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**MORAG MYERSCOUGH IN CONVERSATION**  
GED GAST, NSEAD PRESIDENT 2015-16  
**ARTIST PROFILE: MARIA AMIDU**  
WALK AS ARTISTS

The National Society  
for Education in Art  
and Design magazine  
**Spring 2015**  
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**nsead**





## Art, craft and design education: preparing young people for life in modern Britain

Birmingham, June 2015

We are delighted to be presenting the NSEAD National Conference and AGM in Birmingham during June 2015.

The Society has a long history of engagement in Birmingham, to include regular visits to Initial Teacher Education providers, the development of the Artist Teacher Scheme and more recently engaging with the regional network group Art 4MAT UK.

The conference will define and celebrate how our subject so successfully prepares young people for life in contemporary Britain, to include modelling a curriculum for diversity and curriculum approaches to social, moral, spiritual and cultural development; signposting to careers in the creative, media and design industries; engaging with gender issues and with special education needs and disabilities.

If you are a teacher of art, craft and design working in primary, secondary and further education; a museum and gallery educator an initial teacher trainer or trainee this conference will be of relevance to you.

For compelling arguments why we teach art, craft and design join us in Birmingham for our national conference 2015.

# WHERE HAVE ALL THE BOYS GONE?

In recent years the underachievement of boys in art, craft and design has become a national issue. There are now twice as many girls than boys choosing to continue with the subject at examination level. Girls achieve higher results and the gap between genders in A-C grades is significant.

This course will look at more inclusive learning models and make the subject meaningful, relevant and engaging to twenty-first century learners.

Susan Coles, Past-president, will lead each of the courses in Bristol, Canterbury, Glasgow and Leeds.

[nsead.org/cpd/conferences.aspx](http://nsead.org/cpd/conferences.aspx)

### Notice of the Annual General Meeting

All members are invited to attend the 127th Annual General Meeting of the National Society for Education in Art & Design. This will be held as part of the annual conference in Birmingham in June 2015. A draft agenda for the meeting will be made available to all members of the Society in January 2015 on the NSEAD website.

### Notice of the Annual report 2013/14

The Annual Report 2013/14 to include the audited accounts will be available to all members of the Society in January 2015 on the NSEAD website.

## Editorial

A New Year or new term will be for some a time to reflect on habits of mind and the impact of our actions on others. Maria Amidu's *The A to Z of [New Year's] Resolutions*, is a reflective visual record made with a group of children, who through words and letter forms, explored how they felt about themselves as well as each other and how their words and actions affect other people. Our engagement with others, with neighbourhoods and creative actions for change is central to Maria's powerful body of work, a selection of which is shared in *AD*'s pull-out resource (pages 15-18).

The impact of artists, makers and designers on the built environment is boldly exemplified in *Morag Myerscough's* work and space changing interventions. We are grateful for Morag's sharing of her journey and for her brilliant poster image.

This issue of *AD* is also an opportunity to welcome NSEAD's new president Ged Gast and on pages 12-14,

Lesley Butterworth in conversation with Ged looks back and ahead to the challenges that face art, craft and design education.

In welcoming Ged we reflect on the last two years and to Susan Coles' presidency. On behalf the Society, our community of educators, we extend our heartfelt thanks to Susan who whilst serving in this role has shown such dedication and commitment. Susan is an artist, activist and in her new role as NSEAD past-president we remain grateful that her impact and influence on art, craft and design education continues. In *AD* issue 14 we will be formally thanking Susan for all that she has achieved.

Sophie Leach, Editor, *AD*  
Twitter: @nsead\_sophie

Please send article proposals or submissions to [sophieleach@nsead.org](mailto:sophieleach@nsead.org)

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Cover image  
*Discovery Pavilion*, new Library of Birmingham, 2013  
Morag Myerscough and Luke Morgan  
Commissioned by Capsule and Birmingham City Council  
Photo: Gareth Gardner

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# Morag Myerscough

## In conversation

*After presenting at the 2014 NSEAD national conference, artist and designer Morag Myerscough met Susan Coles to talk about past, present and future work*

**Susan Coles:** I'm interested in finding out how your own art and design education supported the development of your career. What were the creative influences in your early life, both at school and at home?

**Morag Myerscough:** I come from a performing and arts background. My father was a viola player and my mother a textile artist. They were very bohemian compared to the other people around.

I went to the local primary school in Holloway, London, which in the 60s and 70s offered a lot of art, drama and experimental teaching. I spent a year just painting, which was too much expression even for my mum who came to the school as she was concerned I was not being taught to read and write.

At home, I was surrounded with making. My mum would be dyeing materials from vegetables and carding wool while my dad practiced in the other room. What else could I do but make and sew from the age of about five?

**When did you decide a career in graphic design was for you and what route did you follow?**

My father was quite keen on his children following an academic path so it was not until the middle of my A-levels that I realized I wanted to give up one of my A-level subjects and concentrate on going to art college. My father had studied with his brother at the Royal Academy of Music and my mum had been to Glasgow School of Art but I wanted to follow my own path. My art teacher, who made us paint mackerels and cabbages and washed her hair in the sink, said why didn't I go and look at St Martin's School of Art?

I applied for the St Martin's foundation course and got in. I was steered towards design by the tutors as I think they could see something in me I could not see myself. Looking back I would have preferred to have had more opportunity to try different areas out rather than be pushed in one direction.

But I also really liked my tutor Robin Baggihole (sadly no longer with us) who encouraged me to apply for graphics at degree level, so I went and looked at various colleges but in the end St Martin's seemed to be the right one for me. I applied there and got in.

I went through many ups and downs over the three years at St Martin's. The first and second year didn't stretch me enough and if I hadn't had Geoff Fowle as head of the 3rd year I think I may have left. Geoff was just amazing and totally

opened up my mind to the possibilities of thinking and not limiting myself to one approach or discipline. He was my saviour.

I then applied to the Royal College of Art – I was the only female from St Martin's to be accepted. Those two years were complex but taught me how to be independent and determined. My professors were Gert Dumbar and Derek Birdsall who were two very different designers.

When I left the Royal College I went back to St Martin's to teach third year students one day a week. I did that for seven years and part of me just wanted to continue those conversations with Geoff. I do miss them now.

**What did you like about being in art college?**

Time to think and time to experiment. Time to discuss, enjoy and question.

**What styles and which people influenced you then?**

I loved Andy Warhol, David Hockney, Bridget Riley, Futurism, Memphis, Gustav Klimt, Constructivism, Pablo Picasso, Wassily Kandinsky, concrete poetry, French films and opera, and the list goes on. I would visit as many exhibitions as I could and see as many films as I could. I absorbed everything.

**How did you begin your design career?**

When I left the Royal College I was told

**Previous page**

Detail of Martin Luther King quote 'I have decided to stick with Love'

Temple of Agape, Southbank, London, 2014

By Morag Myerscough and Luke Morgan

Commissioned by the Southbank Centre

Photo: Gareth Gardner

**Right**

Initial sketch for the Temple of Agape, Southbank, London, 2014

Morag Myerscough  
Commissioned by the Southbank Centre



I wouldn't get a job due to the type of work I did – my final piece were the sets for the Benjamin Britten opera *Turn of the Screw*. I thought I'd better prove them wrong so the first job I went for I got – at the designers Lamb and Shirley. They were designing the Next catalogue at the time, so I did the cover and intro of the third volume which had a circulation of 3 million – quite exciting for a first job out of college.

**You now run your own organisation Studio Myerscough, but you are also a part of Supergroup, a collaborative set up. How did Supergroup come about and how does it work?**  
Over time I have worked with lots of different people who bring different skills to a project, so Supergroup was a way of all working independently and then coming together under one name when a particular project required it. We work on an equal basis because each person brings their particular skill to the project.

**You are described as a placemaker. That's a very interesting title. What is a placemaker?**  
I aim to make places from spaces.

**It seems to me that people are important to your work, and that you work towards making a space work for them rather than just being aesthetically beautiful?**  
Absolutely right. When I work in schools, hospitals or even in temporary structures, I feel strongly that I'm not the person who'll be there everyday using the place and living with it. So I aim to create places that grow and develop with the people it's made for. I hope they feel like it belongs to them so they can be part of it, to add to it and develop it.

**You have created some remarkable work over the years. Do you have a favourite piece?**  
My favourite piece was created with my frequent collaborator Luke Morgan. It was in front of the Royal Festival Hall in London and called *The Temple of Agape*. It's a whole collection of thoughts and ideas that I've had floating around for many years and they all came out in this piece. It means an awful lot to me and I feel very lucky I was given the opportunity by the Southbank to make it.

**Has there ever been a project which you felt didn't achieve what you hoped it would?**  
Good projects depend on brave commissioners and people working together. If that does not happen projects can be compromised. That's happened to me on a few occasions, mainly with print when too many people get involved. But you learn from everything.

**I saw a drawing you had done on a train with the ideas for The Temple of Agape. How important is drawing to you?**  
Different people express themselves in different ways. I have always been nervous about drawing because when I was young if you did not draw conventionally you weren't considered good enough. More recently, maybe because I'm older and don't care what people think, I've developed my own way of drawing and expressing what I want to do. For me, drawing is the most immediate and expressive form of communicating my ideas.

**Do you use a notebook, sketchbook and digital tools?**  
I have a notebook but not a sketchbook. When I draw I sit down with an A3 Bristol Board pad, pens and stickers and start. I will sketch and



‘For me, drawing is the most immediate and expressive form of communicating my ideas.’

then scan my drawings and use them as a base for developing the work. I work mainly in Adobe Illustrator, either on my iMac or Wacom, which I love and has been very liberating. Ninety per cent of the time I spend developing the projects digitally.

**Where do your ideas start? Does the place/space form the idea or do you have ideas and designs and then find the place/space?**  
That totally depends on the type of project, who it is for and how it will be used or occupied. Sometimes ideas take a while and sometimes they come straight away.

**You have a number of 'collections' in your home? Can you tell me about these?**  
Over the years I have collected so many different things. I have a large collection of chairs for which each has a story. I also had a ceramic phase and a book phase. I think I am still in my mask phase. I bought an amazing African sun mask the other day which made me very happy. I've been collecting all my temporary pieces rather than throwing them away so I have most of the *Movement Café* in my house at the moment. *The Temple of Agape* is in storage as is the *Discovery Pavilion*. Next year I am going to have an exhibition and build something new from them.

**Top**  
*Temple of Agape*, Southbank, London, 2014  
By Morag Myerscough and Luke Morgan  
Commissioned by the Southbank Centre  
Photo: Gareth Gardner

**Middle**  
The *Agape* procession begins with a neon ribboned 60m canopied series of love benches which lead to the entrance of the temple.  
Photo: Gareth Gardner

**Bottom**  
*Generators, Accelerators*, London College of Communication Summer show, 2012  
By Morag Myerscough  
Photo: Ana Escobar for London College of Communication

**Do you take time to visit galleries and exhibitions? Are there any recent ones that you thought had the 'wow' factor?**  
I do visit galleries, particularly when I am travelling. Recently I really enjoyed the *Martin Creed: What's the Point of it?* at the Hayward gallery.

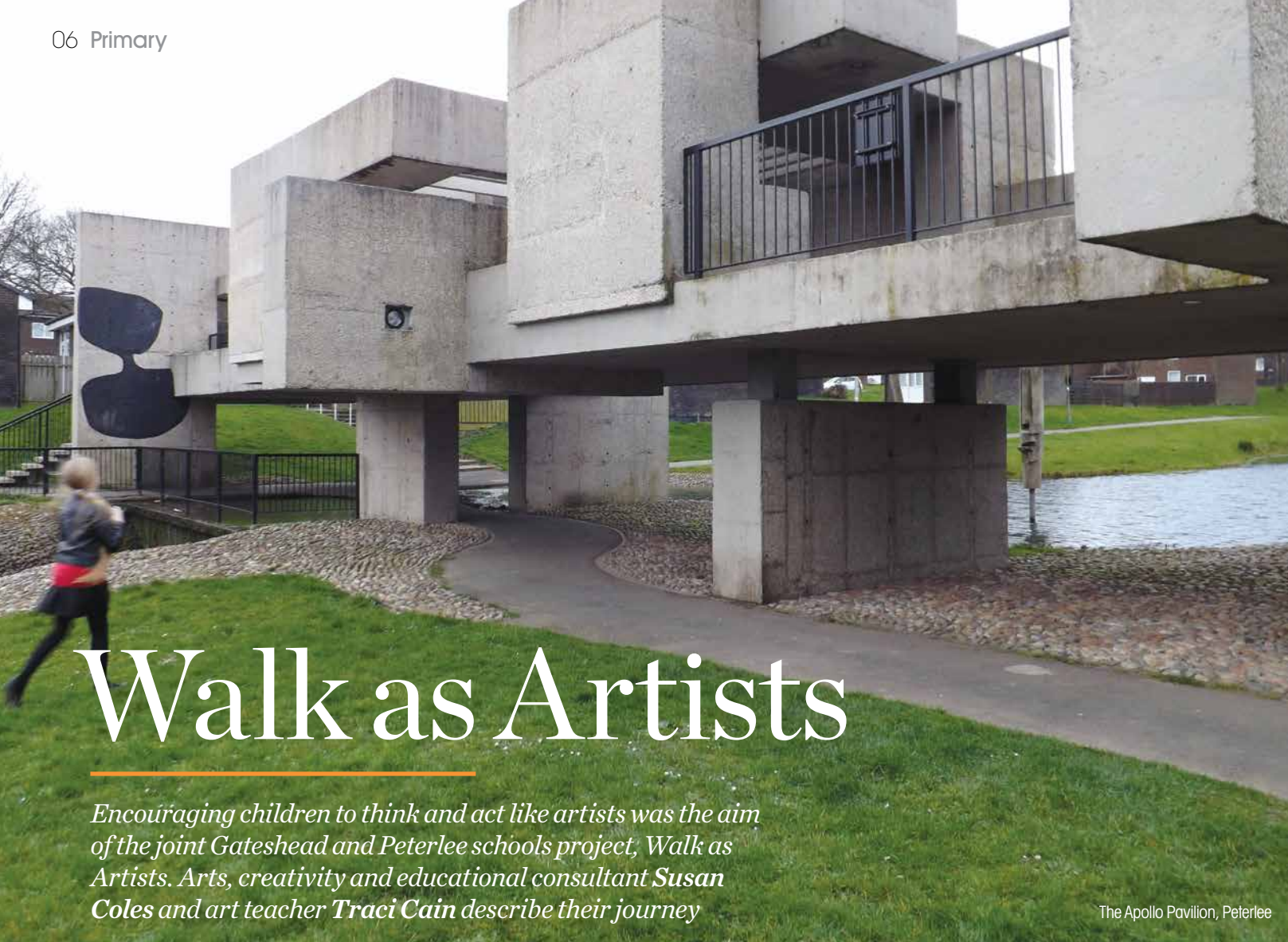
**A good art and design education was important to you in the earlier part of your life. At the present moment we have government policies which don't always encourage young people to choose creative subjects. How do you feel about that?**  
I think all subjects need to cross over into each other and not kept separate. A good balance is needed as one subject feeds into the other and makes you use different parts of your brain and emotions.

**Are you aware that twice as many girls as boys continue with art and design at GCSE level? What should we do to get the boys back into art, craft and design?**  
As mentioned earlier, the need to show the value of art, craft and design and how they are connected to other subjects like maths, science and geography is important. As is the value of game playing. All these subjects should be working together rather than separate entities. The digital world we live in has made this possible and it is very exciting.

**Do you think that schools should offer more design-based content in their curriculum models, which are often very fine art orientated?**  
I don't know if I am qualified to answer this question. Design is a difficult subject and very responsive to change so I think it is dangerous to teach specific aspects of design. But thinking, observing, looking, listening and communicating are worth incorporating.

**What have you got planned for the future?**  
I am in the middle of designing the new permanent exhibition at the Design Museum and am working on the entrance at the Royal London Hospital.

**Finally, if you only had five words to describe yourself with, what would they be?**  
I love what I do. ■



# Walk as Artists

*Encouraging children to think and act like artists was the aim of the joint Gateshead and Peterlee schools project, Walk as Artists. Arts, creativity and educational consultant Susan Coles and art teacher Traci Cain describe their journey*

The Apollo Pavilion, Peterlee

The Walk as Artists project, originally conceived by the NSEAD and funded by the Earnest Cook Trust, was designed to encourage children to engage with their out-of-school environment through 'going for a walk'. This was to be carried out from a cross-curricular point of view but aimed primarily at making pupils think and act as artists. Resources would support the work which could then be shared across schools and localities.

With two local schools involved, the project was led by arts, creativity and educational consultant Susan Coles and art teacher Traci Cain. They developed strong working relationships with both schools and shared the workload throughout the project's six-month period, and presented the story of the project at the North East primary teacher network meeting.

**Brighton Avenue Primary School, Gateshead**  
This newish-build school is in the middle of Bensham, surrounded by rows of terraced houses originally built to house the workers as the town grew. In the centre of this area is Saltwell Park, a Victorian park which acts as a 'green lung' of the industrialised town. The beautiful 55 acres are within walking distance of the school.

Working with art coordinator Nicola Marley, a year 5 and a reception class, the project began as a pilot, which could then be evaluated and used in future curriculum planning.

Traci and I did lots of pre-planning, walking different routes and identifying key visual foci. I worked with year 5 (ages 9-10) on contextualising the visit and looked at our own physical journeys in life. With fewer than half the class born outside of the UK we started making suitcases onto which we glued stickers from their birthplaces. The walk was then designed so that every time the children saw, spotted or drew something significant, they earned a suitcase sticker.

The walk was held on a bright and sunny March day and involved over fifty children, teachers and TAs. Activity sheets were designed to resemble a treasure hunt so children were encouraged to look up, look down, draw, record

words, create a rubbing or find a meaning in the things they observed. The gargoyles on the side of the beautiful Arts and Crafts-inspired St Chad's church proved very popular.

While the reception children looked at trees to support their work and storytelling, the year 5 class, with teacher Mr Burns and TA Miss Greaves, headed for the boating lake in the park. The children were set a challenge of measuring the circumference using themselves as a tape measure. This proved an energetic and rewarding group collaborative and problem solving experience.

In the afternoon, iPad cameras were used to explore other sections of the park and find the letters of the alphabet in natural or made structures. Saltwell Towers, the maze, the bandstand, the war memorial, and other highlights of the park were also visited. The children became extremely competitive and their observational skills were tested to the full.

More 'park' activities were included in the resource pack the schools now have. Back at school, activity sheets were shared to show they had earned their 'stickers' for their battered suitcases.

**Susan Coles**



**Seascope Primary School, Peterlee**

This school was built in 2008 against the backdrop of the North East coast. Peterlee itself was established in 1948 as a new town designed to provide quality housing for the mainly mining families in the surrounding villages of County Durham.

Under the direction of various architects, the artist Victor Pasmore was then invited to be head of the design team for landscape planning. The Apollo Pavilion was designed by Pasmore in 1970, central to the Sunny Blunts housing estate. The geometric concrete structure spans a small man-made lake and has survived a chequered history of neglect and disrepair.

We worked with Jo Brown, art coordinator at Seascope, and her year 5 class. In our initial meeting the cross-curricular potential of the project was highlighted as something she was keen to develop. We decided to split the visits into two half days so that pupils could link their observations to classroom activities that Jo planned to do.

Prior to the first walk I introduced the project to pupils, focusing on how we would explore their local environment like visual detectives, using a map to guide us. Pupils were keen to share

stories about their journey to and from school and were keen to learn about Peterlee's history.

On the day the weather could not have been better. Twenty-five students, Jo, TA Miss Stuart, Susan and I set off with folders packed with activities. Our first stop was just behind the school. Pupils took photos of the skyline and compared it with a photograph taken in 1987. At that time Horden Colliery dominated the view so it was a good way to start talking about local history. Along the route to the town centre we took rubbings, calculated mileage, became human compasses and, above all, observed.

On our second visit we took a minibus to the Apollo Pavilion. Pupils rotated activities between taking photographs, redesigning the Pavilion and solving puzzles. We encouraged pupils to use the various geometric shapes of the Pavilion and to frame their viewpoints as they explored the site.

Once we returned to school pupils took on the challenge of creating a second Pavilion for the site, which is something Pasmore had originally planned to do. Using a variety of cardboard nets and corrugated card the whole class worked to create an array of abstract designs. Pupils imaged themselves in the space they had created

and were keen to explain how they would move around the forms just as Pasmore envisioned. Using Photoshop, they could then see how their sculpture would fit into the space currently occupied by the Pavilion.

Jo's class went on to create scale drawings to develop numeracy skills as well as discovering that the school was just metres away from the site of ancient Anglo Saxon earthworks. Pupils drafted letters to the local council presenting a case for the waterfall to be reinstated in the town centre, something they were unaware existed before the visit. Pupils engaged creatively with Peterlee's past and present, which was inspiring to see. ■

**Traci Cain**

**Above left**  
Seascope Primary School:  
Making pavilion designs

**Above right, top**  
Brighton Avenue Primary  
School: Suitcases with  
suitcase reward stickers

**Above right, bottom**  
Brighton Avenue: Pupils  
year 5 (ages 9-10) and  
reception (ages 4-5)  
working together on  
their quiz pages



# Wearable art

*A partnership between The BRIT School and Dulwich Picture Gallery has resulted in an annual exhibition, some inspired art and a deep sense of achievement for pupils. Assistant director of visual arts and design and KS4 course leader Claire Gildersleve explains how*

Four years ago, as an NQT, I had my first experience of bringing some of the freshest and youngest of artists (14-15 year-olds) together with the Rembrandts and Rubens in Britain's oldest purpose-built gallery, the Dulwich Picture Gallery.

This visit developed into a partnership between The Brit School and the gallery where now, for one evening each summer, our year 10, BTEC Level 2 Extended Certificate and GCSE, hold an exhibition of their work.

Previous years have involved Slinkachu-style miniatures found with the aid of treasure maps, contemporary takes on old paintings displayed alongside the originals, and site-specific installations in the grounds.

In the past students have taken advantage of having the run of the place, inside and out, but this year I thought I'd give my nerves a rest and put together a show which didn't have me frantically checking the weather forecast leading up to the big event!

I decided to adapt a project I'd previously developed for year 11 called *Adorn/Transform: Wearable Art*. With an increasing number of students coming to us with an interest in fashion it was a way for them to explore that field without the time for highly technical skills such as traditional pattern cutting.

Seven months before the show I met with Louise Conaghan, the gallery's ever-supportive schools programme manager. She confirmed we'd be able to use the long, grand sweep of the main gallery as an impromptu catwalk. And so the countdown began.

Back in the classroom we looked at Bauhaus, haute couture and costumes worn by pop acts like Lady Gaga. We contemplated ergonomics and body modification through artists such as Rebecca Horn, Lucy McRae and Bart Hess and considered social, moral, cultural and ethical factors such as Masai tribes, the Vacanti mouse and medical prosthesis.

Students experimented with a range of materials from paper, cardboard (a nod to Christian Tagliavini) to packaging, plastic bags and bin liners. They were fused, collaged, stitched into and knitted together using bubble wrap, wire, mod roc, wax and anything else we could find in the department.

Once they'd got to grips with the ideas and possibilities of 'wearable art' we visited the Gallery where the stories behind

the building and the collection were brought to life by art historian Ben Street and historical costume expert Jacqueline Ansell. This gave students a way in, a connection to a period in time unfamiliar to them.

They were enthralled by stories of love and war and intrigued by the mausoleum with its tombs full of jumbled up bones courtesy of the Blitz. They were taken with the architecture and the atmosphere. One student even found inspiration in a fallen leaf outside which was turning from green to yellow and red — she associated it with the bigger themes of life and death and the passage of time, conveyed so often in the paintings hanging inside.

The students were given free rein. They could design and make anything they wanted as long as they could explain why. Giving them such freedom to fulfil the brief meant the range of outcomes was extremely diverse, reflecting their experiences of the early stages of the project. They had to problem-solve, research and experiment before reaching informed conclusions.

Some were introduced to new materials and techniques we'd not yet used, but each time that happened every student benefited as this new knowledge was shared and passed on. Having that live vocational scenario gave everyone the drive to be ambitious and respond positively to the challenge. They all worked on their own pieces but there was a real sense of collaboration and team spirit, even down to modelling for each other, baking of cupcakes for the refreshments stand and getting the word around so that they had an audience.

I could wax lyrical about targets and learning aims and attainment, all of which were positive. However, the most important part, for me, was the sense of achievement and growing self-esteem the students experienced in that beautiful space that evening after months of hard work.

So I'll end here, with a quote from Louise Conaghan and her team: 'We can't express how joyful, fun and magical it was for us all last night. Thank you for sharing such inspiring talented young creative people. The place felt so alive and full of energy'. ■

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**'Having that live vocational scenario gave everyone the drive to be ambitious, and to respond positively to the challenge. They all worked on their own pieces but there was a real sense of collaboration and team spirit'**

# Creativity counts

*Art is back but not as we know it, says Newman University's **Hannah Hames** as she examines its redesigned primary teacher education programme which has creative development at its core*

A couple of years ago things were looking bleak for art and design at Newman University. After running a primary art specialism here for over forty years, we watched in disbelief as our final cohort moved through the course. I was moved to write about what a fantastic impact the course had (*Art Matters*, AD April 2013) and was buoyed by the positive response the article received. Now, just over a year on, we find ourselves in quite a different place: art is back, but not as we know it.

Newman's redesigned undergraduate primary teacher education programme has been timed to coincide with implementation of the new national curriculum in England 2013. The degree course has been designed flexibly with creative development at its core because as Initial Teacher Education (ITE) Programme Leader Deborah Boekestein, explained: 'We don't want our trainee teachers to feel that they do not have the skills to support creativity. We also want them to develop an aspirational sense of what is important in learning.'

So, the specialist elements, once discrete areas of study, have been aligned to give students a shared thematic focus for their studies in each year, whatever their specialist subject. Key note lectures to all students will be supported by seminars in specialist areas, presenting regular opportunities for debate, discussion and creative input. Every student attends a field course, producing a field diary full of creative content linked to their specialism and thematic cross-curricular modules will integrate the arts and humanities subjects in partnership with visual and performing arts organisations.

Deborah sums up this innovative approach: 'Our programme, whilst maintaining a strong focus on providing trainee teachers with the skills, knowledge and understanding needed to teach the core subjects, is based on the premise that learners' aspirations are raised if their curiosity and interests are stimulated and rewarded. We want our trainees to teach both creatively themselves and to support creativity in their learners.'

But Deborah's philosophy goes further than this, drawing upon recent research to support opportunities for immersive and open-ended learning experiences. She says: 'Our trainees

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**'A basic art education must contain three fundamental elements: the teaching of *skills*, the building of *confidence* and the development of *values*'**

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need to re-learn their own abilities and experience being in the 'flow', whatever area of interest they bring with them or have not discovered yet. That is where the key principle of the programme comes – all trainee teachers should get the best bits of all subjects so that we provide inspiration and balance.'

One of the most significant changes to the programme in this respect is the 20 hours of practical art lectures that every student will have in their first year of study. This equates to a 65 per cent increase to the art and design entitlement in year one. Deborah argues that: 'Children are singing, hopping, building and making marks from early in their development, but it seems to stop. The new national curriculum states that it 'introduces pupils to the best that has been thought and said and helps engender an appreciation of human creativity and achievement.' What better place to start than with our students' own creativity and achievement?'

Of course, the increased time allocation for art is very welcome but we cannot be complacent about what we do with it. In my view, a basic art education must contain three fundamental elements: the teaching of *skills*, the building of *confidence* and the development of *values*. If one element is missing the creative process is compromised, and for many primary teachers this results in art not being taught at all. I want to use the 20 hours to ensure that every student leaves us not just equipped to teach art, but with the confidence and values we would expect to see in a future art coordinator.

I think it important to add that the alignment of subject specialisms has required some serious compromise. There's no doubt about it, the practice-based course I wrote about in 2013 has gone. This made our students advocates for the subject, equipping them with a depth of understanding of the creative process that even some fine art graduates never fully grasp. However, our new art specialists *will* develop expertise to support their critical understanding of the subject, they *will* explore the value of museum and gallery visits in providing an engaging and enriching art educational experience, they *will* learn about the challenges associated with art management in a primary school setting and they *will* leave us able to support high quality art and design experiences in our primary schools.

This, paired with the increased practical input they and every other student will have in art and design, leaves me confident that as we enter a new era for primary teacher education at Newman we still have something very special to offer our students. I commend Deborah Boekestein for having the conviction to stand up and say that creativity must count. ■

#### References

1. *Finding Flow*, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, 1998



Images of work by year one teacher trainees



# Interview

## Ged Gast, NSEAD President 2015-16

*Art and design and creativity consultant Ged Gast has been elected President of NSEAD 2015-2016 and Past-president throughout 2017. Lesley Butterworth welcomes him into the role and asks about his education, work and the challenges that face art, craft and design education in the future*



**Lesley Butterworth: Ged, thank you for finding time to share your experiences with AD readers. Can you tell me about your first experiences with art craft and design at school and how the subject defined and became your profession?**

**Ged Gast:** I have two school stories. My primary school art experience was fairly typical until the upper years in junior school. I was always thought of as being 'good' at art, particularly in painting and expressive work. In the upper years, art was taught by the head teacher Mr Carey who was an accomplished artist. He introduced sculpture to us which was a bit of a light bulb moment for me.

Mr Carey brought plaster of Paris into the classroom along with card, wire and all kinds of modelling materials, which in a mid-sixties primary classroom was fairly unusual. We were encouraged to carve, cast and construct things. He actively promoted playful experimentation, which I think sparked my interest in sculptures and making.

I can still remember going to the chemists to spend my pocket money on plaster of Paris so I could make sculptures at home. At that time I was influenced by African art and, of course, Henry Moore, Barbara Hepworth, Pablo Picasso and all those post-war British artists.

I went on to attend grammar school where art and design had a low value. It was an academic and sport-focused school with a reputation for rugby. Lionel Davis was the only art teacher who also ran the Combined Cadet Force. He was an exceptional painter with a very precise drawing style. His lessons were great because he provided a lot of freedom whilst teaching very technical skills, and his art history teaching was brilliant.

At 14 I started to make large pieces of sculpture and several of us had pieces accepted for an exhibition in Bristol. I remember my work was based on photos of the famine and crises in Biafra which was current at the time. I was looking at Alberto Giacometti and trying to reinterpret it in this context. These sculptures were human scale in plastics, wood, steel and plaster.

I was also lucky as an A level student in Bristol as we were able to attend free evening classes at the Royal West of England Academy where we could use the workshops and studios. I spent many happy hours there making sculpture and using the machine shops. Health and safety was out of the window in those days so I nearly lost a few fingers.

My foundation year at Bristol was uneventful but then I went to Wolverhampton for my degree, where I just enjoyed doing a bit of everything, good for when you eventually begin teaching. The first year was mainly painting, drawing, collage, print and some 3D construction, but after that I specialised in sculpture and quickly moved into carving stone and wood.

My two tutors were John 'Paddy' Paddison and David Nash – both had a really strong philosophy about their craft. There was a strong commitment to honesty and truth to materials at that time which helped form my values as a practitioner. Paddy was a great stone carver and had been an assistant to Epstein. He taught me so much about traditional stone working techniques.

David Nash was also generous with his guidance and I spent some time with several others working in Bleneau Ffestiniog visiting his chapel studio and making work in the abandoned slate quarries on the hills around the town. His work and philosophy made a big impression on me, so that late in my teaching career we would take A level students from Berkshire schools on a residential art week and visit him for a day at the chapel. Just one day working with David always energised the students and convinced them that they really wanted to study art.

Although I specialised in stone and wood carving at art college, I also took time to study print, film and photography, taking most of the technique workshops they offered and gaining experience in processes like welding and metal casting. I've always enjoyed using a range of media and I like learning new techniques.

I even got to do some early digital work because Wolverhampton was one of the leading computer colleges in the country in those days. A computer was very different in the 70s and could fill a three-story building. I believe they were doing developmental work for Hewlett Packard with an early version of a graphic tablet in the form of an architect's desk.

**So, fast forward to 2014, what do you think are the challenges facing art craft and design education in formal education?**

I think I can probably place the situation we are in now in stark contrast to my own teaching experience in the 70s and 80s. In my own department we taught O levels at first and when GCSE came in we taught the unendorsed course, but also offered most of the endorsed options, attracting large numbers but sometimes entering students for different endorsements within the same class.

We were a team of five and thrived on working to our specialisms, promoting curriculum breadth through a blend of fine art and design-focused teaching approaches. We tried to set most projects within a detailed design brief that referenced relevant creative, media and design industry contexts.

This approach engaged as many boys as girls. It also meant we could help examination students who were struggling in one area by moving them in to another course, as our GCSE teaching groups were blocked together on the timetable. We fought hard for that arrangement and similarly at A level where we taught art history in addition to the main art course.

**'They [students] need the breadth of opportunity and a richness of provision to spark their interest to physically and intellectually engage in the challenge'**

With careful timetabling we had almost a whole day each week where we could take the group to any London gallery without disruption. I still maintain that regular and relevant trips to galleries or first-hand experience of both artists and designers are essential to give meaning to projects and place the subject in a contemporary context.

The flexibility we argued for in my department enabled us to plan and drive forward curriculum change, move students around between groups and bring in an artist and designer, or use an exhibition very easily.

I know that's not so easy now but it has left me with a belief that young people don't always recognise their strengths or find their motivation immediately within a learning experience. They need the breadth of opportunity and a richness of provision to spark their interest to physically and intellectually engage in the challenge, to try new things out and find what excites them.

Boys and girls need some different experiences and teaching approaches, as do the various ability groups in our classes. We need to consider these different learning needs when we plan our curriculum, providing learning experiences





## 'I think the Society is very well placed at the moment. Becoming the single voice for the subject has been a very positive development'

with the greatest possible breadth that references all aspects of the creative, media and design industries.

A further issue is the contrast in the amount of design and craft teaching now compared to my own teaching experience. The ceramics and textiles curriculum we taught developed students' creative and design skills, but probably also included as much fine art drawing, research and critical thinking as it would if we had only been teaching painting. Projects were a blend of everything, with just a particular emphasis placed on either art, craft or design.

We also had a programme of residential or visiting artists. This included a potter running a raku course, a textile and surface print designer, an installation sculptor/industrial designer who designed satellite ground stations, injection moulded TV and computer casings. So, a typical GCSE project might be to design a sculpture for a specific site, some printed textiles for a venue or to restyle the casing for a Commodore 64 computer (within the rules of good design).

Students have to understand that the subject

is real, living and meaningful to their everyday lives. We placed an understanding of careers in these industries at the heart of our teaching and that means a much greater focus on design. I really do believe that we need to be doing that now more than ever before.

**NSEAD faces many challenges across the education and cultural sectors. What are the strengths of and opportunities for the Society as we move into an election year?**

I think the Society is very well placed at the moment. Becoming the single voice for the subject has been a very positive development. Likewise, the curriculum review and national projects have engaged a lot of teachers, especially the younger ones coming through, and I think that is really important for them and for us. There is always a real worry around succession planning and I think we have a lot of exciting young teachers coming into the Society who keep us really focused on what is happening in the classroom and the pressures they are facing.

At the same time we must aspire to reposition the subject in the minds of the wider society who have lost some respect for the subject. This devaluing of the arts seems almost a conscious approach from the present government, to limit the number of children who might realistically strive for a career in the arts.

So there is a principle here. I think we need to re-define the subject in the context of the creative,

media and design industries and place all three within the remit of our subject title. We need to include media and design as well as the creative and craft industries because I believe we must keep ourselves alert to the career pathways and progression routes from our subject and the constantly broadening nature of these industries.

**You go into schools very regularly. Could you tell us something about that?**

I spend about two or three days a week in the classroom and run training programmes.

My responsibility ranges from Early Years through to post 16 so one day I can be working in a primary school and the next in a secondary school. I'm responsible for a group of primary and secondary schools and have a working relationship with several colleges. My work is mainly in Surrey but I have worked with several authorities in the South East and still have links with schools in many of them.

**Do you still have time for your own practice?**

I try to keep my practice going. I paint fairly regularly and have periods of activity, such as the holidays when I'm not decorating or involved in family activities. I always have a few paintings and some sculptures on the go. I have a carving area at home and still work mainly in wood and stone. I'm trying to work towards an exhibition in a few years' time, always a goal I'll probably never achieve. Still, good to try. ■

## About Ged Gast

### Background

Ged is an art and design teacher with specialisms in sculpture, ceramics, design and digital media technologies. In the 80s and 90s he was engaged in the implementation of ICT and modelling innovation in the creative use of ICT to transform learning.

He was also a contributor to the national strategy subject materials for Assessment for Learning and Leading in Learning materials, project and development work for QCDA, Arts Council England and other national agencies.

### Present day

Ged is a Babcock 4S Consultant for Creativity and Foundation Subjects. He works in all phases on assessment for learning, thinking skills, learning and pedagogy, SMSC and school improvement.

He currently contributing to the work of the Expert Subject Advisory Group for Art and Design and the All Party Parliamentary Group for Art Craft and Design Education.

### NSEAD

Ged is a contributor to *AD* magazine, writing *Reclaiming the D-Word* in Issue 3 and *Mastery and Assessment* in issue 11.

As part of the NSEAD curriculum writing team, he coauthored the NSEAD *Alternative Curriculum* for art and design in England and *A Framework for Progression, Planning for Learning, Assessment, Recording and Reporting*. Both are available to download on the NSEAD website.

He was instrumental in preparing the way for A4 (the Community for School Improvement) and NSEAD to unite and form one voice for art craft and design education. He facilitates the SEAD Network Group for teachers and educators in London and the SE region.

**We welcome Ged as President of NSEAD 2015-2016.**



## Artist profile:

# Maria Amidu

*Visual artist Maria Amidu connects people, places and things. This pull-out resource explains how*

**Maria Amidu is interested in the social relationships between people mediated by things, objects, places and initiates and develops visual arts projects using language, dialogue and memory to explore this theme.**

Through a social practice she aims to create space for meaningful connections between people. The resulting works, often print or installation, are motivated by her aspiration to substantiate collective moments, experiences or situations.

Recent projects include: *Workforce* (2014), National Maritime Museum; *a moment of your time* (2013), Turner Contemporary and People United; *The A to Z of [New Year's] Resolutions* (2013), *PEER; Betty, Pat, Diane, Ivy, Lynette, Bonney* (2011), Artquest/Parramatta Artists' Studios; and particularly research undertaken last summer during her Winston Churchill Travelling Fellowship.



## The A to Z of [New Year's] Resolutions

Be/To/Ask...



PEER PARTICIPATE

© Maria Amidu in collaboration with Year 4 pupils at St. Monica's RC Primary School commissioned by PEER (www.peer.org/particpate)

phf Paul Hamlyn Foundation

**Previous page**

*The A to Z of [New Year's]  
Resolutions*, 2012

Paper, digital print,  
82.8cm x 58.5cm

**Right**

*Being (an invitation)*, 2014

Archival photograph,  
17.7cm x 12.7cm, paper  
and pins

# Being (an invitation)

Maria is now developing a new, experimental project entitled *Being (an invitation)*.

The project will start with an invitation to people in selected cities across the UK to share their perceptions of authenticity and neighbourhood in the form of photographs – archival or contemporaneous. The image (shown opposite) is Maria's photographic contribution to *Being (an invitation)*. The blank white squares are the potential spaces for other people's photographs.

Categorising the photographs into themes will form the basis of a creative research project to identify what is dominating people's emotional lives across the country. Maria's aims for *Being (an invitation)* are as follows:

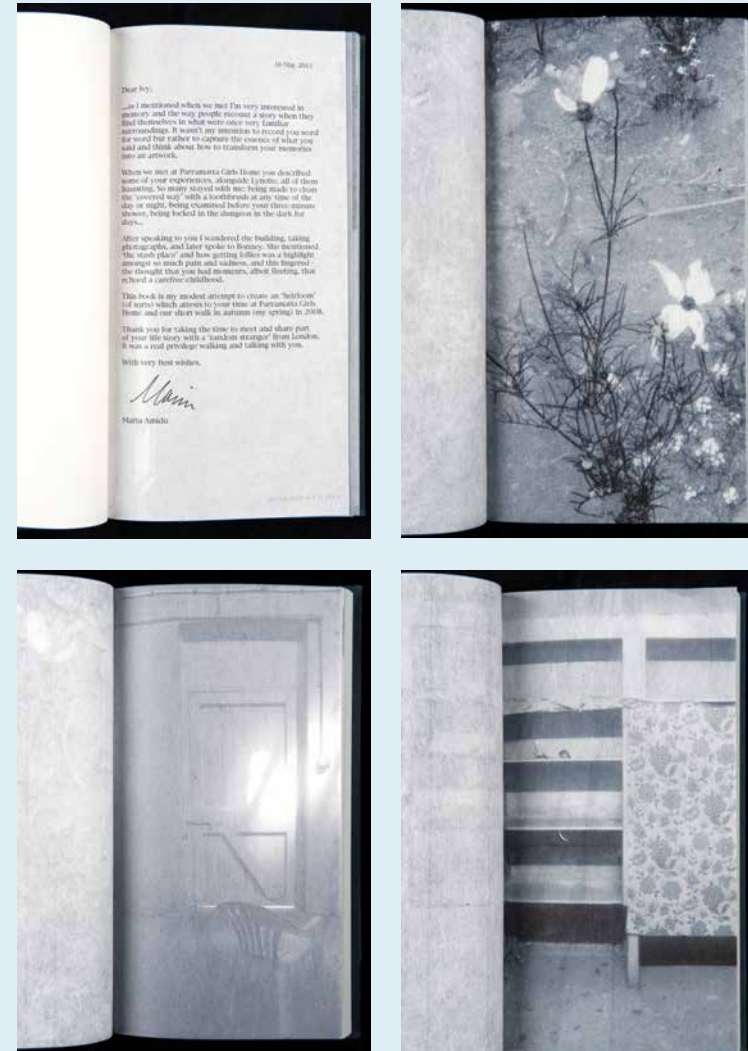
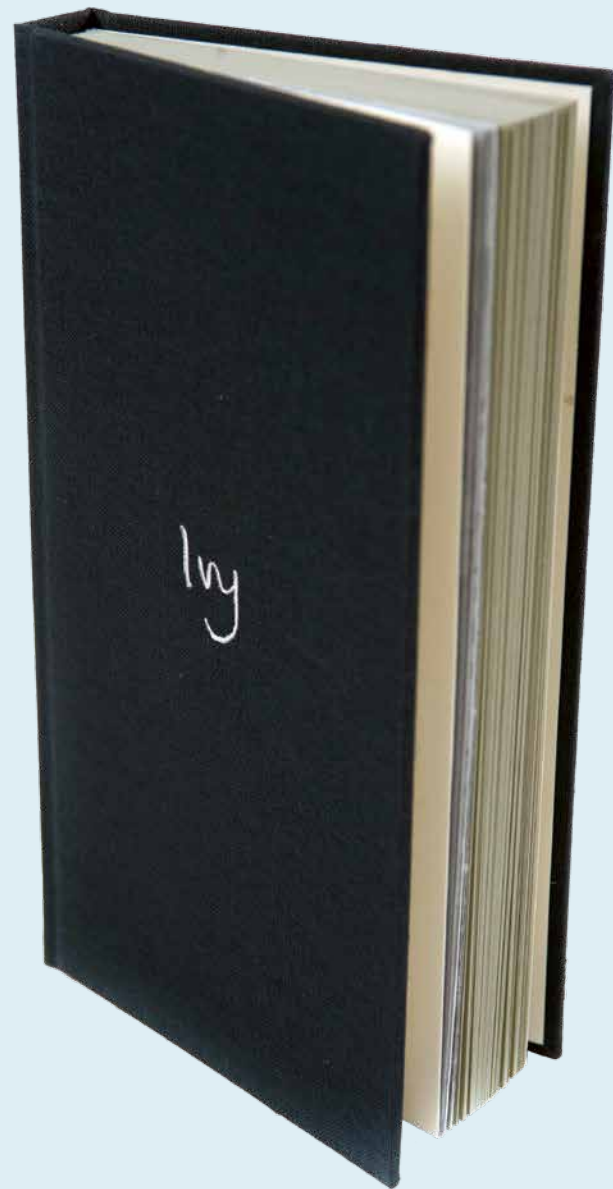
- To explore the challenges inherent in the pursuit of authenticity and neighbourhood.
- To reach a consensus with residents, from school children to senior citizens, about what personal and social aspects of life to address in the project.
- To collectively devise creative actions for change that have a transformative, sustained and longitudinal impact.

*Being (an invitation)* will determine a model for what visual artist Theaster Gates describes as 'radical neighbourliness'. The creative actions could be as simple as looking at common courtesy, or as complex as devising ways to combat loneliness.

'I pay particular attention to the debates around social practice and the role visual art has played and can play in activating change,' she says. 'I am interested in the lines drawn between visual arts practices that are motivated by and dependent on encounters and relationships with people, and practices that are not.'

I ask myself critical questions about the perceptions and definitions of the artistic outcomes in projects I develop, and am concerned about how/if my ideas can make a useful contribution to a situation. I worry/wonder about the limitations and boundaries intrinsic to this form of art making whilst simultaneously embracing its ideologies and unknowns.' ■





#### Above

Betty, Pat, Diane, Ivy, Lynette, Bonney, 2011

Edition of six bespoke artist's books, 1/6

Japanese paper, foil blocking, clothbound, 18cm x 10cm x 2cm

Developed during the Artquest/Parramatta Artists Studios Residency, Sydney, produced in the UK, and mailed to each participant in Australia

## About Maria Amidu

Maria Amidu is a graduate of the Royal College of Art in glass and ceramics, and exhibited nationally and internationally before pursuing a social practice. She has developed site-specific projects and residencies with a number of museums, galleries and organisations including: the National Maritime Museum, Turner Contemporary, People United, PEER, Creative Partnerships, Parramatta Artists' Studios, the Victoria & Albert Museum, Arnolfini, Bristol Royal Children's Hospital, Iniva, the Foundling Museum, Hackney Museum, Metropolitan Archives, Horniman Museum and Gardens, and the 198 Gallery.

Her work is in the collections of the Arnolfini Collection Trust, Bristol; Pilkington Collection, V&A, London; and the National Drawing Collection, Limerick.

In her capacity as a Learning Projects Programmer, Maria has been commissioned to create workshops and learning resources linked to collections, place and identity.

These resources include the *Autograph ABP Archive Learning Resource*, the *Citizen Resource*, Houses of Parliament, National Maritime Museum and components of the *DARE CD Rom*, Iniva.

She is the recipient of a number of grants and awards including the Artists' International Development Fund, Arts Council England/The British Council; Grants for the Arts, Arts Council England; Year of the Artist Award, London Arts; a Crafts Council Setting Up Grant; the Eduardo Paolozzi Travel Bursary, RCA; and a Wingate Foundation Scholarship.

In 2013 Maria was awarded a Winston Churchill Travelling Fellowship to research exemplary projects in the Netherlands and the USA which explore the relationship between public participation, creativity and emotion.

As part of her fellowship she is now developing *Being (an invitation)*, for which she currently pursuing funding opportunities.



Marg Stephens, National Gallery of Victoria Educator leads a tour of indigenous artwork

## Perspectives from InSEA Australia

*In July of this year InSEA's World Congress, was held in Melbourne, Australia. Delegate Susan Coles reports*

The InSEA World Congress was held in Melbourne in July 2014 and I made the long journey to be there. The event was held in the magnificent and exciting location of the Melbourne Cricket Ground – a rather grand place to be.

Over 400 delegates from all over the globe, from 40 countries, were there to share their research, work, and achievements under the conference theme of 'Diversity through Art'. It is the largest arts education event in the world, and has a research conference and main congress.

There were some excellent opportunities to hear from Keynote speakers too, Dennis Atkinson, Susan Wright, Maree Clarke and Ian Brown. They all helped to contextualise the Conference theme. Maree Clarke (indigenous artist and a Mutti Mutti, Yorta Yorta woman from northwest Victoria) brought some school children with her to talk about their collaborative project on making a possum coat which also told a narrative story. They stood up in that huge hall without a sign of nerves, and shared their work proudly.

Delegates also enjoyed a presentation from artist Patricia Piccinini ([patriciapiccinini.net](http://patriciapiccinini.net)) which was engrossing. Patricia's work is challenging and contemporary in that she describes her world as one of questions and not answers. That's possibly true for many of us involved in art, craft and design education.

Delegates were offered cultural visits to various locations and I opted for the National Gallery of Victoria to find out more about indigenous art. The aboriginal artwork was evocative and moving. The gallery itself is an excellent space for showing art, and the collections are cleverly curated to merge the traditional with the contemporary.

Every day of the five days presented us with a menu of opportunities, with projects from artists, galleries, teachers, researchers, students all shared and enjoyed. I was interested in hearing about digital technologies so made my choices around that.

Tea breaks and lunch breaks allowed time for people to make new contacts and to exchange their experiences from across the world. Two social events, the welcome reception and the Congress dinner also gave us some 'down time' in what was a very busy conference week.

I was involved in giving my own presentation about the TEA programme here in the UK and also chaired a session about the new Australian curriculum for Art and Design. Curriculum changes can be controversial wherever they happen so it was interesting to hear different points of view. I also led a panel discussion where my contribution was to talk about the state of art and design education in the UK. Introducing the world to Michael Gove is always an interesting experience!

I have some personal highlights too. Melbourne itself is one – what a great city it is, visually and culturally. You cannot assume that a country so young isn't full of history because it is. I listened to a keynote by Allison Carroll about the importance of not just of studying other cultures in the art classroom but of actually understanding them. That really is food for thought.

It was a great pleasure to meet up with other NSEAD colleagues; Glen Coutts, Nigel Meager, Alex Ashton and Adrian Montana (who hosted my homestay). All presented their own papers. Glen is also a member of InSEA's Council.

Nigel accepted the Sir Herbert Read lifetime achievement award at the World Congress, on behalf of the recipient, Dr Richard Hickman. This award acknowledges life-long contributions by an individual during their career to education through art.

InSEA 2014 was well worth the journey for me personally. Not just to share and present, but to be part of such a powerful global group of Art educators who are proudly advocating for the subject in schools, colleges, universities, galleries and organisations around the whole world.

Hold that thought. It's a powerful one. ■

InSEA (International Society for Education through Art) is a non-governmental organisation of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and was founded in the aftermath of World War II. InSEA's Council has members from every major region of the world and Europe is represented by Dr Peter Gregory (UK), Martina Paatela-Nieminen (Finland), and Janeke Wienk (Netherlands). The NSEAD is affiliated to InSEA.

You can find out more (and how to join) at: [insea.org](http://insea.org)  
Full details of the 2014 Conference are here: [insea2014.com](http://insea2014.com)

The next World Congress will be held in Daegu, South Korea in 2017.

# Potential rising upwards

*Creating, collaborating and communities are important for pupils excluded from mainstream schools. Lisa Robertson, art and design teacher at The Mendip Centre, explains how an exhibition involving three pupil referral units provided opportunity to make, connect with other learning communities and to exhibit work beyond the art room*

**What is a pupil referral unit (PRU)? Who goes there? Why do you want to do that? These are some of the frequently heard questions and comments I hear when posed with the question: 'What do you do?'**

I'm the art and design teacher at The Mendip Centre pupil referral unit in Glastonbury, Somerset, where we deliver a personalised curriculum to a maximum of 25 students aged 14-16 years old, all of whom have found their way to us through being permanently, or at risk of being, excluded from school. A commitment to the arts is at the centre of our core philosophy in order to re-engage young people into education.

The curriculum is enhanced with visiting artists that work in music, performing arts, creative writing, drama and dance, and in July 2013 we were delighted to be awarded the Arts Mark. This was truly a reflection, not only of the staff team's commitment to the arts, but recognition of our young people's ability to embrace the opportunities.

So how can we demystify what happens at a pupil referral unit and let it be known that amongst the community are some of the most creative, challenging and talented young people around?

Following a meeting with colleagues from other pupil referral units in the county who were also developing an arts curriculum, I had the

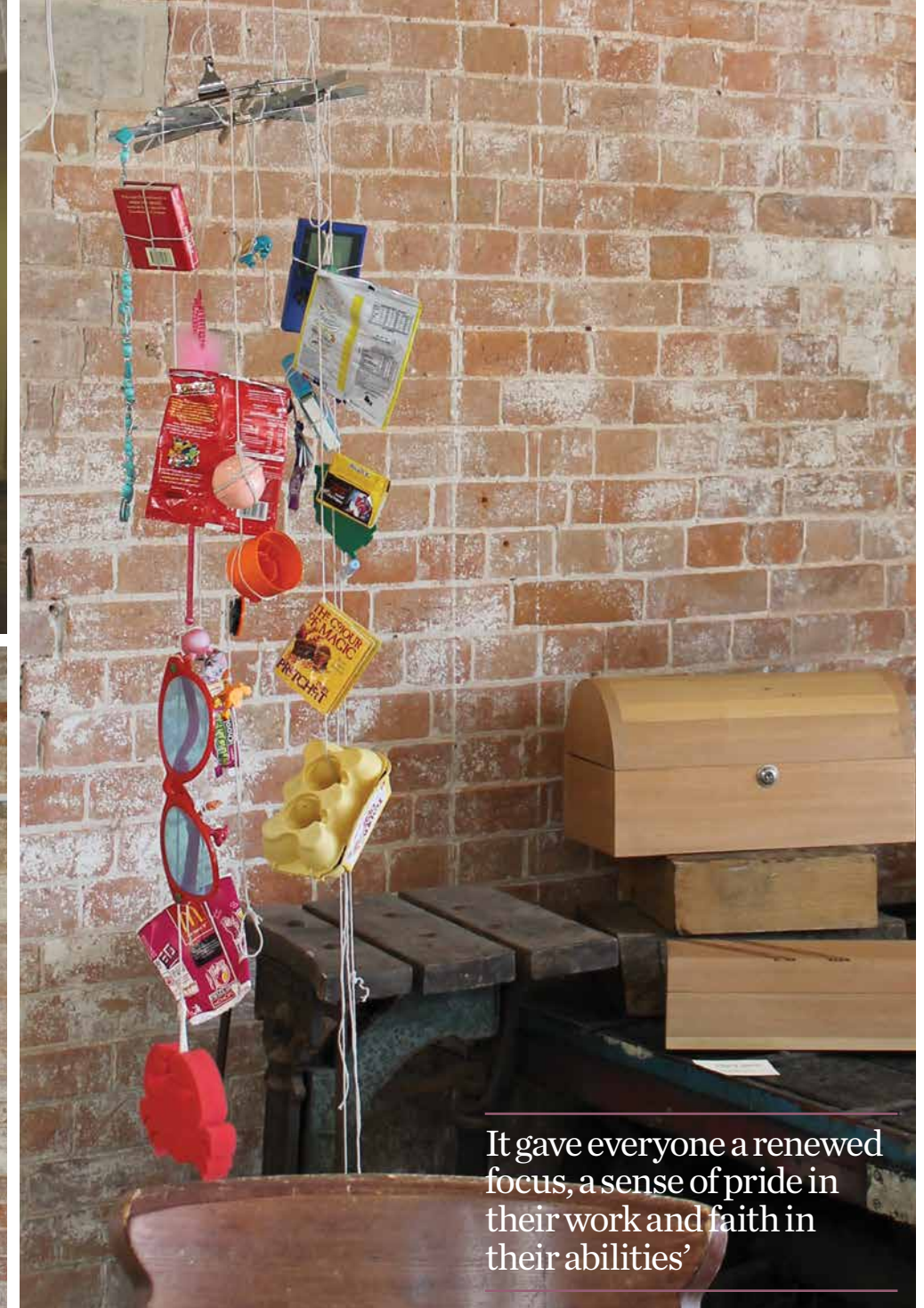
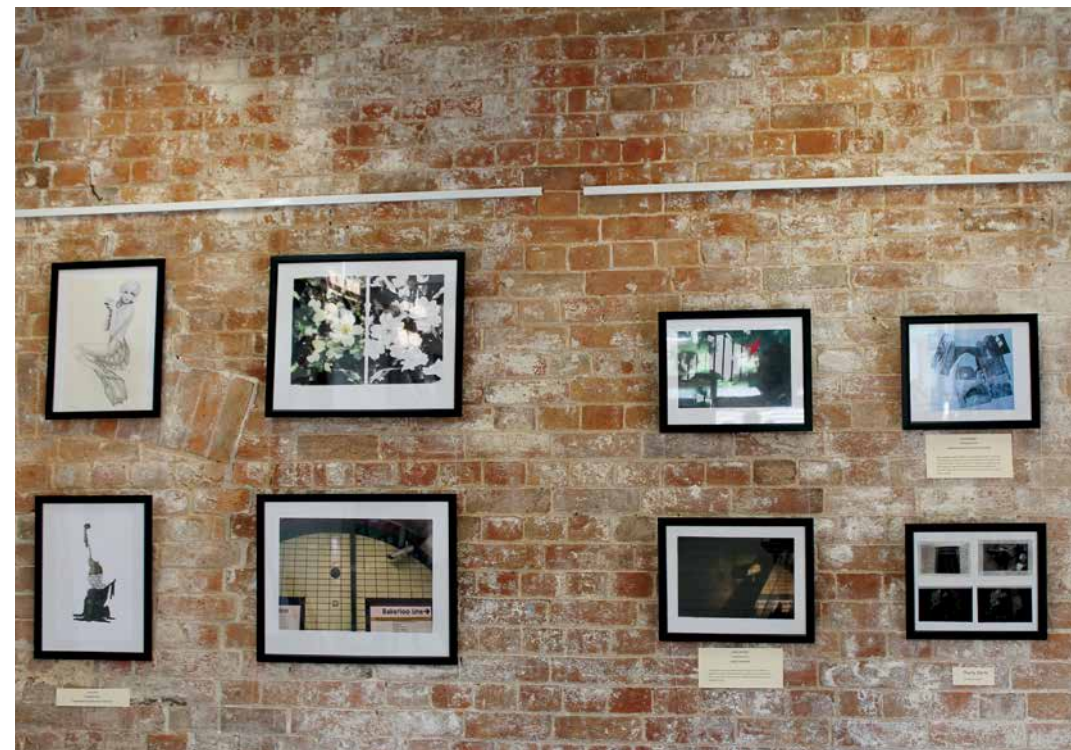
**'Exclusion from school should not mean exclusion from communities'**

idea of collaborating and holding an exhibition of student's work from several pupil referral units. Two other PRUs in the county were keen to participate and, with the support of Somerset Partnership in Art Education (SPAEDA), the Great Bow Wharf in Langport was secured as a venue for July 2014.

The process of creating the work could now begin. The exhibition would primarily show GCSE work in art, photography and furniture making. The question 'is this good enough for the exhibition?' became a familiar war cry from the art and design room. It gave everyone a renewed focus, a sense of pride in their work and faith in their abilities. One student pointed out: 'Lisa wouldn't do this if our work was crap!' I like to think there is a compliment in there somewhere.

As with all great ideas at the outset, the end seemed a long way off but very soon GCSE crunch time was upon us. After a few hiccups were resolved and shredded nerves overcome, moderation was over and it was time to prepare for the show.

After much deliberation the title *Potential Rising Upwards (Potential Uprising)* was chosen. Building an interest and audience for the exhibition was essential and two students designed the poster and invites which were distributed by each of the participating centres. Due to the geographical nature of where we work – our centre alone covers 400 sq miles of rural landscape – a private view did not seem appropriate so students sent invites to previous art teachers, heads of year, head teachers, social workers and of course their mums, dads and carers.



**It gave everyone a renewed focus, a sense of pride in their work and faith in their abilities'**

A major obstacle for a young person that has been permanently excluded from mainstream school is their removal away from their peers, together with potentially fewer out-of-classroom opportunities and experiences. Exclusion from school should not mean exclusion from communities. Everyone should get the chance to get it right and the arts are unique in their position to enable that.

On the day we loaded our vehicles with tables, paintings, collages and photography and headed to the venue to hang the work. Taunton and Bridgwater pupil referral units arrived to add their own work later in the day and it was soon looking brilliant. Visitors left inspiring comments in the comments book and even the students could genuinely not believe how professional their work looked.

With any arts project it is often about the joy of the process, overcoming the set backs, finding resolutions and being brave and courageous enough to show your work that brings the most reward. Feedback from the other centres was also positive and we have all signed up for a repeat exhibition next year.

I work at a centre with amazing young people who create unique artworks year in and year out and have the courage to trust in an adult again and give education another go. So after this experience when I am asked: 'What do you do?' that may well be my answer. ■

*lrobertson1@educ.somerset.gov.uk*



# Art in prisons

*Prison art classes can offer significant and long-lasting benefits to prisoners, prison life and the outside community, as Scott Donnelly, art lecturer at HMP Durham, explains*

Just how important is art? Well, for those detained at Her Majesty's Prisons (HMP), it can be very important. Art classes can have a settling effect on an inmate, who through developing a genuine expression of feelings can experience improved levels of patience, understanding and communication. Furthermore, being able to see a job through to completion are important attributes when relocating outside of prison.

In addition, one of the many things evident in art classes at HMP Durham is the marked improvement in consideration for others. Sharing materials becomes an opportunity for dialogue without having to demonstrate dominance or perceived weakness.

At Durham, for instance, two groups use the art room. Tables are cleaned down and the room is hoovered at the end of each session in readiness for the next class – a relatively unique experience where an inmate makes an effort towards someone he may never meet.

From the viewpoint of being an artist teacher, this improved classroom atmosphere makes for a rewarding experience all round. A good working dynamic is harder to disrupt when a new learner joins the group if it's evident that existing class members are participating in and enjoying the sessions. This facilitates better group work as well as helping to build a different level of conversation and engagement.

**Above**  
Alan, Acrylic, HMP Durham permanent exhibition

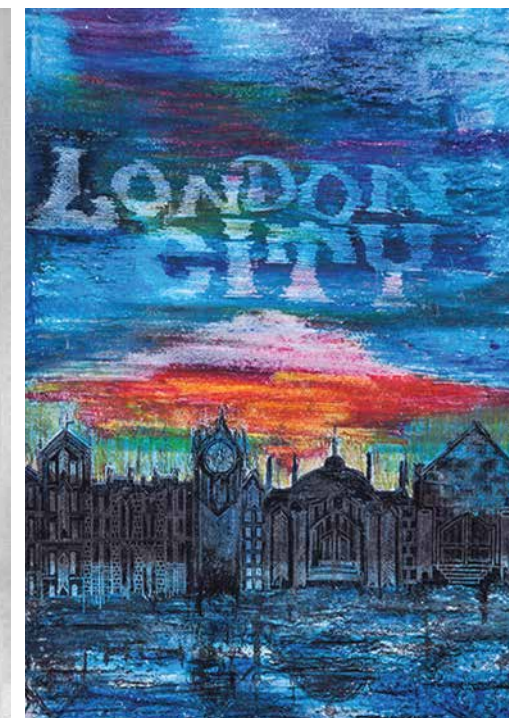
**Top right**  
The Long Road Home, Billy, Pencil drawing, shown in the Shelter Exhibition, Sage



**Above**  
Nigel, Pencil drawing, HMP Durham permanent exhibition

**Middle**  
London City, Lee, Mixed Media, shown in the Shelter Sage exhibition

**Right**  
Drawing by Keith



This year, HMP Durham's art department made exciting developments. With support from the housing charity Shelter, the inmates' work was showcased at The Sage, an international music venue in Gateshead. With a subject title of *Home*, the exhibition allowed a general external audience to see the learner's work and, more importantly, to comment upon it. Cards were made available so that learners would receive feedback on their work from those outside of the Criminal Justice System (CJS).

At the initial meeting with Shelter it was put forward that the learners not only had the opportunity to sell their work but to discuss how sales would be divided. It was decided that proceeds from any sale of work would benefit Shelter, thereby giving those who had experienced problems with homelessness the opportunity to support the charity. The learners were also adamant that there should be a contribution made towards Victim Support.

The Shelter exhibition was deemed a great success, bringing together an exciting and varied selection of work. The show was given a public preview in the daily regional newspaper (*Newcastle Journal*, 29 January 2014), showing colour images of the work across three pages.

The newspaper article changed the mood of the class dramatically.

**‘In the words of one of the learners, the exhibition had “given them a voice”**

The learners were noticeably proud of their efforts and read the article avidly. In the words of one of the learners the exhibition had ‘given them a voice’.

Since the exhibition, there has been renewed enthusiasm for the subject. The art class at HMP Durham has progressed to a Certificate Qualification for all new learners (made up of four units as opposed to the previously offered single unit). In addition, there is now also an option to move onto a Level Two qualification, giving more capable learners an opportunity to develop their art further and help encourage them to continue making artwork upon release. ■

[info@scottdonnelly.co.uk](mailto:info@scottdonnelly.co.uk)  
[scottdonnelly.co.uk](http://scottdonnelly.co.uk)

The National Alliance for Arts in Criminal Justice is the national body for the promotion of arts in criminal justice. It represents a coalition of arts practitioners and organisations working in prison and the community to support men, women and young people to lead crime free lives.

For more information visit [artsincriminaljustice.org.uk](http://artsincriminaljustice.org.uk)



# Felting in three hours

*Working with children at Hendreds Primary School in Oxfordshire, Rowan Jones, art teacher at King Alfred's Academy explains how she planned, prepped and pulled-off a felting workshop in three hours*

Working with primary students always throws up a fresh set of challenges for a secondary school teacher. Some of the basic skills we take for granted with our older students may have yet to be mastered by the younger ones. On top of that, access to art and design provision in primary schools can vary greatly, so planning a workshop for one needs careful consideration. It needs to be accommodating, challenging and rewarding in a fairly short space of time, without compromising on the creative journey or cutting corners in the process.

At Hendreds Primary School I worked with a mixture of year 2 and year 3 students (ages 6-8) who were studying India as a topic. Given the rich cultural heritage of the country I was immediately inspired, whilst trying to find an original way to approach the subject matter. I knew from previous years that the work would be put on sale to raise funds for the PTA so it was essential that every child had a successful outcome.

Inspired by my current year 7 (ages 11-12) project on animals, I decided we would look at Indian birds. An image-rich presentation led to a wonderful discussion with about colour, pattern and shape and I decided I wanted to work in felt, although this is a time-consuming process. The project also needed to provide just enough structure to support learning whilst ensuring that students had creative freedom over their work.

To save time, and overcome the trickiest element of cutting the felt bird shape, I pre-cut some ready-made felt into different bird shapes in a variety of rich colours. Then, after a demonstration on the process of felting, the students were keen and ready to go.

As felting can get the table very wet, students worked from laminated bird images and selected the one they liked best. From this image they decided which colours and patterns they would use on their felted bird shape. The students were brilliant at paying attention to the ideas and skills needed for the piece and got started on the task with great enthusiasm.

They began by building up the colours gradually and some were even able to blend the colours of felt together to create new ones. Once the bird was covered I showed them how to manipulate the felt into smaller shapes such as rings, spots and stripes.

We discussed the key words for the project, based on adjectives such as pulling, stretching, twisting, rolling and blending. Many students let their creativity take hold and copied the pattern but not the colours, or vice versa. Some stayed true to their bird image and carefully observed the colours and patterns within their own piece of work.

Initially I had been concerned that with the pre-cut templates they might all come out looking a bit too similar, but I was quickly proved wrong. Each bird had its unique character, further enhanced by an array of colourful canvases to mount them on for the PTA exhibition.

Felting is such a wonderful technique that can achieve high quality results at low cost. It seems that it is growing in popularity in primary schools and it's something I will definitely be doing again, both at primary and secondary level. ■

## A how-to guide to felting

**The felting process itself is quite simple. Using a pre-made felt template is great for primary years as it provides a base to add layers and colours on to.**

**1** Everyone will need two pieces of bubble wrap and some hot soapy water – the water should be as hot as is safe to have in the classroom. Pull small clumps or strands off the wool tops and begin layering onto the felt template. Once one or two layers are built up, sprinkle on some hot soapy water (washing-up liquid or hand soap works well for lather).

**2** Place the work between the bubble wrap pieces and roll over it a few times using a rolling pin. Then add some more dry felt strands and repeat the rolling process. Gradually the layers will build up and more specific shapes and colours can be added.

**3** The final roll, or 'big-roll', is when the felt is rolled for a solid 10-15 minutes. The combination of hot water, soap and friction binds the layers of felt together into one piece of felt. As the bubble wrap makes indents in the felt, roll the outside of the bubble wrap right at the end, which will flatten the felt out. To test whether the layers are merged, bend the felt backwards and see if any of the layers look like they are coming off.

# The alternative selfie

*Yvonne Jordan, art teacher at Langdon Academy in Newham, challenged the use of photography as a social media tool by introducing film, SLR and dark rooms to GCSE students. She explains how*

During my PGCE placement at Central Foundation Girls' School in Tower Hamlets I was given the opportunity to teach a photography segment for a group of early entry GCSE students. As photography has become increasingly accessible, and image-based self-documentation in social media so present, I aimed to develop a project that could explore ideas about what photography is and how analogue processes can develop analytical skills.

We began by discussing what photography is used for and what we would like to photograph, which instantly brought a divide in defining the practice. The general consensus from the students was that photography was currently mainly used for 'selfies' and social media, whereas 'real' photography constituted nature and landscapes.

Their understanding of social media imagery intrigued me; the students had a strong opinion of what photography was and how the most common use of it in contemporary practice could not be labelled as 'real photography', categorising the subject with a very closed off approach. I felt their opinions reflected recent debates within the photographic industry on whether shooting on camera-phones can be labelled as photography as an art form and if it lessens the value of an image.

With the development of digital processes, the speed in which an image can be shot, uploaded and circulated has dramatically increased and become a part of everyday life. With social media

outlets such as Twitter and Facebook, we have been given a worldwide platform for expression that insists on imagery of the individual and is an increasingly influential part of students' lifestyle.

We worked collaboratively to develop our ideas of the two predominant themes – nature and self-portraiture. I wanted to blur the boundaries between 'real' and 'current' photographic practice and felt that we must approach both subjects to do so.

We were lucky enough to have access to a darkroom, allowing the students to explore analogue processes and develop knowledge in historical approaches to photography.

Beginning with the 'real' photography process, the students shot a 35mm film on the theme of nature, concentrating on composition and the basic camera skills in aperture and shutter speed. Working in a group, the students divided up the 24 shots between themselves and worked collaboratively to find interesting compositions. The limitation of 24 images, and the fact they could not instantly see their images, encouraged discussion, self-assessment and analysis through the practice. It also gave the students an awareness of their own development in their approaches.

It was my aim to open the discussion of what photography is up further and also to explore our initial classifications, so I proposed the 'Alternative Selfie'. The students' task was to create self-portraiture through analogue photography which instantly gave them the



challenge of taking images of themselves without the reverse button on a camera-phone. On a deeper level, this activity asked them to explore approaches to communicate identity through imagery.

The task stimulated the student's creativity, beginning with photographing reflections in mirrors and windows and then progressing into more symbolic imagery using body parts and clothes to communicate aspects of their identity. It was fantastic to see their understanding of visual literacy flourish between conversations of current self-portraiture in social media and the impact it has on how we portray our identity through imagery.

The length of time it takes to develop a film caused both frustration and excitement within the group, and their patience was remarkable. Watching their images appear in the chemicals gave the students a sense of achievement, exhilaration and ignited further interest in the historical approach to the practice.

However, being a first attempt, the films did not come out exactly as the students had imagined. Some images were under or over exposed and the films came out with patchy areas and spot marks due to the chemical process. I found the series beautiful but I feared these effects may dishearten the students. After all their hard work they had managed to create perfectly focused, clean and well balanced images, and the timescale of their practice was so different to the 'shoot, edit, upload' nature of current photography.

## 'The "mistakes" with exposure and process visually communicated the journey'

We set up a group critique to analyse the project and their appreciation of the analogue process. The excitement in the student's own ability and creations were outstanding. They could visually understand how light and exposure affected imagery and discussed the chemical development process and how improvements could be made.

They were as enthusiastic as I with the actual result of the images. We spoke about how the process had become part of the project, the 'mistakes' with exposure and process visually communicated the journey that the students had taken and gave an interesting, and we felt beautiful, aesthetic to the images.

The risk in analogue photography enabled a confidence in the student's exploration, with their passion for experimenting with various techniques, narratives and processes exceeding initial ideas of the final product. They choose to select a combination of portraiture and nature to communicate their understanding of what photography is and how they had approached it, with a final series that reflected their development of their ideas alongside their impressive technical understanding. ■

[yvonnejordan.co.uk](http://yvonnejordan.co.uk)



# The pencil or the stylus?

Observing the difference in tablet usage between British and overseas art students led **Helen Ward**, deputy head of education at the Ashmolean Museum, and **Adrian Brooks**, art education officer at Oxford University Museums, to question and then share the value of digital sketchbooks

As museum educators, we work with thousands of art students who, each year, visit the Oxford University Museums to research their GCSE and A level themes. Alongside the many British students there's also a growing number from Japan and China.

Standing in the museum one day I noticed a subtle difference between the two groups. The British students arrived armed with pencils while the Japanese and Chinese students carried styluses.

My observation may not come as a great surprise but it prompted a series of interesting discussions within Oxford Art Teach – our local network of art teachers – and with colleagues from NSEAD. As a result we decided to map the use of digital sketchbooks as a tool for research.

The result was somewhat predictable; a patchwork of responses shaped by financial constraints, the multiplicity of apps and a lack of technical confidence. Roughly half the secondary schools represented had purchased tablets, either

for exclusive use by the art and design department or to be shared with other departments. However, the tablets were often 'only for staff use' or 'for research only'. Some were even 'locked in the Head's office so we've never seen them'.

Asked how they felt about introducing tablets into the classroom, 55 per cent of art teachers said they felt unsure of their value or lacked confidence using them. Others pointed to the need for clear guidance on apps and lesson outlines.

And so an opportunity presented itself. Working with the Ashmolean Museum and the Oxford University Media Production Unit, we produced a series of online tutorial films addressing some of these issues. In partnership with year 9 and 12 staff and students from The Marlborough Church of England School, we featured three free apps: *Pic Collage*, *Brushes 3*, and *123D Catch*.

Our aim was to show how simple, effective and fun tablets are when it comes to gathering information. The students in every session we

**'The pencil offers the potential for scale, immediacy and a unique personal signature. But in terms of quickly harvesting information in a museum or gallery, the digital sketchbook wins hands down'**

recorded were engaged with annotating, photographing, drawing, editing and searching the web to extend their research.

The response was resounding. A thumping 94 per cent said they would rate the sessions in the highest category of enjoyment and value while 82 per cent said they felt digital sketchpads were 'very important' in art and design work. A solid 64 per cent said they would return to the museum on their own to use the tablets again. Boys were particularly engaged with the tablets, one boy commenting, 'this is a fun way to do art'.

We hope the films (see box) will inspire teachers to start integrating these technologies into future museum and gallery visits. As one teacher said, using tablets provides 'a quick, eclectic way for the students to generate design ideas based on first-hand observations, whilst at the same time generating images derived from a cultural experience'.

Of course, there is no real battle between the stylus and the pencil. The pencil offers

**Top left**  
Dutch Still Life gallery using Pic Collage

**Middle**  
Pupils work in school following their gallery research

**Above**  
Students share flower images from the Dutch Still Life gallery using Pic Collage.

the potential for scale, immediacy and a unique personal signature. But in terms of quickly harvesting information in a museum or gallery, the digital sketchbook wins hands down. It can replicate media from watercolour to oil paint, capture, crop and store photos, annotate and draw with anything from charcoal to a 6H pencil, and then undo work and start again in seconds. Finally, the results can be sent home and arrive before the students have even left the building. ■

The films, together with teachers' notes and a gallery of students' work, can be found at [ashmolean.org/education/dsketchbooks](http://ashmolean.org/education/dsketchbooks)

The project was made possible by support from Arts Council England through their Major Partner Museum Programme.



## Update: It's Our World

NSEAD is one of over 20 partners supporting *It's Our World*. Mostly driven through schools and colleges, the aim is to create the largest online collection of artworks celebrating the environment, as seen through the eyes of its future custodians (aged 4-19 years).

Participants are invited to bring their urban, rural or coastal environment to life. Subject matter can be approached in a variety of ways including observation, critical thinking about environmental impacts and sustainability. The Online Gallery is open for submissions until 30 May as uploaded artworks will be showcased on digital ad screens nationwide from UN World Environment Day June 2015.

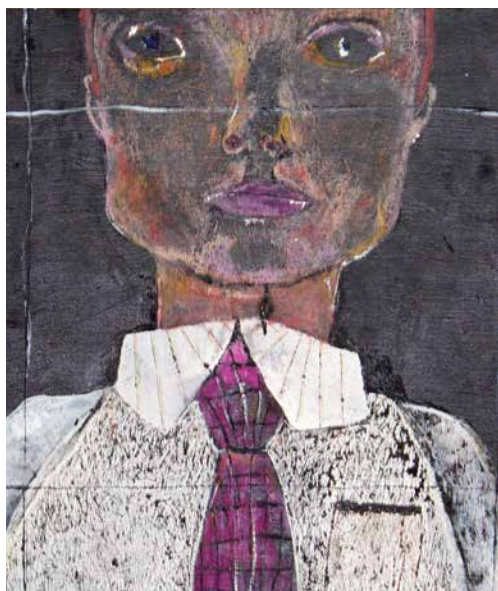
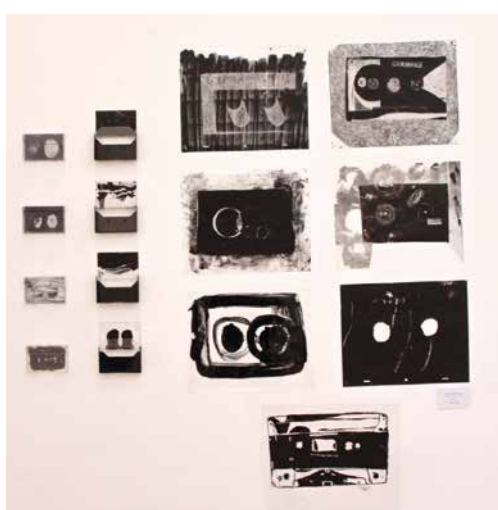
Artwork, from close up studies of natural forms, urban neighbourhoods land/seascapes, are accepted in any medium including painting, drawing, print making or photography. Use of recycled/natural materials is encouraged in creating collages, mosaics or 3D artwork.

For moderation purposes, PIN Codes have been issued to schools and colleges. ■

If you would like your students to take part, please visit [itisourworld.org.uk](http://itisourworld.org.uk)







## Adapting, learning and reviewing

*Kerry Gibson, art and design teacher at Thomas Tallis School in London shares her personalised learning strategies to help build confidence in her students*

**I met my year 10 GCSE art group two years ago. For the most part, these 25 students were fresh faced and eager. Eight had target grades of As and A\*s and many of these were on the Gifted and Talented register.**

There were also eight students with educational needs, five with statements and three deaf and hearing impaired. In my 13 years I've been teaching I'd never met a group of young students with such a range of learning needs. It was going to be a challenging two years.

As all teachers do when faced with new groups of students, I worked hard at getting to know them so I could plan and teach effectively. I looked at the data and predicted grades, spoke to colleagues who had taught them and read student statements.

As a result I found myself evaluating and questioning the teaching strategies I had used before. Were they perhaps at times a little too teacher led, too limiting for students and not offering enough variety and challenge? I had to rethink my approach.

I've created blogs for all my teaching groups for the past four years. For this group I used the blog to show lesson and exam assessment objectives, homework, copies of resources, relevant links to images and other websites, and images of students' work. This helped students connect with the lesson outside of the classroom and supported those who, for whatever reason, had missed a session. I encouraged parents to regularly check the blog and hoped this would prompt conversations about the course with their child.

I held the students' hands during the first term, watching how they worked through a variety of processes and techniques and scrutinizing written work. I differentiated literacy activities at every turn, reflecting on how each student responded to a subject that demands, at times, a sophisticated mixture of skill, emotion, critical thinking and self-awareness.

I created a RAG-rated (red, amber, green) seating plan which – love them or loath them – highlighted all the information I needed to know about the students at a glance. I referred to this when moving students around onto different tables for different activities.

In the spring term I encouraged students to choose a range of materials to work with, using 'the market place' activity. Students taught each other the skills I'd introduced and I became a facilitator. Soon they began to make work that was more personal to them.

Most students had a clear direction as to where they wanted to go, which I supported with individual tutorials during each week's lesson. Students would often RAG rate their own progress at the start of each lesson and review it again as the lesson went on. I would focus on the 'red' students initially,

watching as they moved up to amber, then green as the lesson progressed. They became confident at reviewing where they were and at suggesting their own next steps.

Although they didn't physically sit in them, I loosely placed the students into three groups. Firstly, those who needed extra support, and secondly those who were confident with their skills, developing their ideas and able to make clear connections. The third group was a mixture of the two, needing extra support at times but also able to work independently.

The result was a buzz in my classroom. Students worked independently, making choices, developing ideas and reviewing and refining processes and outcomes. When I asked each student to suggest a homework activity, I was impressed with the imagination they used and enjoyed seeing them take ownership over what we know can be a relentless task of chasing up and tracking down. I created a booklet of all their suggestions, including techniques and processes, making connections and evaluations. Each week students chose what was relevant to them and, since they were differentiated, could work their own level. As time went on I pushed the students to challenge themselves more.

By the time the exam paper was released I felt confident they would achieve, if not exceed, their targets. I tracked them to make sure marks weren't lost in the months running up to the exam using an online tracker sheet so the students could see what they were missing, read my comments and also follow the progress of their peers. I recorded audio feedback on sketchbook work, used Audio Boo on my phone and uploaded the feedback onto the blog. I became obsessed with Pinterest which acted as a constant stream of inspiration for the group as the exam prep work developed. Letters were sent to parents explaining how they could access the feedback and tracking sheets.

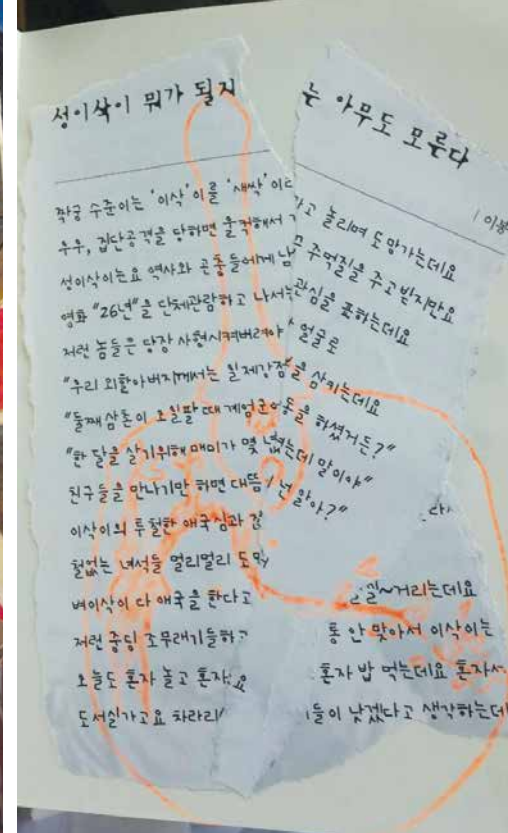
The group achieved their target grades if not better, with an impressive amount of high grades. They have every reason to be very proud of themselves and I felt the results were a testament to all our willingness to take risks and work outside our comfort zone.

But the course was also a success on other levels. Students were creative and independent, positive and fun while I have developed as a teacher. I have learned to let go, to have faith in my learners and watch them excel. I've also enjoyed more personalised teaching and learning, exploring the use of digital media both in teaching and giving feedback, and using what I've learnt about tracking, AFL, self and peer assessment and differentiation to support all my new groups this academic year.

Trying out new strategies for learning has meant that I've thoroughly enjoyed teaching this group that initially filled me with dread. ■

### Read our blogs and image boards

[tks4artanddesignblog.tumblr.com](http://tks4artanddesignblog.tumblr.com)  
[ineartattallis.tumblr.com](http://ineartattallis.tumblr.com)  
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# Travelling sketchbook inspiration

*The Thinking, Expression and Action programme goes from strength to strength as it crosses continents from the UK to South Korea. Art and design teacher at Seaton Burn Community College Amanda Skilton shares the inspiration that came from a teacher and sketchbook exchange between the two countries*

**'Influenced by our respective cultures the travelling sketchbook showed how different approaches can be varied and useful'**

Since the start of the Thinking, Expression and Action programme (TEA) the travelling sketchbook has been a valuable source for art teachers, educators and students alike. My own travels took place last year and involved an exchange programme with teachers from South Korea, the purpose being to develop cross-cultural communication. My inspiration for the programme came from the travelling sketchbook aspects of TEA which we used to build conversations and share understanding.

In January 2014 a group of teachers from South Korea came to the UK to work with teachers from the North East of England. The programme aimed to strengthen teachers' ability to nurture global citizens and foster better cultural understanding among participating countries.

My exchange teacher was called Mikyoung Park, an ethics teacher interested in how art is taught in ethics. She was particularly inspired by Ged Gast's paper *Exploring and Developing the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Dimensions of Art and Design* which looks at how artists' work can be used to engage students in these four areas. During her time here we looked at our students' artwork and at how their personal studies engage with these four areas.

Then, in Korea, we created a school project to encourage students to discuss and talk about their future ambitions, hobbies and beliefs through drawings. We sought to develop a deeper understanding across the two cultures and we continue to develop this aspect throughout our teaching.

While Mikyoung was visiting the UK, she introduced me to another Korean art teacher called YouSun Jung. YouSun and Mikyoung were impressed by our teaching and learning, and by the wide range of creative resources displayed in lessons and corridors.

After being introduced to the concept of the travelling sketchbook, YouSun wanted to get involved, impressed with how it supported learning and allowed teachers the time for their own personal development. So, we set up an exchange where YouSun continued to work on my current sketchbook and I started a new one.

We themed the project 'Culture; drawing from direct observation'. We wanted to build a deeper understanding around what we observe everyday, to inspire our own artwork and to develop skills and research techniques that could be passed on to students.

When I visited South Korea in July 2014, I found an outstanding level of artwork at YouSun's school and the commitment and dedication was evident. However, the diversity of materials used was limited. A large percentage of artwork came from direct observation using still life objects.

This was where the sketchbook came into its own. Influenced by our respective cultures the travelling sketchbook showed how different approaches can be varied and useful. It ignited for us both an interest in mark making using a wider range of materials and their effects. We also looked at alternative approaches to drawing through investigation, exploration and experimentation with new techniques, and pushed the boundaries of direct observation to draw on a more personal response.

YouSun subsequently set a homework project for her students where they worked on their own themes in sketchbooks, which in turn created a starting point for students' next personalised projects. For me, the travelling sketchbook developed my interest in the way we create marks. Inspired by the beautiful artwork and techniques of YouSun my work has taken a new direction.

YouSun will continue using sketchbooks and engage more of our students in the activity to support learning. Since returning I have created a set of photo resources to use in the classroom based on artwork from South Korea. I am confident this project will continue to flourish. ■

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Find out more about The Thinking, Expression and Action programme: [t2.nadfas.net](http://t2.nadfas.net)

## Anna Leokadia Przyszlak 1952-2014

Following the release of her parents from the Siberian labour camps and their arduous journey to a resettlement camp near York, Anna was born in 1952 and schooled in the camp, only speaking Polish until the age of eight.

She gained a place at the prestigious Barr Convent in the City of York where she set about speaking English, free of accent, so she would not appear different from her school mates. Eventually she achieved her A levels and was accepted onto the teacher training course at Christ's College, now part of the Liverpool Hope University.

Graduating in the mid seventies Anna was appointed art teacher at Fazakerley Comprehensive School with a Department of two people. She taught here for seventeen years. In 1991 she successfully applied for the post of Head of Art at the Gateacre Community Comprehensive School, the largest Art Department in Liverpool. She took early retirement in 2009.

From the outset Anna was a keen advocate of the Comprehensive system and had a strong democratising ethos in the running of her department of six. She had an influence on thousands of pupils within the City of Liverpool. From the 1980's Anna undertook a number of representational rolls for the NSEAD and was a regular participant in Annual Conferences.

In 1982 she married Peter Moore who was then President of the Society, having been together since 1978. Peter was a Senior Lecturer at Liverpool Hope University. Anna gave birth to their daughter, Olivia, in 1987. She is now a SENCO in a Liverpool Primary School.

**'She encouraged me to believe in myself and I'm so grateful to her for seeing the potential in me'**

**Kathryn Williams**

Anna was a sensitive artist in her own right and exhibited regularly, selling many pieces. She belonged to a successful Art Group run at the Liverpool Hope University.

She became ill with breast cancer in October 2013 and although chemotherapy seemed to be working a further cancer was detected that was terminal. She fought very hard but in her happy and realistic way, prepared her funeral which had to be colourful and joyous.

Anna died on the 8th September, following amazing care at the Liverpool Royal Hospital, with Peter and Olivia at her side.

Amongst the large number of contributions to her Eulogy was the following from Helen Walker:

'You really mean a great deal to all of us and have, certainly in part, put me where I am today. If you hadn't sat my Mum down at parents' evening - and explained that art was really what I was good at and clearly loved, then I could have been in a very different place today.' ■

**Peter Moore**

