



Art and design - Teacher's notes

Theme: Gypsies and Travellers

Introduction

Brian Hatton and Gypsies and Travellers

Many people have looked at Brian Hatton's paintings and seen an empathy with Gypsies and Travellers. He himself had a secure middle-class life and probably saw their life as romantic and colourful and maybe they represented the freedom of the open road. Whilst Brian may have seen them as romantic subjects, he drew them honestly. He drew broken boots and tattered shawls and showed the harshness of their lives and the poverty that was common amongst many people who worked the land. See the link below to a drawing held in the British Museum that shows the exhaustion on the faces of the itinerant workers.

Brian clearly found Gypsies and Travellers interesting models for his work as he chose to draw them so often. It may also have been a shared love of horses that inspired Brian to work with the travelling community.

Useful web links

["Turnip Hoeing" at the British Museum](#)

Gypsy and Traveller history

Romany Gypsies are thought to have originated in India and it is believed that they left there between 1000-1200 AD. Gypsies travelled from India through the Middle East to Egypt. The term Gypsy is believed to be a corruption of the word Egyptian. Gypsy culture evolved during their migration from Asia and across Europe. The arrival of Gypsies in Britain was first recorded in 1505 in Scotland and 1514 in England. The Romany language is of Indo-Iranian origin.

In 1530, the Egyptians Act was passed in England; this aimed to rid the country of all Gypsies by banning immigration and requiring Gypsies who were already in England to leave the country within sixteen days. In 1554, this Act was amended and imposed the death penalty for Gypsies already in England if they did not leave within a month. In 1783, a second Egyptians Act repealed these previous acts against Gypsies. However, throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries other acts continued to impact upon Gypsy culture and lifestyle. Even today, legislation is generated that targets Gypsies and Travellers and impacts upon their lives.

There are many types of Gypsies and Travellers: Irish Travellers, Scots Travellers (Nachins), Welsh Gypsies and Travellers (Kale) and English Gypsies and Travellers (Romanichals).

Other types of Gypsy and Travellers include Travelling Showpeople (Fairground Travellers), Boat Dwellers (Bargees) and Circus Travellers. In addition, there are New Travellers or New Age Travellers, often defined as people who have made a conscious decision to adopt an alternative lifestyle. Planning law defines Gypsies and Irish Travellers as people with a nomadic way of life. 90% of Gypsy and Traveller planning permission applications are initially rejected compared to 20% overall (1997 research).

Gypsies and Irish Travellers living on local authority or privately-owned sites pay rates, rent, gas, electricity and all other associated charges, measured and charged in the same way as neighbouring houses.

Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers are now all recognised as having protection under the Race Relations Act as they have been finally recognised as minority ethnic communities in law. Many Gypsies and Travellers are subject to racist attacks and name-calling, the withdrawal of services and refusal of admission to shops and pubs and so on. This is despite the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000, which has made all these things illegal.

Useful web links

<http://www.hants.gov.uk/rh/gypsy/resources/history.html>

Hampshire County Council

http://www.bbc.co.uk/insideout/southeast/series8/week_three.shtml

BBC Inside out

<http://www.grtleeds.co.uk/information/racelssues.html>

Gypsy Roma Traveller

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

Gypsy Roma Traveller History month

Lesson activities - Introduction to cross-curricular work

Prior to teaching this theme, it is essential for Art, History, English and Citizenship teachers to liaise.

It is important for this theme that the Citizenship materials are used first with the class.

All the activities in this theme link to a final Art and Design piece. This will take the form of a multifaceted cube. During their Art and Design lessons pupils will be asked to create and complete their own cube, which will form part of a larger display piece.

The Art Department will need to confirm the size of the cube face and the materials that will be used for the final piece. In order to stack the cubes for the final display, cubes should where possible be identical in size. If using A3 card each face will measure 12x12 cm. A template guide has been included. This can be found at the end of this document.

Alternatively, identical sized cardboard boxes could be used.

Each cube face will reflect cross-curricular work undertaken on an aspect of Gypsy and Traveller life. Each cube will display the following faces:

Face 1: Facts and Opinions *Citizenship*

Face 2: The Horse Fair *Citizenship*

Face 3: My choice of art works from the Brian Hatton's Collection *Art and Design*

Face 4: Vardos *Art and Design*

Face 5: Gypsies and Travellers, a brief history *History*

Face 6: Gypsy Traveller traditions *English*

In their Art and Design lesson, pupils can be asked to review their completed work and decide which face of their cube they wish to use in the initial art work display. For subsequent displays, cubes can be re-arranged as required in order to provide alternative views of Gypsy and Traveller culture. Please note that where facilitators are available, this piece could be completed as an Art Textiles and Design piece with words and images printed onto fabric.

Art and Design teachers will need to prepare enough cube templates for the class. These could be printed off onto A3, thin, white card. Completed cubes can be stuffed with newspaper or shredded paper to give them added rigidity.

Where it is not possible to complete this activity as a cross-curricular project the cube can be completed as an art piece using information and images from the web sites provided.

If you do have Gypsy and Traveller children in your class you may want to seek guidance first from your local Traveller Education Service. A sensitive approach is needed and you may want to discuss what will happen during each lesson with the pupil and also with their parents so they will not feel uncomfortable or singled out in any way. A positive aspect is that Gypsy and Traveller pupils can contribute their own knowledge and experiences.

Lesson activities - Creating a cube

Art and design national curriculum - KS3

Key concepts

- 1.1 Creativity, 1, 2, 3
- 1.2 Competence, 1, 2
- 1.3 Cultural understanding, 1, 2
- 1.4 Critical understanding, 1, 2,

Key processes

- 2.1 Explore and create, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
- 2.2 Understand and evaluate, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
- 3 Range and content, 1, 2, 3
- 4 Curriculum opportunities, 1, 2, 3, 5, 7

Key question - How can an artwork reflect aspects of the Gypsy community?

Please note that it is important for this theme that the citizenship materials are used first with the class.

In this activity, pupils will complete faces 3 and 4 using art works and Vardo design and construct their cube.

This activity links with those in the other subject areas in this theme.

Where it is not possible to complete this activity as a cross-curricular project the cube can be completed as an art piece using information and images from the web sites provided.

Resources

- Artworks from the Brian Hatton collection- [Gypsies and Travellers, Art Works](#)
- For Activity 1: chosen downloaded or digital Brian Hatton images of art work
- Cardboard template or box – found at the end of this document
- Images of Vardos (traditional wagons)
- Paper to cover the correct dimensions of a face (on an A3-sized cube each face will be 12x12cm)
- Paper cut to the correct dimensions for other subject areas
- Computer suite with relevant soft ware
- Copies of images for Activity 2
- Paper
- Glue

Activity 1, face 3 - Choosing image/ images

Look carefully at the images and think about

- What did Brian have in common with Gypsies?

- What do the images say about Brian Hatton's attitude to Gypsies?
- Which images do you think best reflect Brian Hatton's attitudes to Gypsies?
- Which aspects of Gypsy life does he record?
- Which images would you choose?
- Print or copy your digital images

Complete Face 3 of the cube by creating a collage of the images.

Activity 2, face 3 - Vardos

Look at the following web sites for images of Vardos. Download and print off a maximum of 2 images.

<http://Gypsywaggons.co.uk/varsuk.htm>

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/shirleytwofeathers/sets/72157603178578573/>

- Isolate the different shapes, e.g. the roof, the door, the panels, the wheels, the spokes/spaces between the wheels
- Consider the different outline shapes
- Select and draw some of these in your sketch book
- Think about how you could re-arrange these shapes
- Take a clean piece of paper the correct dimensions of face 6 (check this with your teacher 12X12cm)
- Using a pencil lightly draw one shape
- Now select another shape and draw this overlaying it onto the previous shape
- Continue doing this until you are happy with your art work
- Use colour to fill in and outline shapes.

Pupils could complete this using the computer and appropriate software

Pupils could complete this as a textile/ design piece.

Activity 3, face 3 - Cubed

This can only be completed when all the materials (History English, Citizenship) for this topic have been collated.

- Lay your template out
- You may need to draw round it first, before you cut it out
- Score all the folds
- Arrange all your finished pieces onto the faces of your cube to create a good design
- Glue each piece in place
- Glue the box together leaving one side open
- Fill the box with shredded paper/or newspaper (optional)
- Seal the box
- Paint completed cube with diluted P.V.A to seal the faces (optional)

Cube Template

