

Before you begin...

This resource is in presentation style, for use with Power Point or as a printed handout. It can be used as pre-visit preparation, to accompany a visit, or can stand alone. It consists of 2 parts:

PART ONE: information, images and ideas for students

- About the artist
- About the work
- Things to think about
- Give your opinions
- Here's one I made earlier...
- Further research

PART TWO: notes for teachers

- Learning Experiences
- Useful links and additional resources

BARRY MCGEE



About the artist

Barry McGee was born in San Francisco, United States of America, in 1966. He grew up in the Mission district of San Francisco and was heavily influenced by the life of the city and other artists working there. McGee is also known by the tag name “Twist”, which he chose when he started to do graffiti in 1984, at the age of eighteen. He studied painting and printmaking at San Francisco Art Institute.

About the work

McGee's work explores the worlds of graffiti, street culture and urban life. He makes large installations which reflect the busy and chaotic nature of the city street inside the gallery.

His work includes found objects which have often been discarded, such as old televisions or cars. These objects are combined, together with drawing and spray painting, to make installations which can occupy the entire gallery space.

McGee often paints and draws directly onto the gallery walls, as well as painting brightly coloured, geometric patterns onto panels which cover the walls of the space. McGee's work makes reference to the issue of private ownership in urban space, exploring the resistance to authority expressed by graffiti and protest.



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Things to think about

McGee exhibits his work inside art galleries and does graffiti outside on the street.

- What are the differences between seeing artwork in a gallery or outside on the street?
- Who is the audience for the work?
- What are your expectations when you enter an art gallery? Do they effect your response to the work?
- Does the work have a different value depending on its location?
- Would you think differently about the work at BALTIC if you saw it outside on the street?

Graffiti is usually anonymous, whilst a gallery displays the name of the artist who has created the work on show. When you look at artwork, does it matter if you know who has created it?





In my opinion

McGee is often critical of the authorities that govern towns and cities and the dominance of commercial advertising in public space. He has said, “I’m not comfortable with the idea that someone who has money can put up a billboard in your neighbourhood telling you how to live your life. A community should have its own voice”.

- Who do you think should decide what happens in public spaces in our towns and cities?
- Do you think billboard advertising should be allowed? Where do you think billboards should be sited?
- Do we need rules for what is allowed or not allowed in public space?
- What rules would you choose?

In my opinion

McGee sometimes paints or draws directly on to the gallery wall, which is painted over at the end of the exhibition. Do you think it matters if the artwork does not last forever?

In my opinion

McGee has said, “I have always been fascinated by graffiti, viewing it mainly from trains, from my car or on a walking excursion into the city.”

- What do you think about graffiti?
- Why do you think people do graffiti?
- Why do you think graffiti is often removed?
- Do you think it should be legal or illegal?

Here's one I made earlier

McGee says that for him, "...graffiti means making marks on surfaces using just about anything, be it markers, spray, paint, chalk, lipstick, varnish, ink. Or it can be the result of scratches and incisions".

Collect a range of different media that you can use to make marks, including both art materials and everyday items. Find some that you have never used before. Explore making different marks on sheets of paper and use tools to scratch into the surface. Choose your favourite mark making tool and try it out on different surfaces such as wood, metal, newspaper or magazine covers. Keep a record of all your experiments.

Here's one I made earlier

McGee works on a large scale, often filling an entire wall.

Clear a wall in your school building and cover it with paper. Take it in turns to try drawing on a large scale. When you run out of space add new layers of paper. Take photographs or use video to keep a record of the wall as it changes.



Here's one I made earlier

McGee often uses cheap, everyday materials such as blue biros to make his drawings.

Using a blank sheet of paper, experiment with a blue biro to create as many different marks, tones, textures and surface patterns as you can.

Make a drawing with the blue biro demonstrating one or more of its particular qualities that you have discovered.



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Further research

Banksy

Jean-Michel Basquiat

Dzine

FAILE

Shepard Fairey

Futura 2000

Groovisions

Keith Haring

Todd James (aka Reas)

Neasdon Control Centre

Op Art

Os Gemeos

Stephen Powers (aka Espo)

Bridget Riley

Bob and Roberta Smith

Swoon

Notes for teachers

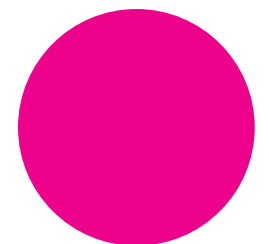
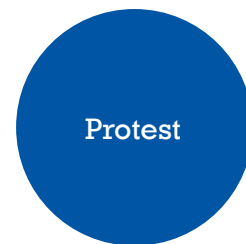
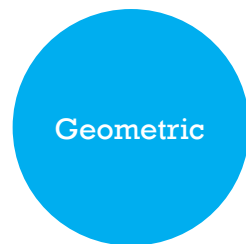
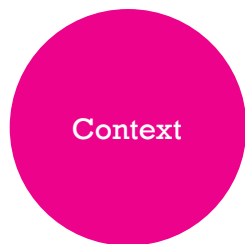
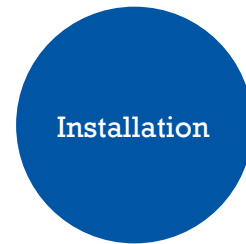
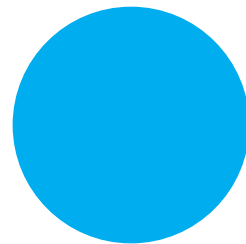
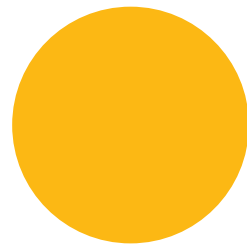
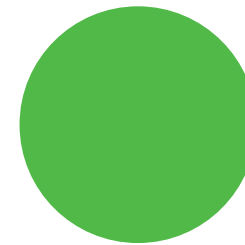
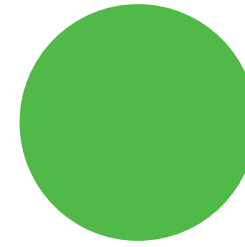
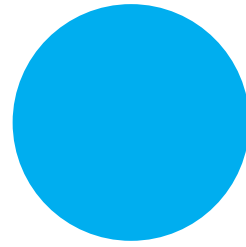


Learning experiences

Contemporary art is incredibly diverse and wide ranging and can be used to support teaching and learning as part of an entire learning experience. It can be used to create creative thinking in all subject areas and to support learning across curricular dimensions, as well as contribute to personal development and personalised learning.

Cross curricular opportunities include:
Art & Design, Citizenship, ICT, English

Literacy key words



Links and additional resources

BALTIC

www.balticmill.com

QUAY

www.balticmill.com/quay

Library and Archive

<http://archive.balticmill.com>

'In my opinion' toolkit to help pupils approach artwork,
formulate questions and contribute opinions

<http://www.balticmill.com/learning/Downloads.php>

Blank presentation template: pupils can use this to present
their own research and ideas

<http://www.balticmill.com/learning/Downloads.php>

Baltic Secondary Resources Bank: pupils can use this to
search for and download images and other information

<http://www.balticmill.com/learning/Downloads.php>

www.balticmill.com