



# Ikon Activity Pack

## KS3

Ikon's activity packs are designed for creative learning at school or home. Inspired by Ikon's showcase by [Vanley Burke](#).

Created by artist Haseebah Ali, they include questions for thinking and talking about art in relation to other subjects, including global cultures and environments.

Share your creations with [learning@ikon-gallery.org](mailto:learning@ikon-gallery.org) or via social media [@ikongallery](#) [#ikongallery](#).

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# Vanley Burke

Ikon Gallery, Migrant Voice and University of Birmingham collaborated with artist Vanley Burke to photograph people who were born overseas and currently live in Birmingham, the UK's second biggest city. The participants were portrayed by the artist in their homes, parks and places of work. They were also interviewed by university researchers about the help and support they received to settle into their new communities. The photographs were exhibited at Ikon Gallery where they were seen by visitors who were questioned about their own experience and understanding of migration.

**Key words:** Migration, city, community, diversity, institutional and intercommunal barriers

**Art form:** Photography, portraiture, storytelling, documentary and social engagement

**About the artist:** Born in Jamaica in 1951, Vanley Burke is a British artist, photographer and curator. For his 10th birthday, he was sent a camera by his mother who moved to the UK while he remained with his aunt in Jamaica. At the age of 14 he joined his parents, taking his camera with him. For more than fifty years, Vanley Burke's photographs have stimulated public debate by capturing the evolving cultural landscape and social change in the UK.



*Collette and her children (2021)*



*Nas delivered (2021)*





Zarah with her mother Lufta at Saathi House (2021)

Take a [3D tour of the exhibition](#).

**Look at the photograph *Zarah with her mother Lufta at Saathi House***

**Vanley Burke likes to photograph in black and white rather than colour. This makes his work seem more factual, like he is documenting a real event.**

What do Zarah and Lufta's clothes tell you about them?

What do you think the headscarf represents?

How do you feel about people expressing their beliefs and identities through their clothing?

Why do you think people are intolerant of other people's beliefs and identities?

How can institutions – like schools, colleges and universities – foster tolerance and understanding among the students and staff?



**Vanley Burke's portrait of Zarah with her mother Lufta is included in an exhibition titled *A Gift to Birmingham* at Ikon Gallery. Look at the other portraits in the exhibition.**

Can you spot the 'gifts' the participants are giving to Birmingham?

Does a 'gift' need to be an object?

Can gift-giving be an exchange of cultures?

How important is cultural exchange to building communities?

What are the social benefits of intercommunal dialogue?



Top left: *Nas delivered* (2021)

Top right: *Mashkura* (2021)

Bottom left: *Zarah with her mother Lufta at Saathi House* (2021)

Bottom right: *Kurdy fighting back* (2021)



Sundus (2021)

**Throughout Vanley's career he has captured images that show historical and social change.**

How has migration historically reshaped the character of Birmingham/UK?

What is Birmingham/UK known for and how does this relate to the migrant experience?

How does the UK government treat people arriving from different countries?

Using the glossary can you describe the difference between a migrant, asylum seeker and refugee?

Do you prefer the term ethnic minority or global majority? Why do you prefer that term?

### **Group exercise**

Below are three extracts from the interviews conducted by the researchers at the University of Birmingham as part of *A Gift to Birmingham*.

Read and discuss the quotes below, taking into consideration how the interviewee identifies and if they feel supported by their community?

#### **Male from Sudan in his 50s/60s**

"I also see myself as an immigrant because my story is I was born in a refugee camp and I'm being an immigrant from the time. We got, we kept on migrating, migrating outside, and coming back to the country and as even coming to the UK I still feel that I'm an immigrant. Even if I came to the UK as a student on a scholarship but still, I still feel myself as an immigrant. This is my identity, like I know whenever I go, I'll still feel myself as immigrant. Even if I have the British citizenship."

**Female from Jamaica in her 30s.**

**Mother of two**

"For my daughter when we first moved here in 2015 and primary school wasn't so bad, she tended to enjoy primary school. But as she started in secondary school, she hasn't had a good journey, since she is there, she's not been happy in school, she's complaining about racism she's complaining about teachers just never taking her side in no situation whatsoever, so she's made to feel like she's not wanted, or she doesn't...she doesn't belong."

**Female from Poland in her 30s**

"I used to speak with much more British accent actually a couple of years ago when I still like cared about sounding British so for the first couple of years I was just like striving to like climb to the top and like you know kind of acted British but couple of years ago you know and just before Brexit when all this facility against migrants started to stir I decided to just not be bothered by it. I kind of embrace the migrant identity."

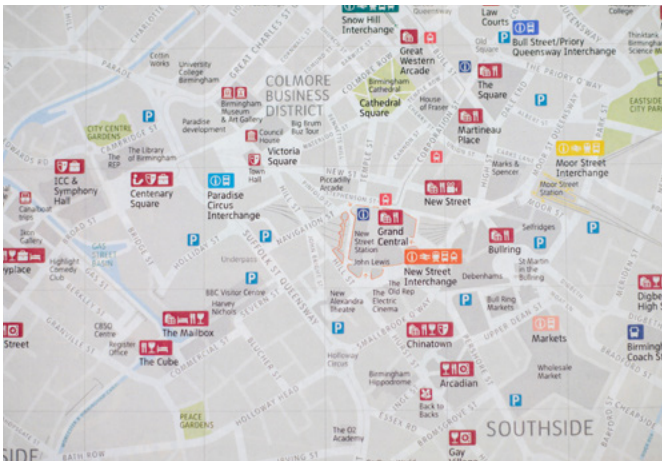
# Painting connections

Vanley Burke travelled across Birmingham's inner-city to document its communities. Using maps and lines create an abstract painting describing your classmates' journeys to school.

**You will need:** A map of the local area around school, a printer, coloured pens, paint, paintbrushes, paper, black felt tip pen.

1. Print out a map of the area around your school.

2. Ask 5-8 people in the room if they can draw a line on the map showing their journey to school. Use a different coloured pen for each person.



3. Pour different colours of paint onto a tray. Recreate the lines that you see on the map. These lines can be thicker and more abstract.

4. Once the paint is dry, outline the painted lines with a black pen and add extra marks to show footpaths or steps.





# Glossary

## Refugee

A refugee is a person who has left their country because they are at risk there.

## Asylum Seeker

An asylum seeker is a person who has left their country and is asking for protection in another country. They have to wait to be legally recognised as a refugee.

## Migrant

A person who has moved from the country they were born in to another.

## Diversity

People from a range of different backgrounds, lifestyles and interests.

## Social change

Social change is the way human interactions and relationships transform culture and organisations.

## Community

A group of people that come together and share similar interests.

*A Gift to Birmingham* has been commissioned as part of the 'Non-formal Intercommunal Education in Birmingham (NICE-B)' project funded by the ESRC-IAA and led by Dr Reza Gholami, Deputy Director of the Centre for Research in Race and Education, [University of Birmingham](#).

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