leading the department some 14 years ago, the hardware was sparse and the software was expensive. Additionally, staff were either unable to use the facilities due to a lack of knowledge and experience, or due to a lack of provision, time and accessibility. At that time, digital art seemed a step too far and any resistance was compounded by what John Peter describes as the ‘sacred’ and ‘profane’. In their text, Marner and Ortegren published an educational inquiry called ‘Resistance to digitalisation of the subject of art education’.

However, it was still being used as an add-on in Creative Digital Media. Our department are planning to continue with our key stage 3 rotation of subjects as ‘the sacred’ and ‘the profane’ are actually bound together in a symbiotic relationship; the ‘sacred’ being the established building blocks on which to develop, but which can only develop through reflection, challenge and change, i.e. the ‘profane’.

Through the pedagogic practice of embedding digital art in our curriculum, I have been able to express myself creatively through a variety of different media, whilst developing my digital literacy skills. What was most interesting was the students’ innate ability to take on and assimilate the digital tools with ease, and use them as a tool in their creative development, thus the boundary between the ‘sacred’ and the ‘profane’ seemed less distinguishable, if problematic and lost definition.

In September 2020, we returned to school and navigated our way around the new systems imposed by the impact of Covid-19. At the time of writing, our department is planning to continue with our key stage 3 rotation of subjects in both years 7 and 8. In Creative Digital Media, year 7 students (ages 11–12) will embark on a collaboratory digital filmmaking course which centres on research work into our environment and the impact of plastic waste on our oceans. Students will continue to use Adobe Spark, as they did in the previous year, in order to develop a digital sketchbook of their work and experiences. They will also learn aspects of digital composition and film editing techniques using Adobe Rush.

Staff will be keeping a close eye on progress, reflecting on and altering projects to ensure that our students get the host possible experiences, whilst developing their digital literacy skills to express their individual and collective creative journeys.

### Online Conference

**Hybrid Spaces**

**April 2021**

**Keynote Speaker**

1. Margrethe Marner, Norway, and Hans Ortegren, Sweden, ‘Drawing and painting are seen as the sacred. In Creative Digital Media, our term of work focuses on key aspects of Adobe CC software.’

2. Aimee Crookes, UK, ‘Through my previous action research, I had reflected on how digital art was growing and developing within our visual arts department. However, it was still being used as an add-on to some of our subject areas and was not fully assimilated – what Marner and Ortegren discussed as ‘the addition of digital art’. What we wanted to see was an embedding of digital art in our department, not as an add-on to tradition, but as another tool for students to explore and utilise.’

**Conference Details**

- **Eventbrite:** [https://ijade-2021-hybrid-spaces.eventbrite.co.uk](https://ijade-2021-hybrid-spaces.eventbrite.co.uk)
- **Standard 3-day rate:** £93.00 | NSEAD Members: £78.00
- **Registration:** [until 28 February 2021](https://ijade-2021-hybrid-spaces.eventbrite.co.uk)
- **For enquiries, please contact:** [ijade@nesad.org](mailto:ijade@nesad.org)

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Ted Fox Joyce, head of visual arts at Langley Park School for Girls in Beckenham, discusses the importance of raising digital literacy skills within the department and building a sustainable programme of development, whilst addressing the concepts of the ‘sacred’ and the ‘profane’ within arts education.

In issue 24 of AD (spring 2019), I wrote an article entitled “Action research and digital literacy” which described how I had started leading the department some 14 years ago, and how the digital literacy skills of our students have grown exponentially. More and more of our students are opting for GCSE Photography and our uptake at A Level and ITTCE is growing.

In September 2019, I took on board a new ITTCE course in Creative Digital Media.

I first became interested in action research in December 2013 when Anders Marner and Hans Ortegren published an educational inquiry called ‘Resistance to digitalisation of the subject of art education’. The four approaches were: 1. Resistance to digitalisation of the subject of art
2. The addition of digital art
3. The embedding of digital art
4. Digital media as dominant

The article resonated. I had worked through a period of ‘resistance to digitalisation’. When I first started leading the department some 14 years ago, the hardware was sparse and the software was expensive. Additionally, staff were either unable to use the facilities due to a lack of knowledge and experience, or due to a lack of provision, time and accessibility. At that time, digital art seemed a step too far and any resistance was compounded by what John Peter describes as the “sacred’ and ‘profane’. In their text, Marner and Ortegren discuss the ‘sacred’ and ‘profane’.

In Creative Digital Media, our term of work focuses on key aspects of Adobe CC software. All students were taught how to use Adobe Spark as a digital sketchbook and via this they were able to document their work and progress, and share it via social media etc. In addition, all students were taught the fundamentals of Adobe Photoshop in terms of layering and blending images to develop intricate composite visuals based on aspects of the formal elements, which is still used at the heart of our delivery across all three subject areas.

Setting up the new rotation came with its own logistical problems and required careful planning and buy-in from all staff, students, leadership and parents. In addition, there were footholing issues with setting up student accounts and ensuring access to all the digital hardware and software worked correctly and smoothly.

Unfortunately, in March 2020, Covid-19 and school closure meant that we had to temporarily abandon the work that we had been developing over the first two terms. However, feedback from students was very positive, especially from those who struggled with more traditional approaches to visual arts. Many students felt liberated and able to express themselves creatively through the new digital tools. What was most interesting was the students’ innate ability to take on and assimilate the digital tools with ease, and use them as a tool in their creative development, thus the boundary between the ‘sacred’ and the ‘profane’ seemed less distinguishable, if problematic and lost definition.

In September 2020, we returned to school and navigated our way around the new systems imposed by the impact of Covid-19. At the time of writing, our department is planning to continue with our key stage 3 rotation of subjects in both years 7 and 8. In Creative Digital Media, year 7 students (ages 11–12) will embark on a collaboratory digital filmmaking course which centres on research work into our environment and the impact of plastic waste on our oceans. Students will continue to use Adobe Spark, as they did in the previous year, in order to develop a digital sketchbook of their work and experiences. They will also learn aspects of digital composition and film editing techniques using Adobe Rush.

Staff will be keeping a close eye on progress, reflecting on and altering projects to ensure that our students get the host possible experiences, whilst developing their digital literacy skills to express their individual and collective creative journeys.
#NSEAD21

The conversation continues

3 Saturday July 2021

Save the date for the 2021 NSEAD annual conference, to be held in partnership with the National Gallery, London

#NSEAD21 will be part of our summer festival of online and face-to-face events for art, craft and design educators

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