

NSEADcreate – Case study #5

Innovative ideas for remote learning

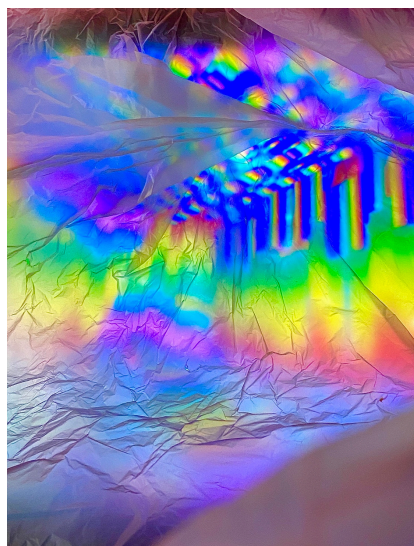
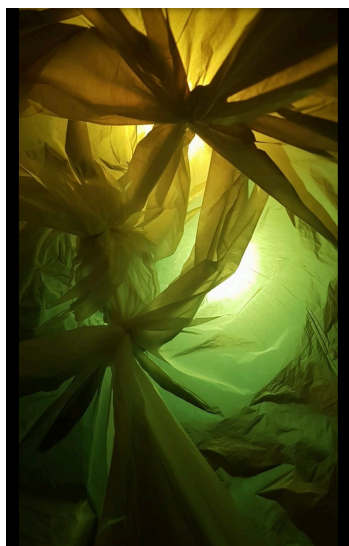
Lynne Calland, head of art and design at All Hallows Catholic High School, Penwortham shares her inventive ideas and approaches to art lessons in Lockdown. Working mostly remotely, her young artists have been making sculptures from ice and art using televisions as light boxes. Lynne's case study is packed with innovative home-learning ideas and for learning in classrooms with limited resources.

As an experienced, long-serving art teacher, I could not have envisaged the steep learning curve that I was about to embark upon when lockdown was announced in March 2020. Initially, I secretly hoped for an extra week's 'holiday' at Easter, never once anticipating the disruption to education that the pandemic would bring.

As time passed and lockdown continued, pupils were sending me their work via email, as no online platforms were used in our department at that point. This was not ideal, so I learnt how to set up Google Classroom for my classes and invested in a gooseneck clamp to make filmed demonstrations. I found this much more practical than taping my phone to the underside of a chair.

I began planning art lessons to inspire the pupils whilst allowing those with limited materials to access the curriculum using a more diverse range of media and techniques. Experimenting with ideas other than more 'traditional' methods of making art has been one of the highlights of my job over the last year.

For those pupils who were considering art as an option, I introduced a range of artists for them to respond to each week, making my own samples and filmed resources. The first artist introduced to the pupils was Vilde Rolfson, renowned for her series *Plastic Bag Landscapes*. I asked pupils to use their phone to capture images through plastic with different lighting effects in the background such as the TV on pause or coloured bulbs. Pupils uploaded their imagery that was often reminiscent of cosmic, aquatic and ethereal scenes.



Raku Inoue's exquisite foliage insects were a source of inspiration for the next task. As it was spring and most people were going on a daily walk, I considered this to be achievable for many. I made my first filmed-demo that was very basic compared to what I am now producing. Our young artists made many beautiful results, films and stills, overall.



Our pupils had previously enjoyed taking photos, so I introduced them to the work of Slinkachu, London-based street installation and photographic artist. They were encouraged to use any tiny figure they had at home to create a scene in response to the artist or make their own figure from Blu Tack or Plasticine. Within the submitted pieces, the theme of lockdown was a popular topic.





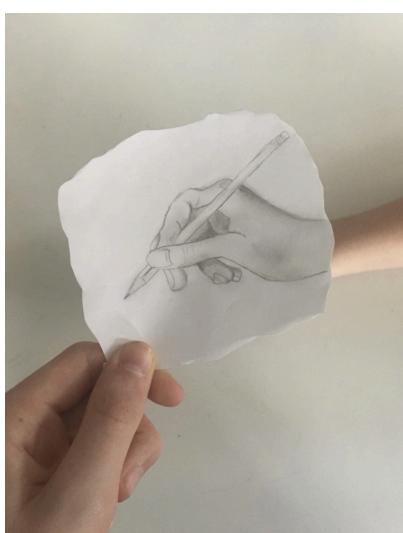
Other experimental lessons included trapping objects in ice which could be photographed in stages as they melted (p. 4); observational drawings of their surroundings linked to Ben Heine (p.4) and expressive portraits related to pupils' moods in the style of film-maker and photographer Rankin's 'destroy project'.



The Year 10 GCSE artists (ages 14-15) were developing their 'Creative Human Anatomy' project when schools closed. I experimented with alternative painting and anotype images using photosensitive material from organic materials (below). I began using ingredients from the kitchen, including coffee, tea, balsamic vinegar, beetroot juice, soy sauce, paprika and turmeric.



As current GCSE work cannot be shown, the images above are my own creations using these methods. I have also recently explored ways to enable printing to be done from home, including thickening soy sauce with cornflour. Fruits and vegetables were effective to print with and further colour was added using diluted spices.



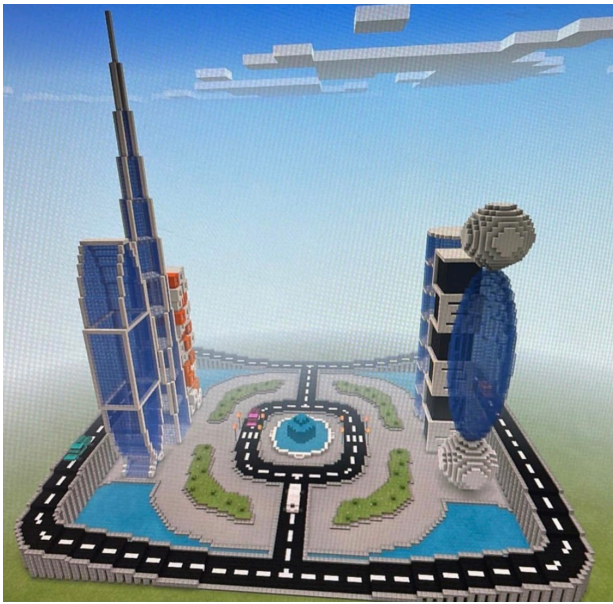
In September 2020, when the new school year began, I was initially disappointed to find out that my students would be learning in non-specialist art rooms for the majority of lessons – this could mean resources would be limited and not to hand. I wasn't going to let this stop me using paint, so buckets of water and tins of watercolour were transported to classrooms, along with anything else I could carry. We also invested in visualisers for the department that have been invaluable, enabling live but socially-distanced demonstrations to take place.

I was particularly impressed with the imaginative colour wheels that the younger pupils produced at home, having initially painted one in school. This was an excellent way of recalling knowledge whilst using found objects to make their own creations. Some pupils baked cakes and one pupil included his sausage dog for the colour orange – the fact that the dog wandered into green added a sense of humour to their outcome.



Many of our pupils have been isolating at various times, meaning that blended learning has taken place, with schemes of work needing to be regularly adapted at short notice.

Within our 'Buildings and Architecture' project, pupils were challenged to design a futuristic city, with the option of using Minecraft. I have never known such eagerness to complete a task, especially the boys. On this occasion I did not make my own sample!



If anyone had told me this time last year that I would be teaching art from my kitchen or non-specialist classrooms, filming demonstrations, editing on iMovie, using a visualiser, teaching live lessons remotely, using Mote, uploading videos to YouTube, marking via Google Classroom and meeting through Teams, I think I'd have run a mile. Despite feeling totally overwhelmed and completely out of my comfort zone at times, to me it has really proven that you can teach an old dog new tricks.

Images: All images have been shared with kind permission of Lynne Calland and her artist students at All Hallows Catholic High School. Thank you to all the young artists who kindly allowed us to share their work.