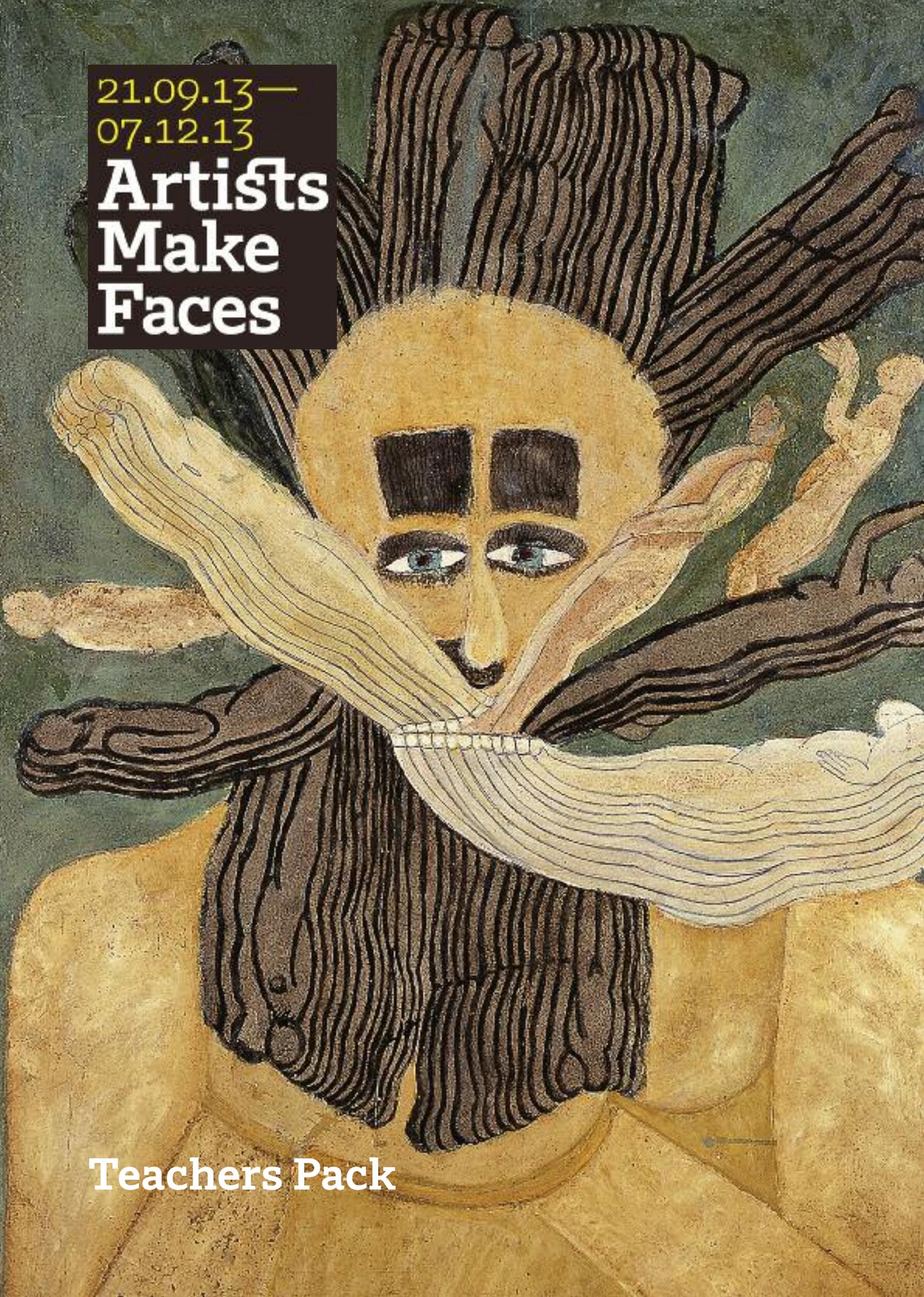


21.09.13—
07.12.13

Artists Make Faces



Teachers Pack

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About the Teachers Pack

The aim of this pack is to provide a way to look at, learn from, and engage with the various themes, characters, and artworks included in the exhibition **Artists Make Faces** at Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery, 21 September to 7 December 2013.

Elements of this pack can support your visit to the exhibition, and can also be adapted for use in the classroom pre- or post- visit.

Please refer to page 15 for guidance on how to book a visit.

Introduction to the exhibition

In 1983, Monika Kinley and her partner Victor Musgrave invited their artist friends to lend works for a small show in their new London home. The show was called **Artists Make Faces** and included work by Auerbach, Kossoff, Rego and Pacheco, as well as work by 'Outsiders'. 30 years on, this exhibition is a realisation of a long held idea to create a show on this theme in a public gallery. It will feature a distinctive and personal selection of works from public art galleries and collections, including Arts Council England, Tate, National Galleries of Scotland, and the Whitworth Gallery, Manchester. It also features loans from a number of private collections, galleries, and artists.

So many artists both past and present are concerned with the face. It gives us our identity and acts as a mirror for our feelings. In this show, the selected artists use it as a canvas, playing with it or agonising over it rather than creating a straightforward image of a recognisable person.

Monika Kinley OBE

"So many artists both past and present are concerned with the face, we can think of works that have stayed in our memory.

The face, the compendium of the whole body, it gives us our identity. We express our emotions, sadness, joy; we smile, frown, look perplexed in conversation, nature has provided us with a mirror of our feelings.

A commissioned portrait is expected to be a record of the persons featured, so as to be recognisable. But here the artists just use the face as a canvas, the person is not there to be recognized, the face is there to be played with or agonized over.

There are wonderful examples where artists have portrayed fellow artists in subtle ways, there are wonderful examples, still, nothing is quite as expected.

I have always been interested in artists 'inventions' and the face is such a great canvas. No other part of the body can express and subvert the normal conventions.

It offers an exciting visual experience."

Monika Kinley, Exhibition Curator

Monika also very kindly allowed us to record a conversation between herself and Jon Thompson, artist, curator and academic, who was head of art at Goldsmiths' College in the 1980s. The conversation took place in September 2012. An MP3 in two parts can be listened to here.

What's in a face?

It is difficult to think of any human interaction within which the face does not play an important role. Even when you are having a verbal conversation with someone, your facial expressions – the tiny movements of muscles beneath the skin – will be playing an important role in that conversation, often sub-consciously mirroring each other. Within the context of a conversation, facial expressions can voluntarily or involuntarily imply, amongst other things; subtext, subterfuge, joy, fear, confusion, anger, elation, irony, nervousness – many human states that can be conveyed non-verbally.

One of the first things we tend to do when starting a conversation is make eye-contact with that person. The eyes can reveal a great deal about the way a person is thinking or feeling, and it can be incredibly unnerving, even rude, if someone refuses to make eye-contact with you during a conversation. Raised eye-brows, down-turned lips, wincing etc. can be seen as offering additional negative non-verbal communication to a conversation, while smiling, or having dilated pupils, can be seen as positive non-verbal communication. Often, these non-verbal additions are fleeting, and we might not even be conscious of making them.

The philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein was concerned with the expressiveness of the body as a whole, but also saw the face as 'special'. He was studying the philosophy of the mind, but recognised that the external expressions offered by the body could be helpful in these studies, and called the human body the best picture of the human soul – “the face is the soul of the body”.

The writer Rainer Maria Rilke, in a passage from his *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge* wrote:

“To think, for instance, that I have never been aware before how many faces there are. There are quantities of human beings, but there are many more faces, for each person has several”

Rilke adopted a style of writing for his novel that came to be known as ‘expressionism’, an approach mirrored in the visual arts, including some of the artists included within Artists Make Faces.

Artists included in the exhibition

Jankel Adler / Eileen Agar / Giuseppe Arcimboldo /
Frank Auerbach / Clive Barker / Georg Baselitz /
Ralph Brown / Chila Kumari Burman / Alan Davie /
John Davies / Jean Dubuffet / Simon English /
Stephen Finer / Lucian Freud / Henri Gaudier-Brzeska /
Gilbert and George / T. H. Gordon / Richard Hamilton /
Nigel Henderson / Howard Hodgkin / Rudolf Horacek /
Allen Jones / Leon Kossoff / Jonathan Leaman /
Hew Locke / Albert Louden / L. S. Lowry /
F. E. McWilliam / Robert Medley / Paul Neagu /
Richard Nie / Ana Maria Pacheco / Eduardo Paolozzi /
Roland Penrose / Marc Quinn / Karl Schmidt-Rottluff /
Sava Sekulić / Peter Startup / Jimmy Lee Sudduth /
Phillip Sutton / David Whittaker / Victor Willing /
Scottie Wilson / Agatha Wojciechowsky

Giuseppe Arcimboldo



Summer

Oil on canvas

Southampton City Art Gallery

Arcimboldo was born in Milan in 1526 or 1527, and is best known for creating paintings that depict recognisable everyday objects such as fruit, vegetables, books and flowers arranged in such a way that they resemble human heads. He became court portrait painter to Emperor Ferdinand 1 in Vienna in 1562.

In this painting, Arcimboldo composes his subject from a variety of summer fruits: his lips are formed by a split fig, his cheeks by ripe blushing apples, the collar by peaches and the shoulder by pears; the chest is constructed from great melons, one split in half, and the figure wears a crown of corn blooms. The individual elements have symbolic significance - for example, a peach with a leaf represented the unison of the heart and tongue, and so symbolised truth.

His paintings catered to the taste of the time – there was a fascination in the Renaissance for riddles, puzzles, and the bizarre.

Sava Sekulic



Napoleon and his Daughters

1975

Household paint and pencil on board

Whitworth Art Gallery, University of Manchester

Sava Sekulic, was born in 1902 in what is now Croatia, and is perhaps the most interesting self-taught artist to emerge from the former Yugoslavia.

Sava Sekulić wanted his work to reflect his own understanding and knowledge of the world. He drew his creative power from his father's past encouragement who told him to "...write with stone on stone, learn to work with your hands. And if you write down what comes into your mind, nobody will say this belongs to me, everybody will say this is yours". There are recurring themes in all his works: animals, bizarre bodies, victims, rebels, historical heroes and also scenes from family life. The composition of his paintings is very simple as he mostly drew a single figure composed of both human and animal body parts to which he deliberately added unusual details like grotesque, scrawny hands and the odd position of thumb and fingers.

This exhibition includes a number of works from the Musgrave Kinley Outsider Art Collection, gifted to the Whitworth Art Gallery, University of Manchester through the Contemporary Art Society.

Frank Auerbach



Head of Laurie Owen

1971

Oil on board

Whitworth Art Gallery, University of Manchester

Auerbach was born in Berlin in 1931, moving to Britain in 1939 under the Kindertransport scheme, just prior to the outbreak of WWII. He studied at St Martins School of Art, the Royal College of Art, and importantly at London's Borough Polytechnic under the painter David Bomberg.

His works regularly feature the same limited band of sitters. Some have been sitting for him for 25 years. Auerbach himself says "If they've sat long enough, they're not self-conscious".

Auerbach has a strict method: he paints and repaints his sitters, often scraping his paintings down to the canvas after each of the many sittings, and becomes agitated if they're even a few minutes late for their weekly sessions. From such a destructive method come paintings which will always happen 'in one take,' at a final sitting. Where they haven't met his standards, he has been known to buy back and destroy an inferior painting, sometimes years after completion.

John Davies



Dogman

1972

Polyester resin, fibreglass and steel

Tate

Davies was born in 1946 in Cheshire. He studied at both Hull and Manchester Colleges of Art and later moved to the Slade, London before winning a sculpture fellowship at Gloucester College of Art.

Davies' practice is mainly focuses on the depiction of the human figure, with works often installed in groups to suggest particular relationships. In 'Dogman', he incorporates what he calls a 'device', in this case a dog-like muzzle. The viewer is therefore presented with a paradox: a head which appears both naturalistic and simultaneously fantastic. Often the device can affect the eyes and make them seem to look back at the viewer in a certain kind of way, for example defiantly or tenderly, as happens when one encounters a person face to face.

David Whittaker



The Year List (Bassaleg Viaduct, River Ebbw, Redstart)

2012

Oil & acrylic on canvas

Courtesy Millenium, St Ives

Whittaker was born in Cornwall in 1964. He is a self-taught artist, and has recently exhibited widely, and won first prize at the National Open Art Competition in 2011.

Most of his works are based around the loose form of the human head and its metaphysical core. His ambiguous, non-specific portraits explore states of calm and conflict, confidence and nervousness, hopes and fears, conscious and subconscious, male and female.

During recent years, Whittaker has been adapting to diagnosis of gender dysphoria, a condition in which a person feels that there is a mismatch between their biological sex and their gender identity. This provides us with a context within which to think about his approach to making paintings of the face and head.

Writers Make Faces

Below you will find a long list of words used to describe facial expressions. Some are positive words, others negative. Using this list, ask your pupils to write a short story based around a few different characters.

Ask your pupils to help their readers by giving them an idea of what their character or a subject is feeling. As you don't have the opportunity to illustrate the facial expressions of the characters, these words will be incredibly useful in painting a picture of the scene in your reader's imagination.

Absent: preoccupied

Agonised: as if in pain or tormented

Alluring: attractive, in the sense of arousing desire

Appealing: attractive, in the sense of encouraging goodwill and/or interest

Bilious: ill-natured

Bleak: see *grim* and *hopeless*

Blinking: surprise, or lack of concern

Blissful: showing a state of happiness or divine contentment

Blithe: carefree, light-hearted

Brooding: see *gloomy*

Bug eyed: frightened or surprised

Cheeky: cocky, insolent

Cheerless: sad

Crestfallen: see *despondent*

Deadpan: expressionless, to conceal emotion or heighten humour

Dejected: see *despondent*

Despondent: depressed or discouraged

Doleful: sad or afflicted

Dour: stern or obstinate; see also *despondent*

Downcast: see *despondent*

Dreamy: distracted by daydreaming or fantasizing

Ecstatic: delighted or entranced

Etched: see *fixed*

Faint: cowardly, weak, or barely perceptible

Fixed: concentrated or immobile

Gazing: staring intently

Glancing: staring briefly as if curious but evasive

Glaring: see *hostile*

Glazed: expressionless due to fatigue or confusion

Gloomy: see *despondent* and *sullen*

Glowering: annoyed or angry

Glowing: see *radiant*

Grim: see *despondent*; also, fatalistic or pessimistic

Grave: serious, expressing emotion due to loss or sadness

Haunted: frightened, worried, or guilty

Hopeless: depressed by a lack of encouragement or optimism

Hostile: aggressively angry, intimidating, or resistant

Hunted: tense as if worried about pursuit

Impassive: see *deadpan*

Inscrutable: mysterious, unreadable

Jeering: insulting or mocking

Languid: lazy or weak

Meaningful: to convey an implicit connotation or shared secret

Mild: easygoing

Mischievous: annoyingly or maliciously playful

Moody: see *sullen*

Pained: affected with discomfort or pain

Pallid: see *wan*

Peering: with curiosity or suspicion

Peeved: annoyed

Petulant: see *cheeky* and *peevish*

Pitying: sympathetic

Pleading: seeking apology or assistance

Pouting: see *sullen*

Quizzical: questioning or confused

Radiant: bright, happy

Roguish: see *mischievous*

Sanguine: bloodthirsty, confident

Sardonic: mocking

Scornful: contemptuous or mocking

Scowling: displeased or threatening

Searching: curious or suspicious

Shamefaced: ashamed or bashful

Slack-jawed: dumbfounded or surprised

Sly: cunning; see *mischievous*

Snarling: surly

Sneering: see *scornful*

Somber: see *grave*

Sour: unpleasant

Stolid: inexpressive

Straight-faced: see *deadpan*

Sulky: see *sullen*

Sullen: resentful

Taut: high-strung

Tense: see *taut*

Tight: see *pained* and *taut*

Unblinking: see *fixed*

Vacant: blank or stupid looking

Veiled: see *inscrutable*

Wan: pale, sickly; see also *faint*

Wary: cautious or cunning

Wide eyed: frightened or surprised

Wild eyed: excited, frightened, or stressful

Wistful: yearning or sadly thoughtful

Withering: devastating; see also *wrathful*

Woeful: full of grief or lamentation

Wrathful: indignant or vengeful

Wry: twisted or crooked to express cleverness or a dark or ironic feeling

Exploring Artists Make Faces

Using the list of words provided above, explore the exhibition in small groups and discuss the images. Which words can be used to describe the paintings and sculptures?

Split a page of your sketchbooks into three columns. Ask each group to select a work in the exhibition. They will need to write down the name of the artist, the name of the work, and the date it was made. Underneath this, each pupil should make a note of which words can be used to describe that work.

When you have done this, the whole class can present a work each, using the words to describe the artwork. See if everyone else agrees. If not, why not?

Photographing Expressions

Ask your pupils to look at the list of adjectives above. Working in pairs with digital cameras, ask each pupil to select a single word, and then try to convey this without telling their partner which word has been selected. The partner should take a photo of each adjective the other is portraying.

Either working together, or with the whole class, can the facial expressions of this person be read? Remember, some of the adjectives have similar meanings, so there may be more than one answer for each expression.

Taking this forward, how else might we convey these adjectives through other means? Does an artwork have to have the subject of a face to be 'tense', 'dreamy', or 'ecstatic'?

What can we do for you?

We are able to offer schools various options when visiting the exhibition. Visits can be arranged for anywhere between **one class** to an **entire school**. In many cases, a member of staff can be present to facilitate your visit. We are also very happy for you to visit as a self-directed group.

The exhibition provides a perfect opportunity for your pupils to experience nationally significant architecture and art first hand – and will act as a starting point for working in sketchbooks, fact finding, and talking about the themes that surround the exhibition.

How to book a visit

We want to ensure your group has the best experience possible when visiting, so please remember to contact us first before organising your trip. We are very popular with schools, colleges and other user groups, so our galleries can get very busy from time to time.

For enquiries for school visits, contact museumvisits@plymouth.gov.uk. Please have a range of possible dates available before contacting us, as it may not always be possible to offer you your first choice date.

Please remember to bring along sketchbooks and pencils for your visit, as wet materials, and also dusty materials will not be permitted in the exhibition galleries. If you have any questions regarding materials, please contact us using the email above.

Further resources

Many of our previous Teachers Packs, Notes, and Resources are available as PDF downloads from our website www.plymouth.gov.uk/museumlearningresources.htm

MP3s

A selection of audio interviews and clips of artists and curators talking about the exhibition, or their work, can be found on our Soundcloud page. Search for 'PCMAG' to find our files



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