



art

NEWSLETTER

Open Day 2021

Achievements, stories &
events of the past year from
the Art Department

NEWS LETTER



12th October 2021

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INTELLECT, EMPATHY &
COURAGE

Welcome to the



Andy Warhol - an icon whose work shook the world and revolutionised the face of popular art forever. (Part 1)

Over the half term, we visited the Andy Warhol exhibition that is being held at the Tate Modern, in hopes of enriching ourselves with the art of one of the most influential artists of all time. This exhibition was largely biographical, focusing on his queer identity, his celebrity circle and the work that allowed him to become the face of pop art, while constantly challenging the norms of both art and societal ideals at that time.

The first rooms gave an introduction to him as an artist: from the start of his career, Warhol used his personal relationships in his art to invite people to view the world in different ways.



His first serious art film, 'Sleep,' depicts the poet John Girono sleeping in slow-motion, almost dream-like, and explores how film can be used just the same as a painting.

Being a gay man, living in a time when sexual relations between men was illegal, he thrived in New York's queer community of artisans; his first exhibitions featured line drawings of young men; however he was considered 'too camp' to be considered a serious artist. It's fascinating how a man who was shunned for his sexuality at the time is still able to have such a great influence on our culture today. In the past few decades, with the voices of the LGBTQ+ community being increasingly recognised, Warhol's position in the world has become even more significant; he's a role model for perseverance and acceptance of oneself.

The exhibition proceeds to describe his early career - the part of his life that would immortalize him as a revolutionary figure in the face of pop art. Many of his most famous prints were exhibited, such as 'Marilyn Diptych' and 'Elvis I and II,' showing his interest in discussing media and commercialism in his work. Warhol's method of screen-printing, modified to get inconsistent and distorted images, was used to portray traumatic scenes from newspapers and magazines; this enhanced the emotional impact of his paintings e.g. for the mask-like print of Marilyn Monroe, there is a sense of uncertainty and impurity in the message being conveyed.



Warhol began to experiment with silver paint and foil and consequently rose to fame due to his experimental art studio: 'The Factory'. His interest in filmmaking led him to create over 500 films between 1963 and 1967; through these films he gained recognition for his unorthodox methods and controversial subject matters. In one of the rooms we visited we were able to see his 'Silver Clouds' installation - another aspect of his silver obsession: this was an attempt to create paintings that float and subvert the conventional ideas of sculpture. This installation, in particular drew us in because of its bizarre nature - you had to lift your head to the ceiling in order to appreciate the work. It was a particularly creative piece that drew our attention since its physical nature allowed Warhol to focus on the effect of the art, on his audience, rather than the skill or technicality involved in creating it.



This brief insight into Andy Warhol's magnificent journey as an artist and a man conveys just how unique his work was and already makes clear why he is such a staple in the history of art. The second half of the exhibition will be explored next week where we look at how Warhol's life and art changed, due to being shot in broad daylight in his very own studio.

Heather Shaw and Joy Hui, Art Prefects

Andy Warhol - an icon whose work shook the world and revolutionised the face of popular art forever. (Part 2)



Although many knew Warhol for his pop art, few knew that he was shot in broad daylight in his very own studio. Following on from last week, the second half of the exhibition explores Warhol's life after this shooting; despite the toll that this had on his physical and mental health, he continued to create poignant artwork that carried profound meaning.

Walking through the next corridor of the exhibition, we learnt that Valerie Solanas, a radical feminist, shot Andy Warhol in the chest and abdomen, condemning him to wear a surgical corset for the rest of his life. He was momentarily declared dead, but (surprise!) he survived and continued to create art. Warhol developed a fear for hospitals, had trouble eating and became nervous around strangers; his trauma led him to create more controversial art that focussed on death and violence. Andy Warhol's ability to channel his

suffering into his art is inspiring since it illustrates how you can translate pain into beauty.

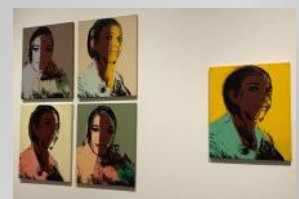
His next artworks moved on to political iconography, wherein he created the Mao series: this included a screen-printed portrait of the leader of communist China, Mao (which was in response to Richard Nixon's visit to China in 1972). Andy Warhol's exploration of iconography progressed as he created the 'Hammer and Sickle' and 'Skull' series; these consisted of brightly coloured silk-screen paint, layered to create a sense of depth to the otherwise flat images. We really loved Warhol's screen prints as they had such a distinct appearance that drew the viewer's attention; the stark contrast between the vibrant paints used and sombre subject matters that they were communicating to us was unique and furthered our interest.



Contrariwise, in the next rooms we saw Warhol's use of rich, intense colours to dramatise and enhance the personalities of his portraits; in 1975 he created a series of screen-printed anonymous Black and Latinx drag queens and Trans women titled 'Ladies and Gentlemen' - this was his attempt to remedy the lack of representation of Trans people seen in art. He took over 500 photographs of a selection of models that were then enlarged onto silk screens; despite this seemingly virtuous deed of giving Trans people more exposure, there were concerns with this series since Andy Warhol himself was not transgender and yet he had a monopoly over how their community was depicted in his work.



Although we can all agree that these paintings are eye-catching and present Warhol's iconic style clearly, we have differing opinions. Whilst I adore the use of the almost lurid, dissonant colours to emphasize the characters in the portraits, my fellow art prefect Alice's initial reaction to the piece was that they were creepy, though still appealing.



Personally, I enjoyed looking at the unconventional colouring method that made the pieces look patchwork-like: this perhaps reflects the difficult and broken history of the trans community; it was not a straight-forward life to live, especially during Andy Warhol's time when people were far more discriminated against for their sexual identity. For me and Heather, we found that this was conveyed clearly through the violent streaks of clashing hues and distorted images.

It's clear that Andy Warhol's iconography and portraiture had the power to transform the face of modern art forever: we will explore the final chapter of his artistic journey next week!

Joy Hui, Art Prefect

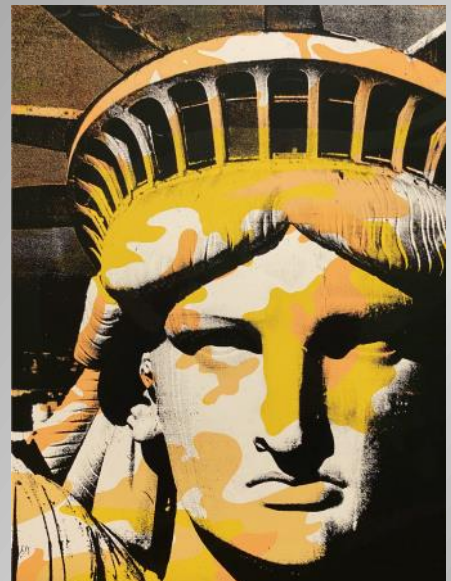
Andy Warhol - an icon whose work shook the world and revolutionised the face of popular art forever. (Part 3)

Moving onto the final few rooms, we reached the part of the exhibition that explored Warhol's life when he was in the prime of his career: an international celebrity. His works in the 1970's were explicit works that fixated on the body - an example would be his 'Oxidation' series, which required human urine to oxidise metallic paint (yes, he created urine paintings): this resulted in a painting that resembled that of abstract expressionist artworks, as it formed uniquely shaped pools of colour. I found that piece fascinating since you would never know, from just looking at the piece, that it was created using Andy Warhol's waste - this just emphasizes how pretty much anything can be turned into art.



He also made a 'Torso' series, in which he modelled men, recruited by his friends from gay bath houses; these were taken in black and white with strong contrast - this helped to define the shape of their bodies and transform the subjects into the art rather than merely the subject of the art, which is what I loved about this photography series.

In the following decade, Andy Warhol subconsciously returned his attention back to political and even religious imagery; his artwork mirrored major concerns such as the Cold War and the AIDs epidemic. One of the pieces that impacted me significantly was Warhol's 'Statue of Liberty (Fabis)' wherein this symbol of freedom was defaced with a layer of camouflage - although it was not a particularly difficult message to interpret, it was most definitely powerful: The idea of freedom being stripped from people in plain sight, despite the US priding themselves on individuality and liberty.

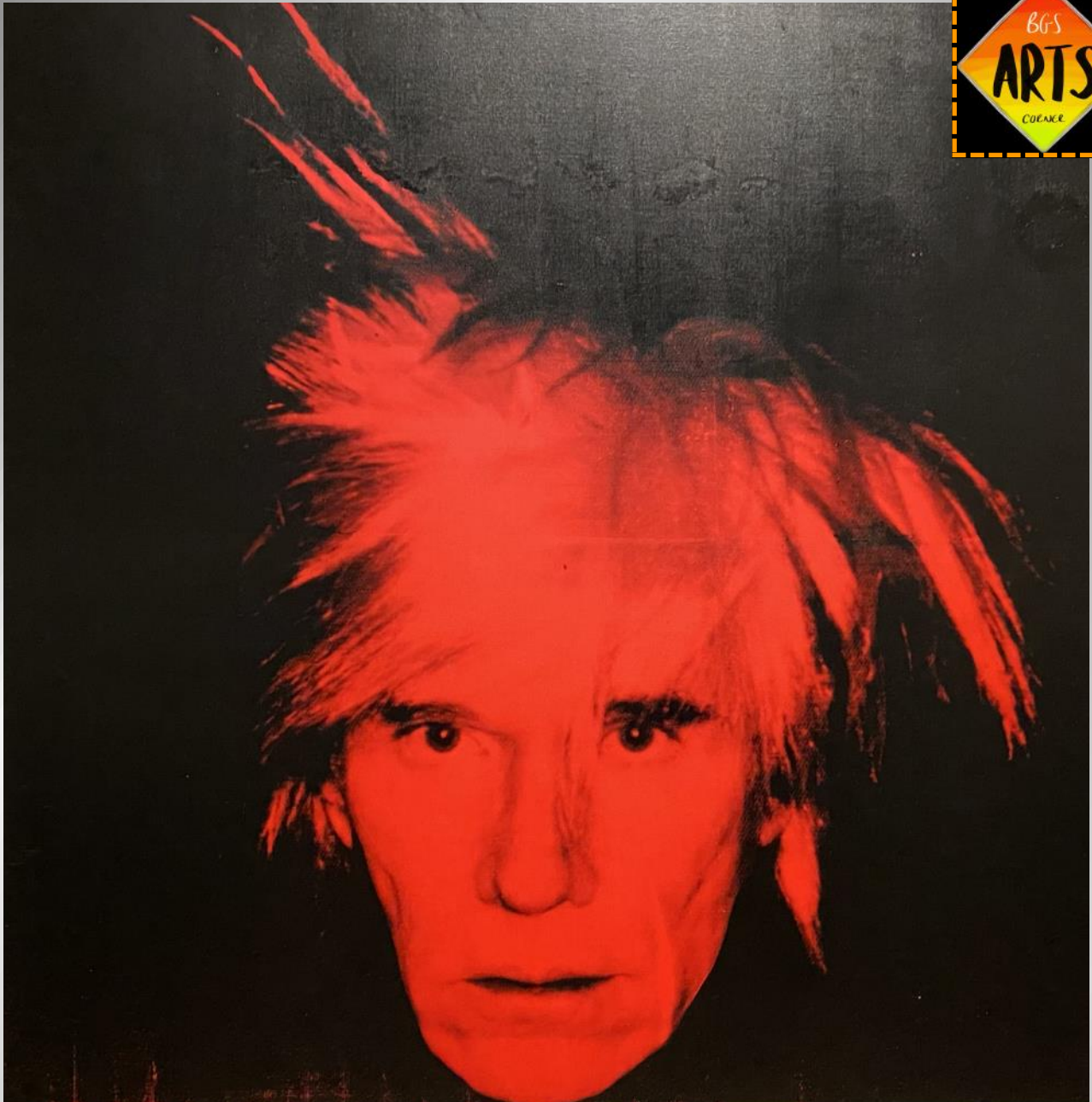


Warhol also presented his own identity in his artwork with the famous 'fright wig' - in these self-portraits, he conveyed the incessant suffering he had to deal with, during the aftermath of his shooting, through his pained expression. The fact that these pieces were done on such a large scale further illustrates the magnitude of his constant physical and mental torment.

Finally, wrapping up this insightful exhibition, we were directed into a dark room that displayed an illuminated painting that covered the entire length of the wall - Andy Warhol's 'Sixty Last Suppers', 1986. This grand artwork has the irregular use of a group of men rather than individual portraits; it draws attention to the communal atmosphere and activity between the subjects. 'Sixty Last Suppers' was one of Andy Warhol's last artworks, as he died the following year in 1987 due to his long-term effects of his compromised health.

Overall the experience of going to the Andy Warhol exhibition at the Tate Modern was beneficial and fun! We were able to learn more about the man who shaped a significant part of our art and culture today, as well as simply admire his beautiful pieces and understand the reasoning behind his artwork.

Joy Hui, Art Prefect



NEWSLETTER



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3rd December 2020

Welcome to the



The Reefline - An underwater sculpture park and a beautiful warning about what climate change may bring.

By the end of 2021, architecture firm OMA will bring a 7-mile long underwater sculpture park on the Miami shoreline that will form an artificial coral reef. This unique project is being created to raise awareness about the critical effects of climate change on rising sea levels and help reduce coral reef damage in Miami. Not only this, but the installations will add to the cultural and artistic value of the area.



The first permanent installation will be opened in December 2021, although only the first mile will be completed then. The experience will mirror Manhattan's high line park, only with snorkels. The project was first created when the project's founder and art director, Ximena Caminos of BlueLab Preservation Society, had the idea of combining art and science with the new artificial reefs that could be deposited in the waters of South beach to aid the dwindling coral population. Caminos thought "What if we created a coral reef designed by artists?", as she'd "always been interested in how we can combine art and science



The Reefline masterplan and Erlich's work.

to address issues of sustainability." Ximena had said that "the secret ingredient here is the arts, but it's crucial that this is artist-designed and scientist-informed. We need the city *and* the scientists *and* the philanthropists." She said "The team has to be cross-disciplinary. Artists, architects, scientists, preservationists and city officials are coming together to create this underwater sculpture garden that will form the artificial reef, helping to foster the regrowth of the area's destroyed coral and enhance coastal resilience."

The Reefline 'Masterplan' is being led by OMA partner Shohei Shigematsu, but also has a team

of different people from different occupations working on the project, such as marine biologists, researchers, architects and coastal engineers. The Masterplan consists of geometric concrete modules, which will be stacked approximately 6 metres underwater and about 247 metres offshore. These modules will run the whole 7 miles from the southern end of the city all the way to the north. These sculptures are planned to enhance the coastal resilience of the Miami Beach shoreline and act as an artificial reef where endangered marine life can live, especially with future climate change warms the ocean and bringing damage to coral. To do this safely, the structures will be constructed with materials that have been approved by the State of Florida for artificial reef deployment. Ximena Caminos has said that "the Reefline will provide structure for corals and sponges to naturally colonize, adding biodiversity to an area that is currently an underwater desert of sand." In the future, they "are looking into the feasibility of transplanting nursery-grown corals to the structure from the University of Miami's Rescue-a-Reef programme."

Once the project is complete, the Reefline will be a unique place for snorkelers to experience artworks by Leandro Erlich, Ernesto Neto, and Agustina Woodgate, as artworks by these artists will be installed in between the concrete framework. The artworks will also be made of similar materials as they are intended to be an extension of the artificial reef. The artists who are contributing have access to a 3D printer which is able to replicate artificial reef modules from cement. Caminos explained how "this series of artist-designed and scientist-informed artificial reefs will demonstrate to the world how tourism, artistic expression, and the creation of critical habitat can be aligned." She said: "the Reefline is a singular investment in civic infrastructure, public art and environmental protection that will pay dividends over the coming decades and attract ecologically-minded tourists and art lovers to Miami Beach." The underwater aspect of the Reefline has created huge opportunities for artists who get to play with gravity. Caminos hopes the swimmers will find the experience to be magical: "[it's] a totally different way of experiencing art. The water will also provide a change in perspective and gravity. Architects and designers are very excited by those opportunities that shift perspectives."

One very interesting planned artwork is Erlich's project, named *'Concrete Coral'*, which is a direct commentary on the causes of climate change. Erlich will place sculptures of cars on the ocean floor, creating structures that will mitigate the effects of global warming on the coastal city. Cars are one of the worst culprits of global warming, and Caminos said that part of what her appeal for this project was how "his works have the depth of a beautiful metaphor", and work on many different levels. "If we don't solve this, the cities will end up underwater. Cars on the ocean floor become a vision of what the future could look like if we don't work together."



The Reefline is a project which embodies a message of how we must all work together to mitigate the effects of climate change on our oceans, while simultaneously being active in delivering its own promise, creating habitable structures to replenish the Diminishing coral population and producing safe habitats for endangered marine life to live.

Alice Partington, Art Prefect

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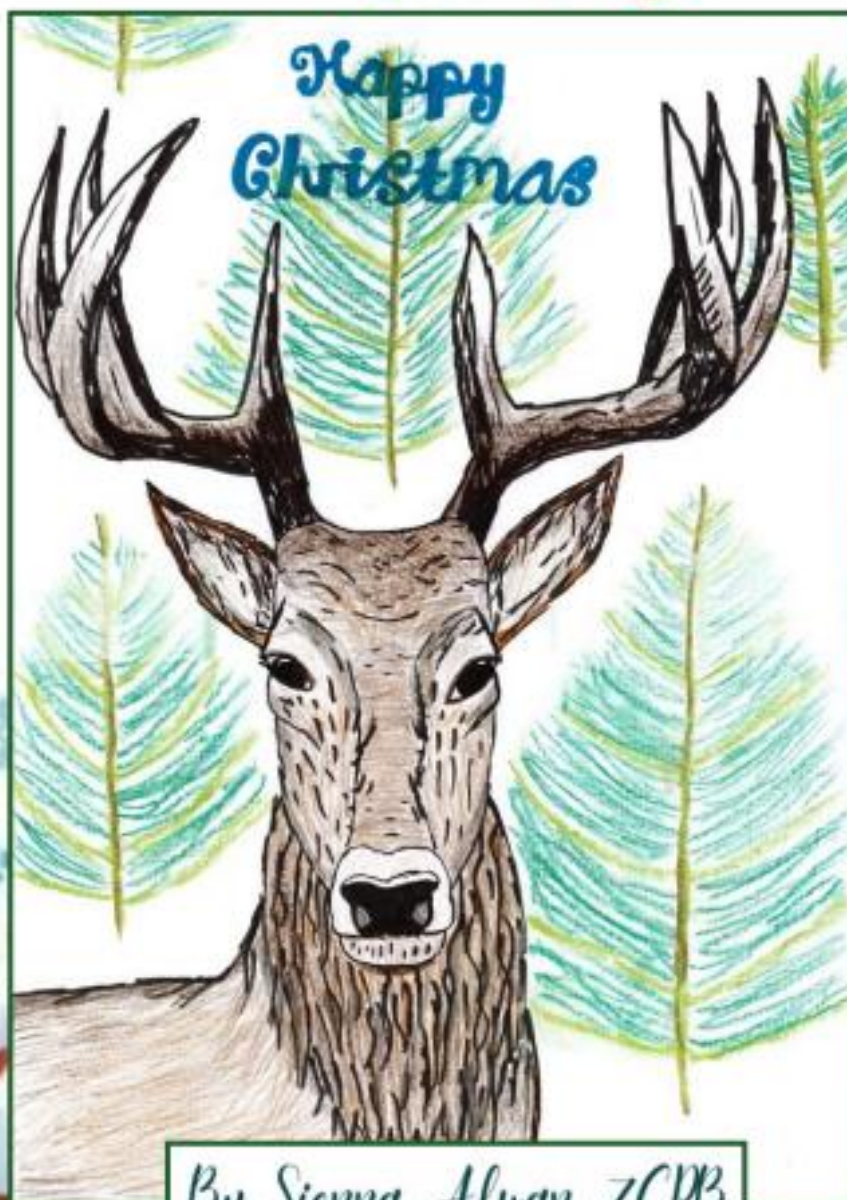
CNN - <https://edition.cnn.com/style/article/reefline-miami-underwater-sculpture-park/index.html>

Artnet News - <https://news.artnet.com/art-world/underwater-sculpture-park-miami-beach-1925582>

Dezeen Showroom - <https://www.dezeen.com/2020/11/19/oma-designs-underwater-sculpture-park-the-reefline-for-miami-beach/>



THE HEADMASTERS
Christmas Card
Competition
Winner



By Sienna Alwan, 7CPB





Welcome to the



Sophie Tea - glitter, 'body positivity' and making art accessible to all: How a young art entrepreneur blows the art world away...

Sophie Tea is an artist who prides herself on making the art world more accessible to the younger generation, having broken free from the traditional gallery route and made her own name independently through her social media platform. As an artist, she focuses on celebrating the beauty of bodies of all shapes and sizes and promotes love and positivity through her online brand, bringing fans from all over the world and contributing to a new era of accessible art.

Sophie was one of the pioneers of the 'glitter body' craze, leading to thousands of people attending festivals decorating their bodies with gems and sequins after a picture of her doing so at Coachella 2017 went viral. This outfit was a very powerful statement as, although some found it untasteful, others found it extremely empowering and a perfect way for women to own their bodies.



This sudden fame gave her a lot of recognition and gave her work a lot of traction, allowing her to reach thousands of people with her art. After graduating with a first-class degree in Business, she then decided to pursue a career in art, although she didn't sell much at first. However, after her increase in attention as her social media platform grew, Sophie stated in an interview that: 'Four years on, I don't feel the need to work with a gallery as demand is already high... There are some progressive galleries - and I have worked with some - but on the whole, they can be quite an elitist world.' This has motivated her further to make her art even more accessible to those not usually interested in traditional art and break out from the restraints of the traditional route of art: 'My work is easily accessible and encourages people who may not have bought original art in the past to consider it. I pride myself on taking people's art virginities.' Now, she has more Instagram followers than most galleries have visitors, and can reach so many people with her art.



Another interesting thing about her work is her business model, allowing customers to pay a deposit, then pay the remainder over 12 months, with no interest. This means her work is so much more accessible for her customers, giving them a chance to enjoy her art immediately and pay in shorter amounts over a period of time. This new approach to the art world encourages more young people to be interested in her work and is incredible for bringing in the art scene people who wouldn't usually spend time or money on it. Is this the start of a new era where high art is accessible to all?





One of her most recent collections, 'Send Nudes,' has been incredibly inspirational, discussing body positivity, empowerment and diversity, uplifting many women from across the world. She says, 'I never had the best relationship with my body growing up, so I always wanted to do a project on the female form.' She asked her followers if they wanted to be her inspiration and a part of her campaign, and if so, to send nudes. Overnight, she and her team received over 1,000 images of women, including those 'all shapes and sizes and different races. People with scars, mastectomies, anything and everything. Every picture came with its own unique story.' This project was a huge success, giving her a unique 'Send Nudes' show at the Carnaby Street gallery, where many women had a chance to partake in her nude catwalk celebrating the beauty of the female body.



Her work is incredibly significant in a society like ours, which is riddled with insecurity and impossible beauty standards, as well as contribute to a world where art is freely available to all.

Heather Shaw, Year 12 Art Prefect



STAR STUDENTS OF THE WEEK



Art Star Students

In art, Year 9 students are investigating and responding to contemporary issues that impact on them, and the world we all share. Our resourceful students have shown that photography is an art form we can all enjoy, even under lockdown. With limited materials we can still make beautiful and poignant messages about the human condition. Our artists would like us to digest and consider the work carefully. Some may appear humorous, but they all carry a serious and heartfelt message from the next generation.

There are several common, and often interrelated themes our students would like you to reflect on. They are: community and diversity, war and peace, truth and lies, health and our environment, and finally justice and injustice. Because life is rarely clear cut, you will often find that the pieces encompass several themes at once. Look at the visual prompts in each piece to see if you can identify the context and message they have been invested with. In some instances, the artists have chosen to elaborate on their intentions and processes, in others, it is the image that does all the talking.

Mr E Gilmore, Art Department



Freddy Moore



Eseose Obhio



Ella Curl

Reach out when you need help.



Isobel Stanley



Aimy Durand: The subject of my photo is 'lies. The picture depicts a man standing behind a lectern, and addressing a crowd through a couple of microphones. The camera is level with the heads of the people in the audience, to give the impression that we are part of the crowd. I placed a lamp on the left, out of shot, in order to cast a shadow of the speaker on the right panel. I positioned the crowd members so that both the lecturer and his shadow would be visible. These two representations of the viewer are important as they give a better understanding of the scene. They show two opposing perceptions of the character which was my main objective.

The central part of the photo represents what we are told to believe: it is bright, and the man looks at us straight in the eyes, as if he is trustworthy. On the other hand, the right part of the composition gives a glimpse of what is really happening. It is darker, and the shadow reveals a long nose. This is a reference to Pinocchio and discreetly indicates that the man is lying. I made the nose with yellow Fimo modelling clay, and pointed it directly at the camera so that it is not visible on the Lego character, but only on his shadow.



Building on their engagement with Black Lives Matter campaign, many students chose to respond to the issue of diversity, and the consequences of intolerance between different ethnic and social groups. Others have chosen to draw our focus to what happens when whole countries fall out of harmony with each other, and pursue self-interest.



Isobel Stanley



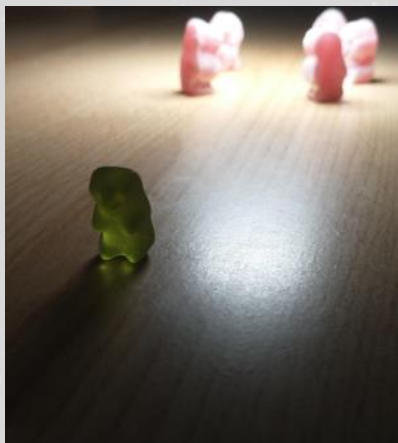
Robert Humphreys



Hannah Benedict



Amrit Ramkumar



Amrit Ramkumar



Kieran Burns
The consequences of war.



Sami Ismail
What happens when different groups
allow diplomacy to fail.



Sam Hood



Henry Bush

My issue is war and peace, and the unknown lives of war photographers. I chose this issue because I believe that they are very important, but barely get any recognition. I created this show the trauma they go through in a



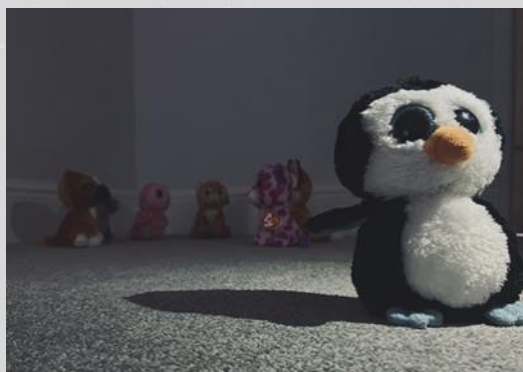
This uplifting piece by **Elliot Woodward** also addresses the theme of war and peace: The opposing sides on the Nintendo chessboard have realised that they do not have to follow the narrow limitations of historically accepted rules, and have come together in a circle of peace. By rejecting antiquated traditions, they are now free to travel in whichever direction they want, with whoever they want.



Rafferty Gibson
Enforced unity stifles diversity.

Another theme that our artists have responded to en masse is particularly relevant, as we have just had Children's Mental Health week. They have responded to different causes and effects of mental ill health. Possibly the strongest influence on mental health, and especially depression, is the quality of our personal relationships. Technology significantly reduces our need to have meaningful interaction with our fellow humans. At times like this, technology can be all we have, so it is important we maintain our bonds using whatever means we

can. The importance of relationships and friendships is very apparent in many of our artists' pieces, as is the need to be open and inclusive.



Max Miller



Thomas Bignell



Art Star Students

Year 9 art students have been exploring the persuasive power of propaganda and advertising, and using what they have learned to formulate their own visual messages through photography.

There is strong evidence that our mental health is directly linked to our exposure to screen based entertainment. This is one of the reasons Bexley Grammar School introduced restrictions on phone use during the school day, and we saw near immediate increases in social interactions and smiles. With much of our social interactions now limited to the virtual, there is a strong case to balance it with non-digital entertainment like reading or practical activities.

Our students know that the quality of information we put into our minds is every bit as important as the quality of food we put into our bodies. Both information and food have now been conclusively proven to have direct relationships with our mental health.

Our students also know that with so much choice, hype and misinformation making the 'right' choices with food or information is not easy. At Sixth Form, our I.B. students study 'Theory of Knowledge' as part of the diploma, which further explores many of these issues in depth. As you can see, our students will be well prepared for what lies ahead.

Mr E Gilmore, Art Department

Zaid Malik: My artwork shows how our lifestyles are influenced by big corporations using products that can affect us negatively. Chocolates, biscuits, drinks... they all affect us. And that is all due to the special kinds of manipulation they use. The apple represents what is a healthy lifestyle but then all the big companies' products tower over the apple



symbolising a big change in society. In this picture, it gets darker towards the top to show that we are still oblivious to what could come next and overpower us. The apple is under a spotlight as that is what humans should be prioritising: their health.



Robert Humphries



Joseph Turner



Freddy Moore



Simon Le

Be wary of trusting what you see on digital media.



Theodore Graham: We are constantly urged to upgrade when we already have something that does the job perfectly well. Are the tiny improvements worth all the hours you must work to pay for a new unit?



Rebecca Elkins



Emily Atkinson

Another prominent theme with our artists is the impact our convenience based lifestyles are having on our environment. As we have seen so far, they are acutely aware that our physical surroundings have a direct impact on our long term physical and mental health.



Joseph Turner: The picture shows a very grey, polluted area with trees and people on the ground. However the Shell man is holding money, and he is in colour. This refers to how Shell and other large companies are polluting our world and making tons of money. People just see the things in colour (the company) and not what goes in the background. Also the car has guns on it, symbolising the idea that we are killing our children with our pollution.



Theodore Graham: We must unite to eliminate single use packaging.



Summer Hewett



Stephan Hristov:

Instead of waiting for someone else to sort out the mess our world is in, we need to be the change we want. Picking up other people's litter may not be fashionable (yet), but does make the world a slightly nicer place for us and others straight away.



Lenny Delieu



Max Johnson