

Teacher Resource Notes – KS3-5

International Exchanges: Modern Art and St Ives 1915-65

17 May – 28 September 2014



Peter Lanyon
Thermal 1960

Booking

To book a gallery visit for your group call 01736 796226 or email stivesticketing@tate.org.uk.

Contents

Using this pack	3
Season Overview	4
Pre-visit activities	7
Follow-up activities	8
The Rotunda: An Introduction	9
Gallery 1	10
Upper Gallery 2	11
Lower Gallery 2 & Studio Resource Room	12
The Apse	13
Galleries 3 & 4	13
Gallery 5	15
Ways In: a framework for looking (<i>activity sheet</i>)	16
Resources	17

Using this pack

These notes are designed to support KS3-5 teachers in engaging students as they explore the exhibition. As well as factual information they provide starting points for discussion, ideas for simple practical activities and suggestions for extended work that could stem from a gallery visit.

- **Ways In: a framework for looking** is a series of questions to help you and your students explore, reflect on and critically discuss the artwork in the exhibition. A huge amount of information can be revealed just by asking 'what do you see?' Once a few ideas are circulating this often cascades into very imaginative and perceptive ways of viewing the work. Asking 'why do you say that?' invites further considerations and sharing of ideas between students. **The Ways In questions can be photocopied and used to help students explore the works on display.** Please also **bring any clipboards and pencils that you will need** with you as unfortunately we are unable to provide them.
- The **Gallery Activity Sheets** have images of key works, information about the exhibitions and artists and a series of questions that can be used as prompts for your students. You can also pick up our **I Spy Tate** family gallery resource at the front desk when you arrive and see if your pupils can find all of the paintings in the gallery. Please note that some of the artworks to find in this resource are at the Barbara Hepworth Museum and Garden.
- Please refer to the **Essential Guide to Visiting Tate St Ives** for **practical information** about your visit including travel, facilities, use of art materials and gallery guidelines. This can be found at www.tate.org.uk/learn/teachers.

Risk assessments

It is the responsibility of the group leader to carry out a risk assessment and teachers are encouraged to make a planning visit and to carry out their own assessment.

Important information for risk assessments

- We ask you **not to touch** any of the artworks on display.
- Space in the galleries is quite limited so the **maximum group size is 20**. Larger groups will need to be split.
- Some sculptures are displayed without glass cases. Enjoy looking but we ask you to please not touch them.
- Photography by individuals is not allowed in the exhibition. Requests to photograph/record should be made to the Tate St Ives Press and Communications Manager. Email arwen.fitch@tate.org.uk. 7 days notice is required.
- Please ask students to enjoy talking about the artwork and exploring the gallery but to be mindful of other visitors.

Please contact us on **01736 796226** or email stivesticketing@tate.org.uk if you have any concerns or questions about your visit.

Season Overview

International Exchanges traces some key connections between the art of St Ives and the rest of the world. This wide-ranging exhibition shows St Ives as part of an **international network** of artists and artistic movements, extending from Russian experiments of the 1910s through to the radical breakthroughs of the 1960s.

St Ives in the 1940s, '50s and '60s was an artistic centre of international importance. The artists who lived and worked in this small town in the far southwest of Britain have had many exhibitions and books written about their work, generally focusing on their location and their use of landscape and nature. This exhibition sets out to view the art of St Ives from the other end of the telescope, to place it **not in relation to where it was made** but in relation to: **what was made, how it was made, and its position in a wider international modern art.**

The Galleries: a quick guide

The galleries are loosely chronological and grouped into key themes that the exhibition will explore. Your journey starts in the Rotunda, and continues in Gallery 1 on Level 3 (straight ahead as you come from the staircase or turn right as you exit from the lift).

The Rotunda

Barbara Hepworth's *Single Form* 1961 has been chosen as the start and the end of the exhibition. Hepworth was a St Ives artist but her work stands outside the headquarters of the United Nations in New York so it is a work that encapsulates the exhibition's approach; being both local to St Ives and having a global reach

Gallery 1: Constructive Networks

This gallery considers St Ives as an important centre for abstract art. It explores how the relocation of leading avant-garde artists Barbara Hepworth, Ben Nicholson and Naum Gabo, and their interest in Constructive art, connected the town to an international network and influenced other artists living and working in St Ives.

Upper Gallery 2: The Handmade

This gallery celebrates the use of traditional craft in St Ives' art through focusing on Bernard Leach's pottery, direct carving by Brancusi, Modigliani, Hepworth and Moore and the self-taught painting of Alfred Wallis.

Lower Gallery 2: The Material Image

After the Second World War artists looked for new forms of expression exploring the material nature of paint, textured surfaces in their sculpture and suggestions of living forms rather than depicting human figures. They became reconnected to artists in Europe and North America and international exhibitions such as the Venice Biennale became a platform for new work.

The Apse: Return to the Modern Masters

In the Apse we explore the impact of exchanges of exhibitions and ideas between Britain and France. Work by the modern master, Georges Braque, had a particular influence on the artist and critic Patrick Heron and his contemporaries William Scott and Bryan Wynter.

Galleries 3 & 4: Body and Environment

These galleries explore how artists in the 1950s tried to express their physical and psychological experiences of being in the natural world. Often painters used repeated marks or the physical action of their body to make the work. Hepworth spoke of a sculpture that articulated the experience of standing in a landscape, while Sam Francis and Peter Lanyon based their art on the sensation of flight.

Gallery 5: Into the Sixties

During the 1960s, political and cultural revolutions forced St Ives artists and their contemporaries to re-evaluate their art. Peter Lanyon's long standing interest in making sculpture out of scrap material was encouraged by the trend for creating assemblages from 'found' objects and the influence of artists like Lanyon, Hilton and Patrick Heron can be seen here in the work of David Hockney and Bob Law.

Studio Resource Room

Located off Lower Gallery 2 the Studio Resource Room is a space to pause with your group and to investigate and find out more about the St Ives Modernists.

St Ives: How did it become an artist's town?

The small Cornish town of St Ives perhaps seems an unlikely site for a major art gallery. However, its artistic connections date back to Victorian times, when artists visited to paint, attracted by the town's special quality of light, cheap rents and a new railway link increasing access.

Many artists are associated with St Ives and West Cornwall, its rich history and its vivid artistic life. St Ives has attracted painters for more than a century; amongst its early visitors were Joseph Mallord William Turner, James Abbott McNeill Whistler and Walter Sickert.

In 1928, on a visit to St Ives, the British painters Ben Nicholson and Christopher Wood discovered the work of retired mariner Alfred Wallis, whose untutored paintings of town and seascapes had a profound influence on the development of their work.

In 1939, with the outbreak of war, Nicholson returned to settle in St Ives with his second wife, the sculptor Barbara Hepworth. They were joined by their friend, the Russian Constructivist artist Naum Gabo, establishing in West Cornwall an important artistic outpost. These artists shared an intellectual and aesthetic outlook that was essentially European, but the work they produced in St Ives was nevertheless often deeply influenced by the physical forms and quality of light of their local surroundings.

The potter Bernard Leach, had been working in St Ives since 1920. The ceramic tradition which he pioneered, with the Japanese potter Shoji Hamada, adds a further dimension to St Ives' international standing. The Leach Pottery is among the most respected and influential studio potteries in the world.

After the Second World War, the emergence of a younger generation of artists, including Wilhelmina Barns-Graham, Peter Lanyon, John Wells, Terry Frost, Bryan Wynter, Patrick Heron and Roger Hilton, had a decisive effect on the development of painting in Britain in the second half of the twentieth century. Many of the artists whose names are now linked

with St Ives first chose to work in West Cornwall, as it was now recognised as an important international centre of abstract art.

The St Ives-born painter Peter Lanyon created a distinctive fusion of landscape and abstract elements, advocating that art could be both technically audacious and rooted in the local environment. The work of Lanyon and other artists working in St Ives attracted visits from internationally renowned, such as the American abstract painter Mark Rothko.

Artists such as Barbara Hepworth, Ben Nicholson, Peter Lanyon, Patrick Heron and Roger Hilton were an active part of the international art world. They had solo and group exhibitions worldwide, took part in the Biennales of Venice and Sao Paolo, wrote in publications, had correspondence with scores of other artists and travelled to artists' studios, events and exhibitions around the globe.

Pre-visit activities

To maximise the enjoyment and value of the visit please consider doing one or more of these activities before your visit. We recommend that **teachers make a planning visit to the exhibition** to familiarise themselves with the galleries.

- Introduce some general background about Tate St Ives (<http://www.tate.org.uk>).

- **Discuss what a gallery is:**

What is its purpose?

Do galleries have a responsibility to show certain types of art?

Who are galleries for?

Should galleries show art that is controversial or difficult to explore, even if it may anger or offend some people?

Who chooses the artwork that is on display?

Ask your students about any other galleries or museums they have been to and what they saw there. Did the visit affect them in any way?

- **Research** some of the artists or artworks in the exhibition and find out more about them and their work in preparation for your visit. There is a list of key artists in the resource section of these notes.

What impact does the research have on students' experience in the gallery?

Does it change the way that they relate to the artwork on display?

It may also be interesting to **not find out anything** about the artists or artworks and see what it is like to experience the work with no prior knowledge of the artist or preconceived ideas.

- **Terms for discussion**

The following terms will be explored or referenced within the exhibition. It may be useful to have a discussion around them and their key concepts before students visit:

Constructive art

Abstract art

Avant-garde artists

Naïve art

Modern Masters

Follow-up activities

These activities are designed to extend learning back in the classroom.

When an exhibition is conceived key objectives are set for it. **Discuss** the objectives below in the light of your visit. To what extent have they been achieved and if so how have the curators achieved them.

This exhibition aims:

- To inspire research and reflection on the relationships between art in St Ives and elsewhere.
- To highlight the participation of artists associated with St Ives in international art worlds.
- To suggest moments and places of connection between artists in St Ives and elsewhere, which enabled participation in international networks.
- To consider how these connections are manifest in artworks associated with St Ives and elsewhere.

Make an exchange. Create your own piece of artwork inspired by one that you have seen in the exhibition. Consider what exchanges you will make with the artwork to inspire your thinking. You could focus on shape, form, colour, media, concept or techniques.

Environment and expression. In Galleries 3 & 4 artists explore how to express their physical and psychological experiences of being in the natural world. Think of an environment that you enjoy being in and try to articulate that experience through making a piece of art. Think about how the place makes you feel and how you could express that through form, colour or media. You may wish to explore gestural painting using the physical action of your body to make the work. You could use large paper and brushes on sticks rollers or throwing, dripping or rolling in paint

Creative assemblages. Consider the works by Lanyon and Niki de Saint Phalle's *Dracula (Fragment de Dracula II)* 1961 in Gallery 5. Try making a sculpture or assemblage using found objects. By physically bringing the everyday back into art, the work de Saint Phalle contributed to the developing pop art movement. Consider what you are trying to express through your work.

Make an exhibition in an unusual space in your school or college. Make decisions about what works to include and how to display them. How do the works relate to each other? Is there a theme? Will you use interpretation (captions, guides, text panels) or leave people to make up their own minds?

Introduction

Our exhibition *International Exchanges* explores some key connections between the art of St Ives and the rest of the world. This wide-ranging exhibition shows St Ives as part of an **international network** of artists and artistic movements, extending from Russian experiments of the 1910s (find out more about this in Gallery 1) through to the radical breakthroughs of the 1960s that you'll find in Gallery 5.

In the 1940s, '50s and '60s St Ives was an artistic centre of international importance. The artists who lived and worked in this small village on the far west coast of Britain have had many exhibitions and books written about their work, generally focusing on their location and their use of landscape and nature. This exhibition sets out to view the art of St Ives from the other end of the telescope, to place it **not in relation to where it was made** but in relation to:

- **what was made**
- **how it was made**
- **its position in a wider international modern art.**

As you explore this exhibition keep considering the exchanges that are taking place between the artists in St Ives and a wider international art. What are they and how do they manifest in the artwork on display?

exchange

verb: to give something and receive something of the same kind in return
(Oxford Dictionary)

The Rotunda

Barbara Hepworth's *Single Form* 1961 has been chosen as the start and the end of the exhibition. Hepworth was a St Ives artist but this sculpture is directly connected with the 6.4 metre bronze *Single Form* 1961–4, made in St Ives and erected in the United Nations Plaza, New York. It is a work that encapsulates the exhibition's approach; being both local to St Ives and having a global reach

Look at Hepworth's sculpture:

- How do you think the artist has made the work?
- What materials and processes have they used?
- Consider the impact of this artwork on the viewer. Why do you think the Curator has chosen to place it here?
- As you explore the building and galleries consider how the galleries have been curated. Would you have made the same choices? What would you change?

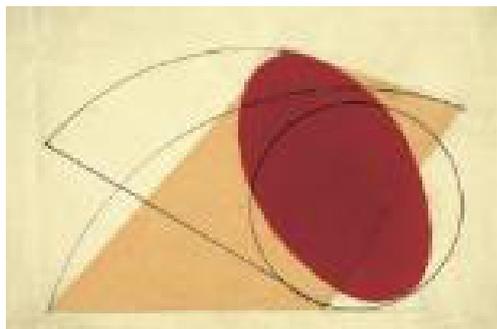
Gallery 1: Constructive Networks

This gallery considers St Ives as an important centre for abstract art. It explores how the relocation of leading avant-garde artists Barbara Hepworth, Ben Nicholson and Naum Gabo, and their interest in Constructive art, connected the town to an international network and influenced other artists living and working in St Ives.

Terms – a quick guide

Abstract art moved beyond representing objects in the world and began to focus on colours and forms. Artists like Kazimir Malevich and Naum Gabo thought that abstraction could reflect a new reality and these ideas influenced many artists who became associated with St Ives.

Constructive art was promoted in opposition to the rise of fascism. It was socially engaged with potential for political enrichment and social harmony.



Margaret Mellis
Collage with Dark Red Oval, 1942

Margaret Mellis was encouraged to make collages by Ben Nicholson and Naum Gabo.

How has Mellis constructed this artwork?

Consider her use of colour, form and layering.
Can you see connections with other artists' work in this gallery?

Take time to look at the connections in this space and how it has been curated. How have works such as and the work of Naum Gabo influenced Lanyon's *Box Construction No. 1*, 1939-40? Compare this work to Moholy-Nagy's *K V11*, 1922 and discuss the connections you can see.

Circle: International Survey of Constructive Art, edited in London by Gabo, Nicholson and the architect Leslie Martin provided a compendium of 'Constructive' art, tracing it back to the abstract work of the Russian artist Kazimir Malevich in the 1910s.

What was the importance of publications such as this? How did it influence the work of the St Ives artists?

You can explore *Circle* in more detail via the digitised copy in the Studio Resource Room, located off Lower Gallery 2.

Upper Gallery 2: The Handmade

This gallery celebrates the use of traditional craft in St Ives' art. It looks at how artists such as Bernard Leach, Barbara Hepworth and Alfred Wallis used traditional processes such as direct carving, relief carving, hand marked works and studio pottery to create work that counterbalanced the mechanised pace of modern life and looked to international artists such as Constantin Brancusi and Amedeo Modigliani for inspiration.

Consider how artworks in this gallery have used the processes below. What impact does the use of these processes have?

Direct carving – this was a way creating an artwork that responded directly to a material. For example using stone or wood and celebrating the qualities of the material rather than hiding them.

Relief carving – this involved chipping away at a surface.

Hand marked works – these are works that are textured, weathered or worn which led to the consideration of how paintings were becoming objects.

Studio pottery- this was pottery that made handcrafted items and was influenced by ceramics in Japan.



Bernard Leach
Tile with bird feeding the young,
c.1925

In 1920 Bernard Leach and the Japanese potter Shoji Hamada set up a pottery in St Ives. They revitalised British ceramics through a fusion of traditional Eastern and Western forms.

Consider Leach's work. Can you see this fusion?

In what way does it compare with that of Shoji Hamada, also shown in this gallery?

Leach wanted to relate surface decoration to form; can you see this in his work? What impact does it have?

Ben Nicholson discovered Alfred Wallis' work on a trip to St Ives in 1928. Wallis, a retired deep-sea fisherman and scrap merchant, was a self-taught artist. Unconcerned with perspective, **Wallis depicted objects in terms of relative importance, adjusting their sizes accordingly.**

Consider this 'naïve' approach in the light of Wallis' work. Does it appeal to you? Why?



Alfred Wallis
Houses at St Ives, c.1928-42

Lower Gallery 2: The Material Image

After the horrors of the Second World War artists looked for a new way of expressing human experience. They explored the material nature of paint as a subject and this and the textured surfaces of sculpture became part of their vocabulary. They often included suggestions of living forms as they explored the boundaries between abstract and figurative art. Artists became reconnected to Europe and North America and international exhibitions such as the Venice Biennale became a platform for new work.



William Scott
The Harbour, 1952

Although never a permanent resident of St Ives, William Scott maintained strong links with artists including Terry Frost, Barbara Hepworth, Roger Hilton and Peter Lanyon. Scott painted abstract compositions which combined figure and landscape

- Can you relate this artwork to its title *The Harbour*?
- Compare Scott's work to De Stael's, *Composition*. What do you think De Stael is depicting?

Stand with your back to the big window and look at the paintings opposite. Consider the connections you can see.

The Studio Resource Room

Our new Studio Resource Room is located just off Lower Gallery 2. There are books, chairs, computers and you can find out more about the St Ives Modernists.

The Apse

In the Apse we explore how the work of the **Modern Masters** influenced St Ives artists such as Patrick Heron, William Scott and Bryan Wynter.

Look at **Braque's *The Billiard Table, 1945***. Can you see how it has influenced any other artworks in this room?

The freedom to invent and depart from realism was central to Braque's work. He once commented, 'A picture is an adventure each time'. Do you agree with him?

Who were the Modern Masters?

The Modern Masters were artists such as Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque, Henri Matisse and Amedeo Modigliani who had been painting for many years and were working in Paris around the time of the Second World War. Their work was exhibited in London after the war and they became a touchstone for younger artists.

Galleries 3 & 4: Body and Environment

These galleries explore how artists in the 1950s tried to express their physical and psychological experiences of being in the natural world. Often painters used repeated marks or the physical action of their body to make the work. Hepworth spoke of a sculpture that articulated the experience of standing in a landscape, while Sam Francis and Peter Lanyon based their art on the sensation of flight.

Gallery 3



Pasmore
Snowstorm: Spiral Motif in Black and White
1950-1

How has Pasmore depicted the feeling of a snow storm in his work?

Consider how other artists have created a response to landscapes in this gallery. For example **Mark Tobey *Northwest Drift* 1958** and **Arshile Gorky *Waterfall*, 1943**

Gallery 4



Consider Lanyon's painting *Thermal*:

This painting is one of a series of works that were partly inspired by Peter Lanyon's experience of gliding. Lanyon explained that: 'The air is a very definite world of activity as complex and demanding as the sea... The thermal itself is a current of hot air rising and eventually condensing into cloud. It is invisible and can only be apprehended by an instrument such as a glider.'

How has Lanyon responded to this sensation and his understanding of flight through his work?

Peter Lanyon
Thermal, 1960

Compare Lanyon's *Thermal*, 1960 to **Sam Francis'** *Grey Space* c. 1951-1953. Francis, who had served as a pilot during the war, said that he was interested in 'not just the play of light, but the substance of which light is made'. How is this realised in his work?

Look at Hepworth's sculpture *Epidauros* alongside her other work in this gallery *Curved Form Delphi*.

What materials and processes has she used?

What is the artist trying to say?

As with *Pierced Form (Epidauros)*, Hepworth felt that the title summarised her recent experiences of the light and landscape of Greece. Hepworth once said that the taut strings of *Curved Form (Delphi)* transcribed the 'pull' she experienced when standing in the landscape. Think about this statement in relation to the sculpture. Does it change how you think or feel about it?



Barbara Hepworth
Epidauros, 1960

Gallery 5: Into the Sixties

During the 1960s, political and cultural revolutions forced St Ives artists and their contemporaries to re-evaluate their art. Peter Lanyon's long standing interest in making sculpture out of scrap material was encouraged by the trend for creating assemblages from 'found' objects and the influence of artists like Lanyon, Hilton and Patrick Heron can be seen here in the work of David Hockney and Bob Law.



Bob Law
Twentieth century Ikon Series 8.8.67
1967

Look at Bob Law's drawings; they were created in a single day.

- What do you think he has drawn?
- Why has he captured it in this way?
- Do you like them? Why?
- What is the impact of minimalist artwork like this on the viewer? Is it appreciated to the same extent as other more seemingly complicated work? Should it be?

Law said of the series, 'I was finding myself, and the map that went with myself...I wanted to get closer to the truth instead of the illusions, of just copying.'

You can step on the artwork on the floor!

The artist Carl Andre was working in the 1960s when the existing order was being questioned. He wanted people to experience being able to walk on top of a sculpture rather than having to look up at it.

Andre refers to himself as a landscape artist. Is this a landscape?

Ways In: a framework for looking (KS3-5)

Exploring the object: what can you see?

- What is it? (painting, collage, sculpture, film, textile, print, etc.)
- Is the work part of a **series**; does the artist paint/photograph this subject frequently?
- How do you think the artist has made the work? What **materials** and **processes** have they used?
- Is the work part of a **series**? Does the artist explore this **subject** more than once?
- How is the work displayed? How does it relate to other work in the exhibition?
- What is the **scale** of the work and how does this affect our relationship to it?
- What tactile/surface qualities does the work have?

Make it personal: what do you think?

- What word(s) does the work make you think about?
- How does it make you feel?
- Have you seen anything like this before?
- Does the title tell you anything more?
- How does it feel to be in the gallery?

Ideas and meaning: is there a story?

- What do you think the artist wants to communicate?
- Is it about real life?
- Is there a story or narrative in the work?
- Does it have a cultural, social or political meaning?
- Does it tell us about an issue or theme?
- Does it relate to our lives today?
- Does the title affect the meaning of the work?

Art in context: what else can we discover?

- Is the work about a particular place or person?
- Who is the artist? Is it important to know who created the work? Does the artist's background change the way that we think about the work?
- Does the work say anything about our society?
- Does the work relate to a particular period in history?

Resources

A catalogue is available for this exhibition.

Books & Journals

Bird Michael & Tooby Michael, *Tate St Ives: Souvenir Guide*

Bowness, Dr Sophie, *Barbara Hepworth Stone Sculpture*

Button Virginia, *Ben Nicholson*

Button Virginia, *St Ives Artists: A Companion*

Childish Billy, *Alfred Wallis*

Clearwater Bonnie , *The Rothko Book*

Cross Tom, *Painting the Warmth of the Sun*

David Shalev & Michael Tooby, *Tate Gallery St Ives: The Building*

Feary Julian & Tooby Michael, *Colour in Space*

Feigel Lara & Harris Alexandra, *Modernism on Sea*

Hodge Susie, *How to Survive Modern Art*

Marlborough Galleries, *Hepworth*

Tufnell Ben, *On The Very Edge of the Ocean*

Woodhouse Jayne, *The Life and Work of Barbara Hepworth*

Some of the artists featured in this exhibition are listed below:

Alberto Giacometti

Alexander Calder

Alfred Wallis

Amedeo Modigliani

Barbara Hepworth

Ben Nicholson

Bernard Leach

Bob Law

Bryan Wynter

Constantin Brancusi

David Hockney

Georges Braque

Henry Moore

Mark Rothko

Naum Gabo

Patrick Heron

Peter Lanyon

Roger Hilton

Sandra Blow

Sir Terry Frost

Wassily Kandinsky

Winifred Nicholson