



Watch this Space 7 at The Exchange, Penzance

Cat Gibbard Education Officer, Newlyn Art Gallery and the Exchange

Kerry Bletso Director of Specialism, Cape Cornwall School

Amanda Beamish Head of Art Cape Cornwall School

Naomi Frears Artist

30 Year 10 GCSE Art students

Context

Newlyn Art Gallery was commissioned in 1895 by the Victorian philanthropist Passmore Edwards and rapidly became the centre for exhibiting the work of prominent artists of the region. Over the past 20 years the level of ambition within the organisation has increased significantly, to the point where the gallery consistently delivers nationally significant programmes of exhibitions and education projects. The gallery was previously limited by its building, necessitating a redevelopment in order to realise its plans to showcase the very best of regional, national and international contemporary art. The newly refurbished gallery reopened on 7th July 2007, alongside major new art space The Exchange, in the heart of Penzance.

Statistics collated by the gallery's education department illustrate that despite exceeding the target set for school and college groups, only 5% were local to the gallery and of those, one was a secondary. Cape Cornwall School has an arts specialism and is the most westerly secondary school in mainland England. It is a smaller than average 11-16 school with just over 400 students.

Project Aims

- To extend the school's capacity to deliver contemporary craft techniques.
- To consider a long term strategy for new collaborations between the Gallery, teachers and schools and how to maintain a meaningful relationship.

For Teachers

- Continued Professional Development (CPD) outside of the classroom, gaining firsthand experience of a skill that they are unpractised in and then transferring this skill in the delivery of the art curriculum.
- To contribute to the schools redesignation assessment as an Art specialist school.
- To strengthen community links and partnerships with outside agencies.

For Gallery

- To provide an alternative perspective for a given curricular area thus extending the pupils visual language.
- To gain an understanding of the schools particular focus, current agendas and how the Gallery can to support future goals e.g. extended services.

Objectives

- To identify a topic area within Year 10's scheme of work within which printing techniques can be applied.
- The artist and Education Officer to devise a workshop for students to participate in which could be adopted by the school as a unit of work in the future delivery of the topic.
- To identify a future opportunities for the gallery and school to work together.

Session 1 **Planning Day** The Exchange 11 am – 5pm 7th October 2010

- Introduction to gallery and Richard Cook exhibition *Under the Summer* by Exhibitions Manager Blair Todd
- Discussed Themes and Ideas for *Under the Summer* based on existing Teachers' Notes, providing platform for exchange of approaches, and a greater insight into how an area, in this case contemporary landscape painting, may be delivered.
- Lunch in the Exchange Cafe.
- Identify the curriculum topic within which to apply a unit on printing techniques.
- Afternoon tea with other members of staff
- Discuss delivery of workshop, timetable implications and logistics of using press.

Session 2 **Meet With Artist**

- Devise workshop for 30 Y10 GCSE students based on topic of Townscapes – 12th October.
- Artist tests Cape Cornwall's print press - 3rd November – The Exchange.

Sessions 3 & 4 **Print Workshop** – 12th & 15th November 10am – 4pm

The two days was split into four sessions:

Pupils divided into three groups



1. **Brief introduction and tour of exhibition** – prior to their visit, the students had researched the work of Richard Cook and Amanda had attended the opening of the exhibition and artists talk. The focus for the tour was on process: Cook returns repeatedly to a particular site and records in his sketchbooks an expression of how it feels to be in that place, the colour of that moment, influenced no doubt by his state of mind at the time. The sketch books are then left. When Cook returns to them, sometimes years later, it is a memory of place and time which he paints. Each 2m² canvas is a burst of energy, executed with one single large brush and the artists hands, completed in about 8 minutes. If the outcome is not perfect at the end of that time, it is abandoned.
2. **Field Study**: the aim of these short duration sketching activities was to expand the visual language of the students through the exploration of a variety of media and ways of looking. Each group was asked to make a minimum of three sketches using three different media – there were no pencils. Each group had two forays into the town and each time were asked to collect either details from buildings which they thought were visually interesting or to sketch a much photographed view of Penzance.
3. **Collage Activity**: the aim was to investigate the idea of subverting a townscape. Looking at a selection of local postcards from the 1960's and 70's, students considered ways in which the images had been manipulated present a more pleasing view. Then considered townscapes by a selection of artists including Ben Johnson, Richard Long, Paul Nash, John Piper, Samuel Palmer. Students produced their own manipulated townscape of Penzance using prepared photographs, postcards, images from their sketchbooks.
4. **Print**: the aim was to investigate inking with multiple colours and to create atmosphere by controlling the application and removal of ink. Using images from their sketchbooks or collage for inspiration the students produced an image etched onto drypoint card with which to experiment.

Evaluation



The Print Workshop presented itself during an early conversation with Kerry and Amanda about possible artists they could work with. Naomi Frears is a painter and printmaker based at Porthmeor Studios, St. Ives. She has shown widely in public and private galleries in Cornwall including Newlyn Art Gallery, Tate St.Ives and 5 solo shows at the New Millennium Gallery in St.Ives. For her, trying things out, applying criticism, seeing what doesn't work and intuiting what will, is all a necessary part of the process of making work. Cape Cornwall had a print press that had been out of service for several years. From the gallery's perspective print was a perfect medium to encourage experimentation and from Cape's, working with an expert printmaker would extend their craft skills.

Learning Outcomes Expected for Teachers

- To extend our use of printing techniques, particularly dry point and intaglio through practicing and applying them.
- To embed and strengthen links to Newlyn and the Exchange gallery

Unexpected for Teachers

- After just two days the students were far more motivated and self-confident. One student asked Naomi if they could visit her studio in St Ives.
- Students were much more willing to explore and experiment with different ways of drawing after the workshops.
- They had such a positive response to the experience that they were relaying this to their peers. As a result of this there were students wanting to change their GCSE choice and swap to Art from other subjects. The number of students studying Art at GCSE has now increased.
- Students are attending lunch time sessions on a regular basis and there is a really nice positive working atmosphere. They come to work and not just to sit and eat lunch!!
- Students are much more self-driven and are coming to us with ideas for pieces of work rather than spoon feeding them!!
- Students are discussing the possibility of studying Art beyond GCSE, in particular, University College, Falmouth.
- Students appeared genuinely impressed with meeting local artists and particularly Richard Cook who has been exhibiting work at the time of the visit. Students introduced themselves to him, shaking his hand!
- The student's reactions to the gallery visit were very positive, with most left wanting more!
Some quotes were:
"Do more trips like this one!"
"Further visits and projects please"
"More gallery visits"

Expected for Gallery

- That the students would be inspired by working with a practising artist, who is highly skilled in her discipline.
- That the students would think and work in a different way from which they did in school.
- That the relationship between the school and gallery would strengthen.

Unexpected for Gallery

- That the student's enthusiasm was not dampened by the weather conditions while sketching.
- That during the print process the students were quick to learn. Each group picking up ideas from the previous group and pushing them further.
- That four of the students have asked to complete their work experience at the gallery.
- That another secondary school having heard about the project, invited the Education Officer in to advise them on incorporating print into their scheme of work.

Expected for Students

- To visit a gallery and work with the artist, Naomi Frears
- To produce some landscape drawings and do some printing
- To spend a lot of time in just one room, or an enclosed space

Unexpected for Students

- That you don't need a pencil to sketch.
- *"I learnt to sketch quickly!"*
- *"I learnt to pick up on small details and look at buildings differently."*
- That what is represented on paper is not necessarily true to life.
- *"the collage work was really inspiring"*
- That the print session was all about testing things out, finding out what worked and what didn't.
- *"Just looking at the artwork at the end was really good."*

Future Plans for Working

- Four of the year 10 students will be spending a week's work experience at the gallery – they will be given a self contained project developing self directed activities for PRINT! an exhibition of cotemporary print at The Exchange between April and June 2011.
- The year 10 group are to return for a visit to The Exchange during PRINT!
- The galley will support Cape's contribution to La Frowda festival with a proposed poster and fanzine making workshop.

How the teachers plan to build on the experience

- To use the Gallery for work experience visits.
- To use future exhibitions at the Gallery to feed into Key Stage 3 & 4 schemes of work.
- To plan further visits that are combined with practical outcomes for Key stage 3 & 4
- To hold an exhibition of the print work produced from the Gallery visit. Show casing the work to parents, staff and the students themselves. (Invite to Naomi Frears!)
- To try and arrange a visit to Naomi's studio in St Ives for the Year 10 students.

How the gallery plans to build on the experience

- The experience can be used as a model for future relationship with other schools.
- The gallery is developing a programme of informal evenings for local teachers to get together, have a personalised tour of the current exhibition and skills exchange.