

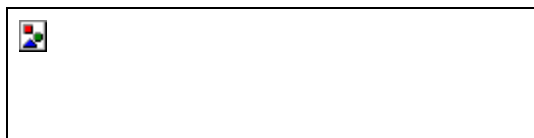


The Alpha to the Omega

An innovative education collaboration between
Orleans House Gallery, Twickenham
Waldegrave School for Girls
St. Mary's and St. Peter's CE Primary School
Teddington School



Generously supported by:



CONTENTS

Project evaluation
Budget report.....
Supporting information.....

INTRODUCTION: The Partners and the Project:

Orleans House Gallery is the headquarters of the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames Arts Service and home to the borough's art collection. The gallery is committed to delivering innovative, integrated, accessible arts provision, and has initiated a number of successful collaborative education projects over the past five years. *The Alpha to the Omega* constituted a development from this work, allowing the gallery to combine direct delivery of curriculum-enhancing arts activities and facilitating partnerships between primary and secondary schools, professional artists and local and national museums and galleries. Rachel Tranter, Head of Arts and curator of the project's link exhibition, and Andrea Cunningham, Education Co-ordinator, initiated and facilitated the project.

Waldegrave School for Girls, a secondary school in the borough, had previously collaborated with the gallery on a National Children's Art Day project. Through *The Alpha to the Omega*, year 11 GCSE Art and Design students, under the guidance of Head of Art Sophie Hewett, used their participation in the project to meet key GCSE criteria through novel means (see attached criteria). Drawing upon Sophie Hewett's own expertise the pupils focused on the textile element of the collaboration.



St. Mary's and St. Peter's CE Primary School was identified as a potential partner through *aRTful*, an open-submission exhibition of artwork from borough schools held in October 2002. 30 year 5 pupils took part in the project, under the supervision of Arts Co-ordinator Loretta Roncone. Continuing professional development and teacher retention were key targets in selecting this school for participation.



Teddington School, a Richmond secondary school, was in the process of pursuing an Arts College Specialist Status bid at the time of the project. A group of Year 10 Design and Technology students participated in the project, under the supervision of Head of Art Keith Yarker. These pupils were selected on the basis of their interest in both ICT and fine art. They worked with furniture maker Dinah Kelly responding to the design briefs created by St. Mary's and St. Peter's primary school.

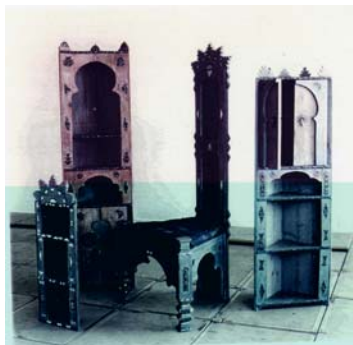
The Alpha to the Omega Evaluation Report



Jennifer Collier, a worker in textiles and 'non-wearable' fashion, acted as lead artist for the project, working with pupils from Waldegrave and St. Mary's and St Peter's. Jenni's experimentation with innovative textile construction and her work at the Museum of Science and Industry in Manchester gave her all the skills necessary to lead this project.



Dinah Kelly, a furniture maker, worked with pupils from Teddington Secondary School and St. Mary's and St. Peter's Primary School. Dinah was responsible for the realising the design briefs created by the primary school pupils which were created by the Teddington pupils in their Design Technology workshops. Dinah's experience as an artist educator, her own practice as a furniture maker and her understanding of the 'Omega Workshops' enabled her to work really successfully on this project.



The Alpha to the Omega brought these organisations together in a creative partnership spanning six months and culminating in an exhibition held at Orleans House Gallery from December 2003- February 2004, alongside the *Duncan Grant in Twickenham* exhibition.

The project took its inspiration from the Omega Workshops, founded by Bloomsbury Group member Roger Fry in 1913. The workshops employed Avant-Garde artists, including Fry's Bloomsbury associates such as Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant, to provide designs for the applied arts, especially home furnishings and fashion. The aim was to bring Post-Impressionism into the home, whilst developing a collaborative working model, which also served to finance individuals' art practice – a business-minded approach to progressive trends in art. Following the principles of the Omega Workshops, pupils from the different schools collaborated to produce their own

interpretations of these designs, with expert guidance of the project artists. The textiles, furniture and fashion items they produced were exhibited at Orleans House Gallery alongside original works by the Omega Workshops.

AIMS

Through the project the gallery aimed to build on previous work with local schools, helping to extend our network of creative and educational expertise in the area and creating a new model for collaboration between arts education providers.

OBJECTIVES

To develop a project linked with the national curriculum where innovation and creativity are placed at the centre.

To raise confidence, provide opportunities for achievement through collaborative working in the visual arts.

To develop sustainable relationships between schools, the Gallery and local business, including co-operation between individuals.

To raise the profile of work made by children in the minds of our visiting public, and challenge the notion of children's art as an 'add-on'.

To develop a model for linking museum collections as source material creating new forms of collaboration between a range of institutions from National Museums and Galleries to independents to Local Authority collections.

To create greater understanding for all involved of how exhibitions involving historical material are developed and curated and how new ideas can be generated from them.

To provide professional development for the artists, teachers, museum and gallery staff.

To develop new audiences for the Gallery and its activities drawn from the local and educational community.

FACILITATION

Preliminary meetings

Project began with preliminary visits to individual teachers by Rachel Tranter and Andrea Cunningham to discuss ideas and plan logistics. Workshops were held at each school, introducing pupils to the work of the Bloomsbury Group and specifically to the designs and the ideas behind the Omega Workshops. Students received preparatory tasks to complete during the summer break.

Planning

Planning meetings were held with the artists and all the key teachers involved to map out the specifics of the project. Research material and sources of information were distributed to all parties.

Museum and Gallery Visits

Each school visited the Courtauld Institute Gallery, London to look at the main collection - specifically the Post-Impressionist work, in the company of the project artist. They also visited the prints and drawings room to see the Omega designs. This was followed by a trip to the V&A Museum, London to see original pieces of Omega furniture.

The Alpha to the Omega Evaluation Report

The museum/gallery visits were the tipping-point in the early stages of the project and really brought the ideas to life for all involved. For the pupils; it gave historical context to the project and helped them to build their confidence in terms of their own creative potential. They enabled students to really get to grips with the ideas we had been discussing in the classroom. Seeing the designs at close quarters in the 'prints and drawings' room was very useful and learning about how they are stored and conserved. Seeing the actual works which would later be displayed alongside their own work was also very important.

The visit to the Courtauld Collection gave a very strong visual context to the influences of the Omega Workshops, especially the works which Roger Fry had collected himself. This part of the visit combined interactive discussion about the works, written tasks and practical drawing activities. These were tailored to the age groups and their contribution to the final exhibition. Waldegrave, for example, focused on design and pattern to support their textile work, whilst Teddington worked on applied design for furniture.



Collaborative Working : Commissioning day

Next key stage was the commissioning day. A group of pupils from St. Mary's and St. Peter's went to Teddington School to commission their furniture designs and discuss how they could be made. Once the pieces were made they were returned to St. Mary's and St. Peter's for decoration and embellishment.



Workshops at Schools: Working with Artists

A series of workshops took place at all three schools, facilitated by the two artists. St. Mary's and St. Peter's worked in mixed media on a range of design projects including furniture design. Waldegrave worked predominantly in textiles and furniture decoration and Teddington School made furniture.

Installation of the exhibition

The pupils from St. Mary's and St. Peter's School were involved in the installation of the exhibition at Orleans House Gallery, over a three day period.

The Launch

The project was launched with a private view culminating in a fashion show with pupils from St. Mary's and St. Peter's wearing the designs by girls from Waldegrave School. This launch was very well attended and was a great success. Henrietta Garnett, Duncan Grant's Granddaughter,' was especially impressed by the quality of the pupils' work and wrote to them following the launch (please see appendix)

Interpretation and linked activities

Pupils from Waldegrave and St. Mary's and St. Peter's gave guided tours of the exhibition to visitors at the private view. Pupils from Waldegrave also assisted artist Jennifer Collier with the facilitation of a 'Family Friendly' workshop based around the exhibition, and went on to assist Education Co-ordinator Andrea with a presentation of the project to the 'Wonderful Things!' conference at the Museum of London, attended by museum professionals from across London. Preparation for the conference included evaluation discussions, use of digital technology, and a dance workshop. Sophie Hewett and two of her pupils made contributions to this presentation and the St. Mary's and St. Peter's pupils performed a short dance piece modelling the textile designs which had been created by the Waldegrave students. One of the participants from Waldegrave involved in this presentation later used the experience as part of her GCSE Citizenship project for which she was awarded an A grade.



Waldegrave pupil supporting families at workshop

Exhibition and Launch at Kew Riverside

As part of our partnership with business sponsor St. George West London Ltd., a second exhibition was held following that at Orleans House Gallery in a show apartment at the new Kew Riverside development. This presented another opportunity for the participants to see their work on show this time in a domestic setting befitting the project and the objects created.



Follow-up and evaluation

Post-project discussions were held with all the teachers and the artists; most of whom also contributed written evaluations of the project. All the pupils involved submitted written feedback and conducted discussions with their teachers.

OUTCOMES, EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION

Objective-based evaluation:

To develop a project linked with the national curriculum where innovation and creativity are placed at the centre:

We delivered all the planned elements of the national curriculum and there were some quite unexpected links including Physical Education in the preparatory dance workshop for the conference at the Museum of London. We successfully supported the delivery of GCSE Art & Design at Waldegrave especially criteria covering the work of other artists, experimentation and working from primary sources. Work produced as through the project played a vital part in the pupils' GCSE art exhibition, and the group have gone on to achieve good results in their GCSE moderation, something which head of art Sophie Hewett attributes in part to the work done through the project. The project also made an important contribution to the re-application for Visual Arts Status at Teddington, which was subsequently successful.

Specific curriculum areas covered included:

- History – looking at the Bloomsbury Group and the Omega workshops including museum artefacts. Discussing the period of British history from 1913.
- Art & Design – looking at artists both practising and historical, experimenting with materials and techniques, developing knowledge and understanding. Delivering breadth of study.

The Alpha to the Omega Evaluation Report

- Design Technology – designing furniture, following briefs, making furniture, working with a variety of tools and materials
- PE – dance workshop with choreographer
- PSHE & Citizenship – through group work developing confidence, building respect, a sense of responsibility and understanding differences amongst people. Talking about their own work and discussing the work of their peers. One participant from Waldegrave used the experience of speaking at the conference as part of a citizenship project for which she achieved an A grade.

To raise confidence, provide opportunities for achievement through collaborative working in the visual arts:

The pupils who participated in the project recorded how they felt about the experience and how it had affected their approach to their own art work and to collaborative group work. They expressed their pleasure and satisfaction at making artwork as part of a group within their classes, and working with pupils from other schools. The pupils were clearly proud of their achievement. The understanding of the historical significance of Bloomsbury and the Omega artists which they had gained through workshops and gallery visits allowed them to appreciate the significance of their work being displayed alongside works by Duncan Grant, especially given that they had encountered some of the pieces in a national collection at the V & A.



The Alpha to the Omega Evaluation Report

Some of the responses recorded by the students:

"Not only have I learnt about Omega but also what I am capable of."

"I feel more confident about using different materials to be experimental."

"The work was quite free and I work more freely now."

"We worked with other people and it turned out really good."

"I feel more confident because I don't have to feel embarrassed about my work anymore."

"This project was special because I got to meet new people."



Head of Art at Waldegrave, Sophie Hewett, recorded that from some of the pupils, the project had constituted a 'turning point' in their artistic development.

To develop sustainable relationships between schools, the Gallery and local business, including co-operation between individuals:

This project served both to forge new partnerships with Teddington, St. Mary's and St. Peter's and develop existing relationships with Waldegrave School. These relationships have not only developed between the gallery and the schools, but also between the schools themselves. Waldegrave are planning visits to the gallery's forthcoming 'Human Habitations' exhibition, which is relevant to the world cultures aspect of the GCSE curriculum, while four members of the borough's Arts Service team recently attended the school's GCSE exhibition. The importance of the project for the GCSE was clearly evident in this exhibition. The school have expressed an interest in future cross-keystage collaborative projects, either with St. Mary's and St. Peter's or with another local primary school.

The Alpha to the Omega Evaluation Report



The positive relationships that have developed with pupils were demonstrated by the fact that girls from Waldegrave volunteered to help facilitate a family learning day based on the project. Teachers also attended this event and helped to deliver the activities to the general public. Children from St. Mary's and St. Peter's school also attended this family day independently and brought their parents and siblings along. Teachers involved in the project have been attending the adult programme of talks and workshops independently and one also submitted some of her own work for our open exhibition. All the teachers have subsequently become involved in the Arts Co-ordinators PHASE panel meetings held at the gallery and helped to deliver a session to teachers on the project. Loretta Roncone at St. Mary's and St. Peter's school has also been working with the gallery to submit the project for the Artworks awards. Parents, pupils and teachers all contributed to the conference at the Museum of London, which was proof of the broad commitment to the project and its ethos. The project has also inspired other local schools to approach the gallery to work on similar initiatives.



Artists and Kara Wescombe formerly of the Courtauld Gallery

To raise the profile of work made by children in the minds of our visiting public, and challenge the notion of children's art as an 'add-on'.

The pupils' work was displayed in the main gallery space alongside works by key Bloomsbury figures, constituting an integral aspect of the exhibition. The importance placed upon continuing creativity in the present, especially among young people, was paramount, and the juxtaposition of contemporary and historic greatly enhanced the exhibition.

The Alpha to the Omega Evaluation Report

The extremely high standard of the work produced by the pupils ensured that they were capable of being exhibited alongside the original Omega products without suffering by comparison, and comments recorded in the visitors' book demonstrated the favourable impression created by the pupils' responses:

"Superb. I could live with some of these delightful items."

"Congratulations, inspirational. I look forward to the designers of the future!"

"Superb little exhibition of furniture, fabrics etc. Very Omega 2003!"

"Wonderful exhibition. Good interpretation by the school. The Bloomsbury set live again!"

To develop a model for linking museum collections as source material creating new forms of collaboration between a range of institutions from National Museums and Galleries to independents to Local Authority collections:

The use of other galleries' collections was extremely successful. The combination of visiting the prints and drawings room at the Courtauld Institute and looking at the Post-Impressionist work in the main gallery gave opportunity for interactive discussion and drawn exploration. The visits to the V&A to see original pieces of Omega furniture were also very useful to the pupil's historical understanding of the project's background and provided a contrast with products from other periods. The follow-up sketchbook work which the pupils produced, as well as the notes and drawings made during their visits, showed a real depth of intellectual and visual understanding of the Omega Workshop and the Bloomsbury Group. The knowledge that some of these pieces would also be shown alongside their own work was also an important means of focusing the pupils attention and drawing out the relevance of the objects.



The experience of using the collections at the Courtauld and the V & A, and collaborating with the Courtauld education department to facilitate the school visits, provided a useful model for a subsequent education project organised in collaboration with the National Portrait Gallery. Through the 'Wonderful things!' conference and the accompanying report published by the London Museums Agency, the project outline was disseminated to museum educators from across London, providing a valuable model for future collaborative practice between large national and smaller local museums and galleries within the capital. (please see appendix for sketchbook extracts)

The Alpha to the Omega Evaluation Report

To create greater understanding for all involved of how exhibitions involving historical material are developed and curated and how new ideas can be generated from them:

The process of using historic collections as the starting point for their own work, reinforced by the experience of seeing the historic and newly-created works hung together in the final exhibition, allowed the students to develop an understanding of how collections can provide inspiration for artists and designers.

More pupils than originally anticipated were able to participate in the installation of the exhibition, with all 30 of the St. Mary's and St. Peter's pupils taking part. The pupils who came to install the exhibition enjoyed this element of the project very much. This was apparent from the conversations they had with staff at the time and subsequently in the final exhibition. It is clear from their statements that their involvement in the entire process of installation had given them a real insight into the practical workings of a gallery. Loretta Roncone at St. Mary's and St. Peter's school is using the understanding of the curatorial processes developed through the project to launch a new art gallery at the school. The opening exhibition will incorporate work produced as part of the Alpha to the Omega, and the new gallery as well as the Alpha to the Omega project will play an important part in the school's ARTSmark Gold bid.

To provide professional development for the artists, teachers, museum and gallery staff.

The project provided valuable learning experiences for all involved in its facilitation. Project artist Dinah Kelly enjoyed the challenge of working with both primary and secondary aged groups, and described the collaboration between herself and co-artist Jennifer Collier as 'a positive learning experience both for myself and the young people involved in the project.' Summing up the experience, she commented: 'The experience of running this project has helped me to develop as a practitioner in this particular field of work, and has proved to be a positive aspect in the development of my own work as an artist and teacher. Following the completion of the project, Dinah ran a series of family learning workshops at the Courtauld.

For the teachers involved, the project provided a model for cross-keystage collaboration and for the creative use of historical material. Sophie Hewett commented that the project gave her greater confidence working on a larger scale and with a wider range of media. She described the process of working with an artist in residence as a learning curve, and felt that the experience of working on a project with outside agencies such as the partner schools and gallery professionals aided the development of teambuilding skills. In light of the potential for future collaborative work, she felt the experience of working with pupils from the primary sector was particularly valuable. For Loretta Roncone, the experience of helping to install the exhibition proved useful when she came to establish a new art gallery at St. Mary's and St. Peter's.

The installation of the project work involved the collaboration of the curator, the gallery education team, the participating pupils and their teachers. This increased level of integration allowed the gallery education team to develop more fully their understanding of the processes and procedures involved in putting together an exhibition, both physically and conceptually. The experience of involving a large number of stakeholders in the curatorial process provided a valuable learning experience for the curator, resulting in a more dynamic, flexible approach to creating the display.

The Alpha to the Omega Evaluation Report



To develop new audiences for the Gallery and its activities drawn from the local and educational community.

Over 150 pupils from three schools, along with their teachers, were directly involved in the project. Many of these young people had never visited the gallery before. The private view and the exhibition were well attended by the participants, their families and friends.

Comments in the visitors' book suggested that the opportunity to see work by their peers on display was a powerful attraction for some of the young people who visited the exhibition: 'We love the gallery especially seeing our work and friends on display!'

The project acted as an excellent springboard for outreach workshops at schools. We used Alpha to Omega to teach sessions with Year 2 and 4 at Barnes Primary School for their arts week. The pupils at Barnes especially enjoyed looking at images of work produced by other school children.

The special family workshop run during the exhibition allowed local families to access the exhibition and the artists who had been involved in delivering the project. Teachers and pupils who had been involved also helped facilitate this workshop giving guided tours of the exhibition and helping with the creative activities. In general terms, the exhibition proved popular with the public, attracting over 4200 visitors, over 200 of whom (not including school visits) were under the age of twelve.

Conclusions

The project allowed us to fulfil the important objectives outlined above. The experiences were enriching in educational, creative and professional terms for all involved. The models for partnership working developed throughout the project demonstrated the potential for collaboration between heritage, arts and education providers within the community and instilled a sense of confidence among the partners in future collaborative projects.

A highlight of the project was undoubtedly the quality of the work produced. The final exhibition surpassed expectations in its innovation and quality and provided a rich contemporary dimension to the historical material in the Duncan Grant exhibition. The tight-knit integration of the curatorial and educational aspects created a focussed, rewarding project of which all involved, from the pupils and their teachers to the business partners, could be duly proud, and which could act as an inspiration to those devising similar projects in the future.

The Alpha to the Omega Evaluation Report



Budget Report

The *Alpha to the Omega* project has cost £15,563.00 overall to deliver including exhibition costs, materials, staffing and co-ordination. We are very grateful to the following organisations for their financial support of this initiative, which has ensured that it has fulfilled its full potential and succeeded in delivering our aims and objectives.

Business Partners:

St. George West London Ltd.,
Arts and Business

£3,500.00
£3,500.00

The Alpha to the Omega Evaluation Report

Grant Funding:

Wonderful things! Scheme from DfES via ALM

£3,524.00

Art Council

£4,300.00

