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From this issue onwards AD magazine’s subscription rate has changed. AD continues to be membership benefit; it’s one of the ways we seek to promote and champion outstanding art, craft and design education. We’ve made the changes to AD’s pricing so that more people can access ideas and features that share and champion the best in our subject. You can find out more by reading the summary of these changes on page 33.

Sophie Leach, Editor, AD
Twitter: @nsead_sophie
Please send article proposals and submissions to sophieleach@nsead.org

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Cover image
Dingy Blue (British Isles), 2014 Tania Kovats
Photography by Prudence Cumming	

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We hope to see you there.

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The National Art Education Archive is a major research facility providing a documentary trace of the development of art, craft and design education in the UK and overseas. The conference seeks to put the National Art Education Archive into context and consider its future development for all our communities.

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Sophie Leach: You grew up in Brighton and attended a faith boarding school. What part did your early education, and living in a coastal region, play in signposting your work and career?

Tania Kovats: Catholic school certainly played a role in forming who I am. I don’t have faith now but my schooling did leave me with an understanding of what it is to believe in things, and it’s given me a way of looking at how certain religious ways of thinking act as controlling mechanisms. For me, the question arises about whom those mechanisms serve.

As for growing up in Brighton, it means my natal landscapes are the South Downs. I still love a pebbly beach – the sounds of the waves hitting the pebbles, then pulling back, and no sand in your sandwich! Living near the sea meant always being able to get to the edge and look out into that space. My work is still processing how important it is to be able to see the horizon.

You went on to study sculpture at Newcastle Polytechnic (Northumbria University) and completed your MA at the Royal College of Art. How did higher education impact on your career as an artist?

I loved school – something that makes my teenage son cringe – but I liked learning stuff and I had art teachers who fostered my love of the subject. So going on to art school was an easy decision. At Newcastle Polytechnic I was left to get on with things and work through what I needed to find out. It was a very introspective time for me.

The other significant aspect of life in Newcastle was the proximity to big landscapes. The Lake District, Scotland, Hadrian’s Wall and the beautiful coastline at Whitley Bay, Berwick and Holy Island were all new to me and very different from the Sussex landscape I’d grown up in.

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My MA show in Newcastle was the first time I’d put work together and actually seen it in its completion. Everything before then seemed to happen without me ever seeing my work.
Being there for a period of time meant I didn't have to see everything in a rush. Rome is such a fascinating city for being able to wander through layers of time. My favourite day was 1 November, which is the day to honour the dead. Cars are banned in the city at night, which heightens the sense of time freezing itself from the present. My landscapes in Italy became the archaeological sites around Rome and Naples, including the beautifully painted Etruscan underground tombs, Pompeii and Herculaneum.

The British School at Rome was a literally British institution, which made me reflect on English landscape and identity. Up to that point I'd made works about places that I'd travelled too – Utah, Arizona, the deserts in Israel. Working in Rome I addressed my natal landscape for the first time and made the Very work that references the White Cliffs of Dover.

Your work draws on geology, mathematics, science, archaeology, and you were Visiting Fellow at the School of Archaeology, Oxford University 2006. What advice would you give to art, craft and design educators about working across disciplines, alongside specialists and making cross-curricular connections?

I think artists have an endless curiosity to find things out which leads them down many lines of inquiry that give life a real purpose. They have a hunger to search, understand and find an underlying meaning. I'm convinced experience to people doing and making things is really valuable. Lots of kids don't even understand what their parents do for work. I'm lucky enough to love my job, which is important to communicate the idea of vocation or how loving what you do makes life better. It fosters motivation and purpose, and makes you more robust to cope with difficulty and moments of failure or doubt.

Collaborative activity and conversations that happen across disciplines helps to clarify and define those practices and release a lot of potential energy and creative thinking. It's worth doing just that for the chance to see something from someone else's point of view. To find out what motivates them, what they know already, and what else they want to find out. But these relationships take a lot of time and space to foster so you have to allow for unpredictability, which is hard to accommodate sometimes.

In 2004 you were appointed the Henry Moore Drawing Fellow and in the following year published The Drawing Book. A survey of drawing: the primary means of expression. Can you share why drawing is so important for you?

Drawing is the part of my practice where I recover myself. A lot of my work is quite public and requires me to project forwards. With drawing I spend time travelling inwards, absorbed in the task of drawing. Like ‘reading’ other people’s drawings - not just artist’s drawings, but drawing made by architects, designers, archaeologists, explorers, scientists, children, engineers, archaeologists and dreamers. Drawing is an act of non-verbal communication.

Drawings are storytellers too, allowing someone to look over the shoulder of someone else’s thinking. The relationship between thinking and drawing is well understood both on a cognitive level as being really important for brain development, and in more obvious ways as a way to puzzle something out, or visualise a thought. I’ve been lucky enough to be able to publish two books that survey other people’s drawing and consider the way one drawing can almost unfold or talk to another. It’s the most democratic element in our visual record, and most free of specialisation that is unbound by time periods.

For the last two years I’ve run the MA Drawing at Wimbledon, part of the University of the Arts, London. It’s a cross-disciplinary course as I might have molecular biologists working alongside video designers, anthropologists and artists. Their common language is drawing and wanting to discover something through their drawing research and practice.

When describing the range and variety of your work you once said: ‘There are always connections. It is a charm bracelet and I stick on different things’. If the charms are your artworks, what’s the chain?

It’s a bit of a clumsy metaphor but it helps indicate that there is a central spine to what I do, even if one thing doesn’t look like another. I suppose it’s all attached to the chain of teaching, writing, making and drawing.

Sustainability and transformations in the environment also figure prominently in your work. Indeed, last year you became an ambassador for the schools’ project It’s Our World. Why did you take on this role?

It would be impossible for an artist whose work addresses our relationship with the natural world not to be engaging with the whole question of climate change, environmental damage, and how we are generally not being good enough caretakers of the planet.

I am currently the artist holding the Lovelock Commission so I have been thinking a lot about James Lovelock’s ideas and GAIA theory. Here, the whole world is considered to be an interconnected ecosystem that also attempts to regenerate, even with our seemingly best efforts to upset, spoil and exploit the interrelationships between living things and their environments.

This subject is not the central concern of my work but is an inevitable part of it, and art can engage people in these questions, in debates, and in political discussions in different ways. It’s a more emotional and psychological way of communicating and caring. Art can be provocative and direct, or subtly effecting, and is a route to encourage deep, meaningful thinking.

Thank you Tania for describing the back-stories in your work, your past and present motivations. Artist educators evidently have a very responsible role to play in connecting and communicating and caring for people and places. Needless to say your work embodies this important role.
Don’t let the doodles give you away: from teacher to senior leader

Combining a role on a senior leadership team with one in the art and design class seems to be unlikely mix, yet as Chris Francis explains, the position can prove rewarding for both teacher and school.

I’m two hours into an SLT (senior leadership team) meeting, knee deep in detail, and my creative mind is starting to wander. I’d much rather be dealing with the bigger picture. Map out an exciting, collective vision and I’ll drive towards it. I’ll even put a cherry on top when we arrive. But what’s with all these details? I’m an art teacher. A little risk and uncertainty won’t do any harm… will it?

Of course, teams – or at least school leadership ones – don’t run on risk, which is fair enough. I learnt long ago that not everyone’s mind leaps about like mine. Some people need to ponder on the finer details and scrutinise the data. It’s an area I’ve had to develop because heaven forbid the artist-turned-leader whose numbers don’t add up.

I’m a senior leader in a large secondary on the south coast. It’s a peculiar position, somewhere between subject leader and assistant head. I wear a suit jacket but the art apron strings still swing proudly, and the truth is I’m loath to cut them off.

Most art and design teachers who’ve climbed the greasy pole will face a similar dilemma: “Do I want to move any further away from my subject?”

I’m tired just writing his job title, Pete also found it a tough call. With the decline of specialist colleges and Creative Partnership schools, arts leadership jobs have become as rare as PVA-free paintbrushes.

But there’s no doubt the arts are under-represented at SLT level. Jon Nicholls, director of creativity at Thomas Tallis School (a non-SLT role), suggests three potential reasons for this:

- Visual arts graduates may feel alienated by the focus on data handling at SLT. In addition to this (not even intended), perhaps we are also more sceptical of data as artists, makers and designers tend to worship at more sensory altars. Target grades for art have long been quoted, so to bow before them at whole school level might just be a step too far for some. For many maker teachers – spatially sensitive, less constrained in thought – looking at a spreadsheet is akin to looking at the cage rather than the horizons beyond the bars.

- Women arts teachers, who tend to outnumber their male counterparts, may experience a career hiatus if they choose to start a family. It’s an honest point. Interestingly, when I put a call out for art-based school leaders to share their own experiences of promotion (those beyond a head of faculty role), only one female initially came forward, and from New Zealand of all places. The NSEAD’s Facebook forum then came good (it usually does) with Debbie Hepplstone, director of Teaching School, Bournemouth, offering her perspective: “I moved into an extended leadership role once my own children were well into secondary education themselves. I did choose to wait, but it should always be a personal choice”.

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Other roles. It’s made me appreciate my teaching time even more, although I miss extra-curricular art-based projects like community murals, exhibitions etc.

The path to a whole school leadership role can appear littered with compromise, but there don’t have to include your creative principles. Jon Nicholls and Pete Jones are testament to that. Their schools are, of course, still effective and have the ‘wow’ factor which, in the meantime, the wonky and holey pieces are either works of art or a perfect yarn bomb!

Alex Clark, assistant head and teacher of year 3 and 4 (ages 7-9) at Meadowfield Primary School in Leeds says: ‘It has been a pleasure to see that children excel in these sessions when they may usually lack confidence in other areas of their learning’.

We teach knitting with a mixture of finger and arm knitting, sewing, pom poms, weaving and crochet which are all very hands-on and help develop children’s haptic skills relating to touch, sense and using materials and tools which aids cognitive development.

These activities improve coordination, dexterity and concentration. We use yarns and materials that have been donated from the local community, yarn shops or waste from a yarn company so they all vary in colour, size, texture and weight, all of which is brilliant for the children to be able to explore their individual tastes and styles. Whilst teaching different techniques we encourage children to be mindful of where the yarns have come from which helps to make them appreciate where their yarns come from, and develop a sense of gratitude and community.

We also work with schools to enrich areas of the wider curriculum and create cross-curricular learning, which includes numeracy and literacy. In history we focus on the origins of knitting and textiles. Where possible we incorporate digital technology through the use of our how-to videos and guides, and introduce blogging. All children are given a ‘tool kit’ that gradually builds up and for which they are responsible. The toolkit can be taken home at the end of the project.

We work in a diverse range of settings and welcome parent volunteers, offering them training opportunities for makers in the community as well as CPD for teachers.

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Enriched: Moments: living well with dementia

Inspired by the work at the Abbot Hall Art Gallery in Kendal, ‘Enriched by Moments’ is a programme of creative engagement for people living with dementia, set up by learning and engagement officer Anne-Marie Quinn.

When I first came to Lakeland Arts’ Abbot Hall Art Gallery in Kendal, ‘Enriched by Moments’ was a programme of creative engagement for older people with dementia. As a result, I embarked upon a huge learning curve to set up this initiative.

Dementia was then, and is still, very much on our minds, as a regular news item and a big concern for our ageing population. ‘Enriched by Moments’ recognised that creative and cultural experiences can be enormously rewarding, and evolved alongside a growing body of evidence that such experiences can have a dramatically positive impact on people living with dementia. Being engaged, creatively and socially, stimulates brain activity, aids communication skills and enhances feelings of well-being.

At the time I was captivated by New York’s ‘Meet Me at MoMA’, a programme, which pioneered engagement activity for people whose memory is compromised in order to access their imagination and their emotional capacity through works of art. It spoke to me so positively, as an example of what a well designed programme for older people was that they were largely reminiscence based: the implication being that older people are more interested in remembering the past than exploring contemporary ideas. Looking at contemporary art with older people did not seem to be an option, which I found fascinating.

As a result, I embarked upon a simple learning curve to set up ‘Enriched by Moments’. This initiative comprised of a number of elements. Gallery-based activity happens every month in a session called ‘Every First Tuesday’. Sessions are informal, social and stimulate discussion and debate. Poetry, handling objects and tactile materials provide additional means of exploring ideas.

We employ a creative storytelling engagement process, developed in the USA, called ‘Time Slips’, in which participants are encouraged to engage with an image and reflect on what is happening. This results in a collaborative narrative about the image before them, building a story between the group. The results are very powerful as attention is sustained and, in the retelling of the story throughout the session, individual contributions are reaffirmed.

Each session is documented and evaluated as we identify what worked well and where any challenges arose. It is also shared with all participants following a session. Whilst being an opportunity to ask for feedback, it importantly provides an opportunity for participants to return to the moment in the gallery, enabling a sustained note of engagement for everyone.

‘In the Moment’ is a weekly art and poetry session, run in partnership with the Wordsworth Trust. Collaborative poetic response and creative storytelling lead into visual art activity, inspired by a diverse range of media and ideas. The routine of a weekly group has generated real energy amongst participants, a joyful commitment to the group, and to the activity. Like ‘Every First Tuesday’, it invites people with dementia and their carers to share creative moments together, and we have found that this gives a level of therapeutic enjoyment and pleasure in being creative themselves, as well as seeing the person they are caring for, creatively and pleasurably, ‘in the moment’.

‘Enriched by Moments’ also includes an annual summer project for people living with dementia. Last year the project was inspired by the Cumbrian photographer Joseph Hardman. Following in the footsteps of Joseph Hardman’s visit to the gallery, and then using their photographs to create their own map of moments using collage and ink. It featured on the BBC’s Inside Out series with Fiona Philips who reflected on the incredible positivity she experienced from participants, noting that although we were inspired by a collection of old photographs, we were very much together in the present moment, creating personal works of art and making new memories.

And the initiative is not only for the older generation. We are working with Kendal College to establish a module within their Health and Social Care course that promotes the benefits of cultural and creative engagement. Young people becoming carers and working in health settings will take part in gallery experiences, respond to works of art and develop meaningful conversations with each other. Students will also be able to volunteer at sessions and undertake work experience. Our belief is that if they enjoy conversations inspired by art, they will see the value of ensuring the people they are caring for can access such experiences too.

We’ve found that carers love the sessions as much as the participants with dementia. In the flow of the creative moment it isn’t always clear who has dementia, which is liberating for everyone, and challenges preconceptions one might have about dementia’s ‘behaviours’. There is an overwhelming sense of all participants being present, being connected to others and generating outcomes which give them a voice. The process of creatively engaging with works of art generates experiences that enable participants living with dementia and their carers to feel achievement and success, feel valued, and feel alive.

One of the big messages promoted through the Dementia Friends campaign is that it is possible to live well with dementia. All those involved in ‘Enriched by Moments’ believe that programmes like ours contribute to making this possible. The words in the title of the programme have been carefully chosen. ‘Enriched’, because experiences steeped in art are transformative, cathartic, pleasurable and meaningful. ‘Moments’, because though fleeting and transitory, those moments for people living with dementia are an opportunity for their imaginations, emotions and memories to be voiced, shared and celebrated.

Our initiative has been celebrated by Arts Council England and having been lucky enough to be monitored through the process so far, we are now supporting other galleries in promoting and developing imaginative models of engagement for older people.

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References
1. MoMA, Conversations and Testimonials, 2014, moma.org/meetme/perspectives/index

Photo credit: Florence Hardman. ‘Following in the Footsteps of Joseph Hardman’
From 2009 to 2013, the St Marylebone School, the Serpentine Gallery projects team and the Ultra-red Sound Artist Collective collaborated on a research project called The Edgware Road Project. Looking at state and social citizenship, this work took place against a backdrop of government policies that had the potential to marginalise arts subjects. It was hoped that the collaborative approach would achieve a diverse range of cross-curricular work.

The project first began when the Serpentine Gallery invited a range of groups and institutions to participate in a project that would centre on the Edgware Road, a district rich in social and cultural history. The idea was that schools, businesses, community groups and artists would participate in small investigations that would contribute to a larger body of research and creative outcomes.

An open publishing platform (edgwareroad.org) was created by the digital artists collective Camp to be used for local research, which could then be distributed as journals, pamphlets and webcasts.

The St Marylebone School is an all-girl non-selective state school with a mixed sixth form located in central London. It is a multi-faith Church of England school, partnered by the adjoining St Marylebone parish church. It has a mixed cohort of students from different socio-economic backgrounds and impressive academic results, a specialism in the performing and visual arts, and a head teacher who is passionate about creativity. All this played a part in the successful turnaround from an underachieving to overachieving school twenty years ago.

And so, St Marylebone began a four-year residency with the Serpentine Gallery and Ultra-red, a sound artist collective that works in the heart of communities, using their practice of ‘listening’ as a central protocol.

Ultra-red are a group of artists, musicians, educators and researchers who focus their practices within different social movements, including the struggles of migration, anti-racism, participatory community development, housing, gentrification and the politics of HIV/AIDS.

The group’s approach to participatory investigations is inspired by the Brazilian popular educationalist Paulo Freire. The audio, textual and visual representations of collective investigative processes and the knowledge it produces is an essential element of the approach and led to Ultra-red moving into a secondary educational setting in which these protocols sat in a natural home. Ultra-red had a series of protocols that were followed as part of its intrinsic practice.

The Ultra-red ‘sound art’ practice of listening is an integral part of the process in working with communities, and it listened… to pupils, teachers, support staff, in school, in church and in the surrounding community. Ultra-red member Robert Sember listened to staff talking about the changes to policy by government and the huge implications on their vision and passion for their vocation. He listened to students about the devaluation of the exams that they were studying, the pressure to achieve when they had an undefined future, particularly after the huge financial outlay in further education. The resounding focus of discourse concerned areas of state and social citizenship.

During the period of the residency there were many research projects with many year groups and subjects that all contributed to the bank of investigations undertaken. The aim of the work was similar to the whole aims of the Edgware Road Project, in that there were many smaller studies contributing to a larger investigation. A year 12 (ages 16–17) project mapped land ownership and the economy of the Edgware
collective research on local histories and delved in involving the students was the making of the community. the impact of their institution on the wider of their own environment, who and why opportunities to critically investigate their own of the every day curriculum. lessons, bringing a kudos and a rogue element selection of these songs were offered as a video ‘hymnal’ taken from the schools own hymn conversations. Our transcriptions of the exhibition created by Camp for the Edgware Road Project. research was added into the larger databank drawings and illustrations, took photographs look at the history of the area and presented this Road area. It photographed all the areas in an Ed Students gain from being given the Year 9 (ages 13-14) produced the ‘Hymnal’, that drew from the Residencies at their best create a forum for help to overcome some of these obstacles and disciplines and create opportunities for students need to break down the boundaries of subject valuable. This artistic practice allowed students to reflect on the expectations placed upon them, to respond to what they hear in the media about examinations and their worth. Students spoke about how exams are often criticised as not being easy, but that the extent to which they work to achieve those high grades would suggest that is the case. The expectations for the students to achieve is much higher than in the education their parents experienced, and culture of fear drives their parents and the students themselves into Extremely long hours for exemplary exam results which are then deemed valuable because too many students achieved highly! Students put into context their learning, and that expectations and experiences are transient dependent on the social and cultural context, contact between students and their peers, their parents, their exchange of ideas, from students to head teachers. No problem was too big for our team. From Big Draw posters that filled the corridors, cardboard cities to help teach nets in maths, to whole school team. From Big Draw posters that filled the corridors, cardboard cities to help teach nets in maths, to whole school teaching and learning. The legacy of The Edgware Road Project is that we’re now working on a series of classroom projects to build a professional portfolio and commercial projects to my advantage, using university projects to complete university assignments. I used university and at Sunderland University. During my first year I started my studies and architecture, I applied to study new media design. I realised I had made a mistake. Straight lines and maths didn’t fulfill my creative aspirations. At the age of 20, after completing qualifications in building studies and architecture, I applied to study new media design at Sunderland University. For my first year I started my first business Rendered Speechless. I used university and commercial projects to my advantage, using university projects to build a professional portfolio and commercial projects to complete university assignments. For me it was the best of both worlds. I was learning and I was earning. Unfortunately my university tutors didn’t see it the same way. My work was dull, safe and corporate in their eyes. I left university with, again, a very average 2.2. Through I did walk straight into a full-time job—sometimes I guess you need to stick to your guns. For the next few years I designed 3D walkthroughs and marketing materials for house builders and developers. I even got the chance to design some eco-homes that won a local authority planning competition. But with the economic crash, my 3D work for housing companies was redundant. Builders had stopped building. I was lucky enough to find a job as a designer for a local secondary school. Working closely with the teachers I saw the heresies and ways where design and creativity could support teaching and learning. On the next few years I worked with a brilliant team of teachers and support staff, especially NISEAD even Gemma Roache and Beth Stobbart. No problem was too big for our team. From Big Draw posters that filled the corridors, cardboard cities to help teach nets in maths, to whole school literacy marking schemes and growth mindset posters. For the last two years I have been working with educators across the world to create bespoke educational resources. I now work from a studio in Cheadle, mostly creating bespoke, colourful and engaging, Art. I have worked on just about every area of education you can think of, with everyone from students to head teachers. Hopefully you can see from my story that art and design are so important. They’re not just creative outlets for my ideas, they have allowed a young lad from a poor school with average grades to work in a career he truly loves. I have always loved drawing, but to tell the truth I’m not very good at it. I get a very lucky ‘C’ in my GCSE, which I put down to me not being very talented and also to having too many ideas. Yes, I was your worst nightmare; the student who changes his coursework three or four times, and even his exam piece idea, days before the exam. One past employer described me as ‘a bit, erm, different. His brain works in a different way to ours’. And you know what? You do it, and I love it. I always wanted to be an architect. That idea of designing spaces people live in and construct. It fascinated me. At 14 years old I applied to a local architect practice to complete my work experience. I learned something during that week. All the ideas in the world are useless without skill and hard work to make them a reality. I went back to school determined to return to the drawing board. At 16 I left school with very average C grades. I was a Jack-of-all-trades, master of none. I wanted to be creative, so I returned to the architects, completed my work experience with and worked under the excellent Dick Jones. He was adamant I would learn the craft before I was allowed to get my hands on a ‘bloody computer’. Hundred of Botton 0.2 0.5 and even the odd few 1mm nibs later, I had mastered the drawing board. I no longer smudged the ink and I could write freely in a perfect line. But all of I learned how to compose huge pieces of AI paper, ensuring the layout was clear, polished and practical. It was a skill I would later use very effectively to earn a living. I went on to learn AutoCAD while studying to become an architect’s technician, even getting to work with famous designers like Wayne Hemingway of Reds or Dead fame. But I realised I had made a mistake. Straight lines and maths didn’t fulfill my creative aspirations. On being a designer. The Design Thinking Agency shares a pullout resource ‘Why Art and Design?’ with everyone from students to head teachers. Hopefully you can see from my story that art and design are so important. They’re not just creative outlets for your ideas, they have allowed a young lad from a poor school with average grades to work in a career he truly loves. Why Art and Design?
The Design Thinking Agency
— Why Art and Design?
Gene Genies: textiles close up

When St. Bernard’s teaching school decided to begin their GCSE courses in year 9, an effective way to ease the art and textiles students into a new set of disciplines was launched. Debbie Hepplestone, director of the school and curriculum leader, provides a close-up view of the new GCSE textiles project.

To place our project in context, for the first time this year all GCSE courses in our school began in year 9 (ages 13-14). This was a decision based on the national anticipation of increasing standards and altered content at GCSE across the spectrum of subjects. We now deliver a three-year Art and Design: Textiles GCSE course.

Whether the loss of time in art, craft and design for students in year 9 who have not taken an arts GCSE is balanced by increased time for the enriched delivery of the GCSE courses for the students that opts in is debatable. Like many of my colleagues, I am concerned that students who do not opt for an arts GCSE will cease all arts education aged 13, even though the future economy and universities require our students to leave us as creative, reflective and resourceful individuals. This is a dichotomy that’s not simple to address.

With the age and inexperience of our new cohort in mind, we wanted to devise a project for our year 9 GCSE textile design cohort which would ease them into the GCSE course, familiarise them with the assessment objectives, provide strong links to primary source material, provide a close-up view of the new GCSE project, and encourage research, skills development with a homework menu to choose from, which was a challenge. Students were encouraged to be creative and only one sewing machine to every three or four students in our departmental resource base. Consequently, we also wanted to give them the freedom to be imaginative and explore their ideas without fear of failure. We know as teachers of art, craft and design how important it is for our students to take risks and extend their work in this way, and I do not believe that students can really grow until they fail. Resilience is an important tool for learning and creative practitioners must be able to operate in an environment where it is okay to explore new ideas, processes and boundaries.

Our students rose to the challenge and I began to see that our visual developments referred to the artists they had explored, plus they were making the connection between material, process and imagery whilst becoming increasingly independent. We began designing characters, bringing all of their research together and slowly evolving each character to have their own personality, quirks and humour. One of our students commented that it was ‘a bit like giving birth’!

‘Resilience is an important tool for learning and creative practitioners must be able to operate in an environment where it is okay to explore new ideas, processes and boundaries’.

Each student created three designs, which they then developed into a final design. Their brief was to include at least three different textiles techniques. From this point they created a paper pattern for their genie body parts – simple numeracy opportunities naturally present at this stage! This was probably the most difficult stage of the project – visualising a three-dimensional object from a two-dimensional pattern.

Fabrics and textures were prepared, cut to scale, stitched and stuffed and the basic character materialised. Surface embellishment followed, as well as bespoke character individualisation one student whose graft taught her to knit made a matching scarf and booties. I love the idea of craft being passed down families in this way, but also those students who don’t have ‘knitting grannies’ were then taught how to knit by the student in poor teaching sessions.

Our genie are rather like Marmite: some students like that they are creepy, sinister and freaky, whilst others love them and would like to commission their own. I encourage them slowly taking over the school, waking up at night and roaming around the site! At least they always seem to be sitting in different positions the following day, or could that just be the cleaners playing with them?

The project has been a big hit with our students. It has enabled contextualisation and personalisation of outcomes, and everyone remained engaged. Yes, there are things to be learned and things we will change and improve next time, but aren’t there always? If we stop learning as teachers, then we stop understanding the learning of our students. That’s why I love being a teacher of art, craft and design, because we can always do things differently, even when faced with constraints beyond our control.

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In inner city Leeds, with an Ofsted rating of Outstanding, Becroft Primary School in Kirkstall is a vibrant and diverse school. The head teacher, June Turner, is committed to the visual arts and music, and so appointed a specialist art teacher in 2011.

The school embraces learning about its locality and, as a result, trips out of school are an important part of the curriculum. This project, developed with children in key stage 2 (ages 7-11), came about after a trip to Salts Mill, Saltaire, where children were inspired by the David Hockney exhibition there.

Researching and making large-scale collaborative felt pieces provided a powerful learning experience on many levels. The children learnt about locally-born David Hockney who was inspired and connected to the local environment. They learnt how to work with merino wool (bought from a local mill) and worked collaboratively using the ancient craft of felt making.

The cities of Leeds and Bradford were ones known as the textiles power house of the North. For the children this provided natural links to the geography and history of the area, while the tactile nature of the felt making and collaborative work helped to aid descriptive language.

During the visit to the exhibition, children were encouraged to take copious Hockney’s expressive use of mark making and colour, and discussed the similarities and differences between paintings and art created on an iPad. They were particularly interested in how Hockney selected, removed or exaggerated observations, and considered how they could bring these observations and playfulness to their own work.

One back at school we planned how groups of children could work collaboratively on a large scale and respond to the landscape in a similar way to Hockney using wool fibres. We decided to work with each class for one morning, working with five children at a time for 30 minutes.

Each felt took about three hours to make. A large table was set up in the hall by a window with a good view and each group worked in teams on different parts of the felt-making process. Every group discussed the shapes and colours in the landscape and described how these changed through the seasons. They were all encouraged to discuss and share ideas, combining ideas from observation, memory, imagination, and Hockney’s work.

To prepare the ground, the first two groups laid out a cream horizontal base layer of wool on bubble wrap which the children covered with wool laid down in a vertical direction. They added a wool layer of trees, grasses and leaves. They selected colours and added thin layers of wool over the background colours. We described this as ‘drawing’ with wool (Fig 2 and 3).

The fourth and fifth groups then began the felt-making process by lightly spraying the work with soapy water (Lux flakes dissolved in water) and covering it with bubble wrap. They gently rubbed this to create friction enabling the wool fibres to lock together (Fig 4).

The last group rolled the felt using a long piece of pipe- insulating foam (a broom handle could also be used). They rolled it 50 times in one direction, turned it 90 degrees and rolled 50 times in the other direction. They worked in teams to count and roll, trying to keep in time with each other (Fig 5).

The final pieces were laid flat to dry and then stapled around the sides to form a canvas frame.

The project has provided all children, regardless of age or ability, the opportunity to create high quality artwork. It has engendered a sense of pride and achievement across the school and enabled children, teachers, carers, parents and the wider community to celebrate the visual arts.

Anna Pickard joined Becroft Primary School in 2011 as a specialist teacher of art and design, having previously worked as a head of art in several secondary schools. She also works as a freelance artist teacher, and teaches the art, design and technology programme to PGCE trainees at Leeds University.

To find out more about felting, please contact annapickard@sky.com

#Drawing with felt

Specialist art and design teacher Anna Pickard shares a cross-curricular, hands-on, visual arts project, which keeps both disciplines at the centre of learning.

‘Researching and making the large-scale collaborative felt pieces provided a powerful learning experience on many levels’
Making it happen

Retaining enthusiasm and developing student confidence to champion art and design teaching and learning in primary school was the goal of a research project, set up by Suzy Tutchell and Maria Vinney. Here, they reveal the results.

The origins and incentive for devising this research project were rooted firmly in our career-long passion, enthusiasm and commitment to the wonders of art and design in primary education, and art’s unique contribution to the education of children. Yet it has been clear from our own experience that, despite student and lecturer enthusiasm, much of what is learnt and engaged with through university art sessions does not always transfer into the primary classroom.

This research project explored the potential barriers that affect transference, and how they might be overcome to increase student engagement, thereby strengthening links between university and school-based experiences.

The project’s focus was on student engagement, at a vital point in their learning, as they enter school placement, and embark on their own research dissertation. Crucially, as they enter school placement, and embark on their own research dissertation, thereby strengthening links between university and school-based experiences.

We worked with three undergraduate art-specialist students on the primary education B.Ed degree, who took on the role of co-researchers in order to ensure and maintain a continual/parallel representation of tutors, students and school throughout the duration of our project. The students had to formally apply to work on this project and have been active, considered and collaborative in their approach. They have been intelligent conduits of student thought and an interface between us, as tutors, and their fellow students.

In their words…

We were so enthused and excited to join Suzy and Maria on this research project. As primary art specialists we are all very passionate about art in the curriculum. We have all had different experiences of art on our school placements, but we all understand the great impact art has on children and their development. Now we have entered our final year of our degree, we have noticed the push towards the core subjects and this frustrating because of the benefits we all know that art offers!

Last semester we collected data through a questionnaire. These were given out to non-art specialists, both undergraduates and PGCE students (89 in total), to research their views on art in the classroom and their own confidence in teaching and delivering art. Primarily we focused on the year 2 students (our own cohort) before our second school placement.

Questions included: What is your preferred key stage to teach art to? Have you ever or participated in art sessions during school experience? Do you think there should be more time provision for art overall? How do you think teachers and schools can be supported to develop their confidence in art and design teaching?

It was important for us, as art specialists, to use questionnaires because we needed to gain a more holistic understanding and awareness of the subject through the perspective of non-art specialists.

Our findings showed: 65 per cent said they preferred teaching art and design at key stage 1 (ages 5-7), and 35 per cent preferred key stage 2 (ages 7-11). When asked why responses included:

‘Key stage 1 because the art and design skills are more basic and will require less knowledge.’

‘Key stage 1 due to my own art ability and because it is less intense.’

‘Key stage 2 because I feel like you can really stretch and challenge children.’

Comments, as a result of roundtable discussion with students, indicated initial lines of enquiry about lack of subject knowledge – anxiety around level of skills, health and safety concerns when using equipment/tools, organisation and deployment of staff, time constraints of a full timetable, control, and lack of resources and budget constraints.

As a result of our overall findings we aim to track the same cohort – now final year students – on their third school placement and continue to compare their experiences so that this, in turn, will shape our own teaching of non-specialists as they enter university studies. The student researchers are very keen to continue with the research, post-school placement for their year group.

Importantly, our findings have greatly influenced our own teaching, specifically in relation to what we plan and consider for our year 1 undergraduate non-art specialists and our PGCE students.

Finding 1: How student and staff expectations about the potential of teaching art in school are more basic and will require less knowledge.

Importantly, our findings have greatly influenced our own teaching, specifically in relation to what we plan and consider for our year 1 undergraduate non-art specialists and our PGCE students. As they only have minimal input for all foundation subjects, we know it is crucial to offer sessions which enthuse, excite and underpin what is most important about art and design in the primary classroom.

We have introduced the following aspects to our year 1 teaching, in order to influence their attitude and aptitude to art and design from the very beginning of their university-based experience and into their first teaching placement.

Sketchbooks (process-folios)

All year 1 and PGCE students started off this new academic year with a University of Winchester embossed sketchbook, which we were adamant remained theirs to store, maintain, develop their own ideas into and so start to collate their own autobiographical experiences. We hope that this will not only reflect the experiences of children in many schools, but also call them ownership and development of their own theoretical and empirical knowledge (Gall & Gillmore, 2010)."To encourage the use of these sketchbooks as ‘working documents’, we also refer to them as ‘process-folios’ (Eglinton, 2003), so to retain and highlight development of ideas and imagination through exploration and experimentation.

Project-based discovery

The findings of our project have already been influential on our teaching of non-specialists in their first semester at the university. We have been conscious of designing sessions which allow students to get fully involved in exploring potential projects and so, again, take ownership of their art input and interactivity and so modelling a process they will hopefully undertake with children. Project exploration, around a theme within sessions, appears to have given students a greater sense of ‘finding out’, using a variety of materials, working collaboratively as well as individually, and encouraging discussion of this within a primary classroom context.

We know that this is only the beginning, but we hope that as we invest time into strategies such as the examples above, we will be changing attitudes to a much more ‘can do’ and ‘possible’ way of thinking. So that when these students enter their classroom, they feel better-equipped and far more confident to go forth and lead some wonderfully inspiring art lessons.

Suzy Tutchell
Senior lecturer in primary education (art and early years)

Maria Vinney
Senior lecturer in primary education (art and professional studies)
What do you know about the history or philosophy of art and design education? What has informed your own practice? Have you had an excellent training in education? Have you been influenced by your own teachers or professional colleagues, or have you made it up as you go along? Have you deliberately attempted to place your work in a wider historical context of those who have gone before you, and those who will follow?5

The National Arts Education Archive (NAEA) was set up in 1985 to provide a documentary trace of the development of arts education by bringing together significant collections of writings by key educators and original artworks created by their students. The NAEA, managed by the Yorkshire Sculpture Park, offers resources not only for researchers, but also provides professional development and outreach activities (see Marking Time: The National Arts Education Archive, Tony Chisholm, AD issue 9, 2010). There are now over 100 catalogued collections comprising of books, papers, artefacts, correspondence and original images generated by practitioners and academics in art and design education. The NAEA is not only a monument to the past but a foundation for the future as a national resource of ideas, information and expertise for students and teachers to build on and add to. We need to value our professional heritage and use it to inform and support our work. We need a national focus linking practice, theory, evidence and advocacy as a basis for advocacy to convince others of the value of our subject. We need to ensure that future developments are informed, not only by previous successes and satisfactions, but also by what we learn from our failures and mistakes. We need to be familiar with the body of knowledge we feed off and build on. We need to take some responsibility for contributing to and shaping that knowledge. The NAEA provides resources and offers opportunities to be invited to speculate how it might be used to support art and design education in the future.

My own archive contains thousands of books, files, reports, slides, photographs, films, digital images, drawings, photocopies and other documents that record my professional life as an art teacher, examiner, researcher, consultant, advocate and writer. For nearly two years I have been reviewing and interrogating this material to prepare a book called Visual Literacy: prompting change in art, design and environmental education, which reflects my efforts to extend and strengthen the art and design curriculum, and to support teachers through professional development. This book will be the latest addition to NAEA’s material, to be launched at the NAEA Conference and accompanied by an exhibition at the Lawrence Batley Centre Gallery. The exhibition will show how visual education has taken art and design out of the studio into school grounds and onto the streets, and how collaborations between pupils, teachers, architects, planners and artists have created new learning opportunities. Drawing will feature prominently, with the emphasis on drawing to learn rather than on learning to draw. We can all contribute to the body of knowledge about learning and teaching through documenting and sharing our work. Significant change does not necessarily happen through the efforts of one individual, but is created by a critical mass of people who share similar ideas and ways of working. These people are able to bring their collective energies to bear on particular issues when we come to treat the past differently. This is also the way a body of knowledge can be built up about situations that are dynamic and about which there is little existing theory. An archive tells us what we did and what we believed. It shows us where we have come from and can point the way to where we might go. If we do not know who we were, what we said and what we did, we cannot use our voice.

The National Arts Education Archive

The National Arts Education Archive was set up in 1985 to chart the development of arts education. Eileen Adams, art and design education consultant, considers the importance and purpose of documenting visual and written research.

Jeffrey Henshaw, The National Arts Education Archive's 30th Anniversary

The exhibition will show how visual education has taken art and design out of the studio into school grounds and onto the streets, and how collaborations between pupils, teachers, architects, planners and artists have created new learning opportunities. Drawing will feature prominently, with the emphasis on drawing to learn rather than on learning to draw.

We can all contribute to the body of knowledge about learning and teaching through documenting and sharing our work. Significant change does not necessarily happen through the efforts of one individual, but is created by a critical mass of people who share similar ideas and ways of working. These people are able to bring their collective energies to bear on particular issues when we come to treat the past differently. This is also the way a body of knowledge can be built up about situations that are dynamic and about which there is little existing theory. An archive tells us what we did and what we believed. It shows us where we have come from and can point the way to where we might go. If we do not know who we were, what we said and what we did, we cannot use our voice.
Higher education

As in the past, the staff collective exhibition at Leeds College of Art in 2012 sprung from research into art pedagogy. Gordon Forsyth, principal of Burslem School of Art, was the starting point for the staff collective exhibition at Leeds College of Art. Forsyth’s work prominently featured in the exhibition, marked out the 100th anniversary of the NAEA under the auspices of the Yorkshire Sculpture Park. Studying the collections and archives of the NAEA and their legacy of a practice-led research, pedagogy across disciplines. Other opportunities included how students used the exhibition for research in their own theory and practice: the opening of a dialogue with Susan Cokers, connecting with other staff collectives, and further use of NAEA archival material for future exhibitions. The exhibition brought together staff, students, external visitors and senior management to discuss connections between art pedagogy across disciplines. Other opportunities included how students used the exhibition for research in their own theory and practice: the opening of a dialogue with Susan Coles, connecting with other staff collectives, and further use of NAEA archival material for future exhibitions.

The Process Continues exhibition (26 January – 13 March 2013) was an apt second staff exhibition, marking out the 30th anniversary of the NAEA under the auspices of the Yorkshire Sculpture Park. Studying the collections and art teaching legacies of Eric Atkinson and Tom Hudson, both firmly engaged in the development of the Basic Design Course at Leeds College of Art, brought a new question to pose to staff that asked: “How important is the use of specialist collections and archives to your creative practice and teaching?”

An aim of the exhibition was to invite participants and viewers to assess how artists, educators and artworks speak to each other across time. The loan of colour exercise teaching materials from NAEA showed this eloquently. Not only did they converse on the walls with Richard Baker’s chroma reference series, but they evoked memories of staff’s own experiences from the foundation programmes in the 1960s. Exhibitor Claire Lane currently uses digital versions of the pieces to teach colour to students on the BA printed textiles course.

We were grateful to Mark Hudson, arts journalist and son of Tom Hudson, who opened the exhibition with his film debut. Focused on the BA printed textiles course.

The importance of the use of specialist collections and archives represents the rich vein of possibility, this catalogue significant collections that have formed the foundations and turning points of visual arts and design education. As in the past, the staff collective exhibition provides the opportunity to inform, sustain and challenge art education discourse.

‘As in the past, the staff collective exhibition provides the opportunity to inform, sustain and challenge art education discourse’
Can play-based learning in adults facilitate an increased level of teamwork, empathy and craft in their work? Kai Wood-Mah, associate professor at Laurentian University School of Architecture and co-director of Afield Design, thinks so.

Architectural education is constantly changing with the ebb and flow of emerging theories, social, global and environmental issues, advanced technologies, and the economy. To be current is to keep up with the changes in this neoliberal context, wherein students of architecture and design must develop resilience and grit as they are participating in a field that requires them to think on their feet and be receptive to change and difference.

It is a tremendous adjustment for some students who, after years of individual performance and testing in schools, are suddenly expected to shift gears to a studio environment that expects teamwork, empathy and craft. From years of teaching architectural design to undergraduate and graduate students in both the classroom and the studio, I have discovered that students first need to learn to reconnect with their imaginations, and this happens by being outdoors in nature as much as being in the studio. The ability to imagine can be exercised through play-based learning that offers important lessons in collaboration and compassion, approaches not likely to be emphasized in traditional project-based architectural education.

Can play-based learning impart similar positive outcomes to juniors embarking on academic studies in architecture and design? I believe it can, and I explain how with two first-year studio projects in which students built huts.

Building huts in the woods

The first huts were built in the woods near the school, using materials the students gathered from around the site. The only directive given to the twelve students was that they had to work in even groups, and search for slopes and rock edges for their habitats. In the leaf-covered woods of autumn, leaves and branches were gathered for building roofs and weaving screens for walls.

The groups self-organised, strategised about what to collect, and discussed site selection. The concepts vital to the fundamentals of architecture are inherently folded into the construction of the one-room shelters: the boundaries delineating inside and outside, and the structural components that contain the physical as well as social space. The complex notion of embodiment was enacted in constructing with their hands for their bodies.

Building ice-fishing huts in the snow

The second hut was for ice-fishing, a winter pastime with a long tradition in northern Canada. Basic parameters were given to the students: the approximate size, maximum cost, and required drawings and process work that were to accompany the project. Much time was devoted to group learning using research, discussions, sketching and quick mock-ups with paper models.

I interjected when students needed guidance, and organised short discussions around topics pertaining to design research, wood construction techniques, drawing and working with models, among other topics. The students were responsible for scheduling their work and self-organising with assigned real jobsite roles such as project manager, quality controller and cost estimator.

Imagining and inhabiting the hut

Martin Heidegger’s hut was the subject upon which much writing and thinking took place for him and for others after him. At the same time, the experience of building huts in the woods and in the workshop is direct and immediate, and need not necessarily be philosophically ponderous. Building a shelter is an imaginative act of childhood (e.g., tents with bed sheets, forts in cardboard boxes, tree houses) that forges the connection between nature, play, collaboration, and the physical and social dimensions of humans and animals. These huts are places for students to return to as architects to find inspiration, knowledge and the power of play.

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Celebrating creativity in Kathmandu

Transforming established attitudes to teaching art in Nepal was the vision of art educators Anne Brown and Suzie Parr, whose first large-scale project was launched earlier this year. Anne tells their story

Working in a developing country brings many challenges, but also opportunities to do things in new and different ways. One such project was the Kathmandu Inter Schools Art scheme (KISA), which was developed in partnership with my UK colleague Suzie Parr.

KISA was set up to transform how school communities see art and art education. It is a part of a vision to transform teacher’s attitudes to teaching and learning (currently dominated by rote learning in Nepal) and it’s how I started work with the Education Quality Improvement Programme (EQUIP).

Back in the UK, Suzie and I worked for a number of years as art and design teachers and as artists. I went on to work as an arts advisor for Creative Junction in Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire, and also for Creative Partnerships which, between 2002-11, became the longest and largest-running arts education intervention in the UK. Suzie also worked for Creative Partnerships and our resulting experience provided the fuel to invest and support a new community of teachers, artists and students in Nepal.

KISA 2015 was our first large-scale event, involving many different schools with both local and international students. In one afternoon, in February, the schools worked collaboratively to produce an art installation, and Kathmandu’s discarded junk became a colourful palette for over 120 students and 45 teachers.

Teachers and students aged between 10-13 spent a day with each other through a series of fun, creative, collaborative and interactive problem-solving activities, culminating in the creation of a giant art installation made from re-purposed pieces of colourful plastic junk. The project was completed when all the junk, collected from this polluted and littered city, went off to a new plastic recycling project, culminating in the creation of a giant art installation made from several hundred pieces of colourful plastic junk. The event attracted considerable interest, with a write up in Nepal’s leading English paper The Himalayan Times: Exploring Creativity thru Junk P.S. http://bit.ly/3F3esz

Preparations for next year are already taking shape to include even more partners and schools. We want to push the boundaries in creative thinking and explore further how art can be used in everyday life to explain who we are and the world around us.

Anne Brown is an NSEAD member currently living and working in Nepal with the Kathmandu International Study Centre (KISC) and EQUIP. The programme aims to provide transformational training for schools to positively impact all areas of people’s lives, families and communities in Nepal. annebrown750.wordpress.com

Suzie Parr is also an NSEAD member and has worked within education and museums for nine years, developing cross-phase projects which include even more partners and schools. She has been living in Nepal for two years. Suzy Parr can be contacted at suziparr@kisc.edu.np

This article was written in April, a week before the earthquake in Nepal. Annie and Suzie remain in Kathmandu to help communities rebuild their lives. If you are interested in sustainable development for schools and researchers in Nepal, and would like to donate, please email relief@kisc.edu.np, or go to kisc.edu.np/donate. There is still a great need.

‘Kathmandu’s discarded junk became a colourful palette for over 120 students and 45 teachers’

Published by Routledge, third edition (2015)

Although the first edition of this book was published almost three decades ago in the midst of a very different educational landscape, this remains an interesting and insightful book. The second edition was updated and revised in 2002 and has been helpful to art educators, parents, teachers and student teachers alike. My own well-used copy has an important place in my personal library.

The important question today is, can the latest version remain such a favourite? I personally think it can for three reasons.

Firstly, Rob Barnes is clear in his statement. He is not writing a book about the delivery of the current incarnation of the National Curriculum, but about a subject which enthral children and enriches their experience of life. In this way he carefully explains the importance of teaching art rather than simply ‘doing art activities’, and retains the basic informative approach for which the book has been well respected.

The updating process has been thorough and the reader clearly gets a sense of the changes in educational landscape since it was first written. Some examples of this are the recognition that there are many more teaching assistants in primary education and their immense influence in securing children’s experience and understanding. Rob also spends time exploring aspects of learning which were once seen as commonly understood – especially the ways in which learners need to be taught to carefully look and observe. This is undertaken in sensitive and supportive ways, resulting in a very helpful and thought-provoking guide for all adults wanting to develop young children’s understanding of art.

Lastly, the inclusion of twenty new colour illustrations of children’s work significantly adds to those of the earlier editions. These allow educators to see for themselves the ways that art can be explored today and truly illustrate the points the author makes. The richness of the earlier monochrome and colour images remain.

Together, these reasons point to a good source of insight and support, particularly for new generations of educators in whatever role they may play in developing understanding.

This is not to say that I think it’s a perfect book. There are some regrettable aspects, specific references which were missed in the updating process: the use of the older title JADE rather than the current iJADE, the omission of any female artist as reference points, and the removal of some important writers of the last century (Herbert Read and Elliot Ritten). However, I would still urge those in involved in teaching art to children to make good use of this book and to go on ensuring Rob’s passion remains influential in developing another generation.

Dr Peter Gregory
Principal Lecturer, Canterbury Christ Church University

ISBN 9781138022553
(RRP: £24.99)

Teaching art to young children
Rob Barnes

This book review was written in April, a week before the earthquake in Nepal. Annie and Suzie remain in Kathmandu to continue their work. They have been providing support and for those who are interested in sustainable development for schools and researchers in Nepal, and would like to donate, please email relief@kisc.edu.np, or go to kisc.edu.np/donate. There is still a great need.

with a similar vision and passion for using art education to help transform creative learning in Nepal. It was particularly good to work with so many enthusiastic young people from organisations like Nepal’s Children’s Art Museum, Facebook.com/NepalChildrensArtMuseum. They are part of a growing number of young Nepalis who have studied abroad and made a positive choice to return to inspire a new generation. Shashank Shrestha forms part of this team and is a freelance filmmaker who recorded our day outings. The event attracted considerable interest, with a write up in Nepal’s leading English paper The Himalayan Times: Exploring Creativity thru Junk. P.S. http://bit.ly/3F3esz

Preparations for next year are already taking shape to include even more partners and schools. We want to push the boundaries in creative thinking and explore further how art can be used in everyday life to explain who we are and the world around us.

Anne Brown is an NSEAD member currently living and working in Nepal with the Kathmandu International Study Centre (KISC) and EQUIP. The programme aims to provide transformational training for schools to positively impact all areas of people’s lives, families and communities in Nepal. annebrown750.wordpress.com

Suzie Parr is also an NSEAD member and has worked within education and museums for nine years, developing cross-phase projects which include even more partners and schools. She has been living in Nepal for two years. Suzy Parr can be contacted at suziparr@kisc.edu.np, or go to kisc.edu.np/donate. There is still a great need.

‘Kathmandu’s discarded junk became a colourful palette for over 120 students and 45 teachers’

Published by Routledge, third edition (2015)

Although the first edition of this book was published almost three decades ago in the midst of a very different educational landscape, this remains an interesting and insightful book. The second edition was updated and revised in 2002 and has been helpful to art educators, parents, teachers and student teachers alike. My own well-used copy has an important place in my personal library.

The important question today is, can the latest version remain such a favourite? I personally think it can for three reasons.

Firstly, Rob Barnes is clear in his statement. He is not writing a book about the delivery of the current incarnation of the National Curriculum, but about a subject which enthral children and enriches their experience of life. In this way he carefully explains the importance of teaching art rather than simply ‘doing art activities’, and retains the basic informative approach for which the book has been well respected.

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Losers Weepers

A playground chant informed the theme of an exhibition at Conway Hall Ethical Society, involving pupils from local primary and secondary schools. Jackie Brown and Moira Jarvis, artist educators at the South London Women Artists Collective explains how

The promise of the playground chant ‘Finders, keepers, losers, weepers’ is that when something is disowned or abandoned, whoever finds it can claim it. This proverbial saying became the title of the South London Women Artists Collective’s residency at Conway Hall, which became the title of the South London Women Artists Collective’s residency at Conway Hall, involving pupils from local primary and secondary schools.

To prepare all participating schools, artists from the collective ran workshops based on the ‘Finders, keepers, losers, weepers’ theme. Visits began with a presentation of images that sought to challenge and encourage ethical provocations. The images included art works created in response to the ideas of radical thinkers and writers such as Mary Wollstonecraft, and images from the seed bank at Kew, which prompted discussions on future environmental threats.

Visits to schools were followed by pupil visits to Conway Hall and the Finders Keepers Losers Weepers exhibition. Jim Walsh, CEO of Conway Hall, welcomed each cohort of students and gave fascinating talks about the history of the building, introducing many of the ideas that informed the site-specific art works.

These talks initiated lively question and answers sessions. Jim was delighted to have so many young people in the building and looks forward to nurturing these new relationships with schools in the future.

For the second part of each school visit, students made their own folded sketchbooks and paper-sculpture time capsules, which became part of the exhibition.

A Finders Keepers Losers Weepers explanatory ‘mind map’, drawn on a wall in Conway Hall, formed the starting point for an art trail and showed additional aspects of the theme such as past and future, possession and loss, the brain, archaeology, metaphysics, space and time, memory, story-telling and the future.

Individually and in small groups we asked: ‘What will we find in the future? What would we want to keep from today? What would we like to lose?’ Pupil’s answers were drawn and folded to form small paper-sculpture time capsules which were later hung from the ceiling in the Brockway Room. Students were then invited to the private view to see their work exhibited alongside that of the other exhibiting artists.

For the second part of each school visit, students made their own folded sketchbooks and, in small groups using an art trail map, set off to locate and explore each art intervention. The trail covered the entire building offering opportunities to explore areas not normally accessible to the public.

Students were delighted to have the opportunity to talk with artists and to learn in detail how work was made. In the plenary sessions they talked enthusiastically about what they had seen. One primary school pupil was overheard saying to another: ‘We are all artists now.’

In the evaluation session students wrote about what they had learned, one saying: ‘I like learning about the art was made and the stories behind the work.’ Another said: ‘There are different types of art and it is all important as long as it expresses something.’

South London Women Artists is a community of women artists based in South London who present an online portfolio through their website, e-bulletins and education.

if you purchased a subscription before 22 June 2015 you will continue to have access to NSEAD’s website and other publications.

New NSEAD subscribers will no longer be able to access members-only sections of NSEAD’s website or receive craft, art and design educator e-bulletins, but the cost of NSEAD’s magazine has been reduced to £5.00 per copy (£15.00 for an annual subscription). Current NSEAD subscribers have the option of continuing their subscription rate and pricing has changed. If you purchased a subscription before 22 June 2015 you will continue to have access to members-only sections of NSEAD’s website and other publications.

South London Women Artists is a community of women artists based in South London who present an online portfolio through exhibitions and education.

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