

ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the Role of the Artist in the Senior Cycle of Secondary School. This study points to areas in the Curriculum where a programme like this one could be included. it examines existing programmes like those run by The Arts Council; 'The Artists in Residence' and 'Artists in Schools' programmes. It looks at the successful 'Writers-in-Schools' programme and at how similar visual arts programmes are run in England.

It introduces and discusses four workshops by Professional Irish Artists, one of which was run for the benefit of the pupils and as a case study with 5th year pupils in a Community School in Tallaght.

Each workshop was approached in a different way and this is recorded. It is evident by the response from the pupils and the artists, that these workshops have contributed greatly to the learning experience of the pupils and the artists involved.

Based on my experience of workshops at this level I have found them to be confidence builders and of enormous value to the creative development of the pupils, and the wider community of the school.

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**TITLE: THE ROLE OF THE ARTIST IN SECOND LEVEL ART, CRAFT,
DESIGN.**

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE
FACULTY OF EDUCATION**

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DIPLOMA FOR ART AND DESIGN TEACHERS

BY

DETTA LYONS

JUNE 1999

I hereby declare that this dissertation is entirely
my own work and that it has not been submitted as
an exercise for a diploma or degree in any other
college or university.

Signed _____

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Chapter 1	1
Junior Certificate Art Craft, Design	
Senior Cycle	
Transition Year	
Draft Syllabus	
Artists in School Programme	
The Writers in Schools Programme.	
Artists in Schools a study in England and Wales	
Benefits for Pupils, Teachers, Schools and Artists	
 Chapter 11. ARTISTS IN SCHOOLS SCHEMES	 20
Workshop No. 1 Eamon Connors.	
Workshop No. 2 Joe Butler	
Workshop No. 3 Alice Maher	
 Chapter 111 PROJECT IN ST. MARKS COMMUNITY SCHOOL	 56
Workshop No. 4 Theresa Mc Kenna	
 ARTISTS RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS ON THE ROLE OF	
THE ARTIST IN EDUCATION	87
CONCLUSION	88
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY	90

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Plate Number:	Page
1. 'Untitled' by Eamon Connors	21
2. Pupil working on Landscape Oil painting	25
3. Pupils working with the artist on the Landscape Oil painting	25
4. A Group of Pupils working on the painting	26
5. A detail of the finished Landscape	26
6. 'Atomic Machine' Joe Butler	32
7. 'Bird Sculpture' Sally Moorhead	33
8/9 Pupils working with gathered materials	37
10 'Seat Sculpture' Pupils working on the finished construction	38
11 'Seat Sculpture' in position	41
12 'Bee Dress' Alice Maher	43
13/14 Slide show discussion with the artist Alice Maher	45
15 'Nettle Jacket' Alice Maher	46
16 Resource Book Drawings Susan Williams	49
17 'Pigs Ear' Construction	49
18 Ndy constructing A Ballgown	51
19 Fashion Show featuring Ndy's Ballgown	52
20/21 Evaluation discussion with the artist Alice Maher	53
22 'Untitled' Theresa McKenna	63

Continued:

23/24	Slide show discussion with Theresa McKenna and Kathleen O'Brien	65
25	'Deer Run' Theresa McKenna	67
26	'Deer Run Tapestry' in situ. Theresa McKenna	68
27/28	Pupils Plan drawings	74
29/30	Pupils Shrine developed from a Georgian influence	79
31/32	Pupils Shrine developed from a Georgian influence 2	80
33/34	Evaluation discussion with the artist Theresa McKenna	82

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I would like to dedicate this dissertation to Michael Lyons in appreciation of his help and encouragement throughout its research and writing.

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is concerned with the role of the artist in the senior cycle ,
Art, Craft, Design course.

Chapter I. Examines the present Junior Certificate with it's emphasis on
personal research and contact with the arts, this is in keeping with one of the
main aims of the course as outlined and it states as its purpose, 'To develop
in the student an understanding of art, craft, and design in a variety of
contexts – historical, cultural, economic, social and personal.' (1)

Chapter 1. Takes a look at the Transition Year course, and the new Draft
Syllabus for Leaving Certificate examining the main aims of these courses
and the relevance of contact with the arts in them.

Chapter 1. Two schemes administered by the Arts Council – Artists in
Schools and Artists in Residence programmes - are examined and their
availability in schools assessed. The Writers in Schools programme is
discussed as a relevant working model, which could be, employed to re-
structure the artists in schools programme.

Finally in this chapter the benefits for pupils, teachers, schools and artists of
this Artist in Schools programme are examined.

Chapter 11. Will focus on my own experience showing three examples of workshops done in one Dublin school with the artists; Eamon Connors, Joe Butler, and Alice Maher. These workshops will be discussed under various headings relating to the preparation, setting up and carrying out of the project and to the effect on the pupils and the reaction to the work in the broader context of the school.

Chapter 111, will examine one research project done this year in St. Marks school in Tallaght with 5th form pupils. The main aim of this project was to develop an appreciation of contemporary Irish art through contact with a professional artist and to build confidence in the pupil through the positive experience of the workshop.

In this chapter a scheme of work is described which leads to the introduction of the artists Theresa McKenna and Kathleen O'Brien at first through a slide show/discussion and later in a workshop situation with one artist Theresa McKenna.

CHAPTER ONE

At the heart of the Junior Certificate Programme is the development of resources that will lead to the holistic education of the pupil. This programme encourages contact with art activities and practices in the local and wider environment of the pupil.

The Junior Certificate Programme was introduced in 1989, and it provides a course of study for pupils between twelve and fifteen years, the intention of this programme was to build on the knowledge, skills, understanding and competencies acquired at primary level. The Junior Certificate Art programme offers this continuation of child centred learning and discovery and the Department of Education and Science in its White Paper of 1995 recognises the role of Arts and Culture as 'key elements within the school experience of young people'. The stated aim of the programme is 'to extend and deepen the quality of students educational experience in terms of knowledge understanding, skills and competencies'. It is also designed to 'prepare the pupil for further study at Senior Cycle'. (2)

Junior Certificate Art, Craft, Design.

In particular the Junior Certificate Art Craft and Design programme is structured to extend and deepen the student's educational experience by offering the pupil an opportunity to research topics of interest to himself and to develop this research works through a variety of media.

Students are encouraged to key directly into their own environment and use local facilities as a basis and support for their project.

The Junior Certificate Art Craft and Design programme is a project based study, the pupils work from one of five given themes and they start their research in October of their Junior Certificate year. The syllabus contains;

Higher level

3D

Painting

Graphic Design

Option

Drawing exam

Ordinary level

3D

Painting or Graphic Design

Option

The relevant research of the work of contemporary Irish Artists.

After the Junior Certificate programme was introduced and the area of support studies was uncovered to mean that the pupil could use relevant information from his own environment, often visiting crafts people, artists and local galleries in their research.

Here too lies the opportunity to have an artist visit and display or discuss their work with the pupils, this could be a valuable starting point for the project, the artist could discuss with the pupils his own starting points and process.

To secure greatest value from project-based study it is necessary for the pupil to be aware of how they can utilise the facilities available to them.

The role of the teacher in this area is vital, as pupils often need to learn how to research even the most basic information.

These learned research skills will however benefit the student in other areas of study. In addition this broad-based study can provide occasions where students, teachers and parents can work together for their mutual benefit, if this research work is developed from the interests of the pupil and is focused in a familiar environment

The Department of Education and Science recognises this and states that the Creative and Performance Arts can be “a key contributor to the school ethos and to its place in the local community”. It stresses the importance of all schools developing a strong Arts and Cultural policy and identity. (3)

The Senior Cycle

The obvious knock on effect of the introduction of the Junior Certificate Art Craft and Design programme is the awareness of the importance of developing a more relevant Senior Cycle.

The Junior Certificate programme would appear to fulfil in part the criteria laid down in the White Paper, there is however, a problem of continuity as students progress to Transition Year and the Senior Cycle.

Transition Year

In Transition Year, there is an opportunity for pupils who have not studied art in the Junior Cycle to familiarise themselves with some of the media and methods and exploration this subject allows. This programme also encourages pupils to pursue cross-curricular activities. The Transition Year programme is not a mandatory one but it is offered by the majority of schools. In reference to this programme in the White Paper it is stated that,

the programme helps the pupil to learn skills and to evaluate life in ways and in situations which arise outside the boundaries of the certificate programmes. Transition Year offers the best scope for the introduction of the Artist in Residence programme but there are so few residencies available to schools that an alternative programme funded by the Department of Education and Science would be a worthwhile procedure. One of the most positive aspects of the Transition Year course is its offering of continuity from the Junior Certificate programme and one of the most applicable aims of the Junior Certificate programme is central to the philosophy of the Transition Year and that is "to develop in the student the ability to apply evaluative criteria to his/her own work and to the work of others and in his/her daily encounters with the natural, social and man – made environments and with the mass media" (4)

The Transition Year is a follow on of the open door research learning of the Junior Cycle, but the diverse nature of the Transition year programme and the exam orientated Leaving Certificate do not leave much room for continuity. In the present fifth and sixth year programme the study of art can be a remote experience if the teacher does not bring it alive. There are no strong links to the preceding programme.

The importance of continuity in the curriculum is reflected in the following quotation taken from a study on Critical Elements in Art Education done by the Getty Educational Institute for the Arts.

“Each grade assumes and builds on what the student has learned in earlier grades or in other subjects. To be treated as an academic subject, art should have this kind of sequence... If a student can build on what has been studied in previous years his knowledge and understanding of art will be enhanced”⁽⁵⁾

It is therefore vital that the new Senior Certificate programme be implemented without delay.

The Draft Syllabus

The central aim in the new draft syllabus for the Senior Cycle is to provide a general education in art and design for the student, that offers continuity and progression from Junior Certificate Art, Craft, Design.

In the new syllabus the role of art is clearly defined as being a role “that contributes to the personal development of the student”. It also states that “the importance of art in the social, historical technological economic and cultural aspects of life needs to permeate the teaching and learning of the course”. ⁽⁶⁾

In section C of the syllabus it is recommended that the pupils study each of the three units that is 3D Sculpture, Craft and Fine Art/ Visual Communications in the first year of the Leaving Certificate.

In this personal approach to project work the introduction of an artist to the pupils in the initial stages of their research into a foundation project would offer the pupils a confidence and verification of their own ideas and approach to their work that would render this year a very valuable learning experience for the pupil.

There are also listed in The Draft Syllabus for the Leaving Certificate a number of points relating to the personal, social, vocational and economic role of art. In point No.6 of the syllabus the importance of the role of the artist in the community and to the individual is noted, it states that "the artist need's the community to stimulate creative dialogue and activity, so as to challenge and encourage them to explore and develop ideas in an interactive manner." (7)

The proposed Leaving Certificate programme would benefit greatly from the introduction of an artist in schools programme, one that is approved by the Department of Education and Science and available to all schools. Part of the beauty of such a programme is that it would benefit a wide range of people and encourage the broader education of pupils in the arts in a school context.

ARTISTS IN SCHOOLS

The Artists-in-Residence and the Artists-in-Schools programmes, are two programmes which have been utilised to introduce artists to Primary and Post Primary schools all over the country.

Artists in Residence

In 1989 the Arts Council introduced a new programme within its education policy. It was a residency programme for Schools and Colleges of Education whereby an artist could be engaged to work on long-term projects with students and staff.

‘The purpose of the scheme is to encourage intensive collaboration between schools and artists’. The focus for the collaboration has to be a particular project in which the artist and students work together to realise some artistic object or event. The nature of the collaboration depends on the age of the students and the chosen art form. (8)

The term ‘residency’ was intended to reflect the extent of the commitment and the nature of the relationship required between school and artist.

The principle of reciprocal learning is at the heart of the successful residency, with most residencies taking between three and six months, the minimum being eight weeks. Twice a year the Council considers applications made jointly by artists and schools. The Arts Council makes provision for between ten and fifteen residencies in any school year.

The initiative for the residency and project can arise by a professional artist contacting a school or as a result of a school approaching an artist. Sometimes the residency is very intensive with the artist working every day for four to six weeks. Alternatively the period of the residency may extend over a school term or even over two terms with the artist visiting only once or twice a week. Normally the Arts Council financially supports the project with a professional fee to the artist and the maximum grant for a residency is £1,500. Materials and additional costs are normally covered by another source, the school; V.E.C. grant; or local sponsorship.

THE ARTISTS IN SCHOOLS PROGRAMME

This programme was introduced by The Arts Council as a pilot programme in 1985 it applied to second level schools, this programme was introduced as a parallel programme for the successful writers-in-school scheme. In this scheme it was envisioned that artists would visit schools to talk about their work or to give workshops. It was in operation in four counties initially, Dublin being one of them. In Dublin the scheme was operated out of The Temple Bar and The Douglas Hyde Galleries.

The last mention of this scheme by The Arts Council was in its 1997 annual report. The report stated that "Local groups receive funding from the Arts Council to provide once-off practical workshops or illustrated talks given by artists in schools". It went on to say that "This scheme is operated by a number of galleries, arts centres and local authority arts officers throughout the country". On investigation the Douglas Hyde Gallery which was the principal operator of this scheme in Dublin no longer offer this as an option to schools.

In order to understand how this programme could be a vital organ in education it would serve this study well to look at the Writers-in-Schools programme.

In conversation with the assistant Arts Education officer for the Arts Council I discovered that Poetry Ireland now ran this programme and it was through this group that I found the following relevant information.

The Writers-in-Schools Programme

This is the longest established of the Arts Council's services for schools. It is available to primary and post-primary schools throughout Ireland.

Part of the thinking behind it is that, "by introducing living writers to young audiences, both the critical appreciation and the practice of writing will be encouraged and developed". Writers-in-Schools have the formal approval of the Department of Education. As part of this scheme the artists are included in a directory on application, once they fulfil the criteria. The scheme is administered by Poetry Ireland and the Arts Council of Northern Ireland and is extremely well used.

As part of the Benson report on The Arts Council's role in education, it was recommended that The Arts Council "build up a central source of information on the arts for use by teachers and others working in education". (9)

Benson also recommended that The Arts Council "should develop schemes for introducing artists into schools and pupils to artists".

The new Senior Certificate programme would benefit greatly from the introduction of Artists-in-School programme. The ideal time to introduce this Artists-in-School workshop project is in the 1st year Leaving Certificate year. The advantages of this type of project are many and far reaching and it would benefit; pupils, teachers, schools, the community and artists themselves.

Artists-in-schools - A study in England and Wales

The world of professional art can seem remote from the school room experience of the pupil. The artist provides a link with that world by relating his experience and he can also impress on the students the seriousness with which he approaches his profession. Dust and Sharp in their major study of the work of artists-in-schools in England and Wales found this to be the case. ?
 Their book was based on the findings of a major two-year research study of the work of artists-in-School, it focused specifically on work taking place in schools. The case studies were selected to reflect a range of art forms, types and lengths of artists-in-schools projects. A variety of methods were used to study each artists-in-schools project. The researchers observed work progress and collected documentary materials such as minutes of meetings, evaluation forms and examples of pupils written work.

In their research Dust and Sharp found that the experience helped students self-development and emphasised the benefits of dedication and application.

Benefits for Pupils

I have found in my own artist-in-school projects that pupils learn about the process of planning and research for a piece of work. They learn that the artist may re-work a painting, sculpture or print many times and develop ideas from one piece of work to the next, that there are problems to sort out at different stages along the way and that the artist is a human being and not so much a genius.

The pupils also learn that the making of something from the initial design or drawing stages through to a conclusion has personal rewards that relate to the decision to stick with it. The exploration of the artist's ways of working in a discussion/workshop situation has many effects but the five main ones are as follows;

1. It helps to demystify the arts. Artists encourage pupils to ask questions about the arts, and volunteer information on the way they work, the time they spend working, how they earn a living from their work (or don't)

When pupils encounter a work by the artist they have just met and they really like it they respond openly. Pupils like to know how the artist gets work and what they do if they don't get work or commissions. Pupils can learn through listening to the artist about the origins of different kinds of art.

For instance, if the artist is interested in mural work, cave paintings, frescoes and graffiti can be discussed if it has been relevant to the artists work.

2. It helps to increase the pupil's understanding of the process of making art. They learn how artists can gain inspiration from their own experiences, from historical and from contemporary events or from the work of other artists past and present. Pupils also find out about the importance of research in helping artists to develop their own work or interpret the work of others.

3. Pupils learn how to transfer some of the artist's approaches and methods to their own art making. They learned in one workshop, that if you want to you could make three-dimensional drawings. The artist explained how she sometimes used this technique as part of the process.

4. Pupils can learn whole new ways of working with materials and they can learn how to modify their plan drawings to suit the media. For instance a group of pupils working in a three dimensional workshop having difficulty in developing a plan for their work learn that making a model is another way to approach this problem.

5. The development of self-confidence and skills of critical appreciation is one of the most rewarding aspects of this type of project. In one workshop the artist spoke to the pupils individually. At first, they spoke shyly about what they were working on and when they saw the artist showed interest, this had a big effect on the way they continued with their piece of work. Pupils find artists helpful and encouraging and give them ideas if they are having problems in sorting something out.

Pupils feel validated and feel their own ideas are good but the artist can give ideas to improve the work. Artist pupil contact in projects like this allows the pupil a great deal of responsibility for their own learning, pupils are encouraged to develop their ideas, and to experiment. They respond positively to this and they are reassured by the artist's lack of fear of experimenting and trying out new approaches.

In addition to enriching pupil's experience in the arts, professional artists fulfil a staff development role. Staff as well as pupils can be introduced to new areas of arts experience and understanding.

Benefits for Teachers

Working alongside professional artists can have both personal and professional benefits for teachers.

1. Teachers spend much of their time alone with their classes. Having another adult enter their domain and work with their class is a challenge which offers opportunities for reflection on their own approaches to teaching. According to Dust and Sharpe, 'Teachers found that they learned new techniques and new approaches to working in and through the arts'.⁽¹⁰⁾
2. It also helps teachers to keep in touch with new developments in the arts, it encourages and helps to build closer relationships with other members of staff.
3. In addition it helps to involve the wider community of teachers in the creativity of the workshops, pupils are enthusiastic and driven by the motivating influence of the workshop this sends positive waves through the school.
4. Teachers of other subjects often involve themselves in the visual arts as a hobby and are delighted to attend a discussion or workshop with an artist if their timetable allows.

Benefits for Schools

Professional artists provide an educational resource, helping a school to enrich and develop its curriculum.

1. Artists-in-schools work can range across more than one subject area and can form a focus for cross-curricular work. For instance a project on Medieval Dublin could encompass, History, Geography and Art.
2. Having an artist in the school reminds the general population of the school of the activity of art and that people do pursue this subject a career, and in these times it is a healthy reminder that there are other reasons for pursuing a career that are not the obvious ones of the accumulation of wealth.
3. By choosing an artist the school are reaching outside to the community. The artist is coming from the wider community and they bring with them the work and the experience of living. The wider community can also be involved in the project by making links with galleries, local business that may fund the project. Some projects are advertised in local papers or are put on exhibition.
4. Having an artist in residence is a positive way of advertising the schools commitment to the development of a broad curriculum.

Benefits for Artists

Artists have much to offer especially in the new, more competitive educational climate. Often they wish to reach a wide and diverse audience they are often frustrated with the 'exclusive' label the arts are given and they enjoy making their art form accessible to people who would not normally choose to take part or see it in galleries.

For many artists who work in schemes or on projects the reward comes with the pleasure of helping pupils and staff develop skills and find a new motivation to participate in the arts.

This contact with staff and pupils in schools provides the opportunity to bounce their ideas off others and to develop on comments in relation to their work. Artists are often secluded in their work and they learn and are inspired by the pupil's reaction to their work.

In addition Visual Artists are involved in the business of communicating through a visual language and according to Martin Drury, (Director of The Ark, A Cultural Centre for Children) the meaning of the work has much more to do with the "interior landscape of the artist's and the spectators mind than with the exterior landscape of the work of art" (11)

In meeting pupils on their own ground and being open to comments and discussion the artist is opening the possibilities for development in his own work as well as in the pupils work and their thinking about it.

FOOTNOTES CHAPTER 1

2. The Government White Paper on Education. Charting our Educational future. P.44.
- 3 Ibid. p.48
- 4 The Junior Certificate Syllabus, 2.2.4.
- 5 The Getty Educational Institute for the Arts. Critical Elements in Art Education.
6. The Draft Leaving Certificate Syllabus. p.8
- 7 Ibid. p.8
- 8 The Arts Council, Artists in Residence information sheet.
- 9 Ciaran Benson. The Place of the Arts in Irish Education. The Arts Council, 1979. 7.8 – 7.9.
10. Caroline Sharp and Karen Dust, 'Artists in Schools' (Bedford Square Press) p.13
- 11 The Arts and Education, 'Back to Basics' (from a lecture given by Martin Drury to the I.A.C.D. on Arts and Education, 1991.

CHAPTER 11

Artists in School Schemes

I introduced the following three artists to 5th form pupils in a West Dublin school with three separate groups over a period of time.

The duration of each workshop was one day long with a shorter pre-workshop slide show discussion, where the artist would discuss the brief for the workshop with the pupils. Prior to these workshops I had artists visit the school as part of the Arts Council's "Artist -in-School's" scheme in conjunction with The Douglas Hyde Gallery. I thought this was a very good idea and it set me the task of finding an artist that I felt could work well with each particular group of pupils.

After the initial two workshops, I noticed a difference in the attitude of the pupils towards their own work, and towards the subject, on the basis of this I went to the headmaster of the school with a plan to broaden the contact time with the artist. 5th year presented itself as the best year to benefit from this contact in that they are capable of the more independent research and development of personal project themes, they can recognize the process of development of the way the artist works and they can apply this to the way they work themselves. Also at this stage the pupils have all chosen art as a subject for Leaving Certificate and I feel the subject has more to offer at this level as an area of study in itself and as a way of observing, thinking about

and analysing our surroundings and not just to meet the requirements of an unsatisfactory Leaving Certificate Syllabus.

Pupils feel honored by the visit of an artist to their group and in the initial meeting they often feel overwhelmed. The enthusiasm with which artists speak of their work and how it relates to themselves and what their influences are connects and makes real for the pupil what the artists work involves. This experience of listening to the artist discuss their work gives pupils the confidence to speak about their own work as one pupil put it in a recent workshop in Tallaght, "if she can get up and talk like that about her work and not be embarrassed in front of us then so can I".

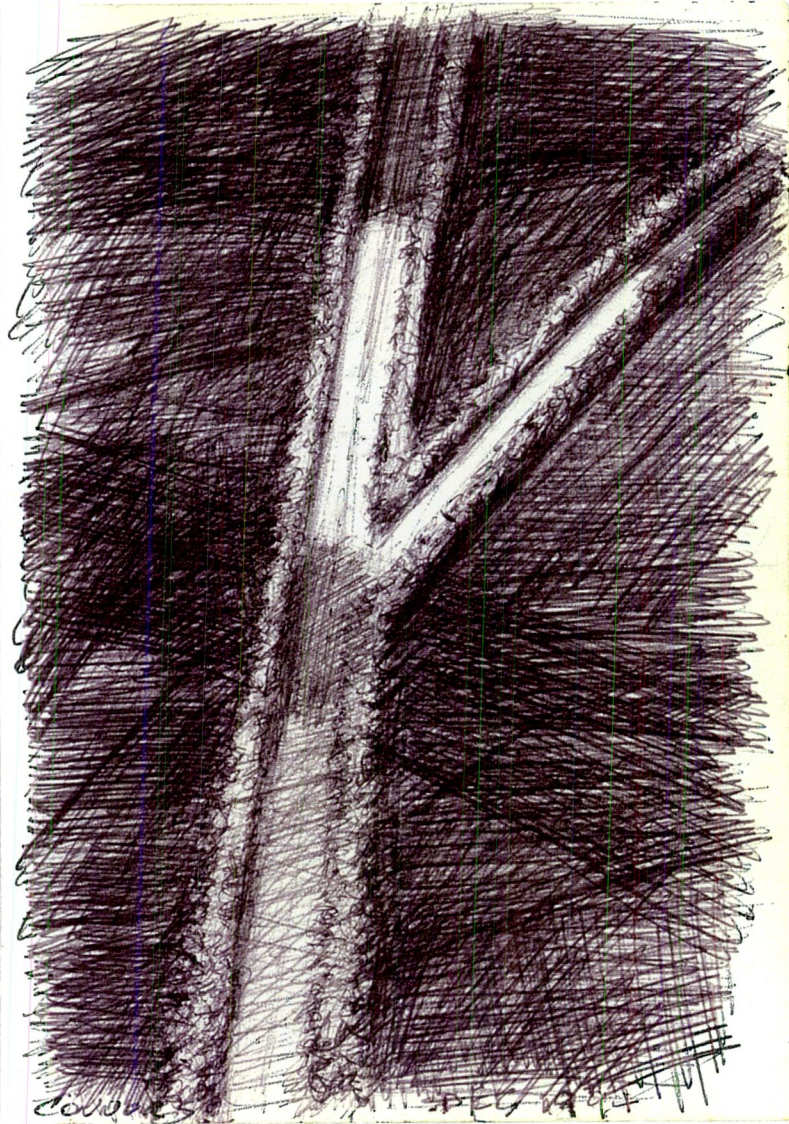
Workshop No.1

Artist: Eamon Connors - Painter.

(See Plate - 1).

Aim 1; To allow 5th form pupils to work on a very large landscape painting under the direction of a practising artist.

Aim 2; To encourage collaboration between the artist/teacher, pupils/artist, pupils and teacher.



Pate 1 - 'Untitled' by Eamon Connors (Pen Drawing 10cmx15cm)

Preparatory work.

Prior to this visit the class had started working on studies of root forms, looking at structure, form and working with charcoal.

The individuals in the group also prepared their sheets of paper by priming them with two coats of white emulsion mixed with p.v.a. 2:1 proportion.

Materials; Oil paint, painting and decorating brushes 2 c.m and 4c.m. white spirit, rags and sticks.

Length of time; 6 hours. Day long workshop.

Support studies; A look at the works of Brian Bourke, Cecily Brennan and Gwen O' Dowd.

Number of pupils involved; 27

Advance preparation.

In advance of this workshop I met with the artist and we discussed what the pupils were now doing and what they could do in the workshop. Eamon was all for the pupils going outside, weather permitting. He suggested that the pupils could work directly from the landscape on large sheets of paper using just one colour oil paint. Prior to the date set for the workshop, Eamon came out to the school and we found a suitable place to conduct the workshop this was a long strip of flat ground facing into a fence of undergrowth

and trees. We discussed a possible approach, and decided on taping all the sheets of paper together so that the pupils could work in a sequence and they would have one long strip of landscape working as a whole but with each pupil working on a unit. We worked out the amount of paint, brushes, paper and masking tape we needed and other things like rags and coats or protective clothing for the pupils. We set a day and time and we talked about a possible lead into this project, drawing natural forms from the landscape.

We agreed that the paper sheets (which were the back of adshell bus shelter posters) would be primed in advance, taped together, and rolled up taken outside and unrolled.

It was further agreed that all the materials would be waiting for the artist and the pupils on the day.

The Workshop

Eamon met with the pupils and myself in the classroom, Eamon discussed with the pupils the work they were doing in class, (this work was up on the walls) and then what they would do during the workshop. Eamon waited until everybody was outside on site before talking to the pupils about what they were going to do. He first discussed with the pupils what it was they

were looking at and what they saw when they looked into the undergrowth. He then encouraged the pupils to look at what was directly in front of them, (See Plate - 2).

Eamon broke the ice for the pupils by demonstrating how they could use the brushes, sticks and rags and oil paint to work with. (See Plate - 3).

The pupils were delighted and a bit apprehensive about using the oil paint but Eamon's familiarity with the media set them at ease. These pupils had worked on A1 size paper previously but these sheets were three times that size and the whole approach was different. The pupils found that they had to stretch and walk around to the other side of the work in order to reach parts of the page. Everybody got involved in working and because what one pupil did lead into the next pupils work there was some collaboration necessary.

With weather bright and warm it was ideal for the workshop, the pupils really got involved. Throughout the day pupils took rests here and there. Most people were caught up in the work, sometimes too busy to take a break. Eamon worked on with the pupils while I taught other groups inside. He got the pupils to put down paint, scratch into it, rub it clean in areas with the rags, dip into the paint and draw using dried sticks from the undergrowth, he encouraged them to build up layers of paint to represent the layers of growth. (See Plate - 4-5).



Plate 2- Pupil working on Landscape Oil painting

Plate 3 -Pupils working with the artist on the Landscape Oil painting



Plate 4 - A Group of Pupils working on the painting

Plate 5 - A detail of the finished Landscape

Pupils sometimes rubbed away too much but realised this could be easily re-worked

Using this media was an enjoyable experience for the pupils and they saw that the paper was able to withstand a lot of re-working because of the preparation.

After the workshop the pupils enjoyed carrying this huge moving landscape into the school past classrooms down the hallways and into the gym where it was to hang until it was dry. The whole project took off then in terms of school involvement. There were crowds of pupils visiting this huge landscape oil painting. The pupils who were involved in making it were very proud to be associated with it and they stayed around to answer questions about it.

Evaluation with the pupils.

After the work was hung in the gym all the pupils met with Eamon and myself back in the classroom, Eamon told them how much he had enjoyed working with them and complimented them on their work.

He asked the pupils what they thought of the work and the experience. They spoke about having that length of time for art only and how they could keep

working and not have to stop after an hour and a half. The pupils felt they got a lot done and even though they were working all the time that it didn't feel like work. They spoke about the mystery that surrounds using oil paint and the workshop took away this 'the precious feel of it'.

They thanked Eamon for the enjoyable day. Pupils who consider themselves weak at drawing were able to look at their own work and feel that they had achieved something.

My Evaluation.

This workshop was the first day long workshop that I organised, prior to this I had a number of slide show/discussion visits by artists organised in conjunction with The Douglas Hyde Gallery, part funded by the school and part funded by the gallery. I felt that the 2 hr discussion wasn't enough and that the pupils and the artist would get more from a day long workshop where the pupils would be focused on what they were doing and the artist could speak to them in turn.

The organisation of the workshop

- Choosing the artist. I knew Eamon from Art College and was aware of his continuing work as an artist as well as his work with young students.
- Phone call to the artist, agreeing on the workshop

- Getting the go – ahead from the Principal of the school for (a) The day off class for the group. (b) The money needed for the artist and the materials, £100 for the artist - £50 for the materials.
- Meeting with the Artist and agreeing on the **Theme and the Aim** of the workshop,
- Preparing the pupils for the workshop, and examining natural forms through drawing.
- Slides show discussion on three different artist's approach to landscape art.
- Further homework research on this.
- The priming of the paper, each pupil took their turn during class and after school until they had two coats of primer painted on.
- Old science coats were organised for the pupils.
- A notice was posted on the staff notice board to inform year heads and teachers of the workshop two days in advance.
- Pupils were told that it was their responsibility to keep up to date with other subjects while they were involved with the workshop.
- The caretaker was informed of events.

Feedback

There was a lot of feedback from the parents and teachers of the pupils involved, this came up in a parent teacher meeting not long after the workshop, various members of staff commented on the interest shown by the

pupils in this workshop and they voiced their own enthusiasm for this approach.

Effects on My Own Teaching

I was delighted with the whole change of attitude in the class, it became more purposeful and individual, the pupils themselves discussing issues around art in a more confident way.

After this workshop I discussed with the Principal the possibility of making this an annual project for 5th years and building the cost into the art budget. He agreed, and it is now established as a once a year daylong workshop.

After this workshop I started using oil bars and paints with 4th and 5th years as one element of a project. Pupils enjoy working with this media for all the reasons artists do, the strength of its colour, its smell, the texture of the paint, and most works they study in the History of Art are painted with oil paint. Working with this media helps to bridge the gap between seeing art done and doing art.

Workshop No. 2

Artist: Joe Butler - Sculptor

(See Plate – 6).

Aim 1; To allow 5th years to work in collaboration with an artist on a welded metal sculpture/seat for the grounds of the school.

Aim 2; To encourage artist/pupil communication, teacher/artist collaboration and to build on the practice of having a professional artist work in the school community for a short period of time.

Preparatory Work

I started the preparation for this workshop in a different way, I introduced the pupils to the idea and they having seen the painted landscape were eager to do the workshop. This group was much smaller in number, they suggested a group sculpture. This group liked working in 3D and one of the pupils was involved in making metal sculptures at home from old machinery. (See Plate – 7). So the motivation was high and the pupils gathered for homework, references to public sculptures. I had read some information on the work of Joe Butler and I had seen some of his work, I knew he had been involved in one of the Arts Councils visiting projects for schools called 'Heads'. I found a phone number for him and rang him up. He was delighted with the idea, he lived just a few miles from the school and was keen to discuss this further, so we set a date for the slideshow.

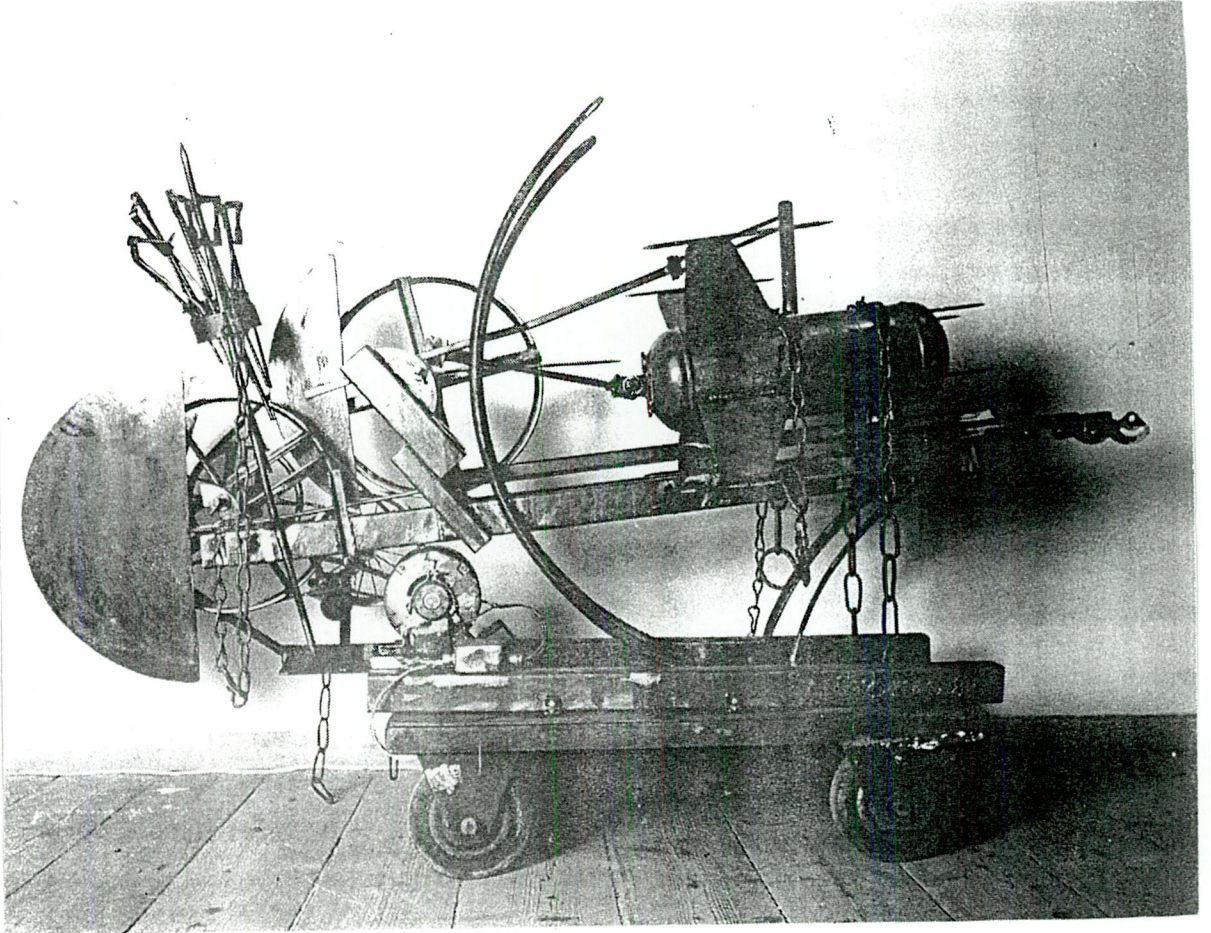


Plate 6 - 'Atomic Machine' Joe Butler (1987 Metal, Electrical Motors)

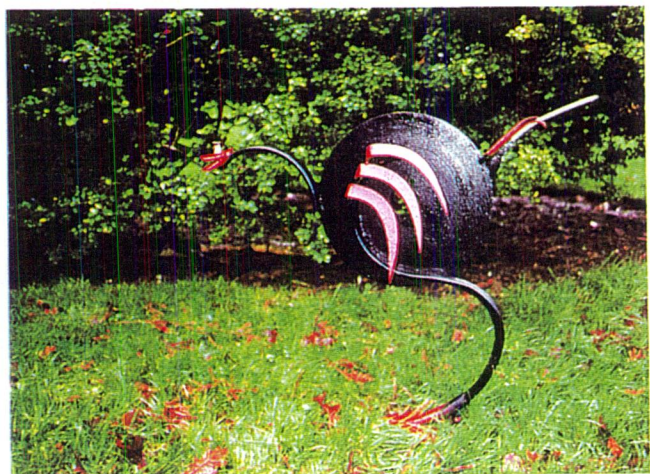
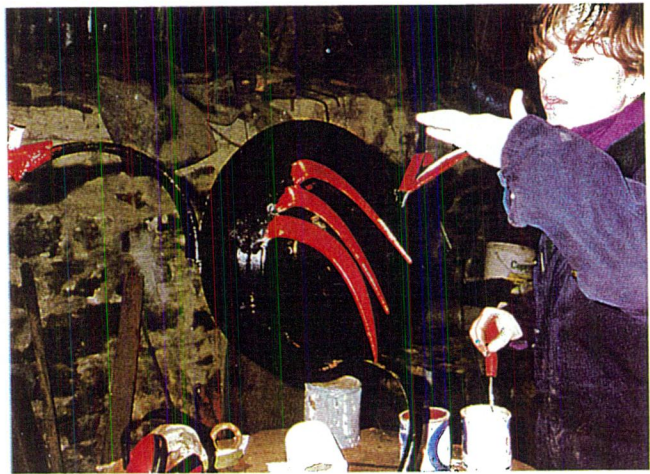
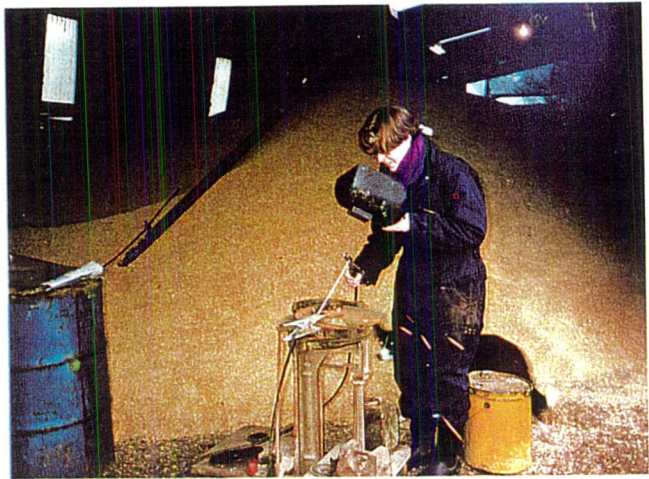


Plate 7 - 'Bird Sculpture' Sally Moorhead (Re-cycled Metal)

Joe was encouraging and enthusiastic from the beginning.

He had some basic requirements in terms of materials and space to work.

Materials: Found metal objects, welding rods, welder, angle grinder, hack saws, pliers, hammers, wire brushes.

Length of time; 6hrs for the workshop, 2 hrs for the slide show/discussion.

Number of pupils; 17

Support Studies; the artist's own work.

Slideshow Discussion

I felt the pupils and the artist should have an introduction to each other prior to the workshop, this would mean that on the day of the workshop the pupils and the artist would not be strangers. The artists discussion of his work would open the way for the investigation of materials and methods. The artist and myself agreed to have an artist lead slide show discussion two weeks before the workshop. Joe visited the class for a two-hour session. This was informative and very worth-while. The pupils had the opportunity to discuss the artists work with him, the materials he used, the commissions he got, his work place and his working day.

The pupils had worked on drawings for a seat sculpture based on the works of artists they liked, for example Alexander Calder, and Picasso, these drawings

roughly formed the basis for the sculpture. Joe asked the pupils to gather together found metal materials for the workshop.

Advance Preparation

For this introduction day, I went back to the Headmaster to get the go-ahead for the extra 2 hour slide show/discussion, he agreed to this, it was also necessary to get permission to set up a temporary workshop in a shed away from the main school building, and to have the necessary electric power for the tools Joe would need to work with. The headmaster also had to secure insurance cover for Joe and the pupils to work with this machinery on the grounds.

By the time the day of the workshop arrived we had gathered together a collection of old bicycles an old metal bench and numerous other bits. The pupils were allowed to wear their own working clothes. We had an old bicycle shed that was no longer in use which had been fitted with a power point; there was a workbench and shelving and large double doors. Most of the time during this workshop was spent outside in the yard.

Joe had a van deliver him and his equipment to the school; he brought with him tools, an angle grinder and welder.

The Workshop

The approach which was taken in this workshop was worked out through debate and the examination of materials for possibilities. In the gathered materials there was a broken bench, which was the pupils used as a starting point. There was also an agreement that there should be a figurative element in or around the seat. (See Plate – 8).

There was then a heated debate as to whether this should be a male or female form. Joe suggested that they could have both so the lads in the class became very involved in making the female form and the girls made the male form.

Joe showed each person in turn how to operate the equipment so everybody was busy cutting, welding, and sourcing suitable objects to add to the form. (See Plate – 9). The male female members of this group didn't mix very well as a class and it was interesting to see the way they had chosen to work separately but in a group situation. As the day went on there were many comparisons between the figures and the competition was tense it added to the excitement of getting the work done and seeing results. Joe is a master craftsman and he was able to suggest various solutions to problems that arose in the course of the day. (See Plate – 10).



Plate 8/9 - Pupils working with gathered materials



Plate 10 - 'Seat Sculpture' Pupils working on the finished construction

Evaluation of Project

Joe has a quiet way with him that the pupils responded to. He didn't dominate the situation but he was keenly aware of the activities of the pupils and listened to their suggestions helping them to get their desired result.

After the workshop we carried the sculpture/seat to the site we had chosen between the school and the games fields. The pupils felt that the seat would be of benefit there, it would be used, and they felt it could also be viewed from a number of classrooms. In discussion around the sculpture afterwards the pupils felt that the work should be painted and they all agreed that it should be done in primary colours.

The pupils were very proud of their work and the skills they had learned during the day.

Self Evaluation

This group worked on their own with the artist for some periods during the day while I was teaching.

This group had been a difficult group to motivate in class but the nature of this workshop was such that they all became involved, initially, it was a competitive situation but as both figures were attached to either end of the seat there was a relationship between them, the pupils saw this and they realised both figures were working together to make the total sculpture seat.

There was a ceremony involved in carrying and position this seat and placing it 'in the right' position on the chosen site. The pupils had the choice of putting this sculpture in one of the Court Yards but they decided it wouldn't get as much use there as it would beside the games field.

Feedback

This sculpture is still in position 5 years later, initially pupils enjoyed pointing out what it was made up of. Because it is so big and wasn't painted originally there was a very mixed reaction to it. The pupils who had made it wire brushed it and coated it with rust proof paint they then painted it with bright metal paints. This seat sculpture is now part of the enjoyed landscape of the school. (See Plate – 11).



Plate 11 - 'Seat Sculpture' in position

Workshop No. 3

Artist: Alice Maher - Mixed Media. (See Plate – 12).

Aim; To enable 5th form pupils to have contact with a professional artist through slide show/discussion and workshop activity.

Aim; To encourage contact between the staff in general and the visiting artist.

Preparation

I had been reading about the work of Alice Maher and her approach to and use of materials. I thought that the group of 5th years I had this particular year would enjoy and benefit from contact with this artist. I contacted Alice Maher through an old studio number I had for her. She was more than delighted to fit us in to her busy schedule and she had her own ideas on possible ways of conducting the workshop.

I discussed with Alice the work the pupils were engaged in, they were all developing a personal theme, some based on insects, vegetables, and people through three main areas painting, sculpture and craft, they were in the last stages of this project and had a lot of resource material and drawing done so we discussed whether to give them a separate brief or to further develop the theme they had already chosen.

We decided that we would leave this open until Alice met and discussed it with the pupils themselves.



Plate 12 - 'Bee Dress' Alice Maher (1994, honey bees, cotton, wire,
13x26x27cm)

In the initial slideshow visit, Alice brought a relevant, interesting and thought provoking sample of slides of her work for us to see. (See Plate 13-14). She spoke of the materials she used and the importance of these materials to the object made, she spoke of the 'Nettle Jacket' and its relation to the story in mythology of 'The Swan Children'. (See Plate – 15). Alice has an engaging way of talking about her work that opens up the process of thinking about and making the work, she spoke about gathering the bees for the 'Bee Dress' and the temporary quality of some of the work she makes.

The pupils had many questions to ask about her work and how she manages to live by making this; Alice spoke in a real manner to the pupils. She told them that she is sometimes commissioned to make-work but mostly manages to sell work. She spoke about the places that have bought her work and where it is hanging and the fact that she sometimes has to replace the bees on the bee dress. The pupils were fascinated by all of this.

After the slideshow /discussion Alice discussed the workshop with the pupils and gave them guidelines on collecting and using relevant material, and putting thought into the work that was to be made. In the brief, they were asked to collect materials for use in the workshop and to base their idea for a piece of work, on the further development of an idea from their resource book



Plate 13/14 - Slide show discussion with the artist Alice Maher



Plate 15 - ' Nettle Jacket ' Alice Maher (1995, nettles, pins, 7x62x62cm)

The pupils were required to have some preparatory drawings done for this workshop. I posted a notice in the staff room advertising the fact that Alice Maher was visiting the school and all staff were invited to the slide show. Three members of staff attended this included the two art teachers.

Materials: Collected, re-cycled, everyday materials put to different uses. p.v.a. glue guns, scissors, knives, paper, wood, saws, hammers, nails, paint, stapler, needles, and thread.

Size; No limit.

Length of time; 6 hrs.

Preparatory work; the pupils own resource book drawings based on class project work, or drawings and research done specifically for the workshop.

Support Studies; the work of Alice Maher.

Number of pupils; 38

The Workshop

On the morning of the workshop the pupils arrived in early, dressed in working clothes and some of them with the materials they were to use. Alice spoke to all the pupils and she asked them to set up a working space with their drawings and materials, and to record any changes they made to their design as they went along. Most of the pupils brought with them drawings and were able to start right away others were unsure.

Alice made a point of getting to see everybody in the morning before break. She spoke to them about their design ideas and possible ways of approaching the construction of the work, she assisted in solving technical problems and everybody was engrossed in their own task. Some of the pupils were influenced by the artist's approach to using materials and they worked with leaves, rope, tea bags, card and chicken wire in the construction of garments. The pupils who had worked on drawings for their sculpture and pupils who continued to develop their ideas based on their project work were at an advantage, they were able to start directly and make good use of their time with the artist. One of the pupils Susan who had been working on insects as part of a personal project in class had chosen a dried pigs ear to work from, she had preparatory drawings and texture studies, done in her resource book, and she decided to develop these in 3D using a wire structure (See Plate 16-17).

She had to resolve problems of balance, texture and use of materials during her development of the structure.

Ronan had been drawing the structure of chains for his personal project in class and he was taken by the whole idea of making these in papier-mâché using a wire structure, this he felt would make a light structure of something that should be heavy.

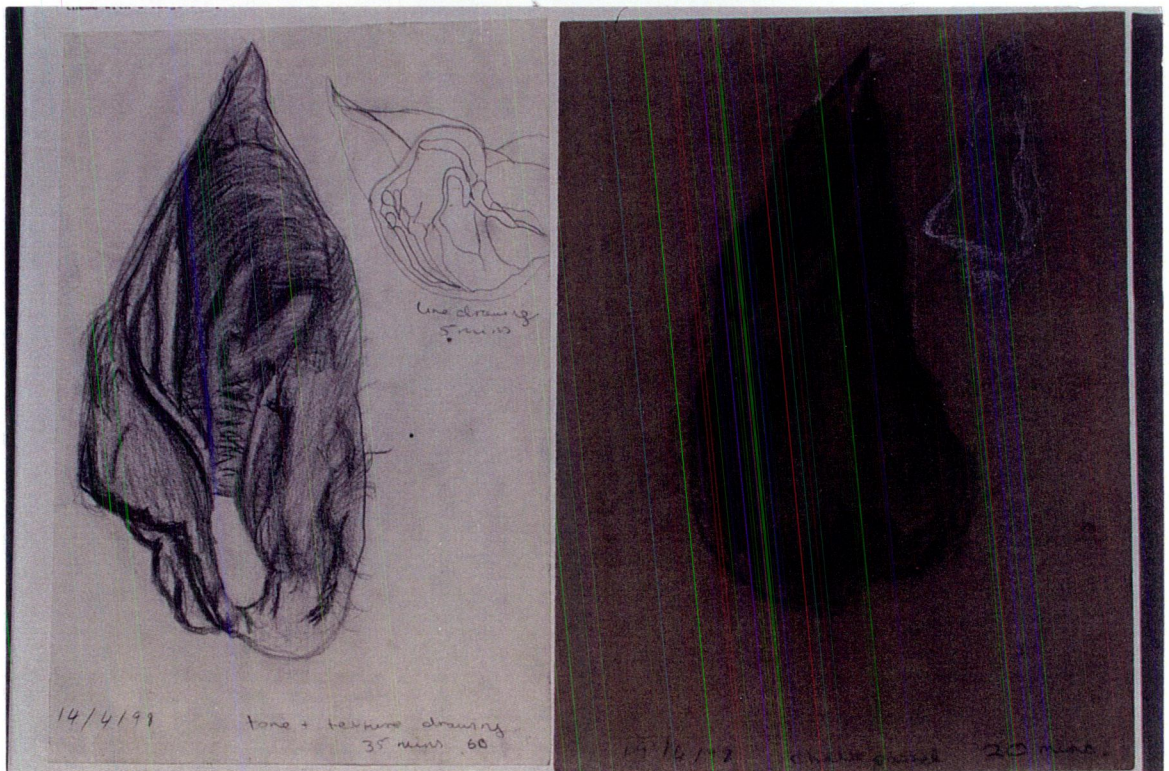


Plate 16/17 - Resource Book Drawings &

'Pigs Ear' Construction Susan Williams

Ndy liked the artists whole approach to making garments from materials that wouldn't normally be considered for that purpose, she use cardboard, chicken wire and plastics in the construction of a ballgown. (See Plate 18-19).

Alice offered technical assistance to anybody who needed it and she continued to discuss with pupils the reason they were developing the work the way they were, and their use of materials.

The introduction and the evaluation at the end of the day were the only times that the artist addressed the group as a whole.

Evaluation of the project

As the workshop drew to a close 40 minutes before the end, the pupils cleaned up and cleaned the work surfaces in preparation for a display of the work. Alice was anxious that we would all have ample time to discuss the work done and she suggested that everybody speak briefly about their own piece. This was a very interesting and genuinely open discussion, the pupils were proud of their work and even the shy members of the class felt they could describe what they had done. Pupils spoke about the problems they had starting off and technical problems they encountered and how they overcame them. (See Plate 20- 21). There were surprise pieces of work based on Alice's own approach to, materials out of context, like the bowl made from cornflakes, p.v.a. And a balloon.



Plate 18 – Ndy constructing a Ballgown



Plate 19 - Fashion show featuring Ndy's Ballgown



Plate 20/21 - Evaluation discussion with the artist Alice Maher

The pupils were relaxed pleased and they were heartfelt in their thanks to the artist for spending time with them. They were able to discuss their own work and make observations of other people's work. The pupils left the workshop asking could they do that again.

Self Evaluation

Alice had an open respectful attitude towards the pupils, she also encouraged work in the hesitant and ill at ease. The result being that everybody had something they were proud to discuss at the end of the workshop. The artist emphasised personal satisfaction with a work, one pupil in particular was having difficulty with the work he was making from Coke cans. Alice suggested ways around the problem showing various possibilities rather than giving up, at the end of the workshop this pupil had made a head out of these cans. He was genuinely pleased with his own achievement. The pupils were reinforced by having one to one contact with the artist, they enjoyed the fact that the artist listened to them describe their project and she spoke to them on a level that encouraged their own ideas. I took my timetable classes elsewhere in the school and when I wasn't scheduled to teach I spent time in the workshop assisting with the use of materials and enjoying watching the pupils caught up in their own activity.

This workshop was very valuable in that the artist was able to encourage the pupils to talk about their work by asking them questions related to what they were doing. Alice trained as a teacher and has a huge interest in educational development and learning, she had a large group to deal with and she handled this no problem; she made it clear, without being stern that everybody was there to work.

For me this was a very busy and engaging workshop and because everybody had their own project the importance of preparatory work was obvious.

I felt this was a very successful workshop in that it helped the individual development of projects in a large group where everybody was working on their own ideas but also aware of the development in the project of the person next to them.

CHAPTER 111

AN 'ARTIST IN SCHOOLS' PROJECT DONE THIS YEAR IN ST. MARKS COMMUNITY SCHOOL, TALLAGHT.

St Marks is a well-run Community school situated in a very populated area of Tallaght.

The facilities for art in the school are very good, as is the attitude towards the subject by both staff and pupils. The 5th form group that I was working with for the purpose of the of the scheme are of a mixed mainly weak ability. I was anxious to start this scheme early in my teaching experience in the school but I was also keenly aware of the fact that I didn't know these pupils very well and had not worked with them on the development of resource books and sketch pad homework. In the introduction to the project I gave the pupils a brief outline of the scheme of lessons. I discussed with them that the main aim of the scheme was for them to meet with and get to know a contemporary Irish artist.

From the outset I spoke to the pupils in the understanding that they would be interested in an approach like this, given that this type of workshop had raised the interest and awareness of entire groups in previous workshops.

I was also made aware of the fact that this group was made up of mixed ability pupils and they for the most part had a low expectation. Their regular teacher was keen for me to work on a Georgian theme. He had already started them on a blockprint based on this starting point.

The Workshop

Aim 1. To develop an appreciation of contemporary Irish Artists and their work.

Aim 2. To generate in pupils a personal response to making a 3D shrine through the examination of Georgian Architecture.

Preparatory Work

I started this project in the first week of my teaching practice in St. Marks school.

I introduced the project to the class and gave them a project brief, setting out what was to be covered over the following weeks. I explained to them that they would have two visits by an artist and one of them would be a day-long workshop they were impressed that they were going to have a day out to work on art.

Objective Lesson 1.

To develop an understanding of line and structure by drawing from observation.

In our examination of photographs of Georgian Architecture we looked at motifs used and especially foliage. In this first class the pupils examined the structure of leaves using a variety of black media.

The pupils made good contribution to the discussion on Georgian Architecture. There was good involvement with the use of media, and the development of structure in the leaf forms.

I gave the pupils a handout on Georgian Architecture and some of the principle Architects of the time. I also gave the pupils an A3 size twelve page home-made sketch pad each, to encourage the development of annotated ideas, and a weekly return of homework.

I made an appointment to speak to the Principal of the school Ms. B. O'Hara.

1. In relation to the proposed workshop and its costing.

2 In relation to the Gallery visit.

She saw me the following week; I presented the mounted photographs of the previous workshops that I had arranged as a support for this project.

Ms. O'Hara was extremely supportive and encouraging of this idea. I told her that the artist had agreed to do the workshop, once I had the go –ahead. Theresa McKenna also suggested that Kathleen O'Brien might be interested, as she had worked on shrines as a theme. We discussed the costing and the timetable in relation to the pupils involved and the other members of staff that needed to be informed. After this discussion I did some more research on the theme, visiting and taking photographs of interior and exterior architectural details of, The Joyce Centre; North Great George's Street; No. 20 Dominick Street; and Merrion Square.

Objective Lesson 2.

To select a functional object from Georgian Architecture and to develop it as the basis of a design for a shrine/container, using the foliage drawing from a previous lesson as part of the design.

The pupils were required to make a drawing of the three dimensional form they would subsequently make, selecting a photograph of a Georgian feature and incorporating the leaf drawings from the previous lesson.

The pupils responded well to being asked to develop a three dimensional design from a two dimensional image.

I gave the pupils a map and information relating to next week's gallery visit, The '**Mexican Devotions**' exhibition.

I was in contact with the Education Officer in "The Douglas Hyde Gallery" to book a guided tour. The Education officer was very helpful and keen to know which work would be of greatest interest to the pupils in their project.

Objective Lesson 3.

A. To develop a detailed colour study of leaves which can be used as a reference for surface decoration on the shrine.

B. To examine the worksheet and to establish an understanding of its requirements.

Objective of the gallery visit.

To gather information in the worksheet that will help the pupils focus on the development of the structure of their own shrine.

In the first part of this class, the pupils looked at colour in the leaf forms they had drawn previously.

In the second part of the class, I introduced the pupils to the worksheet and what was expected of them during the visit.

The Gallery Visit.

The regular art teacher and myself arranged to meet the pupils in the gallery at an appointed time for the scheduled tour. We were then to continue up to Merrion Square to draw architectural features. The works in the gallery fascinated the pupils and they needed more time to develop their worksheets however, the guided tour took longer than anticipated as the pupils questioned the Education Officer on the various works.

The pupils had a good grasp of the purpose of the shrines in Mexican Culture and the materials they were made from, the pupils were keen and interested. We then visited Merrion Square and took the time to draw one architectural feature of their choice, based on previous work.

This was a good way to get to know the class but it would have been a more useful exercise to have one concern instead of the two-separate visits. The pupils found this visit very interesting especially the papier-mache work, it would have been a more productive exercises if I knew the pupils better, and if I knew their attention span.

Objective Lesson 4.

A. To evaluate last weeks gallery visit through discussion and examination of the worksheets.

B. To select materials suitable for the development of the pupils own shrine design and to start to deal with the problems of constructing the shrine.

The pupils started to develop a structure based on the drawings in Lesson 2 and their worksheets from last week's visit. I felt it was necessary at this stage to introduce the pupils to various materials and to encourage the development of an annotated plan for their structure.

ARTIST; Theresa McKenna - Mixed Media, Sculpture. (See Plate - 22).

ARTIST; Kathleen O'Brien - Mixed Media, sculpture.

The Artists Visit / Slide Show Discussion.

In preparation for this visit, I met with Theresa to discuss the project the pupils were working on and to show her their work. I had also taken slides of their observational drawings and plans. We both thought it was a good idea to show their plans during the artist slide show discussion.



Plate 22 - 'Untitled' Theresa McKenna (Collaage, tissue paper and wax)
24in x30in

In this meeting we discussed the objective of the slide show/discussion.

We agreed on a 2hr long slide show/discussion with a starting time of 9.35a.m.

Objective Lesson 5.

To investigate through observation, discussion, and note taking, the work of two contemporary Irish artists. (See Plate – 23-24).

I gave handouts and I reminded the pupils to take notes. I suggested that these could be done in annotated format. I introduced the artists and we were ready to go at 9.35 a.m.

Theresa showed slides and talked about the subject matter, materials, size and colour of her work.

She discussed her design processes. She often begins work by making a maquette, a small model, 10 c.m. high. These are her preparatory sketches, sometimes she does two-dimensional drawings from different angles to help her develop a 3D approach.

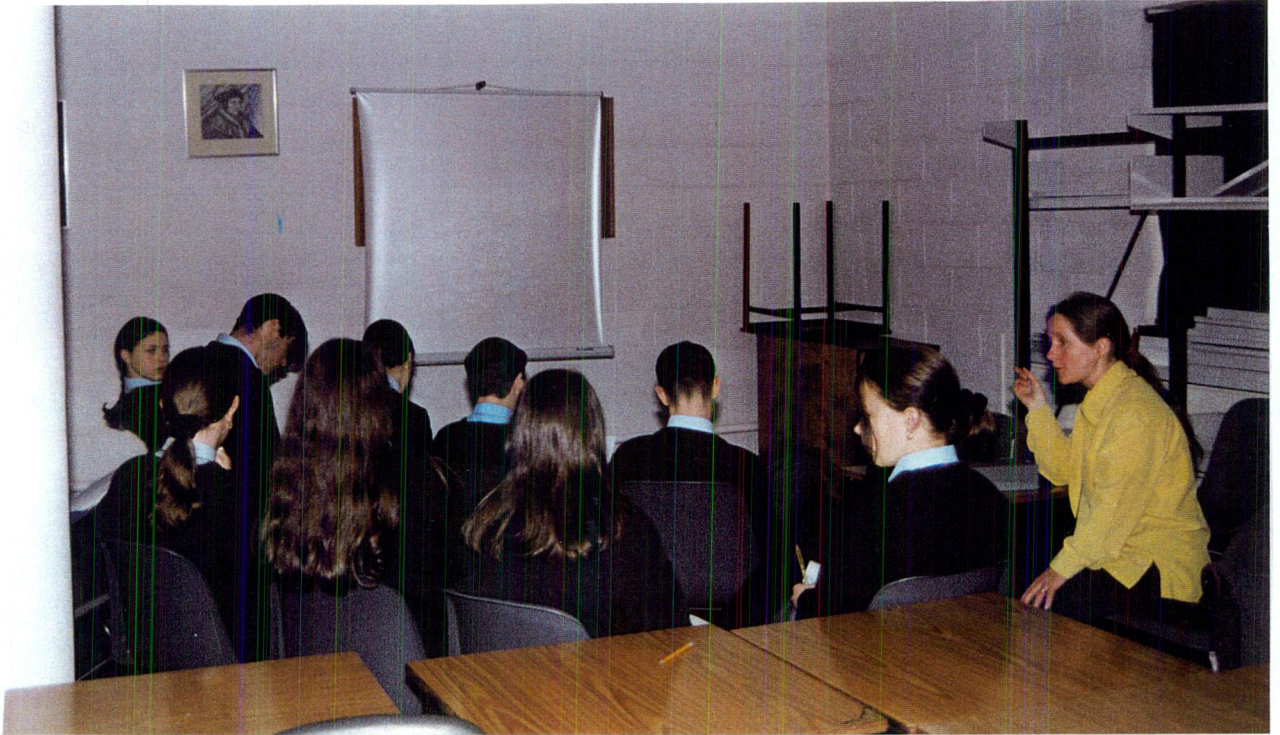


Plate 23/24 -Slide show discussion with Theresa McKenna
and Kathleen O'Brien

Theresa spoke to the pupils about the time she spends on projects. She spoke about the commissions she gets, the pupils were highly impressed with one of these works done for the Interpretative Centre in the Phoenix Park. (See Plate - 25) It was the first slide that showed bright rich colour and the pupils loved it and they wanted to know its size and the materials it was made from. They spoke about having seen the deer in the park, and they talked about going to see the work in the Interpretative Centre. (See Plate - 26)

Theresa showed some of her more recent work, which are more personal in nature. She used these as an introduction to the project theme of shrines, based on ideas from Georgian Architecture.

She put the slides of the pupils work up on the screen they were astonished. This enable them to look at and evaluate their own work in context of the artists works they had seen.

Both Theresa and myself felt it important that the pupils work should be seen in this format for a number of reasons;

1. To take some of the mystique out of the slides, sometimes the process of showing and looking at slides can be distant.
2. The pupils could see their work up on screen and therefore place themselves and their work in the making process.



Plate 25 - 'Deer Run' Theresa McKenna (One of eight panels, Sisal Tapestry
5ftx13ft



Plate 26 - 'Deer Run Tapestry' in situ. Theresa McKenna

3. Theresa and Kathleen could let the pupils know that they were aware of their work and that they supported the project ideas.

4. To give the pupils confidence in their own work and that if they stand back and look, it does have merits, thus encouraging them to be critical in a positive way.

The pupils asked questions such as:

What do you live on? Where do you work? Do people buy the work?

Where do you get all the rope for the sculptures?

Theresa answered all questions fully describing and explaining the way she lives and works.

Kathleen O'Brien

I then introduced the pupils to Kathleen, she showed 20 slides from an exhibition she held in The Project gallery in 1996 it was called 'Innocence Lost in Transit' she told us that the work took 3 years to make, and that most of the materials were re-cycled found in skips, she spoke about her way of working, her 12 to 14 hour stints in the studio.

Kathleen's work is beautifully made and has lovely detail. She spoke of the things that she considers when making a piece of work, the materials she uses, she enjoys working with wood, the preparation and finishing of it appeals to her. Every piece of work brought a new wave of interest to the

group they were so meticulously finished and in the pupils words 'strange' Kathleen directed the pupils to consider using re-cycled materials in the construction of their own shrines.

The pupils asked Kathleen, if she sells her work. She said from time to time that she had, she also explained that sometimes she barter it in exchange for things she needs.(The pupils were amazed at this concept of earning a living)

The pupils were really impressed and were not at all distant from both artists. This was a really valuable experience for them and Theresa finished up the discussion by speaking to the pupils about having a plan developed of what they were going to make for the workshop in January. They were to collect materials that they could use in the construction of the shrine.

Objective Lesson 6 and 7

To develop an annotated plan for a trial shrine in 3D, showing each stage of development.

We discussed the artist visit, the pupils had not returned their questionnaires but I was eager for some feed back.

Lynda's comment: 'I loved the Phoenix Park Tapestry, she explained how she had made a tapestry for her Junior Certificate and was familiar with how

tapestry works. She was impressed with the scale of the work and was eager to find out how the artists had made something of this scale.

Trevor's comment: 'that other artists work was weird, all those dolls heads staring out at you it seemed very personal.

When asked what the word shrines meant to Kathleen, the pupils felt that it was to hold something personal.

Lynda Adair felt the work was very personal to Kathleen and that she enjoyed making a good job of the shrines.

Preparation for the workshop with the artist - Theresa McKenna

I met with Theresa before the workshop and we discussed the objective of the workshop. We agreed on the timetable for the day, the layout of the room and possible materials to be used.

I posted a notice to inform staff of the workshop and to inform them that there would be pupils absent from their class. I gave the Principal and Vice-Principal the timetable for the workshop and details of what we hoped to achieve.

Objective of the workshop:

Using collected information and the plan drawings the pupils were to complete the making of the shrine under the guidance of the visiting artist, Theresa McKenna.

The Workshop Timetable;

Introduction	9.00 - 9.20
Project work	9.20 - 10.30
Break	10.30 - 10.40
Project work	10.40 - 12.00
Evaluation	12.00 - 12.30
Lunch	12.30 - 1.30

Introduction to afternoon session	1.30 - 1.40
Project work	1.40 - 2.30
Break	2.30 - 2.40
Finish up	2.40 - 3.00
Evaluation	3.00 - 3.15
Clean up	3.15 - 3.30

On the day of the workshop Theresa and myself arrived early at the school.

We laid out the materials to be used by the pupils on one long table, with the tools, glue nails, blades, scissors..

Theresa laid out her own work in a separate space down the back of the room.

The pupils arrived in good time and in full attendance. They were each given a copy of the timetable for the day and a nameplate for the benefit of the artist.

Theresa then spoke to the pupils recalling her last visit and asking them what they had been working on since.

The pupils told her they had been developing plan drawings and trying out some 3D materials. (See Plate – 27-28).

Theresa spoke about her own process and about having the drawings and materials related to the work she is going to make on the desk beside her.

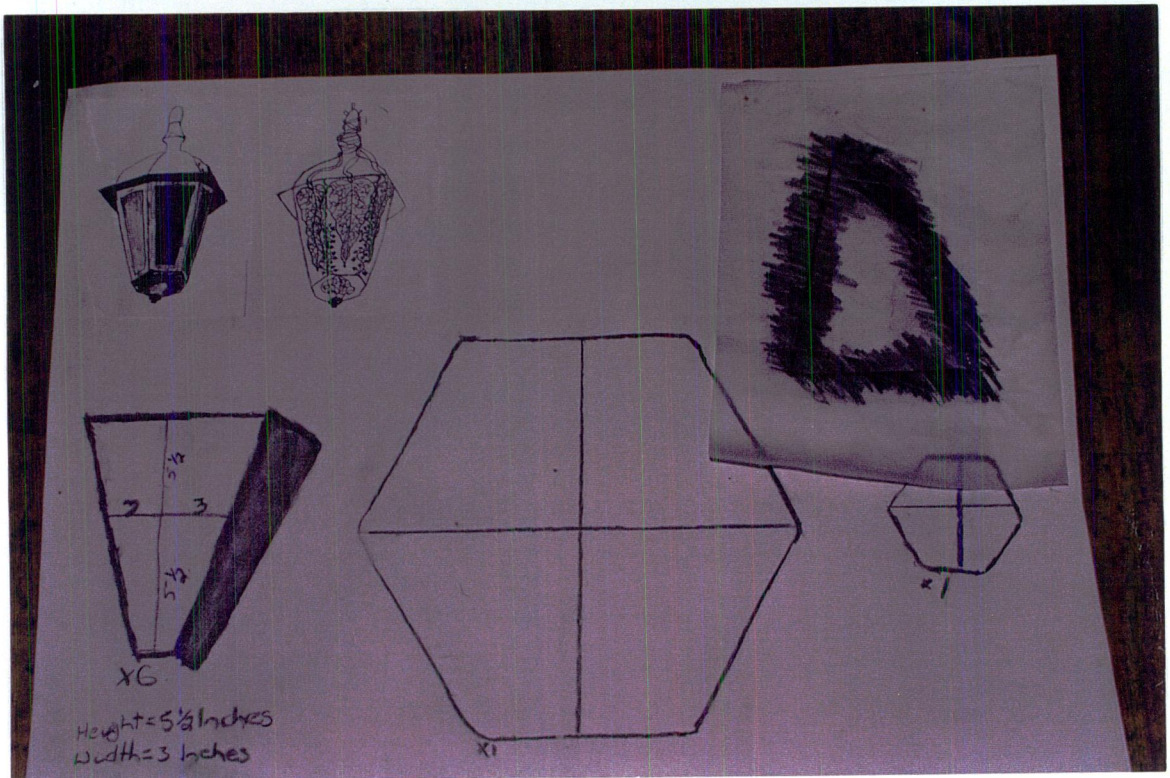
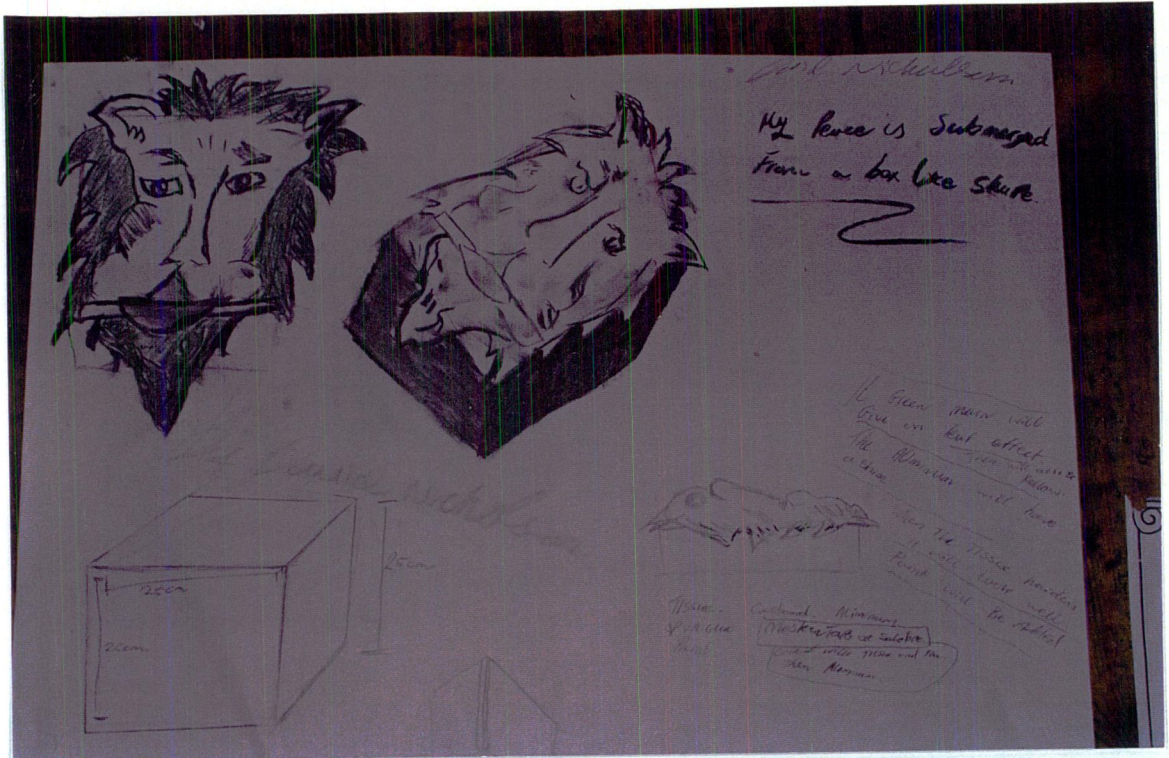


Plate 27/28 - Pupils Plan drawings

She asked the pupils to consider setting up a space to work and put in it the information, i.e. plan drawings and materials. She spoke about the various sources they had gathered their information from. Georgian Architecture, foliage, and the 'Mexican Devotions' exhibition..

She spoke to the pupils about the task for the day being in their own hands and she emphasised that they should think more about what, ' The Shrine ' should contain.

Theresa explained that she would talk to everybody individually about their plan drawings and trial 3D structures and discuss the direction they were heading.

To facilitate pupils who had missed classes, Theresa suggested that they should try to develop a plan from earlier drawings done in class and from secondary sources on Georgian Architecture before going on. There were only two pupils in this position and this suited them very well as they were concerned that they weren't prepared enough for the workshop.

Theresa discussed briefly her own display area and she invited pupils to view it at any time during the day.

The workshop began and Theresa asked for the radio to be turned off to allow people to think and to concentrate on what they were doing. I had to leave to teach another class and the other art teachers took turns to supervise in the workshop

There was a enthusiastic and busy atmosphere in the room and the pupils worked right through the break.

Evaluation.

At 12.00 noon Theresa asked the pupils to clear their desks a little and to look at what they had done. She also encourage them to think about what they were doing and what they were going to do next in the development of their shrine.

The pupils arrived back early from lunch just to get started on their work, at this stage Theresa showed them her work which consisted of a number of recent pieces worked on her own hand-made paper and also some older tapestry works. At this time pupils felt a little less inhibited about asking questions, for example Linda asked Theresa, how she made the big tapestry pieces and she was amazed to find out that she used builders scaffolding as a frame.

After this discussion of her work, Theresa brought it to the attention of the pupils that the workshop was drawing to a close and that they should be working towards a finished piece. To allow for time to display the finished work for a 3.00 o'clock deadline.

There was a marked difference in the attitude of the pupils towards their work and a genuine involvement in the workshop.

Evaluation at the end of the workshop.

I prepared a display area for the work and by 3.00 p.m., all the pupils had their work laid out in this space. Theresa introduced and led the discussion that followed, she said that most people had plans done for their shrine when they came to the workshop and this left them prepared with a solid base from which to start straight into work. She also said that some people got lost here and there along the way and they made a genuine effort to sort themselves out.

Theresa invited the pupils to discuss their work under the following headings;

Where the basis of the design came from?

Could the Georgian Architecture element be still seen in it?

The pupils were reluctant for the most part to talk in front of each other but

David made the comment about Trevor's shrine that he thought it was very

well made, and it still had the appearance of the lantern from the doorway of the building. (See Plate – 29-30).

Lynda said she enjoyed the workshop and that it was great to spend a day working on art and not have to pack up after an hour's work.

Self Evaluation

There was some doubt as to whether all the pupils would be in attendance for the workshop as this particular class's attendance in school was not usually good. The word got around and there was a full attendance for the day.

Some of the pupils were very enthusiastic from the start and others were reluctant to talk to the artist about their ideas. In the space of an hour everybody was busy on their own work. Lynda K worked hard on developing a structure for her shrine, she had missed some classes and she had to work on the plan first but her resulting work was an interesting development of the spiral structure at the base of the stairs in The Joyce Centre. She was very pleased at how her shrine had worked out and the Crucifix was the object that she wanted to place in there. (See Plate – 31-32).

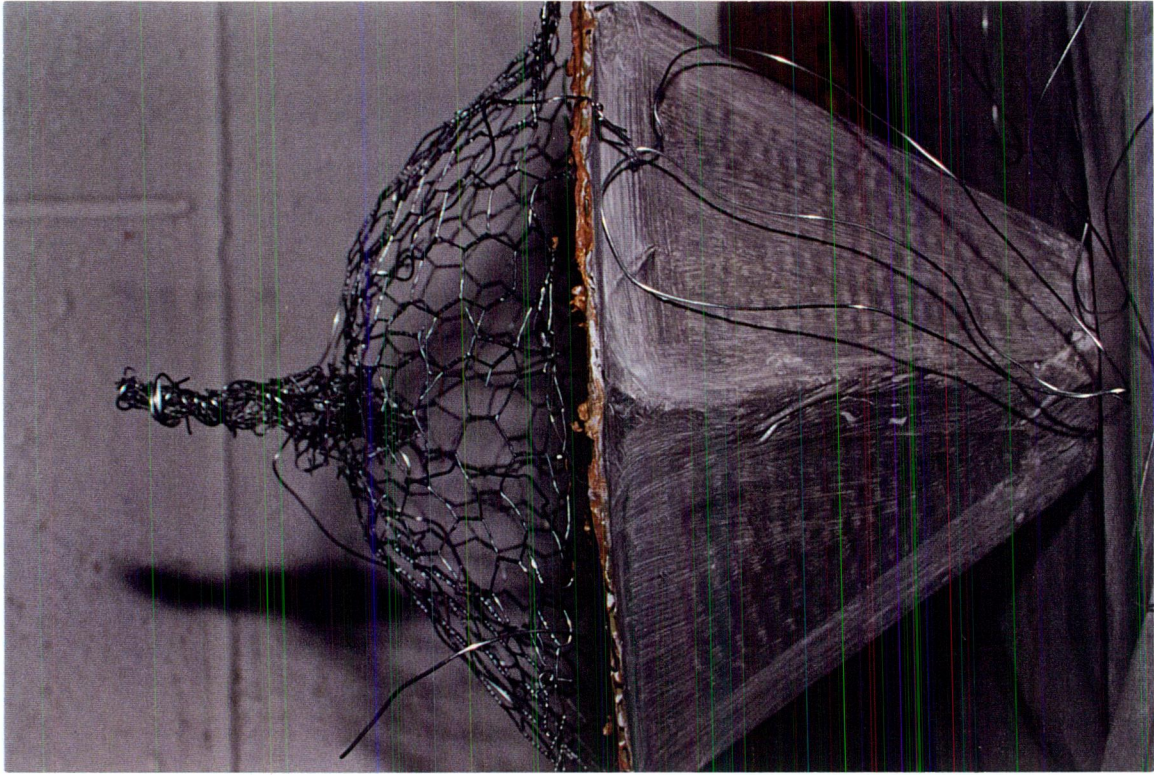
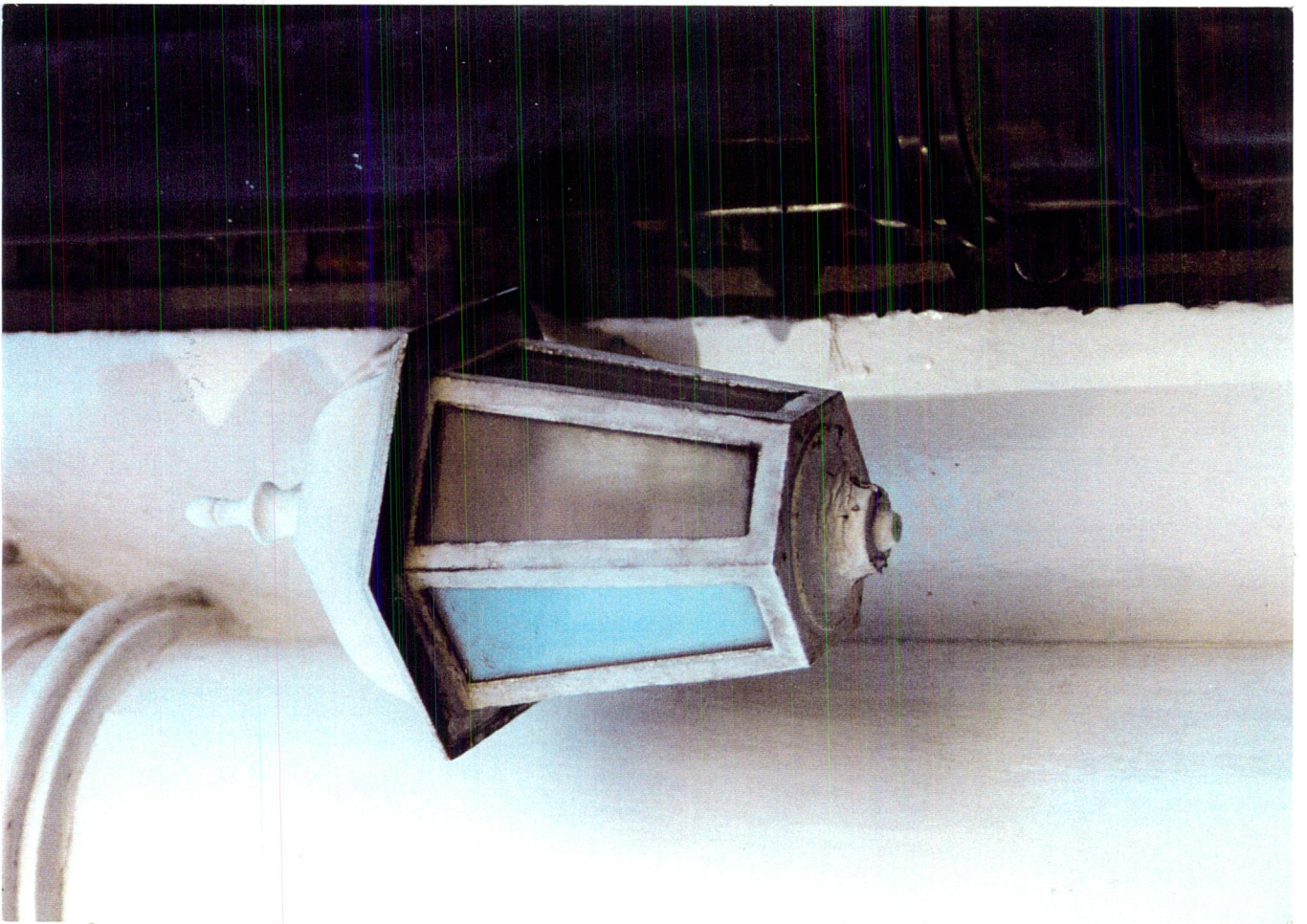


Plate 29/30 - Pupils Shrine developed from Georgian influence



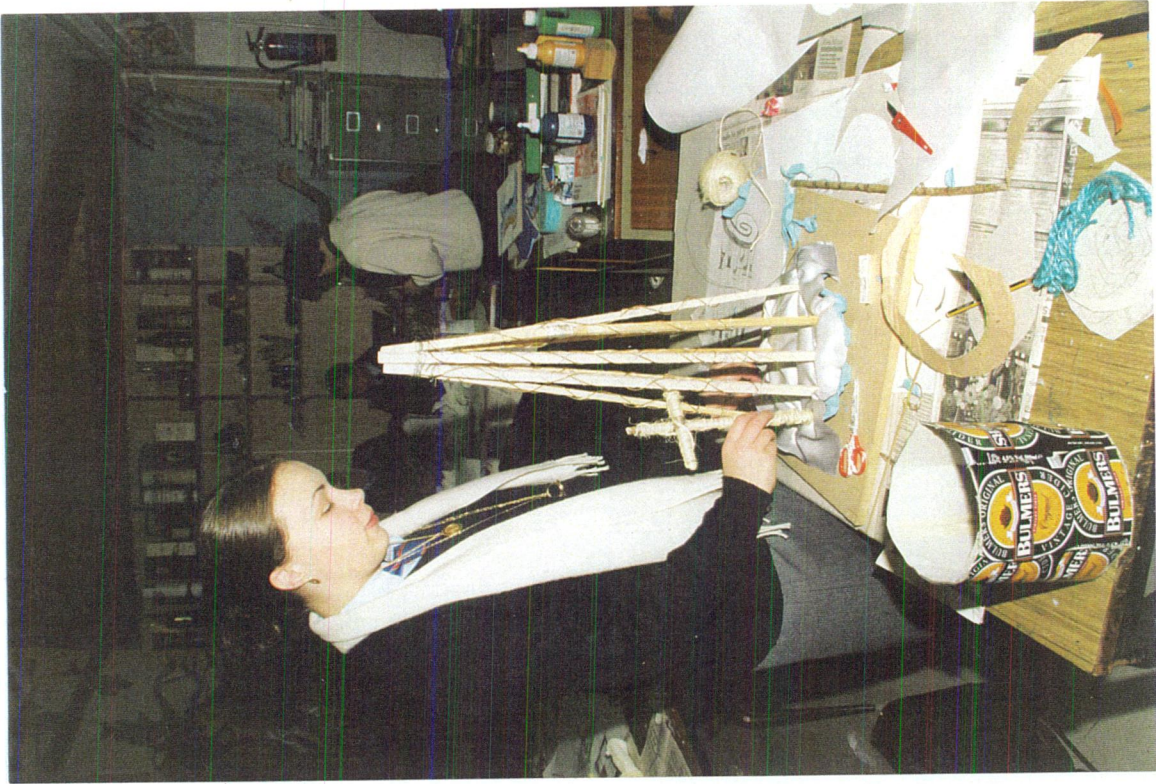
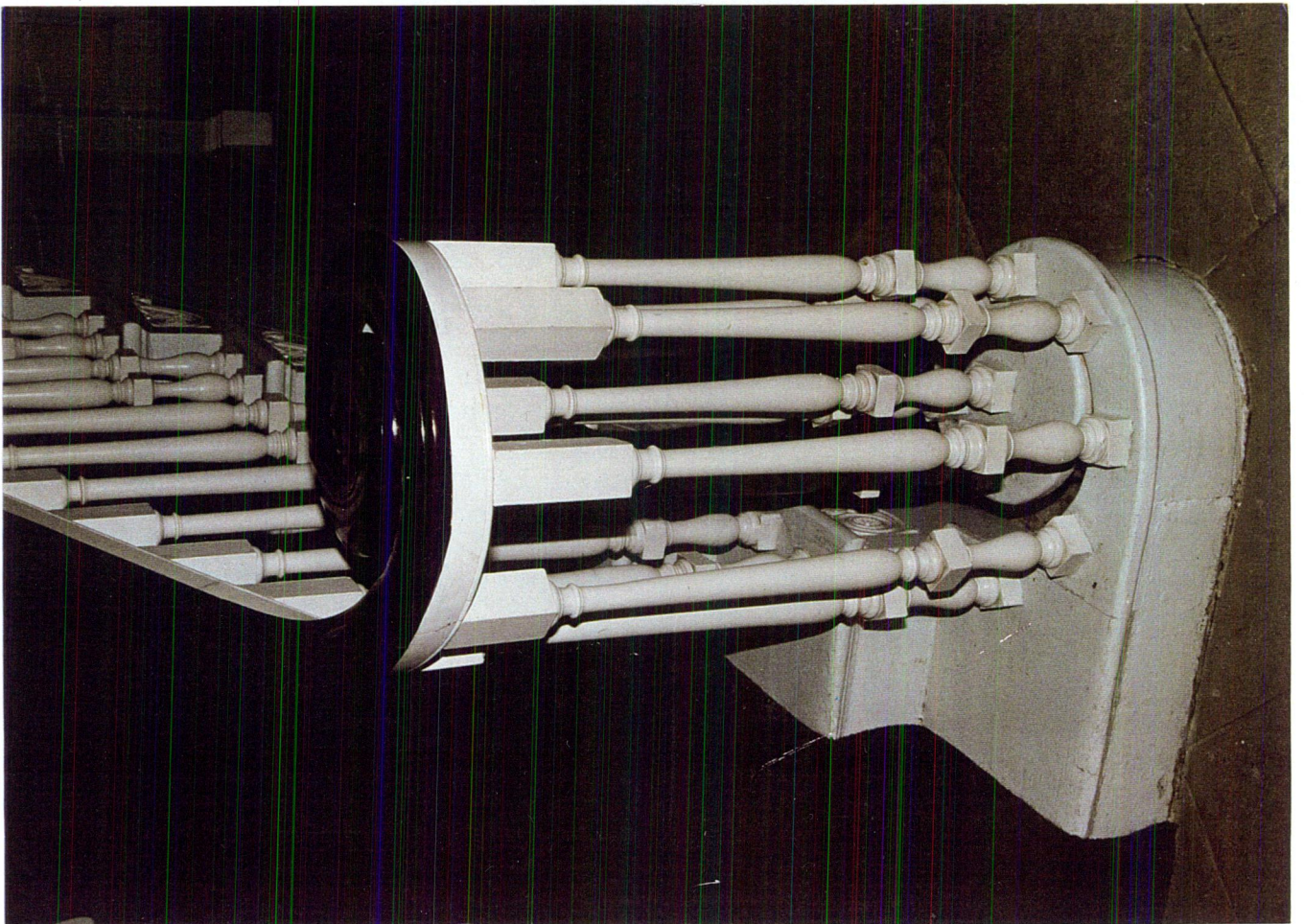


Plate 31/32 - Pupils Shrine developed from Georgian influence 2



Paul was interested in developing a container more than a shrine and this was influenced by the carved design on an interior stairs of a Georgian House.

He started out being negative 'I can't do this' through encouragement from Theresa he became engrossed in the making of this container and was very definite about how it should look.

The pupils really enjoyed this day and there was a feeling of disbelief that they were allowed to do this, there was also a proud feeling that this artist wanted to work with them and they recognised that Theresa viewed their work as being important.

They were tired at the end of the day and as always reluctant in the beginning to discuss their own work. Each pupil was requested to speak briefly about one other work they liked from the workshop, this was a good exercise and no matter how brief at least everyone got a chance to make a comment about their own work, somebody else's, or the experience of the workshop. (See Plate – 33-34).

For me this workshop was a much more structured one than the previous workshops I had organised for the pupils. In this workshop, the pupils had more preparatory time. The pupils themselves had spent very little time outside of class time working on ideas. In order to reap the full benefit of a workshop experience it is necessary to develop a process of thought



Plate 33/34 - Evaluation discussion with the artist Theresa McKenna

connected with the theme that is to be explored. Otherwise, it could be a fractured experience. Nevertheless, the confidence of the group after this workshop was tangible as was the development in my relationship with the them.

This last lesson was an evaluation lesson. I had given the pupils a questionnaire to fill out over the week but they had not returned them. As a result, I felt the best thing to do was to set time aside in class to work on this.

Objective lesson 9

- A, To evaluate last weeks workshop through answering a questionnaire.
- B. To develop an observational study of the shrines noting the changes that have occurred through the making process.

I introduced this lesson as an important one and stressed that each pupils written response was required. The pupils respected this, they found the task difficult and as always were reluctant to write, or talk about their own work. the workshop.

One pupils response was;

“ I thought the whole thing was good, because we were able to do what we liked and not have to do what a normal teacher would tell us to do. We could

use our own ways and ideas and you never laughed at our ideas you always said it was great because it was our own." Thank you for that., Fiona M.

David comment: "Theresa is not afraid to talk about her personal things, I admire her skills".

"I told my friend in 6th year about it, he thought it was deadly, I also told my Mom she said it would be good for me since I love art."

Linda K. response to the question. Are you pleased with the shrine you made?

"Yes I am because I put a lot of effort into it."

In what way was this different to other art classes? "It was different because we got to spend the whole day on it and to do whatever we wanted to do and to use our own imaginations".

Did you tell anybody else about the workshop, and what did they say?

"they said it sounds good and would have liked to do it as well".

During this contact with artists did you learn anything new about the way they live and work?

"Yes, it is very different to us, their whole life is based on art"

Other responses to questions;

Are you pleased with the shrine you made?

“Yes, because I think it turned out really well.” Melanie

“Yes because it is unusual and it is my idea.” Fiona.

“Yes because it turned out the way I wanted it to” Colin.

“Yes I am because I put a lot of effort into it” Lynda.

“Yes I am because I did it myself, and put a lot of work into it.”

Evaluation of this scheme

I have gotten to know the pupils through this scheme of work, it was an ambitious project to take on with a group that I hadn't taught before but it was a good way of building a relationship of trust from the start. The group enjoyed the investigation of Georgian Architecture and if I was doing this theme again I would concentrate the field trip on an area of town rich in Georgian Architecture where we could spend time inside and outside the buildings drawing the features, rather than have two field trips in one.

I found as before, that the daylong workshop for the pupils during a project injects a confidence in themselves and re-inforces the validity of the work they are doing.

The pupils didn't keep a sketch pad or resource book during this project even though I provided them with one, by not doing this they missed a valuable connection in the continuation of the process of developing ideas. According to Lisa Piironen. (12)

"The sketch book could be described as a method of recording at the source of the artistic process, a sort of treasury of ideas."

The value of the learning experience in this project comes from the exposure of the pupils to new ways of looking at their architectural heritage. Working through the design process developing plans by using various media two and three-dimensional.

Most importantly working at their artwork under the direction of a practicing artist.

Visual/ Support Studies

I used my own development of a shrine related to the 3D sculpture Visual Aids for the Classroom workshop done in college and three shrines I had done last year. I showed the pupils plan drawings of what I was doing and the construction method I used. I also introduced the pupils to the plans and work of other artist who worked in 3D.

12 Lisa Piironen, Head of the Department of Art Education at the University of Art and Design, Helsinki. p 40

The artists response to the workshops and their views on the role of the artist in education.

In response to a questionnaire, all the artists involved in these workshops were overwhelmingly supportive of the benefits of first hand experience of contact with artists and their work, and in the words of Alice Maher “the artists role being to communicate the passion of what it is to create, to help the student speak the language of the visual for themselves”.

Theresa McKenna in answer to a question on the role of the artist in education spoke of this exposure to the work of professional artists as one of “allowing students to consider a profession obscure to them and a way of life they may not have considered before”, Theresa elaborated on this and suggested that, “students should from an early age be taught by professionals in all the creative fields, in an attempt to educate the whole person”.

Eamon Connors in response to the same question is in no doubt as to the role of the artist in education. He sees this role, as that of stimulating the pupils by showing them what he/she does and why. “ just seeing the seriousness and commitment of these artists/designers to their work might, at the very best encourage pupils to stop pupils thinking of art as something peripheral.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation examined the benefits of Artists working in schools with students.

Chapter 1. Examined the present Junior Certificate, Transition Year Course and the new Draft Syllabus for Leaving Certificate and it shows the potential and benefits in these programmes of the introduction of pupils to the arts.

This chapter also explored the benefits of an artist in schools programme and it offers an example model on the Writers-in-Schools programme.

The resulting research shows that the ideal of a more personal contact with the arts is written into the curriculum but the organisation and funding is not in place for the implementation of such a programme.

In Chapter 11 Three artist in school projects are examined, and the exploration shows the huge benefit of a workshop approach to learning for all involved

Chapter 111. Involves the implementation of a structured scheme of work done this year as a case study in St. Marks, Community School, Tallaght. The pupils reaction to the scheme of work was a very positive one and their contact with the artists a memorable learning experience. In my privileged position the pupils have worked along with me and have been open and

willing to explore new territories, and since the conclusion of this scheme some pupils in the class who would not normally have had a high estimation of their own ability in the subject, have been giving their work more credence and are putting in the concentration and effort necessary for advancement.

It can be concluded that the re-instating and development of the artists in school project would be of enormous benefit to all pupils in second level education. In order for this programme to be effective it is necessary to develop a directory of interested artists that can be drawn on. Not least it would be a more effective programme if the Department of Education saw it as the very worthwhile project it is and sanctioned it as part of second level education.

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