

# **Teacher Resource Notes – KS1 & KS2 Spring Season**

5 February – 2 May 2011

Simon Starling Recent History

The Design Research Unit 1942-72

These notes are designed to support teachers and students as they explore and engage with the art work. 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.

To book a gallery visit for your group call 01736 796226 or email [stivesticketing@tate.org.uk](mailto:stivesticketing@tate.org.uk).

# Season overview

This season Tate St Ives is showing the first major exhibition of Simon Starling's work since he won the Turner Prize in 2005 ([tate.org.uk/Britain/turnerprize/2005](http://tate.org.uk/Britain/turnerprize/2005)) and includes new work commissioned for Tate St Ives.

The exhibition provides an opportunity to consider how Starling's installations, objects, film and photography (often recording his own journeys) have complex stories behind their construction, often including hidden discoveries about objects and events. It examines how these narratives interrogate and re-negotiate the histories and connections between globalised systems of manufacture and labour, technology, consumption, transport and the consequences for the natural world. The exhibition invites considerations of visual links between artists, science, geography, history and economics.

In Gallery 1 Tate St Ives shows the first public exhibition to survey the history of the Design Research Unit, which is the oldest industrial design consultancy in Europe (now merged with Scott Brownrigg and Associates). DRU originated in 1943 with critic Herbert Read, art collector and advertising executive Marcus Brumwell and architect Misha Black.

DRU was founded on the concept of collaboration between artists, designers and architects and was an important contributor to the 1951 Festival of Britain and the modernist ideals of art and design principles in a post-war society. The display is complemented by a selection of works from the Tate Collection reinforcing links between artists and designers and drawing attention to the involvement of St Ives artists.

## **Ways of Looking: ideas for KS1-2 groups**

### **Listening to others/responding personally/sensory experiences**

A huge amount of information can be revealed just by asking the question '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 more considerations and sharing of ideas from students.

- What word(s) does the work make you think about?
- Have you seen anything like this before?
- What do the titles tell you?
- What does the colour make you think about?

### **Visual experience/what can you see/traditional and new media**

What materials and processes has the artist used to make the work? Have you seen this material in art before?

- Is the work made in traditional or new materials?
- What is it? (Painting, sculpture, drawing, collage etc)
- How is it displayed? What space does it occupy and how does it relate to other work in the exhibition?
- What is the scale of the artwork and how does this affect our relationship to it?
- Is the work made to be permanent?

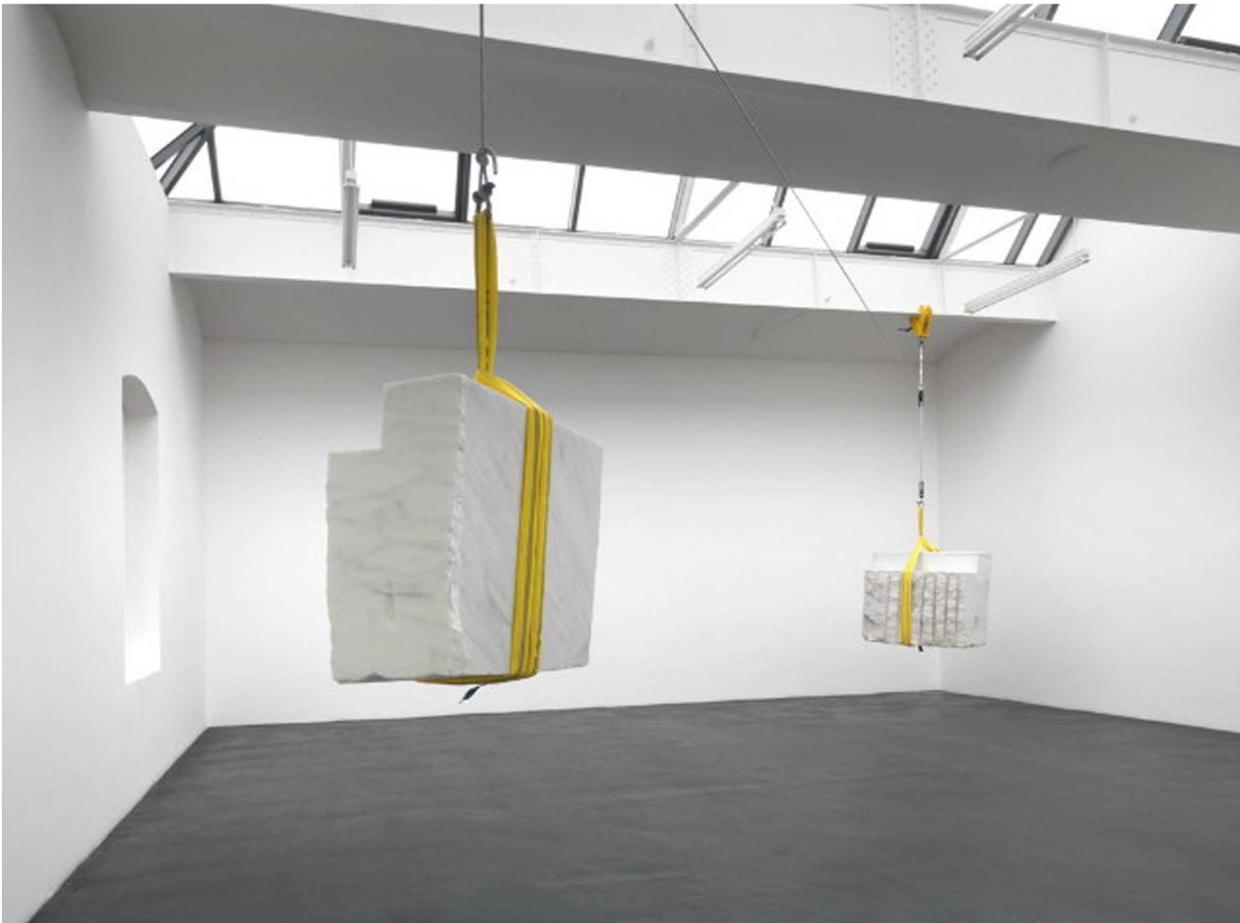
### **Communication of ideas and meaning?**

- Is it about real life?
- Is there a story or narrative in the work?
- Does it relate to contemporary life?
- Does the title affect the meaning of the work?

### **Art in context/cultures/times. Local/national/global**

- Is the work about a particular place?
- Who is the artist? Is it important to know who created the work? Does the artist's background inform the work?
- Does the work connect to art from other times and cultures?
- Has the work reinvented art from other times and cultures?

## Gallery 5



### Simon Starling

*The Long Ton* 2009

Courtesy the artist and neugerriemschneider, Berlin

Photo: Jens Ziehe

Two blocks of marble are installed in this gallery; the smaller  $\frac{1}{4}$  tonne (250 kg) Italian laser carved Carrara marble replica appears balanced in front of the unworked 1 'long ton' (a British Imperial measurement, equivalent to 1.016 kg) Chinese marble, so at first glance they may appear identical. Although the Chinese stone has travelled much further, the economic value of both blocks is the same.

**Scale, illusion and maths.** Can you notice any similarities or differences, apart from size, between the Italian and Chinese marble? Would you have guessed that the Chinese marble weighed one ton - or the Italian marble weighed just a quarter of that? Although only a quarter of the size, the Italian marble costs four times as much – why? Can you figure out how the artwork is constructed and suspended?

**Drawing in the round.** Make a series of drawings from different viewpoints, exploring apparent changes in size and scale of the sculpture. Include the gallery space in your drawing.

**Environmental footprints/global economics.** Do you know where China and Italy are on a globe or map? Consider the journeys made by both blocks of marble and their carbon footprints.

## Gallery 4



**Simon Starling**  
Installation Image  
© Tate

Works in this gallery draw attention to Starling's concern with micro/macro scale comparisons: the enormity of open cast mining and huge expense involved in the production of tiny amounts of platinum. He also contrasts the working memory of early, physically huge computers and the digital image production capabilities of modern technologies. The subject of mining is explored both on the environmental scale and in the production of artworks composed of the mined material itself.

**Scale comparisons/mathematical ratios.** Consider how Starling uses scale and ratio in the transformation of raw material into finished artwork. What other examples of scale and ratio can you discover in the artist's work? Look closely at the fine detail of the artworks in this room – what similarities and differences can you see? Think about the size of digital/electronic equipment today (the objects are small but the memory is vast).

**Expensive ore.** Do you know what platinum looks like or that it was used in expensive photographs? What other uses of platinum do you know? Make comparisons between the luxury metal, platinum, and the uses of china clay, mined locally in Cornwall. Does your sketchbook feel smooth and shiny? Do you think the paper contains china clay, which is also known as kaolin?

**Energy consumption/sustainability.** Huge amounts of energy are needed to mine ore; consider the carbon footprint of extracting platinum in South Africa or china clay in Cornwall. Where does china clay travel after being mined in Cornwall? – track these journeys on a map. Does Starling's work make you think about the process of making objects?

**Lost world discoveries.** How do you think the feather fossil came to be in the stone? What might have happened to this animal? Invent drawings about the missing link between dinosaurs and birds. Imagine you discover a fossil that has never been seen before – what creature have you found?

## Gallery 3



**Simon Starling**

*Red Rivers (In Search of the Elusive Okapi)* 2009

Photo: Cary Whittier, Kasper Akhøj, Simon Starling

This gallery contains a 24min video called *Red Rivers*, 2009 referring to two journeys: one made by the botanist/naturalist Herbert Lang in 1909, tracking the rare okapi in the Belgian Congo (this story is retold in an audio narrative) and another made by Starling and a friend on a tributary of the Hudson river. The screen shows photographic stills of Starling's journey being developed in a dark room. This gallery is a darkened space.

**The Red Filter.** The red filter refers to the red light used in a darkroom in a pre-digital photography age; a fast disappearing technology. It could also refer to the okapi being on the red endangered species list. What atmosphere does the red light create? How do you feel in this space?

**The rare Okapi.** Do you know what the okapi looks like – or the Congo? Listen to the soundtrack and make drawings in your sketchbook about how you imagine this creature to look and the environment it lives in.

**Journeys.** Starling makes comparisons between an Edwardian Congo journey and his own seven-day canoe trip. The canoe was made with African hardwood, striped like the okapi and its design was based on a Native American canoe. Imagine a journey you would like to make – think about what you would find, who you would take with you, and the transport you would invent for your journey. Can you storyboard this?

## Apse



### Simon Starling

*Project for a Masquerade (Hiroshima) 2010*

*Installation Image*

© Tate

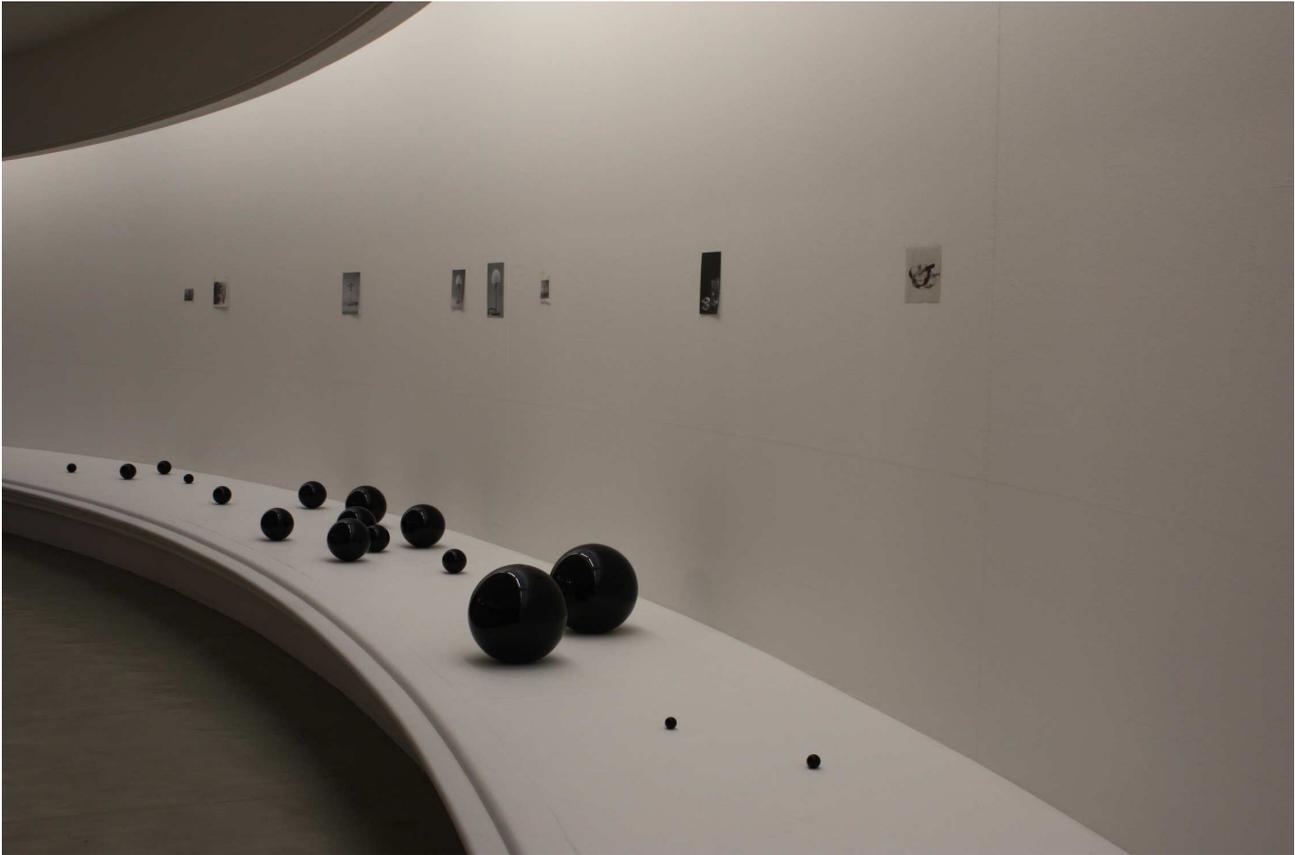
This space exhibits cast and carved masks based on a version of a sixteenth-century Japanese Noh play ([www.japan-zone.com](http://www.japan-zone.com)) which Starling has adapted and mixed with modern Western characters. One mask refers to a sculpture by Henry Moore *Atom piece/Nuclear Energy*, which was commissioned by the University of Chicago to mark the site of the first self-sustaining nuclear reaction.

**Personal reinvention.** Wearing a mask can transform you into another character; the Hat Maker (a hero in the Japanese play) mask is based on Henry Moore's face. Putting on a mask invites a new identity; how would you like to reinvent yourself? Make sketchbook drawings about your ideas.

**Elephant skull or atom bomb?** Moore's sculpture is ambiguous; elements of an elephant skull, a human skull and an atomic mushroom cloud might all be seen in the sculpture itself. Discuss how these ideas can be found in the *Ushiwaka/Atom Piece & Nuclear Energy* mask. Design a mask that brings together animal and human characteristics.

**Dramatic narratives.** What sort of characters do these masks make you think about? Where might they be from and what are their stories? What names would you invent for them? Write the keywords in your notebooks.

## Upper Gallery 2



**Simon Starling**

*300:1 (After Wilhelm Wagenfeld)* 2010

Installation Image

© Tate

This display shows half-tone photographs of modernist glassware by the Bauhaus designer Wilhelm Wagenfeld. Starling has scaled up (300:1) the dots in the areas where the pins obscure the photographic image; the black glass balls on the floor represent the obscured sections three-dimensionally.

**Scale/maths/pattern.** Is it easy to imagine what an enlargement of 300 times looks like? Make size comparisons between the smaller dots which recreate lighter areas in the photograph and the larger balls which derive from the darker areas. Identify patterns within the hand-blown glass sculpture.

**Homage to Modernist industrial design.** Many designs from the modernist period, especially those from the German school called the Bauhaus, are still used in contemporary interiors. Do any of the objects in the photographs look familiar? Do you have any similar objects in your home? Use your sketchbook to design a new lamp for your room.

**Handmade or mass produced?** Many Bauhaus designs were intended for industrial production, although the first designs were handmade. Starling chooses to use hand-blown glass balls. Is it easy to distinguish between handmade and industrially-produced objects? Do you have any handmade objects at home? Make a list of handmade objects you own.

## Studio



### Simon Starling

*Inventar-Nr 8573 (Man Ray) 4m-400nm 2006*

Courtesy the artist and neugerriemschneider, Berlin

The projected slides zoom in on a photograph kept in a storeroom in the Abteiburg Museum in Germany - an underground location that mirrors this enclosed space at Tate St Ives. The image is manipulated by increasingly zooming in with an electron microscope until individual silver particles that make up the photograph can be seen.

**Scientific scale/viewpoints.** Have you ever looked through a microscope? Or used Google Earth to zoom in on your house? Talk about how the silver particle changes shape and structure as the image gets closer and closer and make quick drawings in your sketchbook.

**Digital zooming.** Use cameras to present distant and close up photographs – how close can you get with these? Do you think images get more abstract as the camera zooms in?

**Silver.** Did you know that silver was once used in the technology of photography? Make a group list of objects you think are made with silver.

## Lower Gallery 2



### Simon Starling

*Pier (for Autoxylopyrocycloboros 2006 and St Ives Harbour and Godrevy 1934-8) 2010*

© Tate

This Gallery contains a major commission for Tate St Ives: an actual size replica of a gallery space from the Pier Art Centre, Stromness ([www.pierartscentre.com](http://www.pierartscentre.com)). Inside this sculpture is an Alfred Wallis painting depicting a steamboat in Cornwall, and a slide projection of a steamboat journey on a Scottish loch with an unusual outcome. Simon Starling exhibited the slide projection work in the Pier Art Centre in 2009.

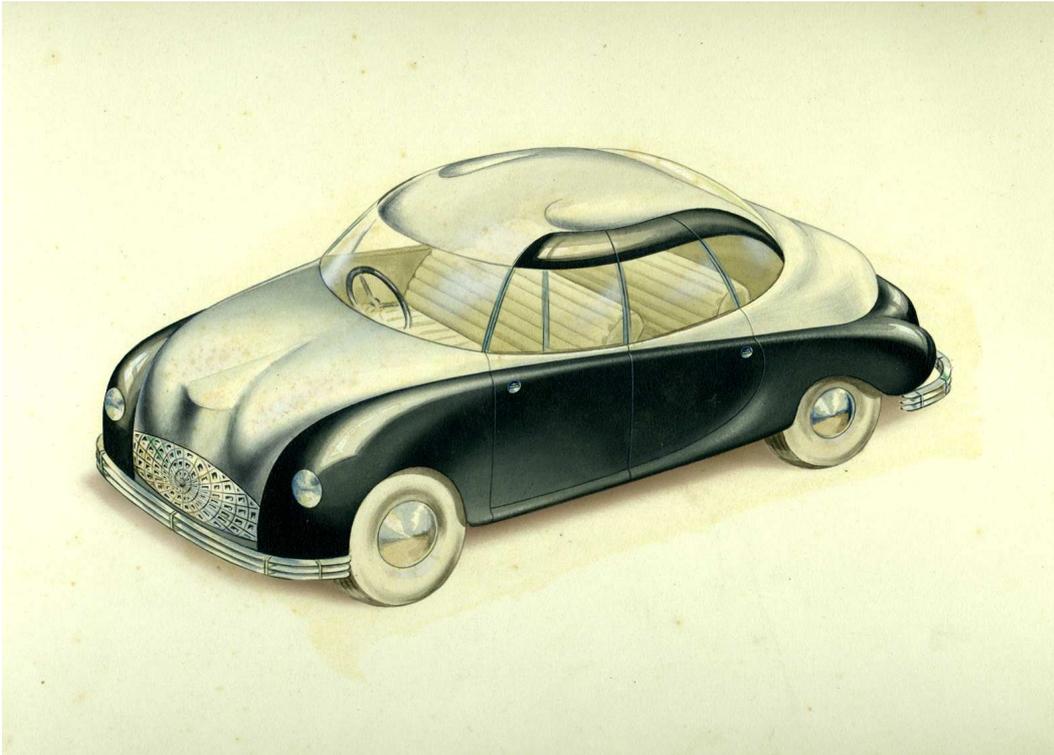
**First thoughts.** What do you think about when you first see the outside of this installation? Is the interior what you expected it to be? Why do you think Starling recreated this space here – what are the similarities and differences between Scotland and Cornwall?

**Folding space.** Stromness is in the far north of Scotland and St Ives is in the far south west of England, but they are connected by the St Ives Artists' Colony. A friend of Barbara Hepworth's, Margaret Gardiner, founded the Pier Arts Centre in 1979 to display the work of St Ives artists from her private collection. Fold a map to bring two distant places together and see if you can discover any connections between them.

**Estimating scale.** How big do you think this work is? Estimate the size by counting your footsteps walking by, or how many people with linked arms it takes to measure it. Write the numbers down and work out measurement estimates in metres when you are back in school.

**Pod den.** Imagine you could have a tiny pod room inside your own house or classroom, just for you. Draw what you would put inside this special den and what it would look like from the outside and develop this into a box model. Design a group work that recreates a favourite space inside your classroom, thinking about the materials you would use to build the structure and what you would put inside.

## Gallery 1: The Design Research Unit



**Naum Gabo**

*Model for a Jowett car c1943*

Courtesy of Tate Archive

©Nina and Graham Williams

DRU was founded on the principles of an integrated practice, including artists, architects and industrial engineers and designers, working in a cross-disciplinary manner. This display includes archive photographs, prints and industrial prototypes and also features related work from St Ives artists in the Tate Collection. St Ives artists who were commissioned by DRU included Naum Gabo and Bernard Leach, who worked on a car design and Barbara Hepworth and Ben Nicholson, who designed textiles.

**Car prototype.** Do these early designs remind you of any modern cars? What are the similarities and differences?

**Technology and materials.** Gabo was using cutting-edge materials developed by science and industry; Perspex from ICI was a new material in sculpture and the car was to include vinyl flooring and nylon seat covers. What modern materials could you use to make car design futuristic? Draw your ideas in your sketchbook.

**Curved lines connections.** Look at Gabo's *Spiral Theme* sculpture – does this suggest any natural crystal or growth forms? Can you identify similar lines and curves in the car design?

**Art and design.** Some of the commercial designs and logos displayed will look familiar and we may not think of them as being created by artists. Gather together examples of symbols/logos used in our everyday lives and analyse what message the colours, shapes and patterns describe. Could you design your own?

## Resources

The Internal Guide to this exhibition provides further information. Pick one up free in the gallery spaces or download from (.....)

Brumwell, M (2010) **Bright Ties, Bold Ideas**

Cox, I (1951) **The South Bank Exhibition: A Guide to the Story it Tells**

Francés, F, Clark, M and Badisa, M (2010) **Simon Starling: Recent History** (exh cat Tate St Ives)

Jackson, L (2008) **From Atoms to Patterns: Crystal Structure Designs from the 1951 Festival of Britain**

Read, H (1934) **Art and Industry**

Rennie, P (2007) **Design: Festival of Britain 1951**

Rosenberg, A, Heynen, J and Eichler, D (2009) **Simon Starling: Under Lime** (exh cat Temporäre Kunsthalle Berlin)

Serota, N and Gooding, M (2010) **An Unfolding Gift: The Piers Arts Centre Collection**

Speight, S and Martin, L (1939) **The Flat Book**

Starling, S and Engberg, J (2001) **Simon Starling: Front to Back**

Galerie für Zeitgenössische Kunst Leipzig (1999) **Simon Starling** (exh cat)

[www.cubittartists.org.uk](http://www.cubittartists.org.uk)

[www.tate.org.uk/britain/turnerprize/2005/simonstarling.htm](http://www.tate.org.uk/britain/turnerprize/2005/simonstarling.htm)

[www.themoderninstitute.com/artists/27/bio](http://www.themoderninstitute.com/artists/27/bio).

[www.tate.org.uk/britain/turnerprize/2005/simonstarling.htm](http://www.tate.org.uk/britain/turnerprize/2005/simonstarling.htm).

[www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,2-1905555,00.html](http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,2-1905555,00.html)

[http://diglib1.amnh.org/articles/okapi/lg\\_1709.html](http://diglib1.amnh.org/articles/okapi/lg_1709.html)

### **Simon Starling Biographical Details**

b Epsom, Surrey 1967

Maidstone College of Art 1986-7

Trent Polytechnic 1987-90

Glasgow School of Art 1990-92

Committee member of Transmission Gallery Glasgow 1993-9

First recipient Blinky Palermo Grant 1999

2005 professor at Städelschule in Frankfurt am Main

Lives and works in Berlin and Copenhagen

[www.tate.org.uk](http://www.tate.org.uk) .Visit the Tate website for glossary

**Diorama:** A three-dimensional miniature or life-size scene in which figures, stuffed wildlife, or other objects are arranged in a naturalistic setting against a painted background.

**Bauhaus:** Revolutionary school of art, architecture and design established by the pioneer modern architect Walter Gropius at Weimar in Germany (1919). Its teaching method replaced the traditional pupil-teacher relationship with the idea of a community of artists working together. Its aim was to bring art back into contact with everyday life, and design was therefore given as much weight as fine art.

## Ideas for follow up and Extended Projects

**Industry and a sense of place.** The marble for *The Long Ton* was quarried in Italy and China; Cornish quarries produced granite, notably granite from the Lamorna quarry that was transported to London for Tower Bridge. Identify these places on a map. Can you imagine the hard labour involved in producing materials for sculptures and industry?

**Suspension/mobiles.** Further extend the workbook by building card or *papier mâché* objects derived from ideas of global products and trades. Use these to develop a large group mobile; investigating the work of Alexander Calder and Cornelia Parker may provide inspiration.

**Scale and reproductions.** Use ICT to copy an image and to scale it up or down. Develop this idea into a photographic, painting or sculpture project that explores the idea of rescaling.

**Balancing acts and equilibrium.** Using found objects and recycled materials construct a series of sculptures which develops the idea of balance/imbalance.

**Global connections.** Develop a workbook exploring your own personal ideas of values and equivalents from objects around the world. What would you balance in equilibrium – how can you measure value? Extend these ideas into a PowerPoint presentation using images, maps and text.

**Shaping the landscape.** *China Clay Stack* is formed from a photograph Starling took at the clay pits in Cornwall, printed on paper with high kaolin content, bringing together this small sculpture and the environmental scale of the landscape. Research examples of how human activity shapes the environment, both locally and globally, as the starting point for a finished art work.

**Historical narratives.** *Archaeopteryx Lithographica* makes connections between quarrying for lithographic stone in the nineteenth century, and an ancient fossilised feather discovered in this stone. This important fossil proved to be the missing palaeontological link between birds and dinosaurs. Invent a narrative about your own locality. What might be hidden, waiting to be discovered?

**Transformers.** Discuss how materials have been transformed; ore from the land becomes photographic prints, china clay from the ground becomes a part of a paper sculpture. Can you find other examples of transformation?

**Technologies in time.** The display includes an installation of a retro Dresden D1 film projector, which projects a digital animation of part of the first Z1 computer. This 30 second computer generated animation uses 22,686,575 times more memory capacity than the Z1 had. Starling emphasises the way changing technology impacts on people and the environment; the projector is mechanical yet projects images generated digitally, then transferred to 35mm film. Use ICT to develop these ideas into a piece of art.

**Journeys.** Use maps, the globe and the internet to research and produce a display about Lang's journey in the Belgian Congo, Starling's trip on the Hoosic and Hudson rivers, the Museum of Natural History in New York ([www.amnh.org](http://www.amnh.org)) and the rare okapi.

**Time Zones.** Consider the two time zones in *Red Rivers (In Search of the Elusive Okapi)* the voiceover is about 1909, but the images are contemporary. Make a short video using your phone or a camera, then record a voiceover on a voice recorder that refers to a different event. What effect does this have on the way you view this?

**Imagining the view.** Describe the view you imagine from the Pier Art Gallery in Stromness; what colour is the sea there? Do you imagine rocks, cliffs or sandunes? Do you think the gallery is in a town or in the countryside? What's the weather like outside? How is it different from St Ives? Use your sketchbook to make drawings of imaginary views from the windows of the original building.

**Cornish lives and Orkney lives display.** Make a group display that investigates the similarities and differences of lives at these extreme ends of the UK. What are the landscapes/seascapes like? How does the architecture look different? Find out what work people do in the areas. Look at weather and temperatures in the areas. How different are names of places? What sports do people do? Use maps to work out how far away from each other these places are. Look at the places on Google Earth. What wildlife would you find on the two seashores? Make a display that uses text, maps, photographs, drawings, objects and models.

**Literary connectives.** Make up a story about something that happened in an artwork using these words to connect your ideas: once upon a time, one day, first, then, next, after that, after a while, a moment later, meanwhile, soon, at that moment, suddenly, unfortunately, unluckily, luckily, so although, the next day, however, as soon as, now, eventually, finally.

**Story drawing.** When you have listened to the story you have all invented, draw a flow chart or storyboard in your sketchbook.

**Changing spaces.** Take a photograph of your own room using your digital camera or phone, then use ICT to research places and maps where you would like your room to be replicated. Imagine what the new view would be like from your window. Create photocollages or make drawings and paintings from your research.

**Excavation encounters with nature.** *Undercroft /Inversion 2011* continues the theme of strata and excavation deep in the voids underneath Tate St Ives. Imagine digging deep into the layers of a familiar landscape. Discuss what human history you might discover in the excavation. What might have happened in this space in the distant past?

**Commercial icons and logos.** How many icons and logos can you recognise? Why do you think some designs have great longevity? What branding do you consider iconic today? Research artist like Andy Warhol who made connections between graphic design and fine art and develop a project from your workbook.