

# AN ARCHIVE BY OTHER MEANS SCHOOLS RESOURCE

## NOTES FOR TEACHERS

A creative exploration of archives and challenging histories, led by young people and artists. With the South London Gallery's Young People's Forum, Art Assassins & Researcher Emmanuelle Andrews.

### CONTENTS

1. Aims of the resource
2. How to use the resource pack
  - a. Contents
  - b. Materials and preparation
  - c. Presentation contents and how to use
3. Creating a safe space for students to talk about race and racism
4. A teacher's perspective
5. Website links

### 1. AIMS OF THE RESOURCE

- To introduce students at Key Stage 4-5 to Britain's colonial heritage and the complexities it throws up to this day, through the lens of the Northcote Thomas archive and the Art Assassins exhibition *An Archive By Other Means*
- To support students to develop a personal response to the materials
- To facilitate discussion, the development of oracy and students' confidence in expressing their views
- To support an anti-racist understanding of culture and history
- To support a diverse arts curriculum

## 2. HOW TO USE THE RESOURCE PACK

### a. Resource Pack Contents:

- Powerpoint presentation
- Glossary of key terms
- Two collections of images from the Northcote Thomas Archive:
  - Examples of Artefacts – Image Pack Part 1
  - Listening to Images Activity – Image Pack Part 3

### b. Materials and preparation

- You will need internet access to be able to view the embedded YouTube videos.
- Print-out:
  - The glossary of key terms to be used in Part 1: Key Words activity. You may want to cut up the words and their definitions, so that students can match them back together.
  - Examples of artefacts, to be used in part 1
  - Photographic documentation, to be used in part 3, *Listening to images* exercise
- Pupils will need:
  - Drawing materials: pencils, paper etc
  - Writing materials: pen, paper
  - Optional materials: camera, sound recording device

### c. Powerpoint Presentation: Notes

The Powerpoint Presentation is in three parts, which could be used as 3 distinct lessons:

1. The Northcote Thomas archive. This provides an introduction to the archive which includes:
  - Understanding the colonial context: Keywords and maps
  - Video: *Introducing the Northcote Thomas Archive*
  - Video: *What's in the archive?*
  - Exploration of artefacts

2. *Art Assassins: An Archive By Other Means*. This section explores the Art Assassins creative responses to the archive:
  - Video: *Who are the Art Assassins?*
  - Video: What is their exhibition *An Archive By Other Means* about?
  - Videos: *What artworks are in the exhibition?*
  - Discussion
  - Activity: make a poster
  - Further activities: *Exploring sound*
3. Activity: *Listening to images*. This activity provides a creative approach to exploring the archive and to challenging racist narratives:
  - Video: *Listening to images*
  - Activity: writing in response to images
  - Video: *Conclusions*
  - Feedback

Each part includes discussion points or activities, highlighted by the orange letter **A**.

This resource is intended to be used in whichever ways suit your students and in-school context. It can be used in its entirety, or by selecting parts of the powerpoint to use as one-off activities. As a whole, we suggest each part could form a lesson, or be combined into double-lessons or longer sessions as suits. It could also be used as part of a wider in-school exploration of colonial histories.

When piloting the activities, year 10 students benefited from having one part per week, whereas year 12 students were led through the resource in one sitting.

### 3. CREATING A SAFE SPACE FOR STUDENTS TO TALK ABOUT RACE AND RACISM

We're conscious that the content of the resource may be triggering for some students, as it touches on themes of race, racism, cultural identity and challenging histories. We would encourage teachers to establish the classroom as a safe space within which to explore these issues collectively, by agreeing group working practices with the class at the start of the session. These could include mutual respect, openness and listening of one other.

At different moments during the session, it may be helpful to gauge the mood in the room, for example by asking students to raise their hand if they feel:

- uncomfortable
- angry
- ignored
- ashamed

In the piloting of this resource, these were all emotions that students expressed feeling in response to the content. It will be important to acknowledge these emotions, to ensure students feel heard and responded to, and to articulate that all of these responses are valid.

At the end of the session, it could be helpful to acknowledge the process that the class have been through together and to check in again how they are feeling. It will be important to have a clear offer of further support where needed. Students can be encouraged to follow-up with teachers or another trusted adult, parent or carer, or signposted to other support services within school.

It may be helpful to consider your own personal response to the resource ahead of the session and to make a plan as to how you would like to respond to students' emotions and questions ahead of facilitating the resource.

#### 4. A TEACHER'S PERSPECTIVE

Clare Stanhope, Head of Art, Harris Girls' Academy East Dulwich:

*What I find particularly useful with this resource is its versatility. Being broken down into three sections, the resource can be used in isolation as a stand-alone project, or each section used as inspiration for much deeper investigations over a longer period of time.*

*I found the resource triggered an opportunity to open up deeper conversations around colonialism and its legacy, particularly in terms of ethics. These ethical considerations not only related to the past histories explored in the archive, but also ethical considerations in how colonial histories are being re-presented in contemporary society, through our cultural institutions, our curriculums and our own education (or lack of).*

*Having creative methods to support these conversations and to scaffold insightful and meaningful engagement within a diverse classroom, not only supports students from global majorities to anchor their sense of belonging in the classroom, but also supports white European students and educators in being able to take ownership over a past history that can often be uncomfortable to navigate. Having creative tools to queer, disrupt and take ownership over these pasts, to reimagine a post-colonial future together, creates an empowered educational space vital for young people and educators across all settings.*

#### 5. WEBSITE LINKS

- <https://www.southlondongallery.org/exhibitions/art-assassins-an-archive-by-other-means/>
- <https://www.southlondongallery.org/projects/art-assassins/>
- <https://re-entanglements.net/category/n-w-thomas/>
- <https://www.nsead.org/community-activism/governance-opportunities/araea-group/>