

RA



**Secondary and FE
Teacher Resource**
For teaching key stages 3–5

Sculpture in the RA Collection

A sculpture student at work in the RA Schools in 1953.
© Estate of Russell Westwood



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Illustrated key works with
information, quotes, key words,
questions, useful links and art
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To book your visit

Email studentgroups@royalacademy.org.uk or call
020 7300 5995

roy.ac/teachers

**'...we live in a world where
images are in abundance
and they're moving, [...] they're
doing all kinds of things, very
speedily. Whereas sculpture needs
to be given time, you need to just
wait with it and become the moving
object that it isn't, so this action
between the still and the moving is
incredibly demanding for all.'**

Phyllida Barlow RA

The Council of the Royal Academy selecting Pictures for the Exhibition, 1875, Russel Cope RA (1876). Photo: John Hammond



Introduction

What is the Royal Academy of Arts?

The Royal Academy (RA) was set up in 1768 and 2018 was its 250th anniversary. A group of artists and architects called Royal Academicians (or RAs) are in charge of governing the Academy.

There are a maximum of 80 RAs at any one time, and spaces for new Members only come up when an existing RA becomes a Senior Academician aged 75, or when an RA dies.

Every newly elected Royal Academician donates a work of art, known as a 'Diploma Work', to the RA Collection and in return receives a Diploma signed by the Queen. The artist is now an Academician, an important new voice for the future of the Academy.

In 1769, the RA Schools was founded as a school of fine art. It still exists today and offers around 17 artists each year the opportunity to participate in an intense three-year postgraduate programme.

[Read more about
how RAs are elected](#)

[Watch a video about the RA](#)

What is in the RA Collection?

The RA's Collection is unusual compared to those of other museums or galleries because most works in it were chosen by artists rather than by curators or collectors. The Collection was formed for two main reasons:

1

To represent the Royal Academicians – the RA has thousands of drawings and prints by the Academicians, as well as Diploma Works in the form of paintings, sculpture, architectural drawings and models, and film.

2

To help teach artists, and to provide examples of great art of the past. When the RA was founded there were very few museums or galleries, no photography, no Internet and international travel was very difficult, so the RA collected source materials such as prints of works of art, plaster casts from antique sculpture and architecture, copies of important paintings such as *The Last Supper* by Leonardo da Vinci and a few original old-masters, Michelangelo's *The Virgin and Child with the Infant St John*. The RA also established a library, including many books on art and other subjects such as anatomy and costume.

The RA Collection exists only because it is an artists' academy and since every work in the Collection is there for a reason, there is an interesting story attached to each one.



Sculpture in the RA Collection

This teachers resource focuses on sculpture in the RA Collection

Sculpture is...

'The art of making two- or three-dimensional representative or abstract forms, especially by carving stone or wood or by casting metal or plaster.'

English Oxford Living Dictionaries

Sculptures in the RA Collection have been created from a broad variety of materials including marble, plaster, bronze, wax, steel, wood, cement, textile, glue, resin and found objects.

These sculptures might have taken form through a range of different processes such as being:

assembled

Fitting together separate parts

carved

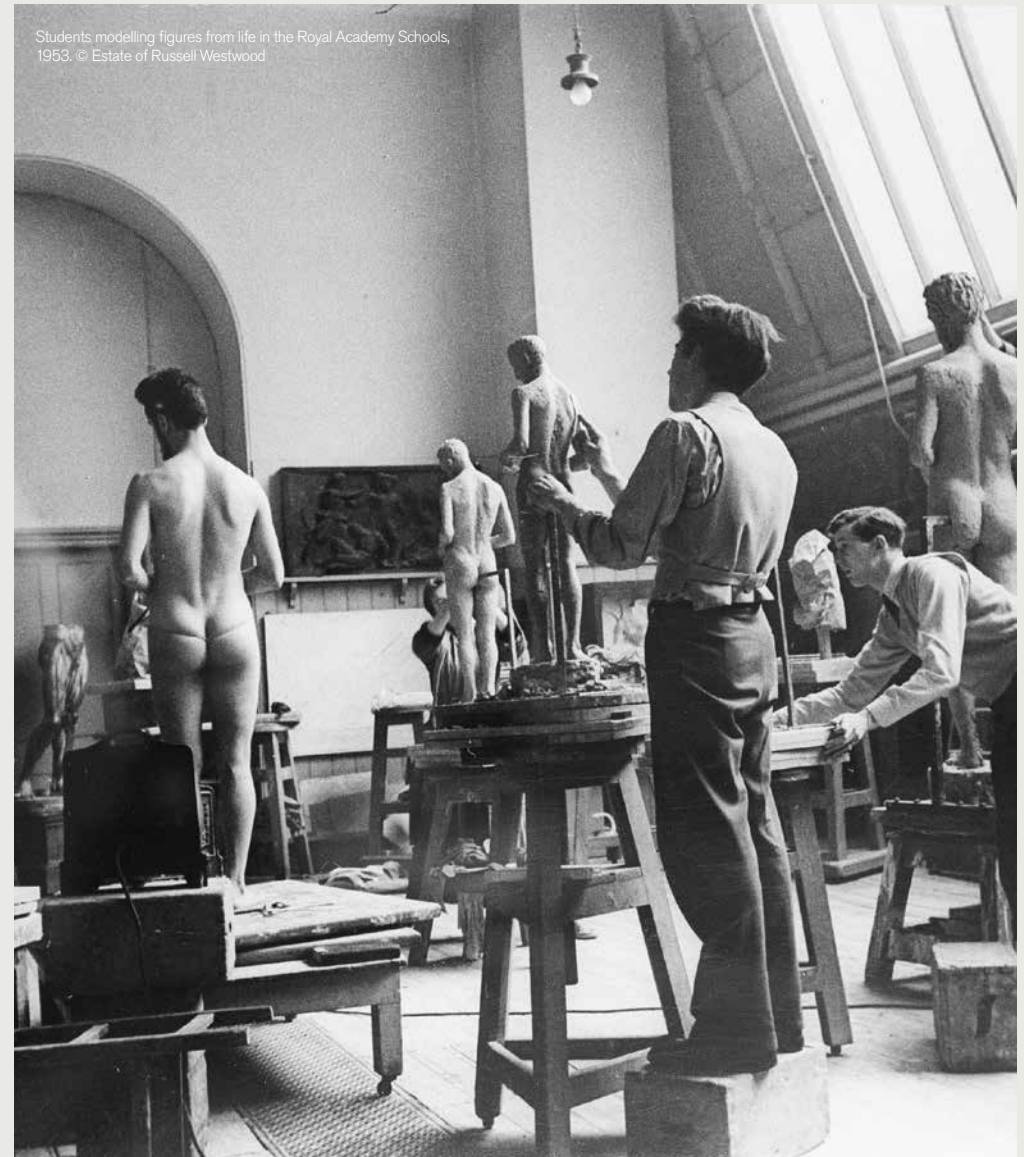
Cutting or engraving into a hard material

welded

Joining together metal parts by heating the surfaces to the point of melting and then uniting them by pressing or hammering them

cast

Pouring molten metal or other liquids, like plaster, into a mould. The material then hardens and the mould is removed. Casts can be made of an existing sculpture, which results in copies of the original work



Aims of this resource

To introduce the RA Collection
to your students

To explore eight key artworks from the RA Collection, providing key information about the artists and artworks along with questions to ask your students

To support a visit to the Royal Academy of Arts to see the real artworks (where possible)

To link these artworks to other related artworks using the online **Collection Explorer** and other useful links

To carry out art activities in the classroom to reinforce the processes and themes used by the artists

To promote discussion around artworks, techniques and processes using analytical language

To encourage discussion around how art relates to its context, in art history and contemporary practice

Nudity in the RA Collection

Please note that some works in this resource contain nudity, as some of the artworks in the RA Collection feature nude characters, often from Ancient Greek and Roman mythology. There is a tendency towards nudity in Greek and Roman sculpture which is not so in any other cultures. To some, it was seen as shameful, but to the Greeks nudity was the mark of a hero, which represented the mythologised world rather than the real one. In these sculptures we can see emotion, action and narrative. In a work of art, a 'naked' figure implies they are unprotected or vulnerable, while the word 'nude' is used to describe an unclothed figure.



Cast of the Farnese Hercules, c. 1790, by Glycon the Athenian and Lysippos. On display in the Julia and Hans Rausing Hall at the RA.

Where to see the RA Collection

Explore online

To look at works in our Collection, use the RA Collection Explorer at roy.ac/collection

What is the RA Collection Explorer?

A tool on our website that allows you to make lateral connections between artworks.

Search for an artwork in the Collection from this resource, and scroll down.

There, you will find artworks that link to the one you searched for. The links could be thematic, or compositional.

The Collection is too large to display all of it at the RA. In order to offer a broad representation of the sculptures held in the RA Collection, we have included in this resource some artworks which are not always on display.

[roy.ac/
searchthecollection](https://roy.ac/searchthecollection) ➡

Visiting the RA

The RA Collection is located in several different areas within the Royal Academy of Arts building, as indicated nearby the image of each work in this resource:

The Dame Jillian Sackler Sculpture Gallery

Level 2, Burlington House

The Julia and Hans Rausing Hall

Lower ground floor connecting Burlington House and 6 Burlington Gardens

The RA Collection Gallery

Level 1, 6 Burlington Gardens

The Annenberg Courtyard

Outside the Burlington House entrance

Your class can visit the RA Collection at any time. There is no need to book.

Tours and workshops

If you would like to combine this with a free workshop, a free tour or a visit to an exhibition, please see the Teachers and Schools section on our website.

roy.ac/teachers ➡



Photo © Justine Trickett





Michelangelo Buonarroti

The Virgin and Child with the Infant St John (the 'Taddei Tondo') c. 1504–05

Marble relief. 107 x 22 cm

**On display in the
RA Collection Gallery**

**'By sculpture I understand
that which is done by
the sheer force of taking
away; that which is done
by addition is similar to
painting.'**

**'Every block of stone has
a statue inside it and it is
the task of the sculptor to
discover it.'**

Michelangelo Buonarroti

Who is the artist?

Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475–1564), better known as Michelangelo, was an Italian artist celebrated as the greatest practitioner of the three visual arts of sculpture, painting and architecture. Although he considered himself primarily a sculptor, he is probably best known for his painted ceilings in the Sistine Chapel in Rome. He was one of the most famous artists of the High Renaissance, and his fame during his own lifetime was unprecedented.

Michelangelo's artwork is still celebrated over 400 years since his death. He became well-known in Britain through various collections of his drawings, and the arrival of the 'Taddei Tondo' at the RA in the nineteenth century was important because it provided an example of his sculpture which RA Schools students could study.

What is the artwork?

The Virgin and Child with the Infant St John, known as the 'Taddei Tondo', is the only marble sculpture by Michelangelo in Great Britain. It is a circular marble relief featuring the infant St John the Baptist on the left holding his baptism bowl and the infant Christ on the right held by his mother, the Virgin Mary. St John presents a bird to Christ symbolising his future. It is most likely a goldfinch, which is said to have taken a thorn from Christ's crown just before his Crucifixion.

The marble is thought to have been carved between 1504 and 1505 during the artist's first period in Florence. At this time, he executed two other circular compositions, a painting and a marble relief, both of which can be seen in Florence. There is a great debate as to why the 'Taddei Tondo' is unfinished. It could be because the artist was very busy at this time, there was concern of it breaking, or it was not completed due to his habit of leaving works unfinished, or maybe even from creative frustration.

The sculpture got its nickname from its previous owner, the wealthy cloth merchant and connoisseur Taddeo Taddei. 'Tondo' refers to its shape, as tondo comes from the Italian word for round – *rotondo*, and this was a common term for a round painting or sculpture at the time. It was probably originally intended for a domestic setting and stayed in Taddei's home in Florence until the early nineteenth century. In 1822, Sir George Beaumont, a collector and amateur painter, bought the 'Tondo' and he left his works of art to the nation. The 'Tondo' was given to the Royal Academy following Lady Margaret Beaumont's death in 1829.



Within a week of the artwork being at the Royal Academy, John Constable (whose sketch of the 'Tondo' is above) declared it 'one of the most beautiful works of art in existence'.

Key words list

marble

relief

tondo

Christ

St John

virgin

goldfinch

birth

life

death

Questions for students

Look at the infant Christ's position. What is his relationship to St John the Baptist? Do you think he is leaning in towards his mother in fear of John and the bird, or is he playing games with the goldfinch (which was a common pet at this time)? Find out about the relationship between St John the Baptist and Christ in the Bible.

The 'Taddei Tondo' is unfinished. Look at this sculpture – either in the RA Collection or a photograph of it. Which parts seem smooth and which parts look rough? Which is the most unfinished figure? Why do you think this is the case?

Many representations of the Virgin and Child in art signify that our eventual death is part of our life from the moment of birth. From 26 January – 31 March 2019 the RA presented the exhibition *Bill Viola / Michelangelo: Life Death Rebirth*.

Watch and find out more about Bill Viola's video works on this theme, in particular *The Messenger*, 1996, and *Nantes Triptych*, 1992. What similarities are there in these videos and the 'Taddei Tondo'?

What are the differences? Although created in different mediums and centuries apart, they both explore life's fundamental questions, asking us to consider the thresholds between birth, life and death.



What other artworks in the RA Collection are by Michelangelo?

Use the [RA Collection Explorer](#) as a research tool to find out more

You can also see sketches here of the 'Taddei Tondo' by John Constable RA (previous page) and Sir David Wilkie RA (below).



Useful links

Artworks

Sketch of Michelangelo's Taddei Tondo, 1st July 1830
John Constable RA (1776–1837)

Sketch of Michelangelo's Taddei tondo, c. 1823
Sir David Wilkie RA (1785–1841)

'Pitti Tondo', c. 1504–05
Michelangelo Buonarroti

'Doni Tondo', c. 1505–06
Michelangelo Buonarroti

Article

How to read it: Michelangelo's Taddei Tondo

Art activities for the classroom

Title

Birth, Life and Death

Work of art

Michelangelo Buonarroti
The Virgin and Child with the Infant St John (the 'Taddei Tondo')
c. 1504–05

Related exam themes and curriculum links

Art & Design

Using a range of techniques and media, increasing students' proficiency in the handling of different materials, recording their observations in sketchbooks, and analysing and evaluating their own work and that of others

Exam themes

Human body, messages, texture, relationships

Resources and materials

Sketchbook
Pencils
Plastic face forms / masks
Polystyrene foam (sheets or from packing materials)
Cardboard scraps
Masking tape
Craft knives
Plaster gauze
Pots for water
White paint (house emulsion)
Paintbrushes
Magazines / newspapers
Scissors
PVA glue
Fishing line

Learning outcomes

Create a sculptural relief whilst experimenting in different media.

Activity outline

Choose one of the themes of birth, life and death to inspire a relief sculpture. Make a list of words associated with your theme. Sketch out your relief in your sketchbook. What shape will it be? Round like the 'Taddei Tondo', or another shape? How will you make it represent your theme? Will it be abstract or figurative?

Use polystyrene foam, and plastic face forms, cardboard scraps and masking tape to create the main structure of your relief. Use craft knives to carve ridges or cut holes in the foam. Create shapes and add them to build up your relief. Think about how you are going to present your work, perhaps by adding small holes at the top to hang it from.

Once your basic shape has been made, take the plaster gauze, cut it into strips and dip it into water before draping it across the surface of your relief. Make sure you wrap around the edges for a neat finish. You will then need to leave it to dry.

Once the plaster strips have dried, paint your sculpture white to unify the surface and fill in any small holes in the plaster of Paris. You could

also cut key words out of magazines or newspapers which match your theme and stick these onto your relief, or print out your own words if you cannot find what you want.

Once dry, cover the whole relief in a layer of PVA glue to make it shiny like marble. Leave your finished relief until it is completely dry.

Finally, hang up your work on the classroom wall using fishing line. Ask your classmates to critique your work. Can they tell whether your chosen theme was birth, life or death?

See **examples of face forms** and relief works by Year 9 students.

Extension for KS4/5

Inspired by Bill Viola's **Nantes Triptych**, 1992 (below), can you extend your work to become a triptych representing all three of the themes: birth, life and death?

What is a triptych and where were they originally seen? How are traditional triptychs different to Viola's triptych? How will your triptych be presented?

Further research

Artist Bill Viola is an American contemporary video artist whose work grapples with life's fundamental questions, asking us to consider the thresholds between birth and life, and life and death.

Examples of his video work include **Nantes Triptych**, 1992, and **The Messenger**, 1996



Bill Viola, *Nantes Triptych*, 1992. Video/sound installation. Courtesy Bill Viola Studio. Photo: Kira Perov





After Apollonius

Cast of Belvedere Torso
c. early 19th century

Plaster Cast. 127 x 78 x 90 cm

**On display in the
RA Collection Gallery**

'A mind elevated to the contemplation of excellence perceives in this defaced and shattered fragment [...] the traces of superlative genius, the reliques of a work on which succeeding ages can only gaze with inadequate admiration.'

Joshua Reynolds, in his 'Tenth Discourse' to Royal Academy students

Who is the artist?

This is a plaster cast of the original marble *Belvedere Torso*. The original in the Vatican is signed prominently on the front of the base 'Apollonius, son of Nestor, Athenian'. Apollonius (1st century BCE), is known only by his signatures on this sculpture and the Boxer, a bronze held by the Museo Nazionale Romano in Rome. At one time these were both believed to be original artworks, but now they appear to be copies of earlier sculptures with Apollonius being one of the most talented copyists of this period. The Romans made a lot of copies of earlier Greek sculptures.

What is the artwork?

Cast of Belvedere Torso shows a muscular nude man sitting on a rock with his head, arms and legs missing, leaving the trunk of his body. This bends forwards to the right as if his right arm is leaning on his thigh whilst at the same time twisting to the left. The identity of this fragmented man is unknown but it could be Heracles due to the scale and inclusion of an animal skin, or possibly the mythological Greek warrior Ajax, in the act of contemplating his suicide.

The Royal Academy's plaster version of the *Belvedere Torso* is an eighteenth century cast of the marble piece which came into the Vatican collections between 1530 and 1536. The original has an interesting history which includes being given up to the French under the terms of the Treaty of Tolentino in 1797 and not arriving back in Rome until 1816.

The torso in the Vatican is believed to be a copy by Apollonius of a Greek bronze originally dating from the second century BCE. It became an iconic object of inspiration drawn by many artists, for example influencing Michelangelo's figures in the Sistine Chapel.

Cast of Belvedere Torso was presented to the Royal Academy in 1816 by the Prince Regent (later King George IV) as part of a large group of casts of renowned classical sculptures.

The torso features in a number of artworks in the RA Collection (see previous page) including *Self-portrait of Benjamin West, P.R.A.* (1793), and *Design* (1778–80) by Angelica Kauffman RA.

Key words list

statue

plaster

nude

torso

muscular

fragment

Heracles

Ajax

cast

Ancient Greece

Questions for students

What is a torso? What is missing from this sculpture of a man? Imagine what the rest of his body would look like based on the torso's posture. Sketch the *Belvedere Torso*, either directly from the sculpture at the RA or from a photograph. Then draw in his head, arms and legs where you think they should be. Apparently Pope Julius II asked Michelangelo to complete the statue in the Vatican but he declined as he said it was too beautiful to be altered.

In the RA Collections Gallery, look for figures in other works of art that appear to have been influenced by the pose of the *Belvedere Torso*.

The identity of the broken sculpture is unknown. Two theories are that it is either Heracles or Ajax. Find out about these two Ancient Greek heroes. Consider the pose of the sculpture – who do you think it is?

Who was Apollonius? How do we know that he made the torso held by the Vatican? Do we know who created the plaster cast in the RA Collection? How important do you think it is that we know who made this artwork?



What other artworks in the RA Collection feature torsos or are made of plaster?

Use the [RA Collection Explorer](#) as a research tool to find out more

Useful links

Artworks

The Belvedere Torso, 1704, by Francesco Faraone Aquila (1676–c. 1740)

Self-portrait of Benjamin West, P.R.A., 1793, by Benjamin West PRA (1738–1820)

Design, 1778–80 by Angelica Kauffman RA (1741–1807)

The Royal Academicians in General Assembly, 1795, by Henry Singleton (1766–1839)

Further reading

The *Belvedere Torso* in the Vatican Museum

Art activities for the classroom

Title

Self-portrait with Object

Work of art

After Apollonius

Cast of Belvedere Torso, c. early nineteenth century

Related exam themes and curriculum links

Art & Design

Using a range of techniques and media, increasing students' proficiency in the handling of different materials, recording their observations in sketchbooks, and analysing and evaluating their own work and that of others

Exam themes

Human body, isolation, identity

Resources and materials

Sketchbooks

Pencils (2B or 4B)

Mirrors

Photographs of students (from home)

Cartridge or sugar paper (A3)

Paint (poster or acrylic)

Brushes (various sizes)

Palettes / paint trays

Learning outcomes

Create a self-portrait featuring an object, using paint mixing and other painting techniques.

Activity outline

The *Cast of Belvedere Torso* became an object of inspiration to many artists, and it features in a number of artworks in the RA Collection including *Self-portrait of Benjamin West, P.R.A., 1793*, (below).

In your sketchbook, draw a self-portrait of yourself using a mirror or photograph of yourself to get a likeness of your features. Think about how you will pose yourself. Will your self-portrait be full body, head and shoulders, or something else? Interestingly, Benjamin West's self-portrait is cut off at his waist presenting his torso, not unlike the *Belvedere Torso*.

What 'object of inspiration' will you include in your self-portrait and what will it say about you? Think about where the object(s) will go in your composition and what you will include in the background.

By placing in his self-portrait the *Cast of Belvedere Torso*, along with books on Greek and English history, West is telling us about his artistic and intellectual influences. By presenting himself sat on the President's throne of the Royal Academy, he is highlighting his importance at that time.



Self-portrait of Benjamin West, P.R.A., 1793. 102 x 132 cm
© Photograph: John Hammond.

Once you have sketched out your composition including your self-portrait and object(s) of inspiration, map out your artwork on A3 paper. This artwork will be a painting and you will need to mix the paints carefully to gain your required colours. Think about which parts you want to emphasise and use different sized brushes to achieve different textures.

Present your finished painted self-portrait to your classmates. Can they recognise you? What do they think your pose and object(s) say about you? Did you get the kind of responses you were hoping for?

Extension for KS4/5

Find out about other objects presented in artworks that signify something in particular, such as skulls and clocks included as a *memento mori* (a reminder of mortality, that we will all die), or a *vanitas* (a still-life which includes symbolic objects to remind the viewer of their mortality and of the worthlessness of worldly goods). Paint a *memento mori* or *vanitas* thinking about what object(s) you could include.

Further research

Artist **Sarah Lucas** rose to fame as one of the YBAs (Young British Artists) graduating from Goldsmiths College in 1987. Between 1990 and 1998 Lucas created a series of self-portraits that include photos of herself featured with objects. Examples of these include *Eating a Banana*, 1990, *Self Portrait with Knickers*, 1994, *Self Portrait with Fried Eggs*, 1996 and *Self Portrait with Skull*, 1997. She depicts herself in a masculine way challenging stereotypical representations of gender and sexuality, creating an image of defiant femininity.



Sarah Lucas, *Self-Portrait with Fried Eggs*, 1996 from a portfolio of 12 iris prints, *Self Portraits 1990–1998*, 1999 © Sarah Lucas, courtesy Sadie Coles HQ, London and Tate





William Pink

Smugglerius

c. 1834

Plaster cast. Width 76 cm

On display at the RA in the Julia and Hans Rausing Hall

‘I have seen two men hanged, and one with his breast cut open at Surgeons’ Hall. The other being a fine subject, they took him to the Royal Academy, and covered him with plaster of Paris, after they had put him in the position of the *Dying Gladiator*.’

A letter from the young art student John Deare to his father, dated 1 May 1776

Who is the artist?

William Pink (1809–1857) made this artwork which is a replica of the original. The original cast was made in 1776 by the sculptor Agostino Carlini RA (1718–1790) and commissioned by Dr William Hunter (1718–1783).

Hunter was the first Professor of Anatomy at the RA Schools, and he originally performed dissections for his students so that they could study and draw anatomy direct from the human figure. Carlini made his cast directly from the body of a smuggler, who was hanged at Tyburn in 1776, near today's Marble Arch. Tyburn was the primary place for the execution of London criminals.

William Pink was known for making plaster figures, first exhibiting his busts at the Royal Academy in 1828. He was commissioned to make this replica in 1834. On the recommendation of the RA, he was later hired by the British Museum as *formatore*, an Italian term for a modelling craftsperson, and remained in this role until his death in 1857.

What is the artwork?

This artwork is an ‘écorché’ – from the French word for flayed – a painting or sculpture of a human figure with the skin removed to reveal the arrangement of muscles. Anatomical casts were first commissioned for the teaching collection at the Royal Academy Schools by Dr William Hunter, to avoid the lengthy process of dissecting real bodies for students to study.

Until 1832, the only bodies that Hunter or other artists would have had access to would have been those of executed criminals whose sentences specified that their bodies be given over for dissection afterwards. Other bodies would not have been legally allowed to be dissected.

To create a sense of high art, after Hunter had flayed the body (removed its skin), Carlini posed it to imitate the Roman statue known as the *Dying Gaul*. The criminal was most likely a smuggler, so to elevate its status the cast was given the mock Latin name *Smugglerius*.

In 2010, research at the Edinburgh College of Art identified *Smugglerius* to be James Langar, who was hanged on 12 April 1776 after being convicted at the Old Bailey as a highwayman. However, two other people, Benjamin Harley and Thomas Henman were also executed around that time, with their sentences stating that they were smugglers turned murderers and that they were to be dissected after execution. The real identity of *Smugglerius* is therefore unknown.

The original bronze cast of *Smugglerius* has been lost, but the plaster cast replicas made by William Pink in 1834 are currently held in collections at both the RA and at Edinburgh College of Art. The RA Collection also includes three other écorché (currently on display) and numerous anatomical drawings. Studying anatomy, including the muscle and bone structure, helps artists to draw the proportions of the body correctly.

Key words list

écorché

nude

anatomical

muscular

flayed

dissected

plaster

cast

Questions for students

What is an écorché? Why do you think it is beneficial for art students to draw from these anatomical casts? How do you think it compares to drawing from a nude life model? Draw from *Smugglerius* – either directly from the sculpture at the Royal Academy or from a photograph of it. Look closely at the body's muscular structure and where the weight is placed in the pose of the figure.

Do you think it was ethical to flay and cast the dead body of a person without their consent, or the consent of their family, so that this anatomical cast could be made for students to study? Does the fact that they were considered a criminal influence your answer? Think about the key arguments for and against.

Why do you think this sculpture is called *Smugglerius*? Do you think it is important to know who this écorché is taken from?

How do you think the dead body was cast to create the écorché? Find out more about the casting process. This body was cast in bronze and then later in plaster.



What other artworks in the RA Collection feature 'muscular build' or are 'leaning'?

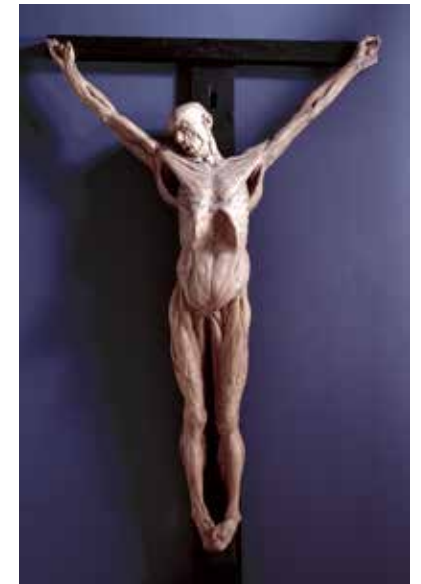
Use the [RA Collection Explorer](#) as a research tool to find out more

Useful links

Artworks

Écorché figure, probably 1771

Anatomical Crucifixion (James Legg), 1801, (below) by Thomas Banks RA



Articles

The Dying Gaul is a world masterpiece about death

Anatomy in the RA Collection

Further reading

Old Bailey Trial of Benjamin Harley and Thomas Henman

Art activities for the classroom

Title

Body Ethics Debate

Work of art

William Pink
Smugglerius
c. 1834

Related exam themes and curriculum links

Art & Design

Using a range of techniques and media, increasing students' proficiency in the handling of different materials, recording their observations in sketchbooks, and analysing and evaluating their own work and that of others

English (writing)

Writing for a wide range of purposes and audiences including narrative essays and scripts for talks, and summarising material and supporting ideas and arguments

English (spoken English)

Giving short presentations and participating in formal debates and structured discussions

Citizenship

Studying the ways in which citizens work together to improve their communities, including opportunities to participate in school-based activities (ethics)

Exam themes

Human body, messages, details

Resources and materials

Paper
Pens
Access to the Internet for research
Whiteboard
Cardboard boxes
Canes
Gaffer tape
Paint
Thick brushes

Learning outcomes

Critically debate the ethics of using dead human bodies in the production of artwork.

Activity outline

Discuss whether or not you think it is ethical to flay and make a cast of a dead body without the person's consent, even though they had been a criminal.

In small groups list the key points for and against, and then choose to present as a group for one of the two arguments:

1

As this man was a criminal and was hanged for his crimes, it does not matter what happens to his body. It is more important to allow access to the anatomical sculptures for people to study, which could benefit them and others in a number of ways.

Or

2

The human body should be respected whether dead or alive. Dead bodies should only be used where prior consent has been given in writing, for example when an organ donor has specified which parts of their body can be used to help save the life of others.

Carry out research using the Internet to gather evidence to support your argument.

You could also make placards from flattened cardboard boxes, tape and canes with painted key slogans to support your debate, referencing the work of **Bob and Roberta Smith RA**.

Gather your evidence ready for a class debate with one class member as chair of the debate. Each side gets ten minutes to present its argument and can use an interactive whiteboard to show evidence.

At the end of the debate take a vote. After that, discuss what it's like being part of a debate, especially if you were presenting a viewpoint which you didn't really agree with.

Further evidence from the Old Bailey supports the thinking that James Legg, whose body was used for the Anatomical Crucifixion, (see useful links), was living with dementia when he shot a man. Does this change your argument?

Extension for KS4/5

Find out about Dr Gunther Von Hagen, a German anatomist who invented a technique called plastination to preserve biological tissue specimens. In 2018 he opened **Body Worlds** near Piccadilly Circus in London which exhibits real anatomical specimens of human bodies for public display and educational purposes. Currently, he has over 17,000 donors signed up worldwide, who have agreed to donate their bodies to Body Worlds.

Discuss whether having a person's consent makes the argument easier for supporting the creation of these anatomical specimens for studying. Think about artists – such as Damien Hirst – who use dead animals in their work. How does your ethical position change when animals are being used rather than humans?

Further research

Artist **Damien Hirst** rose to fame as part of the YBAs (Young British Artists) putting on the group exhibition Freeze in 1998 whilst studying at Goldsmiths College.

He often uses dead animals in his artworks, such as the dissected cow and calf in **Mother and Child (Divided)**, 1993, the shark in *The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living*, 1991, and the numerous butterflies in his *Kaleidoscope Paintings*, 2012.

Hirst also created *Hymn*, 1999–2005, as a 6-metre-high painted bronze sculpture based on an anatomical toy he bought for his son, and *Verity*, 2003–2012, a divisive 20-metre high bronze sculpture on public display in Devon.





Alfred Drury RA

Sir Joshua Reynolds PRA
1931

Bronze. 265 x 170 x 130 cm

**On display at the RA in the
Annenberg Courtyard**

'A painter must not only be of necessity an imitator of the works of nature [...] but he must be as necessarily an imitator of the works of other painters: this appears more humiliating, but is equally true; and no man can be an artist, whatever he may suppose, upon any other terms.'

Sir Joshua Reynolds PRA,
Discourses on Painting and the Fine Arts, delivered at the Royal Academy

Who is the artist?

Alfred Drury (1856–1944) was a British artist in the New Sculpture movement. He became a successful sculptor of public monuments and architectural decorations, including a group of figures for the exterior of the War Office in Whitehall (1905–1908) and figures for the original entrance facade of the Victoria and Albert Museum (c.1905–1908).



Drury made his name with the creation of *Circe*, 1894, for which he was awarded the Paris Universal Exhibition gold medal in 1900. In Greek mythology, Circe was a sorceress who was the daughter of a nymph and the sun-god Helios.

Alfred Drury by Mildred Norris Laker, bromide print, c. 1906-1911
© National Portrait Gallery, London

What is the artwork?

This statue of Sir Joshua Reynolds PRA greets visitors as they arrive at the Burlington House entrance to the Royal Academy of Arts. The statue is made out of bronze and stands high up on a plinth within the Annenberg Courtyard. Reynolds is depicted in period costume, complete with a wig, whilst holding paint brushes and a palette.

Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723–1792) was the Royal Academy's first president as well as the leading portrait painter of his day. He played a key role in gathering together the 34 artists and architects who signed the petition to form the Royal Academy of the Arts. Their purpose was to hold annual exhibitions of works by living artists (today's RA Summer Exhibition) and to establish a free art school. He was knighted by George III in 1769, and his groundbreaking *Discourses on Art* (1769–1790) influenced the development of British Art.

In these published lectures he positioned paintings of epic, historic scenes as the highest subject for art despite his portraiture not typically falling into that category. Reynolds helped to bring British art training into line with these theories which were already prevalent in France and Italy.

Reynolds was greatly mourned when he died in 1792, and his body lay in the Royal Academy before being processioned to St. Paul's Cathedral. His statue by Alfred Drury was erected in 1931 in the Academy's Courtyard. The statue was Grade II listed in 1970, and its inscription was recarved in 2002 along with the addition of the fountain and lights which reflect the alignment of the planets, moon and stars at midnight on Reynolds' birthdays. Each year, during the Summer Exhibition a new sculpture, or set of sculptures, is installed in the courtyard to interplay with the one of Reynolds.

Key words list

statue

portrait

bronze

plinth

courtyard

public art

**New Sculpture
movement**

Questions for students

What is a portrait? What is the relationship between the artist and the sitter? In regard to the statue of Joshua Reynolds by Alfred Drury, who do you think is more important, the artist or his subject? Reynolds never posed for Drury in a traditional artist-sitter relationship. How do you feel this affects the portrait?

Do you think this statue is life-size, smaller or bigger? Why do you think this sculpture is placed high up above the visitors in the Royal Academy's courtyard?

Why was Sir Joshua Reynolds depicted holding paint brushes and a palette? Imagine that the portrait is of you instead, what objects would be included to represent you?

Why is bronze a good material for a sculpture located outside? What is public art? How does it differ to art placed within a gallery?



Compare Alfred Drury's statue of Joshua Reynolds with the *Self-portrait of Sir Joshua Reynolds, PRA*, c. 1780, (above) also in the RA Collection.

What are the similarities and differences? Which artwork do you think depicts the 'real' Joshua Reynolds?

Useful links

Artworks

Self-portrait of Sir Joshua Reynolds, PRA, c. 1780

Poster designed by Theo Ramos for the Summer Exhibition, 1963

Poster for the Summer Exhibition 1940 (below)



Further reading

Alfred Drury at Leeds City Art Gallery

Sir Joshua Reynolds Biography

Art activities for the classroom

Title

Role Model Portrait

Work of art

Alfred Drury RA

Sir Joshua Reynolds PRA

1931

Related exam themes and curriculum links

Art & Design

Using a range of techniques and media, increasing students' proficiency in the handling of different materials, recording their observations in sketchbooks, and analysing and evaluating their own work and that of others

Citizenship

Studying the ways in which citizens work together to improve their communities including opportunities to participate in school-based activities (role models)

Exam themes

Messages, identity, public/private spaces

Resources and materials

Photograph of chosen person (students to source)

Sketchbooks

Pencils

Clay (regular, or air-drying)

Boards

Clay tools

Kiln and glazes (where possible)

Learning outcomes

Explore portraiture in a sculptural way, while experimenting with different media.

Activity outline

This sculpture is a portrait of Sir Joshua Reynolds PRA by Alfred Drury. What is a portrait? Does a portrait need to look exactly like the person or could it be more about their personality?

Think of a key person or role model in your life. Who are they? It could be a teacher, a leader of a club you attend, a relative, or someone famous who inspires you? Who would you choose to create a sculptural portrait of? Find a photograph of this person as a starting point or make sketches of them from life.

Use your sketchbook to plan a clay sculpture of your chosen role model. Make sketches and annotate the drawing with notes. Think about whether it will be a whole body like the statue of Sir Joshua Reynolds, or just a head and shoulders.

Will it be realistic? Or is it more about their personality or how you feel about them? Will it be a frozen moment, or will you try to capture action in your work? Will you include any objects that represent what they do or why they are important to you, like the paint brushes and palette in the statue of Sir Joshua Reynolds?

Make your sculpture out of clay using modelling tools and techniques. For example, if your sculpture is a head you will need to think about how to hollow it out. Can you make your sculpture stand up on its own? Will you add texture or maybe an inscription? If you have access to a kiln and are able to fire the work, think about how to make your sculpture hollow and about leaving an opening so that the work remains intact. Some potters sculpt around a ball of newspaper that can be pulled out before firing. If glazing the work, think about the significance of the colours you might choose.

‘A portrait is a painting, drawing, photograph, or engraving of a person, especially one depicting only the face or head and shoulders.’

Definition from the English Oxford Living Dictionaries

‘Portraits have always been more than just a record. They have been used to show the power, importance, virtue, beauty, wealth, taste, learning or other qualities of the sitter.’

Definition from Tate, Art Term: portrait

Extension for KS4/5

Where would you like your sculptural portrait to be displayed? Where would be the most relevant context? Would it be up high on a plinth like the statue of Sir Joshua Reynolds or at ground level? Would it be inside a building or perhaps outside, as a public artwork?

Write a caption for your artwork, thinking about where it will be exhibited and explaining the significance of the person.

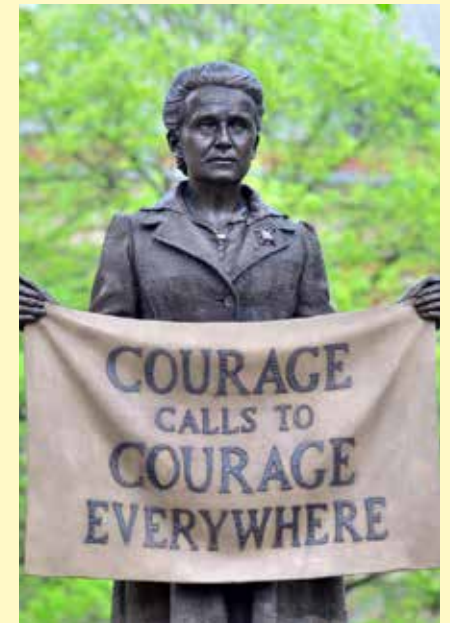


Alfred Drury's statue of Sir Joshua Reynolds PRA shortly after its installation, 12 December 1931

Further research

British artist Gillian Wearing was chosen to design a statue of the suffragist campaigner **Millicent Fawcett**, the first statue of a woman to be erected in Parliament Square.

This was unveiled in 2018, marking the centenary of the Representation of the People Act, which in 1918 gave some women over the age of 30 the right to vote.



Dame Millicent Fawcett (1847-1929) statue in Parliament Square by Gillian Wearing, 2018. PjrStatues / Alamy Stock Photo





Bill Woodrow RA
Fingerswarm, 2000

Bronze, gold leaf and wax.
58 x 35 x 31 cm

On display at the RA in the Dame Jillian Sackler Sculpture Gallery

‘It’s to do with that symbiotic relationship. We look after the bees, supply them with a shelter and support, and in return for this we farm some of their produce. *Fingerswarm* makes reference to this relationship. The hand is both supporting and taking – it’s a two-way thing.’

Bill Woodrow RA in an interview with Maurice Davies, RA Head of Collections, 6 April 2016

Who is the artist?

Bill Woodrow RA (born 1948) is a British artist who in his early career used domestic and urban objects to make sculptures and retained the original identity of his materials. They included items from rubbish dumps and scrapyards, such as old cars, fridges and washing machines. Since the late 1980s he has expanded his choice of materials to include welded steel and cast bronze. From 1996, ‘the Beekeeper’ has become a recurring theme in Woodrow’s artwork and he has even taken up beekeeping. In 2000, he was selected to make a sculpture for the Fourth Plinth in Trafalgar Square. ***Regardless of History*** explored another recurring theme in his work, the destruction of the planet Earth and the relationship between us and the natural world.



What is the artwork?

Bill Woodrow came up with the idea for making this sculpture, *Fingerswarm*, when he held a swarm of bees on his bare hand at a beekeeping course. In this artwork a pear-shaped swarm of bees is supported by three legs. Look closely and you will see that they are actually fingers, which represent the artist’s hand coming through the base of the swarm.

One finger stands in a bowl of wax, which represents honey. Woodrow had thought about using real honey, but it was easier to use wax as it is more stable, and appropriate, as beeswax is also made by honeybees. Woodrow has said that the sculpture looks ‘bizarre and slightly surrealistic’.

The work is a bronze cast and the swarm of hundreds of bees has been covered with gold leaf. The artist made the bumpy surface from an individual bee shape. He first created the overall form of the swarm and made a mould of it, which he then lined with Plasticine. He carved a bee and pressed this repeatedly into the Plasticine, so the negative shape of bees covered the surface of the mould.

The mould was then cast in wax and using the traditional lost-wax method the wax was melted away before a bronze version was made. The fingers and pot were also bronze cast but made separately and then attached.

Woodrow’s title is a deliberate pun. It can mean ‘finger-swarm’, referring to a swarm of bees on the three fingers, or ‘fingers-warm’ relating to the heat of the bees as the swarm keeps the queen bee at an ideal temperature. *Fingerswarm* is part of a series of works including *Celloswarm* and *Rockswarm*.

Key words list

bronze

casting

gold leaf

wax

beekeeping

swarm

pun

surreal

wordplay

symbiotic

Questions for students

Look carefully at the three supporting legs. What are they and who could they belong to? Why do you think the artist has included these in the artwork?

What materials were used to create the sculpture? What stages do you think need to take place to create a sculpture cast in bronze? Why do you think the artist chose to fill the pot with wax rather than with honey (which had been his original plan)?

Find out more about why the artist is interested in bees and beekeeping. Read the V&A article about the artwork going into six homes via a primary school.

Find examples of other work from Woodrow's beekeeping series, such as *Celloswarm* and *Rockswarm*.

Woodrow has said that this sculpture is 'slightly surrealistic'. What do you think surreal means? What makes this sculpture surreal? Which other artists do you know of who have made surreal artworks, or who were Surrealist artists?



What other artworks in the RA Collection feature 'wax' or 'gold leaf'?

Use the [RA Collection Explorer](#) as a research tool to find out more.

Useful links

Artworks

Celloswarm by Bill Woodrow

Rockswarm by Bill Woodrow

Articles

Close Encounters of the Art Kind: Fingerswarm, by Bill Woodrow, V&A

How to read it: Bill Woodrow RA's *Fingerswarm*

Video

The Beekeeper, video of Bill Woodrow

Art activities for the classroom

Title

Finger-swarm or Fingers-warm

Work of art

Bill Woodrow RA

Fingerswarm

2000

Related exam themes and curriculum links

Art & Design

Using a range of techniques and media, increasing students' proficiency in the handling of different materials, recording their observations in sketchbooks, and analysing and evaluating their own work and that of others

English

To consolidate and build on their knowledge of grammar and vocabulary

Exam themes

Habitats, texture, abstract, out of place

Resources and materials

Paper – various sizes (A5 to A2)

Range of pencils

Charcoal

Coloured pencils

Fineliners

Chalks

Pastels

Learning outcomes

Explore puns as part of word play and make a creative response.

Activity outline

The title of the sculpture *Fingerswarm* is a pun. What is a pun? Can you explain why *Fingerswarm* is a pun? Can you think of any other examples of puns?

Choose one of the following natural-world puns as your inspiration for a drawing:

What's the worst part about space travel?

You have to planet.

What do sea monsters eat?

Fish and ships!

What do you call a dinosaur who knows all the words?

A thesaurus.

Why are fish so smart?

Because they live in schools.

You can use any drawing materials you like to create your artwork. Think about the scale you'd like to work at. Think about the key words and include text in your work in some way. Map out your ideas in your sketchbook first.

'A pun is a joke exploiting the different possible meanings of a word or the fact that there are words which sound alike but have different meanings.'

Definition from the English Oxford Living Dictionaries

Extension for KS4/5

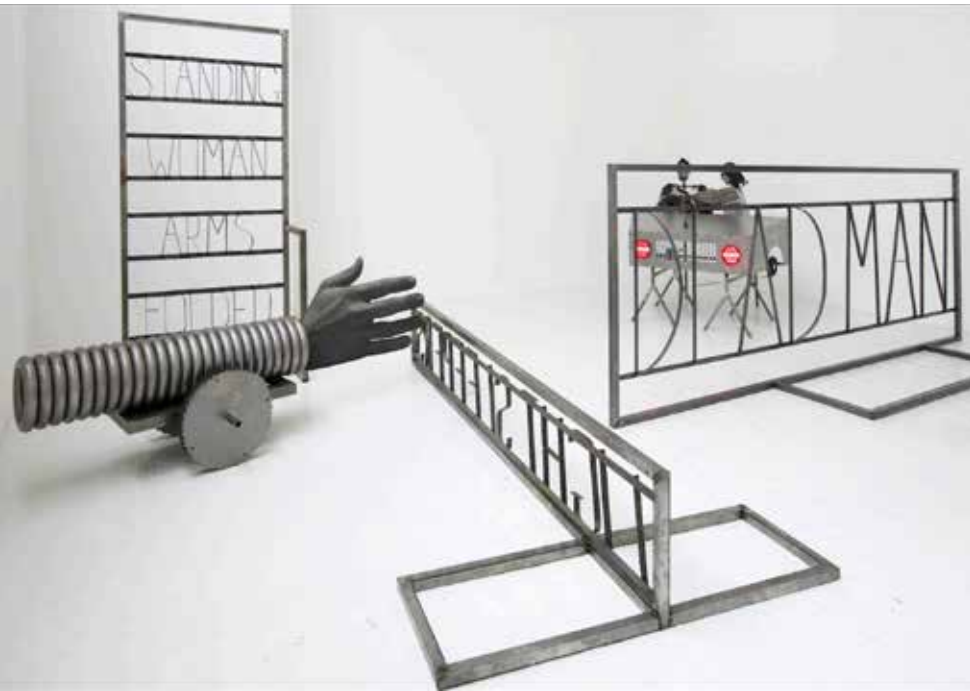
Thinking about the environment, devise your own pun or play on words to highlight global issues that are important to you. Create a drawing to depict your pun whilst incorporating your words as a message to others. Find out about other artists who have used text in their work as a call to action.

Further research

Jenny Holzer is an American artist whose work focuses on the delivery of words and ideas in public spaces. She often shows electronic LED (light emitting diode) displays with scrolling text, although she has used billboards, posters, painted signs, photographs, sound, video, projections and the Internet to present her messages to the public via her artworks.



From *Survival* (1983-85), 1985. Jenny Holzer. Electronic sign. 20 x 40 ft / 6.1 x 12.2 m. Times Square, New York. © ARS, NY. Photo: John Marchael. Courtesy Jenny Holzer / Art Resource, NY





Kira Freije

Standing Woman Arms Folded
2015

Steel. 230 x 105 x 51 cm

On display at the RA in the Julia and Hans Rausing Hall

'All of these text pieces are explicit and confident in their sculptural form, but they are also full of contradictions. They are firmly rooted and momentary, flippant and wistful, suggestive and rigid. They are a way of making metal work with poetry.'

Kira Freije in an unpublished email interview with Tania Moore RA, Curator, October 2017

Who is the artist?

Kira Freije (born 1985) is known for her welded steel sculptures referencing the human body. Freije graduated from the University of Oxford in 2011, where she studied BA Fine Art at the Ruskin School of Drawing and Fine Art. After graduating, she returned to Sussex and trained with local blacksmiths. Here she gained the metalworking skills and techniques she uses to make her welded sculptures, which she began while studying at the RA Schools. She received her Postgraduate Diploma from the Royal Academy Schools in 2016.



What is the artwork?

This sculpture is part of the series Freije worked on for around eight months, titled *A Rapid Succession of Noises That You Confuse for Danger*, which she presented at her RA Schools show in 2016 (see images from the installation on previous page). All of the sculptures in this series refer to the human body, either as figurative pieces, as more surreal or mechanical sculptures, or as text-based artwork. *Standing Woman Arms Folded* was the first text piece that Freije made, and she has said that it marks 'a moment in my work where I started to really own what I was making'. Other large text-based welded works in her RA Schools show include the statements 'Dead Man', 'Conversation' and 'Light Sleeping'. All of these welded words refer to the body by describing a particular stance or action, which Freije intends to be 'directional, contradictory and to slam something down'.

Standing Woman Arms Folded was originally titled *Q Love Stand In* but the artist changed it later. At the time of creating her RA Schools work she was interested in the way that writers of thrillers, in

particular Patricia Highsmith (author of *The Talented Mr Ripley*), are able to create suspense or tension in their writing. The artist hopes that by reading the text in her artwork your mind will move away to think about the body in that stance or action but then return its focus to the materiality of the stationary heavy steel sculpture. She describes the body as 'the vessel' with the emotions contained within.

***Standing Woman Arms Folded* was acquired for the RA Collection thanks to the Keeper's Purchase Prize. The Keeper is allowed to choose one work each year to add to the Collection.**

Key words list

steel

blacksmith

welding

body

figurative

vessel

stance

action

contradiction

text

Questions for students

This sculpture is called *Standing Woman Arms Folded*. When you look at this piece what do you think of? Discuss the power of the text to make you think of something that contradicts what you can actually see in front of you.

Freije says of her text works that 'they are a way of making metal work with poetry'. Think of other artists who have used text in a similar way in their work? (It does not need to be artwork created out of metal.)

The artist describes the body as 'the vessel'. What emotions could be contained within this vessel that could be shown through text? Make a list. Can you think of any other artists whose sculptures reference their own body?

Freije has been influenced by thriller writers such as Patricia Highsmith. Thinking about your own recent artwork, discuss who your influences are at the moment. This could be writers, artists, musicians, sports people, your peers, your teachers or other role models.



What other artworks in the RA Collection are 'sculptures' by women artists?

Use the [RA Collection Explorer](#) as a research tool to find out more.

Useful links

Artist's website

Includes installation shots of Kira Freije's *A Rapid Succession of Noises That You Confuse for Danger*

Art activities for the classroom

Title

Text Sculpture

Work of art

Kira Freije

Standing Woman Arms Folded
2015

Related exam themes and curriculum links

Art & Design

Using a range of techniques and media, increasing students' proficiency in the handling of different materials, recording their observations in sketchbooks, and analysing and evaluating their own work and that of others

Citizenship

Studying the ways in which citizens work together to improve their communities including opportunities to participate in school-based activities (call to action)

Exam themes

Messages, letters and words, identity, out of place

Resources and materials

Thin wire / coat hangers

Wire cutters / pliers

Other wire tools

Gloves

Goggles

Electrical tape

Weights

Fishing line

Magazines

Alternatively, you could use thin metal sheets or foils and a craft knife

Learning outcomes

Explore using text in a sculptural way, while experimenting with different media.

Activity outline

Think about the phrase *Standing Woman Arms Folded*. Close your eyes for one minute. What do you see? Open your eyes and sketch it. How does your drawing contrast with Kira Freije's sculpture?

In her sculptures Freije refers to the body by describing a particular stance or action. What is a stance? What is an action?

Think of a statement that describes the 'stance' of a person (for example man lying down arms behind head) or an 'action' (such as child kicking a football). You can also look through magazines to help you.

Once you have chosen your statement:

Write it down (6 words maximum).

Sketch out your person in this stance or action.

Think about how you could present your statement as a work made from wire and sketch out options for laying out the words. Would all the words be the same size? Do you want some words to stand out more than others? Will your text be all in a row or one word on each line, as in Freije's sculpture? If your statement

is an 'action' can you represent the movement in some way? If it is a 'stance' will your sculpture be standing up, lying down, hanging up, or presented in another position?

Make your text-based sculpture out of wire on a small scale, thinking about how you can connect the text up so that it is legible. You might want to add colour with electrical tape. Check your work for any sharp parts.

How are you going to present your work? Present your finished text sculpture to your classmates and carry out a critique – be prepared to justify your choices.

'A stance is the way in which someone stands, especially when deliberately adopted (as in cricket, golf, and other sports); a person's posture.'

'An action is the fact or process of doing something, typically to achieve an aim; a gesture or movement.'

Definitions from the English Oxford Living Dictionaries

Extension for KS4/5

Think about the words you are choosing. Could they be a call to action? Consider the scale of the artwork you are making. Is there a way that you could make it much larger? Think about presenting your final sculpture somewhere in your school or college in a place where it will be seen by many other students, such as in the school reception, the hall or the student common room.

Further research

Bob and Roberta Smith RA is the name taken by the British artist Patrick Brill who trained as a signwriter and uses text in his artwork, creating colourful slogans presented on banners and placards that challenge elitism. His well-known artworks include *Make Art Not War*, 1997, and *Letter to Michael Gove*, 2011, criticising Mr Gove for the 'destruction of Britain's ability to draw, design and sing.'



Make Art Not War, 1997, Bob and Roberta Smith. Commercial paint on plywood, 154 x 152 x 5 cm. © Bob and Roberta Smith





Phyllida Barlow RA

untitled: female, 2018 (detail)

Cement panels over timber framed plywood lined boxes, steel top part and steel joint
335 x 60 x 80 cm

Not currently on display at the RA

‘My relationship with making sculpture has to be adventurous [...] I like to use chance, to allow for accidents or mistakes to become part of what I’m doing.’

Quote from *Phyllida*, 2019

Who is the artist?

Phyllida Barlow RA (born 1944) is known for her precarious-looking structures that take over and redefine the spaces that they inhabit. Barlow studied at Chelsea College of Art (1960–1963) and the Slade School of Art (1963–1966). She later taught at both art schools. In 2006 Barlow was invited to create an artwork, *Untitled Red/Brown*, in the RA’s courtyard. She is probably best known for her two more recent commissions, *dock* in the Duveen Galleries at Tate Britain in 2014 and *folly* in the British Pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 2017.

Barlow makes imposing, large-scale sculptural installations using inexpensive, everyday materials or off-cuts including cardboard, fabric, wood, polystyrene, plaster and cement. Her experiments with these materials result in giant, bold and colourful three-dimensional (3-D) artwork. She also does vibrant 2-D drawings, often in acrylic, as part of the process of creating her 3-D sculptures. There is a sense of urgency in the creation of her installations which appear both familiar and purposeful, despite their abstract forms.

What is the artwork?

The artwork *untitled: female, 2018* is Phyllida Barlow’s Diploma Work. It was created from cement panels over timber framed plywood lined boxes, with a steel top part and steel joint. The materials she has used are exposed and have a tactile quality. The five boxes of different sizes seem to be precariously stacked giving the illusion that the sculpture is weightless, defying gravity, whilst being anchored at the base. The sculpture is abstract but the title tells us this is a female form, appearing to have a hooded element on top.

Barlow’s work is usually created thinking about the gallery spaces she will exhibit in. She describes her studio as a kind of rehearsal space for her work. She often finishes the works when they are being installed. Her relationship with her work is a private one during its creation in the studio but once in the gallery space she sees it as a form of choreography, encouraging the audience to interact with it.

From 23 February – 23 June 2019 the RA presented the exhibition Phyllida Barlow RA: *cul-de-sac*. The Gabrielle Jungels-Winkler Galleries

became Barlow’s interpretation of a residential cul-de-sac, forcing visitors to leave through the same door through which they entered. The artist created a series of perception-altering installations viewing her structures as being ‘anti-monumental’ and ‘restless objects’.

During the exhibition, the artwork *untitled: stack, 2019* was located in the niche on the stairs to the first floor in Burlington Gardens. This structure is tall, thin, upright and authoritarian, like a column made of stacked red-orange wooden poles that tower above you. The multiple timber layers of the column are visible, exposing how the work is made. The application of gestural colour is clearly visible. The individual posts have a giant matchstick-like quality to them, something both celebratory and intimidating in the strong vertical forms and the dynamic twists of fabric wrapped around each timber post.

Previous page, from left: *untitled: female, 2018*. Construction, 335 x 60 cm. Photo: © Royal Academy of Arts, London; *untitled: stack, 2019*. Cement, Hessian scrim, paint, plywood, polycotton, spray paint, steel and timber, 324 x 107 x 90 cm. Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth. © Phyllida Barlow. Photo: DawkinsColour

Key words list

installation

site-specific

space

anti-monumental

protagonist

timber

plywood

cement

steel

Questions for students

Look at the list of materials used by Phyllida Barlow to create *untitled: female, 2018* and *untitled: stack, 2019*. What is the difference between plywood and timber? What are scrim, polycotton and PVA? Are the materials she uses precious or easily available recycled off-cuts? Why do you think she chooses to use these more malleable materials? What effect does their use have on her work? Compare and contrast the two works thinking about materials and scale.

What is an installation? How does this differ from a sculpture? How might an installation change the way you encounter a space?

Barlow's work could also be seen as site-specific. What does that mean? Why might the artwork change from its creation in the studio to its installation in a gallery space?

Barlow's work has been described as 'anti-monumental.' What is the definition of a monument? What do you think she is trying to achieve in her work by being against 'monumental'? She also sees her work as 'restless objects'. What do you think she means by this?

The artist is keen on multiple-interpretations, seeing the audience as the third protagonist (after the exhibition space and the work itself) who choreographs their own experience, and circumnavigates the space and the artwork.

What is a protagonist? Think about your viewpoint of *untitled: female, 2018* in particular its scale, and how you interact with the structure. What does it remind you of? How does it make you feel?

Barlow's works are often named 'untitled' followed by how she describes them during the making process. How do you think the title *untitled: female, 2018* relates to the finished artwork? What about *untitled: stack, 2019*?

Useful links

Videos

Extract from *Phyllida*, 2019

Tate Britain Commission: Phyllida Barlow

British Council, UK at the Venice Biennale, British Pavilion: Phyllida Barlow, 2017

Articles

10 minutes with... Phyllida Barlow RA

'Do you destroy your work? I do!'
– Phyllida Barlow and composer Harrison Birtwistle discuss creativity

Art activities for the classroom

Title

Untitled: installation

Work of art

Phyllida Barlow RA

untitled: female, 2018

Related exam themes and curriculum links

Art & Design

Using a range of techniques and media, increasing students' proficiency in the handling of different materials, recording their observations in sketchbooks, and analysing and evaluating their work and that of others

Exam themes

Human body, habitats, assembled, spaces, texture

Resources and materials

Cardboard

Paint

Plaster

Fabric

Polystyrene

Wood

String/wool

Paint

Glue

Off-cuts

Brushes

Tool kit

Learning outcomes

Create a site-specific installation to change the way the audience perceives the space, whilst experimenting with different media.

Activity outline

Inspired by Barlow's artworks create your own site-specific structure or installation responding to a space within your school building. It could be a cupboard, the school reception, a corridor, the hall, or even the toilets.

When creating your work, you will need to consider how the chosen space can still be used for its purpose, for example corridors will still need to be accessible by students. Make sure that you get permission to complete your installation in your chosen location.

Sketch your artwork, thinking about its scale and how you will present it (for example, standing on the floor, connected to the walls in some way, or hanging from the ceiling). Think about how the audience's perception of the chosen space might change once your artwork is installed.

Barlow's structures appear to be handmade and tactile. How can you recreate this in your own work? Will you allow your audience to touch your creation? Which of the everyday materials and off-cuts will you use to create your design and how will you connect or disconnect them?

How will you know when your work is finished?

Like Barlow, start creating your artwork in your classroom (or studio) but you may need to move into the space it will be installed in, maybe several times, to help you complete it. The final installation may need to be done at a quiet time, after or before school hours. Observe how the pupils and teachers encounter your artwork once it is installed. You could ask for feedback. Make sure that you document your work *in situ*.

'Finishing a work is the hardest thing. There's always something more I want to do. It's a restless activity.'

'The spaces, the silences in between, are as much a component of the work as the thing itself.'

'Do you destroy your work? I do.' – Phyllida Barlow and the composer Harrison Birtwistle discuss creativity, interview in RA Magazine 2018

Extension for KS4/5

Think about how Barlow has used colour in her work across her career. How has her use of colour evolved? What colours are found in *untitled: stack, 2019* and what could their significance be?

She talks about the 'untidiness of urban living' with the colours and shapes from places like roadworks and building sites feeding into her work. How have you used colour in your work?

Find out about other artists who, like Barlow, have used non-traditional everyday materials, including those who were part of the Arte Povera movement. Experiment with a wide range of materials to achieve differing qualities ranging from the handmade, exposing the processes and gestures, to a more pristine finish. Which materials did you prefer to use and why? Think about using these materials when creating your future artwork.

Further research

Arte Povera was a radical Italian art movement from the late 1960s to 1970s whose artists explored a range of unconventional processes and non-traditional 'everyday' materials. The term was introduced by the Italian art critic and curator, Germano Celant, in 1967.

Arte Povera was less about a lack of money and more about making art without the restraints of traditional practices and materials.

Leading Arte Povera artists included Alighiero Boetti, Jannis Kounellis, Mario Merz, Giulio Paolini, Pino Pascali, Michelangelo Pistoletto and Gilberto Zorio.





Yinka Shonibare RA

Cheeky Little Astronomer, 2013

Fibreglass life-sized mannequin,
Dutch wax printed cotton textile, leather,
resin, chair, globe and telescope,
123 x 47 x 90 cm

Not currently on display at the RA
See the work online.

'It's an aspirational figure in the sense that you've got a little child who is also an astronomer [...] The work also evokes magic [...] looking into the stars, there's something aspirational, forward-looking and magical about the piece.'

Yinka Shonibare in an interview with
Tania Moore, 6 September 2017

Who is the artist?

Yinka Shonibare RA (born 1962) is a British artist who moved from London to Lagos in Nigeria aged three, returning later to London to study Fine Art. He is well known for his exploration of colonialism and post-colonialism within the current context of globalisation. Shonibare works in painting, sculpture, photography, film and installation with his sculptures often featuring mannequins dressed in Dutch wax printed cotton textile accompanied by objects. His artworks comment on race, class and cultural identity, while questioning the complex relationship between Africa and Europe. In 2010, he was invited to make a sculpture for the Fourth Plinth in Trafalgar Square, *Nelson's Ship in a Bottle*, which was his first public art commission and is now in the National Maritime Museum collection.



Photographer:
Marcus Leith

What is the artwork?

Cheeky Little Astronomer is a playful sculpture depicting a child-like figure with a globe for its head. The figure is part kneeling, part crouching on a chair so it can look through the telescope towards the sky. This figure is dressed in brightly coloured patterns of Dutch wax printed cotton textile. This fabric symbolises West Africa where it is commonly sold, although it is traditionally reproduced in Holland, challenging notions of authenticity and origins. The globe head represents international exchange and cultural identity, and the Victorian style of the clothing and objects is reminiscent of British colonial history.

Shonibare has created a number of sculptures using dressed mannequins, which are either headless or with globes replacing their heads. Some of these figures reflect poses from classical sculptures; others are captured in action, as is *Cheeky Little Astronomer*. The artist explains that he brings the two elements together because classical sculpture is iconic in Western high culture whereas the globe is a universal object so more inclusive of everyone.

This sculpture was commissioned for a display at the Royal Museums Greenwich, where it was exhibited in the apartments of the Astronomer Royal (the Queen's astronomer) in Flamsteed House built in 1975. The telescope references the astronomical instruments that were used there, and the size of the figure links to the domestic setting, highlighting that the Astronomer's family also lived there. The figure was placed facing a window as if gazing at the stars.

Key words list

colonialism

post-colonialism

globalisation

mannequin

textile

cultural identity

multiculturalism

Dutch wax print

Questions for students

Thinking about where his sculpture was first exhibited, why do you think Shonibare titled this artwork *Cheeky Little Astronomer*?

What do you know about 'colonialism', 'post-colonialism' and 'globalisation'? Research these terms and discuss their relevance to you today.

The production of the patterned textile used in the sculpture has a hidden multicultural history. Find other examples where the history of a contemporary object has been changed from its original cultural roots.

Discuss the contrast between the chair anchoring the sculpture to the floor with the limitless space suggested by the telescope. How can an artwork make you think beyond the actual space that it physically takes up?



What other artworks in the RA Collection are themed 'crouching' or feature a 'telescope'?

Use the [RA Collection Explorer](#) as a research tool to find out more.

Useful links

Further reading

Press release for Yinka Shonibare's Royal Museums Greenwich exhibition

Artwork

The British Library, by Yinka Shonibare RA

Art activities for the classroom

Title

Cultural Identity Collage

Work of art

Yinka Shonibare RA
Cheeky Little Astronomer
2013

Related exam themes and curriculum links

Art & Design

Using a range of techniques and media, increasing students' proficiency in the handling of different materials, recording their observations in sketchbooks, and analysing and evaluating their own work and that of others

Citizenship

Studying the ways in which citizens work together to improve their communities, including opportunities to participate in school-based activities (identity)

Exam themes

Messages, isolation, identity, the elements

Resources and materials

A3 paper
Coloured paper scraps
Material scraps
Magazines
Images printed from the Internet
Scissors
Pencils
Range of other drawing materials

Learning outcomes

Explore your own cultural identity and make a creative response.

Activity outline

Yinka Shonibare's artwork, including the *Cheeky Little Astronomer*, explores 'multiculturalism' and 'cultural identity'. What do these terms mean?

What makes up your 'cultural identity' and why is it important to you? Discuss how it can give you a sense of belonging or alienation.

Create a collage to explore your own cultural identity, thinking about your:

nationality

ethnicity

religion

social class

neighbourhood

social groups

interests

You can use any drawing or collage materials to create your artwork. Think carefully about how you could avoid stereotypes. Be prepared to present your work to your classmates, explaining how it represents your own cultural identity.

'Multiculturalism is the presence of, or support for the presence of, several distinct cultural or ethnic groups within a society.'

Definition from the English Oxford Living dictionaries

'Cultural identity is the identity or feeling of belonging to a group. It is part of a person's self-conception and self-perception and is related to nationality, ethnicity, religion, social class, generation, locality or any kind of social group that has its own distinct culture. In this way, cultural identity is both characteristic of the individual but also of the culturally identical group of members sharing the same cultural identity or upbringing.'

Definition from Wikipedia

Extension for KS4/5

How can your artwork make more of an impact like Shonibare's sculptures? For example, could your collage include a call for action, or be larger in scale or include a 3-D element?

Find out more about other artists whose work is about cultural identity.

Further research

British documentary photographer **Martin Parr** makes wry observations about social hierarchy, human relationships, mass consumption and globalisation.

Parr explores the theme of national and cultural identity in his work, both within the UK and abroad. For example, in 2018 he was commissioned by Manchester Art Gallery to create a portrait of the city and its people.

Glossary

anatomical

Relating to bodily structure and to the study of anatomy.

blacksmith

A person who works with iron to make or repair things.

bronze

A yellowish-brown alloy of copper with up to one-third tin; a sculpture or other object made of bronze.

casting

The process of making an object by pouring molten metal or plaster into a mould.

cement

A powdery substance made with calcined lime and clay, mixed with water to form mortar or mixed with sand, gravel, and water to make concrete.

colonialism

The policy or practice of acquiring full or partial political control over another country, occupying it with settlers, and exploiting it economically.

dissected

Having been cut up for anatomical study.

écorché

A painting or sculpture of a body that has had its skin removed (flayed) to reveal its underlying muscle structure.

figurative

Representing forms that are recognisably derived from life.

flayed

Stripped the skin off (a corpse or carcass).

fragment

A small part of some whole thing.

globalisation

The process by which businesses or other organisations develop international influence or start operating on an international scale.

gold leaf

Gold that has been beaten into a very thin sheet, used in gilding.

identity

A unique set of characteristics and history by which each individual is recognised.

installation

Often a composite work of art that includes a number of elements installed together in a gallery or other venue.

marble

A hard, crystalline metamorphic form of limestone, typically white with coloured mottlings or streaks, which can be polished and is used in sculpture and architecture.

multiculturalism

The presence of, or support for the presence of, several distinct cultural or ethnic groups within a society.

New Sculpture movement

A group of artists working in the second half of the nineteenth century, whose sculptures were distinguished by physical realism, mythological subject matter and use of symbolism.

nude

A figure wearing no clothes; naked.

plaster

A hard white substance made by the addition of water to powdered and partly dehydrated gypsum, used for making sculptures and casts.

plinth

A heavy base supporting a statue.

portrait

A painting, drawing, photograph, or engraving of a person, especially one depicting only the face or head and shoulders.

post-colonialism

The political or cultural condition of a former colony.

public art

Refers to art that is in the public realm, regardless of whether it is situated on public or private property or whether it has been purchased with public or private money.

pun

A joke exploiting the different possible meanings of a word or the fact that there are words which sound alike but have different meanings.

relief

A method of moulding, carving, or stamping in which the design stands out from the surface.

site-specific

Refers to a work of art designed specifically for a particular location and that has an interrelationship with the location

statue

A carved or cast figure of a person or animal, especially one that is life-size or larger.

steel

A hard, strong grey or bluish-grey alloy of iron with carbon and usually other elements, used as a structural and fabricating material.

surreal

Having the qualities of surrealism; used to describe bizarre dreamlike images or ideas..

swarm

A large number of honeybees that leave a hive *en masse* with a newly fertilised queen bee in order to establish a new colony.

symbiotic

Involving interaction between two different organisms living in close physical association.

textile

Any type of cloth or woven fabric.

tondo

A circular painting or relief or sculpture, from the Italian *rotondo*.

torso

The trunk of a statue without, or considered independently of, its head and limbs.

welding

Join together (metal parts) by heating the surfaces to the point of melting and then uniting them by pressing or hammering.

Definitions taken from or based on those in the English Oxford Living Dictionaries or Tate Art Terms
en.oxforddictionaries.com/
www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms

Useful links

Michelangelo Buonarroti

The Virgin and Child with the Infant St John (the 'Taddei Tondo'), c. 1504–05

Related artworks

Sketch of Michelangelo's Taddei Tondo, 1830, by John Constable RA

www.royalacademy.org.uk/art-artists/work-of-art/sketch-of-michelangelos-taddei-tondo-1

Sketch of Michelangelo's Taddei tondo,

c. 1823, by Sir David Wilkie RA

www.royalacademy.org.uk/art-artists/work-of-art/sketch-of-michelangelos-taddei-tondo

'Pitti Tondo', c. 1504–05, by Michelangelo

Buonarroti

www.michelangeloexperience.com/2010/09/tondo-pitti/

'Doni Tondo', c. 1505–06, by Michelangelo

Buonarroti

www.uffizi.it/en/artworks/holy-family-known-as-the-doni-tondo

Article

How to read it: Michelangelo's Taddei Tondo

www.royalacademy.org.uk/article/how-to-read-it-michelangelo-taddei-tondo

After Apollonius

Cast of Belvedere Torso, c. early nineteenth century

Related artworks

The Belvedere Torso, 1704, by Francesco

Faraone Aquila

www.royalacademy.org.uk/art-artists/work-of-art/the-belvedere-torso

Self-portrait of Benjamin West, P.R.A., 1793, by Benjamin West PRA

www.royalacademy.org.uk/art-artists/work-of-art/self-portrait-of-benjamin-west-p-r-a

Design, 1778–80 by Angelica Kauffman RA (1741–1807)

www.royalacademy.org.uk/art-artists/work-of-art/design

The Royal Academicians in General Assembly, 1795, by Henry Singleton (1766–1839)

www.royalacademy.org.uk/art-artists/work-of-art/the-royal-academicians-in-general-assembly-1

Further reading

The Belvedere Torso in the Vatican Museum

www.museivaticani.va/content/museivaticani/en/collezioni/musei/museo-pio-clementino/sala-delle-muse/torso-del-belvedere.ht

William Pink

Smugglerius, c. 1834

Related artworks

Écorché figure, probably 1771

www.royalacademy.org.uk/art-artists/work-of-art/ecorche-figure

Anatomical Crucifixion (James Legg), 1801 by

Thomas Banks RA

www.royalacademy.org.uk/art-artists/work-of-art/anatomical-crucifixion-james-legg

Articles

The Dying Gaul is a world masterpiece about death

www.vulture.com/2016/07/dying-gaul-is-a-world-masterpiece-about-death.html

Anatomy in the RA Collection

www.royalacademy.org.uk/article/ra-collection-250-objects-anatomy

Alfred Drury RA

Sir Joshua Reynolds PRA, 1931

Related artworks

Self-portrait of Sir Joshua Reynolds, PRA,

c. 1780, by Joshua Reynolds

www.royalacademy.org.uk/art-artists/work-of-art/self-portrait-of-sir-joshua-reynolds-p-r-a

Poster designed by Theo Ramos for the Summer Exhibition 1963

shop.royalacademy.org.uk/poster-summer-exhibition-1963

Poster for the Summer Exhibition 1940

shop.royalacademy.org.uk/art-artists/reproductions/posters-prints/poster-summer-exhibition-1940

Further reading

Alfred Drury at Leeds City Art Gallery

www.culture24.org.uk/history-and-heritage/art54995

Sir Joshua Reynolds biography

www.britannica.com/biography/Joshua-Reynolds

Bill Woodrow RA

Fingerswarm, 2000

Related artworks

Celloswarm by Bill Woodrow

www.billwoodrow.com/dev/sculpture_by_letter.php?page=2&i=20&sel_letter=c%

Rockswarm by Bill Woodrow

www.billwoodrow.com/dev/sculpture_by_letter.php?page=2&i=24&sel_letter=r%

Articles

Close Encounters of the Art Kind: *Fingerswarm*, by Bill Woodrow, V&A

www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/c/close-encounter-fingerswarm-bill-woodrow/

How to Read it: Bill Woodrow RA's *Fingerswarm*

www.royalacademy.org.uk/article/how-to-read-it-bill-woodrow-fingerswarm

Video

The Beekeeper, video of Bill Woodrow

www.royalacademy.org.uk/article/how-to-read-it-bill-woodrow-fingerswarm

Kira Freije

Standing Woman Arms Folded, 2015

Artist website

Includes installation shots of Kira Freije's *A Rapid Succession of Noises That You Confuse for*

Danger. kirafreije.com

Phyllida Barlow RA

untitled: stack, 2019

Videos

Extract from *Phyllida*, 2019. Produced by Hauser & Wirth in association with Peacock Pictures and Third Channel. Artwork: © Phyllida Barlow

www.royalacademy.org.uk/exhibition/phyllida-barlow#video

Tate Britain Commission: Phyllida Barlow

www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/video/tate-britain-commission-phyllida-barlow

British Council, UK at the Venice Biennale,

British Pavilion: Phyllida Barlow, 2017

venicebiennale.britishcouncil.org/2017-exhibition/phyllida-barlow

Articles

10 minutes with... Phyllida Barlow RA

www.royalacademy.org.uk/article/10-minutes-with-phyllida-barlow-ra

'Do you destroy your work? I do.'

www.royalacademy.org.uk/article/magazine-phyllida-barlow-conversation-harrison-birtwistle

Yinka Shonibare RA

Cheeky Little Astronomer, 2013

Further reading

Press release for Yinka Shonibare's Royal Museums Greenwich exhibition

www.rmg.co.uk/work-services/news-press/press-release/yinka-shonibare-mbe-greenwich

Artwork

The British Library, by Yinka Shonibare RA

<https://thebritishlibraryinstallation.com/>

RA



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