

SOUTHBANK CENTRE



Life Through a New Lens

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Welcome to Art by Post. In these free booklets, artists guide you through poetry and visual arts activities inspired by our art collection and artistic programme. We hope taking part will spark your imagination, keep your mind active and help you stay connected to others. Details of how you can share your ideas and responses with us can be found at the back of the booklet.



Creativity plays an important role in how we express ourselves. It's a way to make sense of the world. It's also how we communicate our experiences to others. Creativity is about taking things that are familiar and reorganising them in an unfamiliar way.

If you don't focus too much on the final outcome of your artistic activities and instead, appreciate the process, you can use it to learn and make sense of things. The activities in this booklet can support you to find your own visual language. They may provide you with a new perspective.



I am Suzie Larke, a fine art photographer based in Cardiff. After graduating with a degree in photography and working as a commercial photographer, I became interested in digital art and taught myself photo-editing skills using online tutorials.

Through my creative portraiture I've explored identity, emotion and the human condition. I use photography to take the everyday and skew it. By combining several photographs so that they appear as a single image that defies logic, I play with the fine line between the possible and impossible. This is known as 'magical realism'.



'Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle'

Scottish author and theologian, Ian Maclaren

1

Seeing the unseen

To struggle is part of being human. The struggles we have with our mental wellbeing are often not obvious to other people. They can also be challenging to talk about. This sometimes leads to people feeling isolated in their experience.

My recent exhibition, *Unseen*, featured a collection of photographs displayed in the windows of the Southbank Centre. I used conceptual photography to make people's internal experiences visible.

In your pack is an insert featuring three images from *Unseen*.

Look at the images

Do they evoke any feelings for you?

What does each photograph tell you about the person?

Which image is most meaningful to you personally?

Now choose one of the images from the series.

Using the questions above, write a short description of what you think the image is about. Include any connections you can make between yourself and the image.

If you prefer, you could write a collection of words or phrases about the image instead.

2

Visualising feelings

The image to the right is a self-portrait. I took two photos, one of me standing on a chair holding a balloon, the second one of just the background. Then, I used a photo editing programme called Photoshop to remove the chair.



People often see this as a joyful, uplifting image. What do you think?

For me, this image represents loss of control.

List five things that always bring a smile to your face.

List five things that you find challenging at times.

Your list could include objects, places, people, situations and sensations.

Choose a strong emotion prompted by one of the things on your list. Create an image that evokes that emotion. You don't need a camera or Photoshop. Try drawing, painting, a simple sketch, or a collage of images from newspapers and magazines.

3

Celebrating transformation

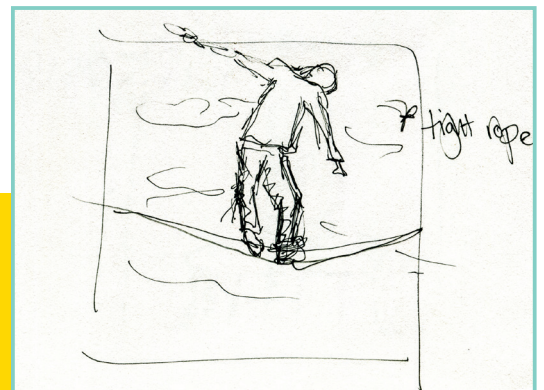
The past year has presented everyone with challenges. Very often, there are positives that can be drawn from a difficult situation.

Think about any positive changes you have seen in yourself, your family, your home or your neighbourhood.

Write down some of these changes, noting when you think they happened.

Did one positive change produce another?

In lockdown, I made this sketch to plan a photograph. I wanted to convey the precariousness of the situation. Nobody had any idea what to expect next. In some ways, not knowing can be liberating and change can be a great time for growth. This idea is expressed with the image of the tightrope walker, as you can see on the front cover of this booklet



Using your examples of changes, create a storyboard to document the steps of a transformation through a series of sketches (or in words).

Your storyboard should document a change from beginning to end.

When it's finished, you could frame it and put it up to remind yourself of how you've overcome adversity.



4

In the Mind's Eye

Photographs allow me to put into images what I can't put into words, and give me a new perspective on my experience.

The image above is taken from my self-portraiture project, *In the Mind's Eye*, which illustrated my experience of depression and anxiety.

Create your own self portrait entitled *In the Mind's Eye*. It could be a photograph, a drawing or a collage.

Start by choosing three to five things that help make up who you are.

These could be some of the things you listed in activity 2 or other objects in your home. Sketch or photograph them. You could also cut images out of magazines.

Next, create an image of yourself. You don't have to include your face – you can use another part of your body, such as your hand.

Find a creative way to bring together the image of you with the images of what's important to you. Play around to create a single composition.

How do these things make you who you are? Does changing the arrangement change how you might be viewed? What happens if you take one item away?

When you are happy with the final composition, fix the arrangement using glue or sticky tape.

This is our final booklet in this current Art by Post series.

Next month, we'll be sending an evaluation form and an update on the future of Art by Post or similar projects.

In the meantime, Suzie and everyone in the Art by Post team would love to see your self-portraits and hear about any changes you've noticed in yourself or the world around you.

Please post us your artwork in an envelope addressed to **Freepost SOUTHBANK CENTRE**. Make sure you write your name and address on the back.

Or you could email us on artbypost@southbankcentre.co.uk to share your artwork with us.

We've been busy sorting through all the drawings, paintings, poetry and writing that you've sent to us as part of Art by Post. The Southbank Centre is the UK's largest art centre, and we're creating an exhibition of your artwork at our site in September, which will then go on tour to at least four other venues in England.

We're also still collecting recordings of your poetry.

We would love to include your voices in our exhibition as well. Call 020 7960 4206 if you need any help making a recording, or to tell us anything else you want us to know about your artwork.

The deadline for exhibition submissions is **Friday 21 May 2021**. By sending us your artwork you agree to being included in our exhibition. We'll do our best to send it back to you after we've made a copy (but we may not always be able to).

You're welcome to get in touch to let us know what you think of this booklet, ask questions, give feedback or opt out of the project at any time.

Contact us

By phone: 020 7960 4206

By email: artbypost@southbankcentre.co.uk

By post: Freepost SOUTHBANK CENTRE

No stamp needed



Freepost
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Support links

For non-urgent information about mental health support and services that may be available to you, please call Mind's infoline on 0300 123 3393, 9am to 6pm, Monday to Friday (except for bank holidays). Or for free 24/7 mental health text support, text 'SHOUT' to 85258.



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

phf Paul Hamlyn
Foundation

Life Through a New Lens

These images are from my recent exhibition, *Unseen*, and are to be used to support Activity 1 in your Art by Post booklet.

Looking at these images...

- What do you think they are about?
- Do they evoke any feelings for you?
- Which image is most meaningful to you personally?
- What does each photograph tell you about the person?

