



PUTS COLOUR AND JOY INTO THINGS

**A report on a consultation with children
for Creative Scotland about the development
of Scotland's National Youth Arts Strategy**

**Children's Parliament
April 2012**



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About the consultation

The purpose of the consultation was:

- To consult with children under the age of 11 about their current involvement in the arts.
- To find out what activities they would like to be involved in.
- To find out why they think children should be able to take part in the arts.

The Children's Parliament consulted with children in Primary 4, 5 and 6 in three Local Authorities: Glasgow, Fife and Edinburgh. One school was in a rural location, and one was a special school. The children were a mix of boys and girls, ethnically diverse and from a range of abilities and backgrounds in accordance with the Children's Parliament commitment to inclusion. 135 children took part.

Our intention is to always make children curious, ask questions and create a dialogue and so in all our work we create spaces within which children's own views can be formed, reflected upon and recorded. This consultation response captures the view of participating children and uses direct quotes and their drawings to illustrate some of the points made.

In their workshops children considered these questions:

- **What is art?**
- **How does art make you feel?**
- **What else can the arts be?**
- **Where can you see art or take part in arts activities?**
- **What are the artistic things you do? And where do you do them?**
- **Are there arts activities or artistic things you would like to do?**
- **What's important about art and arts activities? In particular why is it important for children to take part?**



About the Children's Parliament

The Children's Parliament's approach of using the creative arts as a medium for engagement is unique as a national provider of opportunities for children's participation, working with children from birth to 14 years old in the context of family, school and community.

In our creative projects, consultations and community programme children acquire the knowledge and skills to participate in opportunities to influence social policy and public services.

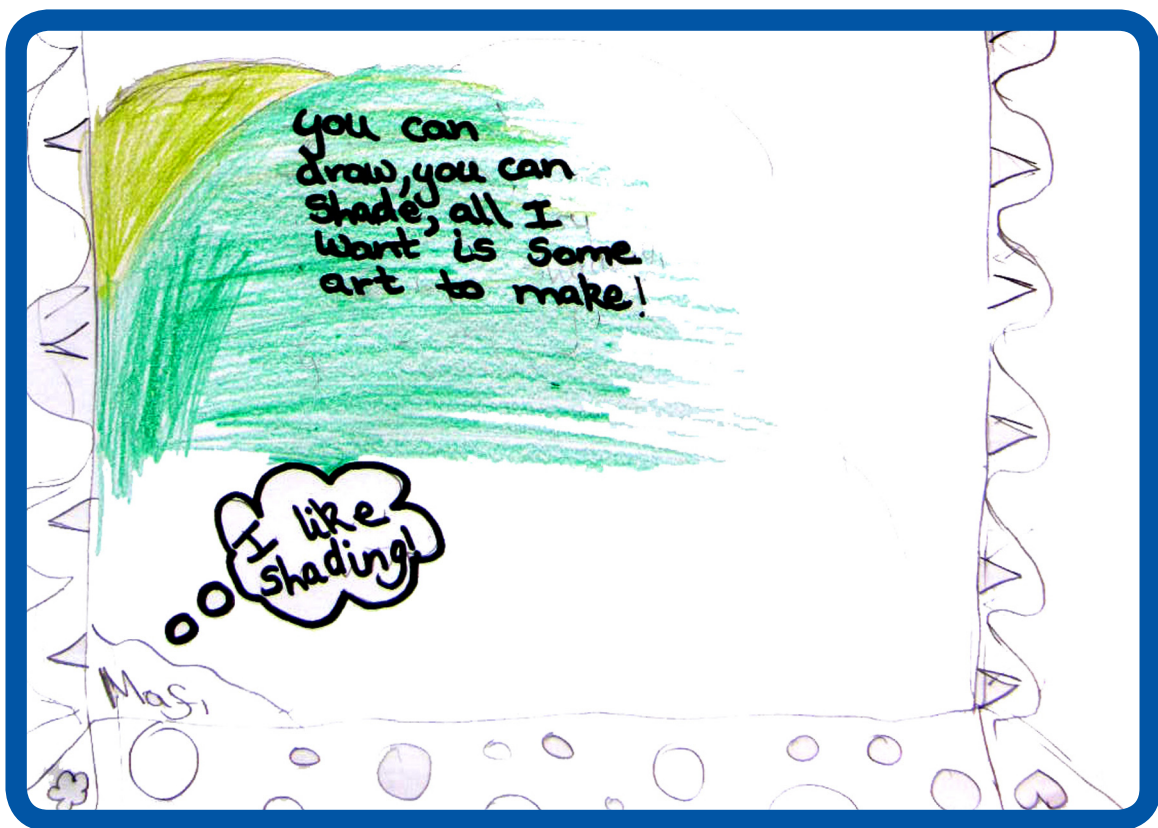
More about Children's Parliament at www.childrensparliament.org.uk

Children's Parliament

Summerhall,
1 Summerhall Place,
Edinburgh
EH9 1PL
0131 558 9030

info@childrensparliament.org.uk

Scottish Charity SC026247



What is art?

“Art is all around you. Everything has art in it.”

“Art is limitless and timeless.”

“Art is tradition. It’s passed down through generations.”

Art is :

Drawing and painting

Portraiture

Fashion

Photography

Clay modelling

Collage

Graffiti

Sculpture

Crafts

Making things from what can be recycled

Jewellery making

Yoga

The circus

Comics

Art is made by famous artists like Banksy, Leonardo De Vinci, Picasso and Andy Warhol.

In their initial reflections children related to art as largely the visual arts, particularly drawing and painting. They understood the visual arts to be contemporary and classical; children know the names of great artists. Their direct experience of arts activities comes in the form of making things, like jewellery or using recycled objects.

When I am older

I want
to be
Working
For my
own
art
Committee

ART



How does art make you feel?

“Art is inspirational. It’s a time to make something new.”

“No-one can judge you on your art.”

“Children can be proud and confident when everyone likes the art they do.”

Art makes you feel:

Beautiful

Happy

Excited

Inspired

Emotional

Proud

Sad

Outgoing

Outstanding

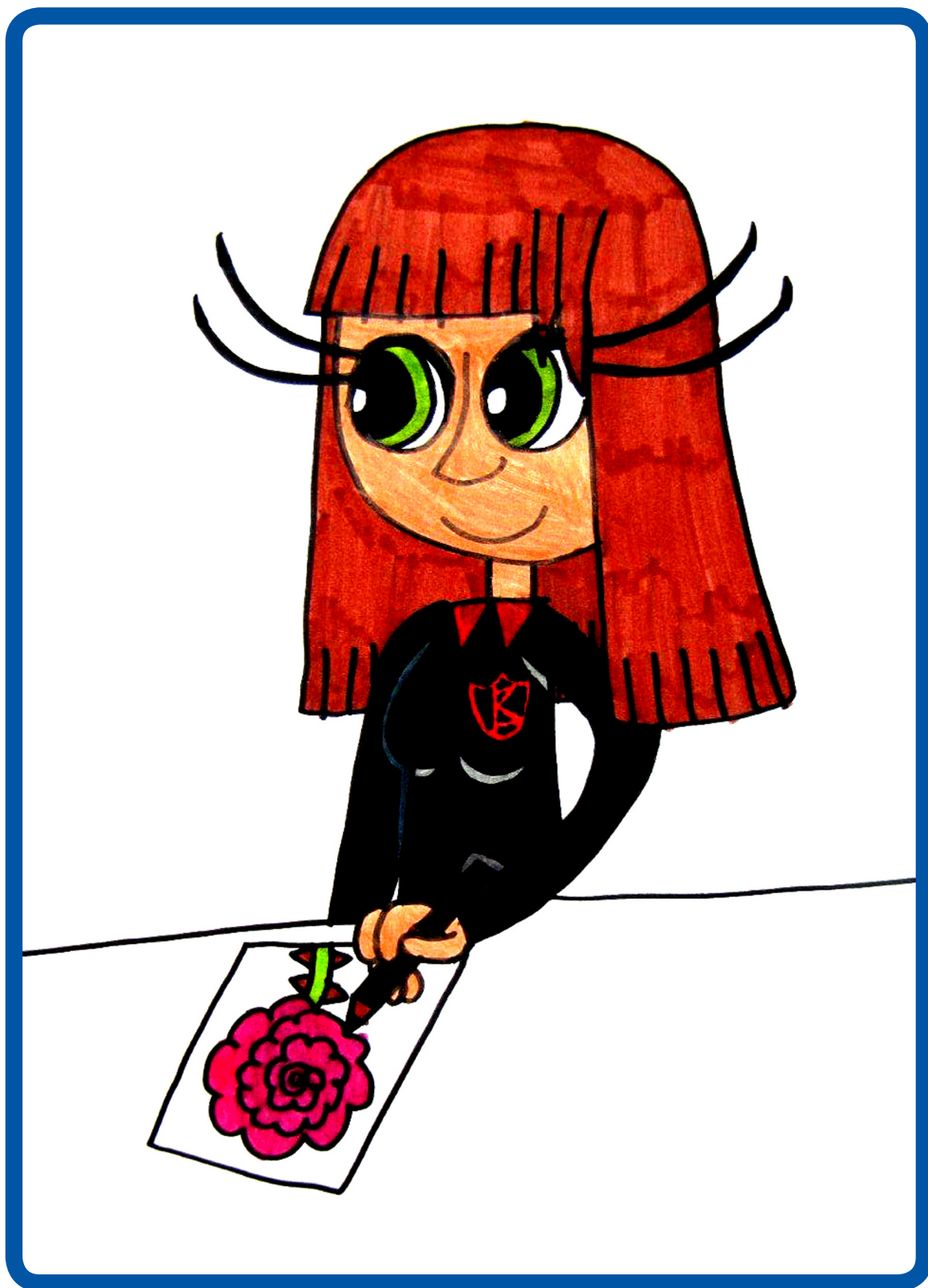
Expressive

Passionate

Relaxed and tired (at the end of an activity)

Free

For children the emotions which art, and engagement in arts activities, inspires are strong, liberating and empowering.



What else can the arts be?

“People can agree and disagree about art.”

“Art can be joyful. TV is one dimensional, black and white. Art puts colour and joy into things.”

In addition to earlier thoughts on ‘what is art’ children also identified that the arts can be:

Making buildings

Sunsets and landscapes

Languages

Reading

Writing stories and poems

Making a documentary

Styling

Knitting

Song writing

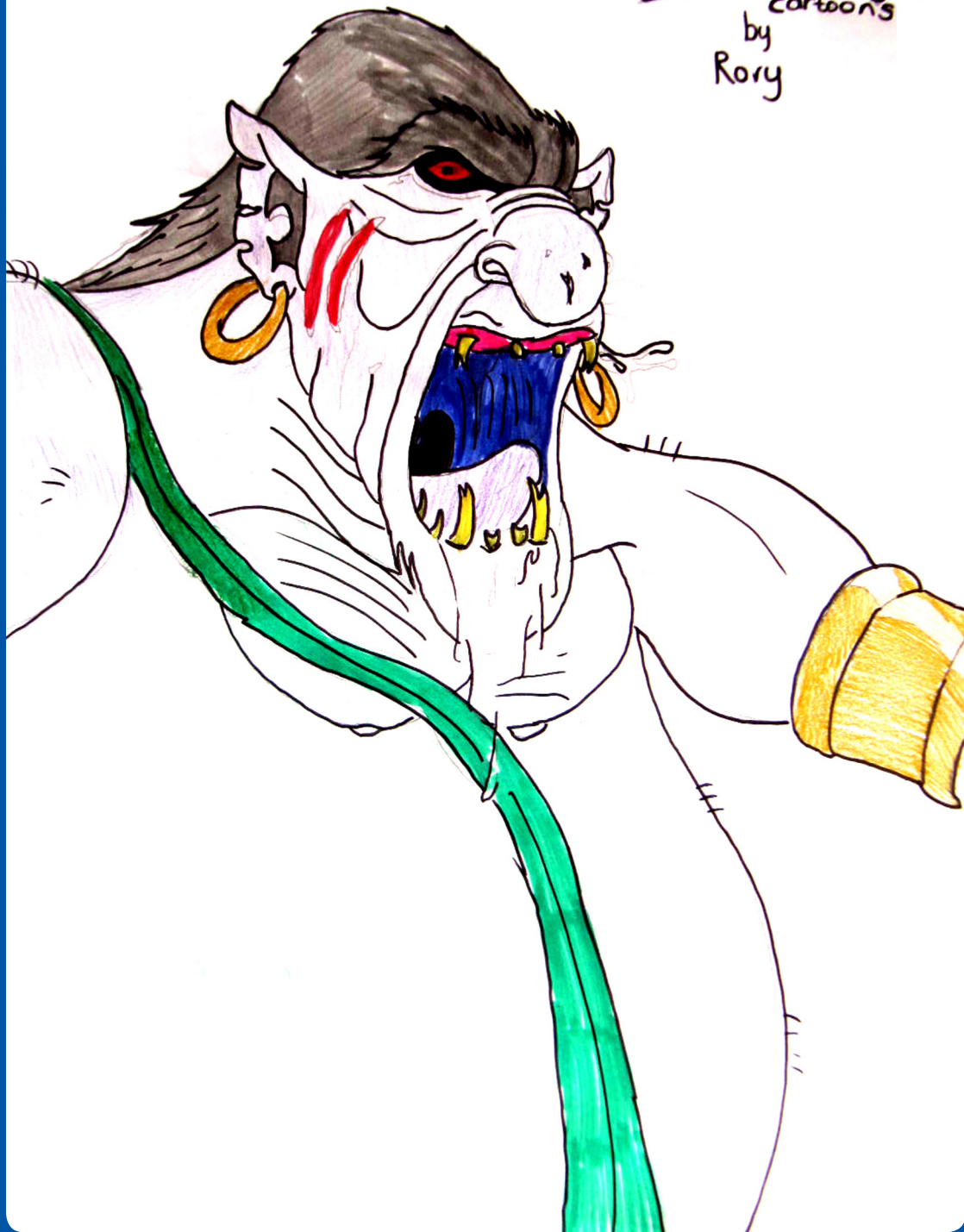
Making music

Nature

Rapping

In earlier discussion children recognised the arts as largely visual arts and expressed somewhat traditional understandings of what makes something ‘art’. However on returning to their thoughts they began to see art in every aspect of the natural and built environment. They also began to view music and performing as a component of the arts. There was some agreement that creating your own stories and poems could be artistic, but there were questions about whether reading was part of the arts. The children also began to ask whether sports activities and in particular being good at sports activities could be seen as ‘artistic’; they agreed though that by taking part in sports you could be creative.

I want to design
cartoons
by
Rory



Where can you see art or take part in arts activities?

“You don’t have to do it as someone tells you. You can put your own feelings into it.”

The ‘arts’ are in these places:

Online/the internet

Art galleries

Palaces

Museums

On holiday in other countries

In the park

On TV

The Community Centre

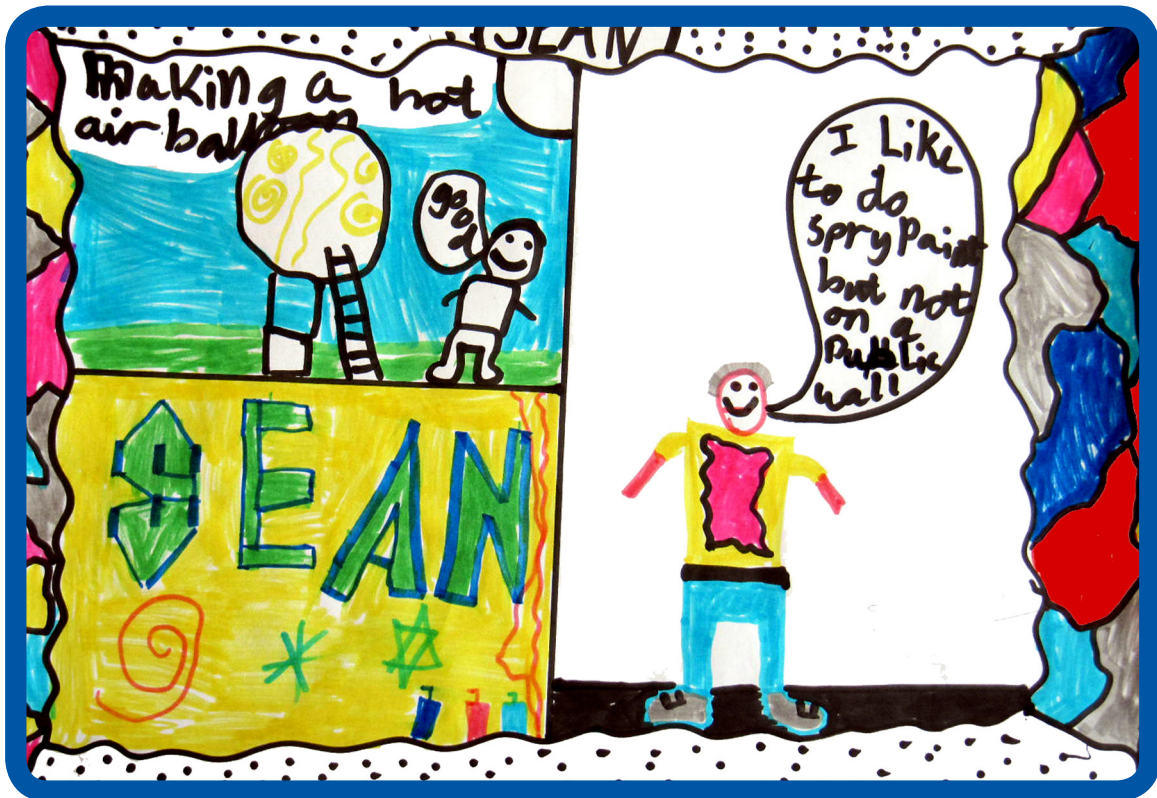
Cinema

Architecture

Billboards

In the theatre

For the most part children thought art belonged in galleries and museums; often they might see these when on holiday. But they also spoke about playing and creating on line on their PC, Mac or iPad. Children reported little or no experience of performing arts.



What are the artistic things you do? And where do you do them?

"I've only been to an art gallery once."

Things we do:

Writing

Illustrating stories

animation

Designing

Pottery

Jewellery making

Papier mache

Photography

Making murals

Playing an instrument

Using computer graphics

Being in the school panto

Acting

Street dance

Where we do them:

School

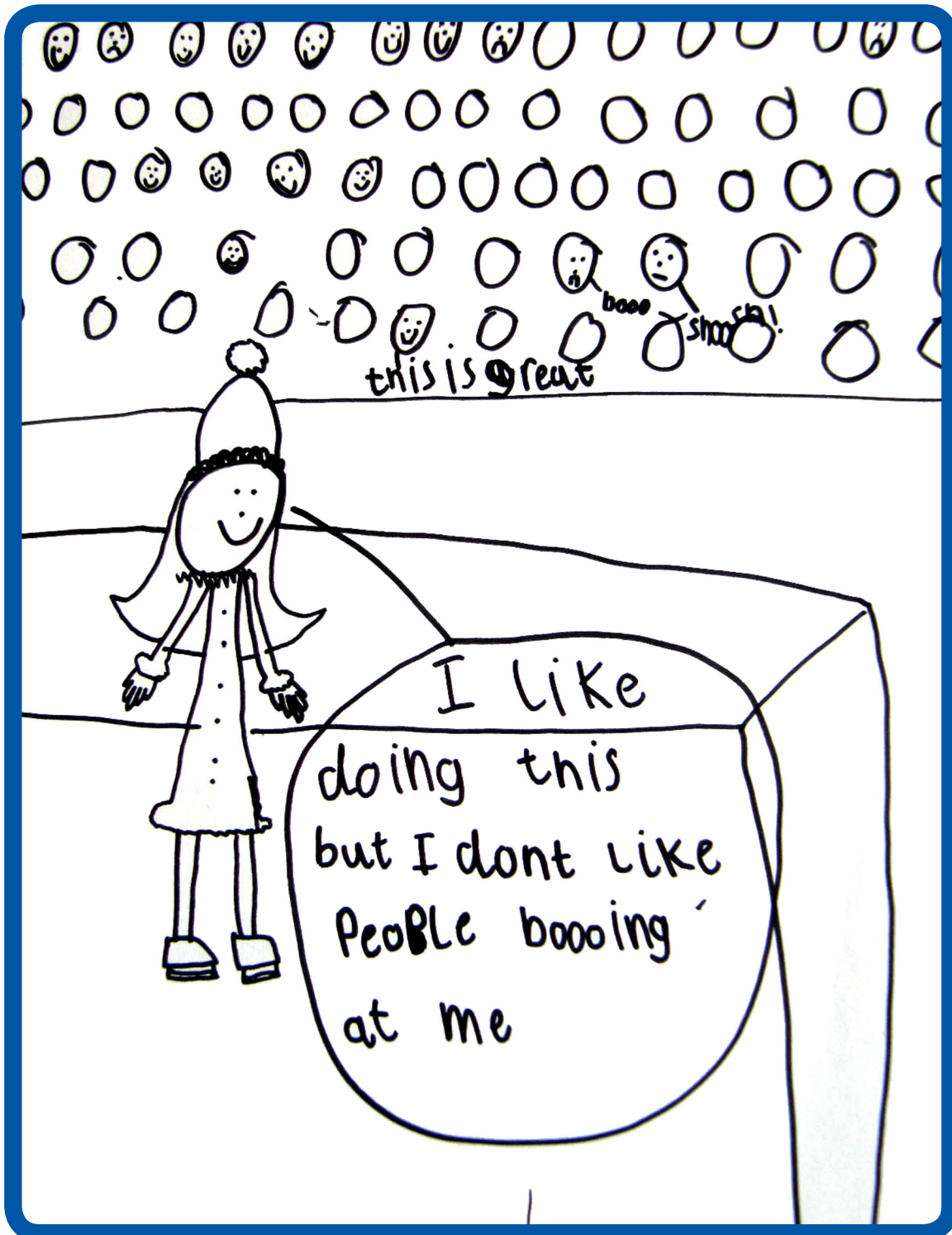
Home

Museums/Galleries

After school clubs

Classes

Hands-on experience of 'the arts' is largely in relation to crafts activities which are facilitated in school, in after school clubs or by parents at home. A small number of children have attended a facilitated arts-based session in a gallery or museum.



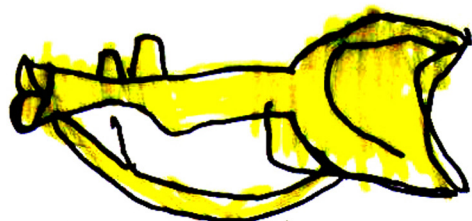
Are there arts activities or artistic things you would like to do?

"I want to join an art club. I really want to be a book illustrator."

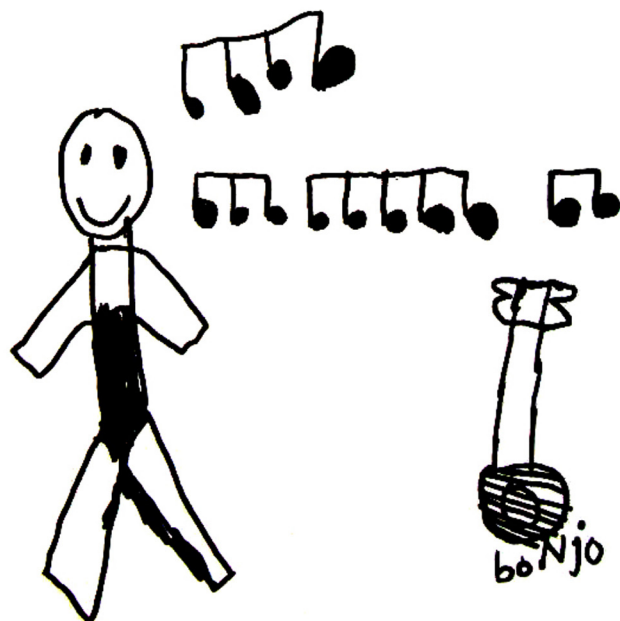
We want to:

Paint
Spray graffiti
Collage
Puppets
Pottery
Play an instrument
Visit galleries
Calligraphy
Recycled art
Nail beauty
Be an author
Cartoons computer design
Scientific discovery
Cooking
Woodcraft

Across the groups there was a shared interest amongst children "to do" more art. Choices may be limited by the experiences had to date but this enthusiasm provides an open door to engagement.



the ~~trunk~~
Trumpet



What's important about art and arts activities? In particular why is it important for children to take part?

"If you didn't know how to do maths or writing but if you had art it would make you feel good at something."

"Children can draw anything they like without adults yelling at them. There's no right or wrong way."

Art and arts activities are important, especially to children, because:

- Art gives ideas and inspiration
- Helps express feelings like love and sadness
- Helps you understand other people's feelings
- You learn things from other people
- Helps you understand other countries
- Helps you to remember
- Helps children have their say
- You can get more creative, even become an artist
- You feel encouraged and confident
- You can get a job out of it
- Practice makes you better

The children talked about the arts and art activities as a space where they feel positive and free. They saw participation as a way to connect with others and with new experiences.

Summary

Thank you to the children who took part and to colleagues who supported their engagement with the consultation. To summarise what we have learned:

In their initial reflections children related to art as largely the visual arts, particularly drawing and painting. They understood the visual arts to be contemporary and classical; children know the names of great artists. Their direct experience of arts activities comes in the form of making things, like jewellery or using recycled objects.

For children the emotions which art, and engagement in arts activities, inspires are strong, liberating and empowering.

In earlier discussion children recognised the arts as largely visual arts and expressed somewhat traditional understandings of what makes something 'art'. However on returning to their thoughts they began to see art in every aspect of the natural and built environment. They also began to view music and performing as a component of the arts. There was some agreement that creating your own stories and poems could be artistic, but there were questions about whether reading was part of the arts. The children also began to ask whether sports activities and in particular being good at sports activities could be seen as 'artistic'; they agreed though that by taking part in sports you could be creative.

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Hands-on experience of 'the arts' is largely in relation to crafts activities which are facilitated in school, in after school clubs or by parents at home. A small number of children have attended a facilitated arts-based session in a gallery or museum.

Across the groups there was a shared interest amongst children "to do" more art. Choices may be limited by the experiences had to date but this enthusiasm provides an open door to engagement.

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