

Changing Views of Manchester

Information for educators

The following booklet has been formulated to provide you with ways of working with groups in the Gallery. The information is based on the changing views of Manchester and supplies practical and theoretical approaches to using artworks. You could use the artworks and suggested activities as a starting point to further study or for a new class project, developing the ideas to suit your yearly or termly planning. Ideas can be photocopied directly from the pack or adapted into worksheets for your pupils to explore independently, in pairs or as part of a group discussion.

The theme has been chosen to give educators and their pupils a tour of Manchester through a selection of four artworks. They have been produced over the last 100 years and provide a solid framework to explore issues relating to the changing urban landscape, development and progression.

The selected artworks depict different aspects of Manchester, through the works of three different artists. The artworks have been chosen to target specific areas within the Gallery, whilst also allowing time to explore the building generally and grasp the various destination Galleries and breadth of study that can be conducted using the collection.

Manchester Art Gallery is a fantastic resource for engaging with many subjects across the curriculum. Art and Design, History, Drama, Literacy, Numeracy and PSHE can be easily addressed within one visit and provide a framework for further visits. The education team use many artworks in a cross-curricular approach, which can be adapted to suit individual pupil, teacher and school needs. Some of these techniques will be explored through the information that follows to create a focal point to your visit and to provide inspiration for related classroom or studio activities and future practise.

CIS Manchester Gallery

Artwork: *Oxford Road*

Artist: Jim Medway

Date Made: 2002

Emulsion paint and permanent marker pen

Installation within the Gallery



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Jim Medway is a Manchester based artist well known for his cartoon style paintings and drawings of 'alley cats', which are witty observations on the urban life of the city. A cast of lovable rogues and delinquent kids from a young urban underclass is represented with humour and affection in Medway's works.

Medway has a BA in Interactive Arts and an MA in Art as Environment from Manchester Metropolitan University. Medway's work has been exhibited extensively both in the region and nationally.

Gallery 10

Artwork: *Old Cab at All Saints, Manchester*

Artist: Pierre Adolphe Valette

Date Made: 1911

Oil painting on jute canvas



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Valette was a French painter born in 1876 who moved to Manchester in 1905. He was inspired by the urban landscape of the region and produced atmospheric paintings inspired by the Impressionists. He taught at the Municipal School of Art, actively sitting and painting amongst his students, which included, L.S. Lowry.

The painting above depicts a smog-filled, autumnal scene of a hansom cab parked at the curb of Grosvenor Square (All Saints) on Oxford Road, Manchester. The horse and cab dominate the centre of the composition, with a suggestion of people, trees and buildings in the surrounding areas.



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Galley 10

Artwork: Albert Square, Manchester
Artist: Pierre Adolphe Valette
Date made: 1910
Oil painting on jute canvas

This piece shows Valette's genius in painting Manchester in softly painted tones inspired by his French artistic influences, e.g. Impressionism.

The atmospheric, smog-filled scene is still evident, with the central figure now a man pushing his handcart within Albert Square, over the wet cobbles.

On the far side of the street, is a hansom cab, parked beneath the statue of Gladstone. Behind the statue looms the hazy silhouette of part of the Town Hall.



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Gallery 10

Artwork: *An Organ Grinder*
Artist: Laurence Stephen Lowry
Date Made: 1934
Oil painting on canvas

Lowry's painting provides a connection between the Valette images and the work of a student of Valette's. Lowry was inspired to paint the urban landscape via Valette's teachings.

The painting depicts a view down a narrow street busy with lots of different people, gathering at the street entrance to enjoy the music of an organ grinder.

Beyond the end of the street are more distant buildings, including an industrial chimney.

Ways In

- Jim Medway provides a good starting point as the image was produced recently. Local pupils and even teachers may recognise the representation; people getting onto the number 42 bus on Oxford Road, making their way back to Fallowfield, studentville.
- A discussion could be generated surrounding the scene depicted within the Installation, whether it is day or night and why? The individual characters portrayed within the piece could also be discussed, where have they been? What has happened? What might happen next? Focus on the journey with younger pupils if you feel some of the content may not be appropriate.
- The group could then look at the Valette paintings in Gallery 10 and connections could be made between the differing depictions. The *Old Cab at All Saints, Manchester* depicts Oxford Road again but from a different time period.
- Pupils could discuss the change in surroundings, dress and atmosphere. You can see trees in the Valette painting; do you think they are still there today? Why may they have been removed? What could be replacing them?
- The final Valette painting, *Albert Square, Manchester*, provides a more detailed representation of the time period and whilst looking at the image if you get the group to look out the window to the right you will see Albert Square as it is today. Pupils can discuss the changes between buildings, people and transportation.
- The man in the foreground provides a fantastic focus to character analysis and the opportunity for the pupils to begin writing. Pupils can discuss what he is doing and why and make notes throughout. His day could be broken up into three main events to create a storyboard. What happened before he walked through Albert Square, what is happening in the painting and what will happen next. This could be produced either working as a group or individually to generate a personal response.
- Using Lowry's, *An Organ Grinder*, as the last image allows pupils time to expand their vocabulary within the Gallery environment. Begin the discussion with the pupils telling you what they see, to change the focus. Allow time to consider what the pupils feel is happening.
- Select a pupil to pick one individual within the painting and tell the rest of the group something about them. Discuss the varying interpretations and observations made.
- A sketching activity could be conducted as a finishing tool to the visit, allowing pupils the opportunity to capture people within Manchester. They could use the images already discussed and put themselves into the Gallery by posing for each other or even taking photographs to document their visit to Manchester. Simple materials such as coloured papers, pencil crayon and markers could record observations that can be further explored back in the classroom.

Follow Up

The storytelling aspect of the Gallery visit using the material generated could be extended into individual work or even a class project.

The main character within, could be given a name and a story could be created entitled 'A Day in the Life of'.

Use the artworks to provide a focus on transportation; the group could consider how the people within each piece are getting around. People are on foot, pushing carts, using a horse and carriage and also the bus.

As a group you could generate discussion using the following:

How transport has changed? - Advancements in machinery and technology.

How change has affected the urban environment? – Pollution.

Are there any similarities between the methods of transport depicted?

How things have developed? Are the changes good?

Who is using four legs to move around within the paintings?

A visit to the Town Hall could be considered to look at the building as it is seen today and draw comparisons with Valette's interpretation of *Albert Square, Manchester*.

Local prominent buildings or landmarks could be researched within a homework project, allowing pupils to explore the surrounding environment. Examples could include, Central Library, Urbis, Trinity Bridge and the War Memorials which are featured on the Manchester Art Gallery website.

Further Research

Adolphe Valette: A French Influence in Manchester, Ed. by Sandra Martin

Lowry's City: A Painter and his Locale, Ed. by Michael Leber and Judith Sandling

Lowry: A Visionary Artist, Ed. by Michael Howard

Jim Medway is represented by Paul Stolper Fine Art London.

<http://www.paulstolper.com/>

Useful websites with general information about Manchester:

<http://www.manchesteronline.co.uk/>

<http://www.manchester.gov.uk/>

<http://www.manchester.com/>

<http://www.visitmanchester.com/>