

Arts Week 2022: Diversity

Our theme for our first Arts Week at OLSJ was Diversity. Each year group explored an artist that has encountered difficult periods in their life.

Reception explored the Mexican artist **Frida Kahlo** who was diagnosed with polio at the age of six. This illness impacted her life in many ways but it never stopped her from creating wonderful bright artwork.

Year One explored the Welsh artist **Nerys Johnson** who had juvenile arthritis as a child and as she got older, it became more severe. Johnson found solace in art and created beautiful pictures based on the natural world.

Year Two explored the work of French artist **Henri Matisse**. They learned about his life and explored his bright colour artwork. They focused mainly on the “drawing with scissors” series as these were done after Matisse became ill and wheelchair bound. He was too tired and in too much pain to paint for long periods of time standing up so he found a different way of continuing his passion.

Year Three explored the work of American artist **Kehinde Wiley**. Wiley is a black artist who felt under represented within the art world. As a result, he wanted to create pictures of people within in his own family and culture so that young people could see themselves within the walls of galleries.

Year Four explored the female French artist **Camille Walala**. She is a London-based artist and designer whose work can be seen throughout London. It was important to have a young, current female artist within our Arts Week celebration, as women are still under-represented in the art world.

Year Five explored the work of American sculptor and performer **Nick Cave**. Nick Cave is a black artist and is famous for his “sound suit” series of work. Year Five explored

Year Six explored the work of British artist Stephen Wiltshire. Wiltshire has autism and is known within the art world as a savant. He is able to look at a landscape from afar and then recreate the image in perfect detail from memory.

Let's hear from the teachers...

Reception: Ms. Scarpini

"Reception learned about Frida Kahlo's life and how she developed her passion for drawing during the time she spent in hospital as a child. We then looked at some of her art works and discussed them. The class got inspired by her very unique self-portraits and made their own version!"

Year One: Ms. Sharpe

"Nerys Johnson was a Welsh artist. From a young age, she suffered from arthritis. Nerys Johnson spent a lot of time in hospital when she was a child. When she was in hospital, a lot of visitors brought her colouring books to keep her busy. This is where her interest in art began. When she left hospital, she decided she would study art at university. After university, she began teaching art and creating her own artwork too.

Nerys Johnson loved drawing and painting pictures of flowers. She said, "For a long time, flowers have been a major source of inspiration for my work. They are alive, and I try to convey that sense of living. They grow, change and decay." We studied her sketches, and made our own versions using charcoal. We then painted in the style of Nerys Johnson using watercolours.

We looked at other artists famous for painting flowers including Georgia O'Keeffe. We then made our own flower arrangements!"

Year Two: Ms. Walshe

"Year Two learned about the French artist Henri Matisse. Matisse was born in Nice and enjoyed painting and sculpture. Later in his life, he became ill and was no longer able to stand and paint. He spent most of his later years in a wheelchair but that didn't stop him from creating. He went onto "draw with scissors" - a technique where he let the scissors cut through bright coloured paper to create a range of shapes. He would then arrange his shapes into beautiful collages. As a class, we explored lots of his artwork and the children voiced what they saw within his artwork. His pictures inspired a huge amount of discussion!"

Year Three: Ms. Cahill

"Year 3 have been learning about African American artist Kehinde Wiley. Kehinde Wiley is a painter and he creates portraits of people in front of a beautiful printed background. His paintings look very realistic and include bright and vibrant colours. Kehinde wanted to create pictures of people that looked like him and expressed his culture.

Do you recognise the famous person he painted in the picture above?

Year 3 used paint to create a bright and vibrant background. After this they practised their sketching skills and sketched their self portraits. Beautiful work!"

Year Four: Mr. Rook

“We looked at the local artist Camille Walala this week in Year 4. We learnt about her style of pop art doing some research, before making our own versions using templates and card. The children loved the vibrant colours and creating their own versions.”

Year Five: Ms. Ruminska

“Year 5 have been learning about an American sculptor, dancer, performance artist and professor Nick Cave. He is best known for Soundsuit series- wearable assemblage fabric sculptures that are bright, whimsical and often made with found objects. We have looked at his designs and inspired by his work designed our own costumes.”

Year Six: Ms. Harries

“In Year 6 we have been learning about the artist Stephen Wiltshire MBE. He is an artist who draws and paints detailed cityscapes. He has a particular talent for drawing lifelike, accurate representations of cities, sometimes after having only observed them briefly. We looked closely at some of his drawings of the London skyline and had a go at drawing some detailed sketches ourselves!”