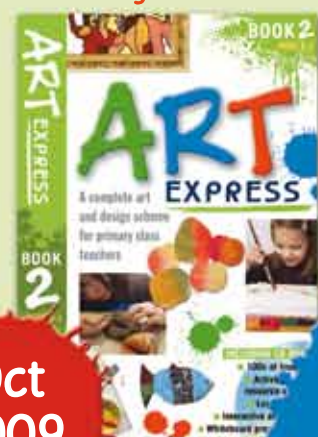


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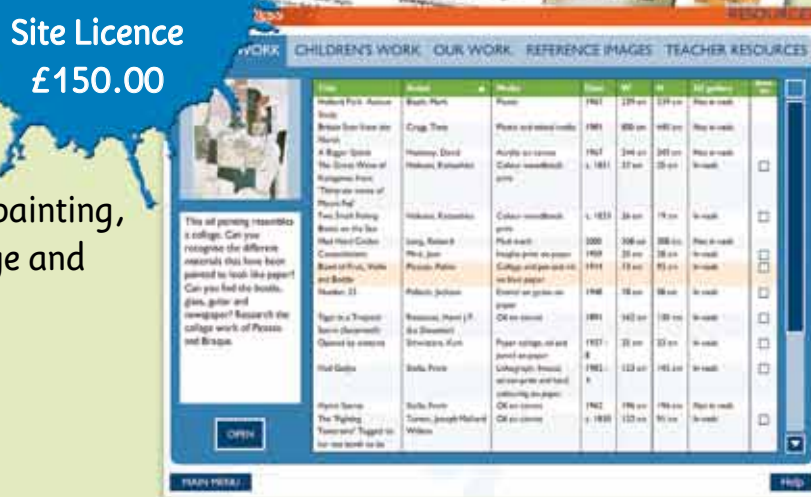
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THE MAGAZINE FOR PRIMARY AND PRE-SCHOOL TEACHERS OF ART, CRAFT AND DESIGN



## CROSS-CURRICULAR ISSUE

Cubism and still life  
mathARTmatics  
Autobiographical  
montage project  
Illustration: more than a  
complement to text  
Anthony Browne

Medusa relief sculptures  
Iron man/woman sculpture  
project from the Netherlands  
Plus  
Gallery round-up,  
News and much more

Poster  
Contemporary Artists from West Africa





has your school made a mosaic? win prizes for your school, enter...

# mega mosaic makers 2009

More than £2,500 worth of prizes in mosaic materials & books, incl a £650 first prize. See 2008 entries on link from the BAMB (British Association of Modern Mosaic) website, [www.bamm.org.uk](http://www.bamm.org.uk).

Entries for 2009 on [www.megamosaicmakers.org.uk](http://www.megamosaicmakers.org.uk), welcomed from Nov 2009. Information about mosaic making and education on this site and BAMB website. All projects encouraged, large, small, amateur and professional!

Competition closes 12th December 2009.



**MEGA MOSAIC MAKERS IS ORGANISED BY BAMB AND KINDLY SPONSORED BY**



**2008 PRIZE WINNERS, FROM TOP**  
FIRST PRIZE St Bernadette's School,  
artist Julie Norburn  
SECOND PRIZE Hiltingbury Infants School  
artist Maylee Christie  
THIRD PRIZE  
Wendron Church of England School,  
artist / teacher, Kate Hale

## Dates for your diaries

### NSEAD Annual Conference and dinner Saturday 6 – Sunday 7 March 2010 at the British Museum, London

The dinner will be held on Saturday 6 March at the Hotel Russell, Russell Square.

An opportunity for you to update yourself with current and future developments in art, craft and design education, listen to presentations about good practice in the classroom and engage in networking opportunities and debate.

### NSEAD Start Primary Summer School

The third Summer School will be held at the University of Winchester on Friday 16 – Sunday 18 July 2010

A wonderful opportunity to refresh or develop new practical skills in a supportive environment, and explore developments in art, craft and design education that will have a measurable impact in the classroom.

**Residential:** Start subscriber £290, non-subscriber £330  
**Non-residential:** Start subscriber £230, non-subscriber £270

**Early bird bookings! Book before 31 December 2009 and enjoy 2009 prices!**

**Residential:**  
Start subscriber £260, non-subscriber £300  
**Non-residential:**  
Start subscriber £200, non-subscriber £240

Booking available on the website [www.nsead.org](http://www.nsead.org) or [Anneingall@nsead.org](mailto:Anneingall@nsead.org)



**START**  
Number 33, 2009

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**Poster:**  
Contemporary Artists from West Africa

Cover image: Poster – Contemporary Artists from West Africa  
**Please note:** While every effort is made to check websites mentioned in **START**, some may contain images unsuitable for young children. Please check any references prior to use in the classroom. Please note that the username to access units of work on the NSEAD website has changed to 'patchwork' and the password to 'quilt'. See page 33 for further details.



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**Editor:** Michèle Kitto, [michelekitto@nsead.org](mailto:michelekitto@nsead.org)  
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# START News

## WATCH THIS SPACE 6: TEACHER PLACEMENT SCHEME

Watch this Space is a funded professional development programme for galleries, teachers, artists and gallery educators in England. It enables them to gain first-hand experience of each other's work, and to initiate, build and sustain relationships that introduce school students to contemporary art in galleries.

The John Hansard Gallery at the University of Southampton will host two primary teacher trainees and their mentor teachers; MIMA, the Middlesbrough Institute for Modern Art, will be working with primary art and literacy specialists; and Orleans House Gallery, Twickenham, will host two KS2 teachers. Watch this Space 7 will run from September 2010 until January 2011; applications will be sought in March 2010. To find out more about Watch this Space and to read case studies of past school/gallery partnerships, see [www.engage.org/watchthisspace/index.aspx](http://www.engage.org/watchthisspace/index.aspx).

## MEGA MOSAIC-MAKERS

The competition will run again in 2009 and all schools are encouraged to plan now for entry. Mosaics made in the last three years may be submitted, but may only be entered in the competition once. Hints on mosaic-making in schools can be found on the Education page of the BAMM website, [www.bamm.org.uk](http://www.bamm.org.uk).

## BALTIC 'B.CREATIVE' TALKS PROGRAMME

**Thursday 22 October, 17.00–18.00**  
Creativity: Prove it! Pat Chapman, Director of Schools for Creativity, Culture and Education (CCE), will talk about how to prove the benefits of creativity. Among other things, Pat is managing and developing the government's flagship

creative learning programme, Creative Partnerships.

**Thursday 19 November, 17.00–18.00**  
Creativity: Work it! Why are creative skills essential in business and industry? How can they be applied? This talk will explore these issues.

**Wednesday 9 December, 17.00–18.00**  
Literacy through Art: A treat for the festive season! We are thrilled to announce that Children's Laureate, author and illustrator Anthony Browne will be talking about art and literacy.

Bookings: [events@balticmill.com](mailto:events@balticmill.com)  
0191 478 1810

## THE BRITISH MUSEUM – ART & DESIGN: ESSENTIAL PRACTICAL SKILLS

**Thursday 12 November 2009, 9.30–16.00**  
A hands-on course designed to help non-specialist teachers in primary schools to develop a range of practical skills and build confidence. Working in the galleries and the classroom, it will explore researching ideas, using sketchbooks, drawing, designing and printmaking and will generate many ideas for teachers to take back into school. Cost: £100, including refreshments but not lunch.  
[www.britishmuseum.org/learning/schools\\_and\\_teachers/teacher\\_training.aspx](http://www.britishmuseum.org/learning/schools_and_teachers/teacher_training.aspx)

To book, phone the ticket desk on 020 7323 8181 or email [tickets@britishmuseum.org](mailto:tickets@britishmuseum.org)

## THE PRINCE'S FOUNDATION FOR CHILDREN & THE ARTS – CATALYST TRAINING DAYS

Looking for a motivational arts teacher-training day? Catalyst is a programme of inspiring arts-based professional development days that take place throughout the UK, organised by The Prince's Foundation for Children & the Arts. During the day, teachers work with professional artists to focus on interactive and innovative teaching ideas designed for Key Stage 2 pupils. Teachers will work with three art forms from a selection including poetry, visual arts, drama, storytelling, dance and music.

**Hastings Museum & Art Gallery**  
16 October 2009; **Towneley Hall, Burnley**  
19 October 2009; **New Walk Museum & Art Gallery, Leicester** 27 November 2009; **Belfast Castle** 26 February 2010; **Foundling Museum, London** 9 March 2010; **Leeds Art Gallery** 19 March 2010; **Bodelwyddan Castle** 4 June 2010; **Saltram, Plymouth** 2 July 2010

## EXPLORE MATHS WITH GALLERIES AND MUSEUMS IN KENT – FREE RESOURCE

Primary school children in Kent have been trying out a new resource and learning about maths through art, objects and the environment. *Maths through Pattern*, an inspiring and colourful resource, is now available for all teachers and group leaders to download for free at:

[www.turnercontemporary.org/learn](http://www.turnercontemporary.org/learn)

*Maths through Pattern* has been developed by artist Katie Beinart in partnership with a cluster of art galleries and museums in East Kent. Turner Contemporary, Stour Valley Arts and Canterbury City Council Museums and Galleries Service are hoping the resource will provide opportunities to explore maths through the rich cultural tapestry of Kent.

## SATIPS NATIONAL PREP SCHOOL ART EXHIBITION MAY 2010

A celebration of the work of pupils from the age of 3 to 13 years. Hordle Walhampton School, Hampshire is hosting this year's event, which is open to all prep school or member state schools. If you are interested in getting involved, please email [admin@satips.com](mailto:admin@satips.com) to register by January 2010. There is no charge for taking part. Satips looks forward to receiving your registrations! [www.satips.com](http://www.satips.com)



## CREATE'S EVENTS FOR DISABLED CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES

On Sunday 15 November, the dynamic creative arts charity Create is taking its acclaimed *creative:space* music events for disabled children and their families to a new venue: Henry Wood Hall in London. Designed by the charity in consultation with disability organisations and parents of disabled children, the events aim to be fun, interactive and inclusive, enabling children and parents to be themselves. Interactive activities will be led by Create's workshop leader and there will be plenty of space for children and parents to interact with the musicians, dance, play along with percussion instruments or sit back and listen in a relaxed and friendly environment. Contact Anna at Create on 020 7374 8485 or email [www.createarts.org.uk](http://www.createarts.org.uk)

## ARTES MUNDI

Artes Mundi, Wales' International Visual Arts Exhibition and Prize, has announced the launch of its free teacher training days, How to Use Contemporary Art, for the primary and secondary sectors. The one-day teacher training courses will look at ways to use contemporary art in the classroom, linking with your skills and assessment objectives, through all key stages, and supporting your continued professional development. Artes Mundi will also provide free on-line resources to help you plan your scheme of work.

For further information and bookings contact 029 2055 5300 or at [info@artesmundi.org](mailto:info@artesmundi.org).  
[www.artesmundi.org](http://www.artesmundi.org)

# From the Editor

*With the leaves changing into the most wonderful array of colours before our eyes, I hope this finds you enjoying a busy, action-packed term.*

This issue is a cross-curricular one, with inspiration drawn from many different subject areas in the primary classroom: maths, design, citizenship, history, assessment and European teaching all reveal how wonderful a subject art and design is. Teaching contemporary art from Africa is explored in both the magazine and through a striking poster. I do hope you will explore these artists with your pupils and uncover with them how diverse and exciting enriching contemporary art is today.

I am always relieved that we can squeeze art into any subject on the curriculum and I am convinced you could teach everything required through art. On that note, I was lucky enough to talk to Children's Laureate Anthony Browne and hope you will be inspired by his passion for imagery. Back in school, I remind my pupils that art must be fun; it must be about serious play. Wow, do I have the best job in the world!

It was great to meet so many of you on the NSEAD START summer school in July and I look forward to seeing you again next year, alongside some new faces. It was an action-packed weekend of costume, large tools and installations – more to come in a future issue.

Meanwhile, I hope that this issue will continue to inspire. And please do stay in touch: we love to hear about what you have tried in the classroom. We would be particularly interested in any fun and exciting printmaking projects you have undertaken, as the next issue, out in February 2010, has a printmaking theme.

Yours in art

**Michèle Claire Kitto**  
Editor  
[michelekitto@nsead.org](mailto:michelekitto@nsead.org)

## Wanted!! Teachers for the new START Readers' Panel

We are looking for art coordinators, non-specialist teachers, student teachers and NQT's to form a readers' panel in the magazine. In each edition different readers will be selected to review books and resources as well as comment on events and news. There will be lots of freebies for those who take part. Please send an email with your name, school and contact details to: [michelekitto@nsead.org](mailto:michelekitto@nsead.org)

## We want your news...

Please send news items of interest to primary and pre-school teachers of art, craft and design to: **START Magazine**, NSEAD, Corsham Court, Corsham, Wiltshire SN13 0BZ or email them to [michelekitto@nsead.org](mailto:michelekitto@nsead.org)



# Gallery round-up

## TATE BRITAIN

### Turner and the Masters

23 September 2009–31 January 2010

This unforgettable show places beautiful masterpieces by Canaletto, Rubens, Rembrandt and Titian next to some of JMW Turner's most dramatic paintings. It shines light on a lesser-known side of the British Romantic painter: his obsession to prove he was just as good, if not better, than the Old Masters whom he so admired.

This is the first exhibition ever to explore the full range of Turner's challenges to the past, and his fierce rivalry with his contemporaries. Many works are reunited here for the first time in hundreds of years and others have never before been seen together in this light. Come along and decide for yourself which battles Turner wins, and which he loses.

[www.tate.org](http://www.tate.org)



## DEAN GALLERY, SCOTTISH NATIONAL GALLERY OF MODERN ART, EDINBURGH

### A Model of Order: Concrete Poetry

3 October 2009–3 January 2010

The Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art and the Scottish Poetry Library will join forces this autumn in celebrating Concrete Poetry, an art form that crosses easily between the literary and the visual. *A Model of Order* will take in a number of exhibitions and displays, in venues across Edinburgh, as well as a programme of special events. These will explore Concrete Poetry as an international movement, together with other, related forms of literary and artistic experimentation. Highlights of the display at the Dean Gallery will include original publications containing the work of major proponents of the movement, such as the Swiss/Bolivian poet Eugen Gomringer, and printed works by Ian Hamilton Finlay, the internationally acclaimed Scottish artist, who died in 2006. This will be the first time that the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art and the Scottish Poetry Library have collaborated in this way.

[www.nationalgalleries.org](http://www.nationalgalleries.org)  
Admission free

## ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM, OXFORD

### Re-opens 7 November 2009

One of the world's leading museums, Oxford's Ashmolean will reopen on Saturday 7 November 2009 following a major £61-million redevelopment partly funded by a £15-million grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). The new



building, designed by award-winning Rick Mather Architects, will provide the Ashmolean with 100% more display space. Located to the north of Charles Cockerell's original Museum built in 1845, it comprises 39 new galleries, including four temporary exhibition galleries, a new education centre and state-of-the-art conservation studios.

An innovative approach to displaying the collections, *Crossing Cultures Crossing Time*, will transform the way visitors experience the Ashmolean's rare and beautiful artefacts. Each object's story will be traced as a journey of ideas and influences across time and continents, enabling visitors to discover how civilisations developed as part of an interrelated world culture.

Themed galleries explore the connections between objects and activities common to different cultures, such as money, reading and writing, and the representation of the human image. Entire floors of galleries will be arranged chronologically, charting the development of the ancient and modern worlds. *Crossing Cultures Crossing Time* will highlight the strengths of the Museum's collections, and create a first-class educational environment.

Founded in 1683, the Ashmolean is the most important museum of art and archaeology in the heart of Britain. The collections span the civilisations of east and west, charting the aspirations of mankind from the Neolithic era to the present day. Among its treasures are the world's largest group of Raphael drawings, the most substantial collection of pre-Dynastic Egyptian material in Europe, the only significant Minoan collection in Britain, the greatest Anglo-Saxon collections outside of the British Museum, and the foremost collection of modern Chinese art in the Western world.

[www.ashmolean.org](http://www.ashmolean.org)  
Admission free



## V&A. MUSEUM OPENS NEW CERAMICS GALLERIES

The new galleries include a major new introductory gallery, presenting a 'world history' of ceramics and highlighting connections between ceramics of different cultures and periods. Another major gallery is devoted to ceramic materials and techniques, and there are smaller rooms for temporary exhibitions, changing displays of international contemporary ceramics, and the study collections of 20th-century pottery and architectural ceramics.

[www.vam.ac.uk](http://www.vam.ac.uk)



## THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF ARTS, LONDON

### Anish Kapoor

26 September–11 December 2009

The Royal Academy of Arts hosts a major solo exhibition of the internationally acclaimed artist and 1991 Turner Prize winner Anish Kapoor, regarded as one of the most influential and pioneering sculptors of his generation. This exhibition will survey Kapoor's career to date and showcase new and previously unseen works.

Also included in the exhibition will be a group of early pigment pieces, stainless steel reflective sculptures, as well as newly created works.

[www.royalacademy.org.uk](http://www.royalacademy.org.uk)

Images clockwise from top:

Anish Kapoor, *Yellow*, 1999, Fibreglass and pigment, 600 x 600 x 300 cm, Photo: Dave Morgan, Installation: Haus der Kunst, Munich, 2007-08

Wouter Dam, *Blue Form*; 2003 © V&A Images

JMW Turner, *Snow Storm – Steam-Boat off a Harbour's Mouth*, exh. RA 1842 © Tate

Ian Hamilton Finlay, *Star / Steer*, 1966, Screenprint: 57.00 x 44.30 cm, Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, © Estate of Ian Hamilton Finlay



# mathARTmatics

START reader and teacher **John Fidler** explains how in the current climate of re-establishing the vital role of creativity in education, the more cross-curricular opportunities we can exploit, the better.

At first glance, maths and art appear to have little in common, other than the obvious – shape. But through this article I hope to highlight just a few of the many possible links, not all of them tenuous! What follows is an eclectic list of ideas and prompts for you to explore and share with colleagues, in order to see how maths could be made much more accessible, and interesting, for a large number of children. All of the artists and artworks can easily be found on the internet, but please check websites for suitability before using them in class.

## Shape

The work of **Wassily Kandinsky** is especially useful for generating discussion (link with Literacy – speaking & listening) about shape and can be used from Foundation Stage right up to Key Stage 2.

The tessellations of **MC Escher** can be used to extend work already done with more common geometric shapes such as squares, rectangles, triangles, etc.

The ‘old’ practice of using a pair of compasses to construct geometrical shapes and angles still has the capacity to ‘wow’ children as they are shown how to create the ubiquitous ‘flower’, as well as other circular designs and repeat patterns.

Patterns prevalent in Islamic art, architecture and decoration can be used as an initial springboard into discussion about the significance and symbolism of shape.

For kinaesthetic learners, origami provides a fantastic range of opportunities to fold and assemble shapes. Along with talk of ‘half’, ‘corner’, ‘reverse’ and so on, it requires the children to carefully follow instructions in order to achieve success.

Contemporary photography is awash with suitable images that utilise symmetry. A quick search of the internet should provide more than enough pictures to inspire the children and whet their appetite, including close-up images

of insects and the natural world. They could investigate the work of such artists as **Monet** and **Van Gogh** for examples of reflective symmetry. For the ‘jaded’ Year 6 mathematicians, **Damien Hirst’s** ‘cow’ piece would certainly jolt them into a lively discussion (though parental approval might be needed).

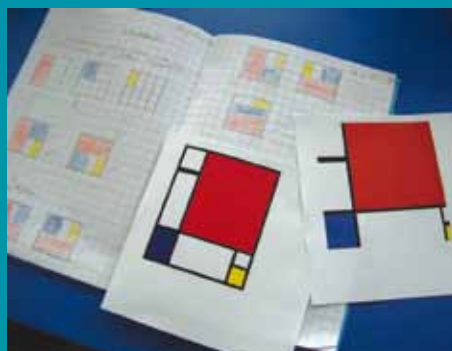
**Andy Goldsworthy** often uses shape as a dominant aspect of his work.

Architectural blueprints are excellent vehicles for showing the links between shape, symmetry and the real world. You could invite an architect or builder to school to talk about their work or arrange to visit a building site. A dozen housebricks are a great resource for creating sculptures – much better than wooden blocks.

The artwork produced by **Ed Emberley** allows for creative experimentation with circles. Technical vocabulary (diameter, radius, circumference, etc.) can easily be introduced, and the concept of ‘pieces of pie’ is extremely useful for introducing fractions (see below).

## Fractions

A circle can easily be cut into halves, quarters, and so on, and then re-assembled into various recognisable images. The picture below shows a bird, where the body is  $\frac{1}{2}$ , the wing  $\frac{1}{4}$ , and so on. I find that children will readily cut, stick and label these all day.



Rather than the old standby of shading parts of shapes to identify fractions, why not begin by showing the children a few **Mondrian** paintings. You could then show them how easy it is to produce similar imagery by using a 4 x 4 grid and colouring relevant portions in bright primary colours. From experience, they will then enthusiastically investigate the myriad possibilities of ‘colour half of the grid blue and one quarter red’, or similar. You could easily extend this into ‘real’ paintings on canvas boards for display around school. Using appropriate colour palettes you could produce a plethora of abstract images, for example ‘A Sunny Day at the Beach’ (produced in seconds using ‘Paint’ software).

## Time

Most children find time a difficult concept, both in its measure and the relationships between the units (seconds, minutes, etc.), and in the correct ‘telling’ of it. It seems to ‘click’ only when the individual child is ready – a bit like walking, talking or riding a bike.

Therefore, why not make it fun and non-threatening by keeping it in their minds through the use of surreal images – like those of Salvador Dalí (*The Persistence of Memory*, 1931) or René Magritte (*Time Transfixed*, 1938). They could then investigate clocks in other works of art. This may well in turn lead them on to trying to tell the time on each clock or,



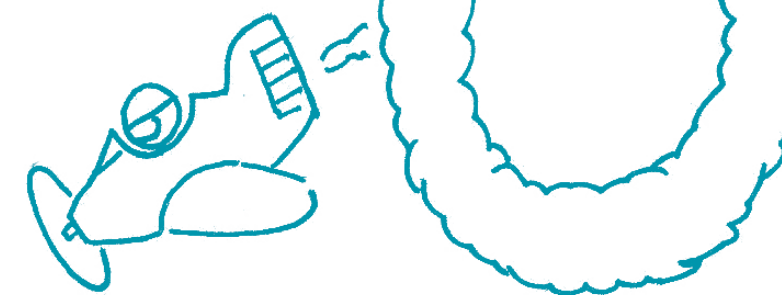
at the very least, noting that the clocks show different times.

To help with identifying times of day, you could assemble a slideshow of images that portray specific moments, for example, **Van Gogh** (*Starry Night*), **Monet** (*Impression: Sunrise*), **Seurat** (*La Grande Jatte*), and get the children to order them correctly. They could then correctly label them with relevant ‘times’. This could also be a good way of introducing the 24-hour clock. A more challenging task would be to order a series of paintings such as Monet’s Haystacks.

The human clock site (<http://www.humanclock.com/>) might also be worth a look. You could get the children to set up and photograph their own version and then use relevant software (e.g. ‘Photo Story’) to put it on your interactive whiteboard/network. The children could explore their local environment and take relevant ‘time’ photos.

## Number

To encourage children to estimate, why not use the paintings of **William Powell Frith**. *The Derby Day*, *The Railway Station* and *Poverty and Wealth* all have large numbers of people (and animals) that could be utilised: ‘How many children can you see?’, ‘Do you think there are more than 10 women in the picture?’, and so on. Let them look for a few seconds before covering the image and asking them to write down an answer. Then carefully check and count. You could also use ‘seasonal’ images, for example, if you are doing estimation around Christmas time, then why not use an ‘Adoration of the Magi’ (various artists) picture.



A significant number of children reverse numbers when writing them down. I have found that using visual imagery can help children overcome this difficulty. With a colleague, I devised and self-published an illustrated story that ‘imprinted’ a representative image in the child’s head. Examples of how ‘5’ and ‘6’ might be shown are on pages 6 and 7.

To visually represent times tables, use appropriate images. A picture of a horse to represent 1 x 4 (legs) may be more appealing than just a straight number sentence. A child could use appropriate software to compile visually interesting times table lists. You could also encourage them to visualise problems (‘Add the number of legs on 3 horses to the number of tails on 5 labradors’) as a way of using both halves of the brain in problem solving.

People with synaesthesia see numbers as colours. Does any of your children have this ability? (<http://www.uksynaesthesia.com/>). An interesting exercise might be to get the class to list the numbers 1 to 10 and label each with the colour they ‘think’ best represents it. This could easily lead into a data-handling opportunity, where any significant coincidences can be explored.

This article is by no means exhaustive and there are many more links and opportunities that could be explored. I would be very happy to hear from readers who have found useful ways of promoting art within other subject areas. You might even feel inspired to write an article – LiterARTcy anyone?



# Medusa relief sculptures

**James Sharp**, previously an AST (advanced skills teacher) in Newham, now develops cross-curricular and creative learning projects in Hackney schools with the Learning Trust. He shares his experience in and great enthusiasm for using paintings as starting points for cross-curricular projects.

One of the schools I am linked with in Hackney, Parkwood Primary School, was very keen to imbed the study of artworks within their curriculum. Along with Jim Williamson, the deputy head, I drew up a list of artworks that complemented the school's curriculum map. The school has good access to the galleries and museums of central London and Jim was keen that the National Gallery should become almost a 'second home' for the pupils. The school launched the new initiative with a week of cross-curricular work around Paolo Uccello's painting of Saint George and the Dragon. Following its success, we decided to focus on Jim's Year 4 class, who were studying the Ancient Romans.

In the first session, we used the interactive whiteboard to look at the 17th-century painting *Perseus turning Phineas and his followers to stone* by Luca Giordano. The painting illustrates the story from Ancient Greek and Roman mythology in which Perseus brandishes the head of the Medusa in order to defeat his enemy Phineas.



The class had been on a visit to the National Gallery the previous week and had looked at the work as part of their guided tour. The painting had made quite an impact on the pupils, not only because of its sheer size, but also because of the dramatic story it portrays. There was considerable discussion around what was going on in the painting and, in particular, who all the main characters were. We stuck copies of the painting in the middle of large sheets of paper, and the pupils, working in pairs, were asked to annotate the image with their observations, thoughts and questions. To round off the first session, they were asked to attach speech or thought bubbles to some of the characters in the painting, which were then shared with the rest of the class.

In the following session, we began to look at the events in the story of Perseus that had led up to the scene in Giordano's painting. The pupils were already familiar with the story of Medusa the Gorgon, and in Literacy sessions had read how Perseus had been sent on a quest to the edge of the world to find and kill her. Using a series of images as prompts, the pupils were asked to make up oral stories re-telling the myth. Time was also spent sequencing events in the life of Perseus, focussing particularly on how, having defeated the Medusa, he rescues Andromeda from the sea monster. Having shared some of their oral stories, the pupils created story maps on large sheets of sugar paper. A wide range of different drawing materials was available and the pupils were free to use any combination of words and pictures.

In the following session, we moved into the hall and the children were divided into small groups and asked to create a 'freeze-frame' of the scene in the painting. There was a lot of discussion as to who would take on which character and some creative solutions as to how to portray the head of Medusa. The pupils were then asked to imagine the scenes immediately 'before' and 'after' the painting and to freeze-frame

that action. Over the course of the next few days, Jim worked with the class on developing role play that linked the three scenes and gradually the pupils began to dramatise the story. Back in the classroom, the pupils created storyboards and wrote play scripts to accompany the drama.

The pupils' enthusiasm for Greek and Roman myths was infectious. Jim used them as key texts during Literacy lessons and many of the pupils were actively engaged in trying to figure out how the different strands and characters related to each other. The possibilities for writing were endless; as well as the play scripts, the pupils wrote very vivid and dramatic entries in Perseus' imaginary diary. Jim used ICT sessions to explore and research the topic further and introduced the pupils to a number of different websites that explore myths in an interactive and educational way. At <http://myths.e2bn.org/mythsandlegends> children can use easily accessible software to create their own short animated versions, complete with sound effects.

On my next visit to the school, our attention switched back to Medusa. The class had seen several pictures of the Medusa, including the famous painting by Caravaggio, and in the weeks between my visits, art lessons had been devoted to the study of snakes. The pupils had spent time making drawings from looking at pictures in books and downloaded from the internet. They had studied the images and mixed paint to create a range of different snake-skin tones. They had also explored the movement of snakes through drawing lengths of coiled and twisted rope.

The first stage in the construction of our sculptures was to sketch the outline of Medusa onto an A2 sheet of thick card. I demonstrated how scrunched-up newspaper and masking tape could be used to build up the base layer of the face. I also showed how sheets of newspaper could be tightly rolled and twisted together



to make interesting and dynamic snake shapes. I emphasised how the newspaper needed to be secured firmly to the board, and the importance of a good solid base onto which further detail could be added later. Working in pairs, the pupils were encouraged to make the features of their relief sculptures as clearly defined and with as much depth as possible.

## 'The pupils' enthusiasm for Greek and Roman myths was infectious'

We began the next session by reviewing the work from the previous day. We looked at examples of work in which the pupils had been particularly successful in creating well-defined features. For the pupils, this was by far the most challenging aspect of the task. The rest of the session was spent using smaller coils of tightly rolled-up newspaper to emphasise features such as the eyes and mouth. Gradually, the faces took shape and the final stage was to cover them with a layer of parcel tape. This method of 3D construction is very versatile; once scrunched-up newspaper has been covered with parcel tape it becomes quite malleable and can be squeezed and moulded into almost any shape desirable. Parcel tape can be a bit fiddly as it has a habit of sticking to itself, but our Year 4 pupils managed comfortably.

The next stage in the process was to add a layer of papier mâché. Trays of cellulose paste and strips of newspaper were prepared before the start of the session and again I began by modelling the technique to the class. The strips of paper were dipped into the paste and the excess paste removed before the strips were layered onto the sculpture base. I encouraged them to use their fingertips to ensure everything was covered with two or three good layers. I also demonstrated how the papier-mâché strips could be used to add further definition to the features of Medusa's head.

This technique was popular with the class and most of them enjoyed the tactile qualities of the paste. It took two or three days for the sculptures to dry, but once they had done so they provided a nice firm base on which to paint. The pupils had already practised mixing different snake-skin tones, so it didn't take long to add the first layer of paint. Once this had dried, they began to add details. They were encouraged to think about using darker tones to create depth and shown how highlights could emphasise the 3D nature of the sculptures. Throughout the painting process, it was important to keep reflecting on how the work was progressing. Jim encouraged the pupils to step back from their sculptures and view them from a distance. They were also encouraged to look at each other's work and to learn from what others were doing. Other colours such as red and yellow were gradually introduced and the pupils worked carefully to pick out details on the face and patterns on the snakes. Once they had finished painting, the sculptures were given a coat of varnish to create a shiny finish.

The sculptures are a wonderful end product to a truly fascinating and cross-curricular project. The painting by Giordano has stimulated the pupils' imaginations and resulted in a whole term's worth of Literacy learning, as well as being the creative starting point for an art project that has challenged and developed the pupils' drawing, painting and 3D construction skills. It has also enriched the pupils' historical enquiry into the lives of the Ancient Romans.



## Resources

Copies of *Perseus turning Phineas and his followers to stone* by Luca Giordano, large sheets of thick cardboard, newspaper, papier-mâché paste, masking tape, parcel tape, pencils, ready-mixed paints, varnish (teacher use)

## Websites

[www.nationalgallery.org.uk](http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk)  
National Gallery's website, where a zoomable version of the painting can be found.

<http://myths.e2bn.org/mythsandlegends>

[www.museumnetworkuk.org/myths/](http://www.museumnetworkuk.org/myths/)  
Websites where pupils can explore Greek and Roman myths and legends further.



# Illustration: more than just a complement to text

Illustrator **Gwen Lee** describes how illustration affects her everyday life and is an important way of communicating ideas and messages.

When I went to the supermarket yesterday, I bought a new brand of tea bags that I had not planned to buy. After I got home, I realised why I had bought them: I fancied the beautiful illustration on the package. Illustrations are all around us in our everyday life.

Can you imagine books, magazines and newspapers without any illustrations? Illustration has also become a new and significant element in various industries, such as games, movies, animations and advertising. Most illustrations are not produced in limited editions but are printed in large quantities for these commercial purposes; this mass production makes illustrations far more accessible to people than fine art.

Most children in the developed world can also easily access illustrations through the abundant picture books available today, and

educators consider it important to expose children to high-quality picture book illustration. And in primary schools around the globe, children are encouraged to express and explain themselves, their stories and their interests, by creating their own images. However, illustration itself – its definition, its history and how it works – is seldom discussed, and is worthy of closer consideration.

## What is illustration?

'An illustration is a pictorial representation that accompanies, explains and illuminates a text. In the metaphorical sense, illustration also means the process of explaining and clarifying a state of affairs linguistically.'<sup>1</sup>

This definition describes illustration as visualisation that makes a text more effective and easier to understand. The aim of illustration is to convey ideas and information in visual form. Therefore, illustration is a method of communication. Illustrators produce images for books, both fiction and non-fiction, editorials (newspapers, magazines), advertising

(animated campaigns, package design and websites) and many other media, with the purpose of visual communication. Mostly, they are commissioned by clients to create these images for commercial purposes, which they do using a wide range of media, including drawing, painting, silkscreen printing, etching, woodcut, engraving, photograph, collage, computer arts, 3D artefacts or animation.

As a communication tool, illustration has integral functions and is more than just a complement to a text. It conveys information that cannot be described by other means such as written or spoken language. For example, an illustration can convey emotional qualities by creating imaginary and fantastic things. When children read picture books, the illustrations convey complex visual information such as the size, shape, colour and position of characters, objects or backgrounds; this allows them to imagine moving scenes and the next scene, and to understand implied meaning. In this way, illustrations enable children to enjoy visual exploration through their imagination.

Another example of the power of illustration to communicate is caricature. It communicates funny and ridiculous feelings to readers through exaggerated visualisation of particular features of people and the world. Scientific, medical and botanical illustrations have certain communication advantages as well: they allow quick, intuitive and effective understanding of structure, anatomy and species through detailed, accurate, refined and idealised representation not permitted by the written word.

## An illustrator's life

As an illustrator, I try to live a creative life. I am easily attracted to the visual elements around me and always find something to draw. I visit galleries, read books and try to experience unfamiliar things to get visual and conceptual inspiration.

Most importantly, when I sit down and draw about a subject, I experiment with images to create an illustration with my own distinctive style that communicates successfully.

An illustrator's career is not only a creative job, but also a business, so I need to contact clients to get commissions. This is still quite difficult for me. Once commissioned, I deal with budgets, ideas, the process and the result. I also promote my illustration business through my website, business card, postcards and stickers.

As an illustrator, I am happiest when my illustrations are published in media like books and magazines and on packaging, and they please the client and the readers. Being an illustrator is great if you want to communicate with many people through your visual expression.

## The history of illustration

The earliest forms of illustration were prehistoric cave paintings, which depicted early man's view of the world. Later, most of the art of the Renaissance, which now fills the world's great museums, were illustrations of the Bible. Between 1508 and 1512, Michelangelo was commissioned by Pope Julius II to paint the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, illustrating stories from the Book of Genesis.

Before the invention of the printing press, books were hand-illustrated with elaborate paintings or wood engravings. These were very time-consuming processes and each book was therefore extremely valuable. Consequently, the common people couldn't experience book illustrations easily. Gutenberg's invention of printing with movable type in the 15th century was to have a profound effect on the process of printing. This was the beginning of mass-produced printing, which would make books widely available.

The main processes by which illustrations were produced during the 16th and 17th centuries were engraving and etching. At the end of the 18th century, lithography allowed even better illustrations to be reproduced. In the 19th century, the spread of books and magazines brought a boom in popular illustration. In *Punch*, a popular British magazine, cartoonists illustrated caricatures of social types and classes with humour and satire. In the early 20th century, the Arts and Crafts Movement influenced some illustrators to explore colours and personal styles as craftsmen. During the 20th century, newspapers, magazines and

books became important media for public consumption and the need for illustration increased more than ever before. Improvements in printing technology and the development of computer software allowed illustrators greater freedom of expression.

## Illustration – between graphic design and art

'Graphic design is the activity of combining typography, illustration, photography and printing for the purpose of persuasion, information or instruction.'<sup>2</sup>

Illustration is one of the graphic design elements that help the realisation of visual communication. However, today illustration is also considered to be art. There is a growing interest in collecting and admiring original artwork originally used as illustrations in books, magazines, posters, and so on. Various museums and art galleries have also devoted space to illustrators. When I went to the Dulwich Picture Gallery in February, it was full of people visiting the special exhibition of Saul Steinburg (1914–1999), an illustrator who created over 1200 covers and editorial illustrations for publications including *The New Yorker*.

Historically, the border between illustration, design and art has often been blurred. The ongoing specialisation of art and design practices in art, illustration and graphic design began during the course of the 20th century as a result of increasing professionalisation.<sup>3</sup> For example, poster-design became an art form in its own right. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, French artists like Henri Toulouse-Lautrec and Pierre Bonnard combined their painted compositions with text on posters. During the 20th century, some illustrations even began to flow back into the mainstream of fine art, in the work of Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein, both of whom had worked as commercial illustrators.<sup>4</sup> Today, distinctions between high culture and popular culture have also become blurred, reflected by the contemporary trend in illustration, which refuses to draw a line between artistic and commercial illustration. People are stimulated to rethink the position of illustration in relation to art and design.

## Children's illustration activity

When babies and young children are shown a picture book, they look at the images and



may not pay any attention to the text. They react to pictures instinctively and emotionally, which allow them to escape to a fantastic world of unlimited possibilities. It is hard to deny that an illustration is one of the most accessible and creative tools for communicating with children.

In addition, I believe that illustration is an expressive and creative practice for children themselves.

The following are my suggestions for teachers who wish to teach illustration in the classroom. Children can use any medium, such as drawing, painting, collage and 3D objects to make their images. They should be encouraged to choose their own medium, as this allows them to develop a personal touch and distinctive style.

### 1. For older children

Design a page for a newspaper or a magazine, or make an illustration about a memory that they want to share with friends, such as the happiest day, the worst day, exciting trips, a fun party or any events or feelings they have experienced. They can also complement the images with related texts. Teachers could show an example of a newspaper layout to children.

### 2. For younger children

Make an illustration about a dream scene or nightmare that you've had or want to dream about. It can be a monster dream, a flying dream, or a dream about visiting a wonderland. Children can add some text about it and present the dream scene with verbal explanation to friends later.

### References

1. Claudia Mareis (2005): *Illusive: contemporary illustration and its context*, DGV, Berlin.
2. Alan and Isabella Livingston (ed.) (2003): *Graphic Design and Designers*, Thames and Hudson, London.
3. Claudia Mareis (2007): *Illusive 2: contemporary illustration and its context*, Gestalten, Berlin.
4. Steven Heller and Seymour Chwast (2008): *Illustration: a visual history*, Abrams, New York.

Illustrations © Gwen Lee





# Beyond masks and drums: Teaching Contemporary Art from Africa

**Barbara Lowe**, Schools Co-ordinator at Reading International Solidarity Centre, asks us as teachers, 'How many of us have taught children about art from Africa?' 'How many of us can name even one African artist?'

A partnership between Reading International Solidarity Centre (RISC) and the Department of Art & Design at the University of Reading Institute of Education is enabling pupils in Berkshire primary schools (Years 1–6) to learn about contemporary African artists and to use those artists' work to inspire their own art. It is also successfully delivering key elements of global citizenship by challenging stereotypes, broadening understanding and developing creative and critical thinking.

The starting point for the project was research that showed that many children hold stereotyped images of the continent of Africa. When we asked children what they would expect to see if they visited a country in Africa, the usual responses describe a 'primitive' lifestyle, barren landscapes populated by wild animals and hunter-gatherers living in mud huts, victims of poverty, conflict and disease. We were concerned that Art projects based on Africa, which seek to celebrate diversity, may inadvertently reinforce those stereotypes.

Teachers who focus on masks and drums, with the aim of celebrating African culture,

may unintentionally convey the idea that these traditional art forms are the only art forms to be found, and reinforce the 'primitive' stereotype. Should they search for teaching resources or for examples of contemporary art online, they are likely to be disappointed.

This project, funded by the Department for International Development, was designed to enable student teachers to deliver stimulating and creative art activities alongside a more balanced image of people and places around the world. We hoped it would also contribute towards more experienced teachers equipping the next generation of global citizens with:

- an understanding of diversity: race and ethnicity, gender, disability and sexuality within Britain and globally;
- an awareness of the wider world: a balanced view of people and places around the world, and an understanding of our interdependence;
- an understanding of how they can make a difference: their rights and responsibilities as citizens and as consumers; the causes of poverty, conflict and injustice and a commitment to take action;
- the skills to think about futures: the impact of poverty and discrimination on aspirations and outcomes, and about sustainability locally and globally.

The start of this project in 2005 coincided with the *Africa Remix* exhibition at the Hayward Gallery in London, which provided an ideal selection of contemporary African artists of international renown. From the wealth of artists exhibiting, we initially chose those who work mainly with reclaimed materials, though in later years we were careful to challenge an emerging idea that artists from Africa have to use reclaimed materials because new materials are not available to them. We hoped to include as many women artists as men, but have not yet achieved this: it seems that the obstacles faced by African women artists are as great as those affecting women artists in the rest of the world. We chose artists from countries across Africa to help children understand more about the diversity between countries within this great continent, and artists whose work addressed an aspect of the global citizenship key concepts. (Fig. 1&2)

Children worked in groups with the student teachers, learning to say the artist's name, finding their country of origin on a map of Africa, looking at pictures of the country that balanced the narrow stereotypes, studying examples of the artist's work, discussing the issues raised, exchanging ideas, working collaboratively, negotiating outcomes and creating installations. (Fig. 3&4)

El Anatsui is a sculptor from Ghana and is Professor of Sculpture at the University of



Fig. 5

Nigeria in Nsukka. In one of his series of works, he reclaims metal bottle tops and foil seals and transforms them into shimmering cloths of gold. The children were impressed by the scale and beauty of the cloths and thought about materials that we discard that have similar properties. They amalgamated cellophane and foil from wrappers with translucent carrier bags to create their installation. (Fig. 5, 6 )

Sabah Naim is a visual artist from Egypt who works with a variety of media –

photography, collage, paint and pencil drawings. The children looked closely at her work *Cairo Noises*, in which photographs of daily life in Cairo are combined with pages from newspapers. They discussed how different groups of people are represented in the media, whether the representations are accurate and how they like to be pictured. They used crumpled pages from magazines to decorate the walls and integrated photos of themselves – the artists – within the piece. (Fig. 7 & 8)



Fig. 6



Fig. 7

Dilomprizulike is a sculptor from Nigeria, known as the Junkman. The children studied his installation *Waiting for the Bus*, in which life-size figures wait to be transported to a better future. They were inspired to create a teacher and a pupil from similarly reclaimed materials. (Fig. 9)

Moshekwa Langa is an artist, photographer and film-maker from South Africa. The children examined *Collapsing Guides*, a series of maps and plans made of bin liners and adhesive tape, which he created after finding a map of South Africa and noticing how much had changed.

Fig. 9

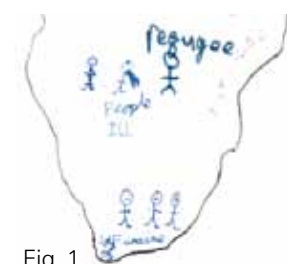


Fig. 1



Fig. 2



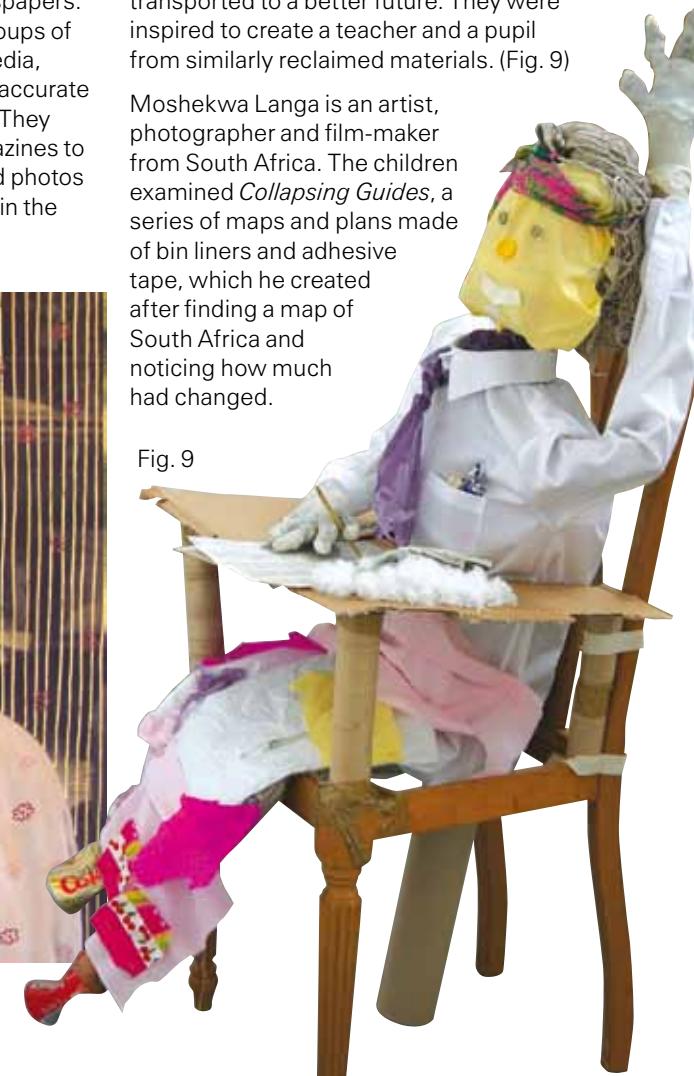
Fig. 3



Fig. 4



Fig. 8





These children are creating their own map of an imagined place. (Fig 10)

Antonio Ole is an artist from Angola. His work, *Townshipwall*, was created from materials found in the streets of Düsseldorf, and belongs to a series of installations made from fragments of abandoned buildings. Here the children are creating an urban environment that has been designed to maximise opportunities for communication. (Fig 11)

All of the schools participating in this project displayed the work created, most repeated it with other classes in the school and some have gone on to find new artists to study. Teachers in neighbouring schools have been inspired to broaden the scope of their own African art weeks. In the following years, the area of study has moved beyond the 55 countries of Africa and now includes artists from South Asia, the Middle East and beyond. Our hope is to include artists from across the Majority World (Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean).

## What has been learnt from the project?

Pupils have gained a great deal from their participation in the project. Student teachers in particular discovered through the project that art can be fun, unplanned, experimental and unrestrained and that children's previous assumptions can be challenged and changed. They felt that pupils had learned about the influence of different places on an artist's work and that art and culture from Africa is equally important as British art and culture. The particular value of the project was that they felt that it allowed them to explore it further in a more interactive way.

Teachers who have used these artists as a focus have commented on the impact on their colleagues:



Fig. 10

I really enjoyed making our sculptures, and chucking the powder on it. Also I liked learning about the artist and where he came from. And I also liked meeting you and every one else. Because I like learning about artists.

I learnt that art isn't just drawing and painting. I also learnt that his art isn't actual things like: e.g houses, animals, they are just made up things And I thought it was abstract.

'They are really enthusiastic and interested – they liked the idea of having a whole day dedicated to one artist and children gaining a good sound knowledge of that artist.'

'They enjoyed the week of things that I had set up for them. It was a very successful week where the whole community participated. My head (who was an art specialist) thought that a high level of work was produced by all the children, and they grasped a solid understanding of the issues raised by the artists.'

'I feel that as the teachers at the school showed interest in more contemporary art, it gives me a little more freedom to introduce this type of art and not always be confined to teaching about the "stereotyped artists". Also, it gave me the opportunity to see how the children enjoyed learning and experimenting with ideas and resources that they would not have previously worked with.'



Fig. 11

## How to get started

Two books that provide a great starting point for this work are *Angaza Afrika: African Art Now* by Chris Spring (Laurence King 2008) and *Africa Remix: contemporary art of a continent* (Jacana Media 2007). Both books contain profiles of dozens of contemporary artists from countries around the continent – sculptors, painters and photographers – most of whom have their own websites where more images of works and biographical information can be found.

An ongoing programme of training events for teachers is being organised by RISC in Reading and by the October Gallery in London.

### 10 Nov 09

Iraqi artist Hassan Massoudy: exploring issues on peace and conflict using calligraphy and proverbs from around the world. Benin artist Julien Sinzogan: exploring themes of memory, identity and activism using textiles and drawing.

### 19 Jan 10

Nigerian artist Nnenna Okore: exploring materials and social action. Benin artist Romuald Hazoume: materials and transformation.

### 17 March 2010

Chinese artist Huang Xu: exploring waste and consumption with a focus on plastic bags.

For more information on these events, please contact [education@risc.org.uk](mailto:education@risc.org.uk)

An online archive showcasing continuing work by students, teachers and pupils will be available at [www.risc.org.uk](http://www.risc.org.uk) next year.

# Literacy

## Anthony Browne



© Lawrence Cendrowicz 2009

We hear much about the problems of verbal illiteracy among our children, but when did you last hear anyone worrying about visual illiteracy. **Michele Kitto** interviews the new Children's Laureate **Anthony Browne**, her favourite children's author/illustrator, about art, reading and picture books.

I have always enjoyed introducing children (and teachers!) of all ages to the work of Anthony Browne. He is a storyteller who loves to use image to leave clues, hide plot and also to amuse. He is also a huge advocate of art. Although he is not a teacher himself, he is highly influential in his new role as Children's Laureate and one area he wants to address is picture books; I hope that he will succeed in giving them the important status that they deserve. After all, when we look at paintings in a gallery – they are like pages of picture books – they tell stories without text. Decoding images is a key skill in art education.

### What do you hope to achieve as Children's Laureate?

As the Children's Laureate I hope to encourage children to read more, especially picture books. I'd also like to persuade adults that it's not a good idea to drag children away from picture books and push them into what some people think of as 'proper' books before they are ready.

### What is your favourite book?

*Where the Wild Things Are* by Maurice Sendak. I think it's probably the best picture book for children ever – the perfect combination of words, pictures and the gap between the two.

### And your own books?

Of my own books, my favourite is *Gorilla*, the seventh picture book I made and possibly the first one where I began to understand how picture books work.

**What is your favourite artist or influence?**  
The painter who has influenced me most

is Magritte, even though I was sued by the Magritte estate's lawyers for infringement of copyright. They said I'd copied him in *Willy's Pictures*, and I suppose I had, but for a good reason, I think. I also love the work of Goya, Edward Hopper, Munch, Rembrandt, Hogarth, Lucien Freud and Paula Rego.

### What medium do you work in?

I work in watercolour and cover up mistakes (there are many) with gouache.

### Why are picture books important for children?

The illustrations in children's books are the first paintings most children see and because of that they are incredibly important. What we see and share at that age stays with us for life. In the best picture books the illustrations tell as much of the story as the words. These illustrations don't just happen by chance – the placing of figures in space and in relation to others, the use of colour and

light all help to express emotion and tell the story. It's this aspect of picture books that fascinates me; the gap between the image and the words, the gap which has to be filled by the reader's imagination.

It was Alice in Wonderland who asked, 'What is the use of a book without pictures or conversation?' and as an author and illustrator of children's books, I'm inclined to agree with her. There is a terrible pressure on children to leave pictures behind and grow into words, as though this is an essential part of education and maturity. But I strongly believe that the ability to read images is as important as the ability to read words.

### Where do you get inspiration from?

I always tell children that I get my inspiration from the same place that they get theirs – from things that happened to me when I was a child, or things that happened to my children, other people's stories, films, paintings and dreams.



Gorilla



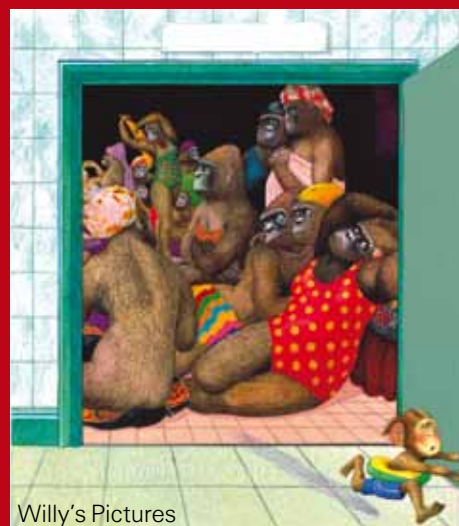
Mini-poster  
Antony Browne







Willy's Pictures



Willy's Pictures

Learning how to look is a skill we don't value highly enough. Watch people in an art museum and see how quickly they walk past each painting on their way to buy reproductions in the gift shop. To see and understand a work of art takes time and patience. It's often said that we live in a visual age, and indeed children are bombarded with visual imagery through television, video, cinema and computers, but these are all fast moving images that allow no time for reflection. Looking takes time.

#### Why are images important?

Children generally have a much more highly developed visual awareness than adults. Many of my illustrations have hidden details, images which tell parts of the story that the words don't tell us, and kids are far quicker to spot these details

than adults, who often take pictures for granted. What happens to this visual awareness? Where do we lose it between childhood and adulthood? All children can draw, but how many adults can? I believe that much is lost when we encourage children to leave pictures and illustrated books behind. I feel it is no coincidence that this happens at about the same time that children stop drawing with the natural creativity that all of them possess. Illustrations in books enhance the enjoyment of reading, and it's only through the enjoyment of reading that we will create true readers – readers who love books.

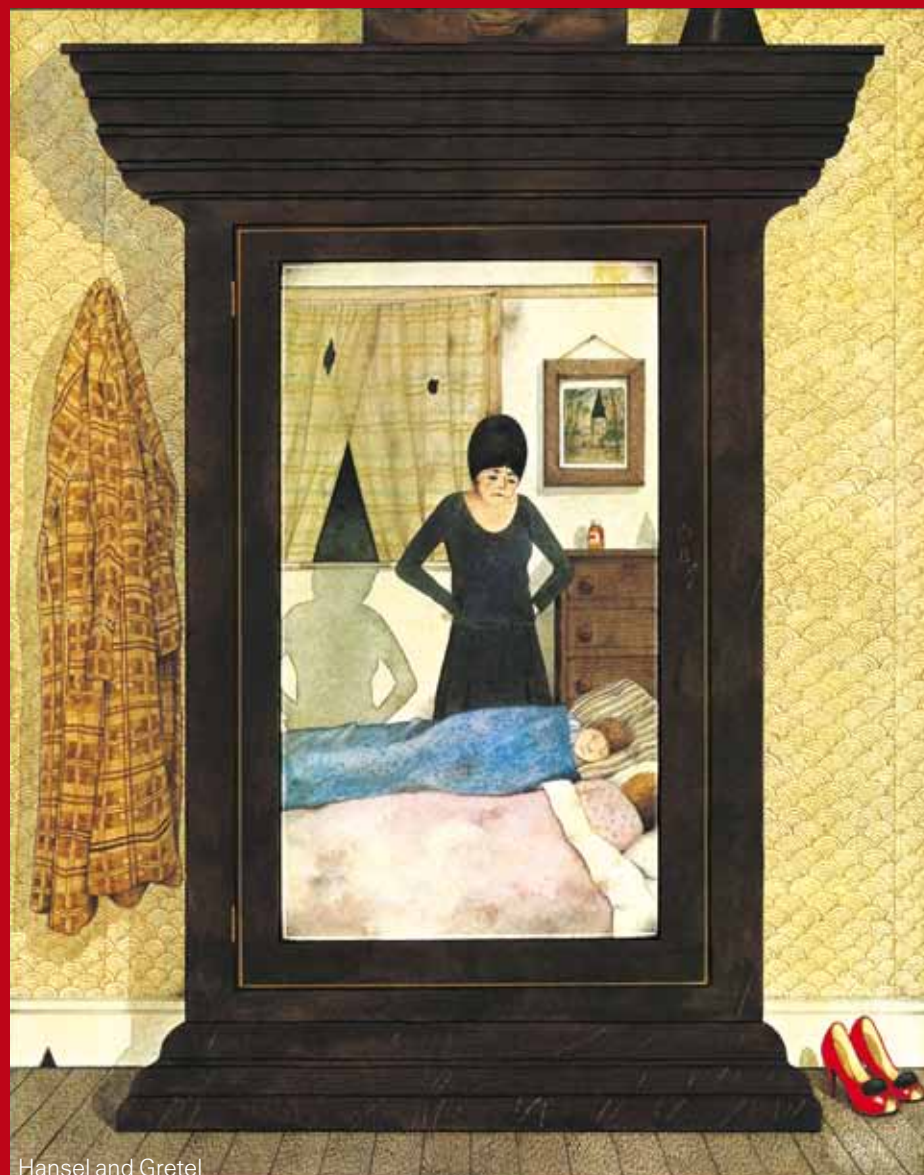
It is perhaps a fairly obvious thing to repeat but a picture can paint a thousand words, and the neglect of them will lead us to become an even more visually illiterate

nation than we already are. We hear much about the problems of verbal illiteracy among our children, but when did you last hear anyone worrying about visual illiteracy?



www.childrenslaureate.org.uk

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Hansel and Gretel

# Knitting together

## A Shetland school's fabric craft tuition and charity hat project

**Kate Allan**, NSEAD Teacher Education Board member, writes about Sound Primary School's hand-knitting and crafts tuition. This curriculum-enriching tutoring links to the islands' textile heritage and connects centuries of knitters and weavers with their present-day descendants.

The Shetland Islands are the most northerly of the British Isles, and textiles have long played a significant part in their economy. Since the introduction of sheep by Norse settlers in the 9th century, which provided an early raw material, to the 19th-century development of traditional knitting – then the occupation of women – Shetland, and particularly Fair Isle, has been renowned for its knitting. Today it is young Shetlanders who are being taught fabric skills, lending them an understanding of their unique heritage and ensuring that the islands remain a textile hotspot.

Sound Primary School in Lerwick, Shetland's capital, is a large school of 344 pupils. As part of the curriculum, pupils receive fabric crafts tuition once a fortnight, which includes knitting, spinning and weaving, as well as other craft projects, such as making clothes-peg Vikings and Viking galleys. These traditional crafts are taught in the hope that they will remain part of Shetland's tripartite traditional economy (textiles, crafting and fishing).

Children begin learning the skills, taught by fabric crafts Instructor Nan Smith, on entering the school. At the age of five, pupils are making woollen pom-poms and learning simple weaving. As they progress through

the school, more advanced techniques are introduced and consolidated: speed-weaving on sticks; plaiting; knitting stitches (knit, purl); casting off and on. By Primary 6 (equivalent to Year 5 in England), pupils have moved on to Fair Isle knitting, using three needles and two colours of their own choice, and working from a graph-paper pattern. In their final year of primary school, pupils have advanced to lace knitting – another type of knitting synonymous with Shetland – and are working from commercial patterns.

Previous fabric crafts projects at Sound School are quite eclectic: a composite knitted blanket for Shetland old folk; a huge fish made from knitted scales; model 'trows' (elves in Shetland folklore), and Fair Isle houses, constructed from knitted parts and local heather, and recently on display in the window of a Lerwick wool brokers. The emphasis is on the acquisition of skills, links to the islands' heritage – several projects are based around 'Up Helly Aa' (Shetland's celebration of its history and Europe's largest fire festival) – and on the social aspect of knitting, spinning and weaving. Many projects are group ventures incorporating contributions from all pupils, for example the aforementioned houses, where some children knitted doors, others made the curtains, and so on.

There are other benefits of the knitting tuition, too. It provides a relaxing antidote to today's stress-filled lifestyle, gives non-academic pupils the chance to shine, teaches children that a project is composed of three parts (preparation, execution, completion) and, being a repetitive action, helps pupils with motor difficulties. The tuition also fills a skills void. Nan says: 'Children are not seeing their mums knit anymore. They are seeing their grannies knit, but not their mums.' Nan, on the other hand, learned her skills largely from her mother, and from growing up in a community of textile producers – many women knitted from dawn until dusk by way of making a living.

A very worthy knitting project was recently undertaken at the school, linking to enterprise and global citizenship. Nine- and 10-year-old pupils put their textile skills to good use by knitting woollen hats for premature babies for the 'Knit One, Save One' campaign run by Save the Children. The pupils were able to make these life-saving garments because by Primary 6, thanks to the fabric crafts tuition, they are all competent knitters. Orkney and Shetland MP Alistair Carmichael was involved from the start, sending pupils the knitting pattern and helping to publicise the campaign.

Before the knitting began, Elizabeth Telford, a Primary 6 teacher, introduced pupils to the work of Save the Children, explained the pattern and showed them a completed hat. Following this preface, the school's 'enterprise fund' was used to purchase different-coloured wools. Pupils then set to work. In so doing, Sound School children, along with other islanders, helped Save the Children reach a grand total of 650,000 baby hats. Alistair Carmichael returned for a photographed hand-over, receiving hats that have gone on to save tiny lives in Tibet, South Africa, Kenya, Myanmar, Zimbabwe and Afghanistan.

Kate Allan is a graduate of Glasgow School of Art and the Universities of Stirling and Hull. Kate is also Trainee Teacher representative on the Teacher Education Board of the NSEAD. Email: e\_kateallan@fsmail.net

### Useful links:

[www.savethechildren.org.uk/en/39\\_7039.htm](http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/en/39_7039.htm)

[www.shetland-museum.org.uk/textiles.htm](http://www.shetland-museum.org.uk/textiles.htm)

<http://www.shetlandtimes.co.uk/2008/11/21/knitters-contribute-%e2%80%9998life-saving%e2%80%9999-hats/>

[www.shetlandwool.org](http://www.shetlandwool.org)





# Creative evaluation: 'enquire Phase 3'

## How can we evaluate creative experiences in a creative way?

As everyone knows, teachers are under constant pressure to evaluate. Gallery education can stimulate and evaluate all sorts of learning, but of course some outcomes are easier to capture than others. Teachers frequently note the impact and value of gallery and artist-led experiences on the personal development of their pupils. Increasingly, they have asked gallery educators at the BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, 'How can we prove it?' During a recent enquire (1) Phase 3 project with ENGAGE (the national programme encouraging children, families and teachers to engage with visual art), they had an opportunity to focus on developing creative methods for evaluating the outcomes of creative learning, creatively. **Helen Burns** from BALTIC reflects on creative evaluation.

BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art supports creative learning across the curriculum. Through day-to-day experience of how children and young people benefit from gallery education, we have a tacit understanding of its potential to deliver all kinds of positive learning outcomes.

This understanding is shared by many teachers who have seen the outcomes of working with a creative curriculum, which includes 'outside of the classroom' experiences in galleries. But can these outcomes be charted and the benefits demonstrated to senior management?

In particular, we looked at ways to evidence 'soft' skills: confidence, independence, collaboration, communication, reflection and evaluation. By finding ways to evidence the outcomes of creative learning experiences, it is possible to provide the means to argue the value of working outside of school, learning in galleries, and of creative approaches to learning in general. This is why it is so important to share the good practice generated through enquire.

We described the methods we used as 'creative evaluation methods' and defined the project as 'evaluating the outcomes of the creative process by embedding evaluation within it, in such a way that the method itself becomes creative'. We embedded methods such as drawing, movement, photography and video into artist-led gallery sessions in order to capture evidence of the development of 'soft' skills. Afterwards, in a reflective session with teachers, we evaluated the effectiveness and further potential of these methods.

What follows is a brief summary of some of our findings, set out as suggestions for capturing evidence creatively. The suggested methods might be used on a trip to a gallery or adapted and incorporated into creative work in the classroom.

### Drawing

Ask pupils to observe and draw part of an artwork (or other stimulus) in response to a question or task. For example: 'Which part of the work is the most interesting to you?' Ask the pupils to contribute their drawings to a 'collective brain' drawn on a wall or on paper, and use this as a starting point for discussion, relating the drawings to each other. The drawings enable the children to visualise and then to verbalise their thoughts, scaffolding the gap between experience and expression. The drawings and 'collective brain' image become the evidence, alongside related notes and photographs of the discussion and 'key words' collected by the teacher or artist.

This method captured evidence of enjoyment, engagement, emotional involvement, teamwork, discussion, listening, presentation of ideas, reflection and evaluation. It could be integrated into literacy so that work begins with an inspirational stimulus and drawing is used to build the confidence to speak and write.

### Movement

Ask pupils to 'show with your body' how they feel at the start and at the end of an experience. Use movement-based games to encourage learners to express their opinions: for example, place coloured shapes on the floor of the space you are working in and ask them to 'move to a blue shape if you like this or to a red shape if you don't'. Give pupils some thinking time before they are allowed to move to the appropriate shape and then ask them why they made that decision.

This method worked well with Reception children. It would be useful in familiarising children with any new learning environment and is clearly appropriate for kinaesthetic learners. The children can be photographed as they move. The resulting photographs show evidence of enjoyment, engagement,

responding to creative experiences, and the communication and presentation of ideas.

### Photography

We used photographs in several different ways: children took photos in response to questions or to ask a question, photos were taken throughout the day and used in reflection and were also used to make timelines. When children are taking photographs, it helps to get them used to using the cameras first, so that the novelty is overcome by focussed application. Children can give personal responses to a clearly delivered question through taking a single photograph, which is their 'answer'. The single photograph can be used as a starting point for further enquiry, which can be mapped and documented. The photo and following enquiry are evidence of engagement and focus, and the ability to communicate and present ideas.

### Video

Video can be used in reflection, in much the same way as photographs. Using 'live feed' is an even more exciting method for creative evaluation: the teacher, artist or pupils film the rest of the group working and this 'feed' is played directly on a screen, which the class can see. A kind of 'super-consciousness' is generated and the group is given an overview of how they are working as a team. The method can be used with instructions to film specific aspects of what is happening in order to capture particular aspects of learning and help to make children aware of their own learning, and supports the development of metacognition.

### Impact of the project

None of the teachers had previously used the gallery and all realised how a contemporary art gallery can support cross-curricular working. One teacher said that her class had covered more skills

through a one-day gallery visit than they would have in a fortnight in school, and all of the children involved certainly had a great experience that they would not ordinarily have had.

The project also gave a group of teachers an opportunity to compare approaches from their different schools and to discuss creative learning, which was found to be an empowering experience. Tina Bell, Reception teacher at West End First School in Northumberland, described it as an experience that was valuable to her personal development, which she has used to argue for a pay rise back in school! She says she has been 'converted' to using contemporary art to inspire and support cross-curricular learning, explaining that the project 'has really opened my eyes to exactly how much the children can get from a gallery visit in terms of the extent of skills which can be developed ... and of course the children enjoy the visits enormously.' All of the teachers involved in the project have agreed to act as ambassadors for it and will be given opportunities for further involvement in future.

Clearly, enquire provided a special experience for the schools involved; however, it is worth remembering that

many galleries are involved in extensive education work and have a significant role to play in supporting creative, cross-curricular learning. Galleries may also offer learning resources that can support teachers who are using creative approaches; do look out for those on BALTIC's website, soon to be joined by our resource on creative evaluation.

(1) Since 2004, enquire has been supporting gallery projects with children and young people and researching the associated learning benefits. For more information, see START issue no. 32, 2009; details about the projects and research findings can be found at [www.en-quire.org](http://www.en-quire.org).





# Resist, scrape & carbon!

**Steve Pratchett**, senior lecturer in art and design at Marjon, shares a range of exciting wax techniques undertaken with children aged 7–10 years, scratching the surface of the endless possibilities that they offer for making images in the primary classroom.

## Wax resist

Wax resist is a technique where children can use a combination of wax crayons and paint in their image-making. When wax crayons are applied to paper and then washed over with paint, the greasiness of the wax 'throws off' the water-based paints, which only adhere to the paper where there is no wax. Opaque water-based paints such as ready-mix or powder paint, or transparent watercolours can be used. Children can also draw with candles. In this instance, the wax applied is not coloured, as it is with wax crayons, but is invisible. When washed over with paint, the images will appear as if by magic.

When washing over the wax mark-making and images, it is important not to overwork the paint. The most effective technique is to use wide decorators' brushes and to apply the watered-down paint across the page in one smooth stroke. Avoid going back over the work, as repeated brushing can reduce the greasiness of the wax and its power to repel the paint.



Wax resist



Wax scraperboard

As my pupils became accustomed to the technique, they began to use the wax crayons more discriminately by leaving gaps between marks for the paint to register. They were beginning to anticipate the patterning and visual texture effects that would result.

## Wax scraperboard

The following pictures were created by primary children using scraperboards, which they prepared themselves with the support and guidance of the teacher. Coloured wax crayons were melted in wax bubble pots and the melted coloured wax applied by the children, under supervision, to sheets of Manila cardboard using decorators' brushes (one brush to each bubble pot). Several layers of coloured wax were randomly built up, or sometimes children would delight in applying the wax in patterns on the card. When the wax had cooled, black paint with some washing-up liquid added was coated over the top of the wax. The washing-up liquid prevents the wax from rejecting the paint. When the paint was dry, the children used scraperboard tools to scratch away the paint. However, they realised that by further scratching away at the wax that was revealed, they could also uncover the different layers of coloured wax

underneath, as little or as much as they wished. This 'scratching away' at layers of pigment is also sometimes used by painters, who may apply paint and then remove layers with a palette knife in a process called 'scraffito'.

Once coated with paint, the coloured wax layers beneath are hidden. Children delight in the unpredictability of what will be revealed. The following pieces of work by 10-year-old children illustrate the element of discovery as patterns develop and lines go on their travels, changing colour 'en route'.

Apart from the learning that occurs when children make their own scraperboards, there is the added advantage that the prohibitive cost of providing commercially manufactured scraperboard can be avoided. Teachers and/or classroom assistants can also easily mass-produce sheets of cardboard coated with clear or coloured wax for younger children, and avoid any health and safety issues around using hot wax. In addition, these homemade scraperboards have qualities that the commercial boards do not: the latter tend to have a hard black coating and a chalky white under-layer, while the wax scraperboards are softer. Scrapping into this medium is less of a 'scratchy' experience and more one of etching/carving into a softer, cheese-like medium. The build-up of coloured wax layers also allows children to create a textural quality to their work reminiscent of woodcuts.

## Wax carbon

Stripes of coloured wax crayon were vigorously applied to some sugar paper in a scribbling action. A piece of paper was laid on top of the wax and the child drew by pressing hard with a biro. When the paper is turned over, the resulting carbon is visible on the reverse.



Wax resist



Wax resist



Wax resist



Wax resist



Wax scraperboard



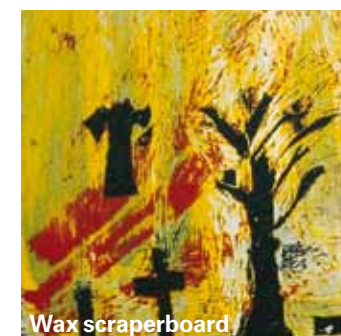
Wax scraperboard



Wax scraperboard



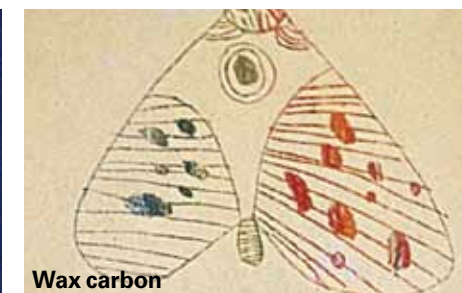
Wax scraperboard



Wax scraperboard



Wax scraperboard



Wax carbon



Wax carbon



# Iron man/woman sculpture project from the Netherlands

**Tracey Mckendrick** takes us on a journey into Dutch art teaching, explaining how the subject 'handicraft' works and describing how she has woven a popular English story, *The Iron Man*, into her art classes. She also provides an insight into the International Primary Curriculum.

My school is at least 110 years old and is situated in the centre of Den Haag, the political capital of the Netherlands. The school is a fee-paying independent school that also receives some government

subsidy. It has two departments: the Dutch Stream and the International Stream. Children in the Dutch stream stay at the junior school until they are 12 years old. Both these departments follow the International Primary Curriculum for their topic work. The International department also follows the UK National Curriculum for maths and literacy frames of work.

Our school has specialist teachers for gym, music, Dutch, English and my subject, which is known as handicraft, a term peculiar to the Dutch system. Children are generally taught by an art specialist in all Dutch primary schools, the aim being to introduce children to all forms of craft-type activities and experiences, sewing, woodworking, printing and even soft-stone carving. From my limited experience, it seems that the teacher concerned develops the system to suit their own strengths. Having a class assistant would also determine what types of activities were planned.

I regard my job here to be rather unique. Having taken over from the previous teacher, who was on long-term sick leave, I was able to teach in English, as the Dutch children were not getting any English

lessons. There was no previous planning in place, so I used a mixture of my own knowledge of the National Curriculum art & design technology objectives and the objectives set out in the International Primary Curriculum (IPC) schemes of work. These are schemes of work created by a company called Fieldwork and

commissioned by The Shell Schools Group. These topic-based schemes are used in all Shell schools all over the world, and particularly aimed at children whose parents are international travellers. Shell is a Dutch company and some of the teachers in our school have previously worked for them. The schemes were introduced in our school six years ago, beginning with an initial staff introduction and training day by Fieldwork, and progressed from there.

A very successful project I would like to share with you is based around an IPC topic called 'Materials'. This project is for a Year 4 class (children aged between 8 and 9 years). I begin the project by having a discussion with them about a story called *The Iron Man*, by Ted Hughes. Lots of the children are aware of the recent film and some have a copy of the DVD. At the start of the project, I stimulate the children by reading the introduction to them and showing some photocopies of drawings in the book. I also show them lots of sculptures in the book, *Modern Sculpture, A Concise History*, by Herbert Read. I use photocopies of certain pieces, for instance Max Ernst's, *The King Playing with the Queen*, Lynn Chadwick's *The Watchers*, Eduardo Paolozzi's *Hermaphroditic Idol, no. 1* and *City of the Circle and the Square*. I also talk about sculptures that I made while doing my BA Fine Art degree, and show them photos of a particular piece I made, where I worked directly from a large life drawing. During this introductory lesson, they are also able to watch a slide show of images of sculptures made by the groups from previous years on the computer.

Once the children have looked at these images, they draw their own idea of an iron man or woman in their sketchbooks.

I encourage them to draw at least three different ideas. During the same lesson, the children then have to form small groups, with three or four in each. This, I have discovered, is the most difficult part of the project for all children across both streams. I give them just a few rules for forming groups: the groups must consist of boys and girls and I really stress the importance of integration between Dutch and International classes. Naturally, this causes problems, for example when children want to work only in friendship groups, but this is usually discouraged. Eventually, the groups are formed. Next, they have time to discuss what to include in their final plan for the robots (nicknamed by the children themselves). This is another learning curve for the groups, as some children want to dominate the planning. They then use plasticine to make a small version of the sculpture. I encourage them to make cylinders, cubes, and so on, and to form the parts of the body separately first, in order to try them out. This is an extremely valuable part of the process, as it allows them to find out if a shape is too big, too small, too long, too short, too heavy, and so on.

The next step in the activity is to gather the recycled materials. I provide a lot of these, but the children are asked to bring in some boxes and specific pieces of junk that they may need. Each group is given the chance to take what they think they might use. Next, they experiment and make decisions about the junk, finally deciding on which pieces they are going to use. At the end of this lesson, we visit each group for a short plenary on how they have put the junk together. At this point, I talk about the size of boxes and their suitability, in terms of weight and solidity, for being a body, a head, legs, arms, and so on. Each group is given a few plastic bags in which to store the junk, which are then named. This is very important, as there can be a few arguments at the start of the next lesson regarding which junk belongs to whom!

The next step is sorting out the junk. Shiny boxes need to be covered first with white newsprint. I encourage the children to discuss and decide how to share out the tasks, pointing out that everyone in the group should contribute. This is fantastic for teaching cooperation and encourages integration between the different classes and genders. During this time, the children often make important decisions and choose to reject and change some of the

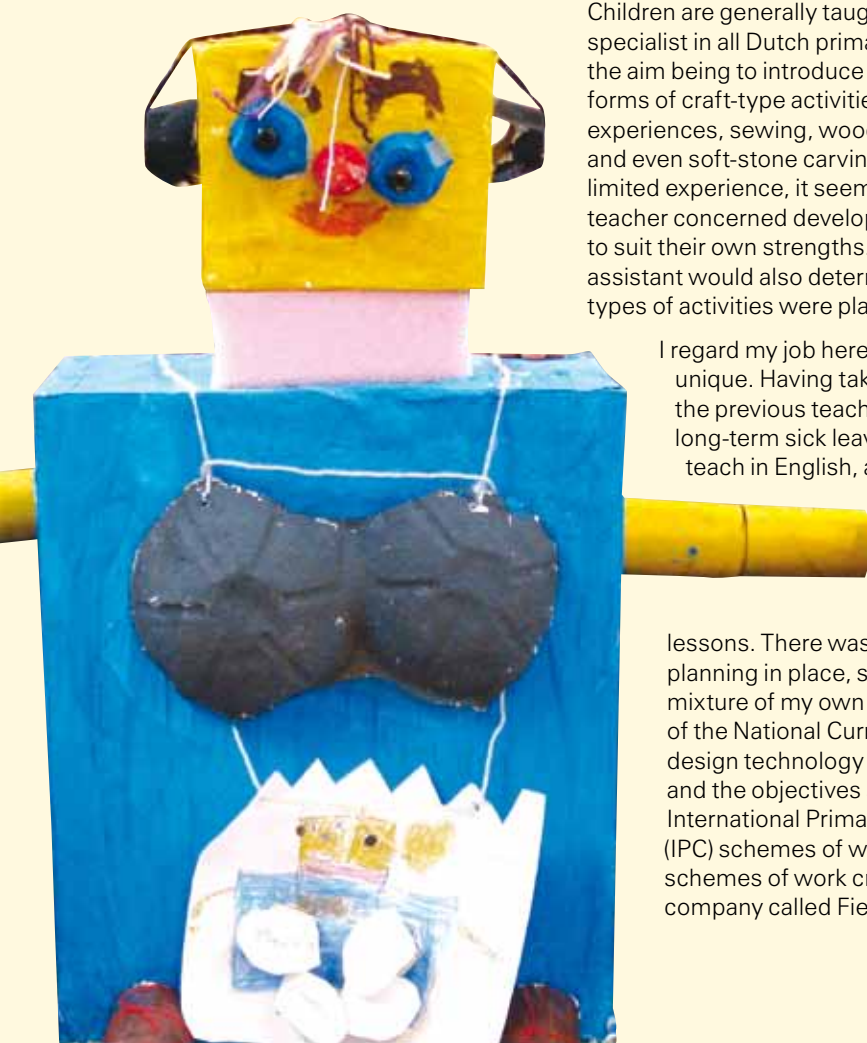
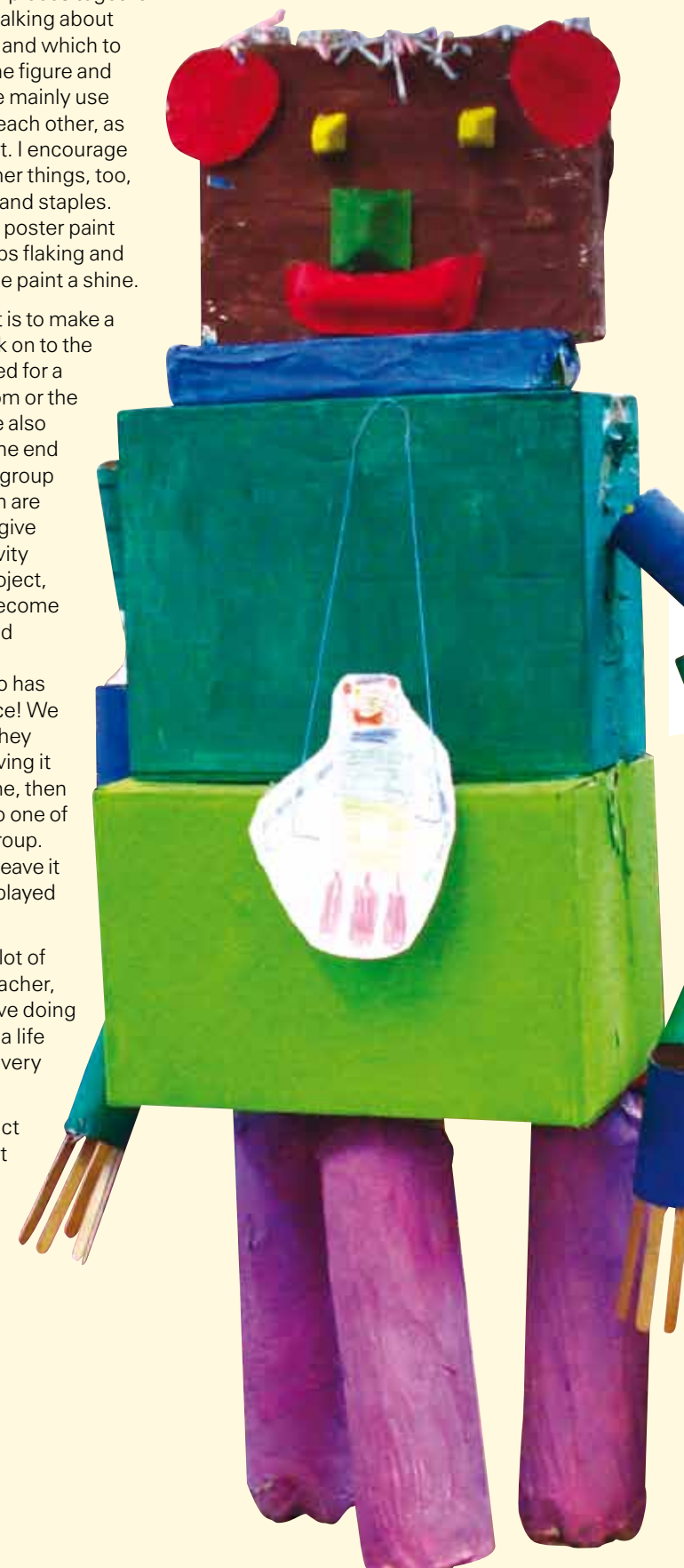
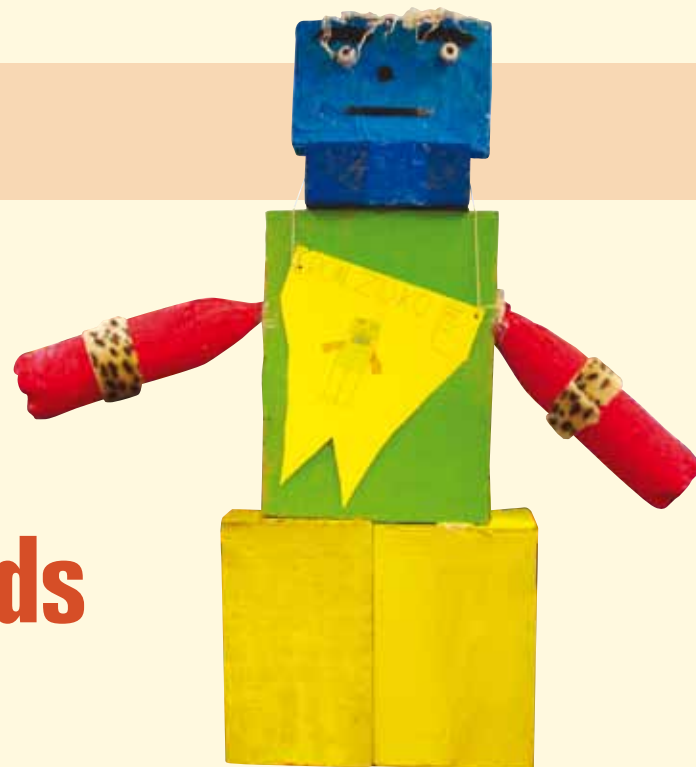
junk. This is a good opportunity to discuss the idea of modification and how that is possible in the initial stages of a project, emphasising that it has to be agreed by the whole group.

The next step is to join the pieces together. I introduce the lesson by talking about different joining methods and which to use for specific parts of the figure and various pieces of junk. We mainly use PVA glue to join boxes to each other, as it is very strong and robust. I encourage them to use a range of other things, too, like split pins, string, wire and staples. I also use PVA mixed with poster paint for the final paint; this stops flaking and cracking and also gives the paint a shine.

The last part of the project is to make a name label to hang or stick on to the figures, which are displayed for a couple of weeks in my room or the children's classrooms. We also always have a plenary at the end of our projects, with each group taking part. All the children are encouraged to join in and give their comments. This activity is a valuable part of the project, teaching the children to become critical in both negative and positive terms. The last discussion is all about who has ownership of the final piece! We talk about ways in which they can share the figure by having it at home for a period of time, then bringing it back to me or to one of the other children in the group. Some children choose to leave it with me, and it is then displayed permanently in my room.

Although this project is a lot of work on the part of the teacher, the children absolutely love doing it. The sculptures take on a life of their own and become very important to the children.

Every year, after the project is over, I vow never to do it again, unless I get help from a parent or an assistant, but somehow this never happens ...





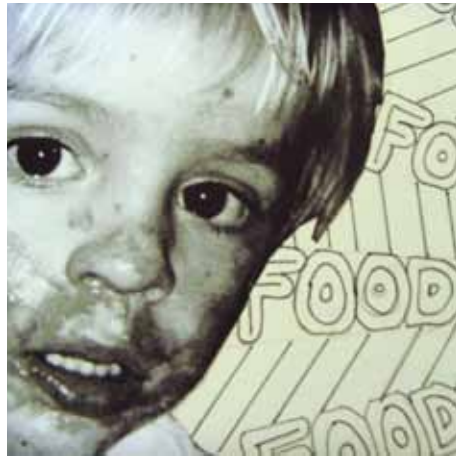
# Autobiographical montage project

**Loren Fenwick** shares an imaginative project created with Year 8 pupils that would work with any age group, especially those about to move on to a new school, whether it be from a primary school, middle school or a prep school.

Many pupils find it particularly challenging to make their work personal and create a link between their audience and themselves. As they grow older and less narrative with their art, they sometimes find it difficult to express themselves and when challenged to initiate a project themselves will often not venture beyond simple representations of things that interest them. This project was designed to encourage pupils to be introspective and communicative, producing a piece of work that is deeply personal and unique to them.

## Essential preparation

Each montage will be a combination of images, lettering and patterns. It is very helpful if pupils have collected the images well in advance, so that they are not hunting around for images at the last minute. To this end, it may be useful to send home a letter in the previous term, explaining the sort of images the pupils will need and reassuring parents that images will be photocopied and returned.



## The images

Absolutely any images can be used, but pupils will find it difficult to select images unless they are given some guidelines.

I suggest to the pupils that they find photographs of themselves as babies, toddlers and youngsters. These photos will be especially meaningful if they are of significant events, like christenings, first day at school, birthdays and so on.

Such photos will be of particular sentimental value to parents, and you may need to reassure them that they will be returned. Alternatively, they can send in black and white photocopies, which is what the pupils will be working from in any case. However, the advantage of making the copies of the original photos yourself, is that you can enlarge them and balance the light intensity in the copies. Poor copies or indistinct images will not enhance the artwork at all.

Photographs of family members and occasions may be useful, as well as pets and favourite childhood toys.

Apart from photographs, images could be used from favourite childhood bedtime stories or well-loved nursery rhymes. If pupils have spent part of their lives in a different part of the world, images to reflect this could be used. Some of my pupils have even included ultrasound images of themselves, or X-rays!



More important than the subject, is the quality of the images, as this will directly affect their ability to communicate anything to the viewer.

## The lettering

Lettering works on two levels: firstly, there is the visual impact of the letters, which will be addressed in class. Secondly, there is their ability to convey meaning. It will be very useful if pupils have already considered what they want to write, so that they can concentrate in class on *how* they want to write.

Lettering may be names of family members, pets, friends, names of favourite songs, possibly their first words, if their parents remember them, names of favourite foods or words that reflect their interests, musical or sporty – in fact, absolutely any words and sentences will do, but they need to be meaningful to the artist, in keeping with the autobiographical nature of the project.

## The patterns

It would be useful if pupils have done some previous work on patterns, textures and mark-making, using pencils and pens, as they will be able to draw on this knowledge in the final stages of the project, when they are drawing the various elements together by bridging the negative spaces between them.

Lesson number	Learning objectives	Key words/ key questions	Main teaching activity	Plenary	Evaluation
1	To explore abstract and distorted lettering by reducing each letter to its minimal essence.	To create abstract names, experimenting with different media. What do we mean by the terms 'abstract', 'distorted' and 'minimal'?	Introduce the terms 'abstract', 'distorted' and 'minimal' to the pupils, establish that 'to distort' means to keep the basic letter, but to change the shape of it, while 'to abstract' means to change essence of the actual letter. Establish that 'to minimise' means to break down a shape or letter to its bare essence. Encourage pupils to demonstrate this once you have modelled it with a few letters. Using strips of black paper to cut and stick, encourage pupils to recreate the letters in their names in an abstract way. Allow pupils to experiment with distorting the letters in their names, using felt tips. Explain that we are extending our repertoire and since we can already do 'bubble' writing, we are finding different ways to distort letters.	Selected pupils show successful examples of abstract and distorted lettering; pupils compare different interpretations of letters. Resources: A4 white paper, strips of black paper, glue sticks, scissors, thin, medium and thick felt tips. Are pupils able to produce distorted and abstract lettering?	Do they demonstrate an awareness of minimalism?
2	To introduce the project to the pupils. To create the border for the poster, using the abstract or distorted lettering from last week.	Recap last week's definitions. Portrait format, landscape format, pattern	Introduce pupils to the project as a representation of themselves during their childhood. Discuss the significance in their lives of childhood and entering adulthood. This artwork is a representation of their lives thus far. Recap last week's work on abstraction and distortion and demonstrate how to create a hand-drawn border on their format. On a separate sheet of paper, pupils create a sample of the border they want to use, using letters to create a pattern, and when they are satisfied with the effect they have created, they proceed to reproduce their sample right around their border. Remind pupils to bring photographs for next week.	Selected pupils show their border and explain how they have achieved it. Discuss with pupils how the individual letters become less important as they are combined to form a pattern. Resources: A2 cartridge paper, pencils, A4 white paper, strips of black paper, glue sticks, thin, medium and thick felt tips.	Have pupils produced a successful border or part of a border? Have they successfully abstracted or distorted their letters to form a pattern?
3	To use photographs of pupils at different ages, manipulated, distorted and repeated in patterns, as the basis of our posters. To consider layout and design when deciding where to place the images.	Montage; collage	Establish that we will be creating a montage, using essentially flat drawings and/or photographs, to create a two-dimensional piece of work. Discuss with pupils some of the possibilities for using the copies of their photographs to create interesting images for their montage: cut out and repeat the same image to form a picture pattern; work on the pictures with the different graphic media, to enhance/change the images; trace/draw the images straight on to the format; be selective about which areas of the image they use, e.g. just the face or part of the face; Encourage pupils to carefully consider where on the format they place the images, and avoid random cutting and sticking.	Share examples of pupils' work, which demonstrates effective placing of the images and interesting ways of transforming them. Resources: A2 cartridge paper, with last week's borders, pencils, A4 white paper, strips of black paper, glue sticks, scissors; thin, medium and thick felt tips.	Have pupils transformed the images and considered their placement on the format? Have they used a range of effects to enhance their images?
4	To define and identify negative areas within the layout of our posters. To enhance them, using the abstract and distorted lettering techniques from week one.	Positive areas, negative areas, revise abstraction and distortion; bold, delicate, contrast	Introduce the concept of a positive area as an area on the format where something has happened – some kind of image or pattern has been placed there. A negative area, by contrast, is an area where nothing has happened; it is a plain, empty area on the format, free from any images or patterns or textures. Get pupils to find examples of each on their own work. Establish that negative areas are an important feature of many artworks, but that we are going to create links between the images, by bridging some of the negative areas, using the lettering techniques we explored in week one. This time, the aim is not to create a pattern, but rather to transform some of the negative areas into positive ones, creating a link between the images. They should use their names, or any other significant words, poems, other people's names, nicknames, words that describe them; the list is endless.	Selected pupils share their work with the class; particular features are highlighted as successful examples of negative area enhancement. Resources: Format with images and border, pencils, A4 white paper, strips of black paper, glue sticks, scissors, thin, medium and thick felt tips.	Are pupils able to be selective in the areas they make positive, can they use the lettering to enhance their design. Are they making conscious decisions about the layout of their work on the format?
5	To continue enhancing negative areas, looking at pattern and texture, using a variety of graphic media.	Mixed media; pattern; texture	Use a variety of graphic media to create different patterns and textures to further enhance their montage by selectively filling in some of the negative areas. Remind the pupils that negative areas can be a feature of the montage, when they are deliberately left so. Encourage pupils to practise their patterns and textures on a sample piece of paper, before transferring them to the montage.	Pupils share their work and comment on the use of pattern and texture where they have been used successfully to enhance the negative areas. Resources: montage, pencils, A4 white paper, strips of black paper, glue sticks, scissors, thin, medium and thick felt tips.	Are pupils able to be selective in the areas they make positive? Can they use pattern and texture to enhance their design? Are they making conscious decisions about the layout of their work on the format?
6	Completing the poster. To consider positive and negative areas, and balance in the final design, making adjustments where needed.	Positive areas, negative areas; balance	Pupils use this session to complete their montage, adding lettering or pattern and texture as and where needed, as per the previous two lessons. Possible extension: pupils who have completed their montage, might want to add a single colour (possibly gold paint/leaf) in very small amounts, to accentuate very carefully considered areas.	As pupils complete their work, it is displayed on the wall/board and pupils have the opportunity to comment on particular areas of any montage that they feel is successful, giving reasons. Resources: format with images and border, pencils, A4 white paper, strips of black paper, glue sticks, scissors, thin, medium and thick felt tips.	Are pupils able to complete their montage, using the knowledge and experience they have gained in the past weeks?



# Cubism and still life

**Tim Perkins**, head of art at Feltonfleet School, describes a multidisciplinary approach to teaching a class over a year-long period. Although this project was undertaken with Year 7 pupils, it could be adapted for upper primary or gifted and talented provision.

This project takes children through drawing, painting, 3D and printing skills. It encourages them to be imaginative, but also to work at times to a tight brief. In addition, it teaches children how to take one drawing through many different



routes and sustains involvement for up to a year's worth of teaching, depending on how much time you have. Through the project, children learn that art is not divided into separate areas, but comprises many disciplines that can be used to achieve different effects.

## Stage 1: Drawing a still-life object

The drawing of a pencil sharpener: I decided to show the children a step-by-step approach to drawing the sharpener, starting with the basic 3D form and using a double metal sharpener, which they each have on their desk.

Draw the basic object as a cuboid shape onto a sheet of A4 paper (working in portrait), so that the cuboid fills virtually all the space. Demonstrate first on paper.

Draw the basic outline of the sharpener in the cuboid, drawing all the detail of the blades and screws. This will enable the children to visualise the basic form of the sharpener. Demonstrate on paper.



Discuss the shading on the sharpener – where it is light and dark – and show them by shading on your version. Emphasise that shading flat objects should be done in straight rather than curved lines.

They can then add a horizon line above or below halfway, shade dark in the background and add shadow. This allows the sharpener to stand out against the background and completes the drawing.

## Stage 2: Creating a cubist design

The next stage involves spending time looking at cubism and getting the children to understand the importance of the movement. They will produce a design in four stages:

1. Draw the outline of the sharpener onto an A2 sheet, as large as possible, including all the detail but no shading (using the same process as their original drawing). Demonstrate what to do first.
2. Randomly draw four straight lines through the entire drawing at different angles, splitting the composition up and making sure that all areas are not the same size. Demonstrate this first on your version.
3. Begin to rub out one part of the drawing inside one of the new areas made by the lines. Grab the actual pencil sharpener and look at the area you have just rubbed out. Change the angle of the sharpener and redraw what you see

in the space that has been rubbed out. You can change the scale of your drawing if you like. Again, demonstrate on your drawing.

Now change some of the areas so that every other area has been redrawn, looking at the same area from a different viewpoint or angle. Demonstrate.

## Stage 3: Painting their cubist design

I find the best way of getting great results from this is to set a few ground rules:

- They are allowed to use only two colours, in addition to black and white or similar for changing the tones. Sometimes I ask them to stick to complimentary colours.
- They must paint each area using as many different brush stroke marks/textures as they can. I usually demonstrate a range of colour-blending/scraffito and stippling effects.
- They must increase and use as much contrast as they can in each area, creating more drama and a sense of 3D.
- Background areas should be treated in the same way as the inside areas.

## Stage 4: Turning painting into relief

The next step involves working with 3D materials to create a relief piece, using papier mâché and card. Ask children to:

Take a section of the painting and draw it onto a sheet of A3 card using tracing paper. Show how to do this on your own version.

Using the same tracing, trace one shape onto another sheet of card and cut out the shape. Again, demonstrate on yours.

Angle the card so that it is anything from 20 to 60 degrees to the horizontal and then cut a second piece to the side of it to hold it up. Either glue the two pieces together using Copydex or attach with masking tape. Demonstrate.

Repeat this process with every other space across the design, each piece at a different angle. Some detail areas on the shapes can be left as holes or added on top of the card, to create a more three-dimensional effect. Demonstrate.

Once all the cardboard areas have been stuck down, you can use the papier



mâché. I use paper towel and separate the sheets, then mix them with a solution of half PVA/half water. Demonstrate.

Once all the areas have been covered with the papier mâché, the children can paint them with white acrylic paint to create some stunning shadow effects, or with very basic colours. Demonstrate.

## Stage 5: Printing using a three-colour process

The final project involves converting some of their previous work into a print. They will need to use either Addigraf lino or polystyrene tiles (press-print) for this.

Take a section from the painting, different from the one used for the relief piece, and trace it onto A4 paper. Demonstrate.

Trace this onto an A4 piece of poly tile, then push down along each line with a blunt pencil to make the traced line deeper.

Begin the first print of the design, demonstrating how not to put too much block-printing colour on the poly tile, nor too much pressure on the rollers. Also make three prints in their sketchbooks/work journals.

Demonstrate what happens when you cut away some sections of the poly tile and



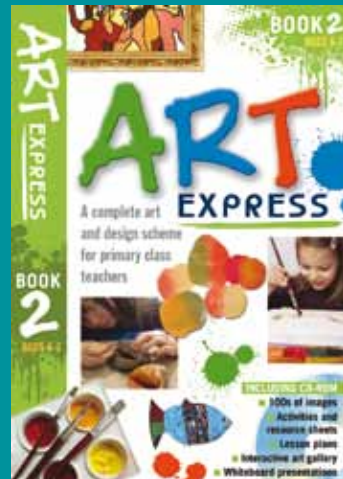
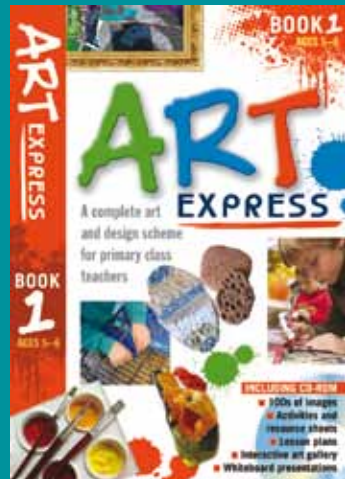
print over the top of the original with a new colour. They can then do this second colour, and go over the second and third prints in their sketchbooks.

Tell them to repeat this process one last time, so that three colours are laid on their print and one final one on the last print in their sketchbooks. They will then have a poly print on cartridge paper plus a demonstration in their sketchbooks of what each layer of colour looks like.

The idea behind this project is that the children see that from one starting-point you can use different media to get totally unique final pieces. They also see that their work is very different from that of others in the class, which creates great class debates about what makes good art.



# Book reviews



## Art Express Book 1 & 2

Published by A&C Black

Art Express Book 1: ISBN 9780713684841

Art Express Book 2: ISBN 9780713684834

Authors Various, Edited by Julia Stanton  
£34.99 each

To be published October 2009

This scheme of work for primary teachers, written by people who definitely understand a teacher's needs, provides you with everything you need for planning and teaching art in the primary classroom.

Consisting of a workbook and CD-ROM for each year group, it exemplifies progression and development of art skills and techniques though the primary school, providing an invaluable aid to any art coordinator. The books are visually pleasing, bright and colourful and the text is easy to read and understand. Units of work are set out in double-page spreads of six lessons per section, together with all the supporting information you will need. Each section in the text directs you to resources available on the CD-ROM, so it is very simple to use. The CD-ROMs do take a while to load but are crammed with resources such as photos, artworks and photocopyables – no more searching the internet or worries about copyright!

Ideas for lesson plans are based around six broad topics: drawing, painting, printing, sculpture, collage & textiles and digital media, each containing a range of

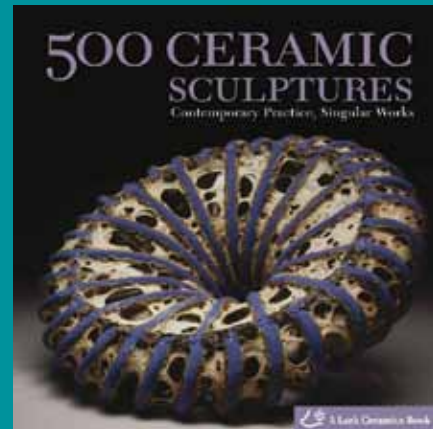
developmental lessons with learning objectives and AFL opportunities. The scheme really tries hard to build in personalised learning. There are ideas for differentiating tasks – something that can be quite difficult to plan for in an art lesson – art vocabulary and health & safety hints and tips. Opportunities for evaluations by teacher and pupils are also built-in.

This scheme is ideal for those planning a new or revised scheme of work for Art, NQTs and those who feel they are not 'artists'. A range of master classes is available on the CD-ROMs, again to support those who may not have tried a skill before. The section on digital media is particularly useful, as so little advice exists on how to progress these skills in the primary years.

Although they are designed as part of a scheme of work, the ideas and lessons do work in isolation and so the texts can be dipped into as required for specific approaches or adapted to fit in to an existing scheme of work. They also link easily with QCA units if wanted, but are not specifically designed with these in mind, allowing teachers to be more flexible and creative. This scheme is definitely a purchase worth considering for your school.

Reviewed by Val Hughes

Longcot & Fernham CE Primary School



## 500 Ceramic Sculptures – Contemporary Practice, Singular Works

Published by Lark Books

ISBN 9781600592478

RRP £16.99

This would suit teachers of all age groups as this is very much a reference and book to be inspired by. The diversity of contemporary images is staggering and suits all tastes and topics studied. Some of the sculptures would work well in PSHE or literacy lessons to start discussions or talk about feelings or emotions, while others are very intriguing. A visually stunning book, full of exciting images that reminds you how diverse ceramic sculpture can be when you move away from pots!

**Reader offer: START readers' offer price £11.05, plus p&p To order call 01273 488005 and quote R1964 Closing date 12th January 2010 (Please note: P&P = £2.95 for the first item, £1.95 for additional items.)**



## The Children's Book of Art

Published by DK

RRP £14.99

ISBN 9781405336598.

This is a beautifully illustrated and informative book that will capture the imagination of children and teachers alike. It is suitable for a wide range of ages and abilities, as it provides information and guidance on how to recreate the techniques used by the Old Masters, while providing accurate terminology. There are many examples of famous paintings and sculptures, as well as examples of natural art and famous landmarks such as the Statue of Liberty and Stonehenge. It looks at how different artists work, how colours have been created over the years and the inspiration that has prompted artists across the centuries to create their works of art.

The layout of the book is unusual, separating early art, modern art and sculpture. Pages are given over to the profile of the artist or sculptor, with a timeline of the artist's biography, who and what influenced them and how they created their work. The book also focuses on how different styles in art have changed throughout history. Inspirational from cover to cover, it provides a new snippet of information each time you open it. It also has a comprehensive glossary at the back.

Art Treasure Trail for children during half term in London on 28th October is taking place to celebrate the publication of this new book. DK has teamed up with the Hayward Gallery, the National Portrait Gallery, the National Gallery and the Dali Universe. The treasure trail map and registration details are available at [www.dk.com/arttrail](http://www.dk.com/arttrail)

Reviewed by Adele Simpson NQT  
Primary Teacher

**Reader offer: Special offer price of £11.99 including free p&p (RRP is £14.99).**

To order, readers will need to call the DK Bookshop on 0843 060 0021.

The offer reference is 'Start/CBA'; readers should also quote the ISBN of the book, which is 9781405336598.

The offer subject to availability. Customers should allow up to 14 days for delivery. Offer open to UK residents only.



## Experimental Textiles: A Journey through Design, Interpretation and Inspiration

Kim Thittichai

Published by Batsford

ISBN 9781906388478

RRP £19.99 HB

An experienced teacher in the field of textiles, Thittichai presents a wealth of knowledge and useful know-how in this beautifully designed book. There is information on where to find inspiration and how to develop initial ideas, along with images and descriptions of finished projects. The processes covered include drawing, printmaking, collage, sculpture and stitching. While the book is written for adults, it contains many exciting and unusual ideas that could be taken straight into a primary classroom. Indeed, the particular appeal of this book is that each project often begins with the simplest of working methods, using low-cost or recycled materials. Recommended for those new to textiles and more experienced teachers alike, it is illustrated with fabulous, large colour images of students' work, alongside inspiring pieces by professional artists. This would provide a valuable resource for primary teachers from Year 2 upwards.

Reviewed by Rachel Williamson,  
Summer Fields School, Oxford



# Readers reveal all

## A few of my favourite things!

Introducing abstract art to young children can sometimes be challenging. What is it? What does it mean? Why doesn't it look realistic? Why did the artist paint it?

I have always found that using Howard Hodgkin's paintings is great for introducing the processes and thinking behind some abstract pieces. Because Hodgkin's paintings are representations of memories, encounters with friends and places, it means that we can attempt to unpick them. By using the title as a starting point, we can place the artist in a particular place; use of colour and application of paint can hint at emotions. Is there any symbolism in the shapes we see? Before long, we can begin to create a narrative about a painting. Whether or not we have read the artist's intentions correctly is unimportant; what is important is that the children can begin to understand how an abstract piece of artwork can be used to convey real emotions, memories and stories.



I recently led a class of Year 6 children on an abstract art project using the work of Howard Hodgkin as initial stimulus. The resulting mixed-media pieces were not only beautiful, but each piece was also created with specific memories, people and places in mind. At the end of the project, the children were able to talk freely about their work, explaining their choices and ideas.

Using Google images makes it easy to put together a Hodgkin PowerPoint in a matter of minutes. After looking at, discussing and guessing at the themes of his work, I asked the children to think about some of their favourite things. These could be objects, people, colours, encounters, hobbies, interests, foods, TV programmes, pets, awards, games or holidays. Keen to avoid the typical 'I can't think of anything' comments, I kept this list as long and as broad as possible to ensure that every child in the class was able to come up with a variety of their own ideas.

The children then produced a small collage that represented some of these memories. They were asked to find and cut out colours, textures, shapes and images that reminded them of their favourite things. Stressing that our aim was to produce an abstract piece of artwork, they were encouraged to think about colours and textures that symbolised their memories. We avoided anything too literal.

These colourful collages were to form the centrepiece of the artwork. Carefully cut out, with a narrow black border, they were kept clean and safe in sketchbooks while we tackled the rest of the piece.

To create the backgrounds, each child produced a series of large sketches or symbols on thick paper using batik wax. These were then plunged into a sink of water, before being sprinkled with brusho ink powders. Using brusho never fails to inspire and amaze the children. As the ink powders touch the wet paper, they explode with colour and bleed into each other. This



fills the paper with random patterns of deep colour, providing the perfect background for our abstract pieces.

With the collages glued in place, the pieces already looked striking and eye-catching from a distance. They had the 'wow' factor, which would draw viewers in, but I was keen for there to be something extra for those who chose to take a closer look.

With a nod to Hodgkin, I thought we could frame the collages with press-print images and symbols. However, on many pieces the print became lost in the richly textured background. Even after we had worked back into them with paint and pastel, they seemed anonymous in many pieces, so we set out to find something cleaner and more graphic.

To this end, each child produced a page of black-and-white ink sketches of some of their favourite things. I then used the photocopier to reduce these down to the size of a coin, and with tiny paintbrushes we worked on them with watercolour paint. These tiny studies provided the pieces with an extra dimension, meaning a closer look would be rewarded with intriguing extra details. One picture featured a beautifully drawn pair of 'lucky pants'!

After adding these details to the pieces, the children drew back into their work in a variety of media, including poster paint, chalk and oil pastels. In doing this, they were able to highlight their favourite parts of the piece and link various parts together.

The completed pieces have been framed and displayed in the school hall. These striking images not only provide a welcome splash of colour, but also give the children a chance to talk about and explain what their abstract pieces actually mean and represent.

**Giles Hughes**  
**Colmore Junior School, Birmingham**

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Visit **www.nsead.org** for more information.

## How to access art lessons and art projects online

The National Society for Education in Art & Design 'Units of Work' database has about 300 units of work that can be accessed free of charge by subscribers to **START** magazine – there should be something there to surprise and inspire you. The units have been written by some of the UK's leading art educators and include art projects, art lessons and descriptions of classroom and art room teaching strategies for children, pupils and students from 3 to 18 years old. However, most of the units are easily adapted for use by a wider age range.

The Society is always keen to receive new ideas to add to the existing units – if you have a lesson you are particularly pleased with, please write it up in a similar format and email it, together with one or two examples of your children's work to **johnsteers@nsead.org**

To access the Units of Work you should go to **www.nsead.org** and log on using the username 'patchwork' and the password 'quilt'. Then click on 'Resources' followed by 'Units of Work'.

You can simply browse through the units or search them by using keywords such as artists' names, themes or techniques. Alternatively, you can search for age range, particular media and processes, and the elements such as shape, form, colour, tone and texture.



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