

somewhere else... an exhibition exploring the often subjective nature of the seemingly-objective world of news reporting. Working with the local *Herald and Post* newspaper, primary school pupils from Clovenstone Primary School visited the newspaper's headquarters before sourcing, writing, photographing, printing and editing their own newspaper. *The P4B Post* is available to all visitors to the Gallery to pick up and presents a lively insight into and indeed immersion in the lives of 20 eight year olds over a half term in February 2006.

The wool sculpture in the main gallery space was likewise a development of work originally undertaken with nine primary schools throughout the Lothians. Responding to the exhibition by Fred Sandback, and the idea of drawing in three dimensional space, pupils from Kaimes Special School created a sculpture in their school classroom, wrapping chairs and tables with wool. This new collaborative sculpture is a development of that. The intriguing forms created as the boxes and wool intertwine give some idea of the time, invention, consideration and co-operation required in the sculpture's making, done on site during the installation of the exhibition by 12 pupils.

The work on show in this exhibition represents a small sample of the work produced through Opt in for Art over the last two years at The Fruitmarket Gallery. Only a fifth of all children and young people who took part are represented. Often work was taken home to show family or be put in the classroom. Just as often the steps taken by young people were as much about engaging with art, their peers, with ideas and others' as producing actual artwork.

Opt in for Art is about the experience that the Gallery and its exhibition programme offers to a wide range of children and young people. It is a pleasure now to open that experience up to the Gallery's public, and to present the art of some ninety young artists who give such an electric and eclectic insight into their own lives and inspirations.

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Opt in for Art

The Fruitmarket Gallery's programme of activity for children and young people



Exhibition 20 April – 6 May 2007

Opening Hours Mon–Sat 11am–6pm, Sun 12–5pm

Admission free

Opt in for Art presents the works of over 90 young artists. It marks the culmination of a two-year education programme which offers opportunities for children and young people throughout Edinburgh and the Lothians to engage with contemporary art. The exhibition presents a range of projects undertaken over the past two years, in collaboration with primary schools, secondary schools, youth groups and of course the young people themselves.

The art was produced in a variety of settings: in formal school groups or more informal youth settings; in one-off workshops or over a period of weeks or months; as products made by individuals working alone or as part of a wider collective; within the Gallery or as outreach projects.

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All of the Opt in for Art programme starts from The Fruitmarket Gallery's exhibitions, and the very direct experience of seeing, discussing, interpreting and sharing the art on show. However, as with any creative endeavour, once supplied with materials, support and encouragement, the work produced by the young people often ends in surprising and unsuspected places. The art in this exhibition communicates that freshness, the vitality and directness of being young and creatively engaged.

The exhibition opens with a sculpture by Katie Munro and Sarah Lawrence, which invites the viewer into the Gallery using an everyday white pan loaf. The piece re-enacts an intervention the two artists created in the street last summer, shown in the projection that accompanies the sculpture.

Using similarly readily-available materials, Cally Tomlinson's work in the same workshop resulted in the sculpture *Biscuit Wars*. Having offered passing members of the public free cups of tea as her first artwork, Cally created *Biscuit Jenga*, an early version of the sculpture presented here, during her own mid-morning tea break. From this idle moment came *Biscuit Metropolis*, which in turn became *Biscuit Wars* as the Bourbons took on and convincingly crushed the Custard Creams.

Lewis Scott and Melissa MacDonald's work *Lewis/Lois* came from similarly humorous beginnings, as Lewis's name was initially mixed up at the start of a workshop. The concurrent blockbuster film *Superman III* inspired the two artists to create and document their own summer adventure in Edinburgh, which plays on notions of gender. The T-shirt reveals much about the creative process; the fabric logo getting less and less careful as the pair get progressively wiser as to how best to attach it to the fabric!

A listening station built into the Gallery store features two audio works: Stewart MacLachlan and Callum O'Connor's comedic tale of *Jinky*, a political refugee from the Eastern European state of Catvia, who arrives in Edinburgh on the train by mistake whilst on a 'tourism related mission', and Laura Roberts and Megan Slater's *Edinburgh Rock*, featuring the girls as they present their Edinburgh to listeners. Both pieces are available to download as podcasts from www.mpsix.co.uk.

At the start of this year, 13 young people from across Edinburgh worked collectively over two days to produce their own collaborative comic. The work on display ranges from narrative and self-contained pieces to more abstract and less explicit work. Ross Hepburn's *Where are we going?* introduces the viewer to the idea of the comic by raising some fundamentals before plunging the reader into the vivid fictive worlds created by the 13 comic artists. One of these is Christie O'Donnell's Manga-influenced strip *Wild Drive*, which is written and illustrated, Japanese style, from right to left. It features a character 'Alex Brockie', a female Scottish professional football player who plays in the Japanese J-League – caught in the dilemma of hiding her gender from her fellow players to protect her place in the male squad, whilst also fancying one of the team's star players.

The painting *Alex Brockie (Dancing)* was developed from this workshop over a period of weeks, and produced on site, in a collaboration combining Christie's vision and comic flair with the bold graphic skills of Ben Parkes and Rosie Iredale. The iconic image captures Alex in a moment of private abandon, as she listens and dances, hair down and free, lost in the music of her headphones, whilst a city burns behind her.

Similar issues of gender and identity are raised in the digital portrait project *Alterego*. Teenagers from Edinburgh and Fife took photographs of themselves and an imaginary alter-ego. The two images were then digitally stitched together to present a composite photograph of the young people confronted by their alter-ego. The images present a range of possibilities - who they fear they might be (but rather wouldn't); who they could be; who they want to be and who they actually are.

The charcoal studies were produced during the course of a drawing workshop over two days in Old St Paul's church opposite The Fruitmarket Gallery. Responding to the work of Callum Innes, twenty-two young people were encouraged to explore the church and the opportunities for abstraction afforded by its strongly contrasting light and form. For teenagers, being 'good' at art is often skill-based; being able to reproduce a lifelike version of reality. This is an entirely natural and crucial developmental impulse, which is both recognised and challenged by the collective hanging of the charcoal studies.

The New Battle (ROMCOMZOM) consists of two title sequences filmed and animated by pupils from Newbattle High School in Midlothian. Responding to a brief to create a sequence for an imaginary film entitled *The New Battle*, one group imagined a classic Zombie tale, as a pupil's chemistry experiment goes terribly wrong; whilst the other group produced a sequence featuring the less expected tale of a classroom love triangle.

In another schools animation project, pupils from Craigoyston Community High School worked collectively on pulling together their short films to produce *Short Cuts*, a film which followed the pupils' creations through their neighbourhood, and which features cameos from Bob Marley (Back from the Dead), 50 Cent, Winnie the Pooh and the Evil Wabbit amongst others. More animation was produced in a Copyleft workshop, using free downloadable software to make films which reference the Edinburgh punk scene and free-running amongst other things.

The felted shawl hanging outside the projection space developed as a collaborative work produced during a cross-generational project. A group of women over 60 from the Pilton-based adult education Ways of Seeing Group, met with teenage counterparts from the local Granton Youth Centre to explore issues of womanhood and the body. The resulting shawl took inspiration from a Kirking Shawl seen by the group on a research trip, which traditionally new mothers would have worn on the way to church prior to being 'cleansed' after childbirth.

The P4B Post was an extended project which took place during *At the same time*