

Our Silver City, 2094

20 November 2021 – 18th May 2022

Learning Resource

The resource is designed for **primary, secondary and post 16 students**. It can be used as part of a range of curriculum subjects: Art and DT, English, Geography, Media Studies, Science, PSHE and Citizenship.

Activities

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

The activities require the participants to work in pairs or small groups of students and then share with the whole group. More than one activity can take place at a time so that there are smaller numbers in each gallery.

Fictional Futures

Using the word bank provided as a starting point, create a description of an imagined future. Feel free to add your own words and ideas.

Natural Colour

Use the cotton fabric coloured with natural dyes to mix new colours. Shine torches to make the colours brighter.

Making is Caring

Sit together and add to the communal sewing while discussing how society could become more caring.

Predicting Tomorrow...

Weather sounds and movements for traditional weather prediction sayings.

Additional subjects for Debate

Resources required

Paper and pencils.

Students and staff may document their responses with cameras or tablets.

Fictional Futures

All galleries

Our Silver City, 2094

'Before the Great Flood and the Great Freeze of 2071, this city was called Nottingham. It was re-christened the Silver City by those stayed, locked in by ice. Water and cold were not the only threats to our survival in that decisive era. Sherwood Forest had suffered severe damage in the Fire season of 2068. The woodland has been regenerating since although some tree species never returned.

When those who had fled to other parts of the Sherwood sector began to return, they revived the textile industry using new dyes. Meanwhile local weather forecasters were developing their craft, combining the study of the sun, wind and water with the observation of wildlife and plants. A deepening of spiritual understanding led to a Temple being created where regular gatherings are held to this day.'

This is the narrative of the exhibition, of an imagined future in Nottingham in 2094. It was created collectively by curator Prem Krishnamurthy, artists Celine Condorelli, Grace Ndiritu and Femke Herregraven, and novelist Liz Jensen.

Activity

Work in small groups.

Discuss what you think Nottingham might be like in 2094.

Choose key words together from the word bank that help you start to describe this future. Write them out singly on small scraps of paper

Arrange your words on the floor and think about the words you think are missing.

Write words of your own on more scraps of paper and the joining words to make sentences. There may be more than one viewpoint in your group – try and include everyone's ideas even if the description is confusing.

Decide on a name for your imagined city.

Share your description with the other groups.

Discussion prompts after the activity

- How were opinions about the future similar and how did they differ?
- Were any key words missing from the word bank? (apart from connectives) What were they?
- What do you hope the future will bring?

Word bank for Fictional Futures

future weather catastrophe

extreme heat cold storms fires

destruction rebirth technology

change local global wildlife

city forests food community

water rivers plastic industry

ancient futuristic transport

materials clothes travel

nature poisoned clean natural

manmade rebuild new old

lost found hope memory

share

Natural Colour Gallery 2

Explore the artworks

For *Our Silver City*, **Celine Condorelli** describes her work as an exploration of the future of colour and the future of materials. The colours Celine has used in her artworks, printed onto paper and fabric, are made using instructions she found about how an octopus produces ink. Cephalopods (octopi and squid) use colour to communicate, adapt and respond to their environment

Activity

Work in two groups.

There are pieces of cotton fabric in two colours. The fabric has been dyed with the spice Turmeric and the vegetable beetroot. Each group has two pieces of fabric, one of each colour. There are also some torches.

Look closely at your fabrics. Use the torches to help investigate. How are they different to the fabrics of the clothes you are wearing?

Mix the colours of the two pieces of fabric. How can you do this? What ways work best? You may need the torches again to really see the colours.

Share your colour mixing experiments with the other group.

Discussion prompts after the activity

- Why do you think Celine has been investigating new ways to produce colour?
- What do you think are the advantages of colouring our clothes with natural dyes to the chemical dyes we use today? What might be the disadvantages?
- What do different colours make you feel?
- How might you communicate with colour?

Making is Caring

Gallery 3

Explore the artworks

Grace Ndiritu has created a large circular wooden structure, *The Temple*. It is carpeted, has cushions to relax on and is a place for conversations and being together, for rituals and spirituality. In and around the temple are artworks that have been hand-crafted with materials and techniques that have been around for hundreds of years.

Activity

Work in small groups.

Look at the hand-made artworks. What materials have the artists used? Are there any that you have learnt how to use? What did it feel like working with those materials?

Sit with your group in *The Temple*. Each group has a piece of collaborative sewing to sit around and work on together. Add to the tapestry will then be passed on to future groups.

Sew using the ancient indestructible plastic needles that have survived from the early 21st Century, threaded with wool. Each person sews lines of stitches by pushing their needles in and out of holes in the tapestry cloth, creating patterns inspired by the artwork around them.

Discuss ways in which people should look after each other. How might caring for others be part of everyone's life? What makes a community happy? How might schools, art galleries, libraries and the city and the government help in this?

Share your group's sewing with the other groups in *The Temple*.

Discussion prompts - whole class sharing after Practical Activity

-How do you feel sitting in The Temple? What other places can you think of where you feel like this?

-Why do you think Grace has chosen hand-made artworks? What is different about making something yourself by hand rather than buying it?

Predicting Tomorrow...

Gallery 4

Explore the artworks

Femke Herregraven is exploring the forecasting of local weather based on traditional knowledge and practices. She is interested in how this knowledge, coming from being more in tune with the signs of nature may help people to survive in the future.

Six sculptures from metal and driftwood Femke collected after floods support speakers playing sounds she has recorded, including sounds from the Nottingham Contemporary building, local woodlands and cemetery, Attenborough Nature Reserve and Nottingham Castle. A weather station on the roof of the gallery feeds a live stream of information that influences the soundtrack that you hear, making each moment and sound unique. Also, part of the soundtrack are local children from Sycamore Academy reading aloud from an 1898 collection of sayings, proverbs and rules about predicting the weather.

Activity

Work in pairs or small groups. Each pair or group has some of the old weather prediction sayings collected in 1898.

Listen to the sounds being played in the gallery. What memories do they evoke?

Read your weather prediction sayings out loud together. How does this type of weather make you feel? Think about what sounds and movements the weather described would make. Experiment with ways of making the sounds and movements with your mouth, hands, feet etc.

Become part of the artwork Perform your saying, sounds and movements in turn with the other groups.

Discussion prompts - whole class sharing after Practical Activity

- How do most people find out about what the weather will be like tomorrow?
- How does different types of weather make you feel and behave?
- Why is it important to know what the weather will be like in the future – tomorrow, next week, next month, next season?
- What is your favourite kind of weather? Why?
- What weather would you miss if it didn't happen anymore?
- How might we help control the weather so it is less extreme?

Sayings for Predicting Tomorrow...

Taken from *Weather Lore: A Collection of Proverbs, Sayings & Rules Concerning the Weather*, Richard Inwards, 1898

If animals crowd together, rain will follow

If fowls roll in the sand, rain is at hand

When a cow tries to scratch its ear, it means a shower is near, when it thumps its ribs with its tail, look out for thunder, lightning and hail

If the crow calls twice quickly and then a third time, it indicates a storm

Seagull, seagull sit on the sand, it's never good weather while you're on land

If bees get out in February, the next day will be windy and rainy.

A red sun has water in his eye

Ringin in the ear at night, indicates a change of wind

When the sun sets sadly, the morning will be angry.

When bees to distance wing their flight, days are warm and skies are bright; but when their flights end near their home, stormy weather is sure to come

If the birds be silent, expect thunder

When a cyclone is near, birds become puzzled and fly in circles

If clouds appear like a flock of sheep and red in colour, wind follows

When dry leaves rattle on the trees, expect snow

If the ice cracks much, expect frost to continue

Sounds are heard with usual clearness before a storm

Additional Subjects for Debate

Is it possible to predict the future or will it always be different to what we imagine? Why?

What do you think we can do now that will make the future of the city, the planet and the human race better?

Has the exhibition influenced your thoughts and feelings about the future? How?

Which do you think will save the earth more effectively, more or less new technology? What sort of technology do we need to be inventing? What old technology could we go back to using?

Extension Activity beyond the Gallery

Nottingham Contemporary and the artists in *Our Silver City* want to generate discussion and action for the future - a future where care of each other and of the world are central to how we live.

Question

How does your school or organisation create a space for care, of each other and of the planet? What else could you do?

Discuss

What would help people to look after themselves and others?

Would it be a physical place? What might that look like?

Would it be an activity or a way of behaving?

How can we care and help the planet too?

What practical and creative activities would help?

Consider the Five Ways to Well-being

Connect - talking to others and valuing everyone.

Be Active - keeping fit helps people feel better mentally as well as physically.

Take Notice – live in the present taking pleasure from small everyday things.

Learn – enjoy learning throughout your life.

Give – help others.

Put into Action

Try your ideas out – one or two at a time is fine. Here are some ideas to start with...

-Make a quiet corner where people can just sit and be in the present for a while, or have quiet conversations.

-Create a 'manifesto' or list of the way you want things to be.

-Arrange creative or physical activities such as craft sessions or local walks.

-Pledge to reduce the use of materials such as plastics and behaviours such as car use that damage the environment and the climate.

How can changes include everyone, value them and give them an active role?

How can they provide opportunities to share ideas, opinions, observations and feelings?