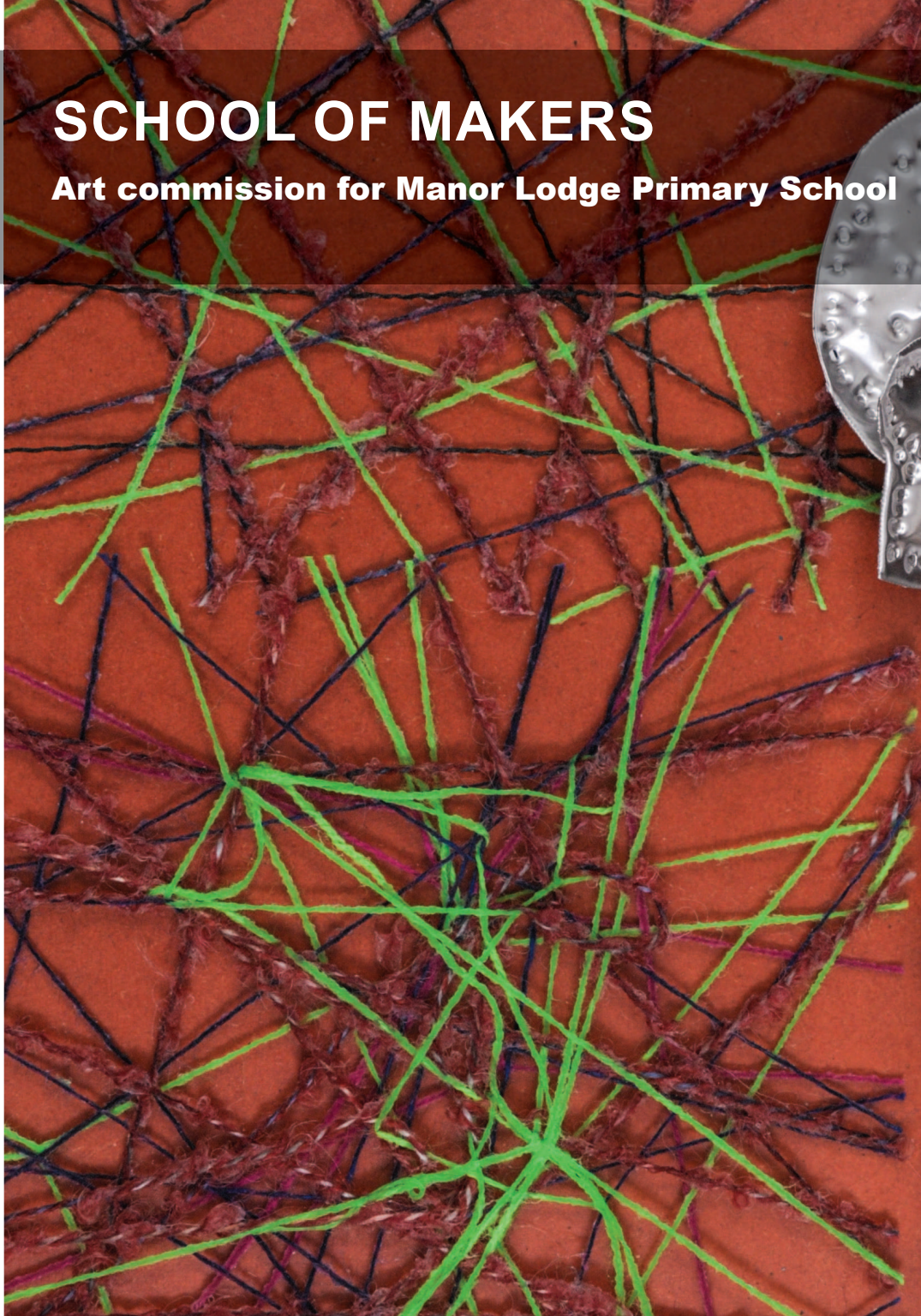


SCHOOL OF MAKERS

Art commission for Manor Lodge Primary School



SCHOOL OF MAKERS

Art commission for Manor Lodge Primary School

***“When we do a bit of art now I think we could do better every day
and I’m going to show mum how to do it too.”***

This commission was a partnership between
Yorkshire Artspace and Manor Lodge Primary School
with generous support from Julie MacDonald
the High Sheriff of South Yorkshire 2016-17

as part of the Year of Making 2016

Lead Artist, Gillian Brent

Thanks to:

Kathryn Talbot, Assistant Head,
Manor Lodge Primary School

Rachael Dodd, Programme Manager,
Yorkshire Artspace

Lizzy Alageswaran, Programme Assistant,
Yorkshire Artspace

Staff and children at Manor Lodge Primary School



**Yorkshire
Artspace**



Supported using public funding by

**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



The High Sheriffs' Association of England & Wales

INTRODUCTION

When the director of Yorkshire Artspace, Kate Dore, asked me if I would consider commissioning an artwork to celebrate both Sheffield's Year of Making and my year as High Sheriff of South Yorkshire, I said 'yes' almost immediately.

But I wanted to commission something that lots of people, especially children, could enjoy. So when she suggested a collaboration with Manor Lodge Primary School, I was delighted.

Because the children have been involved in making the installation, they now have a sense of ownership and pride in their work. They can say to everyone who comes into the school 'We Made That', we are part of Sheffield's great manufacturing story, a story that began over 700 years ago and that continues today.

Julie MacDonald
High Sheriff of South Yorkshire
2016-17



BACKGROUND TO THE COMMISSION

2016 is Sheffield's Year of Making, a celebration of the city's long history of making across art forms and technologies. The Year of Making presents the opportunity for cultural organisations in Sheffield to work together to raise their profiles among the business community and to work together to create a year of memorable events, happenings and commissions.

Yorkshire Artspace's contact with Julie MacDonald, the incoming High Sheriff of South Yorkshire, was made through one of our Board members Neil MacDonald, past Master Cutler and Julie's husband.

Knowing that Neil and Julie had a growing collection of contemporary silver, I presumed that Julie's Year of Making commission would be a celebratory piece in fine metal to mark her special year as High Sheriff of South Yorkshire. I soon found out I was wrong. Julie was interested in supporting an artist to work with primary school pupils on the creation of a new artwork that would celebrate Sheffield's past and present as a city of makers, and to develop a long lasting relationship that would inspire pupils for many years to come.

Kate Dore

Director, Yorkshire Artspace



THE PROJECT

The generous support of Julie MacDonald, High Sheriff of South Yorkshire, enabled us to commission artist Gillian Brent to work with 90 children to create a permanent artwork for the school and perhaps imagine themselves as makers of the future.

All the partners felt it was important that the project would enable the children to learn about all aspects of the creative making process, to understand that making has happened on their doorstep in the past but also, crucially, that it is alive and thriving today.

Gillian began the project with class visits to the nearby Sheffield Manor Lodge where the children saw reproductions of medieval tapestry weaving in the Turret House, stood on the site of Sheffield's earliest pottery, learned about the cluster of silversmiths who repurposed the Manor Lodge ruins in the 19th century and finally met some of the 21st century makers at Yorkshire Artspace's Manor Oaks Studios.

Through 10 days of workshop sessions in school the children were introduced to various tools and materials and involved in many different making processes such as drawing, weaving, carving and metal chasing.

The final artwork—made up of eight wall panels containing individual elements created by all 90 pupils—is installed in the newly refurbished school

hall; the heart of the school seen by all current and future children, staff and parents.

The legacy of this project and Julie's support is that we have been able to set aside a small annual budget enabling us to commission creative activity every year for the next 5 years during their Artsweek.

We hope to establish a lasting relationship between Manor Lodge Primary School and local makers.

Rachael Dodd

**Programme Manager, Yorkshire
Artspace**

SCHOOL ASSEMBLY WITH THE HIGH SHERIFF



Julie MacDonald gave an exciting and graphic assembly to the whole school about her role as High Sheriff of South Yorkshire and its history. She was dressed in her full regalia including her sword.



THE ARTWORK



Gillian Brent was born in Bedfordshire. She studied sculpture at Wimbledon School of Art and St Martin's School of Art. She lives in Sheffield and has a studio at Yorkshire Artspace's Persistence Works.

Gillian has exhibited her sculpture and been commissioned to make work for the public realm throughout Britain. She also works as an artist in a learning and research context with art galleries, universities, public and community organisations.

The 'School of Makers' artwork is all about the past, present and future makers who make Sheffield a City of Making.

The designs for the eight panels are taken from children's drawings of tools, lent by Sheffield makers, and of Sheffield made artifacts.

The children explored materials and processes that have been part of the history of their locality, such as weaving, metalworking and pottery. They made all the individual elements, which have been collaged together and mounted onto each panel.

The location and presence of the artwork in the school hall was key when finalising the design. The artwork is a contemporary take on the tradition of displays of arms in baronial halls. Instead of weapons, it celebrates tools as symbols of creativity and prosperity. The self-portraits that the children carved appear like 21st century gargoyles looking over the school community.

**Gillian Brent,
Lead Artist**

What does Gillian do for a living?

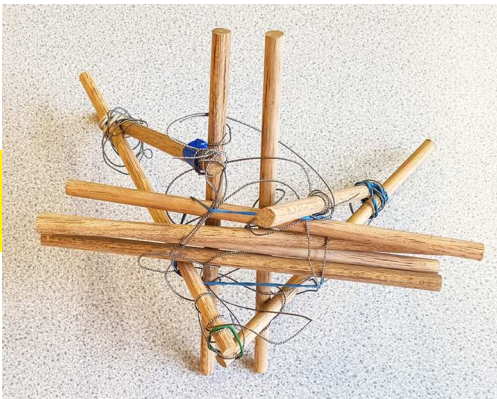
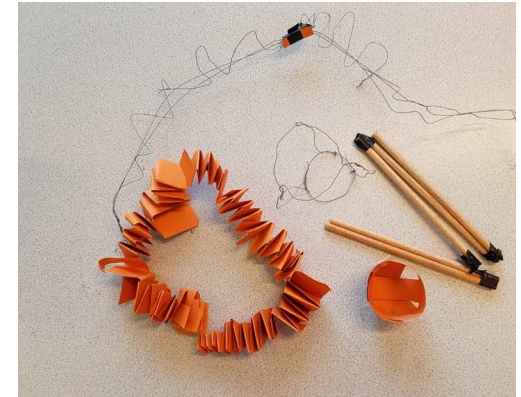
"She models and builds things. She's nice and kind."

"She does sculptures, she's a sculptress and artist, cos what she does really it's a kind of art."

TASTER DAY



Gillian spent her first day at school giving the children a taste of some of the activities they would be doing and showed them tools and artifacts, which they drew and made in 3D.

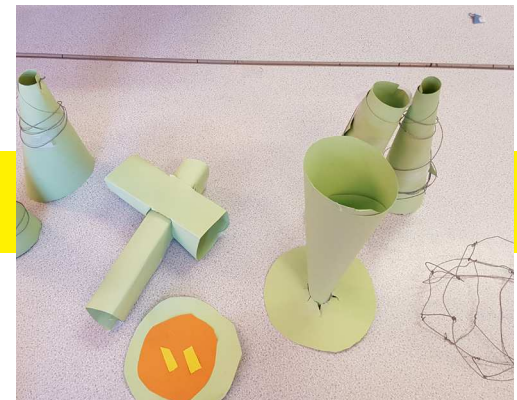
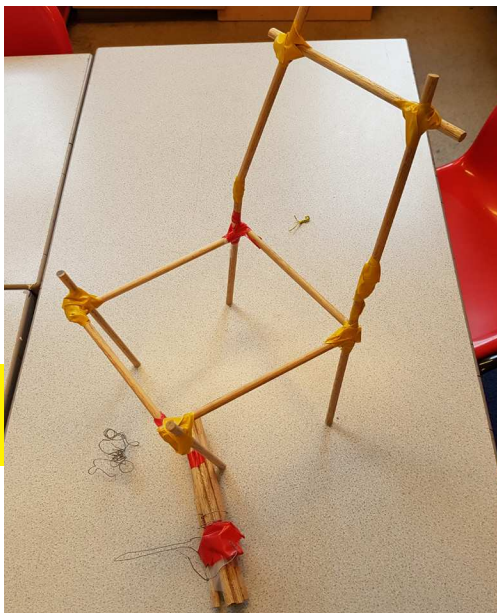




The children were asked questions about what they knew about being a maker.

“we wouldn’t have tables and chairs and buildings if artists and people didn’t make things.”

“when you are stressed it can take your mind off things.”



VISITS TO MANOR LODGE

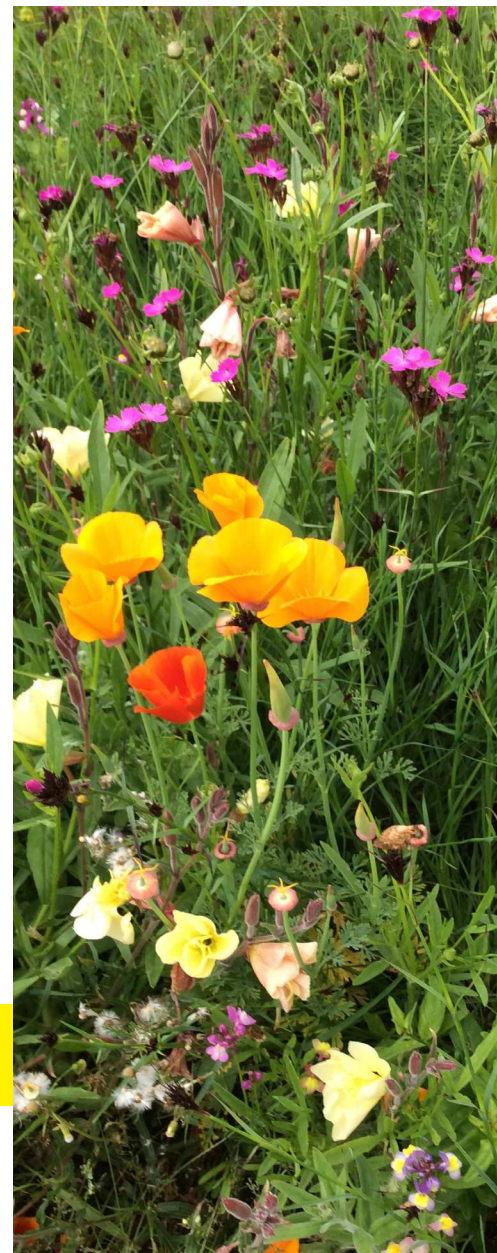


All three classes visited Manor Lodge, the neighbouring historic site with the ruins of a Tudor manor house after which the school is named.

Over the centuries the site has been a place where Sheffield people have made tapestries, pottery and metalwork.



The children made drawings in the Turret House, collected descriptive words, made clay thumb pots and took photos of decorative details and of the wonderful wild flowers.



Photograph taken by one of the children

MEETING MAKERS AT MANOR OAKS STUDIOS

A highlight of the trip to Manor Lodge was meeting two of the Yorkshire Artspace makers in their nearby studios and hearing about how they made their work.



Jeweller Annette Petch

“She spent hours, days, weeks making those things.”



Furniture maker Finbarr Lucas.

“We saw different types of machines and tools and met an artist making in his own wood workshop.”

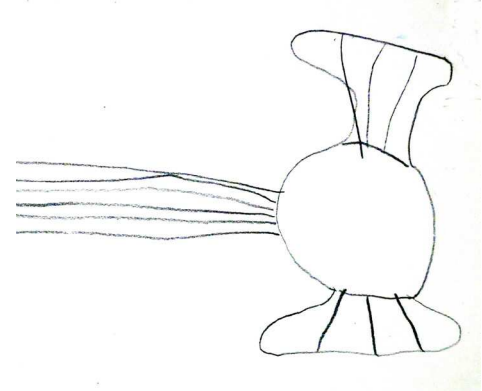
“He was 6 when he made his first chair.”

DRAWINGS OF TOOLS AND ARTIFACTS



Penny Withers, Manorware jug. Photo I2D

The children handled and drew tools use for a variety of making processes. The drawings they made show the tools ready for action; hammering, cutting, clamping etc. They also drew Sheffield-made artifacts; in the final artwork you can see a Georgian-style silver plate coffee pot and a jug made by Sheffield potter Penny Withers, based on Manorware pots made at the Manor Lodge site in 17th century.



Have you shown anyone else how to do the things you learned?

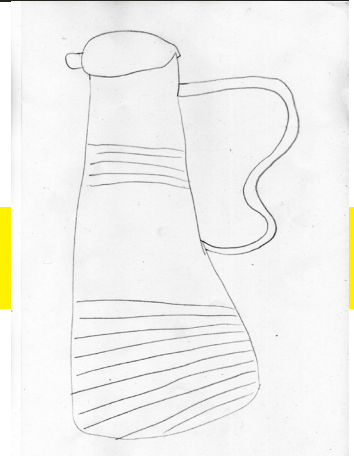


“I’ve shown my whole family how to make things and they were amazed.”

“I’ve shown my sister how to make a wire flower.”

“I made my own wooden box and stuck it together and did weaving with yarn.”

“I told them I could make anything out of wood but it would take a long time. I made an axe and a sword but not pointy.”

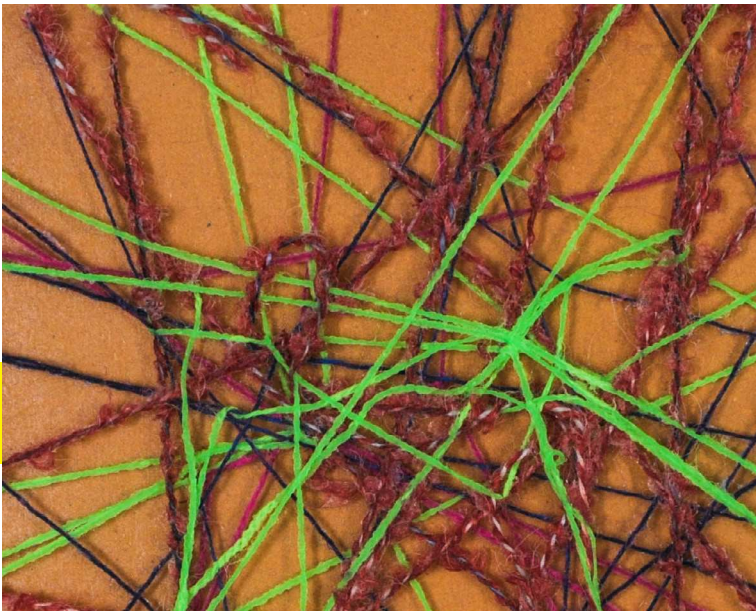


WEAVING WITH YARN AND WIRE



The children created yarn weavings, a contemporary take on the tapestry weavers who used to work at Manor Lodge for Bess of Hardwick. The work of Seiko Kinoshita, a Sheffield based artist weaver, inspired the process the children used.

They also made metal weavings, representing the engineering history of the city. John Thatcher, a furniture maker at Yorkshire Artspace, made the oak frames holding the metal weavings.



CHASING ALUMINIUM FLOWERS

The chased aluminium flowers were inspired by the wonderful wild flowers that were blooming when the children visited Manor Lodge. The decoration on Sheffield-made silverware, using the chasing process of hammering a pattern into the surface of the metal, often uses flowers and leaves as the subject.



What was the best thing in the project?

“Really good fun. Our favourite was using the hammers because of how loud it was.”

“Yesterday when we had the special tools and hammer and glasses and gloves and ear defenders and we were hammering down to make flowers.”

CARVING PORTRAITS IN WAX

The children carved self-portraits in wax. A selection of these have been cast into plaster and painted with metallic paints in reference to the metal casting process, which is so important to Sheffield's industrial past and present.

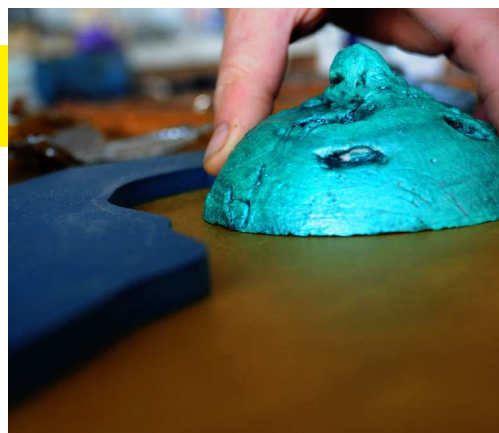
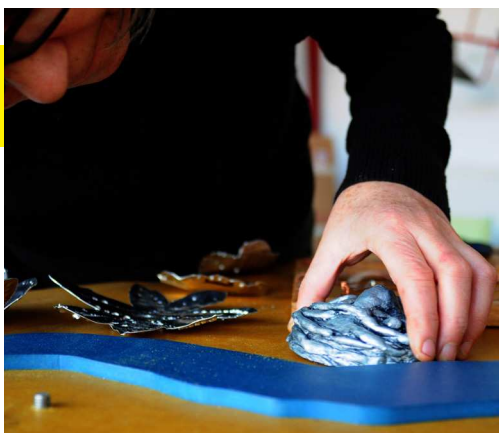
They represent all the people through the ages who worked as makers in Sheffield and will continue to do so, with some of the Manor Lodge children perhaps being part of the next generation.



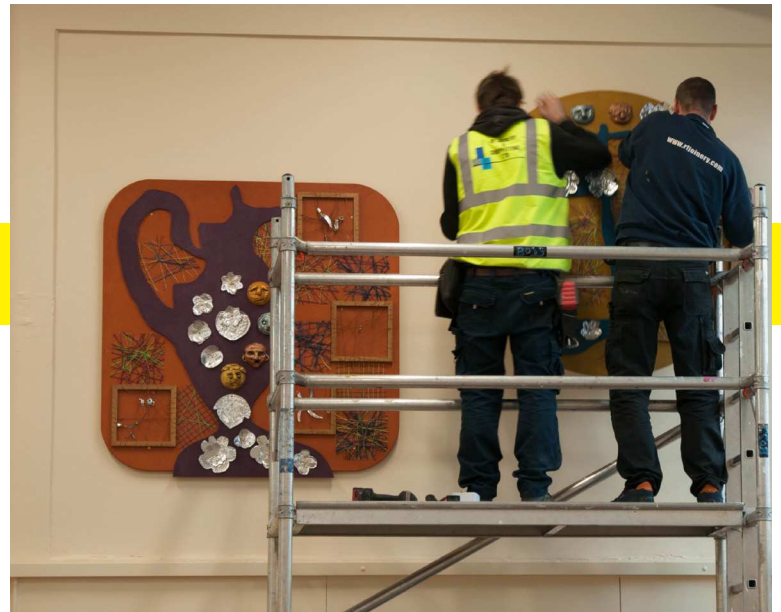
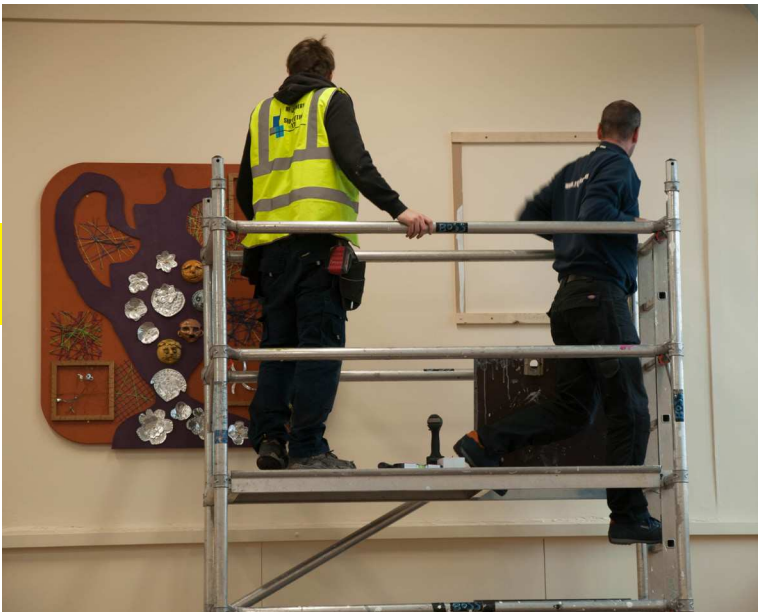
“I liked the metal work and Fraser enjoyed the wax because you could make it really 3D. When you start it’s easy but then it gets harder but I enjoyed it anyway.”



MAKING IN THE STUDIO



INSTALLATION IN THE HALL



THE ARTWORK

“The biggest highlight was witnessing the children grow in confidence with art throughout the project.”—Teacher



Circular saw blade



Ceramic jug

“The children feel empowered by their involvement in producing such a fantastic artwork displayed so prominently.”—Teacher

What do you feel about the artwork being up on the wall for everyone to see?

“I would love other people in years to come to look at what we have done in the past.”



Scissors



Silversmith's hammer

“I would love to do more art. A teacher in the school says I could be an artist and I'd love people to see that in the future.”

Do you think it will make the hall a nicer place ?

“It was fun to make and looks good now it is finished.”



Coffee pot



Metalworking tongs



Silversmith's mallet

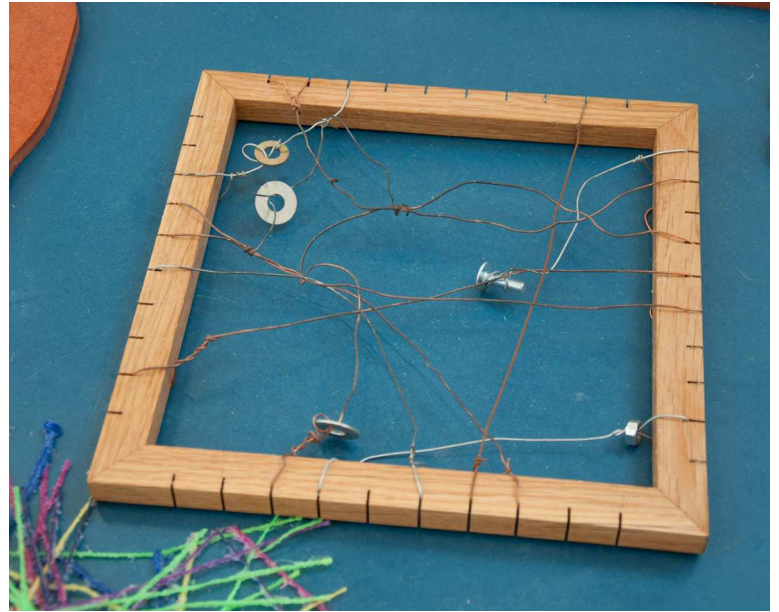
"I'm excited because when its class assembly all the parents can come and see what you've done."



G-clamp

CLOSE-UP DETAILS





LAUNCH



"I'm proud of what we have done."

"It's a little bit good!"

*"Phenomenal" "Fabulous"
"Mind-blowing"
"Jaw-dropping"*

"I like how it's designed."

"Nice to show people what we can do."

"I like the funny faces."

"It felt like we were a professional."



SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

At the start of the project children on the School Council were invited to contribute to the interviewing process and selecting the artist. They had an opportunity to meet all 3 candidates and ask them questions. Their opinions were fed back to the interview panel.

All 90 children involved in the project were given a chance to give feedback, some via questionnaires or group exercises at beginning and end of project, some via interviews.

Overall children were very happy about the artwork, how it looked and had enjoyed taking part in the workshops. Their responses were overwhelmingly positive even though they were asked questions which allowed for negative responses. All were clearly very happy to have taken part and to have worked with Gillian because working with Gillian had been such a positive experience, they felt their role had been successful and felt slightly more confident of their ability to make decisions in the future.

Would you like to have a job or business making things when you grow up?

At the beginning of the project children were not even sure how to respond to this question because they were not sure what these jobs would be. After the workshops and the artwork being installed, almost

half of the children wanted to do a job like Gillian—some had thought it was exciting others saw that it was harder work than they expected.

Do any of your family have a job making things?

Roughly a third of children thought that someone in their family had a job making things. ‘My Grandad made knives and forks’, or ‘he made stuff from steel in factories’ in the past. They were less sure of what people made now.

Do you think you are good at making things?

Children were reluctant to answer this question at the beginning of the project. Not many admitted to thinking they were good at making things. Roughly a third of children admitted to feeling nervous or not very confident about their work before the project started, as they didn’t know what to expect.

An equivalent number at the end of the project felt that they had improved in confidence now that their work was shown to be valuable; that they had tried something new and the result had been good, had been praised and well-received. Most agreed they might feel more confident in the future about trying new things.

SUPPORTING ARTISTS



Penny Withers
Ceramicist

photo NB



Brett Payne
Silversmith



Seiko Kinoshita
Textiles

photo NB



Ross Gilbertson
Sculptor
(casting of faces)



John Thatcher
Furniture Designer
(weaving frames)



Peter Griffiths
Digital design and
Fabrication

These makers supported the project by giving Gillian advice about materials and processes, lending their tools and artifacts for the children to handle and draw and making parts of the finished artwork.

Find more information and contact details for any of the artists at <http://artspace.org.uk/our-artists-makers/>

Photography:
Project documentation Gillian Brent & Lizzy Alageswaran
Artwork photography Peter Griffiths

except where indicated
NB Nigel Barker Photography
I2D In Two Dimensions Photography



“I would like to visit more artists to see how they make jewellery and woodwork and drawing and stuff.”

Child

“I think the children are now more creative and open minded when doing art.”

Teacher



Yorkshire
Artspace

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