



TEACHER RESOURCE NOTES KS3-4

NASHASHIBI/SKAER

THINKING THROUGH OTHER ARTISTS

20 October 2018 – 6 January 2019



R.B. Kitaj
Man with Matisse Tattoo 1978
Screenprint on paper
© The estate of R. B. Kitaj
Tate

ST IVES AND ITS LEGACY

For more than a century, St Ives has been part of an international network of artists and artistic movements. Among its early visitors were painters, including Joseph Mallord William Turner, who were drawn to St Ives' spectacular natural setting and the quality of the light. By the end of the nineteenth century, St Ives had become internationally renowned for its marine and landscape painting tradition.

From the late 1930s, St Ives became an important centre for artists working in a broader movement known as modernism, which rejected styles of the past and instead embraced experimentation with forms, materials and techniques that better reflected modern society. Attracting a number of artists from Britain and abroad, including the sculptor Barbara Hepworth, whose former home and studio is now the Barbara Hepworth Museum, St Ives became a hub for exchange of ideas locally and internationally, and remains a thriving artist community today.

THE NEW TATE ST IVES: THE FACTS

The four-year building project has doubled the space for showing art, adding almost 600 square metres of galleries.

It was created using concrete pouring and moulds –it was done by Welsh specialists who used to sing in chorus on site all day.

The granite is from De Lank quarry in Bodmin, Cornwall.

The faience tiles were made by Richard Miller, owner of Froyle Tiles and the on-screen technician of the Great British Pottery Throwdown.

To create this new gallery, it was necessary to dig into the hillside behind the original Tate St Ives. During the digging, a very hard rock known as Blue Elvan presented a challenging drilling period. In the end, 922 lorry loads of soil and rock were removed to make way for the new Tate St Ives.



Aerial view of the gallery © St Ives tv

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

PRE-VISIT ACTIVITIES

To maximise the enjoyment and value of the visit please consider doing one or more of these activities before your visit.

Discuss what a gallery is

What do you think is the purpose of a gallery?

Do galleries have a responsibility to show certain types of art? Should galleries show artwork that is controversial or may offend some people?

Who are galleries for?

Who chooses the artwork that is on display?

How do you think they choose which artists and artworks are shown?

Do you think that the artwork on display is meaningful to a diverse range of people?

Ask your students about any galleries or museums they have been to and what they saw there. What did they like and dislike and why? We'd love to hear what they think of our gallery too.

Words to investigate

These words/phrases may be used in the exhibition. They are explained in the gallery activity sheets but it could be helpful to talk about them before you come. Lots of useful definitions for art terms can be found at <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms>

Shape	Composition	Structure
Form	3 Dimensional	Inspiration
Surface	Ceramic	Curate
Texture	Global cultures	Connection
Line		

Artists to investigate

Rosalind Nashashibi, Lucy Skaer, Henri Matisse, Paul Nash, Winifred Nicholson, Paul Gauguin, Vanessa Bell, Louise Bourgeois, Gauri Gill and Rajesh Vangad.

We recommend that **teachers make a planning visit to the exhibition** to familiarise themselves with the galleries. For **practical information** about your visit including travel, facilities, use of art materials and gallery guidelines please visit

www.tate.org.uk/learn/teachers/school-visit-tate-st-ives

Please note that the exhibition contains flashing images, nudity and themes of a challenging nature which some visitors might find distressing.

Please photocopy, the **Activity Sheets** prior to your visit for your students.

WAYS IN: A FRAMEWORK FOR LOOKING

Some questions to ask:

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/make this subject frequently?
- How do you think the artist has made the work? What **materials** and **processes** have they used?
- 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? Where / When?
- Does the title tell you anything more? Explain.
- 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? Explain?
- Is there a story or narrative in the work?
- Does it have a cultural, social or political meaning? Explain.
- Does it tell us about an issue or theme? If so what?
- Does it relate to our lives today? How?
- Does the title affect the meaning of the work? How?

Art in context: what else can we discover?

- Is the work about a particular place or person? Explain.
- 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? Explain.
- Does the work say anything about our society? Explain.
- Does the work relate to a particular period in history? Explain.

GALLERY 5 & 6: TEACHER NOTES

NASHASHIBI/SKAER THINKING THROUGH OTHER ARTISTS

This exhibition combines films made by artists Rosalind Nashashibi and Lucy Skaer with their own selection of works that reflect on and add new meaning to their films.

Rosalind Nashashibi and Lucy Skaer work independently as artists and have been collaborating as Nashashibi/Skaer since 2005. Their work is made mostly using 16mm film and explores a range of contemporary concerns through art, artists, people and places that interest them. One film adopts the artist Paul Gauguin's gaze on nineteenth century Polynesian women, while others reconsider works by Henri Matisse and Paul Nash, a museum in New York at night, and a diplomat's residence in Hong Kong.

This exhibition brings together Nashashibi/Skaer's films with a selection of works they have chosen from the Tate collection and other sources. Each film becomes a starting point to explore key themes that resonate across the exhibition, from the **portrayal of women** and the **representation of global cultures** to the **effects of war**. By presenting the various works together, Nashashibi/Skaer reflect on how the power of objects and images changes over time. Some of these ideas are suggested in texts accompanying each film and in an online guide, but the artists also encourage you to **find your own connections between the works on show**.

To listen to recordings of Nashashibi/Skaer discussing the exhibition or to access other information, go to www.tate.org.uk/nashashibi-skaer-guide.

Please note that the exhibition contains flashing images, nudity and themes of a challenging nature.

Photography is permitted however there are some exceptions, indicated by 'no photography' signs by the artworks.

Questions to ask:

Rosalind Nashashibi and Lucy Skaer explore key themes in this exhibition: the **portrayal of women**, the **representation of global cultures** and issues around the **effect of war**. As a group discuss **how** they are they explored.

The artists would like you to see what **connections** you can make between the art works. It could be something you can see or hear, how an artwork makes you feel, a colour, a shape, a theme or idea. Discuss the connections you find.

There are lots of films in this exhibition. When is a film an artwork?
Is it different watching a film in a gallery to at home on TV or in the cinema?
Why?

Which artwork interests you the most? Why?

Which artwork do you like least? Why?

GALLERY 5: TEACHER NOTES

NASHASHIBI/SKAER THINKING THROUGH OTHER ARTISTS

AMBASSADOR 2005

Ambassador is a film portrait of Stephen Bradley, the British Consul-General to Hong Kong from 2004–8. The highest British diplomatic post in that territory, the Consul-General has been a largely symbolic role since Hong Kong ceased being a British colony in 1997. Nashashibi/Skaer's two-screen film follows Bradley going about his daily routines at his residence, which in its grandeur recalls the power the UK once held in Hong Kong. The artists show him both at rest and at work, emphasising the contrast between his individual personality and his status as a diplomatic symbol.

This film captures themes which recur across the exhibition, particularly related to **changes in political powers** and **the cultural value of objects and buildings**. It also connects more directly with other works on show. Intimate, small-scale watercolours made by Elena Narbutaitė take on a monumental presence as wall height prints for public display, mirroring how the Consul-General moves between private and public life in Nashashibi/Skaer's film.

Questions to ask:

Why did the artists use a two-screen format to show this film?

What is the impact of having the film running in a different way at the same time?

What do you think the artists are exploring through this film?

Can you see any connections between the film and the other artworks on display?

GALLERY 5&6: ACTIVITY SHEET



Look at all the artworks in this gallery...the artists encourage you to find your own connections between the works on show.

Choose two artworks that you feel have a connection with each other.

Artist: _____ Artist: _____

Title: _____ Title: _____

What connections
can you see?

What interests you
about these
artworks?

How do these artworks explore
any of the exhibition themes: The
portrayal of women, the
representation of global cultures
and issues around **the effects of
war?**

Make a careful sketch below of one of the artworks you have chosen.

Does sketching
the artwork
change the way
that you see it?

GALLERY 2: TEACHER NOTES

NASHASHIBI/SKAER THINKING THROUGH OTHER ARTISTS

OUR MAGNOLIA 2009

This film centres on Paul Nash's painting *Flight of the Magnolia* 1944 – also on display – which was inspired by his experiences of the Second World War. Nash's painting transforms the shapes of clouds into an airborne magnolia flower, which also recalls an explosion or a cluster of parachutes. In a similarly dream-like way, Nashashibi/Skaer's film blends footage of Nash's painting with real magnolia flowers, a beached whale carcass, the former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, and the director of the National Museum of Iraq distraught by war damage and looting at the museum.

This film's reflection on conflict also links it to other works by Nash on display such as *Totes Meer* 1941, which morphs a seascape into a graveyard of warplanes. Nashashibi/Skaer's exploration of transformation and dreams are echoed in an installation by Rossella Biscotti, made of compost from a women's prison in Venice, Italy, moulded into shapes inspired by the prison's floorplan and paired with audio of prisoners retelling their dreams. Elsewhere, just as the film ends with a mass of scratched lines obscuring the image, a photograph by Gauri Gill is transformed by drawings that Rajesh Vangad has added to its surface.

FLASH IN THE METROPOLITAN 2006

Nashashibi/Skaer shot this film in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York with the lights off. Made with a 16mm film camera moving along a track, it shows a range of objects from the museum's collection, which are each briefly spot lit by studio lamps. While museum displays often group together artefacts and remove them from their original cultural context, the act of illumination in this film brings back focus to the individual characteristics of each object.

In making this exhibition, Nashashibi/Skaer have similarly brought together objects from different places and time periods to provoke new interpretations. Some of the other works on show build on this idea, such as a photograph by Claude Cahun capturing a reflection of her face among objects on display in the British Museum, London. Nashashibi/Skaer's use of flashes to highlight objects echoes a nearby series of late paintings by Winifred Nicholson, for which she used glass prisms to look differently at the world around her.

GALLERY 6: ACTIVITY SHEET

NASHASHIBI/SKAER THINKING THROUGH OTHER ARTISTS



LOOK at the film *Our Magnolia* 2009...the film centres on Paul Nash's *Flight of the Magnolia* 1944, also on display.

How do you think the artists have explored Nash's *Flight of the Magnolia* 1944 through this film? Does seeing the film make you view Nash's artwork differently?

Discuss the absence of sound in the film and what you can hear in the space.

Consider Rossella Biscotti's work, *I dreamt that you changed into a cat...gatto...ha ha ha*, 2013

Why has the artist used compost?

What connections can you make between this artwork and any others in the exhibition?

Find a *Ceramic Sketch* that interests you and try drawing it in the space opposite.

Artist: _____

Title: _____

Discuss any connections you see between this artwork and others on display.

GALLERY 6: ACTIVITY SHEET

NAME: _____

NASHASHIBI/KAER THINKING THROUGH OTHER ARTISTS



Look at the film *Flash in the Metropolitan* 2006...

Does the way that the artists
have filmed the objects make
you see them any differently?

How does this film **connect**
with other artworks on display?

Look carefully at *The Eye in the Sky* 2014-16 by Gauri Gill and Rajesh Vanhgard.

Try creating your own dream landscape inspired by this artwork in the space below

TITLE.....

GALLERY 6: TEACHER NOTES

NASHASHIBI/SKAER THINKING THROUGH OTHER ARTISTS

PYGMALION EVENT 2008

This dual-projection film by Nashashibi/Skaer explores the Rosary Chapel in Vence on the French Riviera designed by Henri Matisse from 1948 to 1952. In one projection, the chapel's priest puts on a selection of Matisse's colourful robes. A second projection presents a sequence of colours, landscapes and scenes that seem to mirror the events of the first projection. The film's title comes from the Ancient Greek myth of the sculptor Pygmalion, who falls in love with one of his sculptures, which then comes to life. This 'event' of transformation is echoed in how the priest brings Matisse's work to life.

Nashashibi/Skaer have chosen works by Matisse and other artists for this exhibition that can be related to *Pygmalion Event*. A print by R.B. Kitaj, for example, shows a man covered with a tattoo of a Matisse painting; he wears the artist's work much like the priest in Matisse's robes. In general, just as the film inspires deliberate or accidental associations between the two projections, Nashashibi/Skaer encourage visitors to make **their own links** between works in this exhibition.

WHY ARE YOU ANGRY? 2017

Taking its title from an 1896 painting by the artist Paul Gauguin, this film explores his depictions of Polynesian women. Nashashibi/Skaer retraced Gauguin's travels to Tahiti, an island in French Polynesia, asking women they met to appear in this film. In some scenes, the women go about their daily lives with independence and self-determination. In others – many of which restage Gauguin's paintings – they are motionless in directed poses that may be uncomfortable to view. By imitating Gauguin's gaze, but stripping away the myth of the artist and using film instead of paint, Nashashibi/Skaer call into question his representations of women.

Many works in the exhibition connect with these ideas, including those by Gauguin himself, some of which inspired scenes in the film. Paintings and sculptures by other French modern artists raise similar questions around their depictions of women. In bathroom views by Pierre Bonnard and bronze figures by Henri Matisse, the nude subjects turn away from the viewer, a gesture that might equally be seen as defiant or passive. In contrast, there are also works by more recent women artists, some showing women powerfully representing themselves. These include Louise Bourgeois' depictions of her own creativity, Lee Miller's self-portrait in Adolf Hitler's bath and Jo Spence's photographs of herself dying in hospital.

NASHASHIBI/SKAER THINKING THROUGH OTHER ARTISTS



Look at the film *Pygmalion Event* 2008....

This dual-projection film by Nashashibi/Skaer explores the Rosary Chapel designed by **Henri Matisse** in Vence on the French Riviera.

What **connections** can you see between the priest, wearing a selection of Matisse's colourful robes, and the images in the second projection?

The film's title comes from the Ancient Greek myth of the sculptor **Pygmalion**, who falls in love with one of his sculptures, which then comes alive. Why do you think the artists have chosen this title for the film?

Can you find any other artworks that **connect** to Matisse or *Pygmalion Event* 2008?
Draw one that interests you in the space below.

Artist:

Title:

NASHASHIBI/SKAER THINKING THROUGH OTHER ARTISTS



LOOK at all the film *Why Are You Angry?* 2017...

Nashashibi/Skaer are interested in exploring the depiction of women - questioning how they are represented by Gauguin and other French Modern artists in this exhibition.

Discuss together how the film and Gauguin's work make you feel in terms of how women are represented?

Consider other artworks in this exhibition that represent women.

Choose an artwork whose representation of women interests you and make a careful sketch of it in the space below.

Discuss why you chose it?

How do you feel that this artwork represents women?

Does it do so in a positive or negative way? Why?

Artist:.....

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Title:.....

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