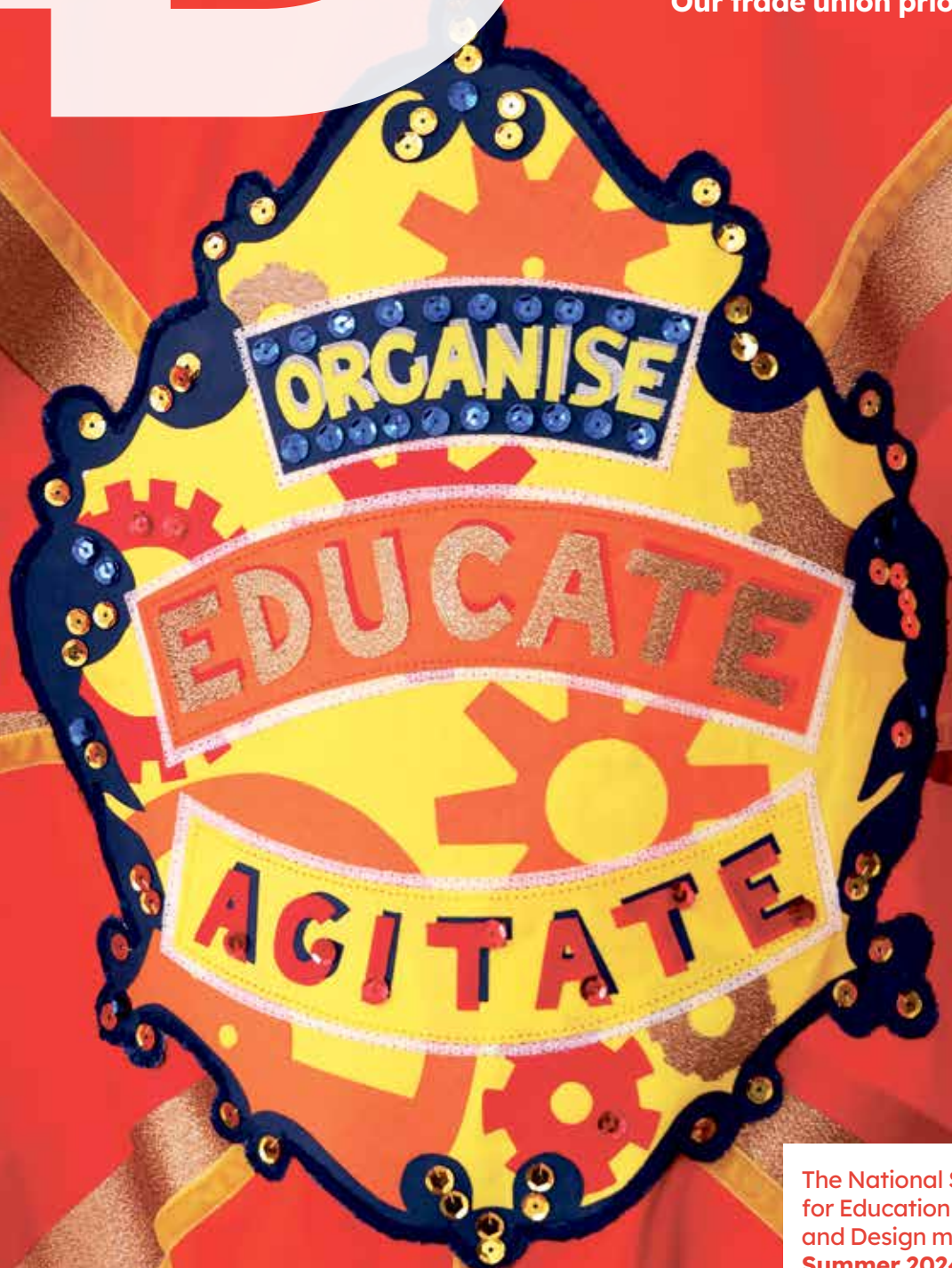


40

NSEAD's manifesto 2024

How all can achieve in art,
craft and design education
Our trade union priorities



The National Society
for Education in Art
and Design magazine
Summer 2024
Issue 40

nsead



nsead **The Big Landscape**
ART, CRAFT AND DESIGN CURRICULUM TOOLKIT

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International Journal of Art and Design Education
National Society for Education in Art and Design

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Hybrid Conference 2024

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Save the date



Faith Bebbington,
Create and recycle
workshop, IJADE 2023

Editorial

Since the last general election and the publication of NSEAD's manifesto for art education in 2019, significant challenges have faced our members. These include problems in recruiting art and design teachers, schools affected by RAAC, and concerning trends in mental health referrals for children and young people, to name but a few.

With four prime ministers and six Secretaries of State for Education since 2019, there has been considerable instability and uncertainty in the political landscape, affecting policymaking and the funding allocation for art education.

Recruitment of art and design teachers has been an issue, with only a 44 per cent recruitment rate last year according to the Department for Education. This shortage of qualified teachers has placed additional strain on schools and has impacted the quality of art education as a whole. Furthermore, the *Art Now Inquiry* (2023) revealed that 82 per cent of teacher respondents had concerns about their wellbeing, indicating they suffered from high levels of stress and burn-out.

In response to these challenges, we have published our 2024 manifesto, outlining three key hopes for the future of art education – and symbolised in our poster by a triangle representing hope, strength and harmony. Designed by artist, designer and educator Libby Scarlett, we hope it will remain on your wall way beyond the next election. Additionally, our pull-out (p.16) details 12 manifesto actions which we hope can bring about the necessary changes in art education that we all need.

Despite the political and systemic challenges in our sector, this issue of *AD* magazine focusses on the transformative power of art, craft and design education. Our authors highlight how art education changes lives, offers inspiration and possibilities for change in the future.

Whatever happens politically this year and into the future, let us remember that we have a unique and special subject in common – art, craft and design will always make the world a better place. ●

Sophie Leach, Editor, *AD*
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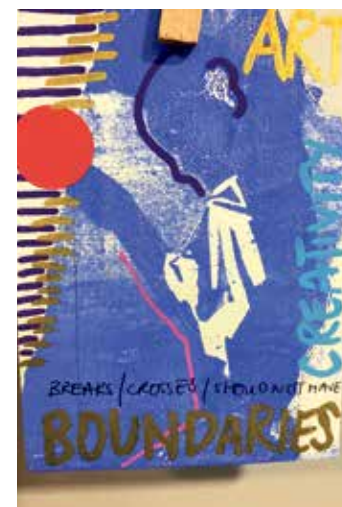
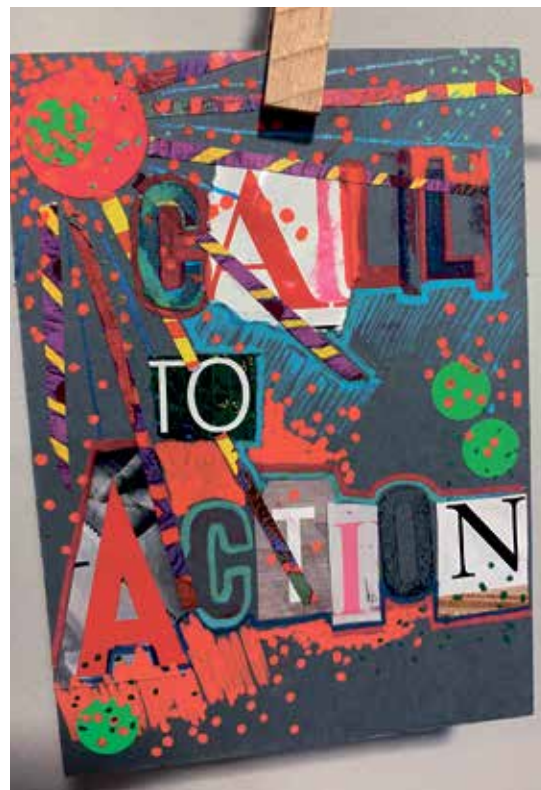
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Our art educator manifesto

Opposite
Postcards made by art educators attending The Fitzwilliam Museum's and NSEAD's Drawing Voices manifesto talk and workshop
© The Fitzwilliam Museum

Michele Gregson, general secretary of NSEAD, explains the power of the manifesto for art education and the importance of our collective hopes, aims and actions

Being an art educator in the UK today means you are teaching a marginalised subject. Art in schools is undervalued and has been subject to year-on-year underfunding, while performance and assessment measures leave little space for our subject in a crowded curriculum. For many schools, this has led to a reductive curriculum that shows little understanding of the potential and importance of our subject.

Contrast this with NSEAD's passionate and expert community, united as we are in a shared belief that we can make the world better. NSEAD patron Bob and Roberta Smith OBE sums it up brilliantly: 'Art makes children powerful'. Along with you, our members, our patrons and partners,

we work to support the conditions and systems to make this happen for *all* children.

We have been working in this way for a long time; since 1888, in fact, when a group of art school

principals gathered outside the Royal College of Art. They were the founding members of NSEAD, united by a shared purpose to promote and raise the value of our subject. They wanted to ensure all learners have access to high-quality art education and to protect the interests of all those

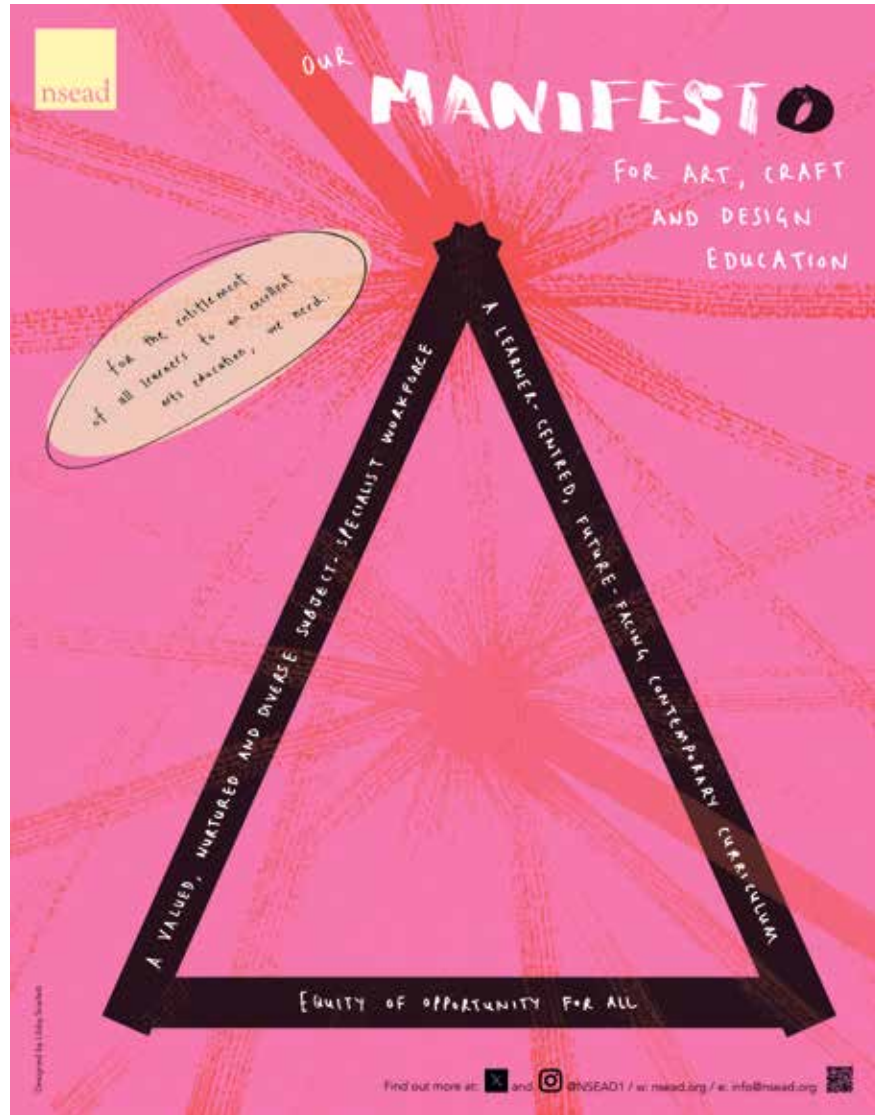
who engage in it. And we still have the same essential founding principles and mission today.

As a trade union standing up for art educators in the workplace, as a learned society, and as a subject association leading research and better practice, NSEAD members work tirelessly to deliver that mission. We draw enormous strength from this tripartite identity, each part of which feeds the whole. It's therefore appropriate that our manifesto poster in this issue features a triangle, a shape that not only represents our organisation, but also the notions of strength, unity and change.

It is also important to remember that NSEAD is a democratic organisation. We have an elected council, a president and a leadership who steer every aspect of our work. So, every NSEAD manifesto is written by the membership for the membership – a powerful collaboration of educators from across the UK, all sectors and phases.

To build our 2024 manifesto, we first evidenced the impact of policies on art, craft and design education. Last year, creative arts entries dropped drastically with A level performing arts down by 19 per cent over 13 years. Our subject has fared better, but we have still seen a decline. In 2023, in England, Northern Ireland and Wales combined, there was a four per cent decline in GCSE and a three per cent decline in A level art and design candidates.

'There is no shortage of statements, arguments or creative campaigns that argue for change but, even so, in the face of arts-hostile policies, we must hold the line and call for change and action'



Above
The NSEAD manifesto poster, 2024

In primary and secondary schools, we've seen inequities of provision too, with the evidence in plain sight. Speaking in 2020 at the launch of Ofsted's annual report, former chief HMI Amanda Spielman said: 'We've seen schools that are cutting back drastically on children's opportunities to discover the joys of languages, art, music, drama and humanities – so that most children have to give them up at age 12 or 13... Poorer children shouldn't get a worse choice.'

We have also seen the impact of policies on our workforce. In the *Art Now Inquiry* report (2023), published by The All-Party Parliamentary Group for Art, Craft and Design in Education, we learned that workloads for teachers have increased in the last five years: 'A very large majority of art and design teachers (86 per cent) report their workload has increased.' The same question was asked in the previous *NSEAD Art and Design Survey Report 2016*, where 79 per cent said their workload had increased.

We also know that our subject is facing a teacher recruitment and retention crisis. Again, in the *Art Now Inquiry* report, 67 per cent said they had considered leaving the profession. In 2016, according to NSEAD's survey report, fewer art and design teachers (55 per cent) had considered leaving the profession.

'Our manifesto upholds the entitlement for every learner to access arts, design, creativity and cultural education'

These concerning trends evidence the impact of policies. There is no shortage of statements, arguments or creative campaigns that argue for change but, even so, in the face of arts-hostile policies, we must hold the line and call for change and action. Our manifesto addresses the needs, the vision and the actions required.

At its most simple, a manifesto is a written statement outlining what a person or group stands for, their core beliefs and how they plan to affect change. All our NSEAD manifestos are grounded in social justice values. They set out the work that we can all undertake and the work that is needed by policy makers and governments. We don't affect change just by declaring it is necessary; we must make it happen through action.

Let's go back to the etymology of the word 'manifesto', which derives from the Latin terms 'manifestus' and 'manifestum', both of which mean 'obvious'. To NSEAD members, it is blindingly obvious that art education is essential. But here is the truth: The value of our subject is also not obvious to this government. They do not get it and, for 14 years, they have chosen not to. Our manifesto sets out clearly and directly what change is needed, and why and how we are going to make it happen.

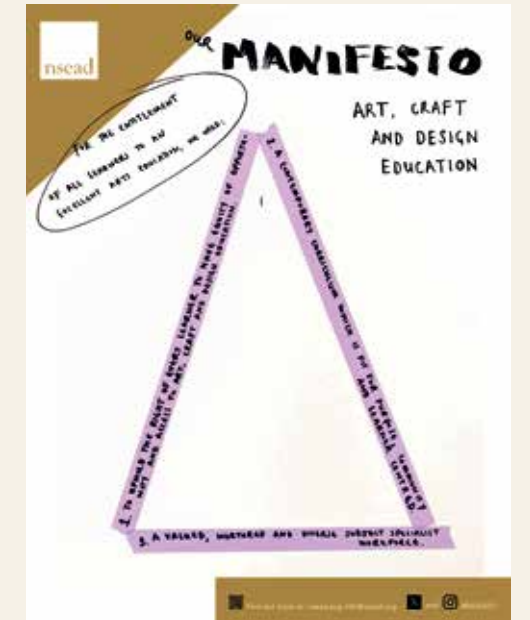
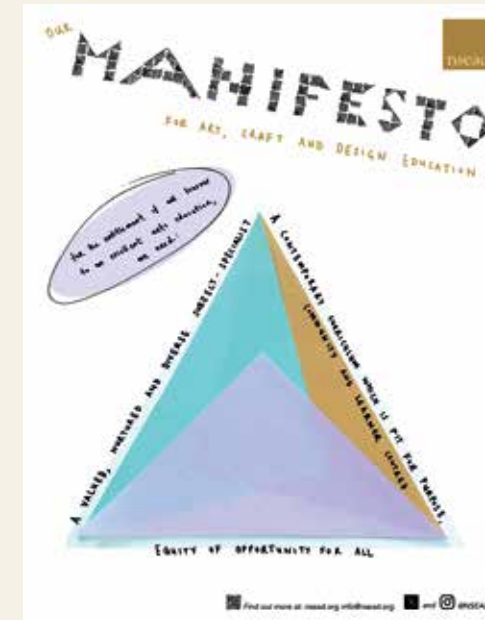
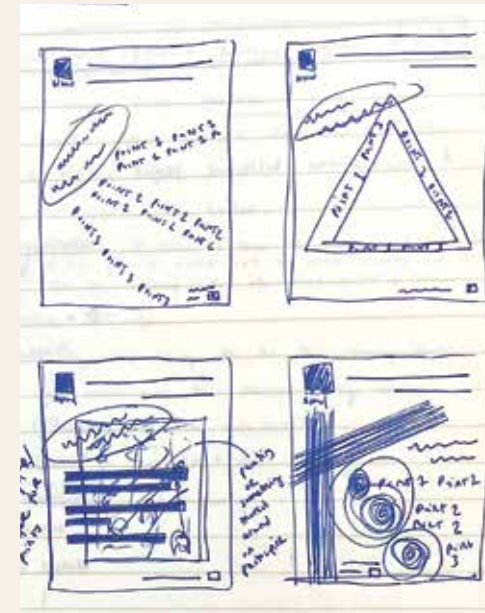
Our manifesto upholds the entitlement for every learner to access arts, design, creativity and cultural education. We set out a clear statement of what our art educator community needs to secure that entitlement for every learner, and how we can work together to achieve that shared vision. And so, for the entitlement of all learners to an excellent art, craft and design education, our manifesto has three key overarching asks or hopes. These are:

- Equity of opportunity for all
- A learner-centred, future-facing contemporary curriculum
- A valued, nurtured and diverse subject-specialist workforce

As illustrated in our fantastic manifesto poster, these key aims create a triangle of change and hope. Each aligns with NSEAD's values and with our trade union, learned society and subject association aims – to protect, support and inspire all art educators and learners.

Each hope is followed by four actions – 12 in total (see our manifesto in the centre-spread, pages 16-17). These are the actions for all policy makers – locally and nationally – in our schools,

colleges and universities, as well as in our government. They are actions by all those who have the power to help – parents and carers, art educators, headteachers, governors, researchers, funders, business leaders, and ministers and shadow ministers alike. We believe these actions will help manifest our hopes. ●



Making the manifesto poster

Libby Scarlett, artist and designer educator, shares how she created NSEAD's manifesto poster and offers an insight into her artistic process

As a multidisciplinary artist, designer and educator, I've never felt very comfortable with the label of just 'artist', 'designer' or 'educator'. I'm quite happy to be all things, sitting somewhere in between or on the edge, and I like to move around depending on the project or my current and evolving interests. Though this doesn't make for a very easy explanation – I definitely don't have a succinct elevator pitch – a wordier version can maybe paint a better picture.

I like the unknown of a project. Be they commissioned or self-initiated, I see projects as problems to be solved and things to be explored. Having an open beginning – and clients or collaborators who trust you and the creative process helps a lot – gives time to learn, listen and set the foundations for collaboration.

Questions I like to ask are: What is everyone hoping for, and what are the essential elements and the flexible parts? And, how does everyone want it to feel?

I then like some time alone to let the concepts evolve. Often, I record the words I've been provided with and listen to them over and

'I like the unknown of a project. Be they commissioned or self-initiated, I see projects as problems to be solved or things to be explored'

over as I doodle initial ideas. I want the design to add a new dimension to these words, enabling a better understanding of the project.

Involving others in the process is also very important to me; really prizing iteration with participants, stakeholders and/or clients. The social and collaborative aspect is something that drives a lot of my work because I love people, learning and conversing, so I'm always looking for ways to create community and displace my view leading the creative process.

This is the approach I took in designing NSEAD's manifesto. It was met with the kind of dream openness, which in turn allowed play and energy. This has ultimately resulted in something everyone involved feels a sense of pride and ownership in. I hope NSEAD members will also feel pride and ownership over the manifesto and use their place and voice in arts education to advocate, with NSEAD, for its aims. ●

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Above (left to right)
Initial ideas for the manifesto poster



Above
Tsunami sculptures in clay, inspired by the power of nature, by year 3 (age 7-8) pupils

Opposite
Collaborative silk batik paintings by year 2 (age 6-7) pupils, inspired by The Great Fire of London

All can achieve in art

Wayne Roberts, art specialist at Dalmain Primary School in Lewisham, aimed to develop an arts curriculum over a six-year period. Here, he explains how he set about introducing a diverse range of artists, makers and designers, and created an environment that inspires all children to achieve

I've had the privilege of being the art specialist at Dalmain Primary School in Lewisham for five years. I call it a privilege because I've been entrusted to build an arts curriculum that embraces every child, celebrates their uniqueness and smashes glass ceilings. Initially, I had a six-year plan to follow the creative journey of the children I was teaching from the age of five until they reached the end of primary school.



'To become young artists also means becoming solutionists, scientists, historians, investigators and explorers (we use these labels frequently in the art room)'

In that time, I hoped I'd be able to see if both the skills and experiences that are woven into the arts curriculum had made an impact. Those children are now in their final year and our school couldn't be prouder. It's not just about what they can do, but it's about their passion, enthusiasm and how they articulate their ideas and express their individuality. And it's a far cry from my own beginnings as an artist or, indeed, as a pupil.

My greatest passion as a child was drawing. If I reflect on my own education, what I learned about art is what I learned at home. Art in school was non-existent and there was little to inspire my creative mind. And being 'different' as a child in a rural, pre-millennial town temporarily stunted the artist in me.

My teaching journey has been far from linear. I got my degree at The Central School of Speech and Drama in acting, so creativity was never far away, but after treading a few boards I decided I wanted to teach. In 2005 I became an art subject leader and, in 2018, began teaching art to mature adults. It was here that my ideas for a new art curriculum started to take shape.

What followed was an amalgamation of all those experiences. At Dalmain we have stripped away any of the 'it can't be done' barriers and replaced them with 'how do we facilitate this?' questions. We have created an environment of awe and wonder, using materials that excite our children and give them the tools to understand and articulate their ideas. To become young artists also means becoming solutionists, scientists, historians, investigators and explorers (we use these labels frequently in the art room). How can children access their imaginations and understand concepts if they are not introduced from the start?



The structure means children of all abilities and ages are given access to all resources and techniques, including techniques that are shown in steps via photographs and video recordings. This provides the children with the confidence to express their ideas, to explore and choose their own media and materials.

Art empowers those children whose voice is not always the loudest. Within our new curriculum, children with special educational needs have consistently produced boldly original work of immense depth. They confidently articulate their ideas and artistic inferences because art is a safe place where all opinions are valid.

As an inner London school, our curriculum reflects not only the local cultural landscape but also global issues concerning climate and environment. Art themes are cross-curricular. They connect with our long-term plan, allowing children to enrich and deepen their knowledge across a broad range of subjects. Our year 5's (age 9-10) galaxy and nebula paintings link to the children's science topic and literacy texts. In the future, year 4 (age 8-9) students will be making sculptures inspired by their science topic 'States of Matter'. They will look at the abstract sculptures of Pablo Picasso and the work of contemporary artist Livia Marin, exploring themes of material culture and consumerism.

Inspiring our children means introducing them to artworks and artists from all walks of life, celebrating ethnicity, diversity and inclusion. We learn about a range of artists, not just those who are established or historically significant, but also those less visible in dominant cultural representations. Children have collaborated with both local and global street-art muralists and, last spring, we began working with Open City to create a 3D future city. Our children were also lucky enough to visit Antony Gormley's studio to learn about his sculpture techniques – the first school ever to do so. The impact that this experience had on their final designs and

sculptures was extraordinary.

These experiences of cultural enrichment make the difference, enveloping the children into the world of those who 'do' art for a living.

The art room, halls, corridors and staircases in our school have

become a celebration of every child's work, creating an environment that immerses them in the subject. Children see that their work is valued and celebrated.

I have concluded that my six-year plan does not end after six years after all. As a practitioner, I'm learning with every new cohort. Picasso was right – every child is an artist – but then I don't need to tell you that. If you are reading *AD* magazine, you already know. But, in these uncertain times, we owe it to these artists to help them make sense of a rapidly changing landscape and empower them to make changes. This is exactly what a diverse art education can do. ●

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w.roberts@dalmain.lewisham.sch.uk

'Of equal importance is the exploration of concepts – those inferences and narratives that inhabit a painting, the history and the hidden messages waiting to be unpicked'

At Dalmain, with the support of our headteacher Erika Eisele, the children's art, craft and design skills, as well as their ability to build and progress, follow a continuous journey.

Of equal importance is the exploration of concepts – those inferences and narratives that inhabit a painting, the history and the hidden messages waiting to be unpicked. Understanding these helps to open doors for young artists and develop cognitive minds. Children delight in sharing their own artistic inferences and are encouraged to explore them in their sketchbooks. This is the way our art curriculum builds skills, knowledge and concepts, as well as quality outcomes.

Drawing on my experience of teaching adult beginners, I have introduced techniques and skills for younger years. Year on year we are able to build on these techniques – enabling higher-learning skills to potentially develop.

Above
Year 4 (age 8-9)
sculptures made from
wood and wire, inspired
by a trip to Antony
Gormley's studio

An HLP manifesto

Paul Carney, art education writer and consultant, speaks on behalf of young artists with higher learning potential (HLP). Using the manifesto created by the artists who formed the community Fluxus (1963) as both as a template and provocation, Paul calls for the recognition of unrealised learning potential

HLP Manifesto.

1. High Learning Potential - not 'gifted & talented', 'more able' or 'most able'.
2. High Learning Potential children have the potential to achieve highly but may not currently be doing so and may need support to do so.

Purge the art room of COLOUR WHEELS, Shading sheets, drawing grids, worksheets, KNOWLEDGE 'ORGANISERS', tests, & predictable outcomes.

Spare Us from PEPPER drawings, CUBISM, POPart, VAN GOGH Sunflowers, "HOKUSAI'S" WAVE...

3. High learning potential is the ability to understand information well, reason & analyse, possess good memory capacity, learn quickly, have vivid imagination, be highly creative, observant, question, challenge.

Give us: independence, agency & personal choice, increased challenge, raised expectations, freedom, & flexibility, unique goals.

4. Dual or multiple exceptionalities - used to describe children who have both high learning potential and a special educational need because of a learning difficulty or a disability.

Make art "FUN"!!

5. Exceptional children have cognitive abilities in the top 0.1% of the population, while profoundly able children have cognitive abilities in the top 0.03% of the population.

Do you know us? We are the ones in your classrooms with unrealised potential. We might appear to have little motivation, have low self-esteem

or be on the SEND register. We might be rebellious and troublesome to the point of being excluded or a truant, but we are also the ones who can learn quickly when we are engaged. We can reason and analyse skillfully, and we have good memories and a vivid imagination.

As our teacher, we need a lot from you. We need nurture, support and additional open-ended challenges that may not fit into your planning. We may want to go off-piste, do our own thing or do the unpredictable. You see, we aren't gifted or talented, most able or more able. What we have is unrealised potential and we need you, our teachers, to help us realise it. ●

📧 @PaulCarneyArts
paulcarneyarts.com



To open eyes

– a homage to
Black Mountain College

Olivia Burton, visual arts faculty leader and senior lecturer at The Northern School of Art, shares how her education doctorate led to a new body of research into what an authentic arts education requires, and holistic approaches fuelled by collaboration and experimentation

Above
Fine art studios at The
Northern School of Art
© Russell Norman

For as long as I can remember I have expressed myself through art and design. In fact, my earliest memories were those when I was engaged with ‘making’. The allure of creativity has led me to many unexpected opportunities and roles throughout my 15-year career in the creative industries and I, like many, stumbled into higher education mid-journey, with the hope of developing and inspiring the next generation of creative makers and communicators. I feel genuinely privileged to work at The Northern School of Art, one of the last remaining exclusive ‘art schools’ of higher education in the North of England, which has spiked my fascination with the ‘authenticity’ of art education worldwide.

Five years ago, I began my educational doctorate into creative pedagogy. Enamoured with models of curriculum, historical syllabuses and innovative pedagogies, I began a new body

of research to ascertain what an authentic arts education requires. My research is occupied with evaluating ‘holistic’ approaches to arts education, fuelled by collaboration and experimentation.

When asked to share my thoughts on a manifesto for art and design education, I began to consider my own declaration of intent. My experience as an educator and researcher continues to lead me to the same question of enquiry: ‘How do I truly deliver an effective, innovative and authentic arts education in a higher education framework?’

To articulate my thoughts, I would like to introduce my art school crush, the 1930s Black Mountain College, an art school that broke the mould and evoked a different spirit of learning. Black Mountain College, for me, is the ‘manifesto’ for all art education, by virtue of its community, values and educators’.

In the years leading up to World War II, America’s great socialist moment was underway, which initiated radical new approaches to teaching, learning and applications of the creative process in the real world. It was during this time that philosopher John Dewey proposed new ideas for education whereby students would shape their own curriculum.

In 1933, John Rice founded the Black Mountain College on Dewey’s principles. Former Bauhaus professor Josef Albers was enlisted to head the art school faculty and assemble a stellar faculty,

‘An adaptation of an ‘open curriculum’ can benefit and promote transferable skills, such as problem solving and creativity, empowering students to direct their own learning and promote an authentic educational experience’

including artists Willem de Kooning and Jacob Lawrence. With Albert Einstein listed on the board of advisors, the college was soon established as the powerhouse of modern culture. The climate of experimentation and free spirit practised there went on to nurture an incredible community of prominent artists, designers, writers and performers, and the college soon counted among its classmates some of the most avant-garde artists and designers of the 1950s and 60s².

Black Mountain College was clearly influenced by the utopian ideals of the progressive education movement. It was conceived as a pro-community and anti-hierarchy movement, so although the faculty was technically in charge, students were involved in institutional decision-making. There were no course requirements, departmental restrictions, grades or degrees. A broad-based liberal arts programme was offered as part of an ‘open curriculum’, with art itself at the centre, available to all. It was not necessarily considered as a professional pursuit but as a means of unlocking creative thinking in students in every field. This encouraged individuals to think beyond the purely visual and focus on the process of making.

When Josef Albers first arrived at Black Mountain College in 1933, he was already a distinguished art teacher from the Bauhaus in Germany. He believed that academic study under measurements and scrutiny would do little more than produce ‘school stars’ and said ‘Any work done for the sake of the teacher or the sake of the school is not enduring, because life is everything but academic.’

Due to funding issues, Black Mountain College closed in 1957. Despite a relatively brief existence, the college alumni of Cy Twombly, Ruth Asawa and Robert Rauschenberg became

famous, alongside some of the most prominent, fertile and original thinkers and artists to emerge in the second half of the twentieth century.

Understandably, modern UK education does not easily permit the flexibility required for an ‘open curriculum’ like that at Black Mountain College. Innovation is required from our educators to use divergent methods to ensure the curriculum can still benefit from interdisciplinary input and collaboration. An adaptation of an ‘open curriculum’ can benefit and promote transferable skills, such as problem solving and

creativity, empowering students to direct their own learning and promote an authentic educational experience.

Brown University, for example, has adopted an ‘open curriculum’ policy

for the last 50 years that’s central to its undergraduates’ education, while maintaining an Ivy League status, a 98 per cent retention rate and high employment for its graduates.

The role of the educator must also continue to develop autonomously and encourage learners to adopt a mindset of unrestricted and creative inquiry, in turn preparing students with the resilience required for complex thinking and innovation.

Black Mountain College was a place where education thrived. It modelled an innovative style of education that would form a paradigm and ‘manifesto’ for liberal arts schools worldwide and educated a generation of prominent artists and original thinkers. In my lifetime, I endeavour to give rise to a network of creatives who could embody a similar spirit to Black Mountain College and thrive in an adaptive, authentic arts education.

Creativity is valuable to our communities, our economy and our place in the world and, as educators, we hold the door open to future generations. We owe it to our learners to create history-worthy education and to elevate high-quality creative learning experiences. ●

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- 1 Molesworth, Helen, and Ruth Erickson. *Leap before You Look: Black Mountain College, 1933-1957*. Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston, 2015.
- 2 Katz, Vincent, and Martin Brody. *Black Mountain College: Experiment in Art*. MIT Press, 2013.

The Northern School of Art is located in the Northeast of England, offering A levels, extended diplomas, undergraduate degrees and post-graduate qualifications. Find us on social @thenorthernart and Northernart.ac.uk

Right
Wall collage by
Goldsmiths PGCE
students and Neil Walton

Middle
Anatomy of a Doll (2017)
by Cathie Pilkington RA
© Graham Chalifour

Neil Walton, secondary PGCE programme leader at Goldsmiths, University of London, argues that art history should be central to how art, craft and design are taught. Here, he explains why this should be an invitation to rethink the shape of our subject, and look at how art historical and theoretical concepts might be fully integrated into the classroom

Art history is central to art education

I want to claim that art history should be central to how we teach art, craft and design.

Of course, art history is already an important discipline in its own right. It's valued for the mind-broadening and empathy-building virtues of studying a range of periods and places, and for developing skills of close observation, interpretation and judgement. But mainly my suggestion is that art history should be key to our teaching so students can get an adequate sense of the complexity and plurality of what 'art', 'craft' and 'design' have become.

It is understandable that many art, craft and design teachers see the subject as essentially practical and worry that the current focus on knowledge is an intrusion on precious curriculum time. However, I would argue that this concern is based on a view of art history that needs updating. For many decades, boundaries have been blurred and redrawn in interesting ways between practice, art history and criticism.

'Art criticism has also changed from the mid-twentieth century image of the influential art critic, concerned only with making definitive judgements of taste, into a more varied field of art writing by curators, advisors, bloggers and researchers'

To convey the notion of art history at work requires questioning some common ideas of it; for example, as a linear parade of great artists or as a written add-on to practice. Both art history and studio practice are better seen together as an arena of judgement and action in which students encounter diverse exemplars and work out their own preferences and commitments.

Art history as a discipline has long since moved beyond the idea of a chronology of styles and movements – the grand narrative of mainly European great artists and their lives. Ernst Gombrich's *The Story of Art* has sold millions of copies, but its approach is no longer representative; art history has comprehensively addressed the charges of narrowness and elitism that used to be levelled at it.

Art criticism has also changed from the mid-twentieth century image of the influential art critic, concerned only with making definitive judgements of taste, into a more varied

field of art writing by curators, advisors, bloggers and researchers. From Donald Judd to Hito Steyerl, critical writing is now just as likely to be provided by artists themselves as by literary specialists. In the art worlds of the present day, artists and audiences alike are guaranteed



to bump into words and ideas in some way. As art critic Arthur Danto has claimed, making and looking at art requires an atmosphere of art theory and a knowledge of art history. To make or judge an artwork, or interpret another's work, is to take up a position and set out one's commitments within a field of competing possibilities.

As a result of all the above changes, the theoretical disciplinary bases of art education – art history, theory and criticism – are in good shape to have a constructive influence wherever there is unreflective orthodoxy in school curriculum and pedagogy.

These points stand as an invitation to rethink the shape of our subject, and to see how art historical and theoretical concepts might be seen as fully integrated into our work in the classroom or studio. In current teaching practice, art history often features only in a limited way at the start of a scheme of work where a few contextual references are introduced. Homework might be set for students to research an artist – perhaps adding some written annotations in the pages of a sketchbook, or a list of disconnected facts or flat descriptions of artworks. The flatness is hardly surprising if we as teachers have not provided a compelling rationale for why such research might be involving and meaningful.

But there are ways this situation could be improved. One is simply to ensure that students get to encounter, look at, think about and develop opinions about a lot more examples of art, craft and design than they currently do. Common school practice seldom recognises how important it is that students get to see and discuss a great many different and contrasting examples of artworks, as well as other cultural artefacts. Research is often done individually, rather than as part of a live classroom exchange. Perhaps we need to be both more playful and simultaneously more serious with this. Some great examples are provided by SPoKE, the art historical documentary film competition, and also by Artpedagogy, a website providing multi-layered artistic connections, thought-provoking questions and practical suggestions for the classroom.

A precedent for the creative exploration of the relationships between ideas and images can be found in the work of the art historian Aby Warburg in his *Mnemosyne Atlas*. During the 1920s, Warburg created a series of 63 large panels featuring hundreds of reproductions of images. On these panels Warburg mapped unexpected, deeply researched links between a wide range of sources; for example, artworks and manuscript pages alongside modern images drawn from newspapers and magazines. He referred to these complex, dynamic constellations as a 'Denkraum' – a thought-space.

These ideas could be adapted as a tool for art and design education. Creating something like this on the walls of a classroom or virtually online – with students adding, moving, linking, discussing and revising elements – is more engaging than using the narrow timeline of periods and movements that is often equated with art history. It points to how art education, in all its practical, historical and critical aspects, is best thought of as introducing learners to the diversity and plurality of art, craft and design, and to the wide range of possibilities they open up – a thought-space for judgement and practice. ●

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NSEAD's trade union priorities

As the only art, craft and design educator trade union, NSEAD is uniquely positioned to campaign, lobby and call for subject-specific workplace changes. Here, **Seán Taylor**, principal trade union case worker, for NSEAD, shares our trade union workplace priorities

To address and affect the much needed workplace reforms, the following four issues have been identified as key priorities for the work of the NSEAD trade union 2024-28:

1. Campaigning for the restoration of the value of teachers' pay

- *The School Teachers' Review Body (STRB) 33rd Report*, GOV.UK, states: 'The competitiveness of teachers' earnings compared to the whole economy, wider public sector and to professional occupations was lower in 2021/22 compared to 2010/11.'
- In July 2023, according to the DfE's own data, the number of teacher vacancies for art and design reached the highest level recorded since 2011. In 2023, The All-Party-Parliamentary Group for Art, Craft and Design in Education's *Art Now Inquiry* report showed that in all nations, art and design teachers are considering leaving the profession. Fewer teachers in Scotland (63 per cent) have considered leaving, compared to 79 per cent of respondents in England. Teachers' pay has not kept up with inflation and has fallen markedly over a number of years. This is devaluing the profession, which in turn leads to difficulties in the retention and recruitment of staff.

We are calling for: The government to provide a significant pay increase that will help teachers' pay catch up with inflation and with the salaries in equivalent professions. We also call for the government to improve pensions and benefits for all teachers. If the government does not act,

the numbers of specialist teachers joining the profession will continue to decline. A shortage of teachers will have a negative impact on the quality of art, craft and design provision. Across all phases and sectors, learners need well-trained and valued teachers.

2. Improving conditions that impact on teacher mental health, wellbeing and workload

- The 2023 *Art Now Inquiry* report indicated that 82 per cent of respondents had concerns about wellbeing.
- The majority of art and design teachers (86 per cent) who responded in the report said their workload had increased in the last five years, and that they are working long hours and facing mounting workloads. This is inevitably taking its toll on educator wellbeing.

We are calling for:

- Teachers' right to a work-life balance that is essential for the wellbeing of teachers and, in turn, the quality of education that pupils receive.
- A recognised maximum class size for art and design in all key stages to improve the learning environment for pupils.
- Action to tackle excessive workloads and address the inadequacy of current teachers' conditions of service frameworks.

3. Securing an art, craft and design advocate in every workplace

- Half of all art and design teacher respondents (50 per cent) in the *Art Now Inquiry* report said the reduced profile and devaluing of the subject are a disincentive to stay in the profession.
- The report also revealed that, since the pandemic, teachers had serious concerns about resourcing for our subject. Ninety-three per cent of respondents said that there had been a decrease in resources.
- Art, craft and design education is under threat from 14 years of governmental policy changes. There has been a focus on what are often referred to as 'academic' subjects (humanities, sciences and maths, and languages), as well as a school accountability and measuring system that has negligible respect for the arts subjects. We believe that art and design educators deserve a strong voice in the workplace. That's why we are committed to supporting our members to be NSEAD advocates.



We are calling for:

An NSEAD advocate in every school or studio workplace to be the voice of art, craft and design teachers and learners. They should represent the interests of educators, whilst protecting the rights of all learners. We know that being a subject advocate can be challenging. That's why NSEAD will provide support training, resources and advice for this key role.

4. Ending financial hardship and inequity for trainee art and design teachers

- In December 2023, data published by the DfE revealed that art and design has seen the largest decreases in reported performance against PGITT targets between the 2022/23 and 2023/24 training years; 44 per cent of target recruited in 2023/24 compared to 88 per cent in 2022/23.
- According to the DfE in 2017, 31 per cent of children in schools were 'minority ethnic'. In the same year, the percentage of art teachers working in the visual arts was 94 per cent white.

Whilst many trainee teachers are awarded a bursary, for many years art and design trainee teachers received no financial help. So, we now

have a generation of teachers, many of whom graduated during the pandemic, who are also saddled with substantial student debt.

We are calling for:

- An end to an unfair system of bursaries that create division and hardship. We want to see equal bursaries for all subjects and all trainees.
- A review of the tuition fees for PGCE students, to include retrospective measures to remedy the ongoing hardship for art and design teachers well into their teaching careers.
- The government to set targets to address the lack of diversity in art and design teaching. Recruitment of underrepresented minority ethnic communities in art and design must improve with support given to those joining the profession. ●

We believe that all art, craft and design educators deserve to be treated fairly and with respect. We will continue to fight for your rights until you have the support you need to do your jobs effectively and to enjoy a healthy work-life balance. NSEAD is here for you.

See overleaf for our pull-out NSEAD manifesto 2024 and beyond.

This image and opposite NSEAD's Winter Social at The Fitzwilliam Museum – a collaborative workshop led by Marlene Wylie and Dr Clare Stanhope, reflecting on the exhibition *Black Atlantic: Power, People, Resistance* © The Fitzwilliam Museum

nsead

Our manifesto for art, craft and design education

Image credit Libby Scarlett

For the entitlement of all learners to an excellent arts education, we need:

1

Equity of opportunity for all

Actions

- **Collect** robust evidence to identify the state of art, craft and design education across all regions, sectors and phases
- **Invest** in resources and improvement to our learning spaces
- **Protect** our art, craft and design curriculum time across all phases
- **Remove** subject hierarchies and dismantle harmful accountability measures that limit learner choice

2

A learner-centred, future-facing contemporary curriculum

Actions

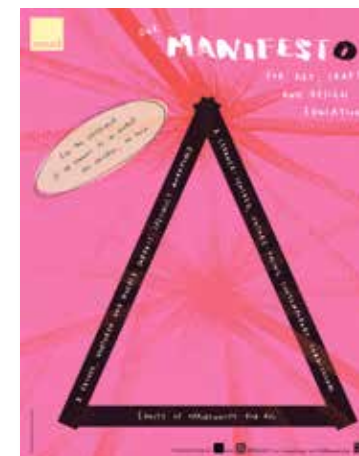
- **Research** into the impact of best curriculum practice, drawing on The Big Landscape research
- **Consult** with the NSEAD's Big Landscape expert community to co-create and shape curricula that is:
 - Relevant and engaging
 - Twenty-first century and future focussed
 - Equitable and accessible
- **Protect** the integrity of our subject, to realise that a distinct curriculum for art, for craft and for design is vital to strengthen progression pathways and careers in the creative industries
- **Empower** learners so they can harness the unique potential of our subject to address the vital and pressing issues of our time

3

A valued, nurtured and diverse subject-specialist workforce

Actions

- **Invest** in data collection that will inform a national strategy to recruit and retain a diverse art educator workforce
- **Improve** teachers' terms and conditions to address wellbeing and workload:
 - Restore pay
 - Reduce excessive class sizes for art, craft and design
 - Build opportunities for teachers to achieve flexible working
- **Invest** in art, craft and design teacher recruitment:
 - Fair bursaries for every subject and every trainee teacher
 - Increase the time given to the study of art, craft and design in primary initial teacher education
 - Address the consequences of the *Initial Teacher Training Market Review*
 - Recognise and remedy the impact of austerity, the cost-of-living crisis and the Covid-19 pandemic on a generation of trainee teachers
- **Create** opportunities for all art, craft and design teachers to continue to train, research and practice



Poster
NSEAD's manifesto poster
Design by Libby Scarlett

Find out more

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Preserving the archive

A workshop series engaging students (age 14-18) with photography, archives and collective histories allowed students to explore the creative and critical power of visual representation in shaping our understanding of ourselves and others.

Jolie Hockings, engagement curator at the visual arts charity Autograph, London, explains

Below
Students looking at Cassia's family archive at Autograph, 2023
© Nadine Scarlett



Not long after joining Autograph last year, I met Cassia Clarke. She had just finished her final project on the Photojournalism and Documentary Photography BA at UAL. Deciding that taking photographs no longer interested her, Cassia based the project around rescuing her family photographs and began to investigate why the archives of African-Caribbean-British families, in particular, are neglected.

We spent the months that followed expanding on the project *Take My Word For It*. Cassia ran a series of school workshops at Autograph's gallery, asking students to consider how personal photographic collections can play a significant role in documenting and narrating British history. The workshops became an important space to discuss why some histories get preserved more than others. Students learnt about Cassia's artistic and archiving practice and recreated photographs they felt would be important to share in the future.

Arts and cultural organisations running workshops for schools is nothing new. However, in recent years I have begun to question how useful such a short interaction with a space, materials and ideas really is to young people's long-term creativity. Perhaps it's just a reflection of frustration stemming from 13 years of successive government policy marginalising art in our schools, leaving institutions to try and fill the gap.

Working with Cassia – and experiencing the workshops she created – has shifted my perspective of what a school's encounter with a cultural organisation could really mean today. The series coincided with Autograph's exhibition *Beyond the Black Triangle* by Jamaican-British photographer Armet Francis, whose mission for more than four decades has been to document the African diaspora. His



Above
Students visiting exhibition at Autograph, 2023
© Nadine Scarlett

Right
Cassia Clarke presenting at Autograph, 2023
© Nadine Scarlett



photographs were displayed on the walls of the gallery, showcasing life-affirming moments that celebrate the resilience and survival of African diasporic cultures. Before the workshop, students were invited to engage with the exhibition through a describe-and-draw exercise and introduction by gallery staff.

It created an interesting synergy with the photographic material that Cassia brought to the workshop. After hearing the story of how she rescued her family photographs, which had been stored in an airing cupboard and in her nephew's bedroom, students were able to handle the original photographs while wearing gloves to instil professional archiving practice. In relation to the photographs on the gallery walls, engaging with her personal archive demystified and democratised how histories can be collected and shared. After the workshop, students shared how they wanted to take more photographs of their friends and family.

A direct result of the devaluing of the arts within education is that many young people and parents do not feel like the creative subjects are viable career options. As a recent graduate in her early 20s, it felt significant that Cassia is an artist at the beginning of her career and was sharing her journey and practice with young people – some only a few years younger than herself. Students were able to visualise the steps to becoming an artist because the gap wasn't that wide. Her story felt relevant.

From an institutional perspective, it reinforced how crucial it is that we seek out and nurture young artists. With limited resources and time, it can be easy to collaborate with the same experienced network, but there is so much potential and exchange that can happen when expanding and diversifying the pool.

Beyond the democratisation of photography and connecting students to young real-life

'Working with Cassia – and experiencing the workshops she created – has shifted my perspective of what a school's encounter with a cultural organisation could really mean today'

artists, what really struck me through these workshops was observing the students having fun. I often think about what bell hooks wrote in *Teaching to Transgress* back in 1994: 'The first paradigm that shaped my pedagogy was the idea that the classroom should be an exciting place, never boring.'

There were moments along the way where Cassia and I would feel frustrated that a student might not have responded exactly how we had expected to the session. It brought up a reflective conversation between us around what we wanted the students to take away from the experience and why. It sounds so simple, but when an encounter with an artist and institution is so light touch, the best we can do for students is for them to go away feeling like they did

something memorable outside the walls of the classroom. It was a freer space, a more playful space, where they had agency over the outcome they created.

Autograph's learning programme aims to encourage curiosity and empathy while fostering visual literacy. We invite students to explore the creative and critical power of visual representation in shaping our understanding of ourselves and of others. The workshops with Cassia provided an opportunity to delve deeper into the importance of archives, reinforcing that everyone has a story that is worth preserving. ●

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Protecting space for the arts in ITE

With arts electives across the initial teacher education sector in jeopardy, **Teresa Smith**, lecturer in education at the University of East Anglia, argues that immersive cross-curricular art pedagogy not only benefits the child but can bring about a new-found confidence in teachers around art

Left
New ways of seeing; exploring paintings through image description and dialogue © The National Gallery, London

Above right
Wool weaving; creative learning responses in the galleries © The National Gallery, London

‘The benefits of immersive cross-curricular art pedagogy on the learning of the child are always at the fore, but a newly found confidence in themselves as art teachers, with a renewed (or perhaps liberated) view of the teacher’s purpose, also develops’

In conversations with primary PGCE trainee teachers who have taken part in a week-long arts elective during their training year, outcomes such as improved knowledge of teaching strategies and increased personal wellbeing stand out. One artist teacher trainee found that their artist identity worked with and not against their primary teacher identity. But increased confidence can also be found in non-art specialists, with one Early Career Teacher (ECT) trainee taking their class to The National Gallery as a direct result of the elective. Hope is written into most

trainee stories and subsequently into the stories of the children of their future classes.

The arts elective referenced here is an annual collaboration between the University of East Anglia’s primary PGCE, The National Gallery in London and

Norfolk Museums Service. It begins with an introductory workshop for all trainees to Take One Picture, The National Gallery’s learning programme for primary schools. From there, 12 trainees engage in a cultural placement week – observing, practising, embedding their learning, and making



use of two days in a local museum and art gallery, and two days in The National Gallery, supported at all stages by gallery education experts. It is a transformative week.

As a teacher educator on this primary PGCE, I teach, observe and engage in this elective week alongside my trainees. The benefits of immersive cross-curricular art pedagogy on the learning of the child are always at the fore, but a newly found confidence in themselves as art teachers, with a renewed (or perhaps liberated) view of the teacher’s purpose, also develops. They begin to think of themselves in Pat Thompson and Christine Hall’s terms as ‘cultural brokers’, able to make creativity integral, explicit and inspirational to the children in their classes.

As a visual arts teacher educator, I also value this week as a breath of fresh air, a refuge, and a powerful liminal space to engage trainees with something other than the mechanistic view of teaching and learning that the government-mandated Initial Teacher Education (ITE) curriculum offers. It is a space in which trainees can be inspired and curious; a place of appreciation for and championing of high-quality arts learning that develops the whole child.

Yet arts electives across the initial teacher education sector (especially within time-precious PGCE courses) are in jeopardy. Pat Thompson and Christine Hall, in the early results of their 2023 *Researching the Arts in Primary Schools* investigation, found arts provision ‘patchily-served’ in initial teacher education. Insufficient time allowed within the ITE framework and uneven arts-rich practice in school placements are cited as key barriers, something that is unlikely to improve with the remodelling pressures of the 2024 ITE curriculum.

We must believe, however, that hope remains. If we don’t want to perpetuate variable arts provision within our schools, we need a shared belief that general arts education and specific arts electives in primary ITE matter. They create opportunities for educational change at a variety of scales and levels. So let us find ways to protect them, speaking up for what they are – an enabling entitlement, and essential at ITE level if we are to empower arts teachers of the future and re-centre meaningful arts learning for children and young people in our schools. ●

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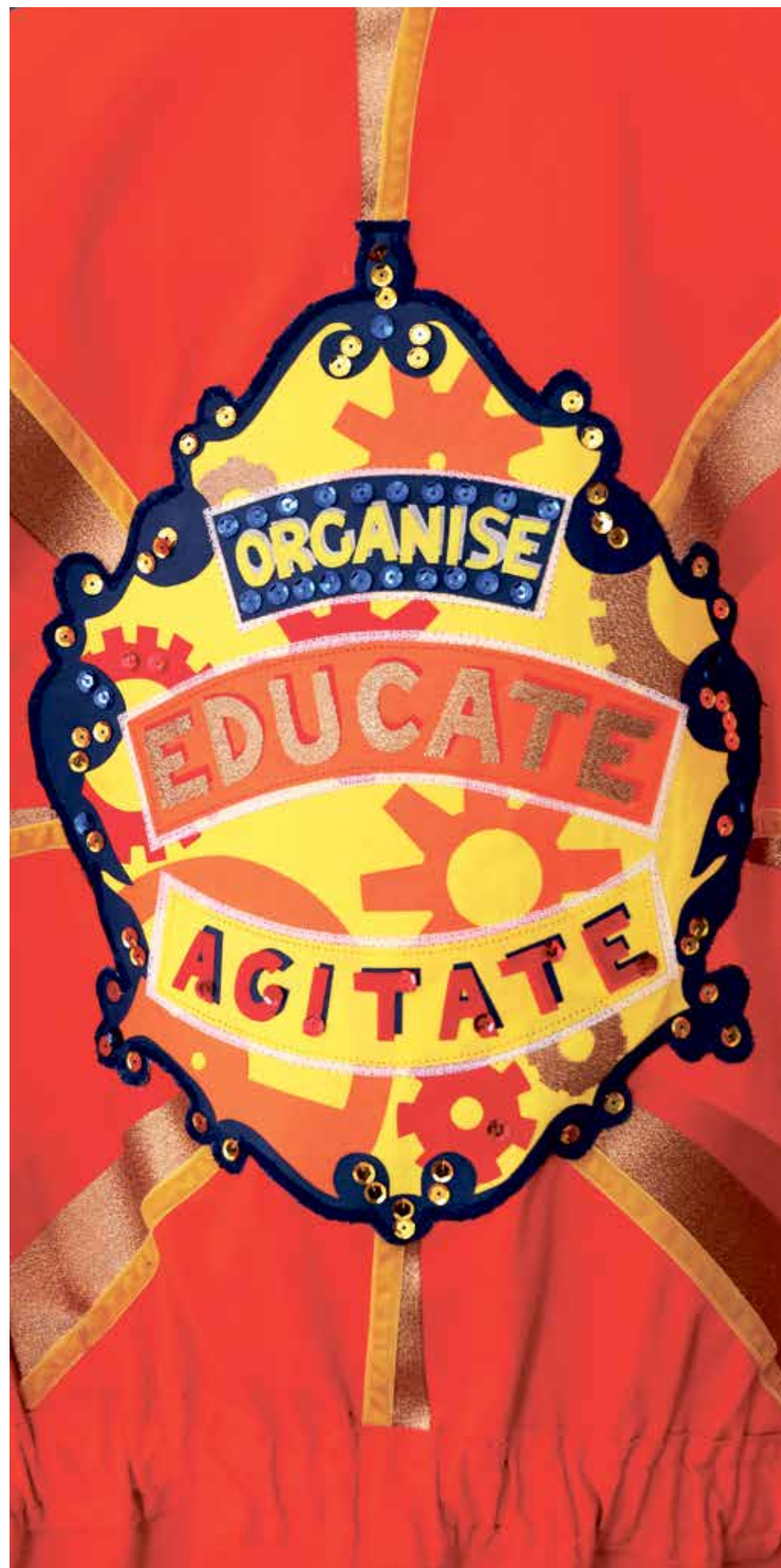
Sam Hobbs, associate assistant head of arts and creativity at The Angmering School in West Sussex, describes how, for her Fine Art MA, she drew comparisons between events in recent social history and the challenges facing working people in the present, thus creating manifesto messages for modern times

Power to the people

In February 2022, my request for sabbatical leave was approved and my place secured on the full-time MA Fine Art programme at the University of Brighton. Sitting in my studio in September felt strange. It was the first time in 17 years that I hadn't returned for the new school year – I half expected a phone call to ask where I was.

I made a start by pinning a screen-printed image of Woodhorn Colliery on my freshly painted wall. I first visited Woodhorn in 2015 whilst staying at our family caravan in Cresswell, Northumberland, and was deeply moved by the mining banners displayed there. Time spent at 'the van' was at the forefront of my mind at that time, as we had just packed up for the final time after 16 wonderful years of holidaying there.

Inspired by this image, I conducted a thought experiment, exploring an alternative reality in which the miners had won their fight to keep pits



Opposite
Organise, Educate, Agitate (2023) – embroidered boiler suit

Left
The Past we Inherit (2023) – adapted Deliveroo uniform

Below
Power to the People (2023), University of Brighton

open in the 1980s. I found a worn orange boiler suit and embellished the back with a design based on my great grandfather's National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) membership badge. The words Organise, Educate, Agitate were taken from an old NUM banner, but felt relevant to my work as an art teacher. I wanted a visual connection to Elvis Presley and his embellished jumpsuits, elevating the miner to rockstar status

people in my local community. *The Big Issue* reported that on the date of the Spring Budget, 15 March 2023, an estimated 400,000 workers across the UK were on strike for better pay and working conditions.

Against this backdrop, I decided to expand my understanding of printmaking processes. I wanted to make images that could be reproduced and distributed affordably and quickly. I liked the simplicity of the screen-printed posters made by Atelier Populaire in 1968, whilst Alan Kitching's fine art approach to letterpress printing inspired me to learn how to set type. I combined the language of traditional trade union banners with the imagery found on old maps and atlas pages.

'Uplifting and hopeful messages found on traditional union banners reached out to me from the past'

as the working class hero in their community.

Mark Fisher, author and music critic, wrote about hauntology and 'lost futures'. Hauntology is a range of ideas first introduced by the philosopher Jacques Derrida in his 1993 book *Spectres of Marx*. Referring to the return or persistence of elements from the social or cultural past, hauntological ideas helped shape my understanding of societal and political changes that have happened during my lifetime and their impact – themes of loss, nostalgia and socialism emerged.

I began to draw comparisons between events in recent social history and the difficulties facing working people in the present – the rising cost of living, low wages and lack of job security. Uplifting and hopeful messages found on traditional union banners reached out to me from the past, including *Unity is strength; The past we inherit, the future we build; There's a world to win and Power to the people* to name a few. When written together, these words felt both instructional and inspirational; a banner manifesto for modern times, relevant to working

In contrast to the nostalgic feeling that my letterpress images elicited, I found that risograph printing allowed me to make quick, cheap and impactful posters. The fluorescent nature of the soy-based risograph changed the appearance of my *Organise, Educate, Agitate* embroidered badge, creating a fresh and vibrant version of this image.

For my interim show, I covered the walls of my studio with these prints. I presented them alongside the Organise boiler suit and a vintage British Rail jacket I had also embellished. One visitor said that my space resembled a 'strike shop', which I really liked. Seeing the two garments hanging together led me to consider workwear more broadly. I started gathering different types of uniforms, including a Royal Mail shirt, a nurse's uniform, and scrubs and garments worn by gig economy workers. I printed and stitched fabric panels and badges onto Just Eat and Deliveroo jackets,

experimenting with old interior stencils and spray paint to create imagery reminiscent of trade union banners.

The artist Jeremy Deller has also been influential in my thinking this year. I visited the Musée des Beaux-Arts Rennes for a retrospective of his work and immersed myself in *The Battle of Orgreave Archive* (2021). Several of Deller's recent works feature banners made by the banner maker Ed Hall, and I have learned a lot from Ed since this exhibition. Finally, a collection of posters made by Deller over a 30-year period was an unexpected and brilliant discovery.

I first exhibited *Power to the People* at the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Gallery in the Unison Centre, London, in June 2023. Over the course of two weeks, feedback was overwhelmingly positive and I was given several union badges to add to the project. I took advantage of the space to begin work on a full-size banner.

By the time I had installed *Power to the People* for the end-of-year show, I had ten embellished or adapted garments which hung from a high rail on etched hangers, alongside a finished banner and a selection of prints. Using reflective fabric from a Deliveroo jacket, the word *Power* flashed under the spotlights as people viewed it. Again, people offered me garments, badges and ideas of how to develop the project further.

I returned to school, working part-time whilst continuing my own art practice. During the October half term I took part in an exhibition with fellow graduates at The Regency Town House in Hove. I'm enjoying seeing my work in different settings. The next step is to exhibit *Power to the People* in my school, with activities and talks for students, staff and the local community.

Following my sabbatical, I feel nourished and motivated. This project has empowered me and exists to empower others – to send positive messages that remind us that things have been different and can be different again. ●

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I'm rubbish at art

When trainee teachers can experience success within their own art, they are able to embrace themselves as artists and go on to help children do the same. **Kaytie Holdstock**, lecturer in Primary Art and Design Education at the University of Worcester, explains how to break the cycle of art anxiety



Art teacher confidence in primary schools has long been cited as one of the many reasons why the quality of art education is said to be on the decline. This is made apparent in Ben Cooper's 2019 report for the Fabian Society¹ that paints a grim picture of the current state of art and design provision in primary schools. As a lecturer in primary art education, the phrase 'I am rubbish at art' is a familiar statement from our undergraduate, generalist trainees when they first enter the art room. This has always fascinated me. Why do so many trainees feel so determined in their perceived lack of ability in art? What experiences have contributed to shaping this negative artistic identity? And what impact does this lack of confidence ultimately have on the children they go on to teach?

Much of trainees' 'art anxiety' appears to be born out of misconceptions around the nature of art and design. Students talk of artistic talent as a gift attributed to the few – a God-given talent that some of us are lucky to be born with, rather than something that can be nurtured and encouraged within everyone. Many trainees recall experiences from their own education which confirmed that they were 'rubbish' at art, and even those lucky few who maintained the love of art into their teenage years were often discouraged from continuing their artistic endeavours by well-meaning parents or teachers in the pursuit of subjects deemed more 'academic'.

With some initial teacher education providers offering as little as two hours focused instruction in art and design, alongside the lack of artistic professional development offered to practising teachers who serve as school-based mentors, little is being done to break the perpetual cycle

Opposite
Reminding trainees that art should be fun and accessible

Below
Experiencing success in their own art breaks the cycle of art anxiety in trainee teachers



where early career teachers enter the primary classroom fearful and ill-prepared to teach art.

Our children deserve an education where art and design holds its rightful place as an essential

primary trainees, many of whom dropped art like a hot potato at the first available opportunity in secondary school.

Understanding the anxieties our primary trainee teachers bring to the art room must go hand in hand with a teacher education that develops trainees' own artistic confidence. We need to challenge trainees' perceptions of art as an exclusive and inaccessible

'We need to challenge trainees' perceptions of art as an exclusive and inaccessible subject by re-engaging them in dynamic artistic exploration, experimentation and play'

and valued part of the curriculum. And for this, we need teachers who are comfortable and open-minded when exploring their own identity as artists. This is unfamiliar territory for most

subject by re-engaging them in dynamic artistic exploration, experimentation and play. Through direct experience, we can guide trainees to see how easily art can be taught, so that all learners

experience success and mistakes, and are then encouraged and valued as part of the learning process. Trainees learn this best by undertaking a journey of discovery for themselves.

One of the key ideas which help students successfully navigate beyond their own perceived inadequacies in art is reframing the idea of observational drawing. A lack of drawing skill in its traditional form is all too often the reason why a student has discounted themselves artistically. By providing opportunities for mark-making, students are reconnected with the dynamic, energetic and inclusive nature of drawing. Giving students opportunities to explore their own drawing by encouraging continuous lines, gestural marks and experimental drawings, whilst also exploring a wide range of tools, scales, orientations and timings, all help make drawing accessible again. It takes the fear out of observational drawing and returns the fun.

When trainees are encouraged to reflect upon their own experiences of primary art, an interesting picture emerges. Many students hold fond memories of making Christmas cards and, of course, using glitter, but few remember experiencing art in any meaningful way beyond a bit of drawing, occasionally 'getting the paints out' and, on rare occasions, making a clay animal (although never one that survived the drying process in one piece). Only once trainees' eyes have been opened to the many other art disciplines – such as the fun of printing, the flexibility of collage and the skill of photography – can the limitless possibilities of a full and rich primary art education be explored. Additionally, this is often the moment a trainee will discover a previously unexplored area of art with which they resonate, leading to the realisation that 'I'm actually pretty good at this!'

When trainee teachers are given the time to experience success within their own art, we give them the tools to move past their own anxieties and embrace themselves as artists. Artists who, by the very nature of overcoming their own insecurities, are uniquely placed to help children do the same. It's time we recognise the pivotal role of quality art provision in initial teacher education as the first step to breaking the cycle. ●

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Reference

¹ *Primary Colours: The decline of arts education in primary schools and how it can be reversed* fabians.org.uk/publication/primary-colours

Opening up access to the built environment

Below

Luke O'Donovan investigating communities in the Becontree Estate, Dagenham

Opposite

Accelerate alumni Zafir Ameen's school workshop model



Open City is dedicated to making architecture and neighbourhoods more open, accessible and equitable. Here, **Sarah Phillips**, head of education and empowerment at the charity, explains how they are helping young people to have their say in the planning, development and architecture of the built environment around them

Young people usually have little say in the planning, development or architecture of the built environment. Research by the property developers Grosvenor revealed that 89 per cent of young people – those between 16 and 18 – have never been asked about their neighbourhood, while only eight per cent had attended a public consultation. Meanwhile, an overwhelming 82 per cent said they would like the chance to be involved.

Opportunities for young people to pursue careers in planning and architecture, particularly those from diverse backgrounds, can be hard to come by. For example, while the LSE's Millennium Cohort Study found that black teenagers are the most likely demographic group in society to aspire to be architects and engineers, intersecting barriers – poverty, structural racism and state schools squeezing out creative education – inhibit those from minority ethnic backgrounds from achieving their ambitions.

Open City believes that young people should have the potential and motivation to drive conversations about the physical spaces of their

city, the urban realm and society as a whole. Indeed, the social purpose of architecture is enriched when it is drawn up with the input of young peoples' lived experience and expertise. We must, therefore, unlock the city for young people by giving them the opportunity and the power to influence its future.

We know about the long list of government directives that create a bleak diet for even the most determined art teachers. With this in mind, Open City offers a glimmer of collaborative hope in the areas of cultural capital, careers and Gatsby Benchmarks, and by ensuring that students don't miss out on trips. The charity's

'I think if you can get young minds asking questions and being conscious of the choices they potentially can make, and the consequences of the choices that they do make, then you have the beginnings of change'

mission is to make the city more accessible, inclusive and equitable, as well as offering free educational programmes supporting young people in learning about and pursuing careers in city making.

Working with young, diverse, built environment professionals in the classroom can energise students, as can workshops that show there are multiple possibilities and no single right answer (or mark scheme). As well as Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in art, we also offer CPD in 3D design and architecture.

A teacher who attended one of our courses said: 'It's been fantastic to meet other professionals who have very different skills from me and are equally passionate about passing those skills on to the children. As an arts lead, it was great to get ideas around the different types of architectural drawings and model making.'

For students with additional access needs, the It's My City Too! programme looks to strengthen and secure students' understanding of different places across the city and empowers them to explore these sites themselves. Longer programmes integrating both research trips and co-creating design have also been a huge success. From skate parks in Haringey and penguin cities in Westminster to bridges and bus shelters in Brent, this has been an inspiring story in which co-creation has brought about moments of astonishing neurodiverse talent.

As another teacher working for the Federation of Westminster Special Schools said: 'The programme is inclusive, tailored to the school's needs and enhances/supports a broad and balanced curriculum. It also equips students with meaningful and appropriate cultural capital.'

Young City Makers and Accelerate

The Young City Makers programme involves partnering a professional practice with a key stage 2-year group (ages 7–11). Together they will share their lived experience of local spaces and get out to explore a new part of the city. Returning to school, they share ideas and

collaborate on creating London reimaged in 3D. There is much that connects with the national curriculum, from lying on the glass floor of Tower Bridge and crossing the Thames by cable car, to soaring up Lift 109 at the newly

restored Battersea Power Station. These are all memorable ways to study rivers, local heritage or our Victorian legacy. Importantly though, these young people bring new ideas to the table and inspire their built environment professionals, just as much as they are inspired by their adult visitors. As a participating architect said: 'I think if you can get young minds asking questions and being conscious of the choices they potentially can make, and the consequences of the choices

that they do make, then you have the beginnings of change.'

Open City's Accelerate programme is designed for sixth formers to explore the built environment industry, learn new skills, create a portfolio and understand how they can become an engaged citizen in their local community. It's a programme that empowers young people to seize opportunities and to be unafraid of new challenges.

We accept 100 young Londoners on to the course each year and in 2025 will open in Birmingham. Students explore the dilemmas of planning and development, as well as broader issues around construction, engineering and new materials. Alongside ten Saturday workshops, each student will receive work experience and mentoring, in addition to the opportunity to build at scale in the annual Accelerate Design and Construct Challenge.

In recognition of the difficulty of getting key stage 3-4 students (age 11-16) out of the classroom, we also offer in-school Accelerate Studios to explore problem-solving through model making, and Accelerate Insight Tours to achieve Gatsby 6 Benchmarks and give insight into the range of careers available under a broad design umbrella. ●

open-city.org.uk

If you work in a school in London or Birmingham and would like to participate in any of these initiatives, please do get in touch: sarah@open-city.org.uk



Below

Work by students (left to right), Gabby Amanambu, Karen Opoku Gyamfua, Louisa Chardi and Obehi George-Momodu
© Martin Darbyshire

Responding to the specialist skills in his new school of St Ursula's Convent School in Greenwich, early career teacher **Martin Darbyshire** shares the value of working nimbly and developing learner-centred, responsive curriculums

Responsive curriculums



In September 2022, I began my first job since completing my PGCE in art and design at St Ursula's Convent School in Greenwich, an all-girls Catholic school under the Catholic Archdiocese of Southwark. At the start of the year, we needed to replace the food technology GCSE with the three-dimensional design specialism in art and design GCSE. This was an opportunity, supported by the then departmental head Sarah Irvine and current head Jason Williams, to implement my manifesto for key stage 4 (age 14-16) curriculum design.

As a practising sculptor, it's no coincidence that I value the importance of experiential learning for making meaning.

**Left**

Postmodernism
architecture work by student Dideoluwa Olonishuwa; plaster and acrylic paint
© Martin Darbyshire

Right

Brutalism architecture
work by student Louisa Chardi; card and photographs
© Martin Darbyshire

I believe the acquisition of skills can develop learners' sensibilities, allowing them to create a tangible expression of their feelings and emotions.

Along with developing tacit knowledge from experiential learning, our department aim was to create a learner-centred curriculum. By making students active decision makers, we hope to develop their self-awareness, raising the prospect of them becoming more autonomous makers.

This approach also enables and develops the affective drive – whereby our feelings act as a motivating factor in our decision making. Giving students personal responsibility was paramount to activating the affective drive, because it relies on the neural stimulation brought upon by interest.

In view of the students' passion for food technology, we selected this as the initial theme so they had the opportunity to develop their interest in an unexpected way. The playful and cultural nature of food provided an organic synthesis between thinking and making. We began looking at the work of artist Claes Oldenburg and his seminal soft 'food' sculptures. Making slices of cake using slab building from paper maquettes enabled the learners to understand the benefit of using a template with slab build. What's more, decorating the cakes using the mini extruder captured the students' imagination.

Although we did not know how the students would respond to exploring clay, our decision was underpinned by the relationship

'By making students active decision makers, we hope to develop their self-awareness, raising the prospect of them becoming more autonomous makers'

we made between the haptic similarities of clay and dough. The school has a working kiln, an array of tools, plaster moulds, and a selection of glazes and slips which allowed for the course to focus on ceramics without any significant outlay.

All learners were unfamiliar with clay. Because most of the students had not opted for an art or design-based subject, they lacked confidence with drawing. Instead, we began by using clay's intuitive qualities. This encouraged and supported student engagement. The experience also indicated that to nurture a positive connection with the subject we should prioritise experiential learning in the early stages.

For the first three terms, the students opted to work solely in ceramics, exploring foundational hand-building techniques such as coiling, modelling, slabs and press moulding, alongside surface treatments. Their work was personalised and the project they deemed most successful used the press-moulding technique to create a food still-life that reflected their taste –



literally. Because the press mould provided structural support for their food plates, the technique gave every student the chance to focus on communicating their idea rather than technical skill. The impact of their engagement with the French Huguenot potter, hydraulics engineer and craftsman Bernard Palissy was magnified when the students visited the V&A, where, to their delight, they found his work. The visit allowed them to critique, make value judgements and further develop their growing knowledge of the ceramics and aesthetics.

As we became more familiar with students, they communicated a yearning for a different challenge, so we expanded their material catalogue and the tools available. One benefit of a joint department is the access it gives us to a wide range of machinery, such as a laser cutter. A consequence of this wider exploration is that it allowed for comparison and reflection of their accumulative and tacit knowledge of clay. Many students are now continuing this journey, researching and taking greater risks in clay or other materials.

One of the benefits of designing a responsive curriculum is that unplanned events can support the contextualisation of the subject. For instance, while some students were researching the artwork of Veronica Ryan, she won the Turner Prize. This allowed our young makers to deepen their cultural understanding of the role of art in society. We also visited the Kiln Rooms, an open access studio facility

in Peckham and the ceramics BA department at UAL. These visits gave students a chance to make connections outside of the school and deepen their knowledge of art, craft and design as viable creative career paths.

Although the happenstance that led to the study of three-dimensional design was not intended, the opportunity to design a responsive curriculum allowed me to learn with our students. During the journey, pragmatism was important – some students were not ready to take on the responsibility for learning. But, with the cooperation of the school and with departmental support, the curriculum has been able to evolve organically. This has allowed learners to become more self-aware, adaptable and reflective of their work and the environment around them. ●

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Above
The Odd Fish installation
– 400 pupils worked with
teachers and creative
practitioners to raise
awareness of the need
to look after our oceans
@ Nathan Towers

As founders and directors of creative education consultancy Shape North, **Kathy Coates-Mohammed** and **Stephanie Bartholet** are passionate about their goal to make changes with the art and creative education world. Here, they share their mission

On an art education mission

Shape North is on a mission to exert influence and make change within the world of arts and creative education. With the aim to broaden creative experiences for all children by enhancing existing offers and shaping new ones, our vision is one of equality; whoever you are and wherever you live, you have the right to creative opportunities that feed your imagination and raise your aspirations.

We know the power engagement in the arts has – it ultimately allows you to put your own stamp on the world. Art is an immense vehicle for giving voice to thoughts, allowing an individual's unique self-expression and offering space to experiment, as well as exploring techniques and considering ideas. Art delivers unseen benefits too, such as raised self-esteem and self-identity, as well as allowing us to explore

big (and small) issues, giving us the space to talk and helping us discover new roads into learning. The arts can also make positive changes to social skills, curriculums and outcomes.

We want everyone to see that art and creativity can benefit a child on all these levels. We want to support educationalists to put arts and creativity at the heart of their curriculum. However, we recognise there is a journey to travel to reach this goal.

Guiding all our work are the key principles of partnership, responsiveness, nurture, empowerment, cycles of investment and aspiration. Our Paul Hamlyn Foundation (PHF) 'Weaving Together a Story of Place' research pilot encompassed all these principals, resulting in a lasting impact on all involved – children, teachers, schools, artists, senior leaders and cultural organisations. The project has evidenced how these key principles lead to positive, embedded change.

Children are at the heart of our initiatives,

'Projects and initiatives may be challenging because they introduce new ways of working and thinking, but ultimately, they will be empowering if you ensure they meet individual school's needs'

but to be truly effective each one must be responsive to all our partners' needs. The art of careful listening and the moulding of ideas ensures our programmes are reflective and draw on the thinking of schools, artists, children and cultural organisations. Our regional 'Culture on the Doorstep' pilot fused together visual arts practice with music, dance and drama in

Right
Awe and wonder
through creative
practice @ Bokhego

Below
Local textile designer
Henry Morris shares his
knowledge in felt making
@ TowersIslam



different combinations and degrees to successfully reflect the contexts of each school.

Change can happen at any level, but for meaningful and lasting influence there must be buy-in from the top. Twenty-five years of experience in schools gives us empathy and understanding of the structure, the constraints of educational settings and the challenges of the school environment. We can talk with sensitivity and grounded knowledge with headteachers and

shape opportunities that are purposeful and realistic, rather than tokenistic, one-off experiences.

Priorities and initiatives may be challenging because they introduce new

ways of working and thinking but, ultimately, they will be empowering if an individual school's needs are met. By providing support and training, people are empowered, which helps them know best how to invest new learning in their context.

Nurture is at the heart of change. Feeling valued and supported allows people to take risks,

share practices and exchange ideas. There is also power in investing time in people. Our work with PHF and Royal Opera House over time has created strong environments of shared learning.

Growing talent and raising aspirations is a cyclical journey. Children learn from adults and adults learn from children. New talent is borne out of support and mentorship from those that have already travelled the journey. We work with, and celebrate, local artists and educators at all stages of their careers.

We also collaborate with local artists, makers and designers who work on a national and international scale. Children and teachers say they enjoy learning from and about artists who 'speak' to them, who spark their interest, whom they can relate to and who raise their aspirations.

Shape North is currently working in Kirklees – a large, diverse borough. There, we are moving to instigate change on a whole variety of levels and areas. Raising access to high-quality arts can be crafted and created. Uniting the priorities of different local authority teams and putting children at the heart of delivery is resulting in an abundance of creative offers. With commitment, drive and strategic vision, change is happening. Shape North intends to stay a driving force, from changing the story in a northern town to spreading the vision nationally. ●

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Kathy Coates-Mohammed and Stephanie Bartholet are art advocates, working with children and young people, partners and communities to deliver high-quality arts opportunities, creative programmes, projects and training. They also partner with local authorities and cultural organisations to devise and influence powerful creative strategies.



Art education for the environment and climate emergency, and why it matters

Dr Emese Hall, senior lecturer in Art Education at the University of Exeter, is the chair of the NSEAD Environment and Climate Emergency (E&CE) research group. A passionate de-growth advocate, her current research centres on ecological justice via art education. Here, she stresses the importance of addressing E&CE issues in our teaching

Below

Smoke stacks at a steel plant in Benxi, China, with residential flats in the foreground © Andreas Habich/Climate Visuals



Ethologist and conservationist Dr Jane Goodall asks: 'How is it possible that the most intellectual creature to ever walk the planet is destroying its only home?'

There seems to be a disconnect between our clever brains and our hearts – our love and compassion.' This quote appears in the Royal Academy of Arts publication *Eco-visionaries: Conversations on a Planet in a State of Emergency* (Gomer Press, 2019). Written to accompany the exhibition of the same name, architects, artists and designers discuss possibilities for a more hopeful future. Albeit a small book, it is extremely informative.

For me, one of art's key purposes is communication – who is saying what and why, how and where. Contemporary art is a fantastic vehicle for promoting understanding of contemporary issues, as I have explored in my research. Between 2019 and 2022 I was involved in an Erasmus+ project called Visual art education in new times: Connecting Art with REal life issues (CARE), which was aimed at enhancing visual arts education with Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) within primary education [see *AD* 28]. Across Cyprus, Greece, Malta and England, CARE involved nearly 120 teachers in training events and approximately 1,300 children in learning activities, successfully linking contemporary art and ESD.

March 2023 saw the launch of the NSEAD's Art Education for the Environment and Climate Emergency research group, and it is my privilege to act as group chair. We currently have over 20 members from different educational phases and settings, united by a shared passion for exploring E&CE issues through art education.

Twenty-first century education must be fit for purpose. In this respect, I set out my aspirations in a recent *ijADE* article titled *A green manifesto for art, craft and design education* (2023). There is an ethical imperative to address E&CE issues in our teaching because these issues are relevant to everyone, everywhere. Although there are many creative practitioners addressing E&CE considerations, it is not always easy for educators to find guidance on how to bring these issues into the classroom.

The NSEAD's Big Landscape curriculum toolkit highlights various sustainability issues that can usefully be included in curriculum planning. One of the E&CE group's aims is to share case studies via The Big Landscape. In the meantime, an introductory list of recommended E&CE readings can be found on the NSEAD blog (search Summer Book Club; art and the climate emergency). We have also created a Padlet that collates relevant artists, books, case studies, exhibitions, ideas for practice, exhibitions, research and theory, websites and more: bit.ly/4aJK7pR (password = ART). There will be an E&CE special edition of *AD* magazine in autumn 2024. It is heartening to know there is much exciting and important

'For me, one of art's key purposes is communication – who is saying what and why, how and where'

practice taking place in and beyond the formal curriculum across the UK and beyond.

Do please join us! Colleagues from Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales are especially welcome, as these countries are currently underrepresented. You can find our Facebook group here: bit.ly/41KQ2XK ●

Reference

1 Hall, E. (2023) A green manifesto for art, craft and design education. *International Journal of Art and Design Education*, Vol 42 (4), 611-621.

News

Visualise: race and inclusion in art education



In the first major research into race in art education, the Runnymede Trust and Freelands Foundation have exposed significant under-representation of minority ethnic artists in school curricula. Just 2.3 per cent of artists referenced in GCSE Art papers are from Black (1.54 per cent) or South Asian (0.74 per cent) backgrounds.

The *Visualise: race and inclusion in art education* report confirms what art educators have been saying for years; that art education in the UK is at crisis point. Despite their best efforts, teachers and students are rooted in an education system that is failing to nurture diverse art practices.

This new research has revealed a strong desire amongst teachers and students to diversify teaching content and improve experiences of art education for all. But teachers are under pressure, overworked and under-resourced, and art education in schools remains overwhelmingly narrow in terms of curriculum content and exam assessment. The Runnymede Trust and Freelands Foundation have proposed a series of recommendations aimed at exam boards, policymakers and the wider visual arts sector to address these issues, which can be accessed along with the full report at runnymedetrust.org/visualise ●

For more information, contact Rachel Cass, head of communications, rachel@freelandsfoundation.co.uk

Above

Haverstock School year 9 (age 13-14) workshop with artist Sam Ayre, 2022
Eric Adyin-Barberini © Freelands Foundation

New
e-learning
course

Better practice in art, craft and design: Developing an anti-racist curriculum

Join NSEAD on a journey of inclusion, equity and diversity as we strive for every art educator to critically review, revise and decolonise their curriculum. Our mission is to advance art education, for everyone, so every child can achieve their potential.

This new e-learning anti-racist art education actions (ARAEA) course is for you if you want:

- Your art, craft and design curriculum to be inclusive – so that all children and young people can reach their potential
- To start, or continue, your journey towards being an anti-racist art educator
- Practical guidance on how to critically review, revise and decolonise your curriculum
- To learn flexibly and explore online NSEAD's ARAEA resources
- To feel empowered to lead discussions to decolonise and improve your curriculum

£50 off!

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