

2020/21



High Arts





Welcome



After a tumultuous eighteen months and an academic year that has been further interrupted by COVID-related lockdowns and the cancellation of public examinations, this edition of High Arts is particularly special.

Special because, in a time when many have turned to creative pursuits, our already-creative community has stepped up to another level. Sharing personal, small-group, large-group and whole-school inventions has brought us closer together - and this is before we even start to consider the considerable academic achievements of our students in all sections of the school.

Taking us on a journey through Art, Craft and Design, Theatre, Fashion and Textiles, Food, Music, Film, English and Dance, this booklet celebrates creativity in the face of adversity. The challenges faced and the heights reached are clearly summed up by Mrs Beacroft, Head of the Creative Arts faculty, in her introduction below, and in every section of the publication.

As always, I thank Mrs Beacroft and her team for their inspirational leadership in these areas - and the whole community for embracing creativity, particularly in recent times. Moreover, I congratulate all our students on their achievements, but particularly those in Year 11 (U5) and Year 13 (6.2) who have kept going despite the absence of formal examinations; they are an inspiration.

I look forward to welcoming you to the Virtual Arts Festival on Monday 21 June and in person next year as we continue to celebrate The Arts at Northampton High School. In the meantime, I invite you to enjoy this stunning compilation of words and images which really captures the spirit of the school and this moment in time.

Mrs Petryszak
Headmistress

Before composing my introduction for this year's High Arts, I took time to reflect on the range of experiences we have worked through together as a community and how our students and staff across subjects rose to the challenge of maintaining and building on their creativity. From home and in school, it is clear that students across all year groups have responded positively to projects. The Arts have always had a positive impact on the lives of young people; perhaps more so during this difficult time.

Technology has certainly helped with the ultimate challenge of teaching practical lessons via a screen. Our outstanding peripatetic teachers have organised stimulating Music lessons, the girls performing and facing new challenges including a mini concert-style format to the online exams, in one filmed take. The Music department used technology as a key-enabler of live performances, continually assessing each Key Stage 3 unit of work through solo and ensemble performances. The Department was also able to deliver each unit of study successfully through highly effective live performances via Google Meet. It was wonderful to welcome back our peripatetic teachers back to school on Monday 26 April; the first lessons I heard resuming that first morning were flute, trombone and saxophone. Technology was used during Drama lessons to enable pupils to share practical work. Sixth Form students Mo and Anika recorded a short film, a verbatim piece based upon 'The Seven Ages of Man' speech from 'As You Like It'.

This was shared via the present mode. In all Key Stages, Google Meet has enabled monologues, group work and performance presentations to continue with success. Additionally, Drama have used technology to screen live theatre productions using the Digital Theatre platform, which has proved invaluable for examination classes.

Continuing with technology, visualiser cameras used during Guided Home Learning enabled us to plan live lessons which included teacher demonstrations of techniques in Art, Food and Textiles, positioning the camera carefully so that our students could clearly see the sewing machine, paint brush, mixing palette or Miss Knight's knife skills. Practical work was most definitely going ahead. The Easter Baking Padlet from Miss Knight showcased excellent bakes from students, staff and parents. Our Google Site ePortfolios are now an important part of Art submissions for U5 and U6 students and each pupil has taken time to design their site, brimming with photography and film clips of their excellent coursework. We look forward to sharing their art with you through our sister publication 'Portfolio' 2021.

Resilience and a willingness to be inventive and flexible have also played an important part over the last twelve months. For example, the L4 printed textiles groups found equipment and printing plate materials to work with at home, to replace the lino that the Textiles Department would have been using in class. 6.2 A Level artists created their studio spaces at home and worked enthusiastically through their September examinations - showing their work to camera so that we could all offer praise and encouragement.

We hope that you enjoy the Virtual Arts Festival this year and we are certainly looking forward to inviting you into school for a face to face celebration of the Arts in 2022.

Mrs Beacroft
Head of Creative Arts Faculty

Art, Craft and Design

Despite the obvious challenge presented to girls regarding how to create Art with Mr Laubscher and I from a distance, I believe that the difficulties we faced as staff and students made us stronger and more determined to succeed. U3 carried out their 'treasure hunt' at home for collage material as we created a mixed media composition on 'Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows' using cardboard as a substrate (we knew those empty cereal boxes would come in handy).



The Okiocam visualiser allowed me to create my own alongside the girls, demonstrating drawing techniques and providing advice and support along the way. It was lovely to see the girls hold up their creations in progress and receive praise and encouragement from myself and their classmates at the end of the lesson. We found small joys when we could, including 'Bring Something Tasty in your Novelty Mug.' Any excuse for hot chocolate and mug muffins.

Welcoming the girls back into school was certainly one of the biggest highlights for the Department.



To see the 6.2 A Level girls resuming their work in The Studio was emotional for us all and we had greatly missed this creative environment and our A Level Art community. The U5 GCSE and 6.2 A Level submissions are extensive this year, despite three lockdowns - a testament to the resilience and independence of our students, many having stayed behind after school to print their etchings and silk screen designs, helping each other and always finding those important encouraging words.

L5 GCSE groups have planned their 'Figurative Decoration' work carefully and are now making great use of the facilities in the Department, including building ceramic models and creating mixed media stitched paintings. Their paintings and drawings of flowers, crystals and gems, alongside their portraits are fantastic. Mrs Bull was immediately on hand to order specific materials for the girls as they edged towards more independent planning.

U4 have been taught a varied collection of subject matter including still life, portraits and landscapes, before embarking on a GCSE-style project based on their own preference. Classes have been learning how to plan and research their chosen topic, before experimenting with media in their new books. The watercolour landscape paintings the U4 girls have created, using their own personal photography, are sensational.

They listened carefully to the advice on different techniques including glazing and wet on wet. U4 also explored oil pastels and chalks, examining colour and linear perspective. The references they have made to Van Gogh and Kiefer resulted in exciting textural work, expressive mark making and vibrant colour.

L4 explored Marine Life, practising different mixed media approaches to create form. Girls used a variety of shading and drawing techniques including cross hatching. In their investigations, students layered colours through the use of soft pastels to investigate translucency, replicating an underwater atmosphere. Based on the colour wheel, groups explored palette choices such as complementary colours and harmonies. Digital photography has helped the students to understand composition, prior to commencing their final marine life composition.

A great deal of art work has happened behind the scenes in homes and we would like to thank families for their enduring support this year.

Mrs Beacraft

Subject Leader Art and Head of Creative Arts Faculty



Art and Design (Junior School)



In this unusual year, the pupils in Junior School have yet again demonstrated their creativity and ability to adapt and invent. Art lessons enjoyed online, from home or school encouraged inventiveness when particular resources were unavailable and alternatives used. Pupils discovered new materials and ways of working and had a few surprises.

A highlight was pupils in Year 3 joining the GDST Art Collaboration with several other GDST schools, all of whom produced 2D and 3D pieces of work based on local artists to share online with other schools. The practical activity was followed up by a small group of pupils discussing and reviewing examples of work with the other schools across the country.

As part of their 'Awesome Australia' topic this year, Years 1 and 2 studied the work of Australian designer and illustrator, Pete Cromer. His distinctive style of painting involves a psychedelic combination of simplistic shapes and bright colours that represent various Australian animals. Having learnt a lot about different Australian animals and having completed many non-fiction writing pieces all about them, the girls thoroughly enjoyed selecting their favourite animal to paint in a modern and exciting way using Cromer's work as their inspiration.

Year 6 began the year exploring expressive mark making based on ideas from contemporary mixed media artist Karen Stamper on the theme of 'How wild is your garden?'

The current Year 5 have been pleased to see their pottery cats glazed, fired and proudly displayed in the Junior School entrance hall after many lockdown months safely stored in the Art Department.

As I write, we are busy designing stamps for the very exciting Royal Mail Heroes Stamp Design Competition. We are keeping our fingers crossed for a successful entry!

Mrs Purvey-Tyrer
Deputy Head of Junior School



Theatre

The past year has demonstrated that we can adapt to new ways of teaching Drama and Theatre. Theatre experiences have been enjoyed in the Drama Studio via live streaming through Digital Theatre.

Each Key Stage has had the chance to see a play in this way and analyse and evaluate the process of the making of Theatre. Plays screened include *The Tempest*, *Things I Know To Be True*, *Hamilton*, *Peter Pan* and *Funny Girl*.

Technology has also been utilised to show *Frantic Assembly* and *The National Theatre's* approaches to devising for U4 and GCSE, to assist with their practical element. U4 have been introduced to the informative and entertaining world of Podcasts and have written and recorded their own Podcast episode. Episodes ranged from 'Science Fiction' and 'True Crime' to 'Running Your Own Small Online Business'.

U3 have studied *Theatre Makers* and their roles and responsibilities. They have also read a play text, performed a monologue and written and presented a duologue based upon an imaginary friend, using contrasts in their vocal and physical approach to character.

L4 have watched clips from a selection of West End plays and created their own play concept, including audience impact, plot, characters, style, costume, and marketing. GCSE classes performed all practical components under exam conditions and demonstrated excellence in their execution. Sixth Form Elective students created and recorded a short play, a verbatim piece and an experimental performance on *Dada*, in collaboration with Art students.



L5 created a Christmas play and performed it to Nursery children on an outdoor stage at Forest School. So, although Theatre has not happened as we know it, there have been plenty of exciting and innovative variations employed to maintain the vibrancy of the subject.

Mrs Care
Director of Theatre

Fashion and Textiles



The academic year began with Covid safety restrictions in place in the Textiles studio. Our schemes of work were adapted once again to enable our students to engage with creative work whilst minimising sharing of resources and equipment. Our projects have been focussed around analysing the work of contemporary textile artists. U3 students have learnt felt making whilst exploring the work of celebrated felt making artist Andrea Graham. In L4, students have enjoyed finding out about the work of American fibre artist Bisa Butler. This project explored using fabric to create portraits and traditional African print-making techniques. U4 have been researching recognised textile artist Natalie Graham, known for her brightly coloured woven artworks.

GCSE courses began with a focus on flowers; primary images have been used to create a range of textile prints, whilst A Level students learnt new skills in screen printing, fabric manipulation and reduction lino printing. Sadly, our annual trip to the Victoria and Albert Museum had to be postponed due to restrictions, but we have made the most of accessing new online resources visiting galleries and museums from around the world and used Google Maps to go on virtual visits to faraway places for inspiration and research.

Guided Home Learning brought with it a wealth of new skills. It encouraged us to embrace technology using Google Classroom, Google Meet and a visualiser camera for live demonstrations. Whilst working with resources readily available at home, we printed with potatoes, painted with coffee and tea, as well as dying fabrics with onion skins. Our students have impressed us with their ability to adapt their project work during this time. Now we are back in our wonderful well-resourced Textiles Studio and it is fantastic to see our students' initial ideas coming to fruition as final garments and creative pieces.

Miss Lycett
Subject Leader Textiles



Food Preparation and Nutrition



upload photos and descriptions of what they have been creating in their kitchens at any time. I know that we have many fantastic chefs and bakers amongst us, so I am really pleased to have this platform in place so they can showcase their talents. Hopefully, it is a place of inspiration too! This year I have offered the Sixth Form a wellbeing and skills development cooking course and it has been lovely to see some old faces back in our school kitchen. I'm really looking forward to formally starting the Food Skills Elective with Sixth Form in September.

I really commend all of my students' efforts in buying ingredients and joining in our virtual lessons by cooking in their own kitchens. I enjoyed demonstrating recipes from my own kitchen too using a visualiser, which did a brilliant job. I can't wait to plan our next GCSE trip to Borough Market when the time is right, and to see how new ways of teaching during Guided Home Learning will be used in our 'new normal'.

Miss Knight **Subject Leader Food**



During this mixed academic school year it has been wonderful to see students cooking together in school (which we have luckily been able to do), and in their own kitchens during the nation's third lockdown. I have seen wonderful outcomes from all year groups, and hopefully cooking/baking has been an escape for some.

During the most recent lockdown, I was able to run a baking club named 'Ad Break Bakes' on a Wednesday afternoon. It focused on quick baking recipes which used equipment like microwaves instead of ovens. Some of the recipes we made were peanut butter truffles and microwave brownies. The club was particularly popular with KS3 students and we created a wonderful baking community from our own kitchens.

To further develop our cooking and baking community, I have created an online photo gallery using Padlet where all staff and students across Junior and Senior School can

Music



This has been an unusual but very productive year for Music at Northampton High School. The two annual flagship events are our Christmas Concert and the Senior musical production.

Unfortunately we were unable to attend All Saints' to hold the Christmas Concert due to restrictions, however the concert was staged virtually, showcasing many soloists, small ensembles and the Senior Orchestra. The 2020 Senior production of 'Seussical' had to be cancelled although the orchestra managed to learn most of the music, which was a very worthwhile journey despite the cancelled performances.

During the current academic year, Junior students have participated in two virtual singing events: Christmas Celebrations and House Singing. These performances featured each individual class performing as an ensemble to a very high standard.

Senior Choir continued virtually during lockdown and is now up and running again in school. A vocal highlight of the year was Olivia Scurr's entry for the GDST Song Contest.

As students have been confined to their homes during a significant portion of the current academic year, they have been able to really focus on improving their individual technical skills. The teaching has been focussed on improving keyboard and vocal skills, including very successful virtual performance assessments. Many students decided to begin one-to-one instrumental lessons remotely during lockdown and success with remote ABRSM performance grades has also been excellent.

We look forward to returning to All Saints' and also welcoming an audience into school for our next production.

Mr Nathan
Director of Music

Film Studies

AS Film students have continued to produce high quality short films and screenplays despite the pandemic.

Hannah J's Agrimonia House used soft brown lighting tones and depth of focus to recreate the feel of Britain on a summer's day in the 1940s. Meticulous details in mise-en-scene captured the story of a young girl's evacuation to the countryside and foreshadowed the tragedy of war (picture 1).

Katie N's After the Credits presented a twist on the romcom, including a stunning sequence where the couple

break up that appears to be a continuous tracking shot. Complex editing techniques place the past and present together in single shots to evoke the compressed time of the romance. Katie will be studying Film and English Literature at University of East Anglia (pictures 2 and 3).

The Last Hurdle by Tamara brilliantly follows a student's athletic hopes shattered in a downward spiral, with a shock ending worthy of a horror film (picture 4).

Ms Heimfeld
Subject Leader Film



English

Debating and public speaking continued to thrive, online, this year. Two U4 public speaking teams competed against Caistor Grammar School in the first round of the ESU-Churchill Public Speaking Competition; we were delighted that Anushka, Leona and Mia went through to the regional semi-final, while Tevini won Best Chairperson of the evening and Anushka was awarded Best Speaker of the evening. For U5, Hannah came runner-up in the semi-final of the GDST's Chrystall Carter Prize for Public Speaking, with a very well-received speech on Artificial Intelligence. Our 6.1 debating team, comprising Freya, Jodie, Korena, Sarah and Zara, competed in the ESU Schools' Mace competition, arguing for the retention of educational information on CVs; they were especially commended by the judges for their firm responses to questions.

Celebrating World Book Day in March, pupils from Year 6 and U3 joined a webinar with children's author Robin Stevens, famous for her Murder Most Unladylike series. Her virtual visit to the school was met with great excitement and the girls were really inspired by her obvious love of books, her creative flair, and her infectious enthusiasm for her work.

The ranks of the 'Backchat' editorial board were strengthened by students in 6.1, L4 and U3, all ably led by Jess Cressey-Jones. The March issue, on the theme of 'Change', saw contributions ranging from the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change to music and US politics. The magazine's Wordpress site continues to be developed by Isobel Ward (with readers from as far afield as Ecuador and India), while the magazine's successful Instagram presence is being steered by Freya Tansley.

The High School's entry to the GDST Laurie Magnus Poetry Competition in the Sixth Form was Isobelle Aphalé's 'The Moon and Sea', a richly lyrical piece infused with evocative classical references. The runner-up was Mo Lomas, whose set of short poems impressed with their urgent and punchy tone. Harriet Williams was the winner in the KS4 category with 'Set in Stone', while Hannah Pearson came runner-up with 'A Wonderful Dream'. Sonya Mittal was the winner at Key Stage 3 with the very funny 'Ode to my Bedroom Door'; Anushka Thomas's political poems placed her runner-up.

The theme of the GDST Creative Writing competition was 'Belonging' and we had some fabulous entries for this, several inspired by the experience of lockdown. The Sixth Form winner was Ruby Howard with 'At Peace'. At Key Stage 4, Katie Maybin won with 'Beginning of the End' and at Key Stage 3 the winner was Himaya Senadhipathy with 'Take me to the Stars'. In Key Stage 1, Shanaya Shah was Highly Commended with her story 'Flower: A story about belonging'.

The School Book Club was available to all years during Guided Home Learning, but it was a pleasure to resume face to face meetings upon our return. There has been keen interest in the Carnegie shortlist with a diverse selection for 2021, with books that explore the relationship between children and their natural environment a popular trend, as explored by our favourite title so far, 'Echo Mountain', by Lauren Wolk. There will be a Summer Reading Fest after May half term for all year groups organised by Miss Buxton, our Librarian.

Mr Williams
Head of English Faculty

Dance

With the return of Guided Home Learning in January 2021, the Sport Faculty utilised the opportunity to teach Dance during the Physical Education curriculum for Reception up to Sixth Form. During our live lessons, we engaged with our classes through a variety of dance styles. The pupils, especially those in Junior School, loved participating and the staff were delighted with the progress of all.



Reception learnt a dance to Disney's Moana, with Years 1 and 2 'strutting their stuff' to the Bear Necessities and learning some Bollywood movements, including hand gestures. Years 3 and 4 focused on Sixties-style and Bollywood, with a little bit of Ballet and Contemporary thrown in there too. Years 5 and 6 also covered Sixties, Bollywood and Street, with some African-style dancing as well. We had great fun and hope that towards the end of the summer term we can showcase all these dances.

In Senior School lessons we incorporated Dance into our Wellbeing curriculum. Some groups learnt Zumba and Boxercise whilst others enjoyed an old skool dance lesson involving some pre-choreographed dance classics such as Time Warp, Saturday Night and Macarena! We are excited by the enthusiasm of our dancers moving forward and look forward to getting back to normality, where we can continue to choreograph, perform, and work together to showcase the talent of many of our pupils here at Northampton High School.

During the Easter break, the GDST Lockdown Dance Competition Finalists were revealed on a Zoom call, hosted by the organiser Mrs Williamson-Jones of Sutton High School and judged by Kira, a dancer, choreographer and teacher based at Pineapple Studios, London.

The competition was extremely popular with over 250 entries from across the GDST Schools. The age categories consisted of Years 3 and 4, Years 5 and 6, Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 upwards. Northampton High School was represented by the following pupils who performed some amazing pieces.

Years 3 & 4, - Angelie B, Zoe S, Shreya S, Tami S, Ellie J-E, Harini S

Years 5 & 6 - Sophia B, Anya R

Key Stage 3 - Holly H, Carolina F-L, Ques-Li DB

Key Stage 4 upwards - Hannah S, Kathryn L



We are delighted to announce that Angelie B (Year 3) was placed in the top 5 for her age group with an energetic Bollywood performance. Hannah S placed top 5 with her beautiful Contemporary piece and Ques-Li D-B won the entire Key Stage 3 competition, which is absolutely amazing, with a stunning Contemporary piece. We are very proud of all the entries on behalf of Northampton High and we are super excited about the future of our creative dancers.

Mrs Blake
Director of Sport



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