

*"Every picture everyone painted told a story
about them. Your whole life on a board."*

An evaluation of the Gifted and Talented
Image and identity project at the V & A

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1 Aim of the report

This report was commissioned by the V & A Museum to reflect upon the impact of the Image and Identity project that the Museum ran with 15 Gifted and Talented Key Stage 3 students in Autumn 2003. Whilst the project had already been evaluated for its immediate effectiveness by NFER, the Museum was keen to discover whether or not there had been any long term impact on both the students and adults involved in the project, six months after it had ended.

The study aimed to identify evidence of impact and successful processes that the Museum could use for advocacy with teachers. The Museum would like to encourage teachers to see the value of using Art and Design to explore image and identity. This report seeks to discover therefore what, if any, impact the project has had. It aims to identify successful elements that could be drawn upon in future project planning and also, where necessary, to highlight areas where improvements could be made.

The Gifted and Talented Image and Identity project became a high profile project that attracted media attention and offered students the chance to meet MPs to discuss their work. This study therefore also seeks to establish whether the impact on students is mainly as a result of the excitement of the press attention that grew around the work or intrinsic to the sessions themselves.

2 Background

Image & Identity is the title of a national/regional partnership project funded jointly by the DCMS and DfES under the national/regional partnerships programme for education and communities 2003/4. The V&A led the project, working in partnership with five regional museums, NCH-the children's charity, the National Foundation for Educational Research and the Campaign for Drawing.

The project for Gifted & Talented young people was one of the V&A's programmes in the larger Image & Identity project. Running for 8 consecutive Saturdays in Autumn 2003, the project was the latest in a series of projects with the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea/Westminster Excellence in Cities Programme. Schools were identified by the Gifted and Talented Coordinator and students invited to take part by their art teachers.

15 students from 7 different schools within Chelsea and Kensington took part. Two of the schools, from which students were interviewed, are specialist Art Colleges for the visual arts. Students came from a wide range of cultural backgrounds, including some refugees.

The project aimed to give young people a chance to use art to explore their own identities and at the same time to help them develop skills in drawing, scaling up and painting. The Museum also aimed to reach beyond those directly involved in the project through producing an e-learning resource based on the project's process. The initial idea was to provide a prequel and sequel to the project. Whilst, due to technical difficulties GATEA did not provide the pre-project website, the sequel resource can be accessed through their Managed Learning Environment that has been established as part of the Gifted and Talented provision in London. The e-learning resource was co-produced between the V & A and GATEA (the Gifted and Talented Education Arm of the London Challenge).

As the project developed, students were introduced to ways in which artists represented and explored their image and identity through their art. Working with artists they considered the kinds of objects, symbols and scenery that would reflect their own image and identity, created designs and then scaled them up into large scale backdrops. Through working with a group of Indian Hoarding painters, students were introduced to large scale drawing and painting techniques. Finally they were photographed in front of their boards.

3 Executive summary

The students stated they felt the project was a success. They not only enjoyed their experience, they learned a lot and the experiences of the project have impacted subsequently on their lives. The impact on some students was more intense than for others, but all gained something, not least the experience of having produced a piece of art 2m tall and 1.5 m wide in such a short time.

The most lasting impact for most students was in skills and confidence gain, with an emphasis on artistic skills that students are applying to their school work. Family pride is also evident, an important factor in young people's self esteem. There was variation between students in how much the project helped them reflect on image and identity. For at least half, this was an important and integral part of the experience, for others, the project was more about art techniques.

The adults involved in the project also benefited. The principle artist for the project gained experience and confidence of working with young people and the Event Assistant has applied the project techniques to herself and begun painting as a leisure activity.

One area of improvement for the project appears to be in the planning stages. Recruitment of the students could be better organised, introductory sessions better structured and peer learning better facilitated. Although the students recruited were undoubtedly from a range of cultural backgrounds, the schools they attend and the students chosen mean that these were in the main highly motivated students to begin with. In addition, only one boy took part.

Students valued being at the V & A and particularly enjoyed the respect and independence they were given in sessions. They rated this very highly in comparison to their school experiences. The findings suggest that the uniqueness of the V & A may have been somewhat underutilised by the project. This report therefore suggests that the Museum should consider how to better capitalise upon its uniqueness in future projects.

It should be emphasised that any areas for improvement are small in comparison to the overwhelmingly positive endorsement the students gave Image and Identity.

4 Evaluating the project

4.1 method:

Given the personal nature of the aims of the project, it was clear that qualitative data would be needed. Structured interviews, face to face and one on one were used to gather the student feedback. The interviews took place at school and in school time with students on their "home ground".

No baseline data existed, however, students were old enough to be asked to reflect on their experiences and the perceived benefits of the project. In addition, students had filled out comment sheets after each of the eight sessions and these were able to provide evidence of enjoyment and some skills gain. They were however mainly diary style records of sessions, mainly logging what happened rather than student's reflections.

Phone interviews were carried out with two of the adults involved in the workshops, plus a face to face interview with the teacher involved. Interview questions can be found in Appendix 1

4.2 sample:

Fifteen students took part in the original project. The study aimed to talk to eight of them. However due to student commitment, the final sample was seven. The sample included the only boy to take part in the project. Session feedback notes were available from all fifteen students.

In addition the artist who ran six of the eight sessions was interviewed, alongside the Event Assistant who attended all the sessions and the teacher who had been instrumental in planning the project and developing the on-line resources.

4.3 timescale:

The project ran in Autumn 2003. Whilst some of the students have been back to the Museum for the Image and Identity Young People's Conference or to work in the exhibition, this study, in the region of six months after the event, aims to capture evidence of any long term impact.

5 Key findings

Both students and the adults involved with the project were overwhelmingly positive about it. Whilst students undoubtedly enjoyed the seriousness with which their work was treated and the media attention it engendered, the benefits they identify with the project are more closely linked to the sessions and the experience of creating their own work and sharing with their peers. Only one student chose meeting MPs as the part of the project they were most enthusiastic about, with all the others talking about their work or meeting artists.

5.1 Key Findings: initial motivation

Students were asked what had motivated them to take part in the project when they were invited. Initial motivation depended to a large extent on the amount of information given to students when they were invited to take part. Individual teacher enthusiasm for the project played an important part in student's decision.

Students of the teacher involved in planning the project demonstrated that their choice to participate came from an enthralling by their teacher and an understanding of what they might experience. "She said there would be Indian painters and loads of artists" and "I thought it would be a wonderful, exciting experience working at the V&A with artists from India." In contrast students from other schools tended to join for social reasons or for the opportunity to take part in a project, rather than especially to explore Image and Identity or to work with particular artists. "Two of my friends were doing it, so I thought it would be fun" and "I was really bored. I thought it would be something to do. I didn't actually know what was going to happen ... I thought it would just be an art workshop."

5.2 Key Findings: structure of the project

Overall students felt the project was well structured. They liked the fact that it ran over series of weeks but that there were breaks so they could have "a Saturday off". Three of the seven students interviewed said they would have liked more sessions, with one explaining: "I could have done with longer because I'm so slow." The session notes also chart some students' feeling of being rushed and concern that they may not have enough time to finish, with six students commenting on this and three mentioning being very tired. Since others felt the number of sessions was right for them, the evidence may be pointing to a need for slightly more differentiation, with some optional activities built in for quicker students, thus taking the pressure off slower ones.

Despite reporting feelings of being rushed, students were agreed that the length of the sessions was about right. They appreciated the 11.00 start and a good break for lunch. One female student commented: "I wasn't keen on going home in the dark at 4.30 in the winter."

Students' main concern was the beginning of the project. They felt that the Museum could have provided more information before the project and structured the initial session a little better. GATEA helped by the V& A had aimed to develop an Image and Identity website before the project had begun so that students would have had a clearer idea of the project, but unfortunately technical difficulties prevented this from happening.

Students would have liked a pre-project meeting where they could have met each other socially and have had more information about what to expect of the project. "I

was a bit nervous at first. It would be good to have a chance to get to know everyone first” and “It would be nice to have a pre-session to get to know the people, so as it’s not so awkward in the first session.”

Three students mentioned that they felt the first session had not been successful. Their main criticism was that it was too passive and not directly useful or relevant to their later sessions with David Hancock, the project’s main artist. An additional student alluded to this same view without specifically mentioning the first session.

“In the first two sessions I kinda (sic) lost interest because it was just listening to the artist, with nothing to do. Teenagers get fidgety!”

Despite an initial planning meeting, the project artist felt that he could have been better informed about the specific learning outcomes for the project: “It took me a while to realise that they shouldn’t include portraits of themselves in their backdrops.”

5.3 Key Findings: effectiveness of the project

Six of the seven students interviewed spoke enthusiastically about the value of the project to them. There was a range of opinion as to what was the most valuable element of the project. Nonetheless there was some agreement on what made the project enjoyable and successful. Whilst some commented on the high profile aspects of the project, such as meeting MPs, these aspects were not seen as central to the success of the project for students.

All could identify some areas for improvement although they agreed that generally these did not detract from the overall success of the project. “It’s always good to try new things and you don’t know how good it will be ‘til you try it. My experience was great.”

All three adults involved felt the project was a great success. The project artist said: “It surpassed what I expected. It was absolutely brilliant. They really pushed themselves and each other. Some of the work was absolutely outstanding.”

5.3.1 working with artists

Three of the seven chose this as the most valuable part of the project. In addition, six of the seven identified working with the artists as the element the Museum should definitely keep in any future projects.

The importance of choosing artists that can work with young people was highlighted by the negative reaction of four of the students to the first session. As one student commented on the first session: “I wanted to sleep!” One young person however identified with the first artist and felt he was “cool”.

5.3.2 working alongside peers

Though initially working with peers was not a main motivator for most students to take part, it was a clearly valued, and perhaps underdeveloped, part of the project. In many ways it is more of a surprise with young people not to see peer learning and socialising mentioned more frequently. The project artist commented on how well the students worked together, supporting each other.

5.3.3 keeping it active

Students were passionate about their own work and their involvement in its production. This comes through all the interviews and all the session note booklets. Even those few students for whom the image and identity element of the project was not hugely successful, valued and learned from the practical, skills based experiences.

5.3.4 a relevant theme

Image and identity was seen as a relevant theme, with most students engaging with the ideas to some extent. When asked how useful the project had been for thinking about their own image students gave scores of between 3 out of 5 and 5 out of 5 (where 5 is the highest score). Comments ranged from "It didn't reflect anything I didn't know already" to "I hadn't thought about my image and identity before."

5.3.5 something new

Students were all pleased with their finished results. They liked the scale of their work and the fact that they wouldn't normally work with such large canvases. They enjoyed the new materials and techniques they were taught and the new styles they were exposed to. The finished product was big and impressive and one student still has her work on display in her form room. The artist also commented that the quality of the materials was a key factor in the professionalism of the finished pieces.

5.3.6 respect and independence

Students talked about the importance of being treated as independent thinkers, being taken seriously and being helped rather than taught. Some underlined the difference they felt between their experience in the project and their experience of school. One student commented that if the project were to be run in school he would advise the teacher to: "Give them more responsibility. Nobody likes to be bossed around 24/7."

5.3.7 receptiveness of the students

Many of the students came from schools with specialist arts college status or from schools that value self discipline highly. The artist commented on the willingness of the students to listen and take advice, identifying this as an element in the success of the project. Many of the students were already interested in art and some were already museum goers, which may have helped create the atmosphere referred to in 5.3.6.

5.3.8 using the collections

Although perhaps not a stated aim of the project, it is interesting to note that students mainly drew their inspiration from within, from the artists and from the techniques they were introduced to rather than connection with objects. One student commented about looking round the galleries for ideas: "I didn't get much out of that. It doesn't reflect the world as it is today." This then is one key area in which the project could have been improved.

5.4 Key Findings: outcomes for students

There was plentiful evidence of learning outcomes for both students and adults involved in the project. Whilst there is no baseline data, evidence exists within the

interview data and the session note booklets of learning outcomes that can be categorised under Generic Learning Outcome headings. GLOs are the categories used to describe learning as part of the Inspiring Learning for All framework recently launched by MLA. There is also some evidence of learning opportunities missed by some students.

Overall, students provided evidence of having learned new things across the spectrum of learning. Individual students appeared to gain more in some ways than others. However, overall the main gains were in skills acquisition, self confidence and progression as a result. Whether students gained insight into image and identity is rather more varied, as is whether their attitude towards museums changed.

5.4.1 Increase in knowledge and understanding

This varied most across the students. This is perhaps unsurprising since the “intellectual content” was based on better self-understanding rather than the acquiring of subject based knowledge. Whilst six of the seven students provided some evidence of acquiring new knowledge and understanding, only three provided evidence of a clear understanding of image and identity developed through the project: “It’s about image and identity, about you yourself. You look into yourself, so you find out things about yourself as well as about art.”

Others provided no evidence or very little in this realm of learning. One student actually commented: “I don’t really see a difference between image and identity.”

Of the three adults involved, only the school teacher (not present at the sessions) mentioned a deeper understanding of different cultures as an aim for the project. Beyond this, none explicitly mentioned any kind of intellectual engagement with the ideas of image and identity. The major adult emphasis was clearly on skills and motivations, rather than knowledge and understanding. The artist for example said he was hoping that students would: “learn basic skills and gain confidence doing life drawings.”

Students did gain knowledge in relation to art. They spoke about using colour in different ways and this increase in knowledge is confirmed by the teacher involved who identified: “working with acrylics” as a new area of knowledge for students.

5.4.2 Increase in skills

All students showed evidence of skills acquisition. These mainly related to artistic techniques, although one student also mentioned developing socialising skills. They were divided in how useful they thought the skills they had acquired were, with three students giving a rating of 5/5, three 4/5 and one 3/5. Four students offered evidence of using the skills acquired in producing their own art work at school and the teacher interviewed commented that: “their work has shown improvement.”

The adults involved also identified student skills acquisition. Beyond the techniques learned, the artist also commented students had had to learn to be: “quick and adaptable, adjusting their ideas from week to week.”

5.4.3 Change in attitudes and values

Without baseline data it is very difficult to say whether changes in attitudes and values have taken place. However, five of the seven students provided evidence of change based on their own reflective comparisons. These ranged from gains in

confidence to insights about themselves, others and other cultures. “The group was varied. It opened our eyes to different things and cultures and stuff.”

The artist felt that the greatest benefit the students had from the project was students gaining a realisation that: “... they could do something like that. Pushing themselves to produce a really professional result.” The Event Assistant noted that: “Over the weeks their confidence just grew and grew.”

5.4.4 Enjoyment, inspiration and creativity

All the students clearly enjoyed their experience. Their interview responses indicate this, as do their session note booklets. Giving up eight Saturdays is a large commitment for a young person. Inspiration for students largely came from the artists. The hoarding painters inspired even the student who showed least evidence of any lasting impact from the project. “I told my friends about the hoarding painters. They were interested.”

Whilst students didn’t use the word creativity they were clearly pleased with their pieces. In addition, the artist commented on the high quality of the end product: “Some of the work was absolutely outstanding. The finished results blew me away.”

5.4.5 Changed or new behaviour, or progression

Five of the seven students stated they would be more likely to visit a museum or art gallery following the project. Of the two remaining, one already visited museums regularly and the other felt that school visits were sufficient.

Five of the seven stated they would be more likely to be interested in art in general following the project, with one student adding: “Now I’m hooked on watercolours.”

Students were asked whether or not they might be more likely to think about becoming an artist as a result of the project. Two students felt they might consider art as a career, with four students making positive comments about art as a pastime. Whilst not all the comments show evidence of change, it is likely that these statements, taken in conjunction with the levels of enjoyment recorded, denote a reinforcement of art as an interest at the very least.

In addition, three students said they would love to do such a project again, whilst another is already involved in a further project: “I’m doing another project at Somerset House, which the V & A project gave me the confidence to do.”

5.5 Key Findings: outcomes for adults

Whilst there were no formal aims set for the adults involved in the project, nonetheless, the project has impacted upon them, particularly in enjoyment and confidence gain. Increases in skills, for example in working with young people for the artist, are hinted at.

5.5.1 Change in attitudes and values

Whilst perhaps more of a reinforcement of attitude, the teacher involved in the project clearly felt that her partnership with the Museum was valuable: “Keeping close connection with a Gallery, sharing resources and experience...”.

The artist spoke of gaining confidence: “It gave me confidence in leading workshops ... now I feel much more confident to run workshops and more ambitious about what can be achieved.”

5.5.2 Evidence of enjoyment, inspiration and creativity

Both the artist and the Event Assistant who attended the sessions were enthusiastic. They provided evidence of enjoyment both on behalf of the students and in their own right.

The Event Assistant was so inspired she has taken to painting herself. “Well, I started to paint myself. Using the same method... it’s so liberating.”

5.5.3 Evidence of activity, changed or new behaviour, or progression

The Event Assistant has begun to paint, whilst the artist involved has applied what he learned from this project: “I’ve taken ideas and used them in other projects.”

6 Recommendations

The key recommendations for future projects are:

- establish more specific outcomes in initial planning to inform student selection, make communication clearer and evaluation easier
- provide more pre-project information for students
- ensure initial sessions are active and involving
- include some more opportunities for peer learning and support
- provide more built in differentiation, to accommodate differing pace and ability between students
- build on the respectful and independent learning environment created in this project
- make stronger links to the collections

6.1 outcomes based planning

The project had aims and was well planned. However, there were some difficulties reported by participants around the early stages of the project. The initial approach through arts teachers has missed the opportunity for the project to be rather more cross-curricular. Clearer objectives may have prevented this. Finally, the adults involved express their aims for the project in terms of skills and confidence gain and yet the theme offered clear opportunities for deepening understanding and challenging values. Without planning, the outcomes in these areas are rather more varied.

This report recommends that for future projects the Museum use outcome based planning processes, where desired outcomes are clear from the beginning and success is explicitly described. This does not mean inflexibility of the project since outcomes can be wide ranging and not all participants would be expected to achieve all outcomes. Such planning would however provide an opportunity to collaborate with, and a reference for, external partners. It would inform the student selection, in which the Museum played little part. It would also inform and enable the collection of baseline data, which would be useful for future projects to demonstrate impact.

6.2 pre-project information

Providing clearer pre-project information is one way in which participation may have been widened. This report recommends that, in future projects, the Museum ensures that all potential participants have equal access to information about the project and a clear idea of both the commitment and benefits that the project may bring in helping students focus on what they might get from such a project, the likelihood of students receiving those benefits is increased. The original idea of a website may have helped achieve this. Students suggested however, that Museum staff visit school to talk to them, so personal contact should still be considered in addition to web based information.

Whilst it was not possible to interview the Gifted and Talented Coordinator responsible for recruiting, the students' accounts of how they became involved

indicate that it might be wise for the Museum to be more actively involved in recruitment in future.

In addition, the report endorses the students' suggestion of a pre-project social meeting at which participants can get to know one another. This is particularly important for young people.

6.3 initial levels of activity

Students were clear that active participation in their own work kept them enthused across the weeks. They were quite negative about the first session where they felt uninvolved or "talked at", despite there being activity in that session. This report recommends that the Museum ensures that future projects avoid initial sessions that rely heavily on information giving. Instead important information should be fed throughout the sessions, or delivered in a more participatory way.

6.4 include peer learning opportunities

This report recommends that future projects with young people make more of peer learning opportunities. In this project, the lack of initial social introduction made the first session awkward for students. Both adults at the sessions commented on how quiet students were. Although this can be positive, it can also indicate a slight over reliance on individual work. The Event Assistant commented that it would be good to provide the students with more time to get together to discuss their work and such peer reflection and critiquing may have enabled some of the insights into image and identity shown by some students to be better shared amongst the group.

6.5 build in differentiation

Whilst such projects always have to be conscious not to involve too heavy a time commitment, some of the students show evidence of being very rushed. They voice concern over this, one even began to blame herself: "I could have done with longer 'cos I'm slow. Everyone else was fine."

This report suggests that some extra activities are built into project plans to provide breathing space for slower students if needed. Whilst the timescale of the project produced an intensity that enabled students to focus and to create excellent results, a little extra time may have enabled more reflection and a little breathing space.

6.6 recreate the learning atmosphere

The Museum should be proud that the students felt so respected. Whilst being invited to national launches with VIPs obviously played a part in this, there is clear evidence that students valued the attitude shown to them by the session adults and the kind of learning experience on offer. This report recommends that the Museum includes this in its aims for future projects, particularly, though not exclusively, with young people.

In future projects with young people it may be advantageous to have peer discussions about the teaching and learning style to be used, so that agreement is explicit from the start. This would also introduce a reflective discussion on the learning that is happening which the young people may want to pick up on throughout the project.

6.7 make stronger links to the collections

It is clear from student responses that the collections did not have much of an impact in this project, despite spending a morning in the gallery and an afternoon with the South East Asian curator looking at examples of hoardings. One student did suggest including some gallery tours, but most students simply didn't mention the collections.

This report recommends that the Museum seeks ways to develop the role of Museum objects in future projects.

One way is to choose a theme with more obvious relevance. One student suggested the Museum should run a very similar project based on fashion, with obvious teenage appeal and collection relevance. Another would be to consult with students about objects they like or relate to in the collections and choose themes based on their suggestions. Project funding may need to stretch to accommodate such consultation and also to possibly include some level of familiarisation with relevant objects for the project artists.

7 Findings in detail

These findings cover many of the areas pulled out in the key findings and offer more detail. They also show detailed responses to questions students were asked about the value of the project.

7.1 initial motivations

Although the teacher involved in planning the project was obviously able to inform and enthuse her students, the data suggests this may not have been the case with other teachers. Students from other schools appear to have had little information on which to make their decisions. This may partly account for some students deciding not to take place. The only boy in the project commented: "Miss Armitage approached three of us. The other two refused. I said yes, so I had nothing to lose. They others weren't interested. They made a mistake."

Whilst perhaps unavoidable it is also worth noting that three of the fifteen participants were absent for the first session of the project. A greater initial understanding of the structure and aims of the project may have helped avoid this.

Initial motivations are key with this project. Young people face many barriers to participation and need to make judgements based on information about whether or not to commit. This is particularly so in a project where eight Saturdays were being asked for.

Students were asked if they could remember what they hoped to get from the project. Overall, most didn't expect anything in particular. Two students talked about meeting new people, with one student looking to gain new skills and confidence.

Adults were also asked what they were hoping students would gain from the project. The artist was looking for basic skills and improved confidence in life drawing, the teacher hoped students would gain a wider context and knowledge, mainly through working with artists and the Event Assistant also hoped students would gain skills and "... be able to express themselves in new ways."

7.2 working with artists

Three of the seven interviewed chose this as the most valuable part of the project. In addition, six of the seven identified working with the artists as the element the Museum should definitely keep in any future projects.

In addition, seven of the fifteen session note booklets included positive comments about working with artists, with a further five mentioning the artists in their description of the session. The artist and other adults involved were crucial in getting the right atmosphere for the work. One student commented: "We felt that we were treated with respect and allowed to learn by ourselves" whilst another said that the most valuable part of the project was working with David Hancock and the way he helped the students.

The corollary of which was the artist's comment that the students were very open-minded and happy to be advised. "They were really open to ideas and suggestions, for example using bright colours. They were happy to be taught new techniques without thinking they knew better, unlike others I have taught who will try to give you an argument."

7.3 working with their friends

One student mentioned the atmosphere and being able to work and talk to friends as the most valuable part of the project. Although most did not choose this as the most valuable element it is clearly important to young people.

Five of the students felt that the project had given them insight into their peer's image and identity. "Every picture everyone painted told a story about them. Your whole life on a board. I learned about the others on the course." Another student commented: "It showed me what was important to my classmates. I got to know them better than at school."

One student, although not sure if she had learned much about others' image and identity, did value the peer learning situation and wished they had had time to get to know each other as a group at the beginning of the project.

Teenagers like to work alongside each other and to learn from each other. It is interesting to note therefore that only two of the session note booklets specifically mention meeting other students or working with them. The emphasis is very clearly on very individual work. Adults involved with the project too note that students didn't appear to talk much. When asked what surprised her about the students, one adult said "They were quite quiet. Some knew each other, some didn't. They were very focused and quietly enthusiastic."

7.4 the structure of the project

Students were asked:

- Is there anything the Museum could do to help students before the sessions?

Suggestions included:

- a pre-session to meet people (3)
- more information about what is going to happen (2)
- Museum staff visit school before the project to explain

One student felt it was fine as it was.

"I was a bit nervous at first. It would be good to have a chance to get to know everyone first."

Students were asked:

- Do you think there were too few, too many or about the right number of sessions?

5 students thought about right

2 students wanted more session suggesting 2 or 3 more would be ideal.

- Were the sessions too short, too long or about the right length?

All agreed they were about right.

Added comments included:

"It was fine. Time went quickly."

"About the right length, although I wasn't keen on going home in the dark at 4.30 in the winter."

Adults were asked whether they would change any aspect of their role.

Only the artist had any suggestion here, commenting that perhaps his brief could have been more clear.

7.5 the best part of the project

Students were asked a number of different questions concerning the value of the project.

Students were asked:

- which parts, if any, the Museum should keep in future projects.

1 student mentioned the last 5 sessions where they worked independently

1 student advised the Museum to give more time to David and leave out the “first artist”.

5 students mentioned working with artists

“The part where they bring in the artists. Their inspiration helps a lot.”

- what was the most valuable part of the project?

1 student mentioned learning to “grid up”, working on a huge scale for the first time

1 student wasn’t sure

3 students mentioned working with artists: split between David and the hoarding painters

1 student mentioned being in the V & A

1 student mentioned the experience and the atmosphere: working with her friends

1 student mentioned personal gain

“Being able to express myself and gain confidence. Gaining new skills I was able to use afterwards.”

- how could the Museum persuade students to take part in future projects?

All students said they would recommend the project to other students. Five of the seven emphasised their recommendation saying “Yes, definitely” when asked.

Ideas to encourage participation included:

- giving clearer information at the beginning
- stressing that students should like art and be prepared to commit the time before signing up
- making the Museum more accessible through workshops
- getting some people to sign up and getting them to encourage their friends to come too
- telling students it’s good to try new things and stressing they may miss the opportunity
- Museum staff coming into schools to explain the project
- highlighting the importance of image and identity to young people

“Image and Identity is important today as there’s a lot of pressure to conform.”

7.6 how interesting was the project?

Students were asked to rate this on a scale of 1-5, with 5/5 the highest score.

| <u>Score</u> | <u>Students</u> |
|--------------|-----------------|
| 1 | 0 |
| 2 | 0 |
| 3 | 0 |
| 4 | 5 |
| 5 | 2 |

The project lost points for the first two sessions and one student mentioned she would have liked to have seen more of the Museum.

Four students felt that doing their piece was the most interesting thing, with two more feeling working with artists was the most interesting. The remaining student felt the whole experience was interesting.

7.7 how useful were the skills you learned?

There was plenty of evidence of skills acquisition, but opinion was more divide on the usefulness of the skills acquired.

Students were asked to rate this on a scale of 1-5, with 5/5 the highest score.

| <u>Score</u> | <u>Students</u> |
|--------------|-----------------|
| 1 | 0 |
| 2 | 0 |
| 3 | 1 |
| 4 | 3 |
| 5 | 3 |

“They’re useful but not something you’d use in everyday life. They will be useful in my art GCSE.”

7.8 how successful was the project in deepening student understanding of image and identity?

Students were asked:

- How useful was the project for thinking about your own image and your own identity?

Students were asked to rate this on a scale of 1-5, with 5/5 the highest score.

Image:

| <u>Score</u> | <u>Students</u> |
|--------------|-----------------|
| 1 | 0 |
| 2 | 0 |
| 3 | 3 |
| 4 | 1 |
| 5 | 3 |

Identity:

| <u>Score</u> | <u>Students</u> |
|--------------|-----------------|
| 1 | 0 |
| 2 | 0 |
| 3 | 3 |
| 4 | 1 |
| 5 | 3 |

Some students clearly responded well to this aspect of the sessions, whilst others did not engage with it.

Comments ranged from: "I learnt to be a bit more free about where I'm from and talk about it a bit more" to "It didn't pinpoint exactly what I am...it didn't reflect anything I didn't know already."

Overall, the session notes give huge amounts of detail about what the students did, but rarely talk about this more intellectual side of the sessions. Whilst from the student evidence it is difficult to say whether this is simply a lack of awareness on behalf of some students, the limited reference to learning and development in this area by both adults at the sessions tends to support a sense that this was a slightly underdeveloped part of the project.

Students were also asked:

- How useful was the project for thinking about other people's image/identity?

Image:

| <u>Score</u> | <u>Students</u> |
|--------------|-----------------|
| 1 | 0 |
| 2 | 1 |
| 3 | 1 |
| 4 | 3 |
| 5 | 2 |

Identity:

| <u>Score</u> | <u>Students</u> |
|--------------|-----------------|
| 1 | |
| 2 | |
| 3 | 1 |
| 4 | 3 |
| 5 | 2 |
| not sure | 1 |

Five of the seven students showed evidence that they had understood that the pictures revealed information about their peer's identities, perhaps even things that the artist wasn't consciously intending to show. One student stated she was more interested in the other student's techniques and materials than in thinking about their identities. Another said she was mainly concentrating on her own piece.

"The group was varied. It opened our eyes to different cultures and stuff."

"Even with my friends I saw a lot about them from their paintings that they hadn't shown me."

"You can't judge people by their images."

7.9 areas for improvement

Students were asked what if anything had disappointed them. The majority could think of nothing. Comments that were made included:

- the first artist/session (2)
- the first work space
- looking round the galleries: not relevant
- giving up all those Saturdays!

Students were also asked what they would change about the project. Overall most students had few things to suggest and many began their answer with “Nothing” and then made a small suggestion. Suggestions included:

- the first session (3)
- add in more gallery tours
- add an ice breaker

In a previous question students had been asked about suggestions for pre-project improvements. Their answers are recorded in 7.4 above.

Adults drew attention to two aspects of the project that could be improved:

The Event Assistant suggested: “An added dimension would be more time to come together to discuss their work” and also commented that the lunch room was not an ideal venue as it made tidying up “a bit of a nightmare.”

The project artist commented: “The kids were sad that the Indian hoarding painters had painted over some of their work.” This was also mentioned by two students.

Whilst not a big issue, it is important as it signals a lack of valuing the student’s work, which is at variance with the general atmosphere and ethos of the project. The fragility of student confidence in their work is illustrated by a student comment: “I was worried at first when they (the hoarding painters) went over my work, but then it was fine when I realised that they had to get it right.”

7.10 how did the project differ from learning in school?

Students were asked to consider what advice they would give to a teacher running a similar project in a school. The responses varied but many illustrated the value the students placed on the informal learning experiences offered through the project and working with artists. There was a sense from all involved that everyone was learning, rather than it being a teacher and student situation.

Advice could be loosely grouped under the following heading:

- treat students as independent learners/move away from the teacher-student model (3)

“Give the students freedom. We felt we were treated with respect and allowed to learn by ourselves.”

“Give them more responsibility: nobody likes to be bossed around 24/7.”

- use artists (3)
- keep student’s interested and active (3)

“When showing the artists work, get them involved actively by doing some drawings themselves rather than just passively listening.”

“Make it lots of hands on. Most kids have a short attention span, to be honest.”

- organise visits to museums

In addition, the Event Assistant and the artist commented on the excellent working atmosphere in the group. The Event Assistant highlighted the value of working with artists: “(students have) the added benefit of working with a professional artist who takes the mystique out of painting as an art form.” She went on to say: “As a teacher, it was great to work with students in a way that took them (and me) to a different level.’

The artist commented on the positive way students responded to his advice and helped and supported each other. He remarked on their “enthusiasm and sustained effort” and commented that the high quality of materials, unlike those available in school, benefited the students.

The teacher interviewed also commented that it was difficult to work in such large scale in schools. “The pupils make contacts and work in a way they can’t at school.”

7.11 how has the project affected students attitude to art and to museums and galleries?

Students were asked:

- Since the project how likely are you to visit a museum or art gallery?

Five students replied more likely.
Two students replied about the same.

One student described how he had already organised a visit to the Museum with 4 of his friends to visit the exhibition and see the rest of the Museum.
Two students said they already visited museums quite often.

- Since the project how likely are you to be interested in art?

Five students replied more likely.
Two students replied about the same.

One student commented she was already interested in art.

- Since the project how likely are you to think about becoming an artist?

Two students replied more likely.
Two students replied about the same
Two students replied less likely.
One student didn’t know.

In qualifying their answers the students who replied less likely or don’t know spoke about art as a hobby. “I’ll definitely do art as a pastime” and “Art is a pastime thing. Something I’d like to develop. It feels good to do something right in my art work. The better I get, the better I feel.”

One student commented:

“Before the project I wasn’t sure but it encouraged me to think about a career in art, travelling and creating.”

7.12 how did students feel about the project?

All the students expressed enthusiasm for the project. All said they would recommend other students to get involved with similar projects.

Six of the seven students had spoken to both their families and friends about the project. One had spoken to her family.

All reported positive support and encouragement, with three students mentioning pride and two talking of their families being very excited for them.

7.13 learning outcomes for students

The following section aims to examine what kind of learning took place and to provide a big picture of the spread of learning outcomes. Without baseline data however, it is difficult to assess the quality and depth of the learning experiences the students undoubtedly had.

7.1.3 spread of learning

All students showed evidence of learning across all Generic Learning Outcomes (GLOs). Across the seven interviews some 116 statements that showed evidence of student learning were recorded.

These statements can be broken down into the following:

| | |
|---|----|
| Increase in knowledge and understanding | 13 |
| Increase in skills | 27 |
| Changes in attitude and values | 33 |
| Evidence of enjoyment, inspiration and creativity | 28 |
| Evidence of activity, progression etc | 15 |

7.1.4 Increase in knowledge

This was the area with least evidence. The most common new knowledge gained was learning about the use of acrylics and different colours in art works. Four statements also provided evidence that students had gained a deeper understanding about identity.

7.1.5 Increase in skills

Each student identified a number of skills they had acquired. Most of these (96%) referred to art skills and techniques. The most commonly mentioned was scaling up.

7.1.6 Change in attitude

The area most mentioned by students. Most common areas for comment included having new thoughts about their own image and identity, about their peers’ images and identities or about being more interested in art. It should be noted however that these comments were often prompted by direct questions. Only three statements provided evidence of gain in confidence, although the adults involved in the project feel that the students gained in confidence.

7.1.7 Evidence of enjoyment

The strongest evidence is from the session notes. Of the 119 statements in the notes that show evidence of learning, 77 (65%) relate to enjoyment and inspiration. Interviews also provided clear evidence of enthusiasm and inspiration.

Statements ranged around the value of working with artists and the enjoyment derived from working on and completing their art works, which they found extremely satisfying. Three students also mentioned the motivational aspect of being given the freedom to work independent of teachers.

7.1.8 Evidence of progression

Five of the fifteen progression statements came from a direct question on whether or not the project had impacted on student's likelihood to visit a museum. The project does not appear to have profoundly affected the majority of these students in obvious intentions, although one talked passionately about actively considering a career in art and another has already signed up for another project. However, some of the most profound impacts projects can have are to be found in the change in attitudes and values. (see above)

Appendix 1

Student interview framework

- 1 How did you get involved with the project?
- 2 When you first heard about the project, what made you decide to take part?
- 3 Can you remember what you hoped you would get from the project?

The Museum is thinking of running a similar project for students of your age. They are interested in your ideas and opinions to help them make improvements.

- 4 Is there anything you think the Museum could do to help students before the sessions?
- 5 Do you think there were too few, too many or about the right number of sessions?
Prompt: makes you say that?
- 6 Were the sessions too short, too long or about the right length?
Prompt: Can you explain your answer?
- 7 What parts of the project, if any, should the Museum definitely keep in the new project?
- 8 What parts, if any, should the Museum change or not include in the new project?
Prompt: makes you think this?
- 9 What would you say was the most valuable part of the project?
- 10 Would you encourage other students to take part in an image and identity project? How could the Museum persuade students?
- 11 If a teacher was thinking about doing an image and identity project in their school, what advice would you give them?

Now thinking about your own experience of the project, can you please give me marks out of 5 for:

12 How interesting the project was

1☹ 2 3 4 5☺

Prompt: why a five, why not a five? Can you explain?

13 How useful the skills you learned have been

1☹ 2 3 4 5☺

Prompt: why a five, why not a five? Can you explain?

14 How useful for thinking about your own image

1☹ 2 3 4 5☺

Prompt: why a five, why not a five? Can you explain?

15 How useful for thinking about your own identity

1☹ 2 3 4 5☺

Prompt: why a five, why not a five? Can you explain?

16 How useful for thinking about your other people's images

1☹ 2 3 4 5☺

Prompt: why a five, why not a five? Can you explain?

17 How useful for thinking about your other people's identifies

1☹ 2 3 4 5☺

Prompt: why a five, why not a five? Can you explain?

18 What did you find the most interesting part of the project?

19 What, if anything, disappointed you about the project?

20 What were you most enthusiastic about?

Since the project, can you say how likely you are to:

21 Visit a museum or art gallery

More likely less likely about the same don't know

22 Be interested in art

More likely less likely about the same don't know

23 Think about becoming an artist:

More likely less likely about the same don't know

Prompt: Can you explain these answers?

24 Have you talked about the project with your family or friends?

Yes No

When you told them about it, what kinds of things did you tell them and how did they react?

25 Have you looked at the web site with your picture on it?

Yes No

Have you shown family or friends?

26 What, if anything, do you think you learned from the project?

Prompt: Has that been useful to you since the project in anyway?

27 Have you been back to the V and A Museum at all?

If Yes: what did you go for?

If No: can you explain why?

28 (*optional*) If you could only choose one thing, what would you say was the most valuable thing you got from the project?

Adult interview framework

- 1 What was your role in the project?
- 2 what were you hoping students would get out of the project?
- 3 what skills did you feel they gained? Can you give any specific examples?
- 4 what knowledge do you think they gained? Can you give any specific examples?
- 5 what progress, if any, did you see students make week on week?
- 5a teacher: have you seen any evidence of students applying learning from the project in school? If yes, can you give me some examples?
- 6 what, if anything, surprised you most about the students?
- 7 what do you feel was the greatest benefit to the students from the project?
- 8 Would you recommend a project like this to other teachers?
If you were going to persuade teachers that their students should take part in future projects, what would you say?
- 9 If the Museum were to run the project again, how could it be improved?
- 10 is there anything about your specific role that you would do differently?
- 11 How, if at all, do you feel you benefited from the project?