

SCHOOLS SHOWCASE: CREATIVE CONNECTIONS

This showcase is a celebration of artworks made by pupils from thirteen Birmingham primary schools during Spring/Summer 2023, as part of Creative Connections, the regional schools' consortia.

Organised by Ikon, the project involved 930 primary school pupils who visited Ikon's exhibition of drawings and paintings by Edward Lear. The students then worked with Birmingham-based visual artists back in their classrooms to create bold and experimental pieces responding to the theme 'journeys'. Pupils' ideas and actions are captured in their artworks which convey their unique experiences of place, movement and culture.

AUDLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL: YEAR 5

ARTIST: SARAH HAMILTON BAKER

PERFORMANCE, MIXED MEDIA

Together with the artist, students embarked on a space-themed journey, exploring movement and mark making through performance art. They created wearable sculptures and traversed large pieces of fabric, following movement instructions such as 'bop', 'glide' and 'turn', marking their journeys by leaving tracks with their sculptures. Students invite visitors to follow movement instructions they have written, encouraging them to interact with their installation.

BEECHWOOD CE PRIMARY SCHOOL: YEAR 4

ARTIST: TAT VISION

MIXED MEDIA

Drawing inspiration from a story about a magical beast, students worked with the artist to design and construct a dragon train – a mythical creature which journeys through different countries, gathering cultures. Students decorated each of the carriages with drawings and paintings representing different types of journeys they have taken or wish to take in the future.

BROMLEY PENSNETT PRIMARY SCHOOL: YEAR 1

ARTIST: WILL KEW

CERAMICS

Students boarded Ikon's *Slow Boat* to travel along the Tipton canal, observing and sketching scenery along the way. The clear water and abundant wildlife of the canal highlights the importance of our waterways as green corridors and shows how pockets of urban landscape can be transformed with care into havens of biodiversity. Back in their classroom, students explored canal folk art which informed their designs for a large 'tableau' panel, with each student painting a tile. Following the showcase, this collaborative artwork will be permanently installed in their school.

BROWNMEAD ACADEMY: YEAR 4**ARTIST: POLLY BRANT****DRAWING, MIXED MEDIA**

Inspired by the theme of journeys, students explored Birmingham and their local communities through cartography. During creative workshops, students were introduced to a variety of drawing and collage techniques and used a range of media to create maps – revealing their individual and personal connections to places. With the artist, students created an activity guide to share with visitors, encouraging others to consider local communities through their own unique perspectives.

ELMS FARM COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL: YEAR 3**ARTIST: WILL KEW****CERAMICS**

The students explored their own gardens and neighbourhoods; far away from the exotic destinations of Edward Lear's travels. With the artist, they created sketchbooks, recording local landscapes and landmarks. Inspired by Lear, students focused on recording snapshots of place and time, paying attention to the effects of the weather and quality of light by experimenting with colour. They turned sketchbook entries into clay 'postcard' tiles, using ceramic techniques including slip painting, coiling and sgraffito.

HILLSTONE PRIMARY SCHOOL: YEAR 4**ARTIST: EXODUS CROOKS****DRAWING, POETRY**

Students were introduced to John Agard's poem *Windrush Child* and considered the history of the Windrush and migration. With the artist, they explored what it might mean, and what it might feel like, to migrate – listening carefully to pupils with first-hand experience. They used inks and pastels to document the foods, toys, animals and buildings they would take with them, or might encounter, if they moved to a new place. Students wrote poems representing their understanding of migration and relevance to Birmingham's diverse communities.

HOB GREEN PRIMARY SCHOOL: YEAR 4 AND 5**ARTIST: MONICA PEREZ VEGA****DRAWING, MIXED MEDIA**

Students considered the theme of journeys by reflecting on their own personal experiences and everyday travels. Guided by the artist, they took a journey with their eyes – closely observing their local environment and making continual line drawings – before using drawing and painting to illustrate memorable journeys from their past. Students also transformed found objects into 'trail signs', crafting trails in the forest school area for their peers to discover and explore the school's flora and fauna.

JERVOISE SCHOOL: YEAR 4**ARTIST: HASEEBAH ALI****PRINTMAKING, TEXTILES**

The artist invited students to consider where they would go on a journey and items they would take with them – from luggage and passports to postcards and letters. They decorated suitcases with drawings of the journeys they would embark on and made a blanket and passport to take with them. Students reimagined a world map and the flags of imagined countries.

PRINCETHORPE INFANT SCHOOL: YEAR 3

ARTIST: TAT VISION

MIXED MEDIA

The artist and students worked collaboratively to construct a ship, onto which they wrote messages, as well as adding notes to bottles which travel the oceans. These messages signify the students' desires to make connections with people from different countries and extend the hand of friendship across the seas, welcoming conversations with others. They used recycled materials to convey an important environmental message and concerns about climate change.

SLADEFIELD INFANT SCHOOL AND TOPCLIFFE SCHOOL: YEAR 2 AND 3

ARTIST: JOANNE MASDING

CERAMICS

Students worked with the artist to create a museum of personal objects using clay, reflecting their individual identities and aspirations. They recreated meaningful objects from their past, symbolising their personal heritage and influences such as toys, jewellery and cultural symbols. They also crafted objects representing their envisioned future selves and the qualities and careers they aspire to. During a final workshop with the artist, students created objects as gifts for future archaeologists, expressing how they want to be perceived in 200 years time.

THE OVAL SCHOOL: YEAR 4

ARTIST: JOANNA FURSMAN

PHOTOGRAPHY

Students considered how they could use photography when making journeys around their school environment. The artist introduced a 'photo walk' method, encouraging students to take photographs every 10 steps using iPads, documenting and capturing important places and interactions and exploring the school's landscapes.

WYCHALL PRIMARY SCHOOL: YEAR 5 AND 6

ARTIST: HIPKISS & GRANAY

DRAWING, PAINTING, SCULPTURE

The students and artists co-created an artwork inspired by Edward Lear's sketches and landscape drawings, tracing his journeys through Europe, the Middle East and India across many decades. Students worked outdoors to capture the environment of their playgrounds, while the artists encouraged them to explore feelings of solitude and disorientation. The waymarkers evoke a sense of Lear's travels, helping lost travellers find their way.

This project is generously supported by Creative Connections.

Ikon Gallery, Brindleyplace, Birmingham, B1 2HS
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Open Wednesday–Sunday, 11am–5pm
Free entry, donations welcome

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