The Courtauld





Impressions of Place

The Courtauld

The Courtauld is the world's leading centre for the study of Art History, Conservation and Curating, with its own world-famous art collection. Established in 1932 by Samuel Courtauld, along with Viscount Lee of Fareham and Sir Robert Witt, a founding aim of the Institute was to further the study of art history, making Courtauld's Collection of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist artworks available to as wide an audience as possible. At this time Samuel was chairman of the family company, Courtaulds Ltd textiles manufacturers, and it was the success of the company that enabled him to collect his artworks.

Combining the heritage of Courtaulds Ltd and the artistic vision and passion of Samuel Courtauld, The Courtauld National Partners programme involves loans of some of the major works in our Collection to partner organisations in eight areas of the UK with links to Courtaulds Ltd. Alongside this we are working with schools and colleges in each of these areas to make connections between local heritage and these artworks through an art history approach.



About the sourcebook

The Impressions of Place sourcebook has been developed alongside a partnership between Ferens Art Gallery in Hull and The Courtauld. Using Claude Monet's Antibes (1888) as a starting point to consider sensory responses to place, the practical activities and resources included here introduce a range of approaches by contemporary artists. Teachers can select from the activities, or use the sourcebook to adapt the materials to their own teaching approaches.

The materials for this project have been devised by Francesca Herrick, art historian and educator, in collaboration with Alice Hellard, Heritage and Learning Officer at The Courtauld Institute of Art, with design and layout by artist and illustrator Toya Walker.







Contents

Impressionism and sensory impressions of space	4
Modern urban identity and the senses	6
Artist case study: Richard Long	7
Personal cartographies and movement	8
Artist case study: Linda Karshan	10
Artist case study: Larissa Fassler	11
Sensory impressions and space	12
Artist case study: Chris Ofili	14
Artist case study: Abigail Reynolds	15
Connections through time	16
Next steps: Curating your exhibition and research	17
Future Ferens and the Monet in Mind exhibition	18



Impressionism and sensory impressions of space

The Impressionists were considered **radical** for their time, and audiences and critics struggled with their work because they were breaking the established rules about the subject and methods of painting.

Impressionist artists were known for working **outdoors** ('en plein air'). They wanted to communicate the sensations of a particular location and time.

They used rough, rapid brush marks to capture the essence of a scene in a matter of hours.

They took advantage of **industrial inventions**, such as new synthetic colours in metal paint tubes, making outdoor painting more practical.

The Impressionists painted scenes of **modern life**, including the new leisure activities and fashions of the middle class, and the natural landscapes beyond the city, drawing attention to the changing industrial landscapes of the time.

Claude Monet (1840-1926), Antibes (1888)

In early spring of 1888 Monet travelled from his home in northern France to Antibes in the south of the country and spent several months experimenting with colour combinations that could capture the intensity of the Mediterranean light. *Antibes* shows the view south-west from the Cap d'Antibes towards the Estérel Mountains at a time when the area was becoming a popular tourist destination.



Claude Monet, *Antibes*, 1888, oil on canvas (x-ray image), The Courtauld, London (Samuel Courtauld Trust) © The Courtauld.

Monet commented in a letter:

"What I bring back from here will be sweetness itself, white, pink and blue, all enveloped in this magical air."

While the painting has a peaceful quality, X-rays of the canvas have revealed a number of changes made by Monet, including the repainting of the waves so that they appear calmer. The alterations perhaps point to the difficulties of working outdoors with varied weather conditions.

Using google maps as a research tool

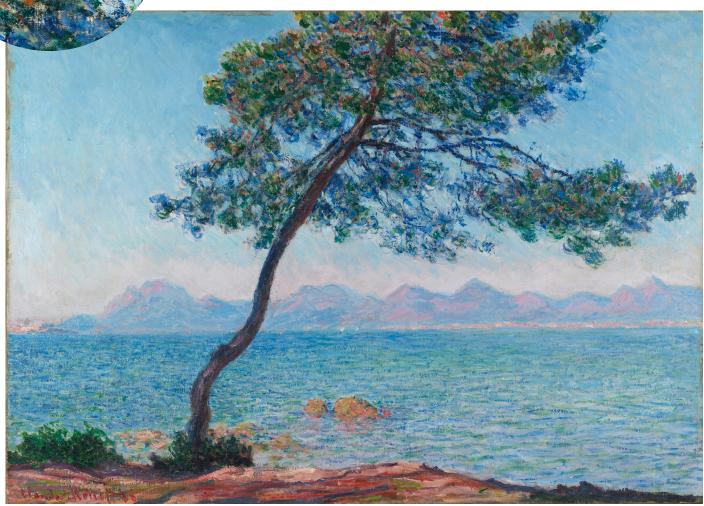
Google Maps (satellite and street views) is a helpful resource for locating the landscapes favoured by the Impressionists and thinking about how they might have changed over time. Can you pinpoint Monet's location when he was painting *Antibes*?

What can you find out by comparing historical maps of your own area with the most recent versions? Think about industry and transport as well as social values (look for cultural, health, educational and religious buildings).



Colour – The Impressionists used innovative colour combinations to heighten and draw out effects already present in nature. How has Monet used unusual pairings of colours in the painting?

Subject Matter – Some 19th century viewers were surprised to see paintings that did not have a story, but Impressionist artists were content with capturing mood and effects of light. **How would it feel to stand on this shore? What words could be used to describe this image?**



Claude Monet, Antibes, 1888, oil on canvas, The Courtauld, London (Samuel Courtauld Trust) © The Courtauld.

Technique – Many art critics of the time considered the rough brush marks of Impressionist paintings more appropriate for sketches than finished artworks. Are Monet's brush marks messy or controlled? What are the different types of strokes that he used?

Artistic influences – Monet was a great admirer of Japanese prints. They showed that perspective was not the only option for depicting space. How has Monet given this painting a sense of depth and distance?

Context – The 19th century was a period of great industrial change and development. A lot of change took place in the coastal landscape as waterways were used to transport goods. Are there any signs of human life in the painting? How might life and travel have been changing in rural and coastal areas in comparison to urban areas at this time?

Modern urban identity and the senses: Édouard Manet, *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère* (1882)

Édouard Manet was friends with the Impressionist group of artists, although he chose not to take part in their exhibitions. He lived in Paris all his life and observed huge changes to the city. The population grew from roughly three quarters of a million people in the 1830s to over two million by 1882, when he painted A Bar at the Folies-Bergère. During this time traditional markers of identity such as class, family, religion and work were increasingly erased from public view. What people wore and where they were seen in the city became more significant.

New shopping arcades, boulevards (wide streets), parks and entertainment venues were developed to provide spaces of leisure for wealthy Parisians. The Folies-Bergère was a cabaret music hall. The crowds, lighting and reflective surfaces in this painting were all part of the modern experience, and this is thought to be the first painting that represents electric light. Manet and his circle also painted scenes with steam trains, docks and factories, which would have felt similarly contemporary.



Edouard Manet, A Bar at the Folies-Bergère, 1882, oil on canvas, The Courtauld, London (Samuel Courtauld Trust)

A Bar at the Folies-Bergère allows us to enter into Manet's urban world for just a moment. **How is the space transformed by people?**

How does the painting appeal to our different senses in order to create an atmosphere?

What are the sights, smells and sounds that we can imagine from the image? How do they contribute to our understanding of the space the young woman is working in?

Artist case study: Richard Long

(born 1945, lives and works in Bristol, UK)

Richard Long is best known as a land artist, using the natural environment as a location and material for his sculpture and drawings.

His work is considered to have challenged the idea that sculpture had to be made from materials that could be taken into the studio.

Focused on the passage of time, space and distance, Long's work is intertwined with his experiences of walking expeditions which have taken place all over the world.

He records his pieces using photography, mapping and text works.

richardlong.org



Richard Long, A Line Made By Walking, 1967, Black and white photograph, The Courtauld, London (Samuel Courtauld Trust) © The Courtauld.



This piece was made by the artist walking repeatedly up and down a field. Do you think that A Line Made by Walking is a sculpture or a drawing?

How does this artwork suggest the passing of time?

Do you think the temporary nature of Long's sculpture adds to or takes from his work?

What kinds of marks do you leave behind as you go about your everyday life?

Personal cartographies and movement

Outline

In this activity you will start to explore how your sense of identity is informed by interaction with your city or town. You'll look at how the built environment is composed of flowing and interconnected spaces that are constantly transformed by people, their movements and ideas. Through investigating the works of contemporary artists you will consider your own personal language of mapping.

You will need

A historical map of your city or town, coloured pencils, fine liner pens in black or blue, A3 layout paper or tracing paper, paper clips or masking tape.

Links to contemporary artists

Use the case studies on **Linda Karshan, Larissa Fassler** and **Richard Long** to spark discussion about relationships between physicality, drawing, space and identity.

Activity 1

- Place a sheet of layout paper or tracing paper over your printed map section so that you can only just make out the shape of the streets.
- Pause to think about a journey you recently made in a part of the town or city that is on the map. It may help to close your eyes. How fast was the journey? Was it by car, bike or on foot? Where were you going and what were you doing?
- Choose a coloured pencil and use connected, flowing lines to plot your journey. Turn the map/paper so that your lines take you forward. Think about the rhythm of your movement as you make your journey on the paper. If you have time, you could add more journeys with different colours.
- What has changed in the roads and buildings since the map was created? What is the same? Has this altered your journey at all?
- Is the journey that you've plotted true to life, or has the drawn journey taken on it's own identity?



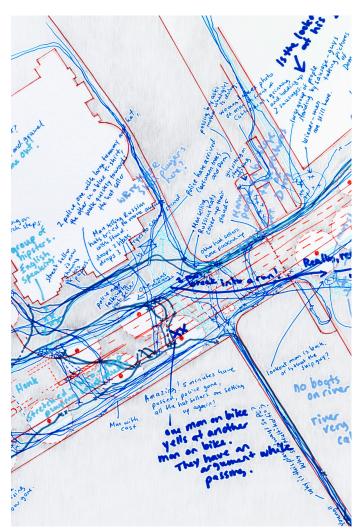
Activity 1 and 2: examples layered together



Activity 1: line drawing of journeys example



Activity 2: annotations and sketches example



Larissa Fassler, section from *Schlossplatz VI*, 2014 Photo: Jens Ziehe

Courtesy Galerie Poggi, Paris

Activity 2

- Now lay a sheet of layout or tracing paper over your map section. Outline and label buildings that you feel a connection to and/or consider important to this area's character.
- Using a fine-liner pen, write down associations that you have with the various locations on your map – your experiences, the businesses, people, sounds smells, colours, materials, eyecatching signage, etc. You could use single words or short annotations or sentences. You could describe things you've seen or feelings that these places give you.
- You could also draw quick sketches of visual clues that you've seen on the journey you have plotted, such as shop signs, adverts or graffiti.
- How are these observations different to what is charted on the historical map? What has changed and what has remained the same?

Next steps

Try layering the original map and the drawings you have created together. How have you transformed the original map to make it richer and more personal? What else could you add to these drawings to show your personal connections to places that you know and visit?

Maps use a variety of symbolic forms of representation that rely on being commonly understood (grids, a key, geographic direction, poles). They condense and communicate ideas, experiences, geographies etc.

No map is objective. Always think about why it was made and whose perspective it represents.

Our sense of identity is informed by where we grow up, live, study, work and travel to. Cities, towns and people have flexible identities.

Contemporary artists often use maps to tell personal stories and journeys. These might connect to broader cultural, environmental, political and social issues.

Artist case study: Linda Karshan

(born 1947, based in London and New York)

Linda Karshan is known for creating abstract prints and drawings composed of grids and intersecting lines.

The process of making is a performance that is guided by what she calls her "inner choreography". Every mark on the page comes from the careful motion and balancing of her entire body.

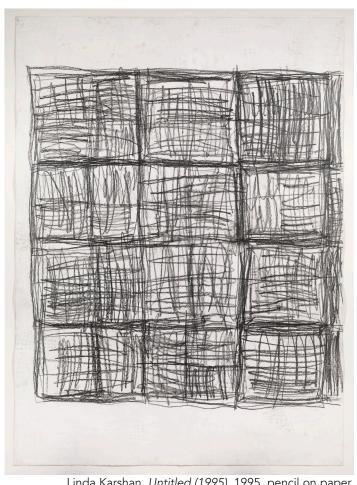
Her physical presence in the space relates directly to how the drawing unfolds. She brings a sense of order through her rhythmic breathing, counterclockwise turning of the paper and the rhythmic way of counting time.

As well as drawing with pencil on paper, Karshan makes 'walked drawings' which connect her bodily rhythms with the space that she is in.

lindakarshanstudio.com



What sort of state of mind does this drawing process require?



Linda Karshan, *Untitled (1995)*, 1995, pencil on paper, The Courtauld, London (Samuel Courtauld Trust) © The Courtauld.

What do you think about this style and method of drawing? How does it contrast with conventional drawing techniques?

This drawing is deceptively large and was created by the artist working on the floor. Can you see her footprints in the image? How does scale alter the meaning and impression of a drawing?

Do you agree that Linda Karshan's drawings are a kind of mapping? Why or why not?

When do you use maps in your everyday life? What information do they provide?

Useful links:

Documentary of artist Linda Karshan and her work, 2007. Filmed by Candida Richardson.

'Four Walked Rooms', 2018-2019. Choreographed by Linda Karshan. A Stonedog Production. Directed and filmed by Ishmael Annobil.

Inset image left: Linda Karshan in a still from the film Movements and their Images by Candida Richardson, 2008 Inset image right: Film still from Linda Karshan: Educating the Stone, Being Educated by the Stone by Harald Schluttig, 2017

Artist case study: Larissa Fassler

(born 1975, Canadian artist based in Berlin)

Larissa Fassler is interested in the architecture of cities and the way in which places affect people, physically and psychologically.

She focuses on the everyday spaces we tend to pass through and ignore.

Her artworks show how people's perception, understanding and use of place in turn shapes the feel of the built environment. She sits and records how human actions, sounds, smells and graphics animate these 'non-places'.

Her projects reference architectural plans and also psychogeographic maps that chart the maker's emotional and behavioural interaction with a place.

Psychogeography is a way of explaining the relationship between geographic places and people's emotions and behaviour as they experience them. Psychogeography in art is playful and experimental.

larissafassler.com/startside.html

What is Fassler charting? What type of things are recorded in words or by using shapes and lines?

How does the artwork reference architectural blueprints or plans?

Why do you think Fassler contrasts formal and informal elements (e.g. original blueprints and graffiti)?

How does the artwork suggest movement and change over time?





Sensory impressions of place

Outline

The Impressionists were radical in the methods they used, and in their response to the changes they experienced to the urban landscape and industrialisation. In this activity you will consider experimental techniques for capturing the sensory and atmospheric qualities of a particular place using collage and drawing.

Links to contemporary artists

Chris Ofili's North Wales etchings have much in common with the 'mindfulness' drawings that have become a popular tool for relaxation in recent years. Look at the case study on **Chris Ofili** for more information about his process.

Step 1

 Take your images of a building or an area of your town or city and cut them to separate and focus on particular aspects of the buildings that you think are important.

 Arrange and glue the pieces on a sheet of A3 cartridge paper so that different views, times and atmospheres become fragments of a bigger arrangement.

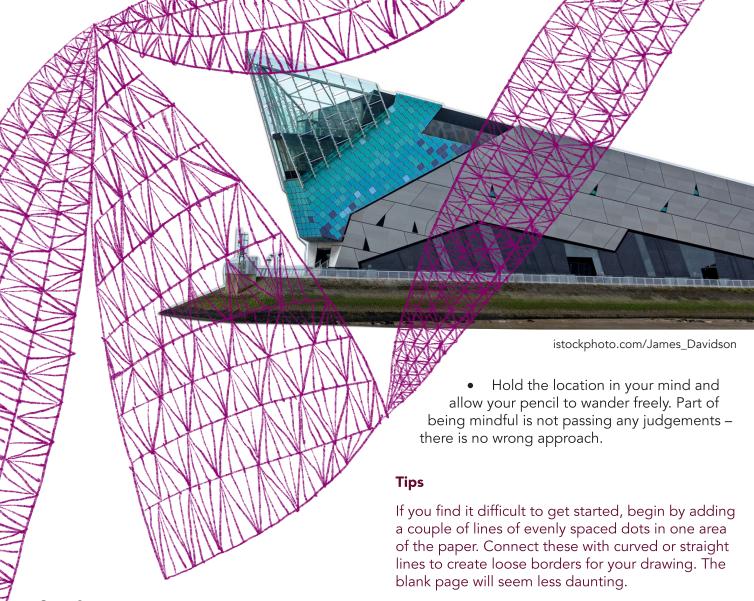
 Think carefully about your real life experience of these places, or what it would be like to go there and walk around and in between them. Leave space around the edges of your composition.

As you are working on your collage, note down some words to describe shapes, patterns and textures in the images. For example, 'flowing, sharp, angular, curved, rough, smooth...'
 You can use a sheet of scrap paper for this.

You will need

A3 cartridge paper, scissors, glue sticks, historical and contemporary images of architecture, carbon paper, pencils.





Step 2

Mindful drawing can help to create balance between what your attention is focused on and the environment around you. These drawings can be made by creating marks and doodles in relation to a specific place and concentrating on the sensations and movements of your body in the present moment. By focusing on your immediate physical presence (e.g. the rhythm of your breath, the feel of the pencil touching the paper) it can be possible to let any distracting thoughts pass by.

- Lay a sheet of A4 carbon paper over your page of collaged photographs, and a blank sheet of cartridge paper on top of this.
- Draw on the cartridge paper to create patterns and marks that you associate with this location. Think about the notes you made when you were making your collage and what they might represent. Does 'angular' describe being alert or uneasy, or does 'curved' describe a more relaxed and relaxing sensation? The inspiration could come from anywhere on the image – uneven cobble stones, ripples on water, peeling paintwork, roof tiles etc.

You could create this drawing separately using closer observation if that is more comfortable, and transfer it onto your collage by tracing over it on top of the carbon paper.

You can use a pencil if you want to see the marks unfold, or a use a blunt mark-making tool (e.g. a pen lid) if you want to keep the final image a surprise!

Independent research

Walk about and photograph a building or an area of the city with a rich history. Research and print/ photocopy images relating to it from the past and present. Try to take and find images of textures and surfaces associated with the building or location, or visit the place and take your own photographs. You could make rubbings from the walls and other surface textures of the building using graphite on paper.

Artist case study: Chris Ofili

(born 1968, British artist, works between Trinidad & Tobago, USA and UK)

Chris Ofili is best known as a painter who produces large-scale canvases with dazzling elements of colour and pattern.

He uses unconventional materials and draws on a variety of source materials, from comic books to African textiles.

In the 1990s Ofili made a series of etchings based on trips to Barcelona, Berlin, New York and North Wales.

Using patterns created by repeating shapes and marks inspired by each location, he describes these works as "an odd kind of tourism". The results are largely abstract, but forms seem to vibrate and grow.

victoria-miro.com/ artists/6-chris-ofili/



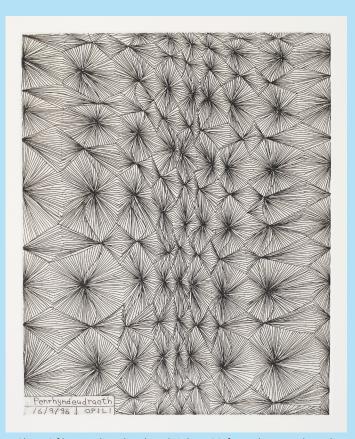
What types of natural or manmade features might have inspired these patterns?

What similarities and differences can you see with Monet's artistic processes and interests?

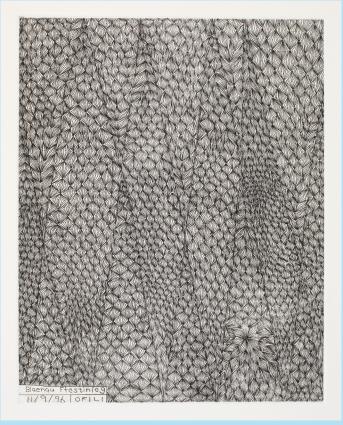
Ofili said he found the process of making these artworks "nourishing".

What do you think he meant by this?

Some critics in North Wales didn't think that these images represented their area at all. Why do you think they might have thought this?



Chris Ofili, Penrhyndeudraeth (Plate 09 from the 'North Wales' series), 1996, ink on paper, The Courtauld, London (Samuel Courtauld Trust) © The Courtauld.



Chris Ofili, Blaenau Ffestiniog (Plate 05 from the 'North Wales' series), 1996, ink on paper, The Courtauld, London (Samuel Courtauld Trust) © The Courtauld.

Artist case study: Abigail Reynolds

(born 1975, British artist based in Cornwall)

Books and libraries are the starting point for Reynolds' work, which she uses as sites of research and source material. She uses a personal collection of several hundred books to search for shared cultural memories and associations relating to a particular place.

She often begins by finding photographs of a single location, building or interior taken by different people over different time periods.

By folding, layering and splicing the images together Reynolds focuses on social history and how its flow can disrupt 'the unity of the individual subject'.

Using diverse mediums including paper and glass, her works tend to be fragile, making links to the fragility of 'self' and layered and conflicted interpretations of community and place.

abigailreynolds.com

Studio tour (short film): abigailreynolds.com/interviews-reports-and-features



Abigail Reynolds, When Words are Forgotten, 2018, Steel, acrylic, tinted and textured glass and found materials @ Abigail Reynolds

Reynolds studied English Literature, but could there be another reason for her interest in libraries? What do they represent for individuals/communities/cities?

How do her compositions suggest continuity between past and present?

For Reynolds, the materiality and potential fragility of the paper or photographic film she works with is important. Do you agree? Would the collages have the same effect if they were made using digital methods?

Connections through time

Outline

In this session you will use collage and historical images of places and buildings to create and develop your own responses to places that you may know.

Contemporary artist Abigail Reynolds has devised a series of exercises to get you started, drawing from her own practice of using photographs she finds in books and from other source material. Abigail's work suggests layers of time and gives the viewer the sense that they are uncovering lost or partially buried histories.



Have a look at the case study on **Abigail Reynolds** for more information about her work.

You will need

black and white images of buildings and places in your town or city, coloured paper, scissors, glue. Historical images can be found in local libraries and archives, or are sometimes available online.

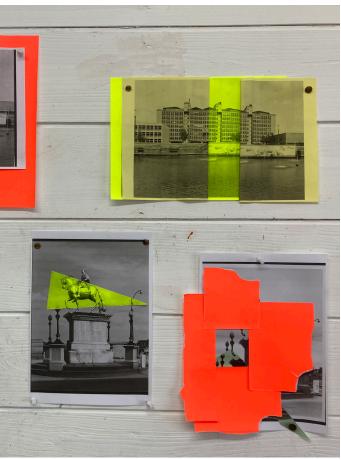
Activity

Abigail has used two images of places in Hull by A.F. Kersting from The Courtauld's Conway Library as her starting point for four quick collage exercises. In this film workshop she demonstrates how playing with colour and repositioning sections of historical images can lead to new and personal interpretations of architecture and space.

The film can be used to guide activities through a lesson, pausing at key points to give students time to respond and complete the activity, or by students who are working independently.

The film workshop can be found here





What themes and places can you explore using Abigail's approach as inspiration?

Do you know about the history of buildings in your town or city? What can you find out about when or why they were built, and what they are used for now?

How can techniques like these show changes to architecture over time?

How can they help you to reinterpret your own personal connections to buildings and spaces?

Next steps: Curating your exhibition and research

Brief

Curate a small exhibition to communicate what you have discovered about your town or city and your relationship with its architecture, past and present. The exhibition should appeal to other young people and help them to look at their urban surroundings and histories in new ways.

Consider how you would make sure that a viewer unfamiliar with your town or city and its history could understand the meanings and associations of your artworks. You will need to create short explanatory texts to support your artworks.

Step 1: Come up with an exhibition title

As a class, review and discuss some of the themes in your work and pool ideas for a potential exhibition title. You could use this project title (Impressions of Place) or you might feel that the focus has evolved into something slightly different.

Step 2: Write a wall panel (introductory text)

Most exhibitions begin with a wall panel of text (one or two paragraphs) to explain the overall idea and themes that links the various artworks or objects on display.

Mindmap ideas as a class or in groups and then nominate someone who enjoys writing to type up the final text. Who is the exhibition aimed at? Language should be engaging and accessible for your audience.

Step 3: Select artworks

Each student should select their favourite artwork from the project.

Write a short paragraph explaining what your image represents and what you discovered through the process of making it. You could mention the artist that inspired your work and what aspects of your city and its architecture you have found most interesting.





If you are planning a physical exhibition in school, you could think about mounting your work and how to display it. Consider how Abigail Reynolds has used colour to frame her collages in the film, for example.

Step 4: Plan the display of your exhibition

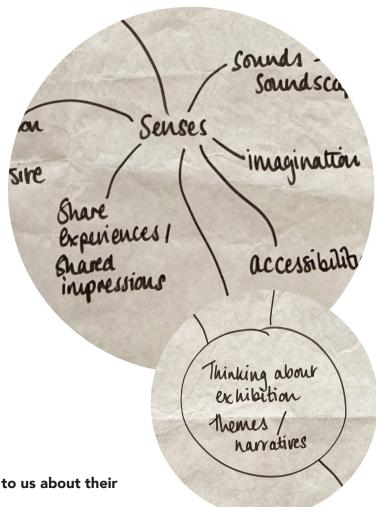
Your exhibition could be presented as a real-life display at school or as an online show. Discuss the options available with your teacher and classmates. You could organise your exhibition by geographic location/area or by theme or style.

Future Ferens and the Monet in Mind exhibition

Future Ferens area group of creatives, promoters and curators aged 16-25 years old who are passionate about connecting people through art and creativity. Future Ferens work with gallery staff to make the Ferens and its exhibitions accessible to young people. Since summer 2020, the group has met regularly online to plan a programme of events, design marketing and curate the Monet in Mind exhibition at Ferens, Hull, centred on Claude Monet's Antibes (1888).

For the exhibition, Future Ferens carefully selected artworks to accompany Antibes from the Ferens permanent collection. The group were interested in the meditative side of Antibes; how it connected to nature, and made you experience the moment with the painting. It felt opposed to the experience of lockdown during the pandemic.

In building the exhibition and digital resources for young people, Future Ferens wanted to explore mindfulness practice as a way of appreciating art, to create a relaxing exhibition showing how art can promote wellbeing.



Future Ferens participants Jemma and Esme talk to us about their experiences of working on the exhibition.

Can you explain how you have been involved in putting together Monet in Mind at the Ferens?

Jemma: We've been involved in most aspects of the exhibition. Through weekly meetings we have created interpretation labels

for the works in the exhibition, developed our social media approach for marketing and promotion of the exhibition, and created playlists to enhance the Nortalgic - can't visitor experience.

travel right now. Thinking of summers past. Why did you select the theme of Escapism mindfulness for the exhibition, and how did alone with one you approach selecting thoughts. the other works to be exhibited alongside Antibes in

the exhibition?

Esme: We came up with the theme of mindfulness by discussing how Antibes made us feel and what we saw in it, and we all kind of got this sense of peaceful escapism from it. To choose the other works we decided to split them into different categories that would show the different sides of mindfulness as well as relating to Monet's approach and technique. We also decided that we didn't want any portraits of people as we wanted to give a sense of escapism and have a sort of remote feel.

Jemma: The theme links to the pandemic and the constraints that many of us have faced. The exhibition has been designed as an immersive experience, reflecting our senses and considering how the paintings can be translated into our own experiences.

"We are story tellers, helping people to build their own stories through experiencing the paintings."

mindfulness.

What has been the best part of being involved in this process?

Jemma: It has been great collaborating with a diverse range of people, and being able to bring our own ideas and creativity into the actual exhibition. Being able to interpret Monet's work in the context of the pandemic has also been good, especially thinking of how the exhibition can be interpreted as a meditative practice and teaching others to be mindful.

Esme: So many things. It's just been great to be a part of and to see all the work and dedication that goes on behind the scenes when putting on an exhibition. I did really enjoy being able to look at all the works and working together with everyone figuring out which works would go well together and work with the theme and which would not.

Jemma: Learning about and writing interpretations using the Ekarv method (an approach to interpretation that keeps language and meaning simple and easy to understand) has been challenging but also helpful. We've learned to express feelings and aspects of the paintings sensitively using the correct tone of voice.

Have you found anything surprising or unexpected about working in this way?

Esme: It has surprised me just how much work goes in to making the exhibition happen, especially when it comes to marketing and all the different creative ways you can promote it.

Jemma: Using the project management software, virtual exhibition layouts and sharing and learning digitally has been challenging but worked well once we learned how we could work together virtually.

How does being involved in the Future Ferens group benefit your school/college work? Do you think this experience will help you in your future education or career? How?

Esme: It has shown me that there are a lot more options when it comes to careers, especially in the creative sector.

Jemma: As a masters graduate in art museum and gallery studies, Future Ferens has enabled me to expand and explore curatorial skills further through collaboration, interpretation and understanding art in a wider capacity, and particularly how we can engage audiences virtually throughout the pandemic. This experience is also my passion, where we can use creative and critical thinking together. Using the Ekarv interpretation method is also really useful, in terms of communication skills for employment and understanding people and emotions. It is about sharing the human experience.

Can you sum up Monet in Mind in one sentence?

Jemma: Being in the present – to BREATHE, INHALE and EXHALE.



Ewan Munro, Ferens Art Gallery (edited version) creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/legalcode

Watch these films to out more about Impressionist and Post-Impressionist works in The Courtauld Collection:

Impressionists and Post Impressionists youtube.com/watch?v=tACZurAPUIc

Edouard Manet's A Bar at the Folies-Bergères youtube.com/watch?v=XQJUL-3QqFU

Ferens Art Gallery, Hull hcandl.co.uk/museums-and-galleries/ferens

The Courtauld courtauld.ac.uk