



"Our Local Environment – Designing A Mural"  
Gallions Primary School  
Key Stage 2 - Year 3



A project for young people to use photography and art to engage with the changes in their local environment.

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## **Foreword – Stratford City Education Project**

Stratford City Education Project aims to ensure all young people of Newham are informed of the regeneration employment opportunities in their borough. This is done through young people accessing relevant learning resources, engaging with employers that develop their entrepreneurial flair and inspire them to fulfil their potential and address the economic well being agenda.

The Stratford City Education project seeks to use the development of Stratford City to increase the awareness of young people of:

- The regeneration of Stratford, in particular Stratford City, the Olympic Village and the Olympic Park
- The future employment opportunities that will be created over the next 10 years, in particular in construction, retail and in the commercial sector
- Opportunities in the world of work and related sectors of employment
- Their own potential and economic well being

The key aims of the project are to:

- Involve key employers in developing a range of educational resources that are transferable across curriculum areas
- Embed these resources within the curriculum to enrich and inspire the learning experience of young people
- Raise self confidence and aspirations among young people

## **Gallions Primary School – Context**

Gallions Primary School is a chosen partner working with the Stratford City Education Project to develop and pilot curriculum resources and to encourage young people to explore opportunities and pathways in the world of work.

Year 3 students at Gallions primary school worked on a ten week project exploring Stratford in the past, present and its future. The project linked to their work in Geography looking at changes to their local area. The project had a strong creative element as the students worked with Tim Mitchell, A photographer and artist to produce murals of their work.

### **Project Aims**

- (a) Enrich the learning experience of young people to achieve the highest possible standard
- (b) Engage young people in dialogue with outside businesses and agencies
- (c) Raise expectations and self confidence to seize the opportunities arising through regeneration in Newham

All students worked in small groups to investigate their local area and how it was changing, then coming together as class groups and working collaboratively.

### **Project Outcomes**

- All students to be aware of Stratford City & The Athletes Village and understand where it is being built
- All students to understand that their local environment is changing
- All students to be able to describe how Stratford has changed
- All students to use creativity to express their ideas
- All students to visit an art gallery
- All students to take photos of Stratford
- All students to contribute to the collage
- Most students to be able to describe what futurism means
- Most students to understand how Stratford will look in the future
- Most students to be able to explain the changes that are occurring in Stratford
- Most students to make drawings based on futurist works
- Some students to be able to explain how they have used futurism in their collage

**Resource development** validated by Gallions teachers and tailored to their curriculum delivery. Gallions teachers worked independently with their classes on a variety of activities which enriched the project. The project encouraged cross curricular work and met curriculum standards in Geography, History, PHSE, Citizenship, Literacy, Design and Art.

**Uptake** 60 Year 3 students at Gallions Primary school were engaged on the project working with their peers on different activities. The children worked collaboratively in groups. At the beginning of the project the students had an introduction from the Stratford City Education Development Officer. Additional support was provided throughout the project by Lend Lease and Tim Mitchell, who worked closely with the students on their photography and art works. In addition, the students went on two trips – one trip to Stratford and a second to the Estorick Gallery in Islington.

**Wider dissemination** through existing teacher networks, events and through websites such as NEBP, TES and Stratford City Education Project website. Students produced an assembly about Stratford which they showcased to the rest of the school and parents on the 25<sup>th</sup> March. The murals were displayed in the hall at Gallions Primary School. The project was showcased in the Stratford City Education showcase on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2009.

## **Introduction to the project**

On Monday 9<sup>th</sup> February the Stratford City Education Development Officer introduced the project to the students. A Power Point presentation was shown, which included images of what Stratford City will look like and a video showing a fly through of the new development. The students were inspired by the images and had the opportunity to ask questions about the changes.

On Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> February Chris Grocock, Lend Lease attended Gallions Primary School and presented on the Athlete's Village to the students. This presentation complimented the previous days presentation and allowed the young people to develop ideas about what might be happening in the future.

The images and information from the two presentations allowed the young people to begin to visualise the changes that are occurring in Stratford and what it will look like in the future.

## **Tim Mitchell – Photographer**

On Monday 16<sup>th</sup> February the students met Tim Mitchell, an artist and photographer, who was working with them on the project. He began by introducing himself and giving a background to his profession.

After this Tim asked all the students to write on a “post-it-note” something that they remembered from the past – responses ranged from birthdays, holidays, to moving house. He then created a time line at the front of the class and got the students to pin their post it notes in the appropriate places. Most of the student memories were from the last few years. Students dates of birth – from 2000 & 2001 were also added on to the time line to help them appreciate time scale. Tim then put the 2012 Olympics on the time line. After this he showed students old pictures of Stratford from around 1900 and placed these on the time line – to do this students had to physically walk around the room which helped them to understand how far in the past these photos were taken. The time line was a point of reference for the project and allowed the students to think about Stratford past, present and future.

Tim then got all the students to look at the old photographs of Stratford and picked out key features. The young people then did their own drawings from photocopies of the photos. These drawings helped them to understand what Stratford was like in the past and acted as a point of reference for the work looking at the present and the future of the town.

## **Photography Sessions**

Each student was given their own disposable camera, these cameras were to use for their trip to Stratford to capture images of the present. Prior to the Stratford trip, Tim ran workshops with each class focussing on photography and how to use cameras. He showed the students the images of Stratford again and got them to identify key features and items in the photos. In addition he held a short practical session introducing the students to topics such as composition and framing. Tim showed examples of photos to help the students with their understanding. At the end of the session the young people had the opportunity to take some photos of their classmates.



A student learning how to use her disposable camera

## **Trip to Stratford**

Students travelled by bus to Stratford and spent the day exploring Stratford in the present. The young people each had their own disposable camera to take images of Stratford which they would use in their final mural that they were creating.

The day started at Stratford station where the students were able to look at the hoardings, which describe the history of Stratford. Tim drew their attention to two key landmarks – the spiral clock which marks the count down to the 2012 Olympic games and the old Stratford station, which the students had seen in a photograph and is now a small arch next to some railway lines.



Image of Stratford taken by one of the students

The young people went into the station and were able to view the construction of Stratford City from one of the platforms. This allowed them to gain an idea about the scale of development and how Stratford would look in the future. In addition, the students were able to see the bridge, which links Stratford City to Stratford town centre, in one of its first connections across the railway lines. The students then walked through Stratford centre and took photographs of the shops and market stalls. They went to St Mary's Church, as seen in some of the old photographs. The young people all had a copy of one of the photographs from 1900 and they went to the exact same spot and drew what they could see. They were able to compare the past with the present from this exercise and discussed the changes enthusiastically.



A student taking a photo outside Stratford station



Tim reminds the students how to use their cameras

Some students visited Stratford Library where they went to the archiving area. They were shown maps of Stratford in the past and the present and were able to see how it had got more built up and populated over the years.



Students shown maps at Stratford Library

The final activity involved the children interviewing people with a set of questions they had devised about how Stratford has changed. They each managed to interview at least one member of the public and this evidence was used to support the visual evidence that they had collected.

The disposable cameras were collected in and the photographs were developed to be used by the students within the project.

## **Photograph analysis**

Each student was able to keep their own photographs from the Stratford trip. Tim gave the students a photography masterclass showing them some of his favourite photos and identifying key features that he was looking for – for example if the photograph was framed, composition, interest and light / dark contrasts. The young people then selected their favourite photos, taking into account the key points. These photos were then incorporated into the completed mural.



A photo taken from the bus showing excellent composition



Another interesting photo taken by the students



Young people take a photo of an existing photo by Stratford station

## **Futurism**

Tim introduced the students to the idea of futurism as it linked with the project and allowed them to explore their ideas using this as a basis. The young people were shown images of Futurism and told about the movement. They looked at various future ideas and past inventions (electricity, airplanes, trains), which influenced the Futurists and they made flick books to illustrate the point in history of being able to 'stop motion'. This gave the young people a good background about futurism before their visit to the Estorick Collection. In addition, the students worked on their time lines, which they had started in the first week with Tim encouraging them to build on what they had learnt.

A work by Umberto Boccioni on Display at the Estorick





A work by Luigi Russolo on display at the Estorick Collection

## **Estorick Collection**

The students visited the Estorick Collection in Islington, London. The Estorick Collection of Modern Italian Art opened in London in 1998. Its new home - a Grade II listed Georgian building - was restored with support from the Heritage Lottery Fund and contains six galleries, an art library, cafe and bookshop. The Collection is known internationally for its core of Futurist works, as well as figurative art and sculpture dating from 1890 to the 1950s. It features paintings by Futurism's main protagonists: Giacomo Balla, Umberto Boccioni, Carlo Carrà, Gino Severini, Luigi Russolo and Ardengo Soffici as well as works by Giorgio de Chirico, Amedeo Modigliani, Giorgio Morandi, Mario Sironi and Marino Marini.

The young people were given a short talk about the Estorick collection from Claudia, an Education Manager. She was able to tell them about the history of the Collection and talk to them about some specific paintings and art works. In addition to the Futurist works there was an exhibition on Framing Modernism which focused on photography allowing the students to make associations with the photos they had taken.

The students then chose between one and three of their favourite Futurist works and sketched them in their sketch book. These sketches were revisited when they went back to school allowing them to incorporate their ideas into the final logos.



The Estorick Collection in Islington

## **Mural Creation**

All students spent a further two days working on their murals. Students worked in groups of 5-6 on their ideas. The remit was to create a mural that looked at the past, present and future of Stratford. The students were encouraged to incorporate elements of photos that they had taken, into the collage as well as the work that they had done looking at Stratford in the past. In addition, the young people used the images and information from their visit to the Estorick Collection to create a futurist influence for their murals.

The first session had the students drawing images onto the large pieces of paper. They then used pastels to go over their work and create images of links from the past, present and future. The murals were brightly coloured and used photographs as well as drawing to combine media. The completed murals were sprayed with hair spray so the pastels didn't run.

All completed murals were displayed in the hall at Gallion's school and the winning mural took pride of place in the Head Teacher's office.

Completed Murals:



## **Assembly**

Reggae Class, one of the Year 4 classes working on the project, conducted a whole school assembly based on Stratford past, present and future. The assembly was based around the work that the students had done during the Stratford City Education Project and saw actors travelling from Stratford in the past to the present and in to the future. This assembly was well attended by parents and allowed the rest of the school to gain an understanding of what happened during the project.

## **Evaluation:**

### **Pupil Voice**

Students enjoyed working on the project, some of their comments included:

"I liked having my own camera and being able to take the photos with Tim"

"I enjoyed going on trips, they were fun and we learnt lots"

"I liked working in a group on the mural as we all did different things, although sometimes I didn't think the other group members listened to me"

"I liked going to the Estorick gallery as there were lots of interesting photos and paintings"

"It was fun when we went to Stratford and took lots of photos"

"The mural was really good because we could use our own ideas"

"It was really good working with Tim as he helped us understand how to use the camera and take good photos"

"It is a shame that all of this stuff is going on in Stratford and not in Beckton, I hope that we have similar things happening in Beckton as well"

"Working as part of our group was good because we all got to give our own ideas and help each other"

"It is exciting to think about what Stratford will look like in the future".

### **Teacher Evaluation**

The project went well and was a great success; we really appreciated the support that we received from Ruth and Tim during this project.

### **Stratford City Education Officer Evaluation**

The project was a great success and an example of excellent employer engagement with the photographer. The students were able to develop a number of new skills and gain a good understanding of how Stratford is changing in the future. The classroom teaching was balanced with practical sessions and visits, which allowed the students to contextualise their learning.

The project evolved from the initial brief and became progressively larger in scope as time passed; this was due, to the flexibility of the school and the artist and the interest and excitement of the children. Although this natural evolution meant the project could expand it may have been preferable to have clearer objectives at the beginning, which could have been developed with the teachers, Stratford City Education Project and the artist.

The Estorick Gallery was incredibly supportive of the project and Claudia provided an excellent source of information and resource for the students. The days at the gallery were enjoyed by students and teachers alike.

The teachers and students were so involved in the project that they worked on the murals in additional sessions. It was really satisfying to see the students working together on the projects and sharing ideas. The completed murals were a testament to all the students and were all excellent pieces of work. The display of the murals in the hall was appreciated by the students who understood that their work was being taken seriously.

### **Advice for Teachers Doing This Project**

Before commencing embarking on this project, I would advise teachers to have a planning session with the artist so common objectives could be drawn up. I think it is incredibly beneficial to supplement class teaching with visits and as this is an art project it would be good for the young people to visit a gallery. Teachers should research local exhibitions in their area so they are able to identify a good gallery to visit that will link to their objectives for the project.

## **Employer Evaluation – Tim Mitchell:**

### **What we did.**

In response to the brief and project aims, I thought it would be good to:

1. Explore the history of Stratford with the children through visual means such as old photographs.
2. Use the proposed fieldtrip to study present Stratford through the collection of field data such as photographs, drawings and interviews with people we met.
3. To explore notions of future Stratford through the context of the Futurist and Modernist art movements.
4. Culminate all this in a mural in the style of the Futurists.

I wanted it to be a multi-disciplinary project mixing and making connections between history, geography, art, art history and photography.

To me there seemed to be lots of similarities between the world the Futurists grew up in and the modern Stratford, in which the children of Gallions are growing up with.

Both faced massive changes to their environments. There is a strong industrial and railway history to Stratford, which was a preoccupation of the Futurists.

When I was at school history was taught in isolation, was from an authoritarian perspective and was purely about dates and kings and was incredibly dull as a result. For me history only comes alive when it has a context to which I can relate to. I felt therefore that we could look at the history of Stratford, making a local visual connection (there are many things from 100 years ago in the old photos which are still there now) while at the same time thinking about and exploring some of the technologies from that period in order to understand the artists who responded at that time.

As a result we were constantly able to cross-reference between history, geography, art and technology – making each come alive within the context of the other.

We made a 25ft timeline to help understand the timescales involved (approx 200 years). It was a great visual aid, as it can be almost impossible for an 8 year old to comprehend 100 years ago.

Everything before their birth is often simply bundled into “the olden days”, whether it’s 10 or 100 years ago.

We looked at the new technologies that influenced the Futurists such as trains, planes and cars which all led to the philosophical ‘speeding up’ of human lives.

We made flick books as a visual aid to understanding the invention of ‘instantaneous’ photography (which was also the birth of film), at the same time allowing us to see the physical effects of speed and movement on photography and compare with the styles used by the futurists to represent speed and movement at that time.

We visited The Estorick Collection in North London to see their Futurist paintings where we also received a talk from their education officer.

For their fieldtrip to Stratford, the children were each given a disposable camera and a thorough introduction to the basics of photography.

Along with this they were given a list of locations (such as a view from one of our old photos), objectives (likes, don’t likes) and styles (movement, abstract) to photograph.

They also prepared a questionnaire to survey the people they met with in order to gain data about them and their thoughts on Stratford.

They also had copies of the old photographs of Stratford to use for drawing comparisons with now and a list of things to look out for such as historical landmarks that are still there now.

On their fieldtrip they also visited the library where they were able to see the model of the developments in Stratford and some material from the library archive such as old maps etc.

After several sessions researching, exploring and building up our understanding of Stratford past, present and future we were able to spend 2 whole days working on the mural itself using a collage of photos, chalk and oil pastels, pencil and pen.

The resulting mural was 15 metres long and would have done the Futurists proud!

### **What went well?**

All the physical, visual aids were great, such as...

- The flick books of Edward Muybridge's 'stop motion' photography.
- The timeline to help understand the comparative distances between times.
- The disposable cameras. Great to have physical photos and the discipline of a limited number of shots.
- The old photographs of familiar places.

The cross-referencing of art, history and geography worked well. I think context always aids understanding.

Taking the time to give a good introduction to disposable cameras worked well too.

Field trips are a great thing. A lot of children learn better outside the classroom. Having a chance to explore Stratford in a new way was a dynamic experience for them and visiting an art gallery gives them a very different experience to school too.

Having done a lot of thorough research before starting on the mural itself paid off. The children were able to bring some great and informed ideas to the piece based on their research. They blended the past, present and future in wonderful ways.

### **What you would do differently.**

The children can take on a lot of philosophical concepts but there's nothing quite like some hands-on work for them to keep the interest up. The more physical examples and tasks the better really. I'd definitely like to come up with some physical aids to understanding how cameras work.

I'd like to spend a little more time on the planning before starting the project.

This would help ensure all the objectives were met and that sessions were planned out enough to avoid running out of time (always tricky with primary schools). The project kept growing as it went along which was great fun and dynamic but meant that it sprawled a bit and we didn't get to spend enough time exploring the children's thoughts about their future Stratford towards the end due to running out of time.

In retrospect I'd have started us making the timeline at the start of the project as it was such a good visual aid and encompassed the whole project and would have benefited from more input from the children. It would have become a strong piece of artwork in its own right.

Overall this project was a great example of partnership working between Stratford City Education Project, Gallions Primary School, Tim Mitchell and the Estorick Collection. The end product was well received and the young people were enthused and inspired.