

HAMPSTEAD FINE ARTS COLLEGE

NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2025

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL AND HEAD

As we step into Spring, it is time to reflect on the achievements of our students and staff over the past months. This term, we celebrate the academic progress and dedication of our students and the resilience they continue to show in striving for excellence.

Beyond the classroom, our Fine Arts community has again demonstrated its generosity and compassion through various charity initiatives and fundraising events – the spirit of kindness and service shines brightly, reminding us of the impact we can make when we work together. Notable charities we have supported include CRISIS at Christmas, Kent Refugee Action Network and Chickenshed.

From near sporting successes (!!) to creative achievements, and community projects to personal milestones, this term has been filled with moments of pride and celebration. Thank you to everyone who contributes to making Fine Arts such a vibrant and supportive place to learn and grow.



CHRISTMAS SHOWCASE

MariaPaz Candeias-Carson

On the 5th of December we had a wonderful Christmas Concert in the hall, where talented students confidently shared their skills. The atmosphere was vibrant and wintry, with a variety of musical pieces, from Dolly Parton to Stutschewsky and Billie Eilish to Kander and Ebb.

I had the delight of playing Vivaldi's "Concerto in G Minor," which was an exciting experience. Additionally, I participated in the choir, singing in the tenor section. It was nice to blend my voice with others, creating harmonies that added depth to our performance.

After the concert, everyone gathered outside to sing carols. Although it started to rain, we huddled beneath the winter canopy and had mince pies and mulled wine which enhanced the warmth and cosiness of the moment. The sound of the rain over our heads mingling with our voices made the moment special.

Bianca Manasseh

This was my first time performing in the Christmas showcase, and first performance as an A level Dance student – I loved the experience and time spent rehearsing, especially being able to perform on stage for an audience.

The dance was contemporary and was inspired by a story of a girl who felt trapped in her own mind, with the dance itself having lots of flips and tumbling and big movements, which really pushed me out of my comfort zone. This is what I have enjoyed most about A level Dance, I am given freedom to explore the types of dance styles I enjoy.

Lola Morris

Drama has always been a huge passion of mine. I chose Drama and Theatre Studies for an A level as it's a great blend of a creative and academic subject. The written, scripted and devised coursework alleviates the stress of the written exam and means we explore a wide range of theatrical techniques and styles, practitioners and time periods. I chose drama mainly because of the scripted component as I love performing naturalistic pieces and being able to delve into a character's mindset and create my individual interpretation, but I am also surprised at how I have grown to enjoy the other components including devising and Ancient Greek theatre, which I was not so keen on before.

Throughout the course we have been taken to watch countless incredible productions at multiple theatres, which I would not have had the opportunity to otherwise. By far, the most rewarding part of this subject was being able to perform our pieces at the Christmas showcase as I could show something I am proud of and express myself creatively.



BEYOND A LEVEL ENGLISH LITERATURE

Akhil Merchant

Students who study A level English Literature at Fine Arts gain a wide variety of transferable skills that are highly valued by higher education institutions across the country and abroad. Sophisticated communication, analytical and research skills are readily applied to a range of creative and academic courses.

In recent years, many students have gone on to read English at top national and international universities: UCL, Bristol, Edinburgh, Durham and Leeds, to name just a few. However, many decide to pursue related degree courses in History of Art, Media Communications, Creative Writing, Journalism and Film. It is always a pleasure when students re-visit us, as they frequently do, to keep us informed of their

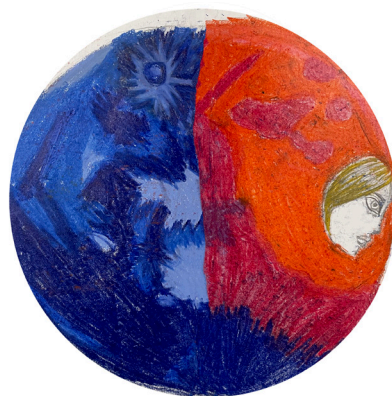


many interests and accomplishments after their time at Fine Arts College. No matter what they move on to do, staff in the English department never tire of hearing how their English studies have continued to enhance their lives, inspiring and equipping them to become writers, artists, entrepreneurs, teachers, and professionals in unlimited fields, from Politics to Zoology.

YEAR 9 TRIP TO THE WELLCOME COLLECTION

Soley Atladottir

Last month, we took a trip to the Wellcome Collection to an art exhibition titled 'The Adventure of the 254'. The exhibition was by created by Jason Wilsher-Mills. Jason was paralysed from the neck down when he was a child. The exhibition featured bright colours, cartoonish sculptures, drawings, and murals. One of the walls was covered in illustrations. They represented a timeline of Jason's life. Among the illustrations the artist included dates of historical events that happened during his time at the hospital. The following week, we were each given a historical event that happened on the day of our birthday. We then drew the event and included ourselves in it. The event I was given was on December 31st, 2009, when there was a blue moon on the same night as a lunar eclipse. The next eclipse like this will be in December 2047. Inspired by this event I drew a self-portrait in the blue moon using colouring pencils.



THE LIFE ROOM

Suzanne Holtom

The human body is an endlessly fascinating subject in art and the life room gives expression to this. It allows us to interrogate our own existence unmediated, confronting us with our own physical form and the often complex, emotive response to it.

Life drawing has a long history in Western art. In looking back to Classical precedents, Renaissance art renewed an interest in scientific approaches, close observation and specificity, in particular the study of anatomy and idealised proportion. Alternatively, in later modernist developments artists challenged these traditional notions of the ideal and the beautiful through the radical fragmentation of the human form.

Today, we live in a society with a constant flow of visual imagery, and endless repeated screen representations of the human body. The life room offers a radical alternative. When drawing directly from the model, images are unmediated, they are wrought from intense concentration, both hard won and immediate. Drawing connects us directly through perceived experience, working our way around and through the body in front of us.

Empathy is one of the most important aspects of the life room, and the work of artists can be used as guides. Fiona Banner, for example, uses writing to bring the psychology of the life room into focus. To switch from drawing to words can disrupt the expectations and conventions of the life room, giving voice to the more subjective thought processes unfolding between artist and model.

The life room can be an opportunity to experiment with attitudes, vulnerabilities and power relations when dealing with the human figure. In contemporary culture there is increasing interest in ideas around the gaze, that is, looking and power in subject/object relations. Essentially, life drawing presents us with the possibility of allowing us to contemplate the human body of another, without ownership, judgement or indifference.



DUKES YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD

Flo White

Active community engagement is something that is unbelievably rewarding, not only for the person participating, but for society too. I have come to appreciate how important it is to contribute to shaping the environments we live in. Consequently, I decided to apply to be an ambassador on the Dukes Youth Advisory Board, to collaborate with others to create positive change, amplify young voices, and ensure decisions reflect the needs of diverse communities.

In preparation for our first meeting as part of the Youth Advisory Board, we were tasked with researching six environmental youth charities that work to spread awareness and drive positive change. We had to evaluate their missions, impact, and initiatives before submitting our top three choices. After careful consideration and voting, the charity with the highest number of votes will receive a donation of £15,000, highlighting the board's commitment to empowering young people to make meaningful contributions to environmental causes. My top three choices were Eco-Schools, Groundwork and Eco Active, all charities with innovative activities that spark engagement from young people with astonishing evidence of impact.

THE BIG IDEA CHALLENGE

Steven Kern

The Big Idea is a London-wide enterprise start up competition run by London Metropolitan University, in partnership with NatWest, for young people with business ideas. Eight teams competed in the Big Idea Challenge College heat at Centre Studios. Our learners represented their subjects, such as Business, Media and Photography, with pride and dynamism, for the chance of glory and a place in the London finals.

The Big Idea Challenge is a transformational experience for our learners. It was wonderful to see the positive development of their confidence and leadership skills. They collaborated and problem solved to produce presentations with immense imagination, drive and eloquence.

Our winning History of Art team focused on an App to make colours for artists, hairdressers, nail artists and interior designers.

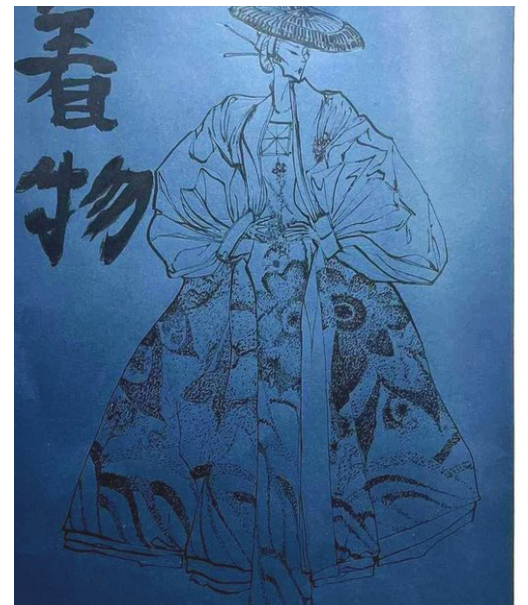


STUDENT JOURNAL

Sam Margulies

The student journal serves as a dynamic platform dedicated to showcasing the artistic creations, intellectual ideas, writings, and diverse opinions of students. Established last year, this initiative seeks to publish an issue each term, providing a space to highlight the progress and creativity of students across various disciplines throughout the academic year.

Over time, the journal has featured an impressive array of works, ranging from thought-provoking photography and expressive watercolours to insightful articles on music and the rich history of the kimono. As the journal continues to expand, it aspires to broaden its scope and impact, enriching its body of work in various ways. This may include hosting engaging talks to accompany future publications or introducing physical copies to complement its presence and reach. Hampstead Fine Arts is a school brimming with creativity, diversity, and profound stories, and we hope the journal will continue to serve as a powerful medium to bring this vibrant community to light.



MONET AT THE COURTAULD

Gianna Fitzgibbon

I chose to study Fine Art at A level because I had prior experience with similar online courses and understood what to expect. Since starting at Fine Arts, I've discovered how valuable it is to engage with tutors and peers about my chosen themes. These discussions have opened a new perspective of art for me. My A level project 'Funerals in Ireland' has led me to explore so many different topics relating to it. Creating art is about showing others how you see the world. As Paul Cézanne famously said of Claude Monet, "He is only an eye—but, my God, what an eye!"

This sentiment resonates deeply with me, especially after a recent trip to the Courtauld Gallery to see Monet's London: The Thames and Fog. Monet's ability to capture the play of light and fog over the Thames was breathtaking, and his use of colour to create the hazy, atmospheric effect stood out to many of us. Studying Fine Art has not only allowed me to explore my interests but also given me the tools to express them visually in ways I never thought possible.



HISTORY TRIP TO HAMPTON COURT PALACE

Ashton

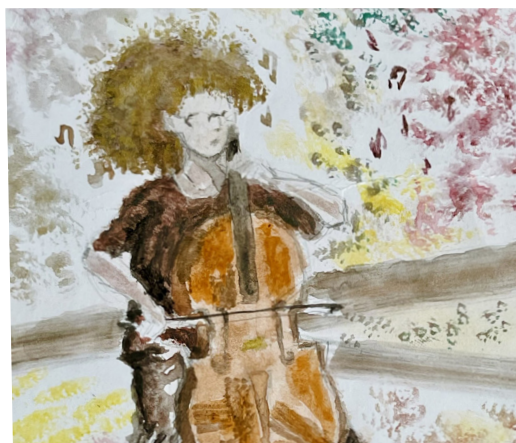
Our trip to Hampton Court Palace was a fun, interesting, and educational trip. We started with a talk from a wonderful palace guide, Jeremy. He taught us about the layout of Hampton Court Palace, as well as the history behind the different chambers and the demolition and rebuilding of different parts. We first looked around the courtyards and at the wine fountain, as well as the astronomical clock that Henry VIII put in.

Our guide then took us into the Hall and taught us about the six tapestries and their religious and political significance, the stained-glass lights, and the overall layout of the Hall. As we walked through the hallways near the Hall, we learnt about the paintings and the designs of the rooms and their royal significance. After our guide left, we went through the kitchens and read about the many meals that were cooked for all the people at the palace, as well as the conditions of the workers and how the food was preserved.

DUKES FESTIVAL OF ARTS, MUSICIAN OF THE YEAR AUDITIONS

Avram

Having somehow reached the age of fifteen without ever being enrolled in school, it was an unusual feeling to sit in a Knightsbridge church hall along with scores of performers all wearing uniform. Appearances can be deceptive. Lack of clothing variety was more than contradicted by diversity of music, with composers ranging from Elton John to Beethoven, and instruments from trumpet to marimba (mine were Cassado and cello), and the audience responded enthusiastically even to those wearing a rival blazer! Thank you, Christina, for your support, and MariaPaz for beautiful Vivaldi on the violin. I felt honoured to be chosen to play in the Festival Hall. Fast-forward three months, and I was backstage at the Royal Festival Hall; this time with hundreds of performers crammed into any available space. A solo cello is not the loudest instrument and walking on to the stage I was



stunned by the vast space I had to fill with sound. My hero of the night was Music Tech teacher Jonny, who smuggled me in to the HFAC choir's friendly dressing room. They patiently heard my warm-up routine (and as a result probably thought I couldn't play the cello!) and buoyed my spirits. I came away with a large, shiny trophy. But for me music is a deep human communication, not a competitive sport. We are all prize-winners when we share the healing effects of art.



UNIVERSITY SUCCESS 2024

Margaret Park



College of Arts and three at London College of Fashion. Two students are now studying abroad, one at the Fashion Institute of Technology, New York and the other at the Canadian University in Dubai.

In addition, 14 students are studying for the Foundation Art diploma at UAL, Kingston, Ravensbourne and other universities and will no doubt go on to great things from there. We are very proud of everyone's achievements - too many to mention here - and we look forward to hearing all about their progress.

After a great set of A level results in the summer, our Upper Sixth students took up a range of exciting university and art school places in September.

Among many 'Russell Group' university offers, six students took up places at King's College, London, three went to the University of Bristol, two to the University of Warwick and three to the University of Leeds. Other destinations included two places at the Courtauld Institute, two at University College London - one to the Slade and the other to study architecture at the Bartlett.

Many students won degree places at the University of the Arts, London, including three at Central St Martins, five at Chelsea

THE ADVANCED LEARNERS' SYMPOSIUM: EXPLORING HORIZONS BEYOND THE CURRICULUM

Dan Jewison

The Advanced Learners' Symposium, held weekly at the college, is a vibrant forum for students eager to push beyond the boundaries of the standard curriculum. This unique event offers intellectually curious individuals the chance to explore a wide array of academic materials and engage in stimulating discussions.

A distinctive feature of the symposium is its leadership format. Each week, a different tutor from the college leads the session, bringing their expertise and passion to the table. This rotation ensures a diverse range of topics and perspectives, from scientific breakthroughs to philosophical quandaries, historical analyses, and artistic explorations. Students not only gain knowledge from various disciplines but also benefit from the unique teaching styles of each tutor.

The weekly nature of the symposium allows participants to engage deeply with complex ideas, fostering skills like critical thinking, interdisciplinary analysis, and creative problem-solving. Whether examining the historic approaches to the theory of evolution or debating the

limitations of artistic representations of the suffering of others, students are consistently challenged to think outside the box.

This rotating leadership approach, combined with its academic rigor, makes the Advanced Learners' Symposium a cornerstone of the college's intellectual community, inspiring students to embrace lifelong learning and pursue excellence across disciplines.



THE POWER OF THE VOICE: A REFLECTION ON MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Christina Boyle

Singing is a powerful tool for mental health, engaging the mind, body, and voice. Research shows it reduces stress, elevates mood, and improves emotional regulation by releasing endorphins and lowering cortisol, a stress hormone. A 2015 study in *The Journal of Music Therapy* found that group singing lowered cortisol and improved mood, providing immediate stress relief. Singing also aids those with anxiety and depression by promoting deep breathing, activating the "rest-and-digest" system to encourage relaxation. A 2016 study in *Frontiers in Psychology* showed group singing helped manage anxiety, improve emotional regulation, and enhance well-being. The social aspect of singing fosters community, reducing loneliness—a key risk factor for depression.

Cognitive benefits include better memory and attention. A 2014 study in *Ageing & Mental Health* showed that older adults who sang regularly had better cognitive function. Music therapy programs, such as those for dementia, use singing to improve memory recall and emotional well-being. Singing transcends cultural and linguistic barriers, offering a universal way to express emotions and connect with others. Sir Simon Rattle highlights the transformative power of the human voice, not just through melody, but through shared emotional experiences. Whether performed solo or in a group, singing creates a sense of belonging and unity, strengthening both individual and collective mental well-being. In essence, singing is a simple yet profound practice that nurtures emotional health and resilience.



HISTORY OF ART TRIP TO PARIS

Millie Grant & Flo White

Our recent Paris History of Art trip was an unforgettable whirlwind of art, culture, and good food. The day started early, very early, with a 5:30am meet up at St. Pancras International to catch the Eurostar. Once in Paris, we set off for our first stop: the Musée d'Orsay. This museum featured masterpieces like Millais' *Ophelia* and Renoir's *Bal du moulin de la Galette*. Seeing these pieces up close was incredibly surreal and brought the lessons from class to life.

After soaking up all the art, we were ready for a break. Lunch in Paris wouldn't have been complete without crepes, which we thoroughly enjoyed and spent the remaining time walking around the small streets of Paris near our next stop, Centre Pompidou. This museum with its strikingly modern exterior is home to even more abstract pieces. The museum's open galleries and interactive exhibits created an immersive experience, encouraging us to rethink the boundaries of art. It was a fascinating contrast to the classical works at the Orsay.

We ended the day catching the 7:30pm Eurostar back, arriving in London around 10pm, tired but buzzing from the experience. It was an amazing trip that truly made art history come alive.



A LEVEL FILM STUDIES

Terri Murray

Last term Upper Sixth Film students visited the BFI Southbank for a study day exploring the aesthetics of different silent film movements, including German expressionism, Soviet montage, constructivism and surrealism. The day included close study of extracts from the films *Sunrise* (F.W. Murnau, 1927), *The Cabinet of Doctor Caligari* (Robert Weine, 1920), *Man with a Movie Camera* (Dziga Vertov, 1929) and the films of Buster Keaton including *The General* (1929) and *Cops* (1922). Students examined these films' innovative aesthetic styles and learned about the historical, social and cultural contexts that influenced them.

In the afternoon, the film *Sunrise — A Song of Two Humans* (1927) was screened with live piano accompaniment by Neil Brand, followed by a Q&A. Neil has been a silent film accompanist for over 30 years. He performs throughout the UK and at film festivals and special events around the world. He also inaugurated the School of Music and Image to teach up-and-coming young pianists about silent film accompaniment.

Lower Sixth Film Students joined Fine Arts Geography students to attend the Into Film Festival special screening of *Wilding*, a docu-drama film about Knepp Estate

proprietors Charlie and Isabella Tree, who were inspired by a radical Dutch conservationist to cease all farming operations on their vast tract of land in Southeast England in the early 2000s. The couple adopted a controversial large-scale, conservation effort to restore sustainable biodiversity and ecosystem health by protecting or reintroducing apex predators and highly interactive species. The documentary recounted and dramatised their journey against the odds to make Knepp rich with flora, fauna and many species of animals.



ZANELE MUHOLI EXHIBITION REVIEW

Jiazhou Li



Zanele Muholi is one of the most acclaimed photographers working today, and their work has been exhibited all over the world. This major exhibition presents the full breadth of their career to date. From the early 2000s, they have documented and celebrated the lives of South Africa's Black lesbian, gay, trans, queer and intersex communities. My first impression of Zanele Muholi's photographs is that they are bold and visually striking, especially in the variety of angles and the content of the photographs. In addition to the "Only Half the Picture 2003-6" series, I was also impressed by the *Somnyama Ngonyama* series.

In this series, *Somnyama Ngonyama: A Tribute to the Dark Lioness*, Muholi uses themselves as bodies to confront the politics of race and representation, questioning the ways in which the black body is displayed and perceived. The series "Brave Beauties" and "Being", on the other hand take on a more beautiful side and give people a better understanding of this group from another perspective. What I felt from the whole exhibition is a gentle but straight to the heart power, these photos expose the reality of the South African LGBTQIA+ community's life, and through these photos, call for society's attention to the marginalised groups.

FAC FOOTBALL

Lawton Ballbach

The Fine Arts Football team has been a great success this school year, bringing so much enjoyment to many of us. A big part of that success is thanks to our head coach, James, whose dedication has been the driving force behind the team. Our weekly training sessions on Wednesdays after school have been well-attended, helping build a strong sense of camaraderie among students who may not have otherwise gotten to know each other.

For me, the games have been especially fun, as it's amazing to see everyone working so hard for the team. One of the highlights was hosting a match for KRAN, raising money for their charity supporting young refugees. It was truly inspiring to hear their stories and connect with them, even making new friends by the end of the match.



