



BRITISH ART SHOW 9

HAYWARD
GALLERY
TOURING



PRIMARY RESOURCE | TEACHER'S NOTES



You can access this resource via the *British Art Show 9* Google Classroom using the code using this code: **pa3cjvh**

British Art Show is widely acknowledged as the most influential exhibition of contemporary art made in the UK. Organised every five years by Hayward Gallery Touring, this is the first time it will be presented in Aberdeen. The 33 selected artists showing at Aberdeen Art Gallery (with one project presented at Aberdeen Central Library) use film, photography, painting, sculpture, and performance to explore issues that affect us all, including climate change, identity, and social justice. After Aberdeen the exhibition tours to Wolverhampton, Manchester and Plymouth.

Contemporary art is the art of now

All the work in *British Art Show 9* has been made in the last five years, with two new commissions specifically created for Aberdeen and a site-specific artwork in Aberdeen Central Library. The exhibition changes and adapts to each of its four host cities and Aberdeen's presentation explores how we can heal the earth and put care at the heart of our relationship with nature. This is very topical, as Aberdeen is in the process of moving its economic reliance on oil and gas, towards green energy production.

About Aberdeen Art Gallery

Aberdeen Art Gallery has a long history of collecting new work by living artists – from our Victorian beginnings to the present day, the collection is always growing. With a £34 million redevelopment in 2019, Aberdeen Art Gallery is now a world class venue housing permanent displays, programming an inclusive learning and public programme, and hosting amazing displays such as *British Art Show 9*.

To see a list of *BAS9* artists presented in Aberdeen Art Gallery click [here](#).

About teacher's notes

The aim of this resource is to provide support in learning from and engaging with selected artworks on display in Aberdeen Art Gallery. It will support a visit to the *BAS9* exhibition as well as being suitable for use in the classroom.

There are introductions to selected *BAS9* works with accompanying activities and discussion points. There are also links to artworks from Aberdeen Archives Gallery and Museum's collection on similar themes.

Ground
level

LEARNING FROM ARTEMISIA

Uriel Orlow

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In this multimedia installation the artist Uriel Orlow continues his investigation into the relationship between plants and politics. It was created in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where Orlow worked with a women's co-operative. They grow and sell *Artemisia afra*, a native African plant, with the proceeds funding a collective health insurance for their families.

A simple infusion of *Artemisia afra* can effectively treat and prevent malaria. Despite studies showing its effectiveness and the simplicity of its administration and sustainability of its local production, it is not recommended as a treatment by the World Health Organisation. Orlow celebrates its benefits for the whole community and shows us local and sustainable healthcare solutions that are environmentally friendly. He also highlights how the Democratic Republic of Congo has historically had its natural resources pillaged by colonial powers. Three promotional paintings by Congolese artist Musasa and photographs of *Artemisia afra* in Katanga are the final elements of the installation and there will be a daily tasting of Artemisia tea, served in the seating area at set times.



Uriel Orlow, *Learning from Artemisia*, 2019-20. © Uriel Orlow. Installation view, *British Art Show 9*, 2021-22, Aberdeen Art Gallery. A Hayward Gallery Touring exhibition organised in collaboration with galleries across the cities of Aberdeen, Wolverhampton, Manchester and Plymouth. Photo © Mike Davidson.



Discussion

There is a lot to see and take in with this installation. What did you immediately focus in on and why? Look at the vibrant colours used in the paintings. Why do you think the artist chose to use these colours? How do they compare to the images you see on the accompanying films?



Extension Activity

For hundreds of years people have used plants to relieve aches, pains and ailments. If you have rubbed a dock leaf on a nettle sting or aloe vera oil into sunburn, then you've used herbal medicine.

In the classroom investigate how these four Scottish plants were traditionally used for their healing properties:

Bog Myrtle Nettle Heather Thistle

There are few symbols as Scottish as the thistle. For a fun crafty activity follow this link [here](#).



Ground
level

WHEN DECISIONS BECOME ART

Kathrin Böhm

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Words matter. Language has the power to soothe, hurt and unite us - it can tap into every human emotion. Using text in art allows an artist to communicate in a creative and direct manner. Kathrin Böhm's work for *British Art Show 9* questions how art and culture both depend on and affect our economy. An emotional exploration of Aberdeen's relationship with oil appears on one of her sticky-paper wall drawings, as well as a letter denouncing the Southbank Centre's plans to make up to two-thirds of its staff redundant in the wake of the coronavirus crisis.

Böhm believes that art does not need to look like 'art' and sees herself as part of a 'critical mass of artists who don't want to comment on or decorate the world we live in, but actually to shape it.' As for how this can be achieved, she thinks that we can all be creative in our everyday activities. This way art becomes less of a separate, set event scheduled for specific times.



Discussion

How do you think this artwork was created and what materials have been used? What do you think the artist was feeling or experiencing when she made this? Do you think she wants to shout these words out or do you think they are spoken in a calm and collected manner?

If you were to create an artwork like this one, what message would you write and why?



Extension Activity

Younger learners can have fun combining letters and words and turning them into works of art. Pick a subject and ask them to write messages on interlocking loops of paper using different writing styles and colours. The end results can be used to decorate their classroom.

Suggestions for older pupils to create some abstract word art can be found [here](#).



Kathrin Böhm, *When Decisions Become Art*, 2019-ongoing. © Kathrin Böhm. Installation view, *British Art Show 9*, 2021-22, Aberdeen Art Gallery. A Hayward Gallery Touring exhibition organised in collaboration with galleries across the cities of Aberdeen, Wolverhampton, Manchester and Plymouth. Photo © Mike Davidson.

Level
1

AWAY WITH THE BIRDS

Hannah Tuulikki

Hannah Tuulikki is a composer, performer and visual artist. She is interested in folk music and is inspired by traditional sound-making where music emerges from people's relationship with the land, as in her own Finnish heritage. *Away with the Birds* is a series of 10 pen and ink line drawings of birds from the Western Isles. A vocal composition accompanies the drawings, performed by 10 female singers. It weaves together fragments of Scottish Gaelic song poetry that evoke the birds pictured in her drawings and their various island habitats.



Discussion

Really listen to the music as you look at the drawings and discuss what you think the performers are trying to communicate. Birds use songs and calls to share messages with each other throughout the day. Do you think this composition has captured that variety?

Discuss how not all communication is verbal. Encourage your learners to think about other ways we can pass on messages or signals and why this is crucial for some people.



Hanna Tuulikki, *Away with the Birds*, 2014-15. © Hanna Tuulikki. Installation view, *British Art Show 9*, 2021-22, Aberdeen Art Gallery. A Hayward Gallery Touring exhibition organised in collaboration with galleries across the cities of Aberdeen, Wolverhampton, Manchester and Plymouth. Photo © Mike Davidson.



Extension Activity

Aberdeen is infamous for the constant sound and presence of its large seagull population. But if you listen closely, you will hear the calls of other smaller, less ferocious birds. The RSPB have created a bird song ID playlist of common birds found in your garden or local area. Head outside together and listen for bird sounds in your outdoor space. The ideal time is early in the morning, but there are many times of day to try. Just try to avoid noon when birds tend to be the least active. Visit the [RSVP website](#) for help to identify bird songs.



Level
2

DOUBLE QUILT

Katie Schwab

Katie Schwab works with textiles, furniture and film to explore personal and social histories of craft, design and education. The textiles and stools which furnish the space for her films are examples of her own work, often made in collaboration with other makers. *Indigo Curtain* was made using offcuts of hand-dyed fabrics. *Double Quilt* and the silent film *This Interesting and Wonderful Factory* were inspired by a patchwork of silk offcuts from the Cryséde factory in St Ives.

Long-term projects allow the artist to get involved with the local community and take part in collaborative workshops, oral history interviews, archival research, and craft-based learning. "I have worked in learning departments in galleries for many years, and I perceive education to exist in spaces where thoughts, knowledge and skills are shared. This is a two-way process, and education is an important and necessary part of my development as an artist. Evening classes and weekend courses have been vital in teaching me craft-based skills, for example weaving and ceramics."



Discussion

Katie Schwab is interested in how communities work together to make a difference. Discuss ways that you can make a positive change to your local area by working together as a class.

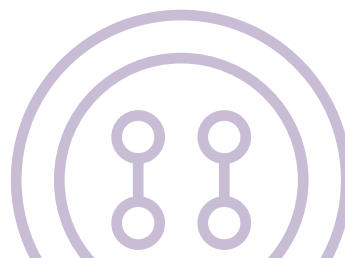


Katie Schwab, *A Working Building*, 2016-20. © Katie Schwab. Installation view, *British Art Show 9*, 2021-22, Aberdeen Art Gallery. A Hayward Gallery Touring exhibition organised in collaboration with galleries across the cities of Aberdeen, Wolverhampton, Manchester and Plymouth. Photo © Mike Davidson.



Extension Activity

There are many creative and fun things to do with fabric scraps. Here are [simple instructions](#) on how your learners can make a decorated frame for one of their artworks or a photograph.



Since 1979, eight British Art Show exhibitions have toured UK museums and galleries, sharing the work of 492 practising artists with audiences. Aberdeen Archives Gallery and Museums collected work by 72 of these artists spanning all eight tours. A selection of these works made by successive generations of BAS artists are on display in Gallery 2. From *British Art Show 9*, Aberdeen Archives Gallery and Museums will acquire Florence Peake's work *Crude Care*, which is on display in the Sculpture Court.

ADORATION OF THE MAGI

Andrew Walker

The presentation of gifts by the Three Wise Men is a scene which has been depicted by artists since the Middle Ages. Andrew Walker's version is a more modern interpretation of this familiar event. Joseph and Mary are simply dressed in plain robes and there is no attempt made to make the couple seem of 'olden days'. They have modern hairstyles, and a relaxed familiarity in their gestures. The bold colours cover the canvas in broad expanses of rich, warm tones.

You can see this artwork on the AAGM [emuseum](#).



Did you Know?

In Western European art history, black people had mainly been depicted as slaves and exotic natives. From the medieval period onward an exception to this was Balthasar, one of the three kings believed to be from Ethiopia and the giver of myrrh.

Discuss why it is important that Art Galleries should reflect the multicultural world in which we live in by displaying art made by and showing people of colour. To explore this in greater detail click [here](#).



Adoration of the Magi, Andrew Walker

ABBREVIATED CHAIR

Gavin Scobie

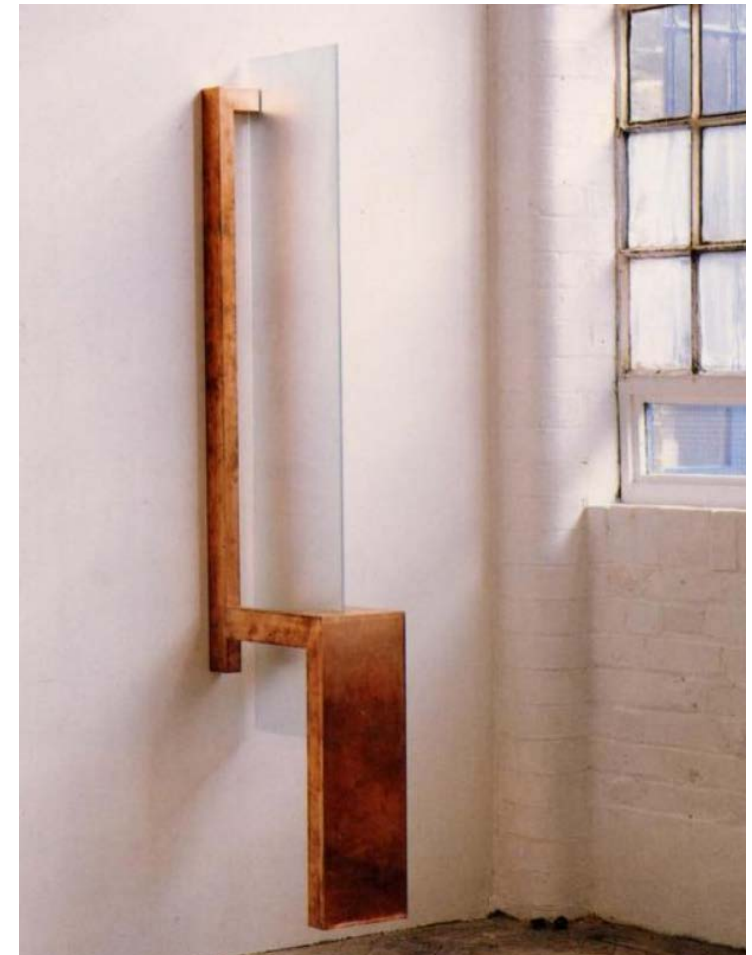
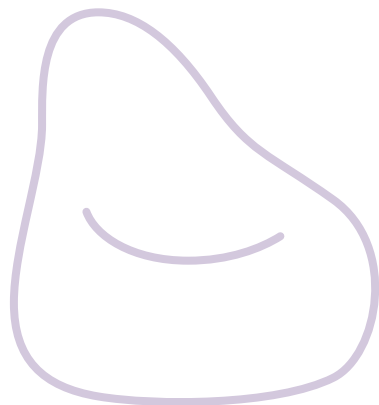
Gavin Scobie was a pioneer of modern sculpture in Scotland. He did not train as a sculptor, having studied graphic design at Edinburgh School of Art, but he had always had a passion for making things. He admired the work of the Dutch artist Vermeer especially his use of light in a domestic setting. This inspired Scobie's use of etched glass combined with forms derived from household furniture. Scobie found the effect created by etched glass immensely satisfying; 'It's such a beautiful colour, the greenness in the glass...a very contemplative colour.' Although this formal looking chair can appear confusing it is at the same time balanced and calming.

You can see this artwork on the AAGM [emuseum](#).



Discussion

Artists can blur the boundary between furniture and fine art. Rules of functionality are broken with chairs that aren't meant for sitting on and lamps that are less interested in illumination than in how they look. Recognizable forms such as the sofa or even a shelf can be turned into objects of individual expression which override comfort and utility.



Abbreviated Chair, Gavin Scobie

The importance of community, learning and equality are themes that are apparent in many BAS9 installations. Contemporary artists are saying it's not enough to simply create art in isolation. It is also about working with others and using this collective voice to create positive change.

ARTS STUDENTS PREPARING A STILL LIFE

Ian Fleming

Ian Fleming was not merely a talented painter, teacher, engraver and etcher he was also an important figure in the Scottish art world. After moving to Aberdeen in 1954 to take up the position of Principal at Gray's School of Art, he played the key role in the revival of the Aberdeen Artists' Society. After retiring in 1971 he became the enthusiastic founder and chairman of Artspace and Peacock Printmakers.

Featured in this oil painting are two young female art students preparing the set up for a still life. In the background we can see other female students and the whole painting captures the hustle and bustle of this community of young creatives learning their craft.

You can see this artwork on the AAGM [emuseum](#).



Discussion

Some artists are self-taught, such as James McBey whose work is displayed in Gallery 13, while others will go to art school. Historically women have not always been allowed to join these institutions, so it is important that their work is collected and displayed in an art gallery.



Watch

This [short film](#) looks at some notable female artists and their struggles to receive an education and have their work appreciated.



Arts Students Preparing A Still Life, Ian Fleming

In the same way that BAS9 artist Katie Schwab has a special interest in design and craft produced by women, Aberdeen Art Gallery has been acquiring and displaying such work for many years.

RED AND GREEN BOBBIN KNITTED NECKLACE

Sarah Key

This necklace was created by contemporary Scottish designer Sarah Key using the ancient technique of bobbin knitting. It is decorated with handmade 'stamens' that hold precious stones and crystals. The stamens are long pieces of monofilament with enamel paint on the tips. The necklace is worn by draping it round the wearers body.

This combination of an old method of manufacture with modern materials provides the inspiration to explore the boundaries between jewellery, textiles and sculpture.

You can see this artwork on the AAGM [emuseum](#).



Activity

Finger knitting is a great activity for children to engage in as it requires no expensive extra tools just some yarn and their hands. Two different techniques can be found here:

[Finger knitting 1](#)

[Finger knitting 2](#)



Red and Green Bobbin Knitted Necklace, Sarah Key

Art in its many forms is connected to the community - it is inspired by and reflects that community back to an audience. This is as true now for contemporary artists as it was in 1850 when this painting was created.

BAPTISM IN SCOTLAND

John Philip

Created by Aberdeen-born artist John Philip, the primary focus of this painting is the baptism ceremony in the family home, which was a common occurrence in the 19th century. The daylight flooding in through the window draws our attention to the central grouping of mother, father and baby. The surrounding gathering of the extended family, at least four generations, all display individual personalities but never detract from the warmth and purpose of the community gathering.

You can see this artwork on the AAGM [emuseum](#).



Baptism in Scotland, John Philip



Activity

See if your learners can spot any Scottish objects, tartan or references to the Jacobite rebellions hidden in the painting.

This [short film](#) highlights the hidden symbols of support for the outlawed Jacobite cause.

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