

AN artSOUTH PROJECT: Ringwood Academy



The People

artSOUTH
Ringwood Academy
Arts University Bournemouth & Art Gallery
Lizzie Jones
Jo Willoughby

The Project

Lead artists: Lizzie Jones and Jo Willoughby. Taking inspiration from Claire Barclay and Tom Hall, we explored puppetry, improvisation, making with cardboard and the schools existing theme of 'A Brave New World'.

We began with a starting point of Claire Barclay's workshops and the idea of making puppet like objects to consider performing with. When considering materials, we were inspired by Tom Hall's installation and from this decided to use cardboard as our predominant material.

The aim of these sessions was an exploration into contemporary art within a fun and accessible framework, taking time to look at and understand the artSOUTH commissions, discussions, practical

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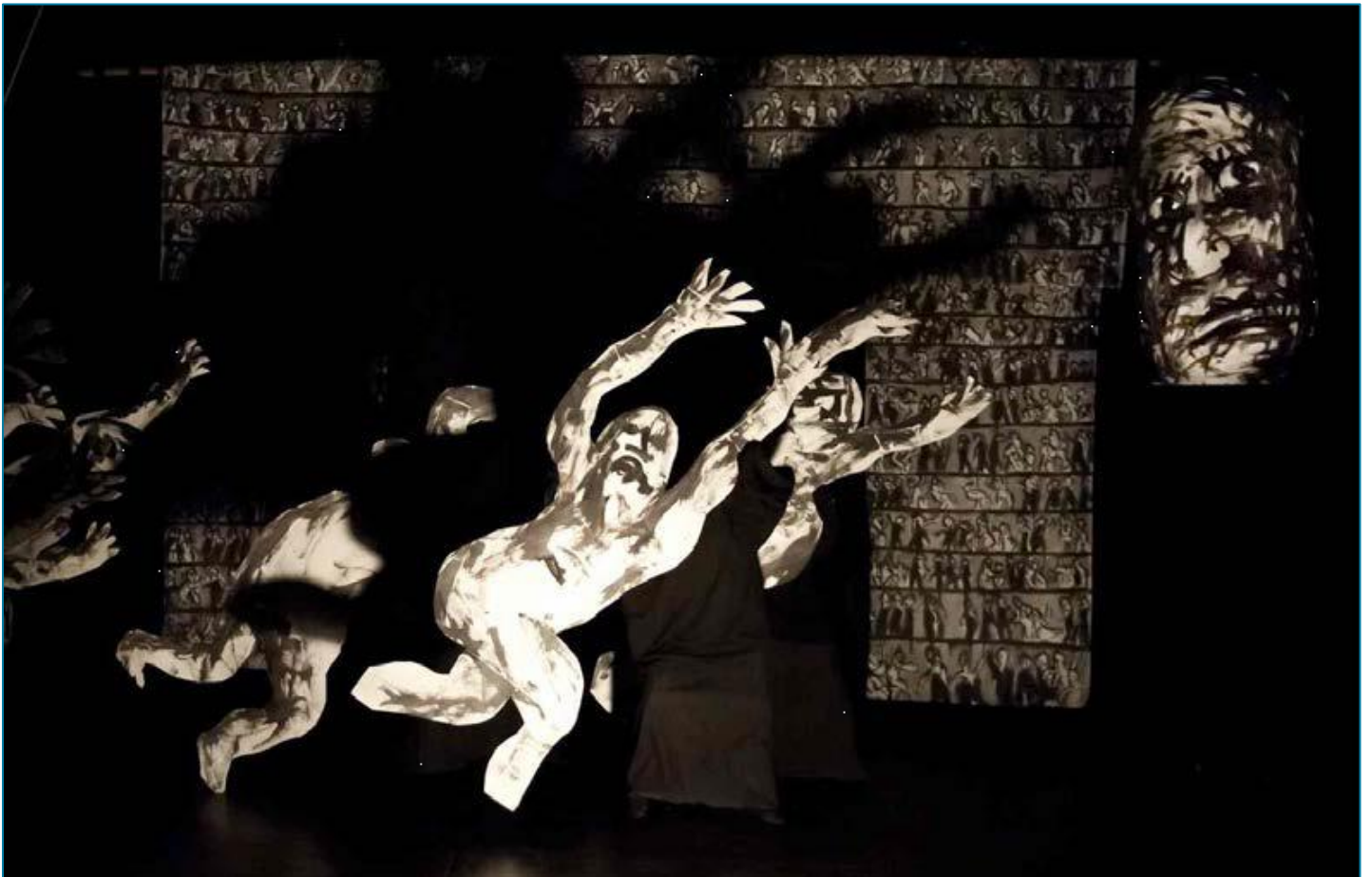
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exercises, improvisation, problem solving, collaboration and making.

Making included construction, using different tools to manipulate cardboard, working collaboratively, large painting, involving ourselves/the use of the figure within simple performance and also photography and film with which to record the outcome.

Workshop One

We began with an introduction of ourselves as working artists and gave a talk about our individual practices,



Still from Bread and Puppet Theatre film. Taken from The Audience Agency's 2014 artSOUTH Phase 2 Report.

We have learnt how to interpret art and that you can use anything to make art. I am inspired to become an artist.

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as well as our careers within the arts and galleries we are connected to. Following this, we introduced the work of Claire Barclay and Tom Hall and spoke at length about the artSOUTH commission. We began a discussion about their existing project, 'A Brave New World'. 'A Brave New World' is a segment of their Year 10 BTEC work which encourages them to think independently about ideas of a future world and imagine ways in which the world might change. We then discussed our thoughts on what they might make the following day, speaking about creating large scale works from cardboard, using 3D elements and movement to reflect their idea of a future world. The students had already been working in groups during this project, so we asked if they could jot down ideas of what their 'Brave New World' might resemble, asking questions like, "Who will be in control?", "What new technology will exist?", to get some ideas together for the following day's tasks. We then amalgamated these ideas and looked for similarities across the board.

Workshop Two

At the beginning of the second session, we ran through a few card manipulating techniques and showed the students images of artworks that had been created using card, as well as screening a video of the Bread and Puppet Theatre who use their own homemade puppets for performances.

They already had a lot of ideas of what they wanted to create so we then went straight into making. Each person was given a large sheet of card to use and working in groups they set about roughly planning, and then trying out the new ways of making we had introduced. This was a brilliant moment in the session where the process of experimenting with the materials began and the students utilised trial and error. It seemed the fact that they were working with relatively inexpensive materials which were abundant to them invigorated them to try out a lot of crazy ideas.

We encouraged them to think big (as big as the classroom allowed), to introduce 3D elements rather than sticking to the 2D frame of the rectangular cardboard. We also encouraged them to use the room, to hang things from the ceiling, to use the table as a stage for what they had built. During this process they used large scale cardboard, paint, glue guns, scalpels, card-cutting scissors, tape, cable ties, string, bamboo sticks, staple pliers and staple guns. When they had finished creating the visuals, we thought about sound and whether they would like to document their work with photography or film, with movement or static, or with them as a part of their work. After we documented



A vision of a dystopian future, Ringwood School pupils. Taken from the Audience Agency's 2014 artSOUTH Phase 2 Report.

what they wanted as an outcome, we discussed as a group the positives and negatives of the session, what they would do if they had more time, and opinions of each others' work.

Successes

- Because of time and planning constraints, instead of completing an Arts Award, our aim was to give a taster of what the award would be like. We feel that these two sessions met the aim of giving an insight into more diverse art practices, where emphasis was put on experimentation, improvising, collaboration, problem solving and thinking about the making process.
- The students reflected on and discussed the work of a range of artists that we introduced to them in addition to Claire Barclay and Tom Hall. We looked in depth at artSOUTH and the artists involved, as well as our own practices which gave them a good overview of considering what it is to be an artist as well as the possibilities of future careers in the arts.
- Our sessions had 25 students from a Year 10 BTEC class. The main teacher that we liaised with was Toni Butler, Art teacher at Ringwood academy school. Her response to the sessions was very enthusiastic; she was happy for the students to be experiencing activities beyond the curriculum and we believed that she gathered a lot of ideas for the future from

being involved in our sessions. She was also incredibly pleased with how the students worked together, saying that a lot of students who don't usually work well with others excelled in the tasks they were given. She found the outcomes particularly impressive and was surprised at the variety of work that had been created.

It has inspired me not to fully plan and to just experiment sometimes.

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- The students stated during the sessions that they had never worked on an artwork that was so big. It was great to see them thriving at the opportunity to be involved with a large scale project together and we think they benefited greatly from having the chance to work as a team. A few students that usually find it hard to concentrate in lessons worked particularly well at this task and produced some of the most ambitious work.



Challenges

- We also proposed to work with Bransgore CoE Primary School, using the inspiration behind the work of Lucy Orta who was exhibiting at The Gallery in Bournemouth. After a visit to the school to discuss the project, it was agreed that we would write a proposal so they could see how it would fit into the school's existing plans. After scepticism was voiced about potential problems with conveying the message and concept of Lucy Orta's work to Primary-aged pupils, we refocused the proposal based on Claire Barclay's work (also at The Gallery, Bournemouth).
- We also readjusted the plans in the hope that it would be less demanding workwise for the school in terms of organisation. Unfortunately, at this time, the proposal remains unsuccessful.

Suggested improvements for future projects

- Schedule more time into the equation – as previously mentioned, we were unable to complete Arts Award due to time and planning constraints – something we would have liked to have done given more time.

The project has inspired me to take risks and to not be afraid if I make a mistake.

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Recommendations for other organisations doing similar projects

- If possible, factor in more time for discussion so that the young people can elaborate further on their work – and talk about what they would have done better, or different, if they had longer etc.

How could the project partners best support this kind of work in the future?

- Longer time scale for the project overall.



Credits

Taken from: The Audience Agency's 2014
artSOUTH Phase 2 Report.

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