

London Art & Photography trip - Tuesday 7th February 2012

It was decided that it would be very beneficial to organise a trip to London in the first week that students receive their exam titles. Part of the exam criteria requires pupils to have had first hand experience of art work and this kind of visit would be strongly encouraged.

Unfortunately Mrs Stokes was unable to partake due to a recent fall limiting the amount of time she could walk comfortably. Mrs Holwill, having completed a recci the week before, had plotted times and locations in detail and so led the trip with the aid of Mr Turnbull, Mr Stokes and Alex Mc Carthy.

Leaving at 6am, with packed breakfast and lunch on board, we travelled to Exeter St Davids to catch the 7.20am train to Waterloo.

At this time in the morning the train was empty and we successfully secured an entire carriage for the Thirty six 5th and 6th form art and photography students.

We arrived in London at 10.55am disembarked and registered at the station before walking to our first venue The Tate Britain. A 30-minute, cold but sunny, walk past the London Eye under Westminster bridge and across Lambeth Bridge and down Milbank brought us to our destination by 11.30am After a quick group photo, near snowy remnants on the steps of the Tate, students and staff spent an hour and a half in the gallery snapping pictures and sketching the art work within.

From contemporary art in the foyer by Barry Flannigan to traditional works by artists like Turner, Picasso and Chris Ofilli. As well as experiencing the more obscure like Mike Nelson's Coral reef installation.

At 1.00 pm we left The Tate Britain and walked up through Whitehall and the Victoria Gardens taking in the architecture of the Houses of Parliament and the War Memorial sculptures. We walked past Number 10 Downing Street and Horse Guards Parade towards Trafalgar Square and our second and third venues the National Gallery and the Portrait Gallery.

Having successfully negotiated the multiple crossings into Trafalgar Square, students organised their own time to eat lunch and explore the contents of these two galleries. The Olympic Clock, Lions, Nelson's column and the water fountains provided the background to many photographs and students also enjoyed the street entertainment taking place outside the entrance.

In the National gallery students were able to see work by Holbein, Da Vinci, Rembrandt, Monet and Van Gogh.

In the Portrait Gallery, apart from riding one of the longest escalators in London, students could see work by such artists as Richard Hamilton, Julian Opie, Frank Auerbach and some of the sketches from the new exhibition by Lucian Freud.

Successfully gathered at 3pm on the steps of Trafalgar Square we briefed everyone on the next stage of the day. We set off down Northumberland Avenue across the Hungerford Bridge giving the

photographers and artists alike the opportunity to take photos of the London Eye, Parliament and the Thames in general. A pleasant walk along the Southbank followed, past the National Theatre, the Oxo tower and the new Blackfriars underground station.

At 3.30pm we arrived at The Tate Modern students spread out and moved throughout the Turbine Hall, which currently hosts an installation by artist Tacita Dean and subsequent levels. Photographers taking full advantage of the 'New documentary forms' exhibition, showing work by photographers such as Luc Delahaye, Mitch Epstein, Guy Tillim and Akram Zaatari, as well as two important earlier works by Boris Mikhailov.

As we had met all predicted time allocations at each location we were afforded a somewhat leisurely twilight stroll back down the Southbank using this opportunity to photograph London lit up.

Arriving at Waterloo in plenty of time students were afforded a comfort break and the opportunity to purchase tea from the many food vendors. Armed with noodles, baguettes and burgers we embarked the south west train at 6.20pm on mass and began the 3 ½ hour journey home. A tired but happy crowd met the coach in Exeter at 9.45pm and we all arrived back to a chilly Kelly by 10.45pm.

Students have gathered sketches, photographs, memorabilia and memories which will undoubtedly enhance this year's GCSE, AS and A level Photography and Art examination coursework. It was a long day but feedback has confirmed that this was a very successful experience, four galleries in one day is a huge achievement but one which many appreciated. It is our hope that this will be repeated for exam students again next year.

Report by Mrs Holwill