

# VISUALISE

## RACE & INCLUSION IN SECONDARY SCHOOL ART EDUCATION

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**RUNNYMEDE**

 Freelands  
Foundation



**Art is powerful;  
it helps us to visualise  
ourselves in the present,  
and to project into  
the future; we need  
to imagine that future in  
a way that is truly inclusive,  
and those efforts need to  
start in our art  
classrooms, now.**




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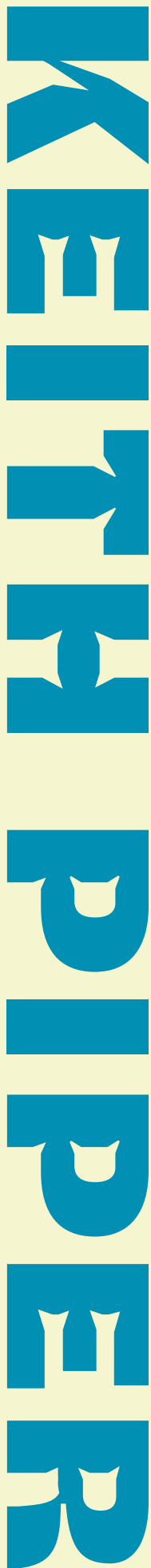
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# FOREWORD

KEITH PIPER

**WE ARE  
SURROUNDED BY  
THE DESIGNED,  
FABRICATED,  
STRUCTURED,  
SCRIBED AND  
EDITED RESULTS  
OF HUMAN  
CREATIVE  
ENDEAVOUR.** 

*Keith Piper is a Black British artist, curator, researcher and academic. In the early 1980s, he was a founding member of the British BLK Art Group (active 1979-1984). Over the past four decades, he has exhibited internationally. His creative practice has responded to specific social and political issues, historical relationships and geographical sites. Prioritising a research driven approach, his work has ranged from painting, through photography and installation to a use of digital media, video and computer-based interactivity. He currently teaches Fine Art at Middlesex University, London.*



Today, we live in a world drenched in cultural products. Through our waking moments, we are surrounded by the designed, fabricated, structured, scribed and edited results of human creative endeavour. The shape and patterns of the clothes we wear, the content that we cast to our digital devices, the printed materials that we read, and the configuration of the physical spaces that we occupy are all the outcomes of labour by people we call artists and designers.

In an ideal world, these people should bring with them influences, approaches, ideas and solutions drawn from the spectacular array of possibilities afforded by the social and cultural diversity of our contemporary societies. However, for this to be possible, those who occupy the spaces in which culture is made, and from which culture is distributed, need to fully reflect this diversity.

This process must start in the classroom, and this report offers a timely appraisal of the issues and possibilities confronting teachers as they work to inspire student's imaginations and engage their energies. For young people to imagine creative industries as potential places within which they can grow and contribute, it is important for them to be able to see examples of others who have already taken that route. It could be argued that recent years have witnessed examples of individuals from diverse backgrounds who have achieved visibility and success within the creative industries. However, as this report confirms, this visibility is often clouded and overlooked within the structure of existing curricula, which needs to be urgently addressed.

As a creative industry, 'Fine Art' provides us with a fascinating example of this. The pleasure of mark-making; the joyous and exploratory act of manipulating materials to form representations of your favourite people, pets and places, often forms the earliest gateway into creativity for young children. It is often at this moment when a child recognises themselves as being 'good at drawing', and can perhaps start on a trajectory that could, if sustained, lead to a lifelong engagement in creative practice. However, it is also true that this early impulse to express oneself through mark-making points most directly towards one of the least transparent, and traditionally most precarious, areas of creative practice and distribution. The world of 'Fine Art' with its elitist gallery systems, curators and collectors, is seen as remaining largely inaccessible to the majority of young people.

The apparent difficulties of Fine Art as a career option inevitably persuade many young people to gravitate toward some of the more vocational applications of creative practice with more easily identifiable 'industries' in which to gain stable employment, or in some cases, to abandon creative practice completely. One of the aims of a well-balanced and informative curriculum must be to create an awareness of the breadth of possibilities within the creative industries as a whole, but also to maintain creative and conceptual dialogues with the core expressive and experimental drivers of Fine Art practice.

The recent success and visibility of Black and majority global artists and designers provide us with a wealth of examples to inspire young creatives. However, creating curricula that are responsive to this is a more difficult task, and time-poor teachers need to balance this with the long tail of Western art history, which has traditionally struggled to recognise the importance of global forms and their impact upon 'modernity'.

This can only be achieved through the redrafting and diversification of the canon of art history and the creation of engaging new learning materials that help teachers confidently present it to their students. Our work is cut out.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



**Art education has an extraordinary transformative potential for individual students, classroom communities, the educational system and our broader society. Art has long been associated with deep value and wide-ranging benefits to student learning, both in terms of the development of artistic skills and imagination and also more broadly for the contribution it makes to all-round development and wellbeing.**

As highlighted by the recent Art Now report (2023) published by the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Art, Craft and Design in Education, art offers an enormous range of direct and indirect cognitive and emotional benefits to students.<sup>1</sup>

However, there is an emerging consensus among those in the sector that we are facing a ‘creativity crisis’ in art education.<sup>2</sup> The contours of this crisis can be traced through the participation rates for all arts subjects, which have plummeted in recent years, with a 35 per cent decrease in GCSE entries,<sup>3</sup> a staggering 67 per cent of art teachers thinking of leaving the profession<sup>4</sup> and a looming, compounding problem with the number of art and design trainees having nearly halved since 2021.<sup>5</sup> The Art Now report adds definition to the growing problem, highlighting the deficit in diversity in the curriculum and in the teacher workforce and the gaps in training and guidance offered to teachers during both initial teacher training and ongoing professional development.

The report concludes that these factors are manufacturing a maelstrom of conditions that are inflicting a devastating deprivation of good-quality access to art for children and young people.

Significantly though, these impacts are not distributed equally; the COVID-19 pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis have exposed deep-seated inequalities in our social and economic systems, as a result of which people have experienced these crises in uneven, racialised ways. We can see huge gaps between private and state schools in the way that art education has fared.

While state-funded schools are facing ‘acute funding pressures’ and a ‘systematic downgrading’<sup>6</sup> of provision, private schools are actively investing in their arts and cultural facilities, articulating a proud commitment to

broad-based education.<sup>7</sup> Our report takes a closer look at these themes and issues, with a particular focus on the racialised impacts of the worsening conditions.

The creativity crisis that we face is one that has been designed by decades of education policy that has failed to value or support the teaching of art in our state schools, and that has in some cases actively denigrated the status of art education, through elevating some subject awards above others and through funding restrictions. These shifts have an impact on all young people, because they are deprived of a good-quality art education. But there is a disproportionate impact on minority ethnic students, who are more likely to find that the content of the art and design curriculum fails to represent, affirm or inspire them.

This is then compounded by lower levels of support among parents of minority ethnic students for selecting the subject at GCSE.

Chiming with the conclusions of the now well-developed body of work on these issues, we show why it is crucial that art education is made inclusive, relevant and enriching for all students.

Our research as part of the Visualise project has found that although the numbers of minority ethnic students opting to study art and design at GCSE is disproportionately low compared with their demographic representation in the school population, participation levels of minority ethnic students studying art and design have been increasing in recent years.

What remains unchanged is the systematic under-representation of minority ethnic artists and their work in the school curriculum, relative to the diversity of contemporary ideas, practices and influences.

**Our research found that:****Artists referenced in exam papers are overwhelmingly white**

Although minority ethnic students are now choosing to study art at a higher rate than they have since 2017, diversity within the curriculum has not gone up. Only 10.8 per cent of exam assessment materials mention any art by minority ethnic people, and only 2.3 per cent of all named stand alone artists are from Black or South Asian backgrounds.

**Students want a more diverse curriculum**

Nearly two-thirds (66 per cent) of all students wanted to study artists from a wider range of ethnic backgrounds in their art classes. This statistic rises when we look at Black students in isolation: 80 per cent said they should be studying artists from a wider range of ethnic backgrounds.

**Some art teachers are unfamiliar with the work of minority ethnic artists**

A third of teachers (37 per cent) said they had not been introduced to the work of any minority ethnic artists during their own art education and teacher training.

Nearly all teachers use work from the early and mid-20th century in their lessons, but over half never or infrequently use works by minority ethnic artists. Even when teaching contemporary work (late 20th and early 21st century), about a quarter never or infrequently mention minority ethnic artists.

**Art teachers want to expand their knowledge**

There is insufficient support and guidance for art teachers to enable the development of a diverse, inclusive curriculum.

The National Curriculum for art has a loose structure which is less prescriptive than other subjects and is designed for interpretation by teachers. But just over half of the teachers we surveyed said that the National Curriculum for art and design does not provide them with enough support.

Ninety per cent said that supplementary materials such as lesson plans, study guides and information packs dedicated to the work of minority ethnic artists would aid their teaching.

**Teachers feel unsupported to discuss race in the classroom**

Eighty-five per cent of the teaching workforce in state-funded schools in England are of white ethnicities, and many teachers admitted that they avoid talking about cultural identity in lessons because they don't feel confident about the correct terminology or ways to frame discussions.

Fewer than four in ten teachers surveyed (37 per cent) felt sure of the correct language to use when teaching students about the work of minority ethnic artists. Forty-three per cent had had no continuous professional development and learning (CPDL) related to race and ethnicity, and 82 per cent of art teachers said that additional standardised content relating to race and diversity would aid their teaching practice.

**Art is perceived as unrelatable and not a viable career route**

Currently, just 6 per cent of students felt they could relate to artists introduced in their classrooms, and less than 10 per cent felt that art helped them understand their own lives. While a lack of relatability was fairly consistent across students, parent opinions of the subject were substantially more negative among minority ethnic families: 19 per cent of Asian students, 18 per cent of Black students, 17 per cent of students with 'Other' ethnicities and 8 per cent of students with 'Mixed' ethnicities reported that their parents had told them to focus on other subjects, compared with just 5 per cent of white students. Further research is required into how these rates compare with other subjects, but they suggest a worrying trend in terms of the diminished perceived status and value of art education.

**We are not measuring diversity in art education**

An absence of data hinders our ability to account for, track and evaluate the art education landscape; this includes an absence of data about the teacher workforce, participation rates and attainment outcomes. As a result, there is little understanding of how curriculum, teacher and classroom experience impact on student experience and outcomes, and little accountability for progress.

# 80%

**of Black students** said they should be studying artists from a wider range of ethnic backgrounds.

# 82%

**of art teachers** said that additional standardised content relating to race and diversity would aid their teaching practice.

Our findings reveal that teachers and educators feel they are doing the best they can to support diverse art practices within the curriculum, but their best efforts are rooted in an education system that cannot support either student or teacher efforts to improve their experience of art education.

There remains a participation gap in art and design for minority ethnic students, and though this appears to be narrowing, the overall education system needs transformation to better support the sense of engagement, talent, capabilities and skills of all students in a fair and inclusive way.

We suspect that the current failure of the system to do this contributes significantly to retention and later participation levels in the visual art sector, which remain persistently low and problematic.

Improving the art educational journey and experience is important not just for those students studying art and those who want to go into visual arts careers: it matters for students more generally. Art education in school offers a representation of the world and its artistic heritage. It teaches students broad transferable skills that they will carry through life. In the best art lessons, students are taught to think creatively and innovatively and to explore their emotional selves in ways that cannot be nourished in other parts of their education.

Overall, these findings constitute a significant contribution to current knowledge about race and inclusion in art education and illuminate contemporary practices in English schools, mapping the way for change.

Policymakers, exam boards and teachers need to collaborate to broaden the existing narrow representation of visual culture offered to young people in schools.

As a starting point, we support the use of a greater diversity of artwork and artists in the curriculum, but also increasing teachers' understanding about gaps in their own knowledge and existing materials.

Efforts to broaden the curriculum and introduce more diversity into art education and the visual arts are unlikely to be successful or effective without supporting teachers who themselves are a product of the very same system.

Teachers need support to develop wider anti-racist approaches and their own racial literacy, so that they can develop and maintain the confidence of their students.

The classroom canvas has become limited by an educational system that values well-worn routes to 'grade success' that inevitably favour a narrow art canon, but all young people lose so much in that process.

Our recommendations identify the potential for change that exists at various levels of the art education ecosystem.

Recommendations

1

Establish standards for inclusion and diversity in GCSE assessment materials.

2

Improve access to teacher and curriculum resources that support a broad and diverse curriculum.

3

Improve racial literacy and curriculum development skills for teachers through existing initial teacher training (ITT) and continuous professional development and learning (CPDL).

4

Improve partnerships between galleries and schools, with specific attention to diversity and representation of work by minority ethnic artists and the norms of engagement which may impact student experience and comfort.

5

Investigate low levels of engagement in art lessons and extracurricular enrichment activities offered by schools.

6

Improve understanding and promotion of the skills gained in art and creative subjects as part of a wider national programme of promotion.

7

Improve the data landscape around art education across the whole school, further education and higher education ecosystem.

**You can find more detail on our full recommendations in the final chapter of the report.**

**The crisis is real, and the potential scars of this devaluing of art in schools feeds and entrenches a much-weakened and unequal cultural and art sector pipeline.**

**However, there were glimpses of hope and optimism in our research. There is an appetite among teachers to develop a more inclusive curriculum, and students are hungry for these improvements.**

**There is an opportunity to reflect on these findings and to imagine an art curriculum that meets its full creative and innovative potential – one which is broad, inclusive, and will equip students with the tools they need to navigate and thrive, whether or not they decide to pursue further education, or a career, in the visual arts.**

**Art has always been central to how people make sense of themselves and their surroundings and how they communicate their experiences with others and therefore, unlike many other subjects, art provides a unique opportunity in schools for students to explore their own identities, heritage and experiences.**

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A NOTE ON  
**TERMINOLOGY**



## A NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

Language related to race has always been contested; there are no fixed categories or definitions, and terminology is always political. Terms relating to race, and how people choose to self-identify, are deeply personal, and we recognise that all terms which group racialised people together are problematic and limiting.

Therefore, this section by no means seeks to be definitive, but rather we aim to explain some of the decisions we have made regarding the terminology used in this report, where grouping people together is necessary for research purposes.

We always strive to be specific wherever we can, and we do not suggest that those from within a particular racialised community will have universal experiences or viewpoints, or indeed that experiences will necessarily differ between those from different racialised communities.

## TERMINOLOGY

### ‘PEOPLE OF COLOUR’/‘BPOC’/ ‘GLOBAL MAJORITIES’

The terms ‘people of colour’ and ‘BPOC’ (Black, Indigenous, people of colour) are taken from the USA and are fairly new in the UK context. They are terms that are used affirmatively to describe shared experiences of racism suffered by different communities. However, work needs to be done to overcome what some regard as their exclusionary nature, given the history of conquest and immigration stretching back thousands of years, and the fact that the terms do not currently feel inclusive of people of white ethnicities who are targets of racism, such as Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people, Jewish people, and Eastern European migrants.

Similarly, the term ‘global majorities’ is growing in popularity and is a useful framing; however, given that we are discussing minoritised communities in an UK educational setting, we found that its use often made the themes we were discussing more difficult to understand from within a UK context.

### ‘RACIALISATION’

This is the very complex and contradictory process through which groups come to be designated as being of a particular ‘race’ and on that basis subjected to differential and/or unequal treatment. Put simply, ‘racialisation [is] the process of manufacturing and utilising the notion of race in any capacity’. While white people are also racialised, this process is often rendered invisible or normative to those designated as white. As a result, white people may not see themselves as part of a race but still maintain the authority to name and racialise ‘others’.<sup>8</sup>

### ‘BME’/‘BAME’

Where we refer to secondary research reports we retain the generic groupings, such as ‘Black and minority ethnic’ (BME) or ‘Black and Brown’, that are used by the authors for consistency with their data. We are well aware of the issues surrounding the use of ‘BME’ and ‘Black, Asian and minority ethnic’; however, there is still a need for an overall category in which the groups collected have something in common, namely that they are subject to structural inequality because of their ethnicity. We have retained these terms where they appear.

### ‘ART’ OR ‘THE ARTS’

The term ‘the arts’ can refer to a wide variety of subjects and disciplines, including performing arts like dance, music and drama. When discussing art education and art practice in this report, however, we are referring specifically to the visual art disciplines generally taught and discussed in UK schools as ‘art and design’, or ‘art’, namely drawing, painting, photography, print, design, textiles, digital art, sculpture, ceramics, conceptual, installation and performance, etc.

### ‘ANTI-RACISM’

‘Anti-racism’ is the active work of highlighting and challenging racism and working towards producing racial equity – so that racialised identities are no longer a factor in determining the opportunities and experiences of individuals and groups.

Being anti-racist goes beyond inclusion and diversity, in the sense that it recognises power and the structural nature of racism and therefore requires structural solutions to address the problems.

### ‘BLACK’ AND ‘WHITE’

In recognition of the shared history, identity and community among people who identify as Black, and the continued racism experienced by Black communities, we capitalise the term ‘Black’.<sup>9</sup> ‘White’, on the other hand, carries a distinct and different set of meanings, and capitalising the word in this context would risk supporting ideologies opposed to racial justice.<sup>10</sup>

### MINORITY ETHNIC

The term ‘minority ethnic’ is one that we rely on throughout this report to refer to people of Black, Asian or other minoritised ethnic groups in the UK; it is a domestic lens which has helped to unify many communities. In the past, the term has served as a tool to make comparisons with the white population in the UK and to reflect a common way of gathering and collating statistics and in company diversity monitoring.

However, we recognise, of course, that ‘minority ethnic’ is an imperfect and very technical way to describe people, which does little to reflect the joy and power of the people it refers to.

INTRODUCTION

# THE BIGGER PICTURE

**Art has long been associated with deep value and wide-ranging benefits to student learning, both in terms of the development of artistic skills and imagination and also more broadly for the contribution it makes to all-round development.**

**Artistic practice is intrinsically about an individual's response to the world and their place in it, and it is crucial that art education is inclusive and enriching for all students.**

**Art has always been central to how people make sense of themselves and their surroundings and how they communicate their experiences with others and therefore, unlike many other subjects, art provides a unique opportunity in schools for students to explore their own identities, heritage and experiences.**

The vital role of art education was highlighted recently in the Art Now (2023) report by the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Art, Craft and Design in Education, commissioned in response to concerns about diminishing opportunities for children and young people to access high-quality art and design education. The report highlights the manifold benefits of art education, stating that it was critical to ‘heightened self-belief and efficacy’,<sup>11</sup> and argues for a stronger emphasis on the ‘lived experience and voices of all children’.<sup>12</sup>

This is not to say that other disciplines are not conducive to exploring identity and experience. Literature and philosophy, for example, can be modes of self-exploration and expression. However, at present, art is one of the only subjects that is explicitly framed in the National Curriculum as a space where personal exploration should take centre stage. Art GCSE papers specifically ask students to create a ‘personal’ response to a selected topic: all four exam boards providing art and design GCSEs use this term ‘personal’ in their instructions to candidates.

The report *The Arts in Schools: Foundations for the Future* (2023) also makes the point that art provides ‘memorable experiences and a creative outlet which enables children to explore and express their emotions and their identities, and can help in supporting children who are struggling with their wellbeing’. It goes on to say that art ‘can enable young people to collaborate and flourish as individuals in their schools, communities and the wider world’.<sup>13</sup>

This is especially important given that elsewhere in the curriculum the designated space for personal reflection is minimal. For example, while English literature lessons allow students to read literary works that express the experiences of others, there is no prescribed space for students to express themselves in creative writing.

Similarly, while geography lessons introduce students to a range of theories on how the physical and social worlds work, there is no designated time for students to construct their own perspectives. Students may be invited to offer their own opinions on established theories or issues, but they are

not, in other subject areas, invited to make their own identity and experience the primary object of exploration and study.

When we present a homogenising worldview to students, we limit the imaginative and creative vision that students have sight of and that might encourage them to embrace and explore their identities for themselves. All students can benefit from being supported to use creative practices to make sense of their personal experiences and settings.

That is why we take issue with a reliance on a narrow canon of default references in the classroom: an unnecessarily narrow curriculum limits the possibility for creativity and connection.

Not surprisingly, art is widely recognised as being incredibly important for young people’s development and self-expression. Both Art Now and *The Arts in Schools* talk about the value of art education for children and young people. The OECD (2022) has found, through an extensive survey of 15-year-olds around the world, that creativity has a hugely positive impact on ‘identity and socio-emotional development by supporting the interpretation of experiences, actions and events in novel and personally meaningful ways’.<sup>14</sup> Yet there is an emerging concern and consensus that at present, art lessons are not providing this opportunity with consistent quality or, as we make clear in this report, providing it equally to all students.

There is increasing concern that there is a ‘creativity crisis’ in our education system, one main reason being shifts in education policy that have denigrated the status and value of arts subjects.

The introduction of the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) in 2010 created an approved list of GCSE qualifications, which did not include a single arts subject. The Progress 8 scores which schools are required to publish in performance tables are based on student attainment in these EBacc subjects, which are a combination of the ‘core’ English, maths and science subjects plus a language or history or geography. This has been translated in the school context into an ascription of value and attention to what

The creative industries sector contributed  
*£109 billion*  
 in 2021;  
 equivalent to  
*6%*  
 of the UK economy that year.

are deemed 'academic' subjects, and it is not incidental that following the change, there has been a dramatic decrease in participation in arts subjects.<sup>15</sup>

This shift is regrettable given that it is well known that a high-quality education in art helps young people to develop a unique set of skills that are not necessarily addressed elsewhere in the curriculum, such as creativity, imagination, expression, observation, problem-solving, analysis and autonomy – all of which are also skills that are less likely to be automated and digitised in the future economy.<sup>16</sup>

Additionally, and important to discussions about anti-racism in schools, there is a strong link between art and social awareness. Art orients students to be 'awake to the world' and creates students who are 'more socially engaged'.<sup>17</sup> It is clear that there is a deficit in the way that the system currently articulates the value of art education and underplays the transferable skills it develops, and the lack of attention to the value of art for 'vocational learning' is a missed opportunity.<sup>18</sup>

For many students, the arts are a dubious path to follow because, in a school environment that values 'academic' subjects and clear routes to vocational progression, art has failed to 'market' the wider benefits that it offers. These include subject-related degrees, training, and secure and sustainable employment opportunities, but also more general understandings of how disciplinary knowledge and skills are fundamental to the creative industries and visual cultures.

Art and design can develop the habits of mind and capabilities necessary for entry to further education and training, if access arrangements are equitable. For working-class and minority ethnic students, it is clear that lack of equity can act as a brake on aspiration and ambition for careers in – and out of – the visual art sector.

In recent years there has been growing awareness of the importance of increasing the diversity of the school curriculum. In a recent study on English literature teaching and learning across primary and secondary schools,<sup>19</sup> teachers and students endorsed the value of broadening the curriculum, because it would enhance the experience and engagement of not only minority ethnic students but all students, including white students in predominantly white communities.

It is clearly important that all students are encouraged to look beyond their own experiences and extend themselves to see the world from alternative perspectives – but those perspectives must be broad and diverse and challenge the reproduction of a single and narrow worldview.

The narrow curriculum is not the result of a lack of minority ethnic artists: a wealth of art exists by minority ethnic artists working across contemporary and historical eras, including artists from non-Western cultures as well as minority ethnic artists from Britain, Europe, North America and Australasia.

Taking up the concerns registered in the aforementioned recent reports, Visualise turns the focus squarely onto the representation of minority ethnic artists and their work, and the current inadequate attention to representation and diversity.

We explore the barriers preventing the rich lineage of work by minority ethnic artists from adequately reaching young people in schools and highlight how many of the obstacles identified in the emerging body of recent work act to produce specifically racialised disproportionalities.

As this report will detail, the approach we have taken enables us to make recommendations for policy changes that relate to exam boards and curriculum design as well as teaching resources and practice which support the delivery of an art curriculum that better represents the world we are and supports minority ethnic young people to experience and benefit from the richness that a truly engaging and affirmative art education can offer.

### **The future pipeline and missing talent in the creative industries**

The importance of an inclusive and engaging art curriculum extends far beyond the classroom. Britain has a distinct and thriving cultural industry within which the visual art sector plays a core role. Before public safety measures were introduced in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the sector was a rapidly growing and increasingly important component of the UK economy. As far back as 2018, the creative industries contributed £11.7 billion to the UK economy, an increase

of 43 per cent in real terms since 2010.

In 2019, the sector employed 2.1 million people – 35 per cent more than in 2011. This represents a growth rate three times greater than that of employment in the UK overall.<sup>20</sup> Post-COVID-19, too, the creative industries sector contributed £109 billion to the UK economy in 2021. This is equivalent to 6 per cent of the UK economy that year.<sup>21</sup> This industry offers opportunities for meaningful, fulfilling work that shapes contemporary discourses and cultural narratives about British identities and provides employment opportunities for young people at a time when several industries are adapting and moving towards digital capability, in turn leaving fewer opportunities for human skills to be utilised in this emerging economy.

The visual arts and creative industries, while relying heavily on digitalisation and adaptation too, will continue to demonstrate a greater dependence on creative skills that cannot be automated. As an industry sector, therefore, it will likely remain an important source for future employment.

Despite the success of individual artists such as Sonia Boyce, Lubaina Himid, Steve McQueen and Chris Ofili, employment in arts careers remains low for minority ethnic workers.

While the workforce overall has been growing over the past decade (see Table 1), the percentage of ‘non-white’ employees remains consistently smaller than the non-white working-age population.

TABLE 1  
**NUMBER OF MINORITY ETHNIC EMPLOYEES IN THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES OF THE UK (IN 1,000 EMPLOYEES)**

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	PERCENTAGE INCREASE 2011/19
<b>DESIGN AND DESIGNER FASHION</b>	102	117	124	136	132	160	160	163	172	68.63%
<b>FILM, TV, VIDEO, RADIO AND PHOTOGRAPHY</b>	211	240	232	228	231	265	261	245	239	13.27%
<b>MUSEUMS, GALLERIES AND LIBRARIES</b>	91	86	85	84	97	92	96	89	95	4.40%
<b>MUSIC, PERFORMANCE AND VISUAL ARTS</b>	213	227	244	284	286	291	283	296	315	47.89%

As of 2021, workers from minority ethnic groups represented 15 per cent of the workforce of the creative industries.<sup>22</sup>

Diversity in the visual art sector is even lower: in 2020 just 3 per cent of the workforce in museums, galleries and libraries were from minority ethnic backgrounds.

This rises slightly to 4 per cent in film, TV, radio and photography, and 5 per cent in music, performing and visual arts.<sup>23</sup> This is despite the fact that minority ethnic groups make up 19.7 per cent of the working-age population.<sup>24</sup>

The statistics also show that the visual art sector continues to be predominantly white. In 2021, research by Dr Charlotte Bonham-Carter commissioned by Freelands Foundation showed that even in London,

the most ethnically diverse city in the UK (with a population that is 41 per cent minority ethnic):

- Only 9 per cent of directors at major non-commercial galleries in London are non-white
- 93 per cent of commercial gallery directors in London are white
- 17 per cent of all non-commercial gallery directors in London are Black or Brown women, 4 per cent are Black or Brown men

Meanwhile, outside the capital:

- 96 per cent of directors of non-commercial galleries are white (39 per cent white men, 57 per cent white women)
- All directors of major institutions are white<sup>25</sup>



It is disappointing that there are such low levels of representation and diversity in a sector that is not only a vibrant part of the economy but also one that gets to tell powerful stories about who 'we' are and what we value. The art sector has an enormous impact on the social psyche; it does everything from representing and reproducing our society to resisting and remaking the world for us.

At a time when so many communities face a cost-of-living crisis that imposes material hardship and financial precarity on them, it may appear frivolous to advance a report that makes a case for greater attention to and investment in art education in our schools. Yet it is at these times that there is a greater responsibility to make this defence.<sup>26</sup>

We risk seeing all the work done in recent years to improve access to the visual arts undone, and allowing inequalities to resume their divisive work.

The enjoyment, provocation and solace provided by art are more vital than ever in this challenging economic climate.

In this report we focus on English secondary schools, exploring the teaching and educational landscape; we hope that this work will contribute to the growing body of work calling for change and highlighting the

In 2020 just

3%

of the workforce in museums, galleries and libraries were from minority ethnic backgrounds.

importance of supporting the development of an engaging, affirmative and broad art curriculum, so that all students receive a broad and honest representation of the artistic canon.

By making this contribution we hope to ensure that all students are given a genuine opportunity to avail themselves of the wider direct and indirect benefits of art education, and, if they want, to stake a claim and contribute to what is a positive and burgeoning sector of our economy and cultural life.

## METHODOLOGY

**In the report that follows we shine a light on the pressures, precarities and absences that limit the transformative potential of art education in schools.**

**Our methodology was informed by anti-racist research ideals.<sup>27</sup> We also applied bell hooks' concept of a 'pedagogy of hope', aiming to explore art education as 'a space for anti-racist hope'.<sup>28</sup>**

**Our research was guided by a series of questions that could help us advocate for better structures and processes in the education system around a more inclusive art education offer for all.**

**The research questions included:**

1. How diverse and representative is the art curriculum, as prescribed and guided by National Curriculum documents and exam board materials?
2. How do teachers teach art, and how diverse is the art being taught in classrooms?
3. A huge value of art education is as a space to explore self and identity. But given that art education is delivered by an overwhelming white teaching workforce, is there adequate racial literacy, diversity of references and sensitivity to create a safe, explorative environment for the diverse student community?
4. How do minority ethnic students experience art education? Does the current teaching of art give them the skills, experience and confidence to succeed?
5. How are art careers represented to secondary school students, and are the ways in which they are currently represented off-putting to students from minority ethnic backgrounds?
6. Are there expectations and pressures external to school that shape decisions not to pursue art careers?

To answer these questions, we employed a mixed-methods approach to get a broad and deep understanding of race and inclusion in art education in England. This included a nationwide call for evidence from members of the public and organisations in the visual art sector.

We also undertook two national surveys of teachers and their students, supplemented with qualitative data gathered through interviews and focus groups with teachers, students and sector professionals. Student focus groups were mixed, inviting students of different ethnicities, genders and social class profiles to participate.

The quantitative research captured data from 120 teachers with an average of 16 years of teaching experience, and a maximum of 39 years of teaching art and design. Eleven per cent of teachers taught at key stage (KS) 3 only, 5 per cent at KS4 only and 19 per cent across both key stages.

The majority (65 per cent) of teachers taught art and design to all year groups across KS3 and KS4. Thirty-six per cent of these teachers worked as heads of departments, 29 per cent were secondary school art teachers and a further 21 per cent were subject leads for art and design.

On average, teachers estimated the minority ethnic population of their schools at 41 per cent. Of this population, an estimated 42 per cent receive free school meal (FSM); the national averages for England and Wales are 36 per cent<sup>29</sup> and 24 per cent respectively,<sup>30</sup> meaning that there is an over-representation both of minority ethnic students as a proportion of the school population and of FSM recipients within our sample.

The schools we surveyed were spread across the nine regions of England, but the majority of responses came from London (36 per cent), the North East (21 per cent) and the North West (17 per cent). Twenty-five per cent of schools surveyed were state schools, maintained or local authority, 22 per cent were academies and 21 were part of a multi-academy trust.

We also gathered quantitative data from 408 secondary school students currently studying art and design. These students were spread across the country, with a significant majority (61 per cent) studying in London; 72 per cent were in KS3 at the time of data collection and 28 per cent were in KS4. Thirty-five per cent identified as Asian or Asian British, 11 per cent as Black British, 13 per cent as having 'Mixed' ethnicity, 29 per cent as White or White British, and 7 per cent as belonging to 'Other' ethnicity groups. Sixty-one per cent of students were female, 34 per cent were male and 5 per cent preferred not to disclose their gender.

The quantitative data is an illumination of rich and textured stories, not an attempt to survey the entire country, and we recognise the disparity between our pool and wider student demographics and the subjective positions this will entail.

Findings from the research are spread throughout the report.

We also gathered a wealth of data from national data sources to develop an understanding of the state of race and inclusion in art education. This included our own analysis of GCSE exam papers provided by the four exam boards to give us a crucial insight into what is and is not represented within the current teaching of art. We analysed exam board assessment materials, looking at the types of references used when describing the work of both white and minority ethnic artists and mapping each reference according to the time period in which the artist worked, the medium used and their ethnic identity. Overall, we analysed 27 GCSE exam papers provided by the four exam boards between 2018 and 2023.

During the phase of qualitative research, we held focus groups with both students and teachers in five regions of England. These included schools in both urban and rural areas and spanned two academies, an independent grammar school,<sup>31</sup> a specialist school and a mainstream school. In some instances, it was not possible to organise focus groups with teachers because of the pressures and time constraints they faced, so we used one-to-one interviews to work around the constraint.

The approach we took in interviews and focus groups was tailored to create a space for participants to share their personal stories.

Our interviews with art sector and outreach support workers encouraged them to reflect on what young people they encountered, and on their own pathways into the sector.

In the focus groups we used creative methods to encourage students and teachers to draw, sketch and freely explore complex and nuanced experiences of race and inclusion.

Alongside this, the research team conducted 14 interviews with sector experts from around the UK, although the majority were held in London – reflecting the concentration of art careers in the capital.

The approach we took in interviews and focus groups was tailored to create a space for participants to share their personal stories.

Our interviews with art sector and outreach support workers encouraged them to reflect on what young people they encountered, and on their own pathways into the sector. In the focus groups we used creative methods to encourage students and teachers to draw, sketch and freely explore complex and nuanced experiences of race and inclusion.

Our focus groups with students centred a drawing or mind map task on what an art lesson would look like if they were the teacher for a day, and on producing a creative expression of the role of art in their future lives. We also asked students to respond to a range of artworks by artists from different ethnicities and time periods. Our focus groups with teachers also incorporated creative mind-mapping activities which asked them to consider what influenced their art teaching, what a diverse curriculum meant to them, the barriers to teaching a diverse curriculum and their experiences of how minority ethnic students experience art classes.

We used creative methods to encourage and enable participants to move beyond established assumptions and discourses about art and art education and focus on elements of their experiences that might otherwise be overlooked.

The success of this is indicated by the unexpected responses of participants – such as students who focused on football or other sports as modes of creative expression. This approach was crucial given that our research aimed to move beyond conventional assumptions about what art and art education are and should be.

Our approach to the research was participatory, conducted with not on our participants.

There is a long and known history around the power of participatory research in different fields, most notably among feminist researchers who have long blurred the distinction between the ‘objective’ and the ‘subjective’ lens. Building on this tradition of disruption, creative, participatory research activities were designed around talking points rather than closed questions or categories, to enable participants to bring their own experiences and expertise to shape the discussion and our findings.

Participatory research can counter epistemic injustice by centring participants as co-creators of knowledge, and this was crucial for us given our aim to centre the expertise and knowledge of minority ethnic groups. Our goal was to contest and reimagine how race and inclusion are understood in art education. This informed the project’s hiring of artist-researchers who had experience of creative methods of engagement, alongside participatory researchers focused on the transformative potential of research.

**Exploring the research questions through a variety of methods allowed us to understand participants' experiences and contextualise them within an analysis of changing education policy and a crisis in education that is impacting the time and capacity of teachers.<sup>32</sup>**

**We hope that this work will contribute to the growing body of work calling for change and highlighting the importance of supporting the development of an engaging, affirmative and broad art curriculum, so that all students receive a broad and honest representation of the artistic canon.**

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CHAPTER 1

**THE BROAD  
CANVAS**

## **QUANTIFYING ART EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS: WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT ITS CURRENT STATE?**

This chapter takes a birds-eye view of what art education looks like in secondary schools in England.

First, we review curriculum content – i.e. the course of study taken in schools – through an analysis of the National Curriculum, exam board materials and assessments.

This reveals how narrow the existing curriculum offer is for students, in terms of both overall representation and the ways that work by minority ethnic artists is mentioned, which diminishes the value of their contributions.



We contrast this with the growing and increasingly diverse student population.

Through a combination of primary and secondary data analysis, we establish that while overall entries for arts-based GCSE subjects (such as drama, music and the performing arts) have overall seen a worrying decline since 2010, participation in art and design has actually increased.<sup>33</sup> What is more, since 2017 there has been a 29 per cent increase in minority ethnic pupils sitting art and design GCSE examinations, meaning that participation among these students is at its highest point in five years.

However, representation of these groups of students on art and design courses is still below representation in the population more broadly – meaning that more could be done to make art and design classrooms truly representative of the school-aged population. We highlight patterns of varying attainment levels between different ethnicity groups.

Overall, we conclude that the absence of data at both the national and the exam board level masks what are worrying deficits in the representation of minority ethnic artists and their work in the curriculum taught to a diversifying student body.

### **Curriculum content at KS3 and KS4 (GCSE)**

The National Curriculum for art and design at KS3 (a two-page document) does not give an explicit definition of art and design but refers to practices such as ‘drawing, painting, sculpture and other art, craft and design techniques’.<sup>34</sup>

According to curriculum guidance:

*a high-quality Art and Design education should engage, inspire and challenge students, equipping them with the knowledge and skills to experiment, invent and create their own works of art, craft and design. As students progress, they should be able to think critically and develop a more rigorous understanding of art and design. They should also know how art and design both reflect and shape our history and contribute to the culture, creativity and wealth of our nation.*<sup>35</sup>

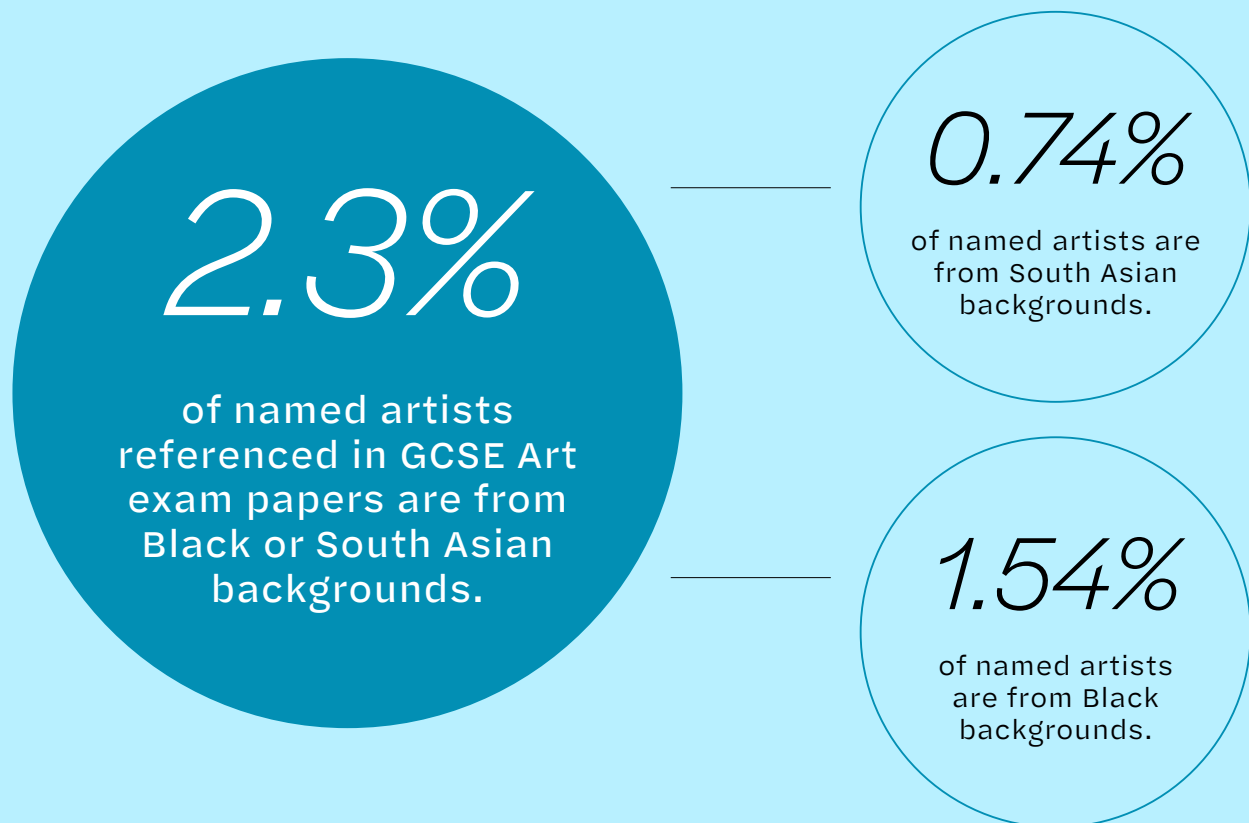
Students should learn about ‘great artists, craft makers and designers, and understand the historical and cultural developments of their art forms’.<sup>36</sup>

Educational institutions that are not managed by the local authority are not required to teach the National Curriculum. Instead, they are required to provide a curriculum that is ‘balanced’ and ‘broadly based’ as laid out in their funding agreement; however, ‘balanced’ and ‘broadly based’ are not defined. In ‘Research review series: Art and design’ (2023), Ofsted acknowledges that ‘the National Curriculum does not set out the exact range and depth of the content, concepts and practices that students need to learn’ and that therefore, ‘teachers, subject leaders, and curriculum designers are able to select content’.<sup>37</sup> It therefore signals the combined importance of a ‘high-quality curriculum’ and ‘teachers who have sufficient expertise to teach it well’ to the experience of students.<sup>38</sup>

At KS4 (GCSE), Art and Design is no longer a compulsory subject covered by the National Curriculum. The art and design GCSE subject guidance of the Department for Education (DfE) is more extended, but it does not name any artists, art movements or artworks that students should study. Instead, it lists the expected technical skills students should learn as well as skills in creativity, reflection and critical analysis.<sup>39</sup> The four main exam boards – AQA, Eduqas, OCR and Edexcel – publish Art and Design GCSE specifications that mirror this approach, focusing on skills and disciplines. As acknowledged by Ofsted, it is left open to teachers which artists they use to illustrate and guide students in acquiring the required skills.

The curriculum mandates only that students should ‘know and understand how sources inspire the development of ideas. For example, drawing on the work and approaches of artists, craftspeople or designers from contemporary and/or historical contexts, periods, societies and cultures.’

As the art National Curriculum is open to teachers’ interpretation, there is a heavy emphasis on the influence and role that teachers have in classroom content and curriculum delivery.



The composition and ethnicity of the teaching workforce therefore has a disproportionately greater effect in the teaching of art and design compared with other subjects where the curriculum is more prescribed.

The entire teaching workforce in England is 85 per cent White British, despite this group making up 71 per cent of the working-age population.

Minority ethnic groups are heavily under-represented in the teaching profession; for example, only 1 per cent of teachers are Pakistani, despite this group making up 3 per cent of the working-age population.<sup>40</sup>

Disaggregated data on teaching workforce demographics by subject is not published by the DfE, but we know through a Freedom of Information request that was submitted in 2016 that the art and design workforce is likely to be even more skewed, with 94 per cent identifying as 'White' at the time.<sup>41</sup>

We return in the next chapter to this point about how the makeup and training of teachers impacts on the quality and experience of students in the classroom.

Given that neither the DfE guidance nor the exam board curricula prescribe artists that students must study, and that no national data exists on what teachers include in lessons, it was crucial to do our own primary research to understand what students are being offered.

As well as conducting a national survey, interviews, and focus groups with teachers and students, we undertook a detailed analysis of the artists, artworks and art movements mentioned in GCSE exam papers as a way to focus on what art is encouraged in the KS4 classroom.

The 'Component Two' GCSE exam paper asks students to refer to a choice of themes and references artists as starting points for students' own investigations and responses. We analysed these references to understand if they adequately equip teachers and students to teach and learn about a diverse range of artists. While they do not prescribe what is taught or included in students' own explorations, they certainly shape it.

Teachers use these references to inform their lesson plans and to provide points of reference for students. We analysed the

ethnic diversity of art and artists mentioned over three years of Component Two GCSE exam papers between 2018 and 2023 (exempting COVID-19 affected years).

### Exam paper analysis

Our analysis of exam papers used by the four major exam boards over this period reviewed 27 papers to understand the visibility and type of representation of minority ethnic artists and their work.

We organised mentions of artworks and artists into five different categories:

- stand-alone artist
- mentioned as an influence
- mention of practice in a region/place but no named artist
- mention of a movement/time period
- individual work with no named artist

We found that across all exam boards across these three years, there were a total of 1,589 mentions of art/artists in these categories. Looking at the diversity of art and artists, there are shocking levels of under-representation.

- First, in terms of all categories combined, work by white artists represents 89.2 per cent of mentions whereas work by minority ethnic artists represents only 10.8 per cent.

- When we look in more detail at the ways in which individual artists are referenced, named white artists make up 91.6 per cent (1,371 mentions) of all exam board mentions but minority ethnic artists only 8.4 per cent (125 mentions).

- Only 2.3 per cent of references to named, stand alone artists are from Black or South Asian backgrounds, this is made up of 0.74 per cent South Asian (11 mentions) and 1.54 per cent Black (23 mentions) artists.

- Finally, when we think about how art is represented in time periods, we find there is an over-representation of practices by minority ethnic people in the earlier, pre-1800 historical period, with 14.8 per cent of art by minority ethnic people identified with that period (25 mentions), compared with only 2.9 per cent of that by white people (41 mentions).

The level of representation offered by the exam board assessment materials is woefully inadequate and sets poor expectations for what teachers should be teaching in the art classroom.

## REPRESENTATION OF WHITE AND MINORITY ETHNIC ARTISTS

Figure 1 provides a year-on-year breakdown disaggregated by ethnicity. The years 2020 and 2021 were omitted from the data as these examinations were conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, when no exam papers were provided.

FIGURE 1  
**REPRESENTATION OF WORK BY MINORITY ETHNIC ARTISTS**

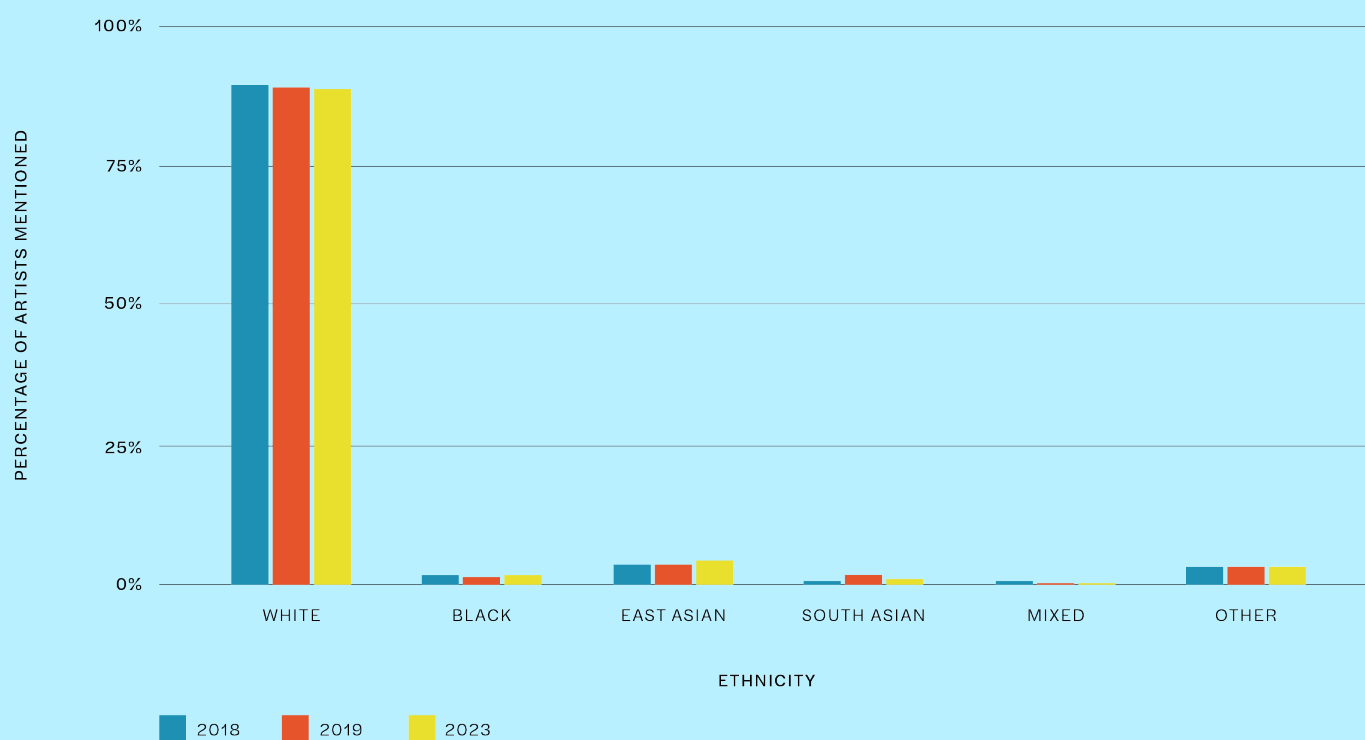
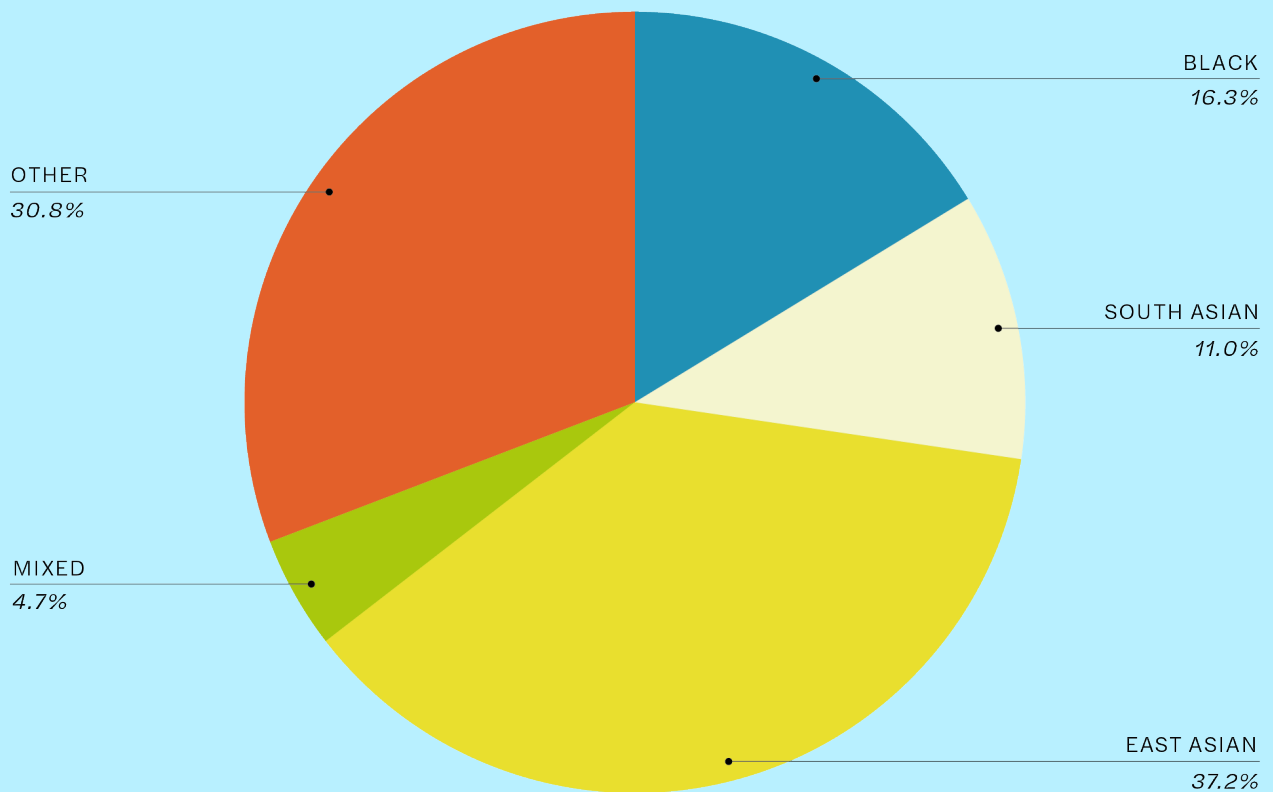


FIGURE 2  
**WHICH MINORITY ETHNIC GROUPS HAVE THE GREATEST LEVEL OF REPRESENTATION?**



As stated above, our research shows a disproportion across the 27 exam papers used over three years of art and design GCSE examinations:

- Work by white artists represents 89.2 per cent of all work featured.
- Work by minority ethnic artists represents 10.8 per cent of work featured.

When we probe that 10.8 per cent further, we can see that some groups are better represented than others (see Figure 2):

- Work by East Asian artists comprises 37.2 per cent of all work by minority ethnic artists mentioned, equivalent to 4 per cent of all artwork used across the exam papers.
- Work by artists of ‘Other’ ethnicities is the next-largest group, making up 30.8 per cent of work by minority ethnic artists and 3.3 per cent of the entire sample.

## WORK BY BLACK, SOUTH ASIAN AND MIXED ETHNICITIES ARTISTS HAS POORER REPRESENTATION

- Work by Black artists makes up 16.3 per cent of mentions (28 mentions) of work by minority ethnic artists, equalling just 1.8 per cent of all work mentioned.
- This figure falls to 11 per cent (19 mentions) for work by South Asian artists, equalling 1.2 per cent of all work mentioned.
- The smallest group, however, is work by artists of Mixed ethnicities, which makes up 4.7 per cent (8 mentions) of work by minority ethnic artists mentioned and 0.5 per cent of all artwork mentioned.

### How are minority ethnic artists represented?

When we examine the way that practices by minority ethnic artists are represented in these categories, we find not only that there is under-representation overall, but also that minority ethnic artists are much less likely than their white counterparts to be mentioned as stand-alone artists. White artists make up 91.6 per cent (1,371) of all named artists mentioned across the 27 exam papers; minority ethnic artists, however, make up only 8.4 per cent (125) of this group.

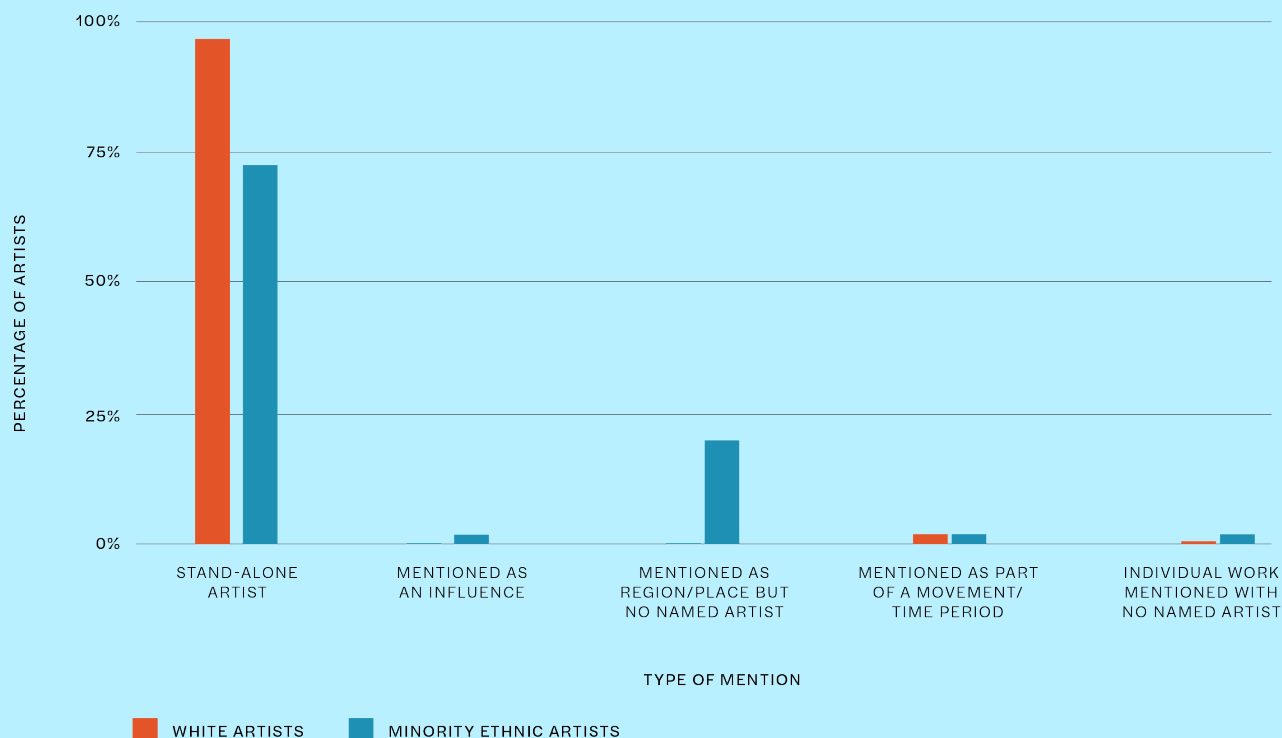
Looking in more detail at named minority ethnic artists reveals that the pool of artists that students learn from is smaller still than these statistics initially might appear to indicate. Of 975 references to named contemporary artists, there were just 17 references to named contemporary Black artists across three years of exam papers (1.7 per cent), with five of these to the same two figures: Ghanaian sculptor El Anatsui and Kenyan-born potter Dame Magdalene Odundo. There were a total of 11 mentions of a contemporary South Asian artist (1.1 per cent) – three of which referred to the British Indian sculptor Anish Kapoor.

Work by minority ethnic artists is more likely to be mentioned in association with a geographical region without any reference to a named artist, for example 'African Ritual Sculpture' or 'Persian Rugs'; 20.1 per cent of all mentions of work by minority ethnic artists are located within this more generalised category, compared with 0.4 per cent of work by white artists.

Figure 3 shows the difference in types of representation between work by white and minority ethnic artists. One in five references (19.8 per cent) to art by minority ethnic people was referenced only as part of a particular region or place or associated with a particular traditional craft, for example 'Indian Textiles' or 'Native American Art'. A further 2.3 per cent of mentions related to influence on other artists, as part of a wider movement or time period; 2.9 per cent of work by minority ethnic artists was referenced through imagery with no mention of an artist's name.

This reinforces, for teachers and students alike, a problematic perception that the most important artists are white artists, and that work by minority ethnic artists is more aligned to 'craft' practices.

FIGURE 3  
**HOW ARE ARTISTS MENTIONED IN EXAM PAPERS?**



**What time periods are associated with work with minority ethnic artists?**

Even though a large amount of art teaching is concentrated on the 20th and early 21st centuries, minority ethnic artists were mentioned fewer times than white artists within these time periods. Ninety-one per cent of references to 20th- and 21st-century art (1304 mentions) across the four exam boards were to work by white artists, and just 9 per cent (129) were to work by minority ethnic artists. This means not only that students have a much smaller pool of modern and contemporary minority ethnic artists to learn from compared with white artists, but also that the representation of art by minority ethnic artists across exam boards is weighted more to earlier historical periods.

This is problematic because these historical periods feature less frequently in the teaching of art, and also because racialised identities and artworks are more likely to be portrayed as being rooted in pre-modern histories.

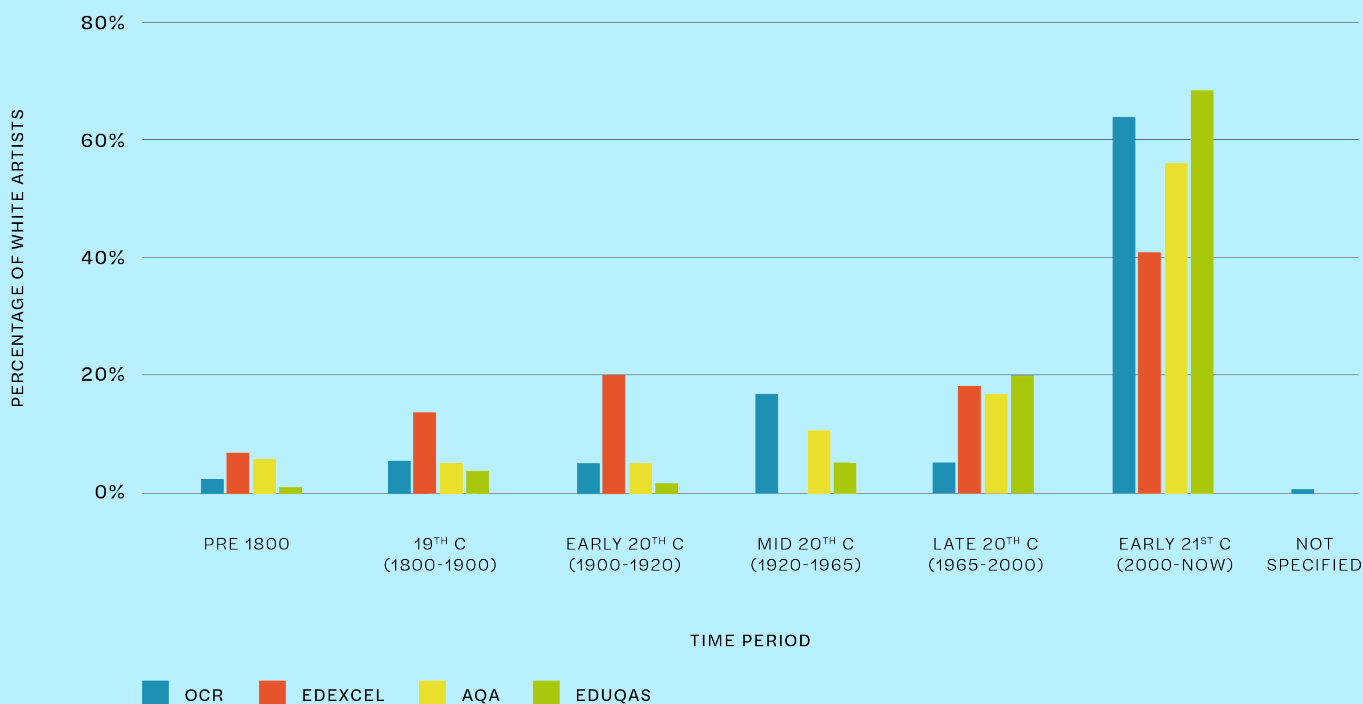
This has been a persistent pattern. In a research paper from 2004, Arts Council England and Tate found that the majority

of art referenced in classrooms originated in Europe and was created predominantly by white, male European artists. Less than 10 per cent of schools made reference to art/culture from continents other than Europe, and when these references were made they were almost exclusively to early historical periods and therefore limited to cultural references such as Islamic patterns, Egyptian hieroglyphics and Aboriginal art.<sup>42</sup>

This chimes with our research wherein exam board references tend to cite earlier forms of art when highlighting the contributions of minority ethnic artists, rather than referencing contemporary minority ethnic artists whose work speaks to experiences in modern Britain.

Figure 4 shows the time periods in which art by white artists that was mentioned was created. Very few mentions are made to work made before 1800, with percentages gradually increasing as the artwork becomes more contemporary. For example, 5.9 per cent of works by white artists mentioned by AQA are from before 1800. This rises to 10.8 per cent for the mid-20th century, 16.9 per cent for the late 20th century and 56.2 per cent for the early 21st century.

FIGURE 4  
**HOW FREQUENTLY ARE WHITE ARTISTS AND THEIR WORK MENTIONED ACROSS TIME PERIODS?**



**19.7%**  
 of art made by minority ethnic people mentioned was from before 1800.

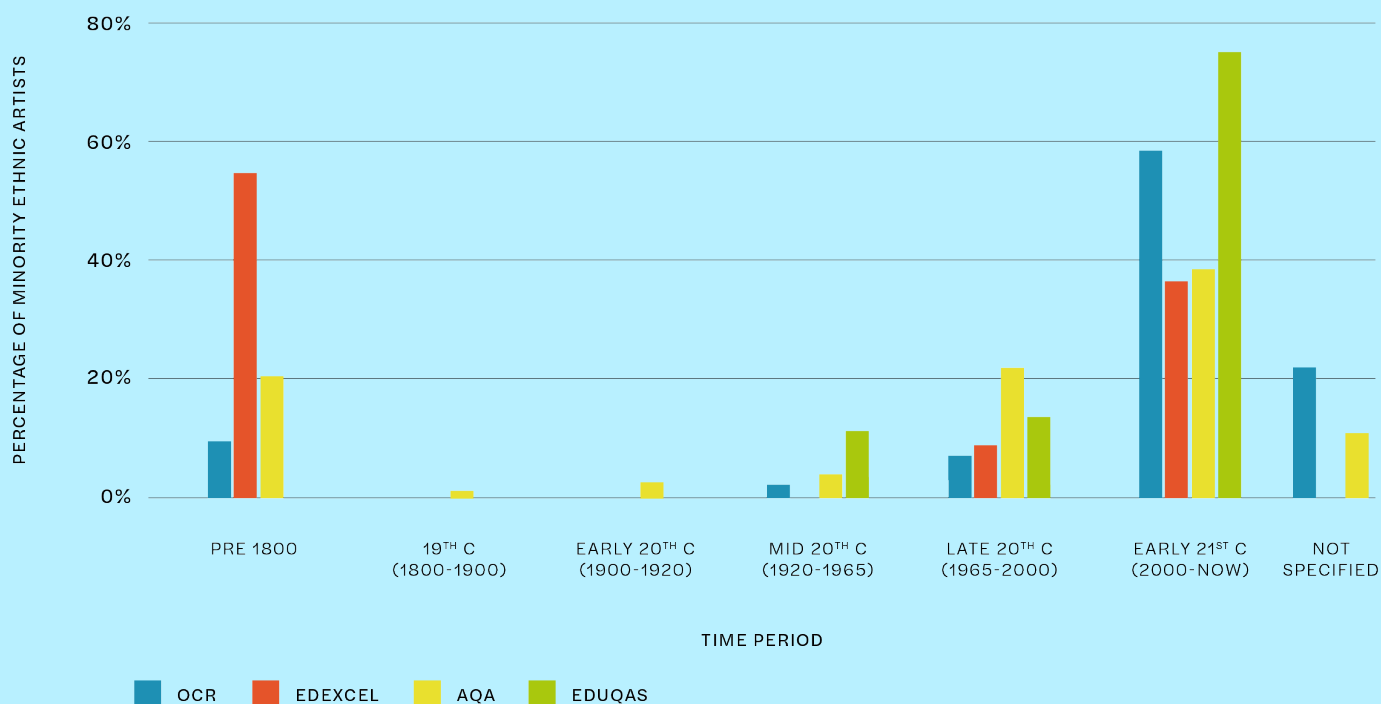
Comparing this with references to art by minority ethnic people shows that although there is still a healthy representation of contemporary practices, these references are weighted more towards art created before 1800, with poor levels of representation from the 19th century to the late 20th century.

In AQA papers, for example, 19.7 per cent of art made by minority ethnic people mentioned was from before 1800; this figure drops to 1.3 per cent for work made in the 19th century before increasing gradually from 2.6 per cent in the early 20th century to 21.1 per cent in the late 20th century.

A time period is not specified for 11 per cent of works by minority ethnic artists. The Edexcel, Eduqas and OCR exam papers we selected all offered no examples of work made by minority ethnic artists from the 19th and early 20th centuries, highlighting a problematic absence (see Figure 5).



FIGURE 5  
**HOW FREQUENTLY IS ART BY MINORITY ETHNIC ARTISTS MENTIONED ACROSS TIME PERIODS?**



**1,421**  
 artists referenced across the exam papers who worked in the 20th and 21st centuries, just 9% of these were minority ethnic.

The percentage figures also obscure differences between white and minority ethnic contemporary artists who are mentioned.

While a healthy proportion of minority ethnic artists mentioned are working in the contemporary era, their inclusion is dwarfed by the number of white artists included who are working in the same periods. Figure 6 compares the number of artists mentioned across each time period in absolute terms.

There were 1,421 artists referenced across the exam papers who worked in the 20th and 21st century, and just 9 per cent (128) of these were minority ethnic.

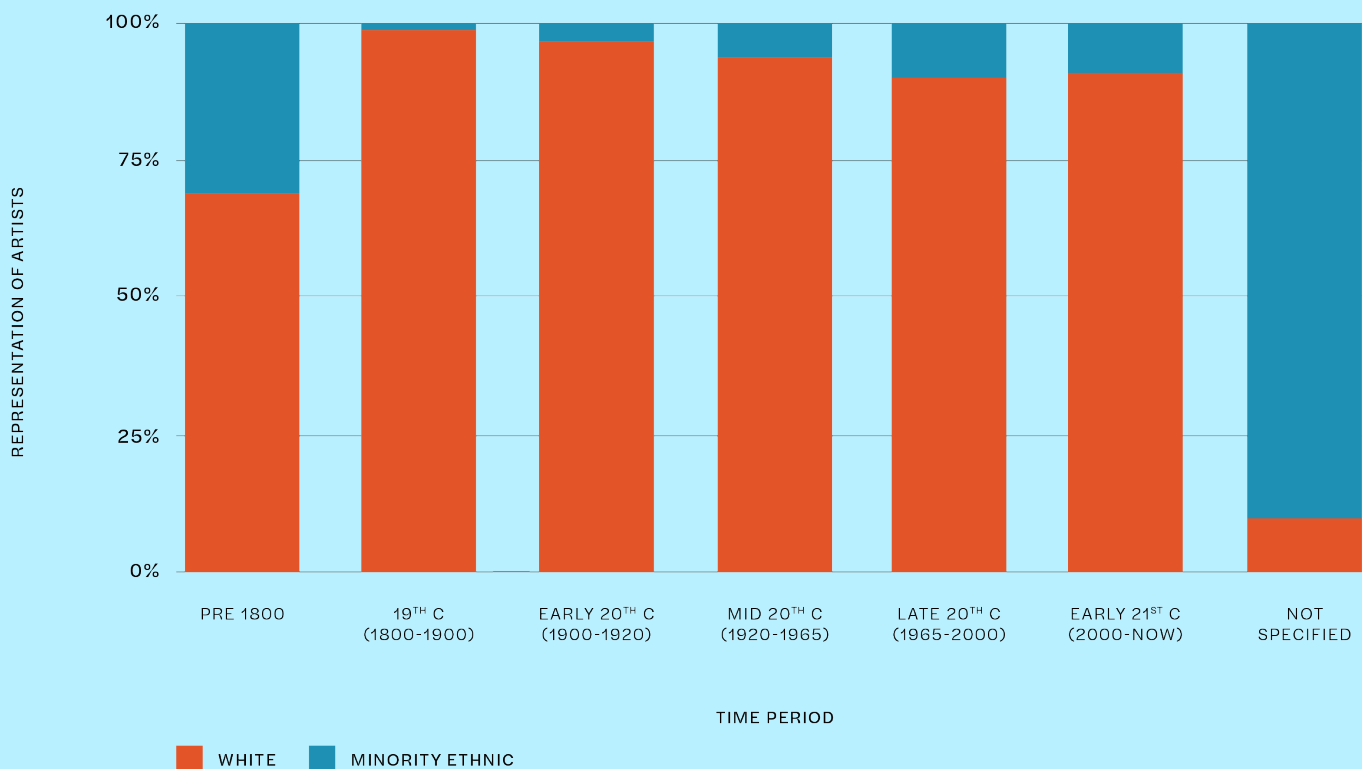
This means that only one in ten works by 20th- or 21st-century artists mentioned across all exam papers is by an artist from a minority ethnic background. When we look at art created before 1800, there were a total of 81 references – with 69 per cent (59) being to white artists and their work and 31 per cent (25) to minority ethnic artists and their work.

**This unequal weighting in the representation of work by white and minority ethnic artists reinforces the earlier point that there is a problem with not just the number of minority ethnic artists represented in art teaching, but also how the time periods in which the referenced work is situated can reinforce ideas about whose art is contemporary, progressive and of value.**

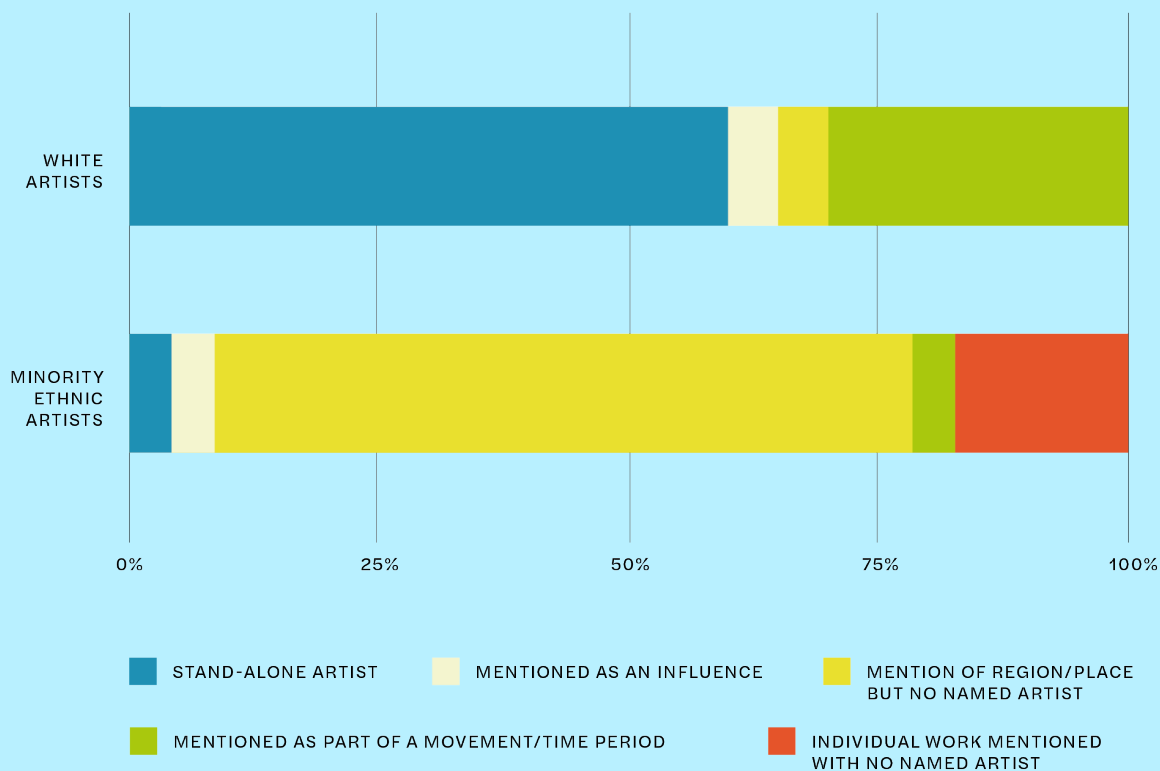
**Looking in more detail at pre-1800 art across the four exam papers shows that 58.5 per cent of mentions of art by white artists are to stand-alone artists, compared with just 4 per cent of mentions of work by minority ethnic artists.**

**Sixty-eight per cent of mentions of practices by minority ethnic artists for this time period are referencing a region or place with no specific mention of an individual artist; this figure drops to 4.87 per cent for white artists, showing an inverse trend (see Figure 7).**

**FIGURE 6**  
**REPRESENTATION OF WHITE AND MINORITY ETHNIC ART AND ARTISTS**  
**ACROSS TIME PERIODS**



**FIGURE 7**  
**HOW IS WORK MADE BEFORE 1800 MENTIONED?**



For example, this extract from an exam question references Native American and Indian art without any specific details of individual artists, artworks or art practices, before going on to refer to three more contemporary white artists by name:

*In Fine Art, signs and symbols feature in the work of many artists, with particular significance in certain societies and cultural history. Vanitas, Native American and Indian art feature many signs with symbolic meaning. Signs and symbols can also be found in the work of Corita Kent, Robert Mars and Roy Lichtenstein.*<sup>43</sup>

Another question, from a different exam board, about artistic responses to the human figure, mentions historical Egyptian, Asian, African (and European) art in vague terms before arguably conflating them into the backdrop to a much more detailed account of how European (male) artists have approached the human figure in supposedly more innovative ways.

*Human figure: The human figure was a major feature in Egyptian and Etruscan wall paintings. European and Asian sacred buildings and African ritual sculptures often included representations of the human form. Twentieth-century artists explored new ways to respond to the human figure. The Cubist painters and sculptors reconstructed the figure as seen from multiple viewpoints. Francis Bacon and Umberto Boccioni were inspired to create figures distorted by movement. Antony Gormley uses steel bars to create sculptures that suggest drawings of the figure in space. Explore appropriate sources and develop a personal response to Human [sic] figure.*<sup>44</sup>

Another question from a different paper states that a particular white artist has been influenced by 'traditional Mexican crafts' without naming a Mexican artist or even specifying the kind of craft being referred to.<sup>45</sup>

This shows that discussion of art by minority ethnic people is weighted towards early historical periods and folds those contributions into generalised material

practices, as these references are more likely to be used to contextualise the work of more contemporary white artists and minority ethnic artists are less likely to be explored through their own artistic merits and inventive qualities.

In addition, the weighting of minority ethnic representation towards these types of references results in a portrayal of these forms of art as peripheral and rooted in early historical periods, rather than introducing students to art and artists more reflective of their experiences.

There is clearly a deficit in the representation being offered by exam assessment materials. They fail to offer a broad and diverse curriculum in terms of absolute mentions across all categories; they under-represent stand-alone minority ethnic artists' contributions; and finally, they locate considerable mention of work by minority ethnic artists in the pre-1800 period, without referencing individual artists.

In the conversations we had with exam boards, there is a growing understanding of the need to do better. What has thus far been absent in this resolve is a clear understanding of the scale of the problem. Exam boards do not currently collect any data on the diversity of their own materials or the diversity of artists that appear in students' examined submissions.

Given how important assessments are in prescribing how teachers shape and plan their lessons, exam boards have a clear opportunity to lead improvement by increasing the representation of minority ethnic artists in terms of both how often they feature and in what capacity.

Giving minority ethnic artists and their work a presence and status in GCSE assessments is a change that we recommend as a significant step towards developing the broad curriculum that students deserve, and which would prompt wider change in the curriculum broadly as it would give impetus to introducing this diversity earlier in KS3 too.

## PARTICIPATION AND ATTAINMENT

This deficit in the curriculum sits alongside a broader participation gap.<sup>46</sup> Minority ethnic groups make up 26 per cent of all 14–16-year-olds in England and Wales<sup>47</sup> and are currently under-represented within art and design courses, with minority ethnic students making up 21 per cent of the GCSE art and design student body in 2021/22 and 19 per cent of the AS- and A-level student body.<sup>48</sup>

Arts subjects at GCSE level have witnessed a dramatic decrease in participation since 2010. Figures from the Cultural Learning Alliance show that subjects like dance, drama, music, and design and technology have witnessed a devastating decline in student entries, down by an average of 41 per cent between 2010 and 2023.

Within this broad category, art and design GCSE has remained a popular subject choice among students of all ethnicities, with a 9 per cent increase in that same time period.<sup>49</sup>

Historically, and now, minority ethnic students are under-represented in arts participation. However, in recent years participation in terms of numbers of entries from among minority ethnic groups to art and design GCSE is increasing.

Table 2 shows data gathered through a Freedom of Information request to the DfE.<sup>50</sup> It shows that minority ethnic participation has been increasing year on year, from almost 30,000 students in 2017/18 (19.77 per cent of the student body) to over 36,000 students in 2021/22 (21 per cent).

The ethnicity categories used in Table 2 are those that are offered by the DfE in their data publications and regrettably they do not offer the level of disaggregation that would give us a detailed view of participation across these groups at a granular level.

However, we can gather that ‘mixed heritage’ students have seen the most significant rise during this period, with 45 per cent more students now sitting GCSE examinations, a figure equal to almost 3,000 more students.

This is followed by students of ‘Other ethnicities’ (38 per cent more students) and of Black ethnicities (+25 per cent). ‘Asian’ students have experienced a slightly lower percentage rise (+21 per cent), but as this group already forms a large part of the student body, this is equivalent to more than 2,500 more students opting to study the subject than in 2017/18. Participation among Chinese students has risen by 20 per cent, although this is a much smaller group and the figure represents just 126 more students.

It is important to note that this increase in participation is in the number of GCSE entries and while indicating a welcome increase, is still a little below the actual demographic population of minority ethnic students who could feasibly sit GCSE or A-level examinations (26 per cent of 14–16-year-olds) (See Table 3).<sup>52</sup>

TABLE 2  
**ETHNICITY BREAKDOWN OF EXAM ENTRIES, ART AND DESIGN GCSE,  
 2017/18–2021/22**

	COVID-19 PERIOD					PERCENTAGE DIFFERENCE 2017-22
	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	
<b>WHITE</b>	111,818	122,761	128,772	132,807	129,256	+16%
<b>ASIAN</b>	12,656	13,913	15,088	15,439	15,305	+21%
<b>BLACK</b>	5,747	6,624	7,029	7,230	7,183	+25%
<b>CHINESE</b>	641	693	711	720	767	+20%
<b>MIXED</b>	6,569	7,636	8,440	9,158	9,535	+45%
<b>OTHER</b>	2,361	2,832	3,190	3,261	3,266	+38%
<b>MINORITY ETHNIC AGGREGATE</b>	27,974	31,698	34,458	35,808	36,056	+29%
<b>UNCLASSIFIED<sup>51</sup></b>	1, 672	2,031	2,377	2,762	2,845	+70%
<b>ALL</b>	141,464	156,490	165,607	171,377	168,157	+19%

TABLE 3  
**STUDENT POPULATION AND PARTICIPATION RATES IN GCSE AND AS/A-LEVEL ART, BY ETHNICITY, IN ENGLAND**

	14 - 16 YEAR OLD POPULATION	% OF ART GCSE EXAM ENTRIES 2021/22	% ART AS- AND A-LEVEL EXAM ENTRIES 2021/22
WHITE	74%	76.9%	64.2%
ASIAN	11.8%	9.6%	7.1%
BLACK	6%	4.3%	4.1%
MIXED	5.6%	5.7%	5.6%
OTHER	2.6%	1.9%	2%
MINORITY ETHNIC	26%	21.4%	18.8%
UNCLASSIFIED	N/A	1.7%	17.1%

We were unable to gather whether the reported 2022/23 decline in art and design entries has also affected minority ethnic student participation rates.<sup>53</sup>

The most under-represented minority ethnic group at both A-level and GCSE is Asian students, who represent 11.8 per cent of the population but just over 9.6 per cent entering GCSE and 7.2 per cent entering A-level art exams respectively. This means that while the number of art students from minority ethnic backgrounds is slowly rising, the subject appears to appeal less among certain groups of minority ethnic students.

In terms of attainment, Table 4 shows that a significant number of students of all ethnicities achieve grades A\*–C /9–4 at GCSE level. In 2021/22, during the COVID-19 period, over three-quarters of students across almost every ethnicity group achieved high grades. The exception, however, was Black students, who had the poorest attainment rates, with 73.8 per cent achieving grades A\*–C/9–4 in 2021/22.<sup>54</sup>

This follows a wider trend: over a five-year period, Black students have consistently had the lowest level of attainment in art of any ethnic group. It was at its lowest recorded level in 2018/19 (64.6 per cent).

TABLE 4  
**ETHNICITY BREAKDOWN OF ATTAINMENT, ART AND DESIGN GCSE,  
 2017/18–2021/22 (% ACHIEVING A\*–C/9–4)**

	COVID-19 PERIOD				
	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
<b>WHITE</b>	74.8%	75.1%	85.9%	84.5%	80%
<b>ASIAN</b>	75.4%	75.4%	86.5%	84.9%	79.6%
<b>BLACK</b>	68.2%	64.6%	80.7%	80.9%	73.8%
<b>CHINESE</b>	91.6%	90.9%	96.8%	97.2%	91.4%
<b>MIXED</b>	75.7%	74.5%	85.8%	83.9%	78.9%
<b>OTHER</b>	75.3%	72.4%	85.2%	82.9%	76.2%

Attainment patterns for minority ethnic students are nuanced and change over time; over the last 20 years we have seen ebbs and flows in progress, with gaps closing and re-emerging. Some groups, such as Chinese students, performed consistently well throughout that period. Others, such as Black Caribbean students, made more faltering progress.<sup>55</sup> As seen in Table 5, the attainment gap in art and design flattened across all ethnicity groups during the COVID-19 examination period (2019–21).

Black students, however, still experienced an attainment gap in every year captured by the data; this is now beginning to widen again and is comparable to pre-COVID-19 levels. It is problematic that the data is not

disaggregated to enable further scrutiny of how attainment gaps break down across different Black ethnicities, as we know that there are wider patterns of educational attainment that show a clear divergence between Black African and Black Caribbean students.

These patterns cannot be probed with the existing level of data collection. Clearly, Chinese students replicate in art the high performance they demonstrate elsewhere in the curriculum.<sup>56</sup> Students of ‘Other’ ethnicities slightly outperformed White students in 2017/18, but are now falling increasingly further behind. In 2021/22, the attainment gap between these students and white students had reached its widest point.



TABLE 5  
**MINORITY ETHNIC ATTAINMENT GAP COMPARED WITH WHITE STUDENTS**

	COVID-19 PERIOD				
	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
WHITE	-	-	-	-	-
ASIAN	0.6%	0.2%	0.5%	0.4%	-0.4%
BLACK	-6.5%	-10.6%	-5.3%	-3.6%	-6.2%
CHINESE	16.8%	15.8%	0.8%	12.7%	11.4%
MIXED	1%	-0.7%	-0.1%	-0.7%	-1.1%
OTHER	0.5%	-2.7%	0.7%	-1.7%	-3.9%

This trend is also apparent for students of 'Mixed' ethnicities. Although these students are the fastest-growing group in terms of entry at GCSE level, they are also experiencing a widening attainment gap which in the most recent academic year has reached its widest point.

Students of Asian ethnicities have had a stable rate of attainment compared with their white peers, with a slightly higher percentage achieving grades A\*-C /9-4. In the most recent examination period, however, these students experienced a negative attainment gap for the first time, having seen an attainment decrease of 0.4% in the year 2021/22.

While this is an emerging trend, it is worrying that as exams are reintroduced into the art curriculum, some minority ethnic students are beginning to fall behind their white peers. These emerging gaps, though small, are inconsistent and below attainment levels more generally.<sup>57</sup>

### The pipeline from GCSE to higher and further education

There is a significantly smaller drop-off between art and design GCSE and A-levels

than in a number of other both compulsory and non-compulsory subjects. This means that students who do study the subject at GCSE are likely to progress with it into further and higher education.

There were 78 per cent fewer students sitting art and design A-levels in 2022 than there were studying GCSE examinations in 2021, which means that art and design has a better retention rate than lessons such as history (-85 per cent), music (-85 per cent), physical education (-83 per cent) and computing (-80 per cent).

Following the trend in GCSE participation, the 2021/22 academic year saw more minority ethnic students sitting art and design A-level and AS-level examinations than at any other point during the previous five years. As shown in Table 6, from 2017/18 to 2021/22 the percentage of minority ethnic students in art and design A-level classrooms rose from 15.9 per cent to 18.8 per cent.<sup>58</sup>

Increasing minority ethnic participation is also observable in higher education, where minority ethnic students' participation in 'design and creative and performing arts' has risen slightly from 16 per cent of the total student body to 17 per cent.<sup>59</sup>

TABLE 6  
**ETHNICITY BREAKDOWN OF EXAM ENTRIES, ART AND DESIGN AS- AND A-LEVEL, 2017/18–2021/22 (FIGURES GIVEN AS % OF ALL STUDENTS STUDYING ART AND DESIGN)**

	COVID-19 PERIOD				
	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
<b>WHITE</b>	66.9%	65.7%	66.9%	64.3%	64.2%
<b>ASIAN</b>	6.8%	6.7%	7.1%	7%	7.1%
<b>BLACK</b>	3.2%	3.5%	2.7%	3.4%	4.1%
<b>MIXED</b>	4.5%	4.6%	4.7%	5.4%	5.6%
<b>OTHER</b>	1.4%	1.5%	1.7%	1.7%	2%
<b>MINORITY ETHNIC</b>	15.9%	16.3%	16.2%	17.4%	18.8%
<b>UNKNOWN</b>	17.1%	17.9%	16.9%	18.3%	17.1%

Unfortunately there is a large ‘unknown’ group within existing datasets (17 per cent in 2021/22), meaning that there may be significant under-reporting of participation across both white and minority ethnic groups.

## CONCLUSION

The quantitative data produced by our exam paper analysis, alongside existing data about student participation and attainment, begins to give a clear outline of several issues.

First, the parameters set by the exam boards in terms of artists and artworks featured in final assessments clearly do not support diversification of artists and practices. Only 10.8 per cent of works of art in the exam materials are from outside of the white, Western canon, and even those references are often made in oblique and indirect ways that do not give status or esteem to those contributions. Only 2.3 per cent of stand alone artist mentions reference a Black or South Asian artist. Furthermore, 14.5 per cent of work by minority ethnic artists that is mentioned is associated with historical periods before the 1800s, compared with only 2.9 per cent of work by white people, offering a skewed representation of contributions.

The exam boards' assessments fail to offer a broad representation of the artistic world and reproduce an overly narrow canon, in which minority ethnic artists and their work are marginalised in comparison with white peers. This sits in direct contrast to the rhetoric of offering a 'broad' and 'balanced' curriculum that dominates in curriculum and Ofsted guidance.

There is a clear opportunity for exam boards to provide more leadership and support in this context and to create space for teachers to embrace the teaching of artists from diverse backgrounds in ways which are more reflective of the multitude of experiences as lived in modern and contemporary Britain.

Second, there remains a persistent participation gap in art and design GCSE entries for minority ethnic students, although recent trends indicate that this is shifting.

Attainment levels are generally good; however, there are pockets of under-

Only  
**8.4%**  
 of named artists  
 mentioned are  
 minority ethnic, and just  
**2.3%**  
 Black and South Asian.

attainment – particularly among Black students – which need to be addressed.

The next chapter goes beyond the quantifiable map of the art experience of students and begins to explore in more detail what those experiences look and feel like according to those situated within them. Our qualitative research allowed us to gain rich and nuanced insights into how, at present, teachers are navigating a challenging educational environment and how students are enabled or restricted in their self-exploration within art lessons.

Personal experiences of this kind cannot easily be measured by quantitative data, so this qualitative investigation was crucial in illuminating them in greater detail.

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CHAPTER 2

# CLASSROOM PORTRAITS

## **CONNECTING WITH THE CURRICULUM IN THE ART CLASSROOM**

The story of race and inclusion in art education is one that has to be told from multiple perspectives.

As already established, art and design has fared better in terms of participation than other arts subjects in the last decade.

Minority ethnic students have increased in number within the cohort, although they are still under-represented compared with the wider population.

Attainment levels are varied, and there is some under-performance among Black students in particular.

The broader canvas on which the relationship between art teachers and their students is based is a GCSE exam board assessment structure that does not give appropriate space or value to minority ethnic artists or their work – with just 10.8 per cent of work mentioned being outside the white artistic canon. Furthermore, where work by minority ethnic artists is referenced it is often in secondary and generic ways. This lack of a broad and representative curriculum is fundamentally limiting to all students, giving them a narrow perspective on the artistic world.

In this chapter we focus on what is happening in the classroom, exploring this from the perspectives of students, drawing on our survey data and the more detailed qualitative work we conducted through a mixture of focus groups and interviews. We discovered a classroom portrait that is complex, with multiple – sometimes conflicting – narratives of experience.

We found a disconnect between the accounts of teachers and the voices of students: teachers feel relatively optimistic about offering a broad and inclusive arts curriculum (we focus on this in Chapter 4), but students expressed disappointment and dissatisfaction with what they were taught.

This chapter explores these disconnects through a number of themes that emerged: we explore levels of engagement and relatability, how existing efforts at diversity are often received as ‘tokenistic’, and finally how school and classroom norms are felt to militate against artistic development.

While there is tension and nuance in these accounts, as with the previous chapter we find that the picture that emerges leaves a great deal of room for improvement.

### **Representation in the classroom**

Our survey found that two-thirds (66 per cent) of all students felt they should be studying artists from a wider range of ethnic backgrounds in their art classes.

This statistic rises to almost 80 per cent when we look at Black students in isolation. Our findings from the focus groups reiterated this. Students told us that they predominantly engaged with European art in school.

At one London school, a pupil had, in advance of the focus group, made us a pie chart showing the ethnicities of artists on a prescribed (by the school) reference list and showed us how this list was predominantly of white European artists. This lack of diversity was noted by white students too, 60 per cent of whom also reported a desire to see a more inclusive offer. This indicates that a broader and more representative curriculum is one that would be welcomed by students from all backgrounds.

There was also a shared feeling that art education is a space in the school curriculum that is ripe for exploring issues around race and anti-racism. Many of the young people we spoke to understood the potential of art education in relation to addressing racism and creating anti-racist schools. They felt that because art prioritises creative expression, it offers safe entry to exploring contested issues in a more multidimensional and nuanced way:

*“Art classes – when it comes to political problems, race problems, religion problems etc. – it could be a good way to start when it comes to opening up to the rest of the school.”*

In these focus group conversations, art lessons were regarded as a perfect space to host conversations about diversity and anti-racism that are currently lacking in schools. Young people repeatedly told us that they would like to be able to draw on their own experiences, identity and cultural heritage as well as those of their classmates, to help support their broader learning and their artistic development. They wanted time to explore ethnic identities collectively and wanted to be able to have meaningful conversations, with other students of all ethnicities, about race and racism.

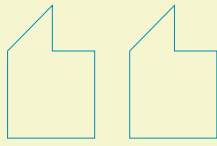


SIMEON BARCLAY

**WE WERE GIVEN  
A SENSE THAT  
WE EACH FELT  
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# SIMEON BARCLAY

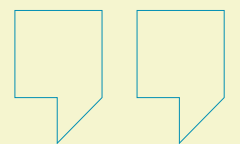


Having left school at 16 without any qualifications, my own early experiences within the education system left me with a deep scepticism. I was part of a peer group of working class boys and girls that were left ill equipped to fully participate within an environment where discrimination and a lack of expectation were visually and verbally communicated. Many years later, I would reestablish my own enthusiasm for learning by attending university, an endeavour carried out against all expectations.

## ARTIST VOICES

This later experience, whilst taking 18 years to reach its apotheosis, was sparked by the only space within the school that I felt some semblance of being human: my art classes. These served as an intermittent buffer where the dominant expectations and educational values of the school did not crush and pierce me. I loved drawing, and the hour art class with Mr Wheldon gave me the opportunity to indulge and steer my passion. It's only in hindsight as a kind of physical recall that I understand how, amongst others in the class, we were given a sense that we each felt central to our own learning, it provided us with the confidence and energy to thrive. He used to say "it's just wrong, on the way to getting it right" a statement at the time that was hard to comprehend given our self-conscious selves, but in a way he was giving us a kind of resilience, a knowledge and skill set that could be grasped, harnessed, evaluated, and developed through constant innovation.

It is through my own circuitous route of 16 years as an apprentice trained machinist, as well as my own time in higher education both as a student and academic, that I try to espouse these same values, encouraging students to develop their own individual language, creating a sense of themselves as practitioners whilst helping them to understand their potential as future world makers.



Simeon Barclay (b.1975, Huddersfield, UK) is a visual artist based in Leeds. Combining found and appropriated imagery with text, video, installation and sculpture, his practice draws upon fashion, music and popular culture to activate complex cultural histories and examine the ways in which we construct and perform subjectivity.

## ENGAGEMENT AND RELATABILITY

Our qualitative research found that students across KS3 and KS4 generally enjoyed art, as opposed to their experiences in maths, English and science. The subjective nature of art meant that students felt more welcome to approach it as a means to express themselves and found great value in the process of making and interpreting art.

Students talked about how engagement with art helps with self-understanding and self-expression, and they also noted the value that art could have in helping them to understand the external world they live in. Students across KS3 and KS4 noted how art can be used as a springboard to understanding world politics and learning about the wider geographical and historical contexts of art and artists. In many focus groups, students were excited about the prospect of studying different art from beyond England as a way to understand the culture and context around it.

One student wrote about how they take inspiration from 'different arts from around the world', going on to explain how art can help to externalise their self-expression and be a way for others to understand their culture:

*"From my country, Uzbekistan was focused on very detailed artworks. And yeah, it expresses a lot about the country itself, I guess. More like, from the history and how I guess it represents much stuff."*

Students appreciated the ability to look at the world through a broad historical and artistic lens and how that helped them make sense of contemporary society in a way that was not supported in other lessons:

*"Me, I really like history as an inspiration for my art. Because, well, I really like learning about history and like the stories and stuff of all these individual countries. And recently I've been learning about Aztec and West African history,*



*Me, I really like history as an inspiration for my art. Because, well, I really like learning about history and like the stories and stuff of all these individual countries. And recently I've been learning about Aztec and West African history, which is really under-rated and there are so many other stories to tell, so much, like, intricate art and stuff.*



*which is really under-rated and there are so many other stories to tell, so much, like, intricate art and stuff."*

When this student was asked what they meant by 'under-rated', they responded by saying:

*"There's a lot of talk about William the Conqueror, like, well, people like to talk about that, but I don't see like a lot of people know Sonni Ali Ber, for example, like it's not very well known. Yeah. And also like, I think just generally in the education system. They don't really like representing the whole world fully, it's centred around England for like a lot of stuff in art, in history, in English. [We need] more diverse casts, more diverse characters and because of that more of a deeper and richer story surrounding those topics."*

Students recognised how much they would benefit from greater diversity in art, saying that it would create a 'sense of freedom'

and enable them to ‘push boundaries with ... art’ if they did get a chance to engage with a wider spectrum of art and artists. Where schools had incorporated critical content on art and race, it had made students feel ‘seen’ and given them a sense of trust in their teachers. It is clear that even small attempts to meet students where they are can make a big difference in students’ sense of belonging in the classroom. One student explained that:

*“There was a push on Black studies and we were learning about the slave trade and how they were stolen and stuff and I think that was really good ... It felt like something to me ... it’s showing that the school can actually show culture and diversity without just fixing on a white person’s perspective.”*

In one part of our focus group discussions, we showed KS3 and KS4 students across the UK different artworks, historical and contemporary, and considered their reactions to them. The pieces ranged from internationally recognised works from the 19th and 20th centuries to lesser-known art by UK-born and international minority ethnic artists. Student responses to the art pieces naturally varied widely depending on their region and class and the type of institution they attended.

While student reactions to works of art are difficult to quantify and are very much multifactorial, there was a consistent enough reaction in which we could detect how students recognised and understood the characteristics of white, European artists’ work and had internalised a value system that ascribed it greater ‘value’ than the value they recognised in relation to minority ethnic artists. Students were not asked to make direct comparisons between artworks, but nevertheless they were often able to draw conclusions and comment on what was considered ‘high-status’ art as opposed to what they thought would be less prestigious.

Some of our discussions revealed an insightful understanding among students that what was considered ‘high-status art’ had a much wider history, with racialised connections to empire and colonialism. Many saw that considering how different

The most frequent theme [in social movements taught] was ‘identity’, mentioned by **20.7% of teachers.**

However, **only 1% of teachers** made any direct references to race.

art forms are validated or given hierarchies of value is a way to review both power and identity in interesting and complex ways. Sadly, our focus groups also confirmed that there is limited space given for these kinds of discussions, in what students felt were classrooms that should be ripe for such conversations.

Given the loose guidance in the National Curriculum about art centring the ‘personal’, students reported little opportunity to do this in their studies. In our survey, 46 per cent of teachers told us that the curriculum is mainly structured around art genres (e.g. portraiture, landscape or still life) for KS3 students, while 56 per cent said that in KS4 the curriculum is more weighted to thematic content. Across both key stages, social issues (such as feminism or race) were the least likely factors to influence teaching content (compared with exploration of different art genres, movements, themes or forms): 20 per cent of teachers indicated that these factors influenced their curriculum planning in KS3, with the figure rising to 26 per cent for KS4.

When surveyed, teachers were asked to give examples of the social movements covered in their teaching. The most frequent theme was ‘identity’, mentioned by 20.7 per cent of teachers. However, only 1 per cent of teachers made any direct references to race, while gender movements were cited by 6 per cent of teachers and the environment by 11 per cent.

There is clearly an opportunity for further research here – for example, to understand how teachers are engaging with issues around identity, when there is so little attention to race and gender.

When students had been encouraged to explore their cultural identities in the classroom, it was often reported to have been handled in an arguably exoticising way. In a teachers' focus group, one teacher commented that it can be 'easier' to achieve good marks across their art students' work if students have 'interesting' cultural backgrounds to bring out in their visual artwork, as opposed to white middle-class students who do not have the 'life experience' to exploit or 'drag out'. Rather than a safe and reflective space being created in which students can electively explore their identities, this comment suggests that students are sometimes pushed into 'performing' their ethnic identities to satisfy marking criteria.

KS3 students in a Yorkshire school felt that they often did not study minority ethnic artists, but when they did it was normally in the context of trauma and suffering. One Black student confirmed that in KS3 art classes:

*"I think they [teachers and exam boards] always pick out the bad. Yeah, like I've never had a lesson where it's, like, by using something good. It's always 'Oh, you were slaves and see how far you can uplift yourself as a race now'. I'm not trying to say that the slave trade should be forgotten because that's 400 years' worth of torture. But you should not always make it seem like that was the only thing that's happened to Black people."*

As presented above, students emphasised that teachers' knowledge of diversity in art is limited to negative aspects of minority ethnic communities' history, where this history is reduced to victimhood, as opposed to introducing students to broader content that reflects more positive and empowering representations of their heritage that they could relate to and engage with.

In the 2020 report *Race and Racism in English Schools*, the Runnymede Trust highlighted the importance of ensuring racial literacy in the teaching workforce so that these kinds of insensitivities are noted and avoided. In that report, Runnymede highlighted that racial literacy 'refers to the capacity of teachers to understand the ways in which race and racism work in society. It also involves having the language, skills and confidence to utilise that knowledge in teacher practice.'<sup>60</sup>

It is also clear that 'focusing on racial literacy means that issues pertaining to race and racism become the responsibility of all teachers'.

While the focus groups picked up this problematic picture, one of the most striking outcomes from the survey was the low levels of engagement and relatability that students reported about the artists they were exposed to; just 7 per cent of Black and minority ethnic students and 5 per cent of white students felt they could relate to artists introduced in their classrooms. Similarly, just 10 per cent of Black and minority ethnic students and 9 per cent of white students felt the artists they had studied had helped them to understand events in their own life.

Although there is some variation across ethnicity, overall these figures throw up a fundamental issue in art teaching: a gaping disconnect between students and either the way artists are presented or the type of artists they are offered.

Art education can be a fertile ground for exploration of self and identity, and yet there are clearly considerable problems of engagement and relatability that are endemic to students' experiences. A broad curriculum that exposes students to works created by artists from a range of backgrounds and viewpoints is essential for this exploration of self, but also for igniting creativity and building empathy among students.

All students benefit from a broad curriculum which offers interpretations from multiple viewpoints. This is supported by the fact that 60 per cent of white students also reported a desire to see a more inclusive offer.

## Tokenistic representation

As we found with the status and prominence given to minority ethnic artists and their work in exam board materials, students we spoke to were perceptive not just about the range of artists they were introduced to in the classroom but also the value that was ascribed to them in how they were featured. Students reported feeling that where diverse art and artists were showcased in art lessons, it was often in a tokenistic way, included as an 'add-on' or a contrast to the main artistic canon.

As one Black student contended:

*"If we're talking about black art, school [introduces] a whole topic about ... 'this is BLACK-rara' but I think that they should just like mix it all in ... they should do like Black and white ... all the time like not just Black and white ... from like different ethnic places."*

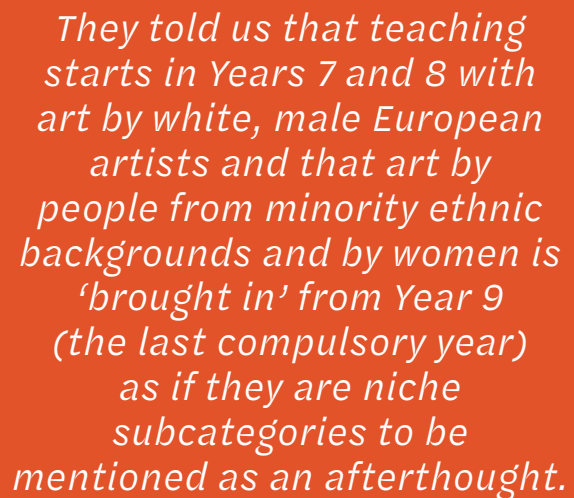
Student perceptions that diverse art is included in a tokenistic way were informed by the sequencing of teaching. They told us that teaching starts in Years 7 and 8 with art by white, male European artists and that art by people from minority ethnic backgrounds and by women is 'brought in' from Year 9 (the last compulsory year) as if they are niche subcategories to be mentioned as an afterthought. Students in one focus group told us that:

*"In years 7 and 8, there's never been a Black artist."*

*"In art, it's normally just a really white, English base."*

*"It [diversity] isn't really spoken about until you get someone to speak about it."*

This experience of students feeling that minority ethnic artists are featured as peripheral to the core curriculum is obviously compounded by how exam boards represent minority ethnic artists in very limited and marginal ways (see Chapter 1). This explains why 66 per cent of students stated that they would value being taught a broader curriculum.



*They told us that teaching starts in Years 7 and 8 with art by white, male European artists and that art by people from minority ethnic backgrounds and by women is 'brought in' from Year 9 (the last compulsory year) as if they are niche subcategories to be mentioned as an afterthought.*

Beyond the art curriculum itself, there was a widespread feeling among students that schools did not give structured time or space to discuss racism in any area of school study or life. This was felt to be especially relevant to art because the subject, ostensibly at least in National Curriculum documents, seeks to market itself as a space for exploring issues around the 'personal' and 'identity'.

As two students commented:

*"We're lucky to have a few minutes in a lesson to talk about Black Lives Matter ... it was like, five minutes after the lesson, it wasn't fully studied or gone into depth or anything."*

*"As soon as I hit the year 2020, it was like a massive push on to cultural diversity. But it wasn't in lessons it was in – like – assemblies."*

These perspectives suggest that many students find schools' attempts to engage with race and racism inadequate, specifically because they are not well integrated into other areas of their education and because their delivery feels forced or unnatural. Students felt able to 'see through' what they felt were thin commitments from teachers, and schools generally, and that efforts to be inclusive were performative rather than steeped in genuine resolve to address the deeply entrenched issues they face.

There was a sense that art lessons are especially ripe for these discussions, and so the frustration felt even more acute when the attempts there felt staged or superficial. Many students did understand that school was a high-pressure environment, and that teachers had to churn through a certain amount of content, but there was clear disappointment that both the curriculum and their teachers' confidence limited what they often identified as prime learning opportunities.

We return to teacher perspectives on this in Chapter 4, but while there was some divergence of accounts, many teachers shared this frustration that they did not have the curriculum resources or training to support the gaps that students identified.

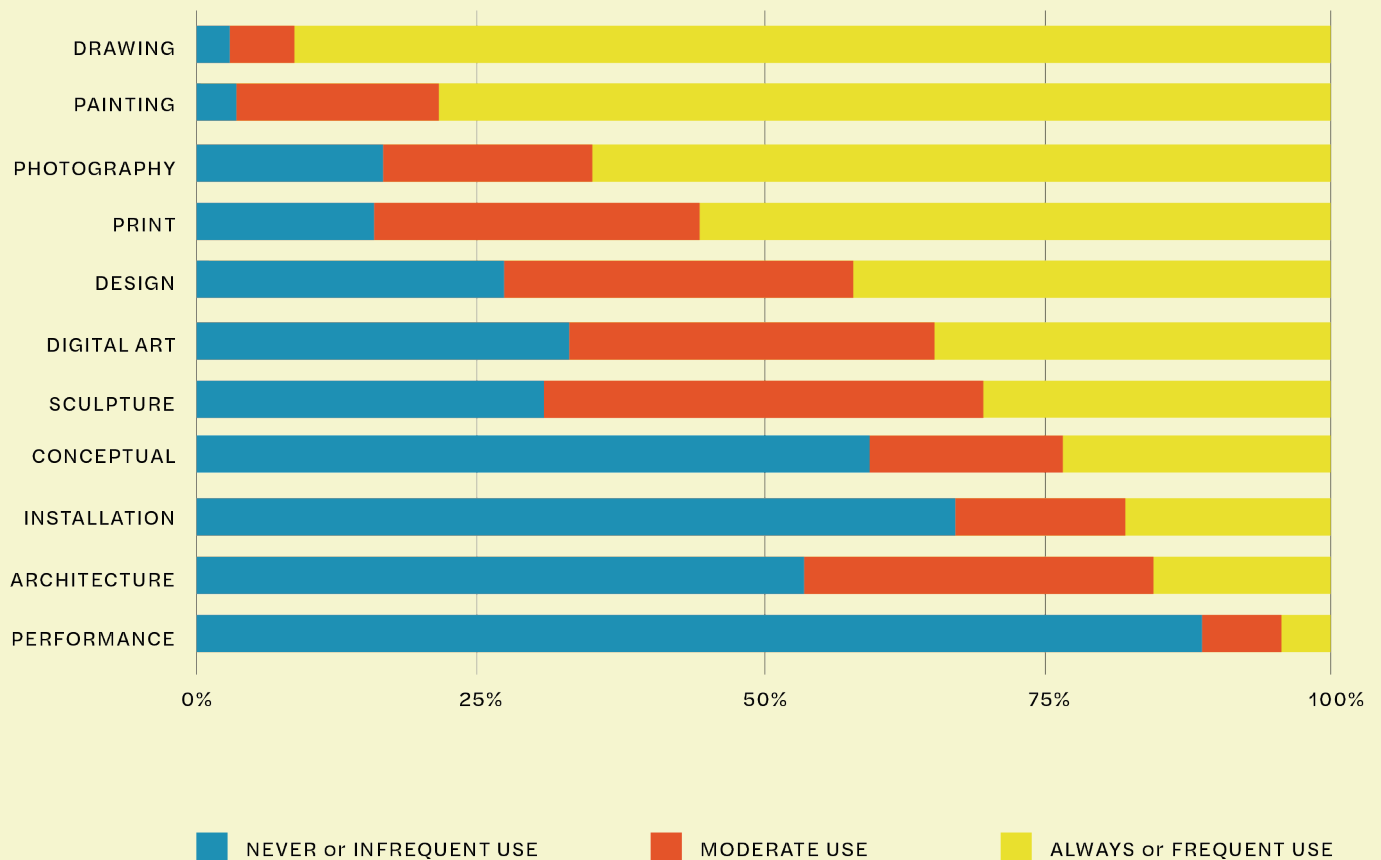
Our research also found a worrying lack of diversity regarding which techniques are taught to students. This may connect to wider issues related to resourcing as reported in Art Now, where teachers expressed serious concerns about resourcing for art and design, with

93 per cent noting that there had been a decrease in resources available to them in recent years.<sup>62</sup>

Especially in the context of extreme budget cuts, schools lack the resources for sound and video art, performance, or installations, and they therefore focus on fine art techniques like painting or collage. For example, drawing is frequently used by 91 per cent of teachers and painting by 79 per cent of teachers. In contrast, performance is used infrequently by 89 per cent and installation used infrequently by 73 per cent. This reflects the general sense of a restrictive pool of references, and a risk-averse approach to expanding to teaching different practices that was also cited by teachers as a barrier to teaching a more ethnically diverse curriculum.

It is clear that where budget and resources are tightening, the opportunity in schools to explore a broader range of disciplines, and the rich work created by practitioners in these disciplines, is more likely to be reduced (see Figure 8).

FIGURE 8  
WHICH DISCIPLINES FEATURE MOST IN YOUR TEACHING?



**This chapter has focused on what is happening inside the art classroom. As with any classroom in English schools, there are multiple and sometimes conflicting perspectives.**

**Many teachers we spoke to felt that they were progressing a broad curriculum offer, but their students often did not concur and felt that both curriculum content and classroom norms act against a broad and engaging art experience. Many students experienced their teachers' efforts as performative and thin – and given that teachers operate in a context where curriculum content, especially at GCSE, is directed by exam boards, that is perhaps a sound conclusion.**

**The next chapter takes a journey outside the classroom and glimpses how students' experience of the wider art sector impacts on their experiences and aspirations.**



**Although teachers are doing the best they can to nurture diverse art practices within their classrooms, their best efforts are rooted in an education system that cannot support either students' or teachers' efforts to improve their experiences of art education.**

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CHAPTER 3

**ART OUTSIDE  
THE CLASSROOM**

**I ASKED WHY THERE WERE SO FEW BLACK ARTISTS REPRESENTED IN GALLERIES, SHE SUGGESTED I USE THIS QUESTION AS THE BASIS FOR AN ESSAY... THIS LED ME ON AN EPIC JOURNEY.**



# HAROLD OFFEH

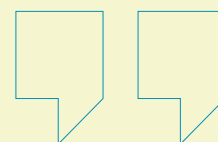


My journey to becoming an artist was very much shaped by my experience at secondary school. I went to Highgate Wood School from 1988 – 1995, it's a mixed comprehensive school in North London. Throughout my school years, I was fortunate to have access to a rich and broad cross section of the arts, great music, drama and art provision, my personal experience was very much shaped by my form tutor and art teacher, Carla Mindel.

## ARTIST VOICES

From GCSE through to A- Level, Carla Mindel took a multicultural and interdisciplinary approach: integrating African art and Indian textiles with western art references that decolonised our curriculum. I'll never forget looking through a copy of 'The Other Story' (1989), the seminal group show at the Hayward gallery which foregrounded UK artists of African and Asian descent. She encouraged us to pose questions and develop areas of interest. When in class one day, I asked why there were so few Black artists represented in galleries, she suggested I use this question as the basis for an essay. She suggested I visit galleries, speak to artists and curators and gather information. This led me on an epic journey. I naively reached out to artists Lubaina Himid and Althea McNish, curators like Gilane Tawdros and Nicholas Serota. All generously replied in writing, through telephone calls or by agreeing to meet me in person.

Looking back, what my art teacher, Carla Mindel, facilitated was curiosity. She created an environment where I could identify questions and cultural interests and pursue them through art and culture. At school, art and culture never felt superfluous or secondary, it was relevant and vital, equipping me with the tools to reflect on my place in the world, communicate and contribute to the world. I was empowered to make, think, play and do.



Harold Offeh (b.1977, Accra, Ghana) is a visual artist based in London. He works in a range of media including performance, video, photography, learning and social arts practice, often employing humour as a means to confront the viewer with historical narratives and contemporary culture.

## SCHOOL VISITS

In terms of art education beyond the classroom, students who participated in our focus groups had a range of perceptions on which art galleries they felt they would want to visit, and which art they thought was valuable to engage with.

One strong theme in our conversations was the tokenistic nature of representation in major galleries.

In a central London school, a group of students discussed this passionately and told us that the current trend of ‘diversity’ in major art galleries felt like window-dressing exercises, ‘picked by white people for white people’.

These students made clear that they would instead prefer to visit smaller local galleries where they felt they were more likely to see art that actually reflected their experiences.

*“[Big galleries] have selected representation. I think it’s for a certain group of people. Okay, so if you’re ... like, part of the group that they’re trying to be representative of you can, like feel that it’s not really ... They’re trying too hard, but it’s not working.”*

The suggestion in this statement is that the representation of work by minority ethnic artists is still designed by curators for a white audience and that minority ethnic people will not necessarily see themselves reflected in the work by minority ethnic artists that is selected. This student acknowledged that there is some ‘trying’ evident in the work done, but there is clearly a credibility gap with the level of authentic representation that is achieved.

*“I think when I went, it was diverse but wasn’t in the way that I would have thought, and it didn’t really interest me as much as it could.”*

There is a clear sense that the gallery in question was out of touch with the representational needs of a younger and more ethnically diverse audience. Another student added:

*“I think it depends on where the gallery is, I think some galleries are catered to ... upper class, like white people. Because they want the diversity, but a certain kind.”*

This (Black) student conflated ‘upper class’ and ‘white people’ in this instance, expressing a generalised sense that central London galleries were for ‘them’ (upper-class white people), not for lower-income minority ethnic people, or indeed lower-income white people.

This sentiment chimes with recent research by the Art Fund which found that pupils’ socioeconomic status and geographical location had a significant impact on their access to galleries and museums.

# 52%

of lower-socioeconomic-status pupils had visited a museum or gallery in the past year, compared with 70% of those growing up with higher socioeconomic status.

The research revealed that only 52 per cent of lower-socioeconomic-status pupils had visited a museum or gallery in the past year, compared with 70 per cent of those growing up with higher socioeconomic status. There is a likely connection between the levels of comfort experienced by minority ethnic students and their class profile, because, as indicated by this research, levels of familiarity and interaction with these spaces are more limited for these students than for others.

This limitation is in terms of both trips taken with family and, more worryingly, the fact that students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds are not as likely to be taken to a museum by their school (34 per cent) compared with their peers from higher socioeconomic backgrounds (47 per cent).<sup>63</sup>

In our call for evidence, one emerging young minority ethnic artist articulated something of these findings from a personal perspective, telling us how gallery spaces can be intimidating if you did not grow up visiting them, that the expectations of silence and slow walking made her feel uncomfortable. The visual language of galleries and other art institutions signifies clearly who is expected to be in that space.

Findings from interviews with sector professionals also corroborated this sense of disconnect.

One gallery curator, from a central London gallery, stated that ‘When we diversify our exhibitions, we don’t seem to diversify our audience’, reiterating the students’ feeling that the ‘diverse’ art shown in central London galleries does not seem to attract diverse audiences but is there primarily for consumption by mainstream white audiences. This perhaps tells us that although some effort is being made to reach broader audiences, there is some inadequacy in existing efforts to interest and gain the confidence and comfort of communities who might traditionally have been excluded by these spaces.

In addition, this gallery worker explained that in their current role, it was the small size of their budget for commissioning artists that limited their efforts to increase diversity. But they described how when had they worked in a larger London museum, in contrast, they often met with direct resistance to acquiring material to diversify the collection:

*“Anytime that I want[ed] to ... have more diversity on display [the museum] would be like, ‘well, we’re limited by what we have in our collection’. So has the collection been amassed overnight? No! ‘I don’t know when they started – about 100 years’. Yeah. I’m, like, ‘because the collection is – it’s all white men’ ... the answer so often, is like, well, we’re limited by what we have. We’re telling stories with this stuff. This is the story we can tell.”*

These testimonies indicate that there is a continued issue in our galleries that in many ways correlates with experiences in the classroom: that is, even where there is some movement towards offering more diversity, established structures restrict progress and the diversity offered lacks resonance with the communities it purports to include.

This is disappointing given that we found that students, especially minority ethnic students, wanted more opportunities to explore their cultural and ethnic identities through art and that they valued visits and excursions. Many students suggested that they would prefer to see art that was closer to their experiences – in terms of not

*When we diversify our exhibitions, we don’t seem to diversify our audience.*

just the artist and artistic work but also local galleries which they felt were more likely to cater to their interests and needs and perhaps offer proximity to their own experiences.

There is promising work in this direction, most notably perhaps the community engagement involved in the London Borough of Hackney commissioning public art sculptures by Veronica Ryan OBE and Thomas J. Price, commemorating Windrush – with Ryan’s work awarded the Turner Prize in 2022. Both artworks are located in and around the Hackney Town Hall square as an accessible form of public art rooted in community consultation, highlighting that art excursions need not be confined to central London museum visits.

## WHAT PERCEPTIONS EXIST OF ART CAREERS?

For many of our student focus group participants, their perception of a career in the visual arts was relatively uncertain. Some students were certain in their career trajectories for art, with the following professions recognised and noted across regional focus groups:



### **ARTIST**

*(specialisms included anime, graffiti artist, illustrator and fine artist, e.g. drawing)*



### **ART THERAPIST**



### **ANIMATOR**



### **COMIC BOOK WRITER AND ARTIST**



### **GAME DESIGNER**



### **FILM DIRECTOR/PRODUCER**

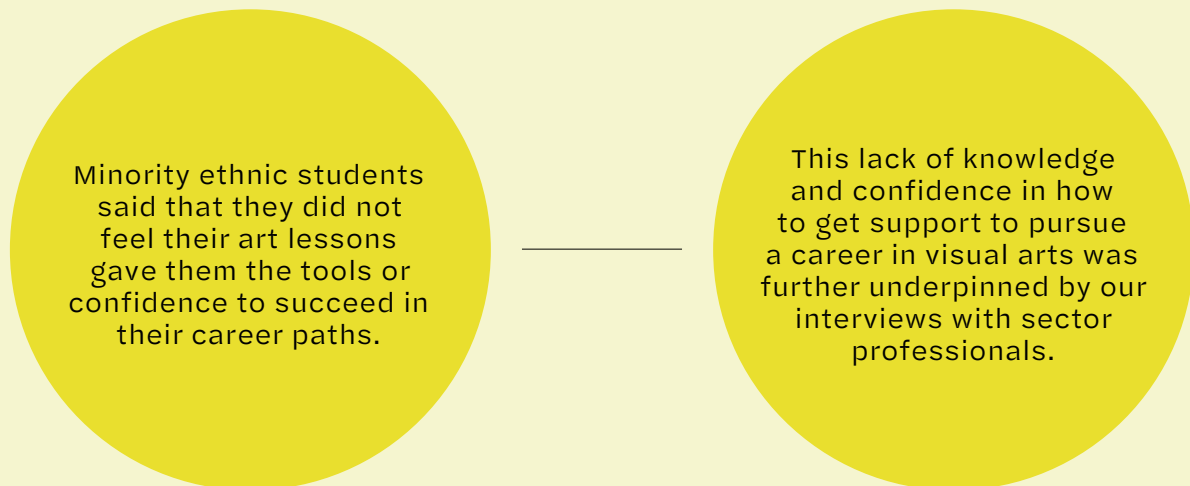


### **MUSICIAN/SINGER**



### **FASHION PHOTOGRAPHY**





However, many students lacked confidence in how they could gain support to pursue these and other roles in the sector. Minority ethnic students said that they did not feel their art lessons gave them the tools or confidence to succeed in their career paths. For example, one Black student stated that he wanted to be an architect but that his art classes had not really set him up for success. He had tried to pursue conversations with his teachers about the trajectory between art and architecture but had not received the support he needed to consider it as a career option and continue the study of art beyond school.

Many students were eager to get more help from their school and external partners in how they might pursue an art career, but many others – primarily minority ethnic and/or working-class students – stated that they would prefer to keep art as a hobby rather than pursue it as a job. These students (particularly KS4 students in more urban areas of Yorkshire and London) did not see art careers as a viable path for them, and many stated that they had no sense of how they would access such careers beyond doing degrees in those subjects.

Many student focus group participants across all class and ethnicity groups expressed concern over the lack of pay and career stability in the visual art sector. However, it was primarily students in academised/state/maintained schools who said that this precarity made them feel as if they ‘are not good enough’.

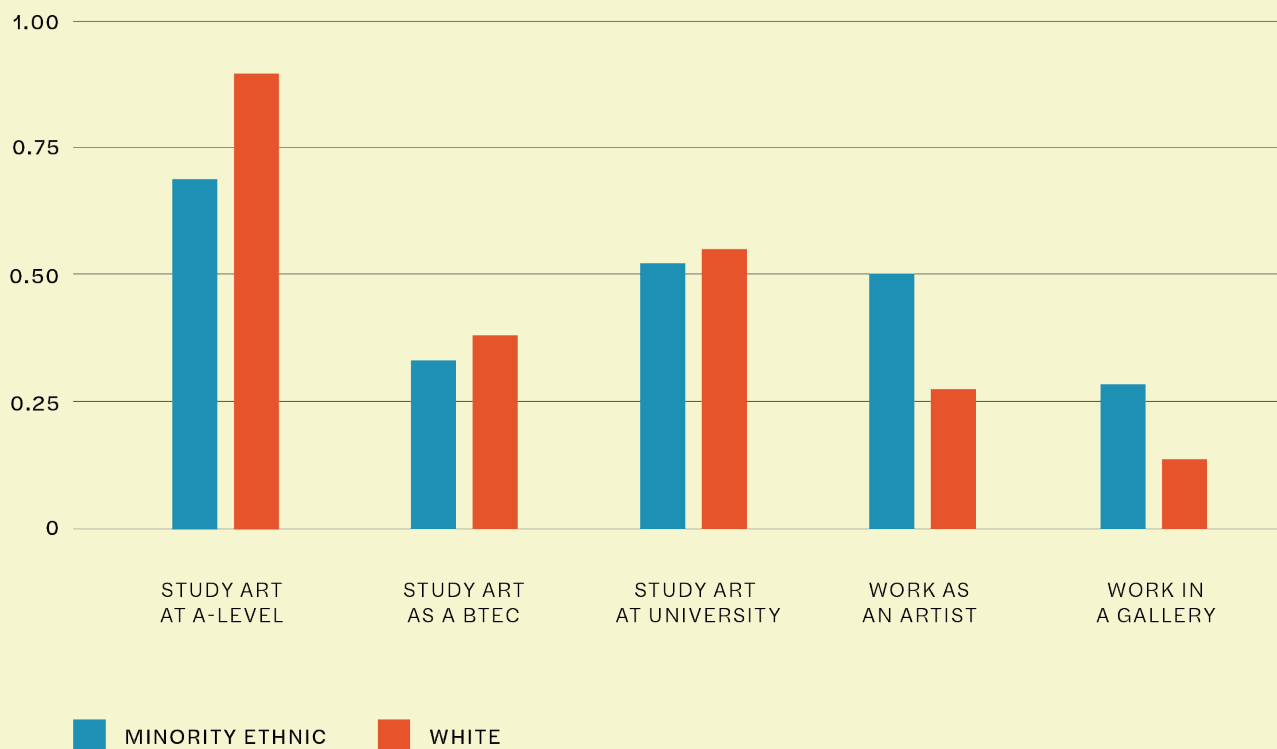
This lack of knowledge and confidence in how to get support to pursue a career in visual arts was further underpinned by our interviews with sector professionals, many of whom agreed that art careers are widely misunderstood, undersold and devalued and that information on such options is not disseminated effectively from education providers to students. As indicated by one member of outreach staff at a creative university in London, schools and institutions do not provide enough guidance for teachers or students on how to navigate and establish an art career:

*“What they need, I think, is specialist information, which highlights all the jobs and then some examples of the products or the services that are provided [by those in such jobs].”*

This respondent felt that the visual art sector remains a mysterious space with little clarity about the diversity of jobs that might be possible.

Interestingly, minority ethnic students were more likely than white students to say that they wanted to work as an artist or in a gallery, meaning that while higher education has a lower appeal for these students, they are potentially more interested in pursuing art as a form of career. The research was not able to probe this any further, and with our small sample size it is impossible to extrapolate any further reasons for this pattern – though clearly it is something that should be picked up in future research (see Figure 9).

FIGURE 9  
ASPIRATIONS BEYOND GCSE ART



Students' fear of precarity is not necessarily an inaccurate perception of work in the sector. A 2021/22 graduate outcome survey shows that one-third of art graduates were working in non-permanent employment after graduation. This means that creative graduates are more likely to be working on fixed-term and zero-hours contracts, or to be freelance and self-employed, than their peers in other sectors.<sup>64</sup> Art graduates also experience lower rates of full-time employment (45 per cent) than graduates from other subjects (52 per cent).<sup>65</sup>

Just over one-quarter of art graduates worked in arts, design and media professions, or in areas directly related to their degree subject. In 2021/22, 45 per cent of art graduates were in full-time employment, which is a lower proportion than in the previous year, and 26 per cent were employed part time.

This compares with 52 per cent of students from all subjects in full-time employment, and 12 per cent in part-time employment.

Within this, design had the highest percentage of graduates in professional-

level employment (62 per cent) and fine art graduates had the lowest (41 per cent).<sup>66</sup>

The Visualise literature review suggested that these experiences will be compounded for minority ethnic graduates hoping to enter the sector, as employment rates for minority ethnic groups continue to be much lower than their representation within the working-age population.

The review also revealed that due to the freelance nature of 'portfolio working', many graduates report their 'steady' forms of employment (for example, employment in the retail or hospitality sectors) instead of their creative work – meaning that statistics measuring employment are only capable of revealing a small part of the experiences of art graduates. Creative careers, however successful, are less likely to provide stable, salaried income:

*The visual arts operate in what is coined a 'risk economy'. Those who are most able to take risks for the longest period (read: operate in conditions of precarity), are the most likely to reap the benefits ... white, middle class and male.*<sup>67</sup>

# 38%

**of minority ethnic students** said that they did not want to continue with art after GCSE.

This sits against the recent rising participation rates at GCSE, indicating that students lack the confidence that they will be able to pursue careers in the visual arts sector.

Students we interviewed were aware of the precarious nature of employment in the visual arts, and preferred to practise art as a 'hobby' than to enter the creative workforce, where they felt the careers that might be open to them were less about creative expression and more about servicing a small base of customers:

*"Capitalism doesn't push art, it wants to make workers ... And the people who do try to make art and don't end up in those big industries or get in all galleries or stuff like that, they end up having to do commissions online, and most of those are like, again, not in high demand and they don't really let you be you and win in your art, they do what the person who's given you money wants, so I feel like I would do [art] more in my free time because it's just easier for me to, like, live my life. But I would like to do it as a*

*career if there weren't so many barriers. If I could get a stable income from it and I could do what I loved, then I would do it, but I can't."*

This student was clear that art careers that allow free expression and bring status are less open to them, and they had self-selected themselves out of the possibility of art as a career. Less than one-fifth of minority ethnic students surveyed (19 per cent) said that they wanted to continue studying art at school, with 38 per cent saying that they did not want to continue with art after GCSE.

This sits against the recent rising participation rates at GCSE and so indicates that although the subject has considerable appeal, students lack confidence that they will be able to pursue careers or continue their contribution in the visual art sector.

RANA BEGUM

**ART BECAME  
MY ESCAPE  
AND MY  
MEANS OF  
COMMUNICATION.**



# RANA BEGUM



My experience of growing up in the UK is mixed. Even though my family and I faced a lot of racism and bullying in daily life I would say my art education was incredibly positive.

I remember my first day at Primary School, where the culture and language barrier were a daily struggle. Art became my escape and my means of communication.

I spent my first day at school sleeping because I was bored and could not understand anything. On the second day, I had to learn, I had to try to understand and take part. I was given lots of colouring pencils and paper. I had no idea I could draw, I had no idea how to use colour.

This was the beginning, I couldn't stop. I remember everything I drew or painted became a point of discussion, a moment to engage. I remember learning single words to describe where I grew up, my family, my home.

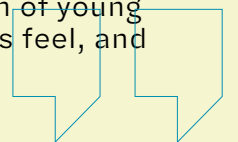
I would say I was very lucky in the education I received, in art in particular. I was very lucky that the teachers could see my fascination and were able to direct me and keep me engaged. I also remember being interested in maths, and how much support and encouragement I used to get. However, language was always an issue.

## ARTIST VOICES

I also remember living two separate lives. At home, we were focused on learning Arabic and Bengali. I would help with factory work when I got home because my older sister and I were fast at making furry toys. My father had multiple jobs but it was not enough. It was expected that after I finished my GCSEs I would work and get a job, if being a teacher, doctor or nurse was not on the cards.

My art teachers (Mrs Morley and Mrs Insley) pushed and encouraged me to do A-level art, and in order to do A-Levels I had to do more than one subject. With the support of my art teachers, I was able to convince my parents to let me continue at school until after my A Levels. I remember drawing a lot, but I would hide any drawings or paintings of the figure or portraits under my bed. I was worried my parents would not let me continue to study if they saw what I did.

My art teachers encouraged me to push myself, never knowing where it would take me. It was my art teacher and headmistress' visit to my home that made my parents realise how much I wanted to do art and that there was something there. Since then, I was fortunate to continue my art studies to MA level. I wish there had been more attention on developing practical skills and teaching you how to survive as an artist after university. That process should be inspired from the very beginning, to encourage a new generation of young artists, creating pathways for them so that their dreams feel, and are, achievable.



Rana Begum (b.1977, Bangladesh) is a visual artist based in London. Begum blurs the boundaries between sculpture, painting and architecture, through a refined language of colour, form and light that draws on Minimalist abstraction, urban landscape, geometric patterns from traditional Islamic art and architecture.

## STRUCTURAL BARRIERS FACING STUDENTS

A survey conducted by the Education Policy Institute in 2018 among schools with high proportions of students from minority ethnic backgrounds, particularly South Asian backgrounds, demonstrated that uptake in the arts is hindered by a belief among parents and students that arts subjects are unlikely to help future job prospects.<sup>68</sup>

Although the sample size in our survey is relatively small, minority ethnic students were more likely to report being told to focus on other subjects than their white peers: 19 per cent of Asian students, 18 per cent of Black students, 17 per cent of students with 'Other' ethnicities and 8 per cent of mixed students reported that their parents had told them to focus on other subjects.

This compares with just 5 per cent of white students. Though our data does not probe this directly, it appears that part of the discrepancy may relate to normative ideas about career and financial viability, as was outlined in some of our qualitative research.

In our public call for evidence from teachers, sector professional artists and students, many respondents noted familial support and financial constraints as two of the top six factors most commonly identified as possible barriers to entering the visual art sector for minority ethnic creatives. According to these responses, there was widespread concern that those from lower-income backgrounds are less able to have the freedom of choice to study art than those from middle-class or affluent backgrounds.

There was also acknowledgement that this lack of choice disproportionately impacts minority ethnic students.

As stated by an older student who responded to the call for evidence:

*“Talking from my experience of going to art school there was one Black girl on my course and me who was mixed white*

According to these responses, there was widespread concern that those from lower-income backgrounds are less able to have the freedom of choice to study art than those from middle-class or affluent backgrounds.

*and Asian. Everyone else was white and most were from middle-class and above families. There was the financial luxury for many of these students being able to study art without being financially concerned. Generally speaking, we know that many ethnic minorities are not in this wealth bracket and so further education can be seen by many minority ethnic homes as an opportunity to get a degree in an industry that will lead to contracted 'stable income' careers rather than careers which are freelance, independent or self-employed.”*

There was a clear sense that being able to study art and having the freedom to pursue one's genuine interests in this area was perceived as a 'financial luxury'. Further written responses to the call for evidence revealed that participation in an art career can often be mired by parental preferences

for their child, with concerns around practicality, precarity and future stability in their child's career. When asked how families and communities can affect minority ethnic students' visual arts career aspirations, one respondent replied:

*“They are from lower-income families. They don't have the luxury of parents financing them. They need to earn money as soon as they can. Art does not promise this. It also excludes people – it's who you know, where you'll go etc. Culturally it is not seen as a viable option for earning a living.”*

Students located their parental resistance not as a principled objection to working in the art sector but as stemming from cultural understanding of which careers are financially viable and secure, which translates therefore into a higher level of support for science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) subjects. For example, one student from a minority ethnic background attending school in London emphasised that despite wanting to be an arts therapist, there was considerable resistance at home:

*“I think that honestly, any sort of, like, an art-orientated job isn't very respected ... for example, I've spoken to my family about wanting to get into this ... they want me to focus on science or math[s] rather than something that I actually want to do ... And honestly – it's money as well, like, it's these jobs don't pay much. You know, I've been told that so many times.”*

Parental resistance is linked to the socioeconomic background of the student and their family. But it is also clear that it is influenced by the continued devaluation of the arts, and that the financial security that parents aspired to for their children was unlikely to be found through an art career. In the context of an ongoing cost-of-living crisis, it is likely that for Black and minority ethnic families, economic considerations will be central to concerns about the possibility of a career in art, given that they are 2.5 times more likely than white families to be living in deep poverty.<sup>69</sup>

It seems unsurprising, then, that the growing participation rates at GCSE are not carried

**For those students interested in developing an arts career directly, there was a lack of clarity and guidance offered to them to help them imagine art sector careers.**

through into higher education and that the student body in art and design courses is significantly less diverse than national averages. Statistics gathered by Higher Education Student Statistics (HESA) show that in 2018/19, 82 per cent of students were white on creative art and design courses in institutions other than further education colleges – despite the fact that 25 per cent of students in higher education identify as minority ethnic. This suggests that minority ethnic students are 'clustering' on different courses where the vocational trajectory is assumed to be more secure.<sup>70</sup>

This chapter has highlighted how students look forward to and value visits to galleries but that their experience of them is disappointing. Many reported that galleries feel disconnected and uncomfortable to them, thereby limiting their enjoyment and inspiration. Even efforts at curating inclusive exhibitions seemed to disappoint, as students feel that they are inauthentic to their experiences. This ties to the lack of ambition reported by many students about going into the visual art sector, as many clearly had very little idea about the broader transferable skills and benefits.

For those students interested in developing an arts career directly, there was a lack of clarity and guidance offered to them to help them imagine art sector careers, especially in the context of a consensus that such careers are precarious and offer little financial security to those from working-class, minority ethnic backgrounds.

This is clearly something that can and should be addressed both within and outside of the education system.

**In the context of an ongoing cost-of-living crisis, it is likely that for Black and minority ethnic families, economic considerations will be central to concerns about the possibility of a career in art, given that they are 2.5 times more likely than white families to be living in deep poverty.**

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CHAPTER 4

**THE ART OF  
TEACHING**

## THE ROLE OF TEACHING AND TEACHER TRAINING

Many of the teachers we spoke to during this research were actively engaging with the challenge of diversifying their art offer and with questions of how to manage conversations around race and identity.

They invested time and effort, researching and trying to find ways to make their classrooms more representative of their students.

We also recognise the difficult conditions in secondary schools recovering from COVID-19-related lockdowns and the associated issues this had fomented within their student community.

They were operating in an academic year (2022/23) that saw numerous teachers' strikes over pay and conditions, and shrinking school budgets despite students' growing needs and attainment expectations.

There is also a crisis in terms of teacher retention, with the Art Now report highlighting that 67 per cent of arts teachers were thinking of leaving the profession, with wellbeing and workload cited as the key reasons.<sup>71</sup> Alongside this potential exodus, the number of art and design teaching trainees has nearly halved since 2021.<sup>72</sup>

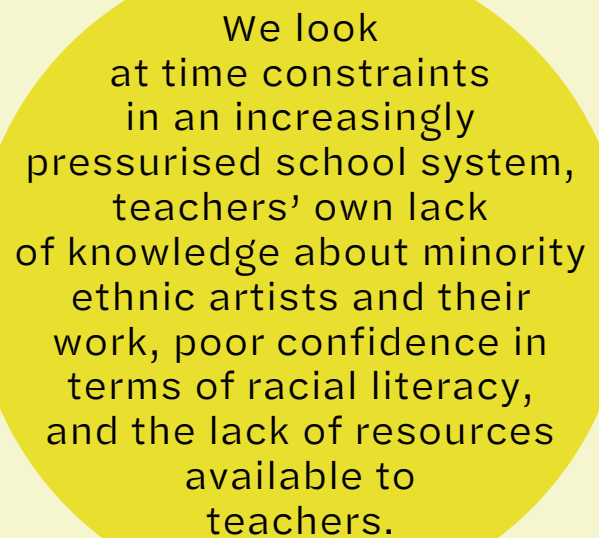
In our survey of teachers, many rated themselves as doing a good job on diversifying their classroom and offering a broad and representative curriculum. In fact, 62 per cent of teachers surveyed felt that they were able to incorporate the experiences of minority ethnic students into their teaching of art, design and craft.

This positivity feels at odds with the perspectives of their students (Chapter 2), who were more disappointed with levels of diversity and inclusion.

Our survey sample was small, with 120 respondents, and we also recognise that there was likely a self-selection bias, as participation in our work was voluntary and our teacher participants may therefore be more likely to be working in schools where there is a positive narrative among teachers and senior leadership teams about their own efforts to improve diversity and inclusion. This in turn means that the teachers represented are likely to have been more assertive and active than average in improving their own classroom practice and curriculum delivery, and their optimism may not be an accurate representation of the wider teaching workforce.

Even so, by combining our survey data, exam board analysis, and qualitative work with teachers and students, in this chapter we shed some light on the role, perspectives and impacts of art teachers. We highlight the barriers that teachers face, noting several key factors. We look at time constraints in an increasingly pressurised school system, teachers' own lack of knowledge about minority ethnic artists and their work, poor confidence in terms of racial literacy, and the lack of resources available to teachers.

Despite their optimism, in terms of our survey data we can see that a significant number of teachers will either never, or will



We look at time constraints in an increasingly pressurised school system, teachers' own lack of knowledge about minority ethnic artists and their work, poor confidence in terms of racial literacy, and the lack of resources available to teachers.


only infrequently, use an example of a non-Western artist. For example, 97 per cent of teachers will use references from the early 20th century during their teaching of art and design; 56 per cent of these teachers, however, said that they infrequently or never use a non-Western artist from the same historical period. A similar relationship exists for later time periods too.

Specifically, nearly all teachers (98 per cent) use examples from the mid-20th century in their teaching of art and design, but

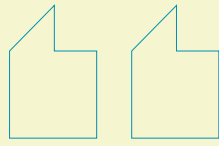
46 per cent never or infrequently use an example of a non-Western artist. Similarly, 99 per cent use references from the late 20th century, but one-quarter (26 per cent) either never or infrequently use an example of a non-Western artist. Even during the teaching of 21st-century art, used by 98 per cent of teachers during their delivery of the curriculum, two in ten (23 per cent) either never or infrequently use a non-Western artist.

These survey findings concur with the data gathered through our exam materials analysis and reveal the narrow art experience being offered in the art classroom. We found that several factors contributed to why teachers were struggling.

RENE MATTIĆ

**I ONLY EVER  
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NURTURED. **

# RENE MATIĆ



I owe everything to my experience of art class in secondary school.

I have always struggled to learn in academic environments and was put in the bottom set for all subjects at school. I only ever looked forward to art classes because it's where I felt respected.

I misbehaved in other classes because I and other students weren't being nurtured.

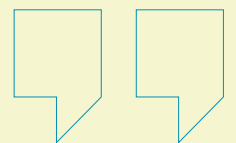
## ARTIST VOICES

As I got older and became more serious about wanting a career in the arts, my teacher let me spend my lunchtimes in the art block which helped calm my behaviour down. I found it a safe place where I (for the first time) felt I was worth something. Through art I learnt how to read and enjoy being still. I became more interested in English and science because I began to understand their intersections with creativity.

I was fortunate enough to have an art teacher that believed in me and my abilities. She gave me books and artists to study. I can remember everything she taught me. Since my career has taken off as an artist, I have actually reached out to her and thanked her for spending time on me and we exchange updates every now and again.

I had a difficult home life during school and art was a way of channelling that into something positive and has continued to do so. I left school with enough GCSE's (A\* in art) to go onto college and then university. I am now a practising artist and I get to live off my work.

I owe art class and my art teacher everything. It saved my life.



Rene Matić (b.1997, Peterborough, UK) is an artist and writer based in London. Their practice spans photography, film and sculpture, drawing inspiration from dance and music movements to delve into the complex relationship between West Indian and white working-class culture in Britain, whilst privileging queer/ing intimacies, partnerships and pleasure as modes of survival.

## BARRIERS FOR TEACHERS IN SUPPORTING MINORITY ETHNIC STUDENTS TO PURSUE ART

### Time poverty

The lack of time was frequently cited by teachers as a barrier to diversifying the curriculum. A number reported having to make time to plan and research outside of their working hours and said that they did not have the protected planning time needed in order to develop their school's curriculum. In this context, teachers struggled to find time to renew and expand resources and include more diverse materials. The Art Now report showed that teachers often have to access continuing professional development and learning (CPDL) in their own time (and often with their own money), making it challenging to update their knowledge or build confidence in teaching a more diverse curriculum.<sup>73</sup>

One teacher told us that the main barrier to teaching a more diverse curriculum was 'time ... just yeah, time to gather information, time to teach the information, even after school and being stretched, just being tired'. In another interview, a teacher elaborated on time as a barrier, coupled with a lack of support: 'For me, it's time, just not enough time to teach everything; and resources – even training for myself, I know there are still things I have to keep learning.'

The time poverty that teachers experience was a common theme in our focus groups; teachers talked about time constraints as a major limitation on their ability to develop their own knowledge or to design new resources. Even our sample of teachers, who just by virtue of their self-selection for this research are likely to have higher-than-average interest and appetite for developing a more diverse curriculum, reported that they found that the demands of school left virtually no time for curriculum development work, either individually or certainly not as a team.

One of the factors that was commonly mentioned was how the wider educational environment impacts on teachers' time.

Teachers talked about the pressures of teaching, and how the reporting of grades as part of public league tables has had a deep impact on the way that schools and teachers operate, creating perverse incentives that detract from innovation and exploration in favour of tried and tested routes to attainment.

One teacher in London explained how they find themselves reproducing the same curriculum content as they know 'it works', indicating that the risk involved in moving away from a familiar curriculum is a significant one. Schools must account for their GCSE results through individual teachers who are required to conduct an annual exams analysis in the autumn term based on the previous summer's exam series.

Teachers are required to offer an analysis of their cohorts and why students did or did not perform. Many teachers described the impact of this pressure as one that incentivises staying close to 'comfort zones' and focussing on well known and familiar artworks, rather than risk diversifying and potentially lowering attainment outcomes.

Schools are tasked with teaching students to 'pass', and so teachers are strangled by an 'assessment regime that does not work for arts subjects'.<sup>74</sup>

One teacher described, regretfully, the impact this pressure has on the ambition to diversify their curriculum offer:

*"In the ideal world, we'd have everybody doing whatever they wanted to do, and they'd be being as creative as ever and they'll bring in whatever they know and love, but also we are unfortunately working to an exam specification and we are teaching in classes of however many – and we do need to think about all of the things that are coming into it.*

*So sometimes you don't want to 'quash' their creativity, but sometimes you're*

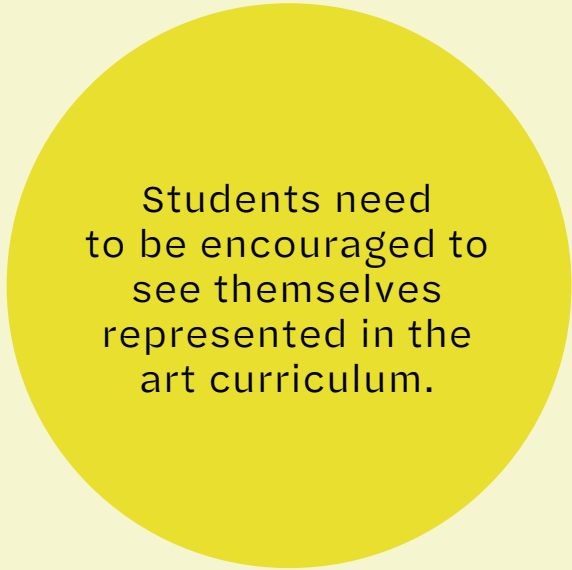
*forced into a box – in a way so that you can assess, and you can control and you can help to make progress with a certain skill or whatever. And that might stop them from doing the manga drawings that they love ... And you have to do that, because even if sometimes you do let them do whatever they want to do, it isn't, unfortunately, going to tick all the boxes."*

This teacher was describing the other side of what students reported: the need to conform and perform to a set standard, and the need to make sacrifices in order to meet specific grade criteria. However, while the previous chapter shows how students felt it was the teachers who were being overly controlling in terms of what was felt to be permitted in the classroom, teachers, as in the extract above, told us that they had to steer students away from what they 'may love' because of the pressure to conform to the exam specifications.

Teachers commented on how the focus on attainment can lead to a narrow way of teaching. Many talked about how the focus on 'outcomes' and the 'final work' tends to be measured against existing exam board criteria, and because teachers and students already know what is required in their outcomes, their processes become means to that end rather than genuine explorations.

They spoke of the need to achieve and maintain high attainment levels for their cohorts, and said that this pressure is compounded by the effects of marketisation and performance-based school league tables. Some recognised that it acts to produce a culture of risk aversion, where anything innovative is avoided because it may not lead to the outcomes that are known to get awarded high grades. This of course precludes diversifying the curriculum, because what is known to 'work' is the established, narrow curriculum and, as the teacher above described, it feels reckless to shift away from what is known to 'tick the boxes', validate their teaching and ultimately secure the school's overall performance.

It was clear that for teachers, experimentation and innovation both receive limited time and space for limited and are



Students need to be encouraged to see themselves represented in the art curriculum.

considered too high-risk in an environment where the focus on grades is the defining feature of educational experience.

### **Lack of knowledge and training**

In our survey we found that 60 per cent of art and design teachers had had no CPDL in diversity and inclusion in the last five years. This is significant because where teachers themselves have had a narrow art education and then have not been offered the opportunity to broaden that through their training, the curriculum they can deliver is likely impacted. Recent research has contributed to the consensus that teachers 'are the most valuable resource for students' learning' and that deficits in training are critical to gaps in students' experience.<sup>75</sup>

We argue that there is also a racialised impact that has not been directly discussed. One piece of research completed by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER), a UK-based educational research organisation, found that restrictions on the art studied in schools are a result not of the National Curriculum itself, which has an open structure, but of its interpretation by teachers. NFER's research, based on qualitative interviews with 54 art teaching staff in the UK, found that teachers' personal preference is a key determinant of what gets taught in art classrooms; and given that we know this preference likely rests on narrow art experience, this is clearly a factor in what students experience.

As the primary data from teacher interviews and focus groups indicates, some teachers were confident that their classrooms were a space in which students could be psychologically safe, where they could engage with art, and which welcomed the full diversity of cultural and social capital many students bring. One teacher in West Yorkshire felt that her multicultural class is made up of students who bring their cultural capital into their work, and she was happy to support them in doing this in line with assessment criteria.

Another teacher told us that a number of their Black students chose to design traditional carnival costumes for a module on costume design, while another teacher in the room – notably, the only Black teacher in this regional focus group – told us that he felt confident to bring his own cultural capital to the classroom and would engage his art students in carnival traditions from across the Caribbean.

Interestingly, this teacher also noted that some white students did not engage with these cultural artistic forms, stating that they didn't 'relate to them'. He had been unsure of how to address the situation and had let the issue pass. Existing teacher training offers little to support the development of a framework or language through which teachers might develop and champion a broad and balanced curriculum that engages all students. This teacher felt that his training had not equipped him to consider how to navigate sensitive conversations.

Teacher training needs to ensure that teachers can articulate why studying art outside of one's immediate cultural identity is important. Students need to be encouraged to see themselves represented in the art curriculum, but this needs to be embedded in a way that locates the value in not just being representative of those specific students, or ticking diversity boxes in curriculum plans, but because it is beneficial for all students to be able to explore art from a diverse range of artists.

The response by white students to the carnival art topic indicates that because it was seen as a one-off, the novelty of

studying something outside their regular art diet meant that some of them felt it was unrelatable to their experiences. The importance of a broad curriculum is that this interpretation of minority ethnic artists as 'novelty' or 'tokenistic' would be mitigated, because representation would be built in across the curriculum, not just in stand-alone moments and presented as relevant only to the community of the artist.

This is also important as it addresses the concern voiced by minority ethnic students that diverse art is just dropped in occasionally to 'perform' diversity. By moving away from tokenistic representations and embedding a diverse art offer, it is possible to both address the accusation of performativity and, at the same time, bring students along, as the art would be presented on the basis of its artistic, historical and cultural merits rather than on that of fitting a particular diversity target.


Teachers, whose own art education may not have articulated this value, need to be supported to convey this in their classrooms.

Many teachers were self-conscious that their ability to diversify their curriculum was limited by their own educational heritage, which was largely white, Eurocentric and male. In our survey, over a third of teachers (37 per cent) said that they had not been introduced to the work of any minority ethnic artists during their own art education and teacher training. As one respondent to our call for evidence survey stated:

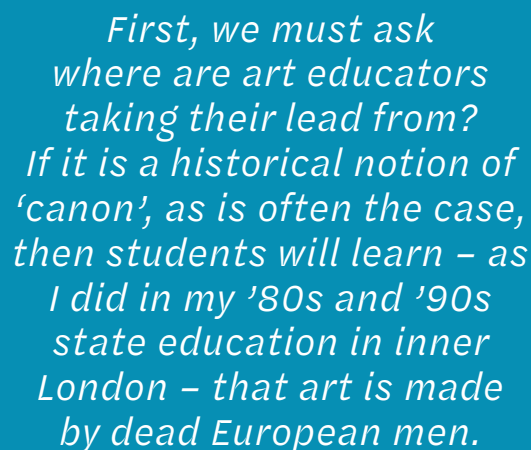
*"I don't feel art education across the country reflects the diversity of the student population. As a teacher of white heritage, I am aware that I have taught in line with my education which barely mentioned women artists, let alone artists from global majorities. I know that I have developed schemes of learning lacking in diversity, both in terms of gender and race."*

Many teachers concurred with the above sentiment, highlighting that although they understand the value of providing diverse and representative classroom content, they often struggle to do so given their own limited scope of experience and professional





*As a teacher of white heritage, I am aware that I have taught in line with my education which barely mentioned women artists, let alone artists from global majorities.*



*First, we must ask where are art educators taking their lead from? If it is a historical notion of 'canon', as is often the case, then students will learn – as I did in my '80s and '90s state education in inner London – that art is made by dead European men.*

training, and confessing that they opt to teach what is readily known and available to them. As another artist and educator stated:

*“First, we must ask where are art educators taking their lead from? If it is a historical notion of ‘canon’, as is often the case, then students will learn – as I did in my '80s and '90s state education in inner London – that art is made by dead European men.”*

Teachers acknowledged that their own training had not prepared them to teach a diverse curriculum or to teach a diverse student body.

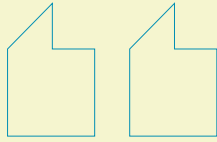
Although our survey data has an over-representation of minority ethnic teachers, and teachers who reported that they already teach a relatively diverse curriculum, 13 per cent of minority ethnic teachers surveyed themselves felt unsure of the correct language to use when talking to students about minority ethnic artists.

Among white teachers, this figure rises to 31 per cent. This shows that there is significant work to be done to support teachers in their own knowledge and understanding of minority ethnic artists and their work, and that this would be a welcome contribution to helping them to broaden the art offer.

**I BELIEVE THAT  
AFFIRMATION,  
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AND  
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ARE ALWAYS  
IMPORTANT FOR A  
PERSON WISHING  
TO BE CREATIVE.**



## HARDEEP PANDHAL



My experience of art education was heavily informed by early years.

I believe that affirmation, positive reinforcement, and encouragement are always important for a person wishing to be creative.

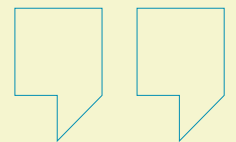
My aptitude for drawing was identified and encouraged by a primary school teacher, during a portrait assignment, and crucially, was reinforced by my father. Without some sort of encouragement at home, I doubt I would have pursued an interest in drawing.

I also knew that this encouragement was rare. It was absent in my extended family. And I knew that some of my peers from South Asian backgrounds were actively being deterred by their parents to draw. So I must have felt lucky, and didn't want to waste it.

Throughout secondary school, my interest in drawing intensified but I was distracted by various social and interpersonal issues. I failed GCSE Art but was allowed to pursue it at A-Level because I went to a sixth form college connected to the school, so the teachers knew me and gave me a chance. By the time I was thinking about going to university I fell back on my drawing skills and decided to apply to do a Foundation Diploma in Art and Design, as I understood that to be the next step.

I didn't know what contemporary art was at any stage of my secondary school experience. I mainly drew Birmingham based public art in the style of pop art. I ended up doing one of an Anthony Gormley sculpture, but I didn't know it was made by Anthony Gormley at the time.

In short, the consensus at school by my peers was that art was a class for dossers. But I went to the classes because my father seemed to be proud that I was being commended for something by my teachers, my drawing skills. I could tell it was unusual and knew I could get away with it, and use it to go to University, because my parents didn't go to University, so they valorised it. So going to University became the main goal, it seems.



Hardeep Pandhal (b. 1985, Birmingham, UK) is a visual artist based in Glasgow, Scotland. His art, film, animation and sculptural works use acerbity and playful complexity to transform feelings of disinheritance and disaffection into generative spaces that bolster interdependence and self-belief.

## LACK OF CPDL FOR RACIAL LITERACY AND TEACHING DIVERSITY

This was also matched by a distinct lack of CPDL for qualified teachers around race and racial literacy: 43 per cent of teachers we surveyed had had no CPDL related to race and ethnicity. This came across in our focus groups, where teachers expressed anxiety about their lack of racial literacy and fear about saying the ‘wrong’ thing. This also chimes with what students reported in terms of frustration about their classrooms being closed to conversations around issues to do with racialised and cultural experiences and their disappointment in teachers’ (lack of) ability to support their exploration of these subjects.

Many students we spoke to talked about being subjected to cultural insensitivity in the context of the art classroom. They referred to the type of language used in art classes, resources and institutions, suggesting that this was a common factor in the sense of exclusion that they felt in their art classes and that inhibited them from engaging with arts and culture more generally.<sup>76</sup> According to a KS4 student in the West Midlands: ‘It’s weird when white teachers try to talk about race – they don’t do it well’. Although the student recognised that their school does not have many teachers of colour, he identified that white teachers were often expected to deliver assemblies on racism and integrate it into their teaching, but he felt that they evidently lacked the knowledge and cultural understanding of its many manifestations and therefore, without any ill intent, would sometimes cause offence to students:

*“Like when I say anything like today’s talk [on racism and the history of slavery] I felt weird because he was just asking [the] Black kids.”*

This student felt that the teacher’s own lack of confidence on how to relay the material resulted in him relying on and asking Black students to participate in an assembly in a way that did not feel safe or comfortable for those students.

The looseness of the National Curriculum means that while it is ostensibly open to broad interpretation, it relies on the efforts of teachers who are themselves overworked, time-poor, ill equipped with wider knowledge of minority ethnic artists, and lacking in guidance around managing conversations around race and racism.

In another example, some teachers in the East of England said that they were unaware of how offensive it was to touch a Black student’s afro hair without consent, after some students presented an assembly on the subject. It was clear that despite the introduction of Equality and Human Rights Commission guidance on the prevention of hair discrimination in line with the Equality Act (2010) and education providers being expected to comply, this guidance is not translating into universal teacher practice. Further, as indicated by the teachers’ surprise, it is clear that some white teachers continue to be unaware of the extreme sensitivity and potential for offence around this kind of behaviour. It is clear that regulatory and governing bodies such as Ofsted could be doing more to support and report on how schools engage in positive conversations in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, centring pupil comfort and wellbeing.

Many of the students involved in our focus groups had experienced direct racism in school and, what is more, felt they had not been supported by their schools or teachers during these experiences. Students told

us that when they raised racist incidents with teachers they were treated as trouble-makers, while perpetrators were soothed and comforted. This experience was somewhat mirrored in an incident during our research when a teacher supervising a focus group emailed afterwards to insist that the students who had complained about feeling their concerns about racism were unheard were unjustified in their complaints, and that this part of the discussion should be removed from the data.

Problems of racism and the denial of its existence and impact in our schools are well reported and indicate that 'race and racism continue to be a defining feature of our schooling system'.<sup>77</sup>

Students in several focus groups shared these grievances, saying that their concerns and feelings were dismissed or devalued and that there was a lack of understanding on the part of an overwhelmingly white teaching workforce. A minority ethnic KS3 student from Palestine identified a time that their class had painted and drawn the Palestinian flag on their hands before entering their art classroom, but some teachers had asked them to remove it. Where there is anxiety about the boundaries of political conversations and what constitutes impartiality, teachers appear to take a cautious approach.<sup>78</sup> Students in turn spoke of feeling restricted in expressing political sentiments in art out of fear that their message would be received as too radical or hostile to the school consensus:

*"You can't really – if you feel like you want to express a certain feeling about a political thing or something, it's difficult because you're like ... so you feel like you wouldn't put it in your art like, cos, is it going to have any backlash?"*

This feeling was shared by many students who felt that their liberty in terms of artistic expression was restricted. One student spoke about how this is not just isolated to art lessons but that school culture does not welcome them discussing issues they feel are relevant, and encouraged the school to make greater efforts to be inclusive:

*"[We should] start talking more about racism, about other communities. The*

*LGBTQ+ community, the Black community ... We don't talk about anything. You go to class, that's it."*

When asked if they got opportunities to express views on political, religious and sexual issues, one student responded:

*"In a school environment that's kind of oppressive, like, you can't really say how you feel, like you need to be a savvy person, like you need to be more active, you can't be this person. Or think about this or that."*

Though opinions on this varied, many students clearly did not feel that their art lessons, or indeed the wider culture of their school, gave them any encouragement to explore issues that were important to them. They read the subtle subtext – and sometimes the overt disciplining of ideas – and elected to be 'savvy' about how they navigated the expression of their views, declining to reflect them in their artistic work at school.

In many ways the absence of freedom to explore complex conversations was regretted by both students and teachers, but without any understanding that both were tied into a system that is fixed by external factors. The looseness of the National Curriculum means that while it is ostensibly open to broad interpretation, it relies on the efforts of teachers who are themselves overworked, time-poor, ill equipped with wider knowledge of minority ethnic artists, and lacking in guidance around managing conversations around race and racism. Teachers were clear that they would welcome further training on how to talk about race with students, and how to confidently plan and deliver lessons on artists from minority ethnic backgrounds, aware of changing political discussion on the subject of race and diversity.

Debates about terminology continue both within and beyond the classroom setting. Evidence from regional focus groups and one-to-one interviews with educators working at KS3 and KS4 levels further underpinned the reality that many teachers say they 'do not know the correct language and terminology to use' when discussing topics to do with ethnicity, sexuality and gender.

# 82%

of teachers feel that additional standardised curriculum guidance related to teaching work by ethnically and culturally diverse artists would help their teaching practice.

This position was consistent regardless of the location of the school.

More specifically, participants across experience levels stated outright that 'appropriate phrasing' was a core concern affecting their ability to teach effectively – though this trend is slightly more pronounced among teaching assistants, teacher trainees and early-career teachers. In most instances, teachers describe a personalised and subjective process of curriculum planning that helps to identify which are the correct terms to use.

As a result, many teachers struggle to strike a balance between showing a willingness to learn versus vulnerability in the classroom when making an 'outright mistake' or initiating 'awkward' conversations that minority ethnic students might find offensive. This includes a deep-rooted 'worry' described by educators concerning the reaction of parents and carers, which presents as another factor influencing confidence, with some teachers going as far as to cite worry of the potential 'loss of jobs' in discussing controversial subjects in their classrooms.

Educators also cite the contradictions between poorly resourced exam board provision and the expectations of Ofsted regarding certain kinds of artwork. While hiring more minority ethnic teachers

was widely felt to be one way to address the continued lack of diversity across the curriculum,<sup>79</sup> the general absence of minority ethnic teachers on teacher training courses means that more needs to be done to bring minority ethnic workers into the teaching profession in the first place, and more immediate practices must also be established in order to facilitate the teaching of diversity within the existing workforce. It is not the sole responsibility of minority ethnic teachers to be ambassadors for inclusive work and work related to broadening the curriculum.

Teachers themselves recognise this urgency, with 82 per cent feeling that additional standardised curriculum guidance related to teaching work by ethnically and culturally diverse artists would help their teaching practice. The confidence vacuum and the tension about 'getting it wrong' and causing offence is clearly a major factor, meaning that teachers attempt this work with a very light touch and refrain from taking risks: having centralised content and guidance relating to diversity would provide teachers with the confidence and security they clearly feel they are lacking. This all the more necessary in the context of the government's guidance around political impartiality.

Although this guidance is ostensibly designed to support teachers, some in our focus groups noted that it actually serves to add further stress to the conversation rather than additional clarity.<sup>80</sup>

One white teacher told us: 'I play it safe ... if I don't know enough about it ... it's off my PowerPoint'. She spoke about the fear of losing authority in the classroom and thought that young people 'will see it as a sign of weakness' if you say, too many times, that you are not sure or need to go and look something up. Although this teacher did not say it explicitly, it was clear that her anxiety was that if she spoke about race or race-related ideas and issues without the right terminology or knowledge, she would lose the respect of minority ethnic students in the class. It is apparent that the current time pressure on teachers and the litigious culture around risk in schools has steered teachers away from developing their classroom practice around these issues.

Many teachers avoided talking about cultural identity in lessons because they do not feel confident about the correct terminology or ways to frame discussions.

39%

of the teachers surveyed felt sure of the correct language to use when teaching students about the work of minority ethnic artists.

Nevertheless, we spoke to some teachers who were trying to learn and be ambassadors for change: one teacher we interviewed gave an example of a white colleague who had done a good job of visibly learning about cultural identity in front of students.

There had been an accusation of colourism in their class, where a minority ethnic student had been racist to another by insulting her skin tone. The white teacher researched colourism and gave a presentation on it to the students. In the presentation, she was honest about not having understood colourism very well previously but showed the students that she had worked to understand the issue so that she could talk about it with them. This was cited as a successful instance of a teacher learning with students and in doing so gaining their respect rather than losing authority.

However, as stated, teachers more often told us that they avoided discussions for fear of getting the vocabulary wrong, which sadly only reinforces the notion that race is a 'tricky' subject and stifles progress towards equality.

As discussed, many teachers avoided talking about cultural identity in lessons because they did not feel confident about the correct terminology or ways to frame discussions.

Less than four in ten of the teachers surveyed (39 per cent) felt sure of the correct language to use when teaching students about the work of minority ethnic artists, and this figure would likely be higher if not for the fact that minority ethnic teachers were over-represented in our sample.

Our interviews with teachers revealed that uncertainty around language is perhaps more widespread than the survey results indicate and that there is a clear need for safe spaces and guidance for teachers to explore this uncertainty in more depth.

This yet again reiterates the need for standardised levels of training and support; poor levels of racial literacy among teachers could be rectified with effective anti-racist training and by equipping teachers with the terminology and confidence to engage in these conversations in a meaningful way.

Exam boards and the DfE should work with teachers and third-sector education organisations to provide teachers with further support and guidance. This needs to be further supported by regulatory bodies such as Ofsted in their inspection of teaching, learning and assessment practices, as well as of schools' overall equality and diversity practice.

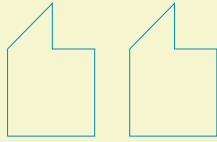
CHILA BURMAN

**I HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO WORK WITH SCHOOLS WHERE STUDENTS HAD NOT SEEN A BROWN PERSON BEFORE AND DIDN'T KNOW HOW TO APPROACH ME; I HAVE ALSO WORKED IN SCHOOLS THAT WERE VERY CULTURALLY DIVERSE.**





# CHILA BURMAN



I am a professional artist and I also regard myself as an artist educator and have worked collaboratively with a wide variety of schools for over 30 years.

I have worked in so many different school environments both in Britain and abroad: I have worked in schools where at lunch time students had only a thin layer of jam in a sandwich for lunch, and in contrast private schools where they had access to a full-on restaurant.

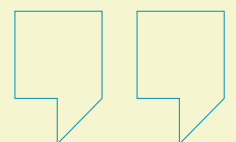
During the era of the Creative Partnerships initiative, organised by the Arts Council, I had the opportunity to visit and work with schools where students had not seen a brown person before and didn't know how to approach me; I have also worked in schools that were very culturally diverse.

I had to learn how to work with students over the years on the job, but I believe that my formative years working with my father in his ice cream van, watching how he interacted with lots of young people, informed my approach as an artist and artist educator today.

The fact that I grew up in a street where I hung around with other hardcore working-class kids in Bootle, where we had nothing and so played out until we had to go back home for our Indian food and then bed. I think that's why I am a good artist now, because we took to the streets with chalk and threw balls, played with dolls and the rest of the kids on the street. We had nothing and had to creatively invent our own games.

I think that in schools they don't get the kids to just work freely. Sometimes I would ask a student "where is that drawing you were working on"? They would say that it is in the bin, and when I asked why? They would say Miss would probably think it wasn't good enough. It's not the teacher's fault, some of the teachers are mega stressed out.

## ARTIST VOICES



Chila Burman MBE (b. 1957, Liverpool, UK) is a visual artist based in London. Since the mid 1980's, she has worked experimentally across printmaking, painting, sculpture, photography and film since the mid-1980s. She draws on fine and pop art imagery in intricate multi-layered works which explore Asian femininity and her personal family history.

## LACK OF RESOURCES

Many of the teachers we spoke to reported that they are working hard to diversify their art curricula by including widely known minority ethnic artists in their lessons. At the same time, over half of art teachers (51 per cent) feel that the art and design National Curriculum offers little or no support in the planning and teaching of art, craft and design, with nearly one-fifth of teachers (20 per cent) saying that it offered no guidance at all.

It is important to note that teachers were protective of retaining liberty and openness in the curriculum. Nevertheless, just over half of the teachers we surveyed said that the National Curriculum for art and design does not provide enough support.

In our research we offered teachers the opportunity, through the survey, to express what might aid their teaching practice: 82 per cent stated that additional standardised content relating to race and diversity would help, while 90 per cent said that supplementary materials such as lesson plans, study guides and information packs dedicated to the work of minority ethnic artists would aid their teaching. This indicates a significant level of interest and appetite for the provision of resources to developing teaching practice and provision.

Teachers were clear that even with an abundance of good will, most do not have the time capacity or educational background to be able to design and differentiate the kind of resources they would find most useful to improve their curriculum.

In the survey, teachers confirmed that an online portal featuring the work of minority ethnic artists, including exhibitions or events, would be the most directly beneficial tool in expanding their teaching repertoire: 94 per cent said that this would be helpful, with nearly two-thirds (64.3 per cent) saying an online portal would be 'very helpful'.

This was followed by resources providing examples of minority ethnic artists who have worked within the art movements that are already covered in the teaching of art and design: 93 per cent teachers said this would be helpful, with 63 per cent saying it would be 'very helpful'.

In our focus groups, where we probed this question of support in a more open way, teachers also highlighted a number of additional resources that would help, including opportunities for greater collaboration with other teachers through networks and support groups. The emphasis in these conversations highlighted the need to create ongoing conversations and teacher communities so that efforts to diversify become integrated rather than incidental in their teaching. This often came back to time pressures, in terms of both planning and preparation and also the time allocated to art lessons in the school timetable.

Many teachers also reported a desire for greater collaboration with galleries so that visits could be curated more directly around the themes and ideas relevant to their classes and teaching. This reflected some shared understanding of the students' perspective (Chapter 2) that visits to large galleries felt uncomfortable and unrelatable.

In line with this view, teachers also highlighted that the productivity and impact of these visits could be improved if there was greater collaboration between schools and galleries to enhance these opportunities as ones to diversify the curriculum.

A significant number of teachers (37 per cent) felt either unsure about how to incorporate the experiences of minority ethnic students into their teaching or unable to do so – a figure that rises to 40 per cent among white teachers. This re-emphasises the lack of confidence that teachers spoke of and how it plays into their ability to develop the kind of resources that they feel might credibly support the diversification of their curriculum.

# 5%

of resources are dedicated to the work of minority ethnic artists and only one to the work of an individual minority ethnic artist, Jean-Michel Basquiat.

# 90%

of the teachers surveyed said that supplementary materials such as lesson plans, study guides and information packs dedicated to the work of minority ethnic artists would aid their teaching.

Other teachers were not so self-aware: during our focus group there were occasions when teachers who professed confidence about their ability to be inclusive of all students would then describe that inclusivity as achieved just by virtue of it being an 'open' space, and that they did not need to think about representation, asserting that it just organically happened.

Some teachers also felt that referencing how art from different regions in the world has influenced the European canon was sufficient diversity. This approach reinforces the idea that work by minority ethnic artists is only worth exploring and valuable when contextualised within a white or European artistic offer and that it has little value in and of itself. This is clearly far removed from the inclusive and diverse curriculum to which the students (and many teachers) we spoke to aspired.

Teachers also told us that resources available to them are sparse and disparately located. While there are some examples of rich resources,<sup>81</sup> access is often challenging, as teachers may not be aware of their existence or location, or of how to integrate

them if they are not designed with school curriculum delivery in mind.

Teachers who are time-poor are often instead reliant on reading lists and materials provided through their exam boards. While not all exam boards provide reading lists for teachers, one reading list that is circulated to aid the teaching of art features 265 individual titles across the disciplines of art, craft and design, fine art, graphic communication, textile design, 3D design, and photography.<sup>82</sup> Of these, only 13 resources are dedicated to the work of minority ethnic artists (5 per cent) and only one to the work of an individual minority ethnic artist, Jean-Michel Basquiat.

There is just one resource based around a minority ethnic movement, an anthology of Black photography. None of the resources cited focus specifically on the work of British minority ethnic artists, movements or creative practices.

Just two titles provided to aid the teaching of fine art are dedicated to contemporary art practices by minority ethnic practitioners, with the majority of resources provided focusing on place-based cultural practices rooted in early historical periods.

TABLE 7  
**AQA GCSE ART RESOURCES LIST**

FIELD	TITLE	AUTHOR
ART, CRAFT AND DESIGN	<i>Islamic Art in Detail</i>	Canby, S.R. (2005)
ART, CRAFT AND DESIGN	<i>Aboriginal Art</i> , third edition	Caruana, W. (2012)
ART, CRAFT AND DESIGN	<i>Art in China</i>	Clunas, C. (1997)
ART, CRAFT AND DESIGN	<i>Western Artists and India: Creative Inspirations in Art and Design</i>	Jhaveri, S. (2013)
ART, CRAFT AND DESIGN	<i>Masks: The Art of Expression</i>	Mack, J. (1994)
ART, CRAFT AND DESIGN	<i>Africa: The Art of a Continent</i>	Phillips, T. (1999)
FINE ART	<i>Art in Latin America</i>	Candela, I. (2013)
FINE ART	<i>Asian Art</i>	Kerrigan, M. (2005)
FINE ART	<i>Basquiat</i>	Mayer, M. (2010)
GRAPHIC COMMUNICATION	NO MINORITY ETHNIC REPRESENTATION	N/A
TEXTILE DESIGN	<i>Indian Textiles</i>	Gillow, J. and Barnard, N. (2014)
THREE-DIMENSIONAL DESIGN	<i>Spirit Faces: Contemporary Native American Masks from the North-West Coast</i>	Wyatt, G. (1994)
PHOTOGRAPHY	<i>Committed to the Image: Contemporary Black Photographers</i>	Head Millistien, B. (2001)


These two contemporary titles are Candela's 2013 *Art in Latin America*,<sup>83</sup> which provides an exploration of Latin American art since the 1990s, and Kerrigan's 2005 *Asian Art*,<sup>84</sup> the foreword of which references how European artists such as Gustav Klimt and Vincent Van Gogh were inspired by the 'exotic arts and artefacts of the far east'.<sup>85</sup> A further title, Jhaveri's 2013 *Western Artists and India: Creative Inspiration in Art and Design*, also explicitly referenced the influence minority ethnic artists have had on Western art.<sup>86</sup>

This aligns with the way that minority ethnic artists feature in the exam assessment materials; given that teachers are time-poor and lack knowledge themselves, it is no surprise that they do not feel supported in their efforts at developing a critical and broad curriculum.

A lack of accessible resources is clearly a barrier to improvement in the context of time-poor teachers. Institutional and wider pressures on teachers to deliver attainment outcomes, without adequate resources and support, have inhibited teachers who want to design and deliver diverse art teaching and a broad curriculum. This pressure to conform to a rigid and league-table-driven schooling system leads to barriers too for students, who in turn absorb the lack of diversity. Students then often articulate that this as a failure of their teachers rather than conveying a sense that both teachers and students are trapped in a system that can only superficially perform inclusivity.

The teachers we spoke to were under a great deal of pressure in a school system that has challenged their creative liberty. Many felt they were doing a good job in trying to broaden their curriculum and to support their diverse student communities. Nevertheless, the wider context is a difficult one; according to the Institute for Fiscal Studies, teacher pay has fallen by £6,600 (13 per cent) since 2010 – a higher rate than pay in other sectors, reducing the appeal of teaching as a career.

The 2022/23 Initial Teacher Training (ITT) census reveals that while the postgraduate teacher training targets have been met in five of the past seven years, secondary school targets have not been met since 2012/13.



Mid-career and more experienced teachers appear to be leaving the profession at a higher rate than those early in their careers.

Retention rates are yet to return to pre-pandemic levels for secondary schools.

Mid-career and more experienced teachers appear to be leaving the profession at a higher rate than those early in their careers – 69 per cent of teachers who qualified five years ago are still teaching, but just 60 per cent of teachers who qualified ten years ago are still in the profession.<sup>87</sup> This means that there is both a lack of teachers entering the profession and high numbers of existing experienced teachers leaving. When coupled with cuts to funding for schools, this results in the teachers who do remain in the profession being hugely overworked and operating with limited resources.

According to Art Now, 67 per cent of art and design teachers (across all stages and nations) stated that they were thinking about leaving the profession. The last academic year was also disrupted by national strikes in UK schools over pay and working conditions for teachers. This is a significant concern given that one route for supporting the diversification of the art curriculum and what is valued and represented is diversifying the workforce and ensuring that there is sufficient space for new recruits to shape their delivery through the lens and perspective they might bring.

If not only is art teaching unattractive as a pathway but those entering are then not given the conditions which inspire them to stay, we are unlikely to see any valuable change through this route.

**This chapter has highlighted some of the key barriers that teachers encounter in the current schooling system. The art curriculum is generally welcomed because it is open and flexible – but this can create problems when teachers who lack broad-based knowledge themselves, and who are under considerable time pressure at school, are left to interpret and design the curriculum for their diverse student population.**

**This is compounded by teachers often lacking confidence to talk about issues to do with race, culture and identity, and therefore avoiding these topics or restricting the conversations they will engage in. Nevertheless, there are clear paths to improvement that are outlined here, including improving the training and resources that are accessible to teachers.**

**Teachers need support and encouragement in teaching about these issues.**

**Without standardised guidance, they are being forced to navigate these complex discussions on their own; in a subject which demands students explore identity and experiences.**

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CONCLUSION &  
RECOMMENDATIONS

**VISUALISING  
AN INCLUSIVE  
FUTURE**



**This research was conducted by artist-researchers alongside the wider research team at the Runnymede Trust: people who love and value art for the inspiration and nourishment it offers, and the power it has for imagining a world beyond the bounds of where we are now. Art education offers something special to children and young people, but sadly there is a deficiency in our current provision, meaning that wonderful opportunities for growth and change are missed, and this impacts all students.**

The need and opportunity for change is great. All students deserve an art education that is ambitious and attentive to who they are and what they aspire to, whether that is a career in the visual art sector or simply a love and affection for art as an enriching part of their lives.

Many of the young people we spoke to understood the potential of art education in relation to addressing racism and in creating anti-racist schools.

*“Art would be a good way to start. When you choose your GCSEs you know that when you’re going into lessons, you have one thing in common with people. I think with art, expressing yourself is one thing people have in common. Art classes – when it comes to political problems, race problems, religion problems etc. – it could be a good way to start when it comes to opening up to the rest of the school.”*

Others concurred, saying that art, as it is inherently about self-expression, is an optimal space in which to start having conversations about diversity and anti-racism that are currently lacking in schools, but which many students are desperate to have with both their peers and their teachers. At multiple focus groups young people told us that they would like to have extended discussions, in art lessons, about their own cultural heritage and that of their classmates. They wanted time to explore ethnic identities collectively and to be able to have meaningful conversations, with students of all ethnicities, about race and racism.

Collectively, a broad curriculum is beneficial to all students and a core tool in building empathy in the exploration of the UK’s rich, multi-ethnic history. As a society we have seen the impact of race and racism come to forefront through successive recent crises, the global Black Lives Matter movement resonated with the inequalities that were exposed during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the cost-of-living crisis has reminded us that structural racism remains a deep-seated part of our experience.

Our education system is sadly a part of this structure, and while recent reports have highlighted a broad creativity crisis in art education in schools, we have focused in on the racialised contours of that crisis.

And yet we remain hopeful; despite the differences in views that emerged, teachers and students felt strongly that art education can be a conduit for transformation.

This report has found that art education in schools remains overwhelmingly narrow in terms of both curriculum content and exam assessment. Exam boards play a critical role in shaping curriculum expectations and content, and the research reveals that they are currently architects of a woefully inadequate system. Not only is there poor representation referencing Black and South Asian artists, but where work by minority ethnic artists is referred to it is often in secondary and subordinate ways. It often appears in generalised geographical and movement-based references, and is associated with pre-1800 time periods.

We found that teachers are operating in a context where arts subjects have been devalued and deprioritised within an educational environment that values attainment and ‘getting students through’, and a culture that incentivises ‘playing it safe’ above innovation. Despite that context, many are trying to build more inclusive classrooms, but their struggle is impeded by a lack of training, resources, time and confidence.

We found classrooms filled with ambitious young people who are hungry to explore their creativity and curiosity, but who are finding this enthusiasm quashed by a narrow curriculum that defines artistic value in ways that devalue and belittle their diversity.

Based on our research findings, we offer recommendations that can make a meaningful and immediate difference to diversity and inclusion in art education.

○ **Establish standards for inclusion and diversity in GCSE assessment materials.**

Exam boards should ensure that GCSE exam papers include a minimum of 25 per cent minority ethnic artists to reflect the growing diversity of the school-aged population in England and Wales.

References should be embedded across all contemporary and historical periods, media and themes, rather than siloed as a 'diversity' section. This recommendation will immediately introduce students to a more diverse body of artists and will provide teachers with named minority ethnic artists they can include in their teaching.

Exam boards should also collect data on which artists are listed in exam papers each year, and disaggregate this data by ethnicity so that diversity can be traced and ensured.

○ **Improve access to teacher and curriculum resources that support a broad and diverse curriculum.**

Exam boards should supplement their more diverse papers with a suite of differentiated resources that are easily accessible for teachers to use.

This may need to begin with an audit of existing resources and further research into what resources art teachers currently use, where they find them and what barriers exist to accessing existing materials. However, it should be the responsibility of exam boards to support curriculum development by offering all centres access to resources that can give teachers quick introductions to new artists and practical resources that can be used in classrooms. We note that teachers expressed a preference for digital libraries of resources and suggest that this needs to be explored in more detail as a first step.

○ **Improve racial literacy and curriculum development skills for teachers through existing Initial Teacher Training (ITT) and continued professional development and learning (CPDL).**

All teachers should be equipped to speak with confidence and sensitivity about issues to do with race and diversity.

The research makes it clear that teachers are not receiving crucial training on how to talk confidently about ethnicity and cultural identity in classrooms. Teacher training should equip teachers to talk about race, racism and anti-racism in ways that support them to nurture safe, inclusive and critical classroom spaces. There is a need to shift away from politicised narratives around race that complicate and deprive teachers of the confidence to address issues that are important to students.

Further research must urgently be undertaken into the content of art PGCE (Postgraduate Certificate in Education) courses and other teacher training routes, in partnership with universities currently offering ITT and bodies responsible for teacher training, and with specific focus on the diversity of the curriculum, confidence in developing resources on diverse artists, and racial literacy. The research should also cover access to CPDL throughout careers.

This work should form the basis of a review of art PGCE course and ITT content and structure to better equip the workforce to teach a diverse curriculum and student body.

- **Improve partnerships between galleries and schools, with specific attention to diversity and representation of work by minority ethnic artists and the norms of engagement which may impact student experience and comfort.**

The low levels of engagement and feelings of alienation in gallery spaces need to be addressed. Students need to feel that the art sector is one that belongs to them and that is inviting, accessible, and open to their experiences and questions. Galleries should work in partnership with teachers and students to devise ways to investigate and deliver better experiences; one way to do this might be to employ student and teacher panels from local schools so that there is opportunity for collaboration and ongoing development.

It is incumbent on those galleries that host school visits to review current practices that may idealise a particular way of offering and consuming art, and to ensure that they can be relatable to young people of all class and ethnicity backgrounds.

- **Investigate low levels of engagement in art lessons and extracurricular enrichment activities offered by schools.**

We need to understand better the low levels of engagement and enjoyment in art lessons and how to respond to this experience.

There is an alarming lack of engagement across all students in terms of how they relate to art lessons: students consistently reported low levels of engagement, whether related to content or mode of delivery. The DfE should conduct research into engagement in art education and the ways in which art is taught and studied. This should be done both in relation to ethnic groups and in comparison with other subjects across the curriculum.

This should extend to how art trips and enrichment activities that sit outside of the sequenced national or school curriculum are planned and delivered: visits to galleries and exhibitions should promote interest and engagement.

- **Improve understanding and promotion of the skills derived in art and creative subjects as part of a wider national programme of advocacy.**

The DfE needs to shift the narrative around the importance and value of creative skills in education and careers service provision in schools.

The DfE should review the structure of the curriculum to assert the importance and value of creative subjects and the delivery of art and design as a valued measure of developing wider skills that have enormous transferable quality. Creative skills should be recognised as a valuable part of multiple career pathways, and not put in opposition with the skills of STEM subjects, by the government, schools, teachers, students and parents/families.

There is a clear confidence and understanding gap for students about how art might further their educational and career aspirations, and this needs to be addressed through better marketing of the skills and intellectual development derived from art education.

We have seen the benefit of a concerted and planned programme of promotion around girls' engagement in STEM subjects. We would welcome an equivalent promotion of understanding of the benefits of art education.

○ **Improve the data landscape around art education across the whole school, further education and higher education ecosystem.**

The lack of data obscures our ability to identify problems, track progress and hold ourselves accountable. In order to understand the exact situation regarding race and inclusion in art education at all levels, the DfE should publish clear annual data on teacher demographics, student participation rates and attainment outcomes, disaggregated by ethnic background.

This would allow greater understanding of teacher recruitment pipelines and retention, in order to inform a clear strategy to recruit and retain a diverse art teaching workforce. It would also allow us to see who is accessing the art curriculum, how that tracks through various stages of the educational journey and how their attainment is progressing over time.

There is an emerging consensus that there is a crisis in art education, this report has highlighted the racialised contours of that crisis and the deficit in delivering the broad, honest and balanced curriculum we are responsible for providing to young people. In the hundreds of conversations that were engaged in during this research, it was clear that there is appetite for change. There is energy for renewing the vision and ambition for what art education can look like in our schools, eventually translating into an art sector that is rich with the diversity of who we are as a nation.

Art is powerful; it helps us to visualise ourselves in the present, and to project into the future. We need to imagine that future in a way that is truly inclusive, and those efforts need to start in our art classrooms, now.

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CLOSING NOTES

**THANKS,  
FOOTNOTES &  
BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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believes art is central to a broad and balanced education, and a right for everyone.

We are driven by a conviction in the vital role of learning and making to foster creativity, resilience, criticality and problem-solving that empowers and equips us for the future.

Our approach combines action research, through academic commissions, workshops, discussions, exhibitions, publications, films, partnerships and a dedicated library; and funding, through grants, awards, fellowships and residencies.

Today, we recognise the crisis in art education in the UK and the existential threat this poses not only to the sector but to wider our culture and communities. As we approach our tenth anniversary, we resolve to strengthen our work with teachers, students, schools, universities, artists and cultural organisations: championing, advancing and expanding the teaching and learning of art for everyone, in the belief that it equips society with the tools to imagine and build the future.

[www.freelandsfoundation.co.uk](http://www.freelandsfoundation.co.uk)

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