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Editorial

In ‘Three decades as General Secretary’ John Steers describes his career with characteristic robustness as one of the many challenges faced by NSEAD in negotiating the education policies of successive governments. He also pays tribute to many NSEAD members who volunteered their time and support throughout this period.

In this issue we introduce a new regular feature to AD magazine called ‘My Teacher’. It aims to celebrate the art, craft and design educators who, knowingly or not, influenced our careers. We are grateful to Eileen Adams, who accepted the challenge of being the first author to reflect on her teachers and mentors.

With great sadness John Steers also looks back on the career of a friend and colleague John Bowden, primary editor of AD magazine, who died earlier this year.

We read of the research, writing and practice of a man whose extraordinary career impacted on many of us. If you have a project or case study that you would like to share, or memories of a teacher who especially influenced your career, please contact us. At a time when art, craft and design education faces many challenges, it is essential that we continue to share outstanding practice and celebrate the people who helped instill in us the value and importance of our subject.

Sophie Leach, Editor AD

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Facebook: http://on.fb.me/tWyGl0

This issue of AD magazine is dedicated to the memory of John Bowden (1941-2012)

Regulars

16 Poster and Feature
BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art

20 A Wednesday in January
A life in a day of Greg Hodgson

22

Features

02 John Steers: Three Decades as General Secretary
John Steers

06 Where Have all the Boys Gone?
Susan Colas on the gender divide in art and design education

08 Reflections on the Legacies of Cy Twombly and Lucian Freud
Michael Jarvis

10 What on Earth is Clay?
The creative investigations of Clayground Collective
Julia Brownstone and Duncan Hinson

12 Art Through Words
Miranda Baxter examines picture description at The National Gallery

14 Looking East, Learning Through Art and Design
Iain Macdonald and Richard Firth

18 Communicating
A diary of a project as it unfolds
Charlie Coggs

140 Characters on...
Why we tweet

14 John Bowden

24 Learning Between
Art and Science
Amanda Warren

28 Obituary
John Bowden

29 Brad’s Bird and the Importance of Making
Bill Hedges

32 Superheroes in Art and Design
Amanda Warren

Contents
After 30 years of tireless work for the National Society for Education in Art and Design, John Steers retired from the Society at the start of this year. From ‘a baptism of fire’ to defending art and design education John recounts some of the challenges and achievements along the way.

Do you have a career plan? I never did. It’s all been serendipity. After four years at art school I emerged, aged 20, needing a job. I followed my girl friend to London and saw an advert for a part-time art teacher in a boys’ school in the East End. I was interviewed briefly by a deputy head and started teaching the next day. It was a baptism of fire but I enjoyed the experience enough to enrol on the Art Teachers’ Certificate course at Goldsmiths College. I taught in London schools for ten years and was fortunate to become a head of department by the time I was twenty-five. In 1974 I moved to a large, well-equipped art and design department in a Bristol comprehensive school and became involved in examining with the then South West Examinations Board. In 1975 I was invited by John Lancaster, an active member of the National Society for Art Education (NSAE), to become an associate tutor on the Art Teachers’ Diploma course at Bristol Polytechnic.

At this time I was beginning to question some of the art and design practice in my school and felt that as a department our approach needed more cohesion and structure. John Lancaster persuaded me to sign up for a new course – the Research Diploma in Art Education – where I began work on a thesis entitled ‘Some Comments on the Structure and Content of Art Education’. Coincidentally in 1978 I spotted an advert in the TES where the NSAE and Berol Ltd were offering a £500 bursary to support a curriculum development project. As I had always wanted to ski the Haute Route across the Alps I applied and to my surprise won the first ‘Berol Bursary’. (The photograph of that occasion suggests the years have taken a marked toll. I hardly recognise the guy in the ill-fitting Asda suit with long black hair and beard.)

Sheila Paine was appointed as a mentor and she quickly disabused me of the idea I could use the money in quite the way I would have wished. It was a question of nose to the academic grindstone and the outcome was the publication of An Experimental Art Syllabus in 1979. I was becoming increasingly restless at school – frustrated by an institution that these days would be described as ‘coasting’. In addition to the art and design department I was also responsible for outdoor activities and I realised the time I spent away from school taking students climbing, canoeing, caving and skiing was particularly rewarding. Perhaps this was an early sign of school phobia?

It is now half a lifetime since I started work for the Society on 9 January 1982 on a morning of deep snow – coincidentally thirty years ago to the day when I sat down to write this article.

It is now half a lifetime since I started work for the Society on 9 January 1982 on a morning of deep snow – coincidentally thirty years ago to the day when I sat down to write this article.
The task of promoting and defending art and design education has been fulfilling and challenging in roughly equal measure, perhaps never more demanding than in the past year. In the early 1990s there was more than one battery of art and design education books in print. The Society needed a web presence. When www.nsead.org was launched at the Education Show in 1996 we certainly never imagined anything as extensive or with the capacity of the current site – or the advent of social networking sites such as Facebook or Twitter.

It is good to know the Society is respected nationally and internationally, that it has influenced practice and policy significantly, supported members' careers and offered support as a trade union in times of personal and professional crisis. Throughout the past three decades working for the Society has been an on-going education, it has been enjoyable (mostly) and has become a way of life. Above all it values the many friendships that have developed – my work for the NSEAD and InSEA has convinced me that art and design education is a path way to craft grade criteria. The early 1990s saw the introduction of the national curriculum when NSEAD joint president Bob Clement served on the art working group. Since then there have been constant revisions of both exams and the curriculum with which to contend. Writing responses to government ‘consultations’ has been a regular if never routine task and the extent of this work is evident in the pages of iJADE and on the web.

It has been an privilege to work for the Society for so long. I certainly never planned or envisaged spending thirty years in post but it has been a foreseen and has few regrets. There have only been nine general secretaries in the lifetimes of the Society from 1884 to 2011. The task of promoting and defending art and design education has been fulfilling and challenging in roughly equal measure, perhaps never more demanding than in the past year – and the battle is not over, probably never will be. It is good to know the Society is respected nationally and internationally, that it has influenced practice and policy significantly, supported members' careers and offered support as a trade union in times of personal and professional crisis.
Where have all the boys gone?

boys and girls alike.

advised us, ever so carefully, to review our curriculum models ‘boys don’t like art’, ‘boys put off art by painting’, and it and design in schools Drawing together: art, craft that some female teachers will teach in the way that they excellent female art teachers. But it is about raising concerns of females going through foundation and fine art courses twice as many girls as boys following GCSE and BTEC in the subject. In many cases they will not have been engaged of opportunity to do fun projects, and they will talk about the lack of ICT opportunities and the fact that they don’t ‘see’ the point of the subject’.

I have supported many teachers in moving away from the outdated curriculum model of the past and have seen pupils and teachers flourish in an exciting new world of possibilities. I have seen option members for boys-double in schools where the GCSE curriculum is interesting and diverse and fit for purpose for the twenty-first century. The curriculum and the learning between ages 11-14 also has to move away from the fine art bias. Year 9 (ages 13-14) is very important, that is where you should be offering an exciting curriculum, look at street art, look at digital media, make and create from diverse 2D and 3D materials, embrace creativity and originality, generate debate and discussion. Boys enjoy sharing their opinions and issues-based work is very motivating. I have seen very moving teenagers’ work on the subjects of war, inequality, poverty, global warming, and loss and grief. They have personal interests too and it doesn’t matter if you don’t like cars, their music, graffiti, Manga or soccer, because it isn’t about the teacher, it’s about the person who makes the art. We also need to create value for the subject by educating all of our pupils (and parents) about the importance of the subject in the world outside, not just about well-being and aesthetics but about the very real opportunities to work as part of the expanding and vibrant creative industries. Engage boys with this by making the curriculum work-related, using more design and more craft, creating comics, packaging, CD covers, music festival posters, making sculptures for public places, designing a webpage for a gallery or an artist, designing and making designer toys, customising clothing, creating animations and films, etc. etc. etc.

I have seen very exciting original and creative work where sketchbooks have been replaced (or enhanced) by blogs, digital portfolios, walls and mood boards, thinking maps, mind maps, presentations, web pages etc. We need to see more of this, for the boys in particular but also for the girls. And, yes, it ticks the right assessment objective boxes. I also think that we have a moral obligation to make the subject much more inclusive, to show the boys that art, craft and design can be about what they are about, and that it really isn’t just about drawing lobster pots or green peppers.

Teachers need to listen to student voice too: do we ever give them the chance to genuinely feed back and tell us what they like? Is it wrong if they prefer Banksy to Monet? Whose life is it anyway?

But I also have the joy of working with teachers who want to buck this downward trend; they are willing to find out about different ways of learning, experiment with the content and focus of work and join the boys (and the girls) on a never ending learning curve. The curriculum in the classroom should reflect what is happening in the world of art and design today as well as look to the past. Contemporary practices and contemporary ways of making art and design are just so exciting.

The futures can be bright, but only if we are honest and reflective practitioners. Any why?

Come on, let’s get the boys back into art and design.

Susan M Coles

artcrimes.org.uk/projects/82/current-courses

When I facilitate meetings or run art inset for art, craft and design teachers, I ask myself the same question every time: ‘Where have all the boys gone?’. The decline in the number of males who continue with the subject between the ages of 14-18 (and beyond) is an huge concern mine. There are nearly twice as many girls as boys following GCSE and BTEC in the UK. The knock-on effect in that we also have a predominance of female-going through foundation and fine art courses and, inevitably, only small numbers of males training to be art and design teachers. This then becomes a vicious circle, as the curriculum becomes more and more feminised. It does not surprise me that the achievement gap between girls and boys (A to C grades at GCSE) is 20 per cent. Don’t get me wrong though, this isn’t a criticism of all these excellent female art teachers, but it is about raising concerns that some female teachers will teach in the way that they themselves like to learn and, inevitably, this favours the girls. The last Ofsted report in 2007, ‘Drawing together: art, craft and design in schools’, hit the headlines with sound-bites like ‘boys don’t like art’, ‘boys put off art by painting’ and it advised, fluently, to revise our curriculum models and create broad and balanced models which would attract boys and girls alike.

What can we do to redress the imbalance? Ask Year 9 boys (ages 13-14) why they are not continuing with art and design and they will talk about the lack of opportunity to do fun projects, the emphasis on drawing and on writing, the lack of ICT opportunities and the fact that they don’t ‘see’ the point of the subject. In many cases they will not have been engaged enough with the subject in key stage 3 (ages 11-14). So, are we not including new media and new technologies, these dimensional work, different approaches to ‘drawing’, research tasks (which are not about cutting and pasting from Wikipedia), discussion, debate, writing blogs, open-ended starting points, personalised learning approaches?

Or are we teachers who stay in our own comfort zone, offering a diet which is predominantly about drawing and painting, topics which are teacher-led, artists whose work and teacher preferences, linear methods of recording and outcomes which are valued and similar? I celebrate the fact that boys and girls are different and my job in the classroom, or working alongside teachers as an advisor, is to make sure that all learning isvlae are catered for, that the interests of the students themselves are exploited and developed, that art is about self-expression and identity. I despair of the hours spent drawing from observation when there are so many other ways of drawing and so many alternative ways of observing. I despair of the lack of opportunities for boys to be naturally kinesthetically involved with their work, through making and creating. Boys learn by doing. I also despair of the fact that art and design
Reflections on the legacies of Cy Twombly and Lucian Freud

The deaths of the painters Lucian Freud and Cy Twombly should give us pause for thought about the importance of the arts in the contemporary world. Their passing might represent the end of an era in terms of painting practice, as well as the larger context of art practice as a whole. However, I think we should also consider the implications of their respective practices upon the entire field of art education.

It seems to me that whenever the education sector is in crisis, (which undoubtedly is at the moment, if we think of issues ranging from the provision and content of early years education to the debates about the cost of university education) then the status of the arts at all levels of education (including music and drama as well as visual art) tends also to be problematic, because these subjects are viewed as marginal, rather than central components, in the evolving experiences and development of all children.

In visual art, particularly in a world dominated by competing ‘virtual’ realities, by often ephemeral encounters with media and processes, it is crucial for children to discover how the exploration and manipulation of materials like paint, clay, ink, wood, card, wire, and crayons can help facilitate a grounded and practical experience of the world.

The practices of Freud and Twombly express a determination to achieve a form of self-discovery through the act of painting. Why are these exemplary practices for our contemporary culture? What can we learn from their example?

Superficially, there could not be two more dissimilar painters, with Freud representing a traditional lineage stretching back from Cézanne to Rembrandt and Giotto, and Twombly belonging to a more recent Modernist tradition of abstraction, ranging from the New York School of the 1950s, to earlier twentieth century exponents of expressionist mark-making, like Chaim Soutine. However, I would prefer to underline the relative similarities of the concerns and temperaments of the two, because it is in their virtuoso skill in handling paint, and the understanding of the succulent and viscous materiality of paint, that their true identity can be found. Between them, Freud and Twombly encompass the whole armoury of a painter’s obsessive exploration of paint as a means of expression and catharsis. Philip Hensher notes of Twombly’s paintings that ‘their subject is memory and imagination itself’. In comparison, Freud’s methods are not so much gestural as the product of intense and concentrated looking over long periods of time, as testified by the numerous models for his portraits. Martin Gayford’s comment that ‘this project is to make an absolutely instinctive examination of the world... in the form of paintings’ seems especially apposite. Another point of similarity for both painters is that their work is not predetermined, but more an arena for discovery. As Freud said, ‘half the point of painting is there is that you don’t know what will happen. I sometimes think that if painters did know what was going to happen they wouldn’t bother actually to do it.’

This is an absolutely crucial aspect for learning, as well as purely painterly projects. I have often alluded to the paintings of Twombly when referring to the mark-making of very young children. The analogy is made to highlight how such openness, freedom of exploration and risk taking with materials like paint and clay are absolutely vital in the experiences of children throughout their schooling, and especially in the formative early years of development and discovery.

Of course, the skills of a Twombly or Freud are hard-won and cannot be equated with the natural spontaneity of children’s mark-making. However, their practices both manage to highlight the importance of actively encouraging and enabling children to play with materials akin to the way in which these painters have pushed the boundaries of painting, and to learn the value of looking intensely and being able to remake the world in their own image. They indicate the value of a deep and sustained engagement with a particular medium and process, instead of a superficial acquaintance with it.

A look at the paintings of Twombly and Freud can underpin the value of such a practical engagement with the world, and constitutes their real legacy.

Michael Jarvis
Senior Lecturer, Visual Art Education


The analogy is made to highlight how such openness, freedom of exploration and risk taking with materials like paint and clay are absolutely vital in the experiences of children throughout their schooling’
A creative investigation led by arts organisation Clayground Collective

Clayground Collective is an independent arts organisation founded by ceramic artist and educator Duncan Hooson and arts producer Julia Rowntree. Concerned with the decline of ceramic departments in schools and colleges, five years ago they set out to revive clay and craft skills through a celebratory approach responsive to specific curriculum areas. The budget per school was approximately £4,500 (inclusive of travel to London, a selection of the world’s clays and a half-day creative session). An additional half-day was included with either Duncan or another artform specialist (movement/dance, film animation, sculpture or story-building). An ‘Heuristic: exploring and experimenting’ approach was taken for each creative enquiry project with eleven schools (nine primary, two secondary), funded by A New Direction, the strategic body for arts learning and skills exchange. Scargill School focused on digging and creating a giant sculpture with clay and three- and four-year-olds experimented with their own clay construction on a giant sculpture. Other schools explored topics such as animal migration, architecture, towers, castles and transport and made links to parents and families. The project culminated in a festival with drop-in sessions for families and additional school workshops to create a giant imagined cityscape beside the Olympic park.

Clayground also advises the Crafts Council’s Firing Up national initiative aimed at reviving clay skills in secondary schools and Higher Education Institutions. www.craftscouncil.org.uk/learn/programmes/firing-up

Clayground Collective offers skills and curriculum development through CPD sessions, Insets or longer-term projects. The company’s approach starts with clay, the basic material, its properties, origins, limitations, creative potential and role in cultural traditions the world over. This perspective makes for exceptional responsiveness to specific curriculum areas and opens up a universe of personal and group learning.

Julia Rowntree and Duncan Hooson claygroundcollective.org

In 2011, Clayground completed an Olympic-themed clay enquiry project with eleven schools (nine primary, two secondary), funded by a New Direction, the strategic body providing ways for young Londoners to access arts and culture. One of 14 independent arts organisations delivering similar creative enquiry projects, Clayground’s offer to each school was an ‘on-site’ for all staff, four-day-long sessions with either Duncan or another artform specialist (movement/dance, film animation, sculpture or story-building). An additional half day was included with an archaeologist or scientist. The budget per school was approximately £4,500 including a contribution per school of £1,000. Each school devised its own approach. Henry Maynard School explored clay skills with an archaeology and movement to illuminate the changing shape of pots over time. Duncan advised on development of the school’s ceramics department. Staff, parents and children exhibited clay items from different cultures in the school’s Ceramic Museum.

Keir Hardie School made artifacts and a film to send to a school in South Africa as part of an ongoing cultural and skills exchange. Scarhill School focused on digging and creating their own animation (also on the link following) and communicated with a school in upstate New York www.anewdirection.org.uk/content/313/Clayground-Collective. Hounslow School linked clay skills with archaeology and movement to illuminate the changing shape of pots over time. Duncan advised on development of the school’s ceramics department. Staff, parents and children exhibited clay items from different cultures in the school’s Ceramic Museum.

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Art Through Words

From words to ideas

Miranda Baxter, Access and Family Officer at The National Gallery, examines the background and methodology of picture description

For over a decade the National Gallery has run picture description sessions on the last Saturday of every month. While these sessions are free and open to all, they cater for blind or partially sighted visitors especially. Sessions involve an hour-long, detailed verbal description (also known as audio description) of one painting. This is followed by a visit into the gallery which for some is an opportunity to see the painting, and for others, an occasion to listen and engage in further discussion.

You might ask, ‘How can a person with little or no sight enjoy a painting?’ You may also be asking, ‘How can verbal description equate with sight?’ People with partial or no sight enjoy art and galleries for the same reasons as anyone else: for the joy of art, to learn and to socialise, looking and seeing however are facilitated differently.

The debate about the hierarchy of the senses is ongoing. Ocellusianism, or privileging vision over the other senses, has gained greater currency since the gradual secularisation and instil it instead on

‘Having a visual memory is potentially advantageous, but capitalising on sensory faculties that are not visual is paramount to creating a ‘picture’ or experience in the mind’

of Western European culture. The proverbial expression ‘I have to believe’ demands rationalisation, proof and understanding before ideas are accepted into the mind. Equally, technology has transformed the ways we manipulate and speak with images. Since at least Aristotle, however, theorists and practitioners of art, education, and culture have challenged this hierarchy. Twentieth-century thinkers like John Dewey wrote that reason ‘must fall back upon imagination – upon the embodiment of ideas in the hierarchy. There are guidelines and advice available through organisations like Art Beyond Sight and the RNIB, VocalEyes. If there is a story, weave in narrative. If the artwork can’t be touched, suggest re-ensacting a pose, like ‘cross your right leg over the left, turning your torso towards the direction of your right hand side’.

Provide information on social and historical context. What was the Archers’ Guild, what is a still life, describe the painting using what could be imagined as a possible narrative, but only as long as it contributes to the mental picture.

Analogies: Refer to senses analogously to vision and explain intangible concepts with analogies. Use clear language and explain. Do not assume that learners will understand why oil paint is akin to a smooth surface. Explain why this matters.

Understanding through re-enactment:

If describing a portrait or a sculpture, suggest re-enacting a pose, like ‘cross your right leg over the left, turning your torso towards the direction of your right hand side’.

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Looking East, learning through art and design: From Person to Process

Iain Macdonald and Richard Firth on crossing continents, turning tables and collaborations in China

Context
China: ‘They’ve got the creative industries message – and home!’ Sir Christopher Frayling’s interview in the first issue of AD drew attention to China’s programme of currently building or developing 1,200 art and design colleges. This is a report from one such academic institution. We have been teaching product design in China since 2006 at the Zhengzhou University of Light Industry in Henan Province, over an hour’s flight inland from Shanghai on the Yellow River. Our initial aim was to teach design innovation, teamwork, idea generation, and quick prototyping (testing of ideas). Our delivery is over two, two-week workshops each year.

It is a highly stimulating teaching experience, but it is not without its challenges. Large class numbers, small studios, and a physical shift in the way they would be taught for the next two weeks – an obvious arrangement to us, but not to Chinese learners encountering this for the first time. It added to the specialness of our visit, the privilege that we and the students, both recognised in the project. The exchange was a two-way learning experience. As lecturers we were able to leave behind some of our day-to-day responsibilities from Edinburgh Napier University and focus purely on our teaching. This enthused a sense of experimentation in our delivery and a freedom to explore, which might not normally have been at our disposal.

The mindset and normative behaviour of the Chinese students who follow respectfully in line with their professors had increasingly dictated our approach. Had we gone native?

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We took a step back and asked questions: how should we communicate to large groups, and enthuse a sense of play? We looked at a more interdisciplinary approach, one that could develop a broader range of transferable and collaborative learning skills. The use of drawing became a universal language as we undertook the project. A blank piece of paper for us all. Drawing became a universal language as we undertook the project. A blank piece of paper for us all.

Engaging students with the shifting of furniture symbolised a physical shift in the way they would be taught for the next two weeks – an obvious arrangement to us, but not to Chinese learners encountering this for the first time. It added to the specialness of our visit, the privilege that we and the students, both recognised in the project.

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A sense of ownership, a sense of place
Mindful of Foucault’s politics of power and our opportunity to be agents of change, we looked to disrupt the expected learning patterns of the Chinese students. We were struck by the layout of the studio, where all the desks faced forward. This suggested that teaching and learning were delivered by rote. By rearranging the tables into a collection of small inward facing clusters, we changed the landscape of the studio to cultivate a collaborative learning environment.

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Mindful of Foucault’s politics of power and our opportunity to be agents of change, we looked to disrupt the expected learning patterns of the Chinese students. We were struck by the layout of the studio, where all the desks faced forward. This suggested that teaching and learning were delivered by rote. By rearranging the tables into a collection of small inward facing clusters, we changed the landscape of the studio to cultivate a collaborative learning environment.

Sometimes it is the things that are in the background that reveal the real story. During the screening of the students’ movies the background sound of laughter, conversation and debate became apparent; this was something that we had overlooked until playback. The noise from our studio was almost amplified by the quietness of the surrounding studios. It was a stark reminder of where they had come from. We had changed the focus and had shared the experience, with our students and consequently we all got more back in return.

We returned to Edinburgh wondering if the tables had changed back.

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Above: Proud student records finished project
Right: Main campus building, Zhengzhou University of Light Industry. Students leaving multi campus building

Reflection
Sometimes it is the things that are in the background that reveal the real story. During the screening of the students’ movies the background sound of laughter, conversation and debate became apparent; this was something that we had overlooked until playback. The noise from our studio was almost amplified by the quietness of the surrounding studios. It was a stark reminder of where they had come from. We had changed the focus and had shared the experience, with our students and consequently we all got more back in return.

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Iain Macdonald and Richard Firth
School of Arts and Creative Industries
Edinburgh Napier University
Ten years on and BALTIC’s Learning and Engagement Team has much to celebrate. Ten years on and BALTIC’s Learning and Engagement Team has much to celebrate.

It was ten years since BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art first opened its doors at one minute past midnight on 13 July 2002, and what a decade it has been! From the moment the decision was made to turn what was once a derelict flour mill into what is now a major, international centre of contemporary art. When it opened, BALTIC welcomed a largely regional audience who were new to contemporary art.

Ten years on, BALTIC is firmly established as an important part of the cultural landscape locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. With 4.5 million visitors to date, there is a clear appetite for cutting edge, contemporary visual arts in the northeast.

At the heart of BALTIC is its Learning and Engagement Team, involving more than 200,000 people every year in its learning and engagement activities. Whether it’s rolling up your sleeves in an artist-led workshop or engaging in a Spotlight Tour, the Learning and Engagement Team help audiences make sense of what they see, explore different lenses on the world and understand new ways of thinking.

In October 2011 BALTIC opened the Turner Prize 2011 exhibition, a major accolade for BALTIC as the first non-Tate venue to host the prize.

Hosting the Turner Prize presented an amazing opportunity to project contemporary art into the public consciousness by creating an innovative audience development programme where ideas around art could be engaged with, and debated at many levels.

The idea was simple, to get members of the public talking about the Turner Prize 2011 and contemporary British art in a non-art environment, to provoke natural conversation about art in a relaxed environment.

To achieve this ambition, one major challenge was to find locations where art could be experienced in new, non-rarefied atmospheres. The Cafe Turner Prize is a brilliant way of bringing contemporary art out of the gallery and into children’s lives. The mix of practical activity and art on display makes the Turner Prize Cafe a perfect way to introduce art to children, to give them a taste for it, and to think about it in new ways.

Over the last ten years, BALTIC has presented over 200 exhibitions by artists from all over the world. As BALTIC’s tenth birthday approaches, the initiative looks back and celebrates highlights from an impressive and dynamic exhibition programme including exhibitions by Yoko Ono, Cornelia Parker, Antony Gormley and the 2013 Turner Prize winner Martin Boyce.

‘The idea was simple, to get members of the public talking about the Turner Prize 2011 and contemporary British art in a non-art environment, to provoke natural conversation about art in a relaxed environment.’

Visit the BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art online for more information on exhibitions, events and education programmes. For details on education and learning resources, please visit www.balticgateway.org.

Over the last ten years, BALTIC has presented over 120 exhibitions by artists from all over the world. As BALTIC’s tenth birthday approaches, the initiative looks back and celebrates highlights from an impressive and dynamic exhibition programme including exhibitions by Yoko Ono, Cornelia Parker, Antony Gormley and the 2013 Turner Prize winner Martin Boyce.

‘The initiative has, through meaningful engagement, been able to deepen knowledge, understanding and appreciation of contemporary art for its participants, and through that greater openness, access to new ideas’.

For free downloadable teaching resources for these exhibitions and many more can be found on BALTIC’s website - http://www.balticgateway.org/resources.

Local schools were also given the chance to host their very own Turner Prize Café. Six lucky schools were selected from the huge number of applications. Pupils visiting the Turner Prize Café took part in discussions and practical art sessions led by BALTIC artists and inspired by the work of the 2011 nominees. In total over 3000 pupils aged 3-18 took part.

Kate Hancock, teacher at Chillingham Road Primary, said:

‘The Turner Prize Café was an inspirational idea, a brilliant way of bringing contemporary art out of the rarefied atmosphere of a gallery and into children’s lives. The mix of practical activity and art on display makes the Turner Prize Cafe a perfect way to introduce art to children, to give them a taste for it, and to think about it in new ways.

Conversations and debates from all of the Cafés were recorded using photography and film, and presented within the Turner Prize Café project’s poster insert looks back and celebrates the decade of Turner Prize 2011, encouraging people to engage with their families and friends.

With 4/300,000 visitors to Turner Prize 2011, huge numbers of visitors were inspired to visit BALTIC and experience contemporary art. Over a free cup of coffee, visitors were offered a platform to have their say and find out more in an informal and fun way. The Cafe Turner Prize travelled the region during the summer, engaging people from all walks of life with contemporary British art, finding out what they think, introducing them to the nominated artists, encouraging them to find out more through dialogue and debate. The Café Turner Prize was described as the ‘most natural and fun thing to spend time on.’

The Turner Prize Cafe project has enabled BALTIC to achieve something that feels very special. The initiative has, through meaningful engagement, been able to deepen knowledge, understanding and appreciation of contemporary art for its participants, and through that greater openness, access to new ideas.

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I should first mention that I teach at Cherry Willingham Community School. It’s a very small rural school that has a catchment area that extends as far as the city of Lincoln. Despite, or perhaps because of, its size and location, the need to connect and communicate is very high on the agenda for every student.

Lesson 1

‘Bash’ by Eduardo Paolozzi was today’s starting point. It’s an image filled with time specific and context heavy ‘stuff’! I didn’t expect them to know when man landed on the moon, or who the president was at the time, let alone to know the image was JFK. It was incredible… then Ben informed the class (ages 11-12) that the soldier symbolised the ‘Vietnam War’—wow!

Lesson 2

Pupils recalled Paolozzi’s ‘apparently’ random images and how events and technology were linked together with colour and pattern to convey connections and meaning. Comparing Paolozzi’s choice of images with what he would use today we began to consider not only how technology has changed but also how it enables us to connect with different audiences in different ways. The class was buzzing and with a common theme and shared understanding: not having access to Facebook, Twitter and their Blackberrys is like being without a limb!

The homework, to take photos on their phones, created a similar level of excitement. They were to use their photographic research and visually illustrate what and how they communicate. I asked them to consider their actions within the image and with just one constraint: the image had to feature themselves (symbolically or otherwise) somewhere in the camera frame.

I have to work through projects I write myself so I don’t make assumptions about ability, timings and whether things are successful or not. I showed examples of my own world of communication and discussed the images I had drawn from my phone and how I had linked each. The class was almost vibrating with enthusiasm; if I could have plugged them into something they would surely power a small country.

Lesson 3

Without exception every pupil came prepared with photos on their phones. I briefly reminded them of the objective, which was to visually represent themselves and their world via the differing forms of communication. They were keen to get started and very quickly they began using the internet on their phones, Bluetooth and texts to send and share images with each other. Pupils who sometimes feel that they are less able to draw were thoroughly engaged and talking about who and what went where. It seemed that engaging with and using today’s popular culture made visual language meaningful and relevant.

Lesson 4

Before I had said ‘good morning Year 8’ everyone had got their work, phones and pencils out and had started work. Another hour flew as I helped a few less confident pupils to draw tricky parts of faces whilst the others texted pictures to each other. At the end of the lesson several asked if they could collect their work at the end of the day to do some at home – and that’s just what they did.

I did think if I was to be observed with a Year 8 group (ages 12-13) they would seriously kick off during my starter and plenary. In fact during our Year 8 monitoring week, when as teachers we weren’t to know when we will be observed, my starter and plenary with one group was terrible as the group desperately wanted to get on with their paintings – it was unreal! You know your project is hitting home when the kids come in and instantly and independently start work.

Lesson 5-10

We were able to use peer-to-peer reflection. We walked around everyone’s work and, armed with Post-its and pens, pupils were asked to stop somewhere in the room but not at their own work – then make two positive comments about their peer’s work and one thing they could improve on. The process encouraged them to make further decisions about their work. They were learning to make decisions for themselves, from each other and with little support from me.

When we looked back on the project their motivation had been the biggest driver. A ‘can do’ atmosphere fuelled by engagement had enabled many to visually communicate ideas. They also recognised that the tools used to communicate are firmly rooted in visual language – art and design learning becomes relevant and meaningful.

Charli Capp, Art and Design AST

Last year we asked Charli Capp to write diary of a project as it unfolded. These extracts show how visual language became more relevant and accessible by using students’ handheld devices as a starting-point and tool.
A Wednesday in January

A life in a day of Greg Hodgson, senior teacher at Chalffonts Community College

Due to the daily senior teacher meeting starting at 8am my day begins at 6am. I wrestle the dog, kiss my wife and I grab coffee in a travel mug, and drive into Chalffont through the Chiltern Hills.

I have a small office in the centre of the school which all students walk past at some point in the day and most check their hair first thing in the reflection of the glass. The girls pull kind of cheeky pout and the lads flick their heads self-consciously.

The SLT meeting at 8am is highly unpredictable in terms of content; today we discuss tonight’s CPD session, Gove’s plans for Music (it seems everyone must play the pianoforte or the bassoon), a couple of new Brazilian kids and skirt length. We talk a lot about skirt length at present.

I still teach about 20 periods a week but lucked out this year having the courtesy to panic or at least pretend they are not one-off books, and we spend 15 minutes looking at the options and how they will need to prepare reasonably high-quality images, sigh.

The rest of the lesson I work with one to one. Their abilities stretch from ‘Raising Attainment’ to ‘Gifted and Talented’; they are stimulating, thought-provoking and creative. Others like ‘Trips and Visits’ make me think I have been rather rud in previous lives. Today I am trying to find Matha and English tutors for one to one tuition and have asked all staff to consider mentoring a year 11 student over the next few months.

Most of my time, when I am not actually teaching, involves training and staff development. One little online project we have been developing for the last few months is called ‘Tech Wednesday 4’ a 10-15 minute online webinar where a new technology or application is shown and discussed each week at 4pm. Today’s session is on ‘Prezi’ and an LSA is presenting. I click the buttons and she does the talk. It works well and the staff who tuned in are all positive in a virtual way.

Next I meet with the art and design team and we work out how to add content onto the new Art Exam blog and then discussed each week at 4pm. Today’s session is on ‘Prezi’ and an LSA is presenting. I click the buttons and she does the talk. It works well and the staff who tuned in are all positive in a virtual way.

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I knew I wanted to be a teacher before I went to school. For many years, I thought I had a vocation. On reflection, I realised it was because of Miss Fletcher, an elderly lady with whom we lived when I was a young child. She told me stories of her time as a teacher in a one-woman school in the Hebrides, firing my imagination and ambition. At primary school, the first teacher I loved was Miss Jane Phyllis Thomas, who introduced me to reading, drama, poetry and choral speaking.

Mrs. Marjorie Thomas, head of English at Cardiff High School for Girls, developed my interest in literature and drama. For both these women, literature was a way of extending first-hand experience, developing our ability to understand human nature and to empathise. Miss Catherine Brackett, my art teacher, was influenced by Marion Richardson’s thinking about art education and by Maurice de Saumarez’s ideas on human nature and to empathise. Miss Catherine Brackett, my art teacher, was influenced by Marion Richardson’s thinking about art education and by Maurice de Saumarez’s ideas on human nature and to empathise. My teachers, who introduced me to reading, drama, poetry and basic design, she enabled me to see art as a way of understanding the world, and introduced me to the study of architecture, which developed into a lifelong interest and important focus for my work.

At Trent Park, where I took a B.Ed in art and education, my painting tutor, John Arnold, who had trained at the Slade, enabled me to understand art as both sensuous and metaphysical. It was about reworking experience, exploring ideas and structuring thought. He saw his role as challenging and disturbing students into a new consciousness, obliging us to question our assumptions about art, and to examine habits we had developed in making art. He asked: ‘What did we want to say? How did we choose to say it?’ He helped us to develop a reflective and self-critical stance.

Kathleen Mitchell, my head teacher at Pimlico School, was encouraging and supportive, but not always in the ways I hoped.

On one occasion, when I was recounting my difficulties in the Front Door Project, based on an investigation of the local area, and musing about having no resources, she cut me short and said: ‘My dear girl, you have marvellous resources! You have the environment, you have the architecture, and you have yourself. Get on with it!’ I have been doing that ever since.

Although known as the editor of Anarchy magazine, a punkrockist and fierce debater, I knew Colin Ward as a thoughtful, gentle and kind colleague when I was seconded to the Town and Country Planning Association to develop the Art and the Built Environment Project. Colin made work a joy through his sense of humour, his observations on life and his feeling for fellow human beings. As well as making me laugh, Colin made me think! His philosophy was concerned with replacing authoritarian forms of social organisation with self-managed, non-hierarchical ways of operating. My role as an educator and as an advocate for young people’s participation in environmental change has been inspired by his ideas and example.

Ken Baynes has been a presence and influence in my life for most of my career. As a researcher in design education, when I was working on the Front Door Project, and afterwards as a collaborator on the Art and the Built Environment Project, then based at the Royal College of Art, where I took my MA in design education. Ken introduced me to action research, which has always been a key strategy in my work. Control over design and action research is the notion of change. The research and designer work not only to understand situations or practices, but also actively attempt to change them. They are agents of change. This has been a key aspect of my work. Although very different in personalities, my teachers and mentors had certain qualities in common. All were independent thinkers, with a keen intellectual curiosity. They were willing both to challenge and to reassure. They were articulate. They had integrity. They were generous in sharing their own experience and ideas. They gave me a lot of responsibility. On my part, there was admiration, respect and love, and a willingness to learn.

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Left: Ivor stop. Age 10, powder paint.
Above right: Selection of covers of books written by Eileen Adams.

For most of Eileen’s working life, she has been a freelance consultant, and as a portfolio worker, her 40-year career has developed as a rich thread of inter-related and interwoven strands, teaching, learning, researching, writing, evaluating and examining – a virtuous circle.

In the 1970s, teaching and curriculum development. Eileen had opportunities to work with professionals from different backgrounds, to gain a fresh perspective on education and to reconsider the role of the teacher.

In the 1980s, Eileen worked on research and development projects which focused on changing teachers’ perceptions and educational practice and extended her own understanding of the purposes and practice of art and design education.

In the 1990s, as researcher fellow and examiner, Eileen learned about evaluation and validation. This experience reinforced the importance of action research and the need to develop theory from practice.

Since 2000, Eileen has continued to link curriculum development, training, professional development and publications through her work with The Campaign for Drawing.
Learning between art and science

Why are science and art viewed as polar opposites? Students on the BA (Hons) Primary Education at the University of Brighton explore the connections between the subjects and find that there are more similarities than differences.

What might be a good starting point for developing inspiring and worthwhile learning in art and design for primary-aged children? Is there potential in combining learning with a practical aspect? Is there a future for making creative connections between science and art as well as questioning the relationship between them.

When asked to compare art and science, contrary to their own expectations student teachers identified many more commonalities than differences including the practical, investigative, creative and visual nature shared by both.

Many student teachers had already observed similarities between science and art without realising the potential for making creative connections between ideas, processes and materials in future work beginning with batik and shibori. Students were introduced to the work of Rob Kesseler, a contemporary artist using the electron microscope and digital technology to create striking visual images of fruits, seeds and pollen. These experiences were then used to help make creative connections between ideas, processes and materials.

Key features emerging throughout the module programme included the importance of both subjects being given equal status whilst working for mutual benefit, as well as the role of visual language and last the experiences in developing an understanding of a range of contexts. Examples of this could be found in students’ ‘sciart notebooks’ (inspired by the notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci) and in their ideas for planning. For instance, one group wishing to address environmental issues selected artist Lyn Bull and Chris Drury as starting points for learning for with their class. Through the investigation and creation of environmental sculpture they hoped to increase children’s awareness of how and why these were made, to develop art skills in imaginative ways and support pupils’ understanding of habitats, considering shelter, protection and food. A visit to Chris Drury’s ‘Dune of Birds’ in Lewes, Sussex, helped them recognise how living fund sculpture could also support local wildlife. Back in school, pupils investigated the process of weaving in the natural world, including the building of nests by birds, insects and small animals. These experiences were used to inspire their own pieces using simple looms with a range of threads and materials but ultimately they began to recognise the ecological dimension of art’s ‘true’ potential. The interrelationship between humans and creatures and the impact of their actions on the environment and culture. For children who are not compartmentalising the world into rigid subject boundaries, it is important that we support them in making natural links between subjects. At the same time, their growing understanding of different areas of knowledge can be enhanced and transformed as they begin to see the relevance of subjects beyond the boundaries of discrete learning.

Leonardo da Vinci is a common starting point for art education, and a range of threads and materials but ultimately they began to recognise the ecological dimension of art’s ‘true’ potential. The interrelationship between humans and creatures and the impact of their actions on the environment and culture. For children who are not compartmentalising the world into rigid subject boundaries, it is important that we support them in making natural links between subjects. At the same time, their growing understanding of different areas of knowledge can be enhanced and transformed as they begin to see the relevance of subjects beyond the boundaries of discrete learning.
Young Artists, Craftspeople and Designers

Billy Rowlinson is studying A2 level photography and BTEC Media, Level 3 at Thomas Tallis School in Greenwich. This is his journey from Flickr to the 2012 Olympic Games.

On photography, learning and technology

Studying BTEC Media, Level 2 and 3, along with A2/A level Photography has given me quite a lot of confidence, mostly by allowing me to do things beyond what I thought was possible. We could experiment with pinhole cameras. This knowledge has stayed with me through my study in photography and I have experimented with pinhole cameras. This knowledge has stayed with me through my study in photography and I have experimented with pinhole cameras.

On creative collaborations

Becoming a member of Creativity Action Research Group really helped me to gain knowledge of social networks – especially through the cultural exchange with our Art and media school in Oklahoma, Creativetallis, weebly.com. The Creativity ARG was set up in 2007 and originally consisted of just staff. In 2009 students were invited to join the group where we then established a blog - creativetallis.blogspot.com - and it evolved. Mr Nicholls (@creativetallis) has built up a large following on Twitter – which enabled us to debate topics and form links which didn’t previously exist.

On social networks

I never used to use the point of Twitter and I’ve only recently seen the huge benefit. I was inspired by our trip in 2010 to Oklahoma and particularly how we used social networking to pretty much arrange the whole trip. This is what made me realise that I need to embrace it.

Social networks are huge! Learning about them should be compulsory in education – I’ve met so many cool people on Twitter

...Why we tweet

Art and design educators were asked why they use Twitter. These are their replies (in 140 characters)

@willow
It allows me to connect with teachers I would not normally meet, be inspired by, or surround you with support for debate to challenging thinking.

@Robbhearteacher
Twitter/tweeting for me is a way to communicate ideas and thoughts, keep up-to-date with many and all parts of the world! I love it.

@ballycastle
Twitter has helped my department out in the face of inspiration and support... we now have begun to develop a worldview of creativity rather than keeping a school view

@Nealston
Twitter is a small scale, utterances of the ego, insights & gestures, questioning, challenging, opening doors, revealing pathways, choices & ambiguities.

@frankieweart
I use twitter for networking & sharing ideas. When you work in a setting like a PBU it can become quite isolated. Helps to keep up-to-date

@creativetallis
I tweet to share ideas & benefit from the collective creativity of the web. It connects me directly to sources of inspiration

@theartcriminal
I think it’s like a web where we all connect and form links which didn’t previously exist. Tweet footprints.

@robinredress
4-up-to-date info on gov policy, to advocate, for research, to brainstorm my IT & “sands unashamedly” bonny shoes & dresses.

@LBSREAD
I use twitter to bring art, craft and design education into the palm of my hand wherever I am.

@crairyj
Twitter extends my reach by providing me with access to a global community of experts and resources.

@gregd Hodgson
Just to see what is possible and interesting! So much good practice can be borrowed from so many good teachers and be repurposed.

On photography from Flickr to the 2012 Olympic Games

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While in Singapore I met the communications director for the International Olympic Committee. My mum accompanied me and we joined the director and his family at a champagne after-party on a rooftop terrace of a very swanky five star hotel. At the start of this year I emailed the director and very cheekily asked what were the chances of getting a press pass for London 2012. To my surprise he said: ‘Leave it with me – I’ll get it’. I now have a press pass to the Olympics! This competition has pretty much changed my life and possible career path. Not only will I be taking pictures of the Olympic Games, but I’ve been nominated by the Olympic Committee to be a torchbearer.

Billy Rowlinson
www.billyrowlinson.co.uk
 twitter: @billyrowlinson
The very sudden death of John Bowden at his home in Knutsford on Saturday 14 January 2012 came as huge shock to all his family, and friends and colleagues in the art and design community. Somewhat John always seemed indestructible. His enthusiasm for the subject and commitment to the work of the Society over so many years was second to none.

After a period teaching English, art and drama in secondary schools in his home city of Birmingham between 1963 and 1980 John lectured in painting at Bretton Hall College in Yorkshire from 1969 to 1974. He was then appointed as senior art and design advisor/inspector in North Yorkshire – a post he held for twenty-six years until his ‘retirement’ in 2000. More recently he worked as an Ofsted Inspector in the arts whilst developing his portfolio of arts education consultancy activities. In the last few years he lectured part time on art and design and technology on four different PGCE and BEd courses, something he described as his own right.

He was also granted Honorary Life Membership of the Association of Advisers and Inspectors in Art and Design Education in 2006 having twice acted as the national chairperson. His publications include Using Pictures with Children, Towards Policy and Scheme of Work for a Primary School, articles in NSEAD and an occasional paper on preparing for inspection published by NSEAD. He was the lead writer on a NESTA project which produced guidelines for schools and a website offering advice to teachers in identifying gifted and talented pupils and catering for their needs.

More particularly he founded and edited the NSEAD house magazine A’n’D. Throughout its period of publication from 2001 to 2010 John edited all 37 issues. At the same time he wrote the regular ‘Ask the Expert’ column in START magazine and continued to do so in the current AD magazine for which he was the Primary Editor. Other projects with which John was involved included developing curriculum material for the Youth Justice Board and a scriptwriter’s consultant on the Sainsbury Print videotapes for the BBC and as editor/writer on several BBC school programmes. As a speaker he has made contributions to many national and local art education conferences.

From 2007–2010 he worked with me as Joint National Subject Leader for the New Secondary Curriculum. I have especially good memories of this time during which he revolved himself to be someone rather different from the image he sometimes liked to create around himself. He was a thoughtful, reflective and supportive friend who it sometimes liked to raise at times, he was a good common sense to all the teachers we met on his service.

From 2007–2010 he worked with me as Joint National Subject Leader for the New Secondary Curriculum. I have especially good memories of this time during which he revolved himself to be someone rather different from the image he sometimes liked to create around himself in earlier years. We worked closely together, meeting almost weekly as we cross-came across the country providing professional development for heads of department, many hundreds of whom we encountered. John at these events. Although I had known him for 30 years, it was this work that gave me fresh insight into the professionalism and integrity of a very complex man. In common with me he was committed to the vision of a broad liberal education encapsulated in the NSEAD and he communicated his enthusiasm, experience and good commonsense to all the teachers we met on these travels. Behind the scenes he was a meticulous and totally reliable organiser of events and the team of 30 part time subject advisors we appointed.

Some of John’s oldest friends recall his dedication from his youth. He was known as an ambitious painter in what he called ‘the modernist traditions’ – he referred to his own art and ways of working in his editorials for A’n’D. His large semi-abstract landscapes are impressive and, having been admired them, it was typical of John that on my 65th birthday a large print arrived with one of his best pictures as a present. It has pride of place in my living room and I will remain as fond reminder of a man I admired, whose friendship and support I valued immensely. John will be keenly missed by all his friends and colleagues in the Society and attending a NSEAD conference without John’s presence will feel strange – he was always there. I am sure that all members of the Society will join me in expressing sincere condolences to his wife, Tonia, his sons Mathew and Paul, and especially his grandchildren, Mia and Josef, of whom he was very proud.

In 2006 the Society published John’s Primary Art Subject Leaders Handbook parts of which were initially serialised as a ‘pull-out’ feature in START magazine. Just a few days before his untimely death he met representatives of the Society’s new publishing partners, HarperCollins, to discuss with his usual enthusiasm an extensively revised and updated edition. Subsequently it has been agreed to go ahead with a new edition as a small tribute to John and his work.

I am passionate about using art and design to reach and inspire the children I work with and I try to make our sessions unconventional. Sometimes Brad and I work quietly on small-scale projects, enjoying the calm and just being in each other’s company. At other times we make large-scale pieces and enlist the help of other children. If the weather is good we use the outdoor spaces as much as we can, taking photographs of the wildlife or making things for the sculpture garden. Brad has always been really interested in wildlife and the natural world, so it came as no surprise that the image of a bird for his linocut-print.

I am absolutely thrilled for Brad that his design was chosen by NSEAD and I feel so very proud of him. I know he will put the art materials he won to very good use and I can’t wait to see what he’ll be working on next.
explore pattern and texture in clothing through printing

John Bowden

How to...

This is an excellent way of highlighting the patterns and textures in clothing before engaging in a drawing activity but it can be really messy, so it is best done outside in the summer months.

For key stage 1 or 2 (ages 5-11), it requires a bucket with redimix powder paint, diluted to a consistency that enables it to be absorbed into a range of clothing, two large boards and lots of plastic protective gloves and large newsprint or similarly slightly absorbent paper which are immersed in the paint and wrung out before use (fig 1). Some plastic protective gloves and large aprons are also essential as the items of clothing will be ruined if they get wet. The second board is then placed over this to make a ‘sandwich’ and a pupil jumps on the board (fig 2). Carefully removing the board and peeling the paper back will reveal a surprisingly accurate and detailed print of the item of clothing (fig 4). With younger pupils they can be just cut out for display on a ‘washing line’ (fig 5) but to sustain the activity pupils can combine their different clothes prints and decide who might wear them, then add bands, feet, and-most importantly a face that ‘joes’ with the clothes, producing some different personalities they can then write about (fig 6). Clothing as a theme can also have links with other subjects; designing a costume in textiles for drama, clothing studied in different periods in history, puppets in design and technology and even links with science—for instance in fabric absorbed the paint most effectively and why? (QCCDA Science Unit 3C: Section 5: Testing properties of materials)

It is with great sadness that we publish John Bowden’s last two features written for AD. We do so in the knowledge that John’s legacy will carry on in schools and universities across the UK. The majority of art and design activity arises as an aspect of the topic in primary schools but there is a possibility that what I have described as ‘focused teaching’ can be neglected. By this I mean presenting pupils with an art and design activity that has clearly defined aims with some learning outcomes specific to the subject. This might have to be done with a smaller group for organisational reasons of course and does not mean that all the art and design work would be presented as an ‘artists’ subject’. It is a case of being flexible—use the most effective combination of teaching strategies that maximise learning opportunities for art and design experiences.

The latest primary review states that ‘crayon work should be promoted more widely as an integral feature of all subjects’. How do you think this can work in art activities?

The primary review is just the first stage in a consultative process. Though any new curriculum changes will not be introduced till 2014 this is certainly one requirement that is not going to be going away. Oracy is the ability to express oneself fluently and grammatically in speech so every opportunity should be taken to get pupils talking; there are many ways to do this in art and design activities. Pupil group activities generate discussion. You could ask pupils, in pairs, at various stages in their art work to describe what the features they enjoy or most work that they like most, and why. To follow, if the piece was theirs, what would they do to improve it? After some exchange of views, these comments can be shared with the whole group.
Innovative design with superpowers, Dr Prop and Dr Paint

Superheroes in art and design

Ipswich Prep School

Art, Design and Technology Teacher

Doug Selway blends fantasy and reality in his work – a torch, a headdress, a belt and so on – might give the wearers their own superpowers. He was keen to get the children to develop their designs. There were slippers to help the wearer find their way in the dark, a helmet to translate languages, a pair of gloves that would tidy up the owner’s bedroom, a device for blocking out unkind words and many other creative ideas.

The next session involved the use of various cutting and joining techniques to assemble the planned devices, including saws, tech scissors, wire cutters, PVA glue, parcel tape, needle and thread and hot glue. Doug brought rattan into the next session, which was soaked and twisted round cylinders such as brown handles to make springs. He also demonstrated how to use wire to similar effect, this time twisting it closely and methodically round a pencil. The children loved the idea, laughing out loud as they removed the cylinders from within the springs, gently pulling the wire or rattan open and watching how it waggled. Eyes made from paper balls, stuffed gloves and various items were attached to the ends.

The assembled props were coated with white emulsion ready for a painting session. Doug or ‘Dr Paint’ as he was known that day, brought in ultra-sparkly glitter, which proved very popular. Children drew simple storyboards showing their props’ super powers, and wrote instructions on brown luggage labels to attach to them. All that remained was an after school viewing for parents, when the room was transformed into a gallery which included an ongoing slide show of the work in progress. Props, storyboards and sketchbooks were on display, together with some of Doug’s own work. The children had the opportunity to experience and enjoy the creative process.

Creative ideas.

Regional Networks

Regional Network Groups across the UK are emerging and we urge members to lookout for local network groups to join and support.

Welcome to Art Education North West, Art Network Group Suffolk and South London Network Art & Design Teachers’ Regional Network (YARN) and South London Network of Artist Teachers (SLNAT).