I am delighted to have been asked to introduce this year’s IB exhibition. The Oxo Bargehouse has long proven itself a striking environment in which the Upper Sixth students of Sevenoaks can share their ambitious and creative practices with family, friends and a wider London audience. Each year I have thoroughly enjoyed weaving through the dilapidated rooms of dusty brick and flaking plaster to discover many an artistic gem. This year will be no exception.

I worked for Sevenoaks School from 2013 to 2015 in a residency role that afforded me teaching experience alongside time to work on my own practice, whilst also contributing to the broader life of the school. There are too many fond memories to list but highlights included helping on the Year 8 trip to Normandy and painting scenery for the school’s production of Les Misérables, a venture that springboarded me into an apprenticeship with The Royal Opera House, where I now work full time as one of their Scenic Artists.

Part of my residency also involved running the Lower School art club. It was held after school and on a Monday, yet the energy and enthusiasm brought by each student to these sessions was a joy to observe. It is perhaps not a surprise but nonetheless a delight to see that almost all those preparing to exhibit in this year’s IB show were attendees of that club. Back then those students were driven by a pure desire to make – not because someone told them to, but because they chose to, making for the simple enjoyment of being creative. It is no doubt the Art department’s superb fostering of this playful spirit that is fuelling the works we see here today.

Displaying artworks can be rewarding but also to an extent, daunting. For me it is a feeling that hovers somewhere between apprehension and relief. However, a good friend once described it as a celebration of creativity for you and those closest to you. After all, do you value a stranger’s opinion over a friend’s? So amidst all the noise and all the times you might have to explain your artistic process to someone you’ve never met, remember to take a moment for pride and celebration of all you have achieved.

I hope the artworks displayed here are not the last we see from these young creatives, and that you can join me in congratulating them for all their hard work.

Michael O’Reilly
Artist in Residence, Sevenoaks School 2013-2015
Renaud Bauné

My artwork has long been driven by my strong interests in structure and its unlikely connection with colour and texture. Exploring techniques has been my way of responding to the challenges that this connection creates. I began experimenting with printing, which would turn out to be, for me, the best way to bind the notion of structure and discipline with the vibrant variations that can occur when using colour. The process of creation itself in all forms of printing gives me a sort of freedom to come out of what seems to be a restrictive technique, where colours are set once on a plate, and textures must be applied in a certain way. Pushing back these boundaries through larger scales and combining several printing types has enabled me to find this connection between colour and structure. Lines fade and reappear through the gradient colours, shadows seem to take over the clear space, yet I always try to reflect hints of the linear and architectural influence.

The continuous visual and emotional progress an urban environment undergoes has been the underlying root for my work. Exploring both the abstract and the concrete concept through a range of forms and media has enabled me to convey the mundane routine of everyday life. Architecture’s most influential tool is the people who inhabit the space; architecture has the power to change someone’s mindset through the use of materials and spatial characteristics. I wanted to incorporate this aspect in my work by using a linear and a divergent system simultaneously. The built landscape along with the geometrical pieces exhibits a mundane structure in which daily life takes place, however, the layers of the work build on the landscape’s energy. The fluid forms, including my charcoal drawings and the moulded plastics, were a tool to dislodge the strict structure. They create a distorted reality, which becomes soothing as well as disruptive for the viewer. I left most of my work open for interpretation in order to let people viewing find the purpose of the art, as does architecture.

Juliette Briery

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The main theme for my exhibition is contrast. I enjoyed exploring the different meanings of this word, and the numerous ways to interpret it. Experimenting with the boundaries of what contrast actually is. There is the surface definition of the physical aspects of a piece, in terms of contrasting light and dark, and of colour, but then it can be taken further into the more conceptual understanding. Here I focused more on the expectations of reality and how that can be subverted.

A strong theme throughout my work is the idea of contrasting tones. In my Wiggly Buildings I enjoyed the freedom of a first project, as it set the grounding for what I wanted to achieve through the rest of my works. Next came Brian, who inspired me to expand my focus from just the urban world. Thus the project took root and inspired the rest of my pieces, still with a connection to contrast. So here is my lasting contribution to the school: some paintings. I personally choose to listen to The 1975’s album I like it when you sleep, for you are so beautiful yet so unaware of it when I am at an exhibition, and it highly recommended, of course you are not required to.

Inspired by artists like Fang Li Jun, Robert Longo, Alison Lantier, Donna Grégor and Romee Berdei, I seek out charged and bold mediums – primarily oil, charcoal, etching, monoprints, linocut, lithography and photomontage – whose either visceral or graphic qualities help translate different forms of energy. I imbue crowd scenes with the sense of an interior or graphic qualities help translate different forms of energy. I imbue crowd scenes with the sense of an interior or graphic qualities that is a dizzying sea of reflection and movement. In close-up portraits, intensity of emotion is expressed through dynamic strokes and reconsidered perspectives. Raised a Buddhist-Taoist, my work also includes scenes of religious devotion. By taking on a distinctively traditional yet celebratory context, I hope to find the beauty, promise and spiritual energy of faith.
My work centres on an exploration of the use of light and its connection to emotion. Throughout the course I have been exploring this through different media, such as painting and printmaking. Each one has different capacity for creation, for example my linoprints tend to be more decorative whereas my monoprints tend towards more simplistic depictions. I was also interested in the relationship between the artist and sitter. The figures depicted are all close friends or family members, and exploring these relationships through art lends my pieces more emotive value. The atmosphere that can be conveyed through light was also at the front of my mind, and this became especially apparent in my monoprint work and photography.

I began with an exploration into contrasting architecture and painting styles in the piece Stone Places 1 and 2. I went on to explore portraiture in various mediums such as large oil painting and etchings. It was through this process that I decided on the focus of light; it had become evident that this was what I was most drawn to as an artist. This came to fruition in the piece Victor Hugo, which pairs with Cathedral Square. Both paintings explore the same night, conveying the subject and the setting at different times, with different atmospheres.
The evolution of my art reflects the evolution of my self and the struggle we face to trust our true selves. Carl Jung said, ‘There is no coming to consciousness without pain,’ and this is illustrated in my artwork, which challenges viewers to channel their inner knowledge and creativity into experiencing an altered perception of reality – perhaps a truer one.

The inspiration for my exhibition was sparked by a fascination with ancient alchemy and its influence on psychoanalysis, a field that emerged alongside Surrealism in the early 20th century. As I continue to comprehend the complexity of the subconscious, I seek to escape from constraints of the rational mind through art. Presenting the psyche through surreal yet abstract symbols, I delve into the collective unconscious as a series of black and white ink drawings, which capture the duality and unity of being.

In my most recent work this medium became film, through the projection of videos onto the ‘tv screen’ on the back wall of my piece. After creating work that was becoming increasingly domestic, I thought about reflecting the content of this theme in the presentation of my works. Consequently, my work has been presented within an interior, homely scene, reflecting its content into the surrounding space. This projection of domestic and interior themes is also present in my use of film, as I produced a series of short clips to further develop these within my final piece.

Georgie Stephens

My work seeks to animate the mundane by manipulating a series of everyday images through representation in multiple mediums. I began creating soft pastel sketches to recreate interior spaces, using fibre to maintain the outlines of individual objects within a larger mass. This style grew more ambitious as I began to incorporate both a larger scale and a greater variety of material. My more recent pieces rely on the use of material to let texture represent object, and create physical depth. Within this I tried to maintain calmer in each piece, so incorporated cleaner mediums, ranging from photography to tinfoil.
As an artist, my aim is one that is rather selfish: to capture my personal experiences and share them with whoever happens to see. With this objective in mind, I have allowed myself absolute freedom to express myself in multiple mediums from sculptures to traditional Chinese landscapes. The pieces in this room show my journey of technical development through multiple mediums alongside my personal emotional responses to the meaningful events that take place in my life. I believe that emotions are the strongest way to connect with the viewer, therefore I strive to highlight the emotions embedded within my pieces as clear-cut as my ability allows me to, evoking feelings inexpressible with words.

I also believe my personality and culture have greatly shaped my work. Being a perfectionist, I feel most comfortable when I have full control over the tools at my disposal, paying particular attention to form and texture. Although my Chinese heritage somewhat makes me feel responsible for continuing the traditional practice of my ancestors, I will not hesitate to use foreign processes to enhance my pieces as I seek originality and adaptability.
The central concept of my art is the relationship between the observer and the deeper emotional association it provokes. I am fascinated by the fact that an image can be interpreted differently depending on the viewer’s own personal experiences. My work is a stimulation of conscious and unconscious sensations linked to people and place, the art of knowing and remembering. I hope to tell stories about the richness and diversity of people’s lives and express the atmospheres of places through my artworks.

I was originally influenced by the portrait etchings of Alison Lambert and Freya Payne and their use of contrasting and expressive mark making while tightly cropping the final image. I not only took these ideas into my own portrait etchings but also incorporated this aesthetic into my places and buildings work to create a more dynamic and shadowy quality. Light, tone, texture and identity is further explored in my large painted portraits and these have been inspired and enriched by Steve Eichenberger’s freedom of brushstroke and cardboard backgrounds.

I am often weary of obliging my viewers to conform to fixed interpretations of the scenes I create, especially since I am sometimes unsure of how to interpret my own work. It often surprises me, as it should, to have a multiplicity of themes, not tying myself to one. In this way, I can attempt to encompass the complexity and diversity of lived experience, expanding personal, private experience and projection towards a public vision. Throughout, the dreamlike and childlike narrative thread hangs loose in a way in which I hope to be elegantly elegant, just like the awkwardness of my writing when I try to reflect on anything at all. I hope the continuous conflict between naivety and clarity between showing what I mean and also simultaneously discovering it, shines through. It is my creative process, in both written and visual form.

When it comes to my work, so much is messy, incongruous and one has even said “hard to look at”, but this is merely a youthful exploration (and yet so much more than that) and that it is bound to be imperfect. It is bound to push the boundaries between meaningfulness and meaninglessness, predictability and unpredictability, whatever it is you, the viewer, will.
Reflection on Technique

In my prints, I tried to reuse a painting I used, Rembrandt having the whites contrasting to the blacks. These dark patches juxtapose the bright light casted on his forehead. I used gloomier and uncomfortable tones, making the mood slightly dark.

I inspired me to incorporate an etching as my main piece. Using only charcoal, I completed a series of sketches of the life model, in a range of poses and outlines to the pieces which creates more drama. These sketches were particularly useful as it meant I wasn’t too caught up in the detail of my lines or the expression.

CRITICAL INVESTIGATION

After the first print I then recreated the techniques that Alison Lambert has used to detail as well as bring out the most essential aspects. The large surfaces and clean patches of colour. The pixelation of the image enhances this three dimensional effect when blended properly. I found the weird energy that awes yet humours. I think the artists intended to bring the outlook the image. The combination of both blank spaces and the contrast served to further enhance the effect on the.

Day often works on complex architectural spaces and urbanization, and I think he intended to incorporate the symbolism of the buildings with a ti-like feel to the board. The peel of the newspaper at the top is a detail which makes the piece seem like a piece of writing. The large surfaces and clean patches of colour. The pixelation of the image enhances this three dimensional effect when blended properly. I found the weird energy that awes yet humours. I think the artists intended to bring the outlook the image. The combination of both blank spaces and the contrast served to further enhance the effect on the.

I used very delicate and controlled brushstrokes to define the subjects features and recreate the interesting tonal contrast which serves to further enhance the.

Sensation screen 1

• abstracted image with
• making a relief sculpture
• using different levels of

IB Visual Arts and Higher Education

The traditional image of the artist showing in a panel is enough to strike terror into the heart of any parent, so it is exciting to see a body of visual evidence that documents and infests the wide variety of routes that are facilitated by pursuing IB Visual Arts and exploiting strengths in that area at a higher level.

The work presented here shows how courses such as architecture draw-on a range of skills and interests, growing from creativity, independence and innovation fostered at Sevenoaks. Observing the world around us, identifying and solving problems, exploring and testing solutions are not just the work of artists and designers but of course the skills delivered across a range of subjects at Sevenoaks. These skills are transferable and sought after even as the nature and content of the higher education courses offered – from architecture to fine art to graphic design to history of art – are themselves rapidly evolving and innovating. Who would have guessed just a few years ago that Old Sevenoaks would today be going on to study game design?

It is heartening to realise that the work in this exhibition draws on those timeless skills that find their own shape and place in the contemporary world.

Wendy Haydon
Director of the Institute of Higher Education and Professional Insight, Sevenoaks School