An abstract line drawing in black ink on a white background. It features a circular clock face on the left with several hands and tick marks. To the right, a hand is shown holding a pen, with the pen's tip pointing towards the clock. The drawing is composed of many overlapping, intersecting lines that create a sense of movement and complexity.

Teachers' Pack Whitechapel Gallery

British Council **5 April 2009**
Collection: **–**
Great Early Buys **14 June 2009**

Whitechapel Gallery
77–82 Whitechapel
High Street
London E1 7QX
📍 Aldgate East

whitechapelgallery.org



Damien Hirst, *Apotryptophanae*, 1994, Household gloss and emulsion on canvas, 205.5x221cm

How to use this teachers' pack:

The pack begins with a conversation between its writers, artists Rebecca Greathead and Daniel Wallis. It outlines some key information about the curator and the exhibition, giving you some context to pass on to your students.

The activities are guidelines that you can vary to suit the vocabulary or ideas that you think students might best respond to. We have suggested ways to differentiate for all Key Stages but you may feel that your students will benefit from trying those aimed at a different group.

First come activities and discussion points to use in the gallery. It is probably best to read these through first although they should be self explanatory and normally only need paper, something to write with and an open mind.

The school activities can easily be expanded from the length of one lesson to multiple sessions. We've included images throughout that you can display in the classroom to help prompt the group and remind them of the exhibition. Perhaps talk your ideas through with a colleague.

Have fun.

Daniel Michael Craig-Martin has curated this exhibition by choosing works from the British Council collection. That is his own work high up near the ceiling, looking down on the others.

Rebecca But it is drawn on the wall, how can it move?

Daniel Someone has to recreate it each time it is exhibited using a slide to project it onto the wall. This time it was the artist himself.

Rebecca According to the leaflet this work has travelled to over twenty different countries. Is a new version made at each location?

Daniel Yes, it is 'drawn' with tape so that gets peeled off and thrown away each time.

Rebecca How many works are in the collection?

Daniel At the moment over 8500. When Michael Craig-Martin was deciding how to collect together a show, he noticed that a lot of the works had been bought at a fairly low price when the artists were early in their careers. As an artist himself he knows how important these early purchases are; it not only gives the artist income to make more work, but allows their work to travel the world, be seen by new audiences and hopefully lead to future commissions and sales.

Rebecca The works on display would cost a lot more now, partly because all of the artists are now well known. Has this happened because the British Council bought their work?

Daniel The works have all been chosen because the artists have subsequently become well known and their work is requested to borrow for exhibitions all over the world. The British Council has probably bought lots of works by artists whose career was less successful.

Rebecca Do you think artists mind that their work might be bought for its future financial worth rather than because someone really likes it?

Daniel I imagine that most artists would like to think their work was enjoyed by those who buy it. Damien Hirst is giving away one of his spot paintings as a competition prize and says that he hopes whoever wins it will hang it on their wall for at least a week before they sell it.

Rebecca You would have to insure it!

Daniel And decide where and how to hang it!

Gallery Activity 1 (suggested for KS2 – KS5)

- In pairs or threes explore the room looking at every artwork. Give each group a different word from the list below and ask them to link it to least one artwork
 - Simple
 - Old
 - New
 - Spiky
 - Thick
 - Round
 - Gloomy
 - Funny
 - Expensive
 - Cheap
 - Lumpy
 - Smooth
- Tell the rest of the group how and why you made your connection.
- Is there anything else that the works have in common?



Lucian Freud , *Girl with Roses*, 1947-48, Oil on canvas, 106x75.6cm

Gallery Activity 2 (suggested for KS2 – KS5)

A curator makes decisions not only about what artwork to put on display but also where it should go. Sometimes they can focus on the smallest details such as how high a painting should be from the floor, but mainly they are trying to 'hang' an exhibition where works link to each other and possibly tell a story to the visitor.

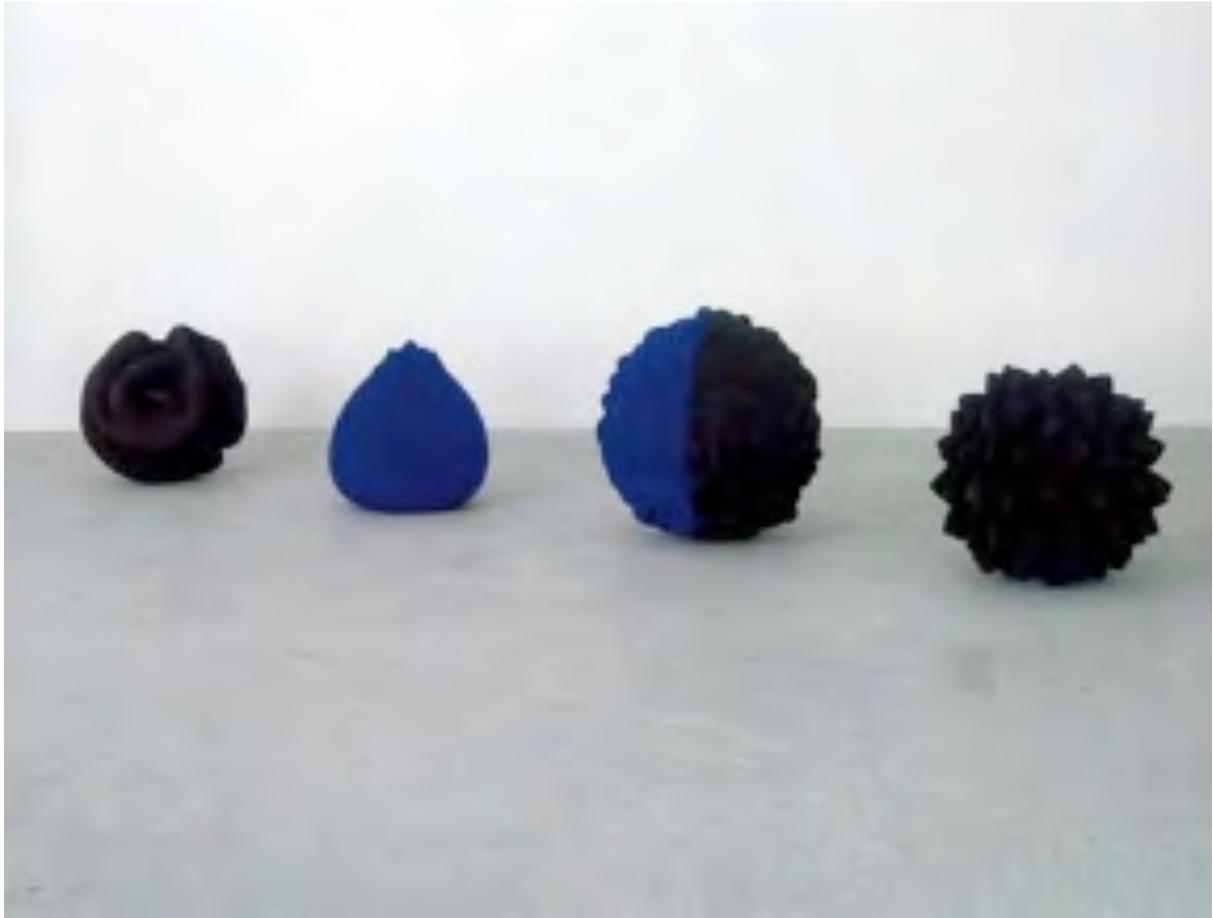
- Draw a simple map of the gallery on a piece of paper marking the position of the artworks.
- Slowly walk around the gallery making connections between the works.
- Use arrows or lines to visually mark out these connections and use words and symbols as a reminder of why you made them.
- You could join works because of the materials the artist has used, the subject of the artworks, the size, or in any other way that you wish.
Can you make a link no one else will have spotted?
- Discuss with the group the links you have all made.
What are the most common?
- What do you think the curator had in mind when planning this hang?
Is there a message here?

The leaflet that goes with the exhibition tells us the costs of works when they were purchased:

- What work do you think would currently fetch the highest price?
How did you make that decision?
- What would you buy for yourself?
- What would you buy for your teacher?

Even if we are not able to see any value in a work it has been selected by someone who has made a careful decision to buy or exhibit it.

- What factors might have influenced this decision?



Anish Kapoor, *The Chant of Blue*, 1983, polystyrene, resin, gesso and pigment in 4 parts
3: 61x61x61/76cm

Gallery Activity 3 (suggested for all Key Stages)

Make your own collection of elements found within the artworks on display:

- Walk around the gallery drawing an element from each work.
Perhaps an ear from the Freud painting, a spot from the Hirst.
- As you collect more and more images see what links you can make between them.
Have you subconsciously selected a theme?



Peter Doig, *Hill Houses*, 1991, Oil on canvas, 200.1x240.3cm

School Activity 1 (suggested for all Key Stages)

The way that artworks are chosen and put together and where they are placed has a huge effect on how they are perceived and understood. Curators have to be creative in the way they decide on themes for exhibitions and how they select works that will describe that theme.

For KS 3, 4 and 5: Using all the previous artwork made by your group, another group or even discarded or old work, ask students to think of ways they might select and display ten works from this 'collection'.

KS 1 and 2: If your group doesn't have artwork they have previously made, collect images or objects from around the classroom or from the internet. Work in table groups with two or three objects or images per person.

Suggestions

- Use one of your own artworks as a basis for selecting others you feel are similar.
- Select works that contain similar colours, images of a similar size or have similar titles.
- Select works that are completely different to each other in every way.
- Select works containing subject matter that interests you personally.
- Select works you think your teacher will like.
- Select works you think your teacher will hate.
- Choose a song title and choose works to explain its meaning.



Anya Gallacio, *Preserve Beauty*, 2003, 500 gerbera, glass, 247x130.8x0.6cm

School Activity 2 (suggested for Key Stages 4 and 5)

Traditional ways of hanging an exhibition are:

- Chronologically
- One artist (retrospective)
- Traditional themes such as portraiture
- Art groups
- Historical periods
- Art Movements

But there are countless other ways to make decisions:

- What would your student's pick as a theme?
Different examples could include alphabetically, by size, by shape.
Why are some of these not commonly used?
- How does curating an exhibition relate to organising your own portfolio?
- What message would you want to give to someone viewing your portfolio?
- Other than chronologically, how else could you organise your portfolio?

Making an 'exhibition' of printed images from the internet and images of students own work (either on the wall, large sheets or within their sketchbooks) can efficiently reveal intended links and ideas and often reveal new ones. It can also be a very good way to make ideas and influences visible to others who have not previously seen their work. This might be other students, but also teachers and examiners during marking and moderation.

- Ask your students to contextualise their own artwork by researching artists that have influenced them or who make similar work. They can use this collection to curate a fictional exhibition, including their work alongside the work of the chosen artists.
- Students may wish to write a short text about how they chose a theme, how they made choices and what ideas they wanted to convey, to act as 'interpretation' for their 'exhibition'.