

RA

Found Objects

A mannequin is seated in a wooden chair, viewed from the side. It is wearing a vibrant, multi-colored patterned suit with swirling red, yellow, and purple designs. The mannequin's hands are holding a brass telescope, which is pointed towards a large, dark blue celestial globe. The globe is mounted on a brass stand and features white lines and text representing constellations and stars. The background is a solid, bright orange color.

Royal
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of Arts

attRAct resources
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Found Objects

Introduction

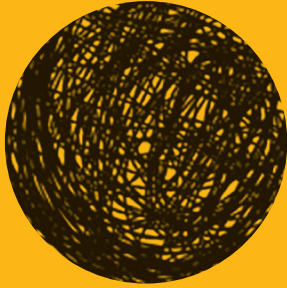
Since the exhibition in New York in 1915 where Marcel Duchamp placed a urinal on its back and called it *Fountain*, artists have experimented with the use of the 'found object' in their art. The term 'found object' comes from the French, *objet trouvé*, describing art created from undisguised but often modified objects. These objects, like phones, tins, tiles, or bags are identifiable by their ubiquitous, 'everyday' character and non-art function. Through subtle interventions, innovative titles, environment, and translation, artists have recontextualised found objects to shift their meanings or create new meanings.

Royal Academicians like Eileen Agar and Cornelia Parker are well known for their use of found objects. Agar, for instance, uses organic and biological forms like molluscs, shells, sea anemones, seaweed, and fossils in her work. Her preferred method was collage and she sometimes included leaves she'd picked up on walks into her paintings, sculptures, and assemblages.

Cover image

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
© the artist

Activity



Look carefully at examples of artworks made with found objects and materials. Use these as inspiration to create your own photographs or series of photographs using the found objects you've selected.

These photographs should be made by using an object or objects from your home, reframing them to give them new meaning and importance.

Not sure how or where to start?

Consider this:

- What do you think your chosen objects represent to the outside world?
- When photographing your object or objects, what are you trying to communicate?
- How can you frame your object to give it the meaning you want?
- In what environment will you place your object/s and why?



1



2

1 Ivor Abrahams RA, *The Masque of the Red Death*, 1976.
Screenprint. 495 mm x 365 mm. © Photo: Royal Academy of Arts, London.

2 Brian Catling RA, *Flea Bowl 2 (After Blake)*, 2016.
Steel, perspex, oak and glass. 1300 mm x 350 mm x 350 mm.
© Photo: Royal Academy of Arts, London. Photographer: Paul Highnam.



3



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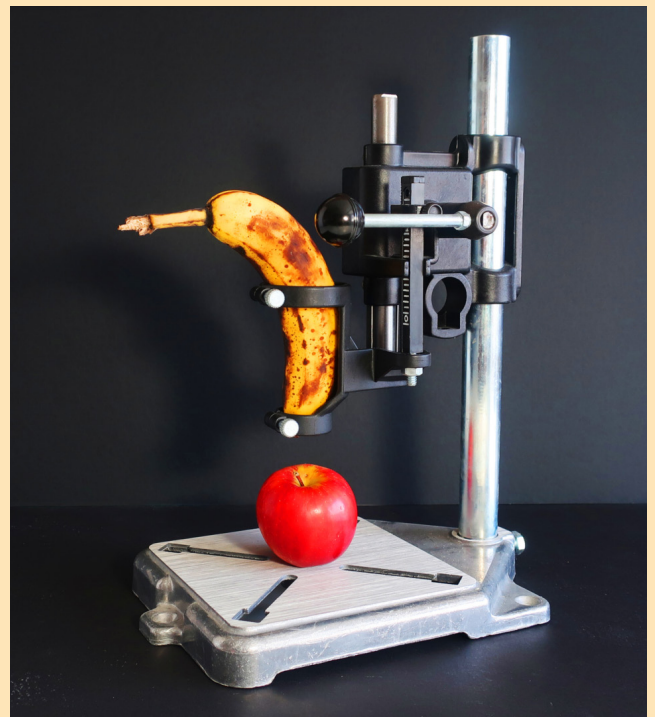
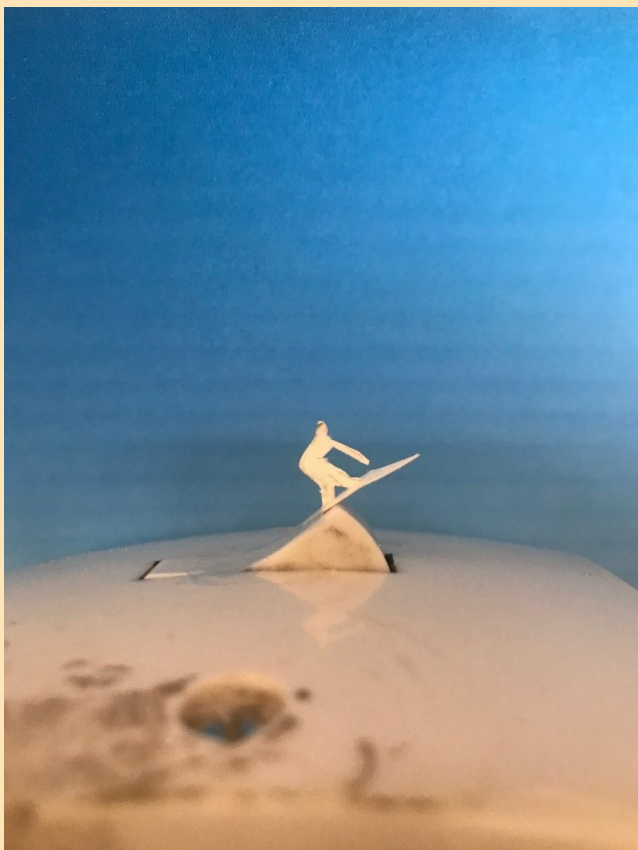


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3 Eileen Agar RA, *Collective Unconscious*, 1977-8. Acrylic on canvas. 1050 mm x 1020 mm. © The Artist's Estate. © Photo: Royal Academy of Arts, London. Photographer: John Hammond.

4 Cornelia Parker RA, *Alter Ego (Boat with Reflection)*, 2010. Silver plated. 155 mm x 250 mm x 100 mm. © Royal Academy of Arts. © Photo: Royal Academy of Arts, London. Photographer: Paul Highnam.

5 Yinka Shonibare RA, *Cheeky Little Astronomer*, 2013. Fibre glass life-sized mannequin, dutch wax printed cotton textile, leather, resin, chair, globe and telescope. 1230 mm x 470 mm x 900 mm. © Royal Academy of Arts. © Photo: Royal Academy of Arts, London. Photographer: Steve White.



Artworks created by Marta Lisowska, Farah Maktari, Joseph Hornsby and Lily Tyler during an online workshop in 2020 with RA Schools student James Lomax as part of the attRAct programme, a free year-long programme for young people aged 15-19.