

Your Paintings: Masterpieces in Schools 2013

Project Summary

Masterpieces in Schools 2013 has now finished. After 26 paintings, 27 schools, 16 days and four countries, we are thrilled to have received such positive feedback about the project. For the Art UK and BBC Learning team, the work for 2013 is over, but for many schools, the project marks the start of a journey in which the visual arts are brought into the curriculum as a way of enhancing and enriching education across a number of subjects. Rosanne Pugh, head teacher of Onny Primary school commented 'This work continues naturally after we have seen Monet, but with a realness and a deeper personal understanding. We will continue to exploit this day educationally.'



I have had the pleasure of meeting hundreds of teachers and thousands of schoolchildren whose enthusiasm for embracing the potential these paintings had to inform learning was highly infectious. The variety of learning pathways schools followed were inspirational. At The Norton Knatchbull School, biology students were inspired by the theme of "perception" they had identified in Ben Nicholson's cubist-esque 1932 (*Bocque*) (on loan from the Arts Council Collection). In response, they were building structures to represent the function of neurons and synapses using willow, balloons, small pieces of plasticine and papier-mâché. At Trelai Primary School, years 5 and 6 were learning about Welsh myth and landscape, inspired by Turner's painting *Dolbadarn Castle*, which depicts the Welsh Prince Owain the Red being led to the castle where he would remain imprisoned by his brother for 20 years; their source material also included other manuscripts in the Library's collection. The recipients of John Luke's *Connswater Bridge* at Craigavon and Gracehill Primary Schools studied symmetry and constructed their own bridges in order to understand the forces inherent in load-bearing structures.



Following each loan we asked the collection, the school and the children to each complete a survey. The results of these surveys will be used to improve the project if we are able to offer it again in the future. These answers are to be assessed against our overall aims for the project:

1. To provide a lasting memory of the day a painting came to their school for participating children
2. To encourage children to feel confident in looking at art
3. To encourage schools to use art in a cross curricular way
4. To encourage schools to use the Art UK resource
5. To foster relationships between collections and schools
6. To enable collections to deliver a high profile outreach project that helped them to realise their own targets for access and inclusion
7. To empower children with the understanding that publicly owned paintings belong to them as much as anyone else

Overall Satisfaction

We were delighted that 100% of teachers felt that children had learned new things and 97% would be inspired to use art for cross curricular learning in the future. Also encouraging was the 100% 'Yes' response collections gave to the question 'Would you do it again?' 98% of children said they enjoyed the day; 97% loved the painting. 61% of children also thought that the day was special because the painting was a masterpiece and not just any old painting – because 'we were trusted with an expensive painting'.



Delivery

From the collections point of view, it is clear from comments that the project allowed them to realise individual criteria in delivering outreach projects such as forging of relationships with particular schools or engaging with children from particular social backgrounds. For example, The National Library of Wales were able to loan to a school in an area of social deprivation, in line with their directive to target outreach at children in poverty. The responses show a high degree of

satisfaction with logistical arrangements for transport and security (100% rating of excellent or very good) and a 96% response of excellent or very good with display of the painting on the day. All collections felt that the additional work the project entailed was at a manageable level.



Schools were very satisfied with the application process and with logistics, but we take heed of the comment that at times they were approached by too many people ahead of the loan asking for information, and will make sure we streamline this process in the future. Thank you for your candid feedback.

When asked about the level of support from the gallery ahead of the loan, it is clear that a greater level of support resulted in a more comprehensive day of cross curricular activities. In general, preparation was good, with just 16% of schools saying they would have benefitted from more support from the collection. The presence of dedicated art-coordinators within a school, and the willingness of the school to collapse the timetable and embrace the day wholeheartedly was also a significant factor in realising an ultimately successful outcome.

The Day

The high number of enthusiastic qualitative comments from collections, children and teachers testify to the impact these paintings had. I think collections were surprised at how enjoyable it was for them. Emma Philip, curator at Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery commented 'Days like these remind me why I do the job in the first place'; Sandy Wood, Curator at the Royal Scottish Academy of Art and Architecture wrote 'projects like these are indispensable for small galleries like us. Since we have a very small staff it is very difficult to organise activities like these and without the support of Art UK/BBC we would struggle to provide anything on this scale of success or innovation. Should the project continue we would love to be involved next year and in the years to come.'

The teaching staff also showed great satisfaction with the project: Alan Pithie, rector of Auchmuty High School 'I have been telling lots of people all about the queues of students that lined up at lunchtime to see the Peploe... I have no doubt that your project is going to have a huge impact on young people's appreciation of art across Scotland.' Sara Erwin, Head of Art at The Voyager Academy 'How proud was I to know that I with my others from all the different agencies had helped to give every child an experience that I am sure they will remember for the rest of their lives... it is the highlight of my career.'

A child from Firbeck Academy, Nottingham, 'It was so fun because you seen [sic] a real life painting and not a picture on the smart board'; an 8 year old from Onny Primary School 'Amazing, I will remember it forever'.

When asked about the quality of cross curricular work produced in response to the painting, 90% of collections and 100% of schools rated it as good or excellent and 100% of children said they enjoyed using art in a cross curricular way 'because it made the other subjects interesting too'. You can see the variety of learning pathways explored in the download Cross Curricular Learning Outcomes.



Follow Up

We are encouraged by the responses from all parties regarding follow-up activities. 95% of children said they would like to go to the gallery either with their parents or with schools. 92% of schools said they would remain in contact with the gallery that loaned the work and 62% of collections thought that the project had brought new schools to their doors.

100% of schools said they would use Your Paintings (now known as Art UK) in the classroom (indeed, we saw plenty of evidence of it in use during the loan days), and 97% of children thought they would like to use it either in school, or would look at it at home. All schools surveyed said they would also investigate other in schools programmes such as Take One Picture, Arts Mark or Regional Collections' schemes (if they are not already using one of them).

Summary

From the statistical and qualitative responses, we can conclude that the project has met our aims and criteria in the following ways:

1. Children were vocal about what an amazing day they had had, and both children and teachers said they would remember the day forever.
2. The project helped children to feel comfortable with both looking at and producing art: 'Yes, I liked it because it taught me and gave me courage to draw and if I am good enough I might become a famous artist' (11 year old at Glan Usk Primary School).
3. Schools embraced the opportunity to use art in a cross curricular way and children enjoyed the experience.
4. All schools and children said they would use the Art UK resource.

5. Most collections felt that it brought new audiences to the gallery; this is supported by the responses of children and schools who said they would make follow-up visits.
6. The project supported collections in delivering a unique, high profile outreach activity. In many cases, the project was also able to meet individual aims and targets of particular collections.
7. Children felt that they were trusted and valued as they had been allowed to house something of great value in their school for the day.

It remains for me to thank all those involved in delivery this amazing project:

BBC Learning

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All participating collections

All participating schools

All participating couriers

Without your support this scheme would not have been possible.

Dr Camilla Stewart, Art UK

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