

Contemporary Learning Resource Box

Denzil Forrester: Itchin & Scratchin

Diane Simpson: Sculpture, Drawing, Prints 1976-2014

Sung Tieu: In Cold Print

8 February – 3 May 2020

The resource box contains a range of activities for schools, colleges and community groups visiting our exhibitions to actively engage groups in looking at, thinking about and discussing the artworks and their underlying themes. The activities are designed to work on several levels so that they can be used with primary, secondary and post 16.

The activities are open ended with no right or wrong answers. They are designed to encourage observation, team working, communication and debate, making connections and learning about different perspectives.

Some of the activities could be extended by writing down responses in notebooks or sketchbooks and making drawings of the artworks. (We can provide paper, clipboards and special gallery pencils).

There are more than enough activities to fill a visit so pick the ones you think would be most suitable for your group. The activities require the participants to work in small groups of 4-6 and then share with the whole group.

We encourage people to explore the artwork, but please ensure participants do not touch.

Contents list

Teacher / group leader's notes

Activities to do in the galleries:

'Flat pack sculpture'

Construct sculpture by slotting together wooden shapes.

- 5 bags of wooden shapes with slots

'Colour of movement'

Create a colourful artwork from ribbon that expresses body movements

- 5 bags of coloured ribbon.

'Finding proof'

Write a newspaper story that proves or disproves the Havana syndrome.

- 5 bags of words. Paper and pencils.

'Connection detectives'

What do you think are the connections between the artists and their work? Look for clues based on word prompts.

- 5 bags of word prompts.

'Subjects for debate'

- Open-ended questions to prompt discussion with your group.

Gallery 1

Diane Simpson

'Flat pack sculpture'

Small groups of 4-6

Approximate time of activity 20 mins.

Beautifully handmade, Diane Simpson's sculptures are constructed from parts made from everyday materials that fit seamlessly together. There is a carefully considered balance in her sculpture. The minimal, flat shapes create a complex sense of 3D space and depth. They are slotted together, a bit like flat pack furniture. Clothing and the exploration of the shapes of garments plays an important role in Diane's work.

Each small group has a bag of plywood shapes that are similar to the shapes Diane has used. The shapes can be slotted together to construct 3D sculptures. Each group works together to create a sculpture that stands up. By experimenting with slotting the shapes together in different ways they decide how to achieve the best balance and most interesting structure.

The final five sculptures are displayed together for the whole group to look at and discuss.

Suggested discussion questions:

- How did the shapes affect how your sculpture balances?
- Share how you experimented with the shapes – how did it influence your thinking and the final sculpture?
- Where would you look to find shapes to inspire your sculpture: nature, machines, fashion, buildings, human bodies, everyday objects, something else...?

Wooden shapes



Gallery 3 & 4

Denzil Forrester

'Colour of movement'

Small group activity

Approximate time of activity 20 mins.

Denzil Forrester's large, colourful paintings capture the dynamic energy of the London reggae and dub nightclub scene during the 1980s and 90s. His paintings begin as quick sketches, drawn in the darkness of the busy dancefloors.

Each group chooses a painting, and looking at the shapes and colours, discusses and tries to copy the movements Denzil has captured.

Each small group has a bag of coloured ribbons. Together they will use these to create a picture on the floor of the gallery.

- A group member makes a dance move with their whole body.
- The other group members use one piece of ribbon each to 'draw' the shape. This need not be the whole outline of the body; maybe a line from top of the head to the feet, or from one hand to the other, that shows the wiggle, bend, twist of the body during the movement.
- Each person takes it in turn to create a movement while the others place a ribbon, building up a colourful artwork.

Each group shares their ribbon artwork with the whole group.

Suggested discussion questions:

- Which colours do you think worked best for which movements?
- If you were to create an artwork about your favourite music, what movements, lines and colours would you choose?

Gallery 2

Sung Tieu

'Finding proof'

Small groups activity

Approximate time of activity 20 mins.

Sung Tieu's installation is about the so-called 'Havana Syndrome'. In 2016, US embassy staff in Cuba started to complain of unexplained sound that left them dizzy and gave them headaches. They believed these to be caused by a secret sound weapon being played to them as they lived and worked. Tieu has written newspaper reports in the style of a journalist that may influence what gallery visitors think about source of the sound. For the first few weeks of the exhibition, the 'articles' argue for the existence of the sound weapon. For the rest of the show they argue against its existence.

Each small group has a pack of words. Each pack has different words. After spending a few minutes looking around the installation the groups should decide if they think the sound is an intentional secret weapon or just random noises. They then use some or all the words in their pack to help them write a short report for a newspaper - headline and two-three sentences - expressing their opinion.

Each group reads out their article and everyone discusses whether the article is telling us that there was a sound weapon or not.

Suggested discussion questions:

- What did you talk about and consider when you were making your newspaper report?
- How do you think newspapers and the media might influence our opinions?
- How do you know if something you read or hear is true?

Word packs

1. dangerous secret hidden weapon
 painful frightening aggressive
2. unlikely unfortunate unexplained normal
 scared random undecided
3. paranoid sneaky rumour target
 doubt proof tests
4. debate damage difficult insects
 brain sound unsettling
5. psychological attack accuse possible
 investigation dizzy deny

All galleries

‘Connection detectives’

Small group activity

Approximate time of activity – 25 mins

The exhibitions show work by three artists with very different backgrounds, interests, materials and ways of working. It gives visitors of all ages the chance to compare their approaches, discuss their ideas and artistic choices, and make connections.

Each small group has a pack of word prompts. They go into each gallery in turn. This can be as a class, accompanied by an adult or independently as appropriate. Looking at the exhibitions they decide if their prompts connect to any the artists’ work and interests.

When they have visited all the galleries, the groups gather together and describe which prompts they have connected to which artworks and if they have connected the same prompts to more than one artist’s work.

The groups may also make their own observations and find other links between the artists and their work.

Prompts:	hearing	drawing	constructing
	clothes	history	movement
	control	repetition	

Suggested discussion questions:

- Which of the prompts do you think connected to all the artists’ work? How?
- What, if any, new connections did you think of?

Subjects for debate

What do you think might influence an artist's decision to make art about a particular subject?

Why do you think some artists keep working with the same ideas for their whole career?

How might artists reveal events and periods in (recent) history in ways that tell us something that other forms of information and media aren't able to?

What do you think is more important to the quality of an artist's work, their skills or their ideas? How might the artist's ideas and interests affect their choices of working methods and process?

Both Forrester and Simpson have not been as famous as some other artists during their careers? What do you think might be the reasons that some artists are more successful than others?