

A trip to the Whitworth Art gallery - 16 January 2019

Having started their 'Discover' arts award in December on the topic of Light/Shadows Badger class visited the Whitworth art gallery in January to further widen their experience and give them an **authentic opportunity** to engage with their topic.

Lead by artist *Isobel Pickup* the class started with a tour of the gallery space, stopping at various artworks to do activities in relation to what was on display. First was the dangling light installation by *David Batchelor / Plato's Disco*. The group watched the moving structure above; the shadows it made and how slowly it moved. We talked about the different colours and shadows it cast. The children looked through wooden light toys out of the window onto the park and they explored craft papers and tape making their own mini structures. The children sat and interacted with adults – they appeared inquisitive and engaged with the environment and the activity.

Next up was the *William Kentridge / Thick Time* installation. This was set in a very dark room, there was loud music playing, a central installation in the room and projections and shadows cast across the walls. Children could sit around on chairs or some chose to move around the room, moving in circles around the installation, some got very excitable with the building crescendo of the music. The children smiled, laughed and moved their bodies, some vocalised and most did not want to leave when it was time to move on. This provided an immersive experience of their shadows topic - it was **exciting, inspiring and engaging** for the group.

We explored upstairs in the gallery to *Alice Kettle's / Thread Bearing Witness*, children wanted to touch the canvas displays which we could not allow; this was hard for them to understand as the fabric looked so tactile and inviting! The group was instead given a bag of fabric and encouraged to explore all the textures in a group on the floor, we wafted some of it over their heads as if they were underneath the sea. Could they see through the fabric? What colours could they see? What shadows formed over them? What did the fabric feel like? This experience ensured a **positive and inclusive approach** to Alice Kettle's work, despite initially wanting to touch the canvases up close the children instead got their own experience of the fabrics and colours she had used to create them.

The group was then supported to move downstairs to a work space to explore further focussed activities. A light projector with different shapes /colours to create shape and colour on the surrounding walls was very popular, as was cellophane and water spray on windows to create our own temporary stained glass windows. The children moved around the room excitedly when we first got in and then as time passed they settled into their space interacting in a more focussed way with each activity. We stayed in the room for up to an hour with the children fully engaged and relaxed. They interacted well with the artist and volunteer as well as their familiar staff.

The gallery visit allowed Badger group to experience a new environment, it was fresh and exciting to see art works on a grand scale and space. The sounds, the light and the new faces all helped our children experience their topic in a different way which is so important to consider within Delamere's art projects.

"Art gives us an experience like nothing else can, a chance to connect, understand, and explore perceptions, feelings, and innovative thoughts. Museums and galleries provide a space for reflection, experimentation, inspiration, creativity, enjoyment and allow for authentic learning experiences and

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play. Bringing children to a museum or gallery reveals children and adults as being equally active in learning, putting them on equal standing as they create a shared understanding." —Jamee Yung, Education Coordinator, Weisman Art Museum





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