

“Missing You” – Pavement Art Response to #SchoolclosureUK

By Rowan Briggs Smith

During lockdown 2020 I decided to make a pavement artwork outside Comberton Village College. I know my friends are missing being at school, and that the teachers are missing us too. I wanted to use my art as a voice to acknowledge that.



With permission from the school, I decided that using the crossing outside the main entrance felt like the perfect place to make an artwork. I adapted the Kitchener "Britain Needs You" Poster into this "Missing You" message, with one side of the "missing you" representing the school and teachers, and the other "missing you" representing the pupils - meeting

across the crossing. I decided to put the hands outside the frame of the rectangle.



The school currently only has about 10 pupils attending and similar number of staff (out of over 1600 regular pupils), but I thought it would be nice for them to be greeted by the artwork when they arrived on Monday, plus others could see it via social media ([Instagram here](#)). What surprised me was how many residents from the village and surrounding villages made special trips as part of their daily walk to come to see the piece. I've had so many messages from people saying how much they enjoyed seeing it. What means the most to me is the messages from my friends saying thank you for doing it and for creating something which communicates how they feel.



The whole thing took about 8 hours. I made the stencils at home the night before, and then got up at 5am on the Sunday to chalk it. I finished at 12.30 on Sunday, and I have a new respect for pavement artists - my whole body aches and I have no finger prints!





















I walked past it today, only 2 days later, and it barely exists (we had rain overnight), but I have amazing memories of it.

Thanks to Hungry for "In the Snow" (find on Spotify) in the video at the top of this page. And thanks to the support from staff at Comberton Village College.



This is a sample of a resource created by UK Charity AccessArt. We have over 1500 resources to help develop and inspire your creative thinking, practice and teaching.

AccessArt welcomes artists, educators, teachers and parents both in the UK and overseas.

We believe everyone has the right to be creative and by working together and sharing ideas we can enable everyone to reach their creative potential.

Home: The Little House on West Street LockDown Project

Inspired! Making at Linton Heights Junior School

Anna Campbell shares how a whole school engaged with making projects integrated across subjects in response to the Renaissance painting of Cupid and Psyche by Jacopo Del Sellaio at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, and how she used the project to progress pupils' making skills throughout the year groups.

The Language We Use Defines The Society We Create: Taking Control of the Narrative

Since 1994, AccessArt has worked to shape high quality visual arts education. As a Subject Association, we have attended All Party Parliamentary Groups and Roundtable discussions with various art specialists, organisations and

Unions, to come together to advocate for the importance of art education. At these meetings arts organisations and experienced individuals agree:

- We need to better value the arts in education, placing arts subjects on an equal footing with STEM subjects, creating time and space for exploration and experience, as well as knowledge.
- We need to invest in Initial Teacher Training and CPDL.
- We need a reprieve from assessment which creates a climate of fear and drives us towards limited outcomes, in direct opposition to the kind of nurturing space art requires to flourish.
- The current Curriculum needs rewriting to ensure it is relevant, diverse and accessible to all.

Art education has been systematically attacked for many years. Art educators have had to defend, and therefore our dialogue has been defensive. We have defended the subject by using language we hoped would be understood by those in government – language which asserts itself but is spoken in their terms. We have taken the current model, shown its shortcomings, and the effects of those shortcomings, and suggested solutions. But all

that has been done using the existing vocabulary which defines education today. And that is a problem, because it limits ambition and vision. We are driven to talk about assessment, monitoring, progression and knowledge, when the subject we hold needs a very different set of words to describe its rich, organic nature and build understanding of the potential for the subject to change lives.

The accidental or deliberate (depending on your viewpoint) misunderstanding of the subject area shown by those in power has demerited the importance of art education. By pushing a knowledge-rich, assessment-heavy, STEM-prioritised curriculum, the government has created a system in which the very words we need to use, as creative practitioners, teachers and pupils have been taken away from us. There is no space in the current curriculum to use words like “intuition,” “growth,” “personal,” “organic,” and “experimental.” We could hold such a rich, exciting, enabling subject in our hands – a subject which should be oozing with joy and richness, discovery and vision, but instead the government wants us to grip it as if it were a beast we need to beat down and control; something to be scared of which offers no real benefit to anyone. Is this misunderstanding on the part of the government, or is this fear? Fear that if we enable personal creativity we create a beast which enables free expression, resulting in a population

not so easily “controlled”?

The language used by any government creates the culture through, and in which, we act, and in that way we become conditioned. We forget there are always other options, other approaches, and other words which describe other philosophies open to us. All the while we have been trying to defend art education by using the words they want us to use, and in that way we are becoming complicit, despite our intention, because we are not using the words we really need to use.

This struck home, finally, when I realised through conversations with school leavers that they could no longer use words like intuition, entitlement, dreaming, invention, play. These words are unfamiliar to them, and they no longer resonate.

These words, and therefore the ways of being they describe, are not available to them right now. They find it hard to embody these words. (Embody is an important word by the way).

So, yes, let's keep defending the importance of art education, but let's take a much firmer stance. We need to unfurl our own language – the words we really need to use – the words which more accurately describe an exploration of the future role of education in general and value of art education in particular. I am no longer going to be embarrassed to use the word *love* in relation to *education*. I am no longer going to purposely *not* use the words intuition, passion,

fun and play, for fear of making art education seem less than; for fear of being dismissed.

Their words have been hurled at us for years – and now our whole educational and societal bedrock is built on silt. We need to start using words which build a solid place on which our children and young people can stand, and from which they can grow.

The language needs to be visceral. Honest. Brutal. We need to nail it and say it as it is. We have listened to and struggled with their vocabulary, and now they are going to hear ours. Please join us; let's use the words we really need to use, not the language we have been forced to use in a system which has been using the wrong language in the first place. We are artists after all, and we should not be apologetic that our vision, wisdom and insight comes from a very different place, is highly relevant, and to be listened to. Let's use our language, and in doing so say exactly what we need to say.

As artist, educator, CEO and parent – this is what I really want to say...

Where do we stand, at this point in time?

How are our children standing on the earth, at this point in time?

How are we serving them, in terms of education, health, wellbeing?

*Are we helping them build their sense of self?
Sense of safety? From which they can grow?*

*Are we helping them understand the relationship
between sense of self and connection with others?
The relationship between compassion and action?
Action and impact?*

*Are we helping them understand what makes them
human? What makes a community? A society? Are we
helping them think about purpose?*

*Are we showing them what healthy relationships
look like? With each other? With themselves? With
the planet?*

*Are we empowering them to dream, to envision, to
imagine? Are we enabling them to communicate so
that they can inspire and collaborate? Are we
skilling them to affect, enable and build?*

*Are we enabling them to think critically and
creatively, and to understand the difference
between the two?*

Where do we stand at this point in time?

*We stand at a point, caught between the way
society has been shaped by previous government
policy (or lack of policy), and the future. We are
ALL held at that point, no matter our privilege.*

*But it is not the only way to stand. And we should
not accept it, or think we can't affect it.*

So how do we enable every person to stand on the earth grounded, belonging, able to dream, empowered to act?

Can we even imagine such a thing, or have we been so stripped of our ability to dream, confidence to be optimistic, ability to think?

Think about it now. Can you even imagine everyone you know being able to feel like they are able to work towards their full potential? Feel appreciated, valued, have something to offer, and able to contribute?

If you can't imagine that, then please get angry and ask if we have perhaps been conditioned?

Don't say it is idealistic.

Why do we stand the way we do, on the earth today? And how can we make change?

When we look, what do we see with our own eyes?

We see teenagers, emerging from their knowledge-rich, assessed-heavy, education, uncertain. Uncertain as to how they feel about their place in the world and unsure what their entitlement is to dream, act and affect, because they have been stripped of their permission. Ask a school leaver about intuition, and see how they answer. Do they know what that word means? Ask a school leaver about their dreams and hopes, and see how they answer. Ask a school leaver if everyone has

equality of opportunity and see how they answer. Have they been enabled?

We see children and teenagers holding so much anxiety. Flight, fright or freeze – sense of self becomes fragmented and constricted and in that state we cannot go out into the world feeling safe and grounded ready to explore and contribute. Ask them if they feel safe and enabled. Ask them if they feel held. Ask them if they understand how what manifests as anxiety often starts as sensitivity – which can be a beautiful and vital thing which in turn can be explored, expressed and shared through art. Sensitivity need not develop into anxiety. It is not inevitable.

We see children and teenagers avoiding school, because their nervous systems know that school in its current state does not feel like the safest place for them. Do we understand what their bodies and minds need, now, to enable them to learn? Ask a child: What would keep you in school? In which lessons do you feel listened to and can flourish? What does flourish even mean? Has anyone asked you?

We see no time, no space. We send them hurtling, ticking off a list. Towards what? And the existential skills they have learnt are? Have we been brave enough to create generations who are curious? Brave enough to embrace the “other” – to explore differences and yet to be able to connect? Ask a child: Do you feel you have had the space to

follow your interests and really understand? Have you ever had the experience of exciting an other?

We see a climate of crippling fear. Everyone looking over their shoulder, or averting their eyes. Ask a teacher: Can you imagine overtly valuing things that can't be measured?

We see everything treated the same. Vanilla subjects. Tidy, neat, convenient. Don't risk, don't dare. Don't create mess. Don't give access to that tool. Don't let them fail. Ask a teacher and ask a child: In what ways is art unique? What does art need to be allowed to flourish in your school? What even is "art"?

We see teachers who cannot find joy and love in teaching, because they are not enabled to find joy and love in teaching. Does Ofsted ask: Do you find joy and love in teaching? Do your pupils find joy and love in learning? What do we feel this takes from us, to ask this question? What are we scared of? Why can't we use those words?

We see young parents and teachers whose own education has not shown them the promise of a more creative, holistic education, so they do not see the possibilities, do not know what their own children are therefore missing. Ask a young teacher: What is art for? How does it serve us? In what ways is it a catalyst? In what ways is it a sensor? In what ways is it a release? How can art make children feel safe?

We see how a curriculum which places emphasis on measurable knowledge which can be pedantically defined and assessed has destroyed the space for exploration, discovery, self-learning. Ask a child: Are you able to explore uncertainty without fear of being judged? Do you feel like you are only valued when you can achieve? Do you feel like you are valued enough for the journey you are on to be the thing which is celebrated? Ask the teacher: How do you feel about the facilitation of an exploration of unknowledge? How do you feel about a child discovering something you didn't know could be taught (or measured)?

We see lack of vision. Our education system is a run-down version of a Victorian model. Does our education system embody aspiration? Just as the language we use reflects and shapes the culture we are in, our schools are a physical manifestation of our educational values. Ask a child: Does the environment in which you learn fill you full of excitement? Does it fill you full of confidence for the future? Ask a teacher: Does the pedagogy by which you teach stir your soul? Do you believe you are part of a system which is inclusive and aspirational?

We see whole communities who don't feel any sense of cultural entitlement. It starts with valuing finger painting which seems so throwaway. Anyone can finger paint. But if you don't let the exploration follow and grow, art remains just

finger painting and of course we can do away with that. We see a basic misunderstanding that art cannot be facilitated with as much rigour as any other subject. That if we assume art is just “nice” then it is a luxury we don’t need. Ask a child: When was the last time you (choose a word: made, drew, painted, sung, acted, were introduced to an artist who shared your values, celebrated your creativity...)?

We see a culture in which we are embarrassed to use words like love, play, curiosity, and nurture in schools beyond EYFS. We have been disempowered to use language which celebrates individuality, and which acknowledges what it is to be human in schools. Ask a child and a teacher: Do you feel better after your day of education than you did before the start? Does the environment make you feel cared for and supported? Do you feel emotionally and intellectually richer? Was it fun? Do you feel fulfilled? Do you even know what that means?

Does this sound idealistic? Too big a job? Shall we just continue as we are? Turn our cheek. If being brave, visionary, radical feels hard, even impossible, then please understand the way we currently stand on the earth has not encouraged that kind of approach. By taking away our right to nurture our creative and critical thinking skills, we are being disempowered. It’s happening already. The books are already burning – smouldering rather

than flames so we do not notice.

Being brave can be small and quiet. We don't have to shout. It doesn't have to take years (it can't).

More heart. Less arrogance, less bullishness, more listening. More seeing with our eyes wide open. Less measurement. More holistic approaches. Less binary choices. A big re-think about what purpose education serves. Radical rethink about what a curriculum is. Greater ability to understand education has a responsibility to go beyond knowledge, which can be googled or accessed in the blink of an AI. More recognition that we are humans and we have traits, needs, desires which can be developed and tapped into. More modelling of who we would like to be as a society. More emotional intelligence to counterbalance artificial intelligence. More problem solving through experience. And willingness and ability to see the far, far bigger perspective.

So that one day, we might look on this point in time, as we stand upon the earth, and see it for what it is: a very small contracted dot, tight and defensive, that we have been engineered into through lack of vision, insight, confidence and love. From here we have to feel able to relax and expand outwards. To use the word love in education without embarrassment, and in doing so ensure we give opportunities to teachers and pupils which enable them to feel grounded, appreciated,

empowered, connected and safe. And from there, we can all move forwards.

Which words would you like to use?

Paula Briggs, CEO & Creative Director, AccessArt,
April 2024

Explore...

Not just ideas: Action Too



“One cold, rainy morning in January 1999,
I received a phone call from the then

DfES. The woman started the call with the words: “What is the best news someone could call you with on such a rainy January day?”

Explore and understand all that AccessArt has achieved and the impact we are making

Why AccessArt Can't support oak national academy



“Like many educational publishers, we were concerned at the time about both the

nature and quality of the resources created, the ethics of the creation of a curriculum by government, and also the potential impact of a so called “free” curriculum on commercial and charitable educational suppliers...”

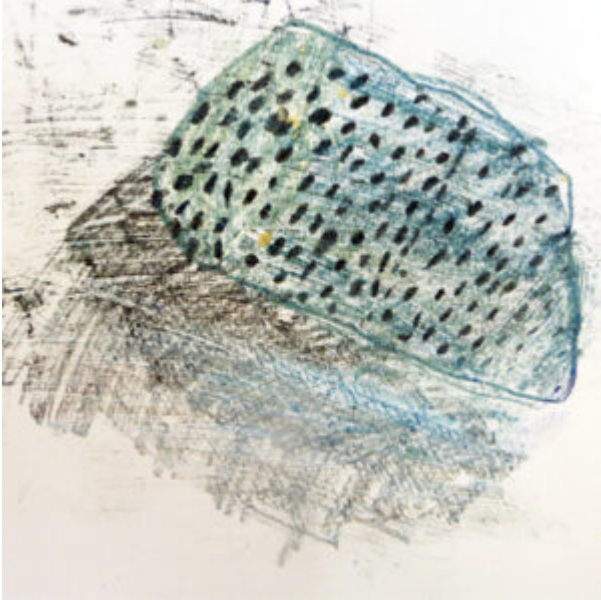
Read why we think Oak is a flawed idea...

Rainbows and Waves for Grey Days

Drawing Small

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Pathway: Exploring the world through mono print



This is featured in the 'Exploring The World Through Mono print' pathway

Drawing Large



Printed Houses

Inspired! Re-Creating Cupid and Psyche in Mixed Media by Year Fives at Linton Heights

Year Five teacher, Kirsty Webb, shares her pupils' Inspire journey and their response to the Renaissance painting of Cupid and Psyche by Jacopo Del Sellaio at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge and the benefits of having a full immersion into materials and working together as a class on a shared project.

Inspire 2020: Introducing Colour and Egg Tempera on a Gesso Panel

This post shares how egg tempera was used as a medium in the Italian Renaissance and how teachers interpreted the processes involved in the teaching studio at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge with AccessArt and the Fitzwilliam Education Team, as part of the CPD programme for Inspire 2020

A Progression Pathway in Clay Work

From Early Years

Woodland Exploration by Caroline Wendling & Deborah Wilenski



Artists Caroline Wendling and Deborah Wilenski encourage young children in a woodland exploration using art and imagination as their discovery tools.

Nest By Paula Briggs



Paula gives children the tools to both draw and make. Children worked with hard and soft pencils, graphite, wax resist, watercolour, clay and sticks.

From Key Stage One

How to Clay Play



[_](#)This resource, commissioned by Cambridge City Council, encourages being together through making and introduces the basics of working with Scolaquip air-hardening clay.

Ofsted are Coming Tomorrow!



[_](#)Primary school teacher, Sue Brown, shares her experience of an Ofsted Deep Dive in Art and gives advice to other teachers on how they might prepare themselves.

Quick Clay Figurative Sketches By Paula Briggs



Paula provided young children with the opportunity to explore clay as a “short term” construction and modelling material. Without being fired, the dry clay has a limited lifespan, and the sculptures will crumble, but I think it’s important to remind ourselves that even without access to a kiln, clay can still be regarded as a valuable sculptural material.

Decorative Clay Coil Pots by Sharon Gale



This simple clay pot making resource is not the traditional way of making coil pots but it’s lots of fun and by using different paint effects, the end results can be very interesting. We worked on this project for two, two-hour sessions.

Making Plaster Reliefs By Paula Briggs



[_](#)This resource describes how to create plaster reliefs using clay and foamboard moulds. It is based upon a session which took place at Bourn Primary Academy with a group of Year 5 children.

Clay Art Medals by Sharon Gale



[_](#)In this three stage resource, students make a circular medal from clay depicting their own profile, look at examples of fun lettering and devise a short, fun or meaningful phrase to paint inside their portrait profile. Clay art medals are a fun way to link class topics with an art activity.

Japan: Making Sushi – Recycled Style! By Jan Miller



 Inspired by research into Japanese culture, children explored the potential and limitations of paper and recycled materials, learning through play and experimentation to make 3D forms. The outcomes of this process were used to inform work created in a second medium of clay, using kitchen equipment to shape the clay and add textures.

From Key Stage Two

Japan – Ceramics Inspire Painting and Painting Inspires Ceramics By Jan Miller



 Jan shares a Year Three class project that uses the work of a contemporary Japanese ceramicist to inspire vibrant paintings in a variety of materials. The children then used their own art to design ceramic vessels.

Clay ‘Portrait’ Miniatures by Sharon Gale



Portrait miniatures are small painted images, usually of monarchs and very wealthy, important people. Dating back to the 1520s, these tiny portraiture paintings are like medals, but with realistic colour. This two stage clay and painting resource is very versatile because essentially the miniatures are blank canvasses.

Clay Slab Work by Andy Cairns



This resource explores how to make an armature and use clay slab to build a form. Based upon the legend of “Black Shuck”, a ghostly dog that roams the coast searching for its drowned masters, this project engaged the children and resulted in charismatic sculptures, but you could equally transfer the activity to other themes.

Fruit-Inspired Clay Tiles By Rachel Dormor



[Ceramicist Rachel Dormor](#) shares a workshop idea suitable for primary or secondary aged children. Working in clay, pupils take their inspiration from drawings of fruit to make decorative clay tiles.

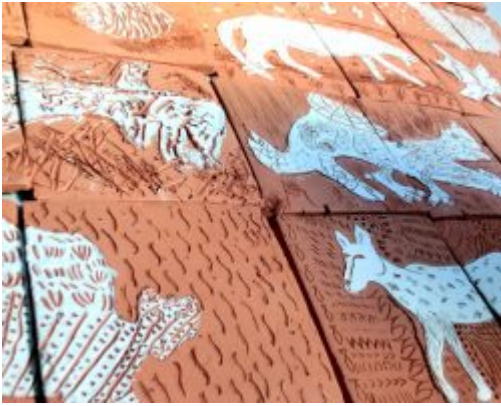
Fruit Pinch Pot Project By Rachel Dormor



[Ceramicist Rachel Dormor](#) shares a workshop idea suitable for primary or secondary aged children. Working in clay, pupils take their inspiration from drawings of fruit to make simple pinch pot mugs.

From Key Stage Three and Beyond

Chimera Drawings into Beautiful Terracotta Tiles By Eleanor Somerset



___Sgraffito, or ‘scratching’ is a technique which is an excellent way to reinforce mark making with all age groups.

Drawing into leather hard red clay tiles to create designs using mark-making can be even more effective when done through a white earthenware slip to reveal the red clay beneath.

Exploring Materials: Clay and Water by Sheila Ceccarelli



___Sheila asked teenagers at AccessArt’s Experimental Drawing Class when the last time was that they had played with clay?

Arts and Minds: Manipulating Clay with Water by Sheila Ceccarelli



[_](#)This post shows how to facilitate a sensory session exploring water and clay – by Sheila Ceccarelli (artist) and Yael Pilowsky Bankirer (Psychotherapist) for Arts and Minds.

Painted Clay by Melissa Pierce Murray



[_](#)This post was inspired by the Japanese art of dorondongo, where mud and dirt are shaped and buffed into highly polished spheres. We made clay spheres and other simple forms in clay, and once dry, painted them with ink and acrylic.

Exploring Portraits with Eleanor Somerset



[_](#)In this resource artist, Eleanor

Somerset shows how she led students in The Little Art Studio, Sheffield, to explore and discover portraiture through various media.

Introducing Sgraffito using a Coloured Clay Slip on a Terracotta Tile By Eleanor Somerset



[_](#)Further explore how to make beautiful sgraffito, or 'scratched drawings' with artist Eleanor Somerset.

From Bones and Body to Structure and Form By Melissa Pierce Murray



[_](#)Artist Melissa Pierce Murray worked with teenagers from AccessArt's Experimental Drawing Class on a series of workshops which physically explored drawing and sculptural responses to form, forces and anatomy.

Simple Clay Moulds by Melissa Pierce Murray



[_](#)In this post, artist Melissa Pierce Murray, shows, step-by-step, how young teenagers explored plaster casting by making simple clay 'waste moulds' and then moved on to making simple 'two piece moulds'.

Casting a Negative Space in Plaster with Sculptor Rachel Wooller



[_](#)Resident artist at ArtWorks Studios, Cambridge, Rachel Wooller, introduces teenagers at AccessArt's Experimental Drawing Class to the process of casting and creating negative shapes in plaster from clay positives.

Rowan: Clay Coiling Techniques to Make Penguins, Tweety Pie and a Dalek too! by Abi Moore and Sarah Nibbs



Abi, Sarah and students at Rowan Humberstone, show how they made clay birds using clay coiling techniques and with a plaster mould for the birds' bases.

Rowan: Making a Clay Bird from a Mould by Abi Moore and Sarah Nibbs



Abi and students from Rowan Humberstone, describe how they made clay birds from a plaster mould.

Modelling The Head in Clay by Melissa Pierce Murray



Artist Melissa Pierce Murray led a

series of workshops for AccessArt's Experimental Drawing Class in which the teenagers modelled a head in clay. There are five resources in this series, beginning with constructing an armature and making preparatory drawings, then studying the bone structure of the skull before moving on to features. The final post in this series looks at ways to increase the techniques and approaches used in drawing.

Design Lab: Phoebe Cummings at the V&A



Students, from the DesignLab at the V&A, London, worked with artist Phoebe Cummings over a three month period to create a site-specific, group piece, from unfired clay which was inspired by the historical 2D designs found on 19th century British tableware in the collection.

Inspired! Psyche's Resilience by The Fitzy Peters

Natalie Bailey shares the pupils' Inspire journey and their response to the Renaissance painting of Cupid and Psyche by Jacopo Del Sellaio at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge as well as her reflections on the transformative impact that the project had on the children and how Art can support healing and wellbeing.

Life Drawing Class: Visual Impressions

Inspired! 'The Tree' by Year One and Two at Hauxton Primary School

In this post, Pamela Stewart shares the submission by Hauxton Primary School, Cambridgeshire for Inspire: A Celebration of Children's Art in Response to Jacopo del Sellaio's Cupid and Psyche by Year One and Two pupils in 'Owl Class'.

It shares the pupils' Inspire journey and all that they learned in response to looking at the Renaissance painting at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.

Ofsted are Coming Tomorrow!

Sue Brown shares her experience of an Ofsted inspection with an Art Deep Dive.

Walking and Drawing

Unesco: Celebrating the Power of Making!

Inspired by Paula's recent rousing film, 'It's in Our Hands', artist Jan Miller pulled images together from her own teaching to illustrate the things the children in her classroom do with their hands

Children's Community Project

Foreshortened Sketches

Cupid and Psyche: How a Fifteenth-Century Renaissance

Panel Became the Most Loved Painting in Cambridgeshire

Sheila Ceccarelli tells the story of how Cupid and Psyche, painted by Jacopo Del Sellaio, an Italian Renaissance artist, came to become the most loved painting in Cambridgeshire. Inspire is an exhibition of art made by primary school children and celebrates the creativity of our local schools. It champions the on-going importance of cultural learning and the visual arts for children and young people. A chance also to see Del Sellaio's Cupid and Psyche on display next to the children's work.

The Story of Cupid and Psyche by Jacopo del Sellaio (1442 – 1493)

In this post, Kate Noble, Education Officer at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge shares the story of Cupid and Psyche as depicted in the 15th Century painting by Jacopo Del Sellaio. This is one of a series of posts from Inspire: A Celebration of Children's Art at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.