

ARTSDROP #6

GUEST ARTIST: **Seiwa Cunningham, textile designer**

TITLE: **Tonic for the Nation**






Textile designer Seiwa Cunningham is interested in different ways of printing and transferring images. She uses tools like paints, old papers, stitches and fabric to create layers of textures, fabrics and mediums. Recently, she's been making small dresses to record early memories, using images and text on fabric. She thinks of these

“reminiscence dresses” as sketches. They are like quick drawings. What she's trying to do is capture memories quickly – emotions, times and places.

Learning links



National Curriculum themes explored in these activities:

-  PSHE & Citizenship: Identifying different influences on wellbeing
-  Art & Design: Producing creative work, exploring and recording experiences
-  Design & Technology: Designing purposeful, appealing products for themselves and others based on a given criteria

In this ArtsDrop, we're getting inspired by the history of the Southbank Centre, and the Festival of Britain, which took place 70 years ago this summer. This was a national exhibition and fair that reached millions of visitors throughout the UK in 1951, and was called 'a tonic for the nation' after the difficult times the country went through during the Second World War. **The Royal Festival Hall at the Southbank Centre is the only remaining building from the festival.**



The brochure advertising the Festival of Britain was created by graphic designer Abram Games and was one of the most recognisable visuals of the time.

1

Write your tonic shopping list

tonic (noun)

Something that makes you feel stronger or happier; giving a feeling of vigour or wellbeing; invigorating.

What are the activities, memories, objects and people that give you a feeling of wellbeing? What would you add as a tonic for the nation this year?

Working on your own, or even as a group or whole class in school, create a giant list of ingredients that would make up a recipe for wellbeing.

Example shopping list:

- A picnic in the park on a sunny day
- Swimming in the sea
- The colour lilac
- 'Happy' by Pharrell Williams
- My favourite cosy hoodie
- A huge bar of chocolate to share with my sister



2

Design an iconic poster

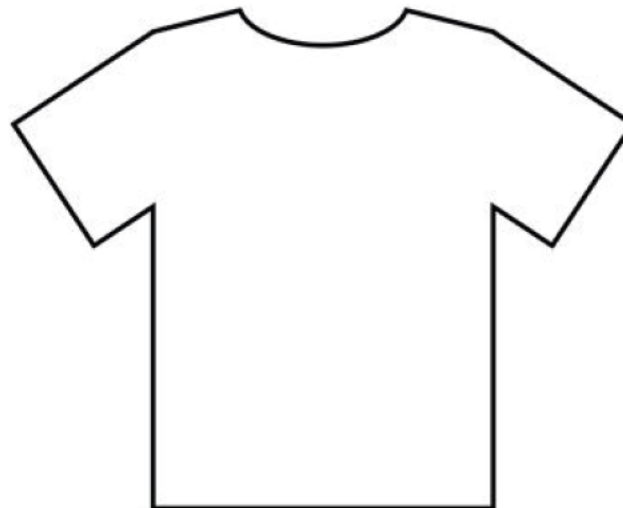
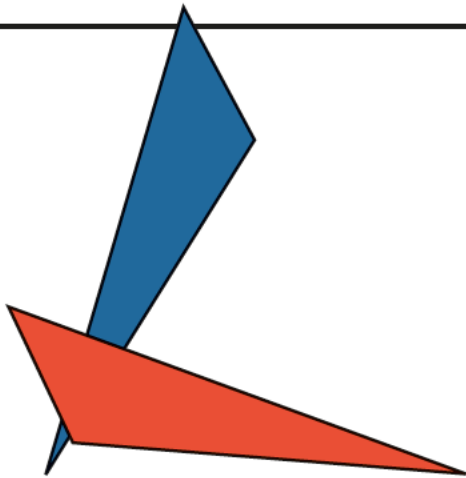
We'd like you to imagine that you've been asked to design a poster, as a tonic for these times, using the same colour scheme and shapes as Abram Games did all those years ago.

You'll see that he used red, white and blue, on a neutral background, in triangular shapes. This could have come from the Union Jack, and there is a hint of celebration in the bunting design.

Prepare Cut out some different triangle shapes from different pieces of card, paper or fabric, trying to reuse or repurpose what you already have where possible. Using pages from old magazines works well.

Place Experiment with the placement and colour combinations by moving the shapes around. Could you design and add your own shapes or patterns to suggest celebration? How could it be linked to your idea of a tonic?

Perfect Once you're happy, stick your shapes onto a background piece of paper or card. You can add more to your design by drawing or painting onto it – for example, add a black outline to some or all of the shapes to make them stand out or give a more graphic look.



3

Wear a smile

The clothes we wear can help us express our personality and feelings. Can you design a T-shirt that would make you smile when you wore it?

Think about your poster design from activity 2, using the same shapes or patterns and colour scheme, or get inspired by your tonic shopping list from activity 1. Try to design a T-shirt that you think would make the whole nation smile!

If you want to go big (literally!), tape several pieces of paper together and make the outline of your T-shirt life-sized so you can hold it up to yourself to see what it would really feel like to wear.

If you have one, you could even use an old, plain T-shirt as a base, and create a design by drawing on it with fabric paints, or make a textile design using fabric glue or by sewing.



Thank you for taking part. You might want to share your work with your school, friends and family, or even our team at the Southbank Centre on social media:
#ArtsDropSC
@southbankcentre