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ACTIVITY PACK

GUT FEELINGS MERI JAAN

~ JASLEEN KAUR

Gut Feelings Meri Jaan is a collection of artworks by the artist Jasleen Kaur, originally created for an exhibition held at Touchstones Rochdale (23 October 2021 - 13 February 2022). The artworks include a series of films made in collaboration with a group of local women and gender non-conforming people from Rochdale's Pakistani, Bengali and Punjabi communities (Alina Akbar, Nasrine Akhtar, Rizwana Ali, Shakra Butt, Rahela Khan and Bushra Sultana).

The starting point for these films was a series of workshops and conversations which took place online throughout lockdown. During these conversations, Jasleen invited the group to think about the local history archive at the nearby museum (Touchstones Rochdale) and to consider who is represented or remembered in telling the story of the town's past. Looking at old newspaper articles and historical documents, Jasleen and the group explored themes relating to identity, belonging, land, migration, tradition and ritual. They also talked about objects from their own personal archives and the stories that have been passed down through families from one generation to the next.

The films weave together extracts from the group's conversations in which they spoke about the experience of living and

growing up in Rochdale, combined with modified cultural traditions performed by the group in specific locations in and around Rochdale - from the town centre to the region's rural landscape and the archive at the Touchstones museum. These films include washing a statue with handfuls of yoghurt, walking on exercise machines in a field full of cows and eating historical documents which have been transformed into edible artefacts.

The purpose of the films is to raise questions about who is and who is not represented or remembered in Rochdale's social history and to highlight the hidden histories and missing voices in local archives, particularly those of migrant communities.

In the exhibition the films were accompanied by a specially printed book, and the final act of *Gut Feelings Meri Jaan* will culminate in a ceremony during which the book, printed on seed paper, is dismantled page by page and read aloud by members of the South Asian community, before being planted in the soil at the Deeplish Community Centre, where the seeds from those pages will grow into a living legacy for the future. A permanent film installation capturing this ceremony will be installed in the Local Studies Centre at Touchstones Rochdale from April 2022.



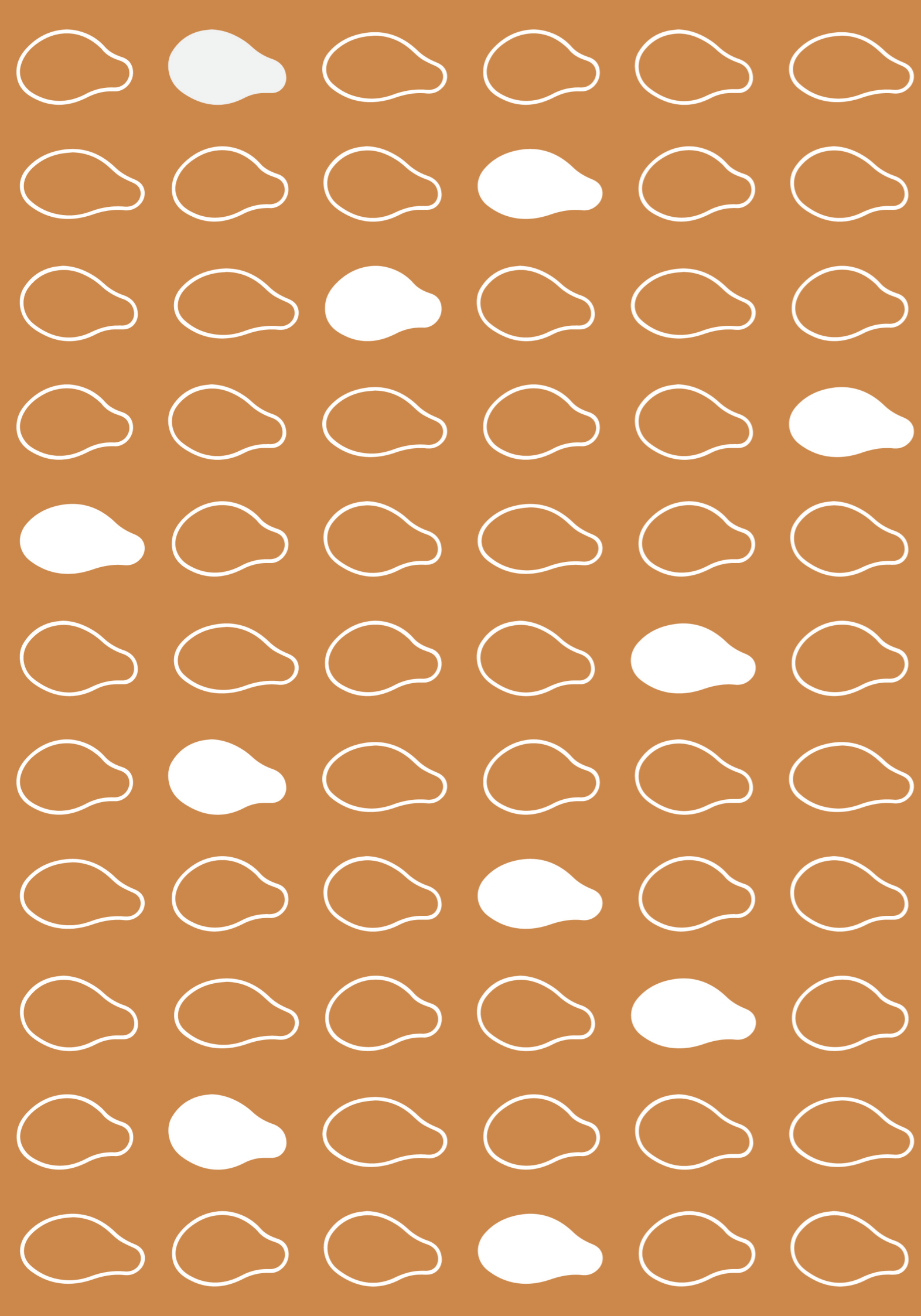
(above) Online meeting with Jasleen Kaur and project collaborators wearing "Haldi" facemasks.

(left) Yoghurt running from the steps during filming in Rochdale.

Jasleen Kaur

Jasleen Kaur (b.1986, Glasgow, Scotland) is an artist based in London. Her work is an ongoing exploration into the malleability of culture and the layering of social histories within the material and immaterial things that surround us. Her practice examines inheritance, diasporic identity and histories, both colonial and personal. She works with sculpture, video and writing. Recent and upcoming commissions include Wellcome Collection, UP Projects, Glasgow Women's Library, BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Eastside Projects and Hollybush Gardens. Her work is part of the permanent collection of Touchstones Rochdale, Government Art Collection and Crafts Council. Kaur is also a recent recipient of The Paul Hamlyn Foundation's Awards for Artists, one of the most significant philanthropic awards for visual artists and composers in the UK.





Academic Learning Outcomes

- Explore the diverse national, regional, ethnic and religious cultures, groups and communities in the UK and the connections between them.
- Explore community cohesion and the different forces that bring about change in communities over time.

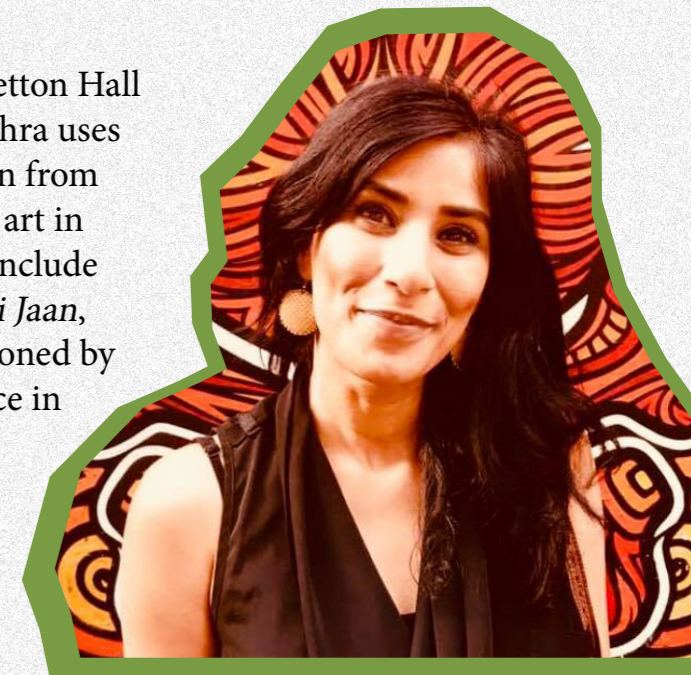
Creative Learning Outcomes

- Understand and interpret related themes: belonging, archive and landmarks.
- Create narratives and storyboards through experimentation with text and illustration.
- Explore alternative camera-less film making techniques and processes.

The following activities have been developed by Bushra Sultana and Alina Akbar who have collaborated with the artist Jasleen Kaur on the exhibition *Gut Feelings Meri Jaan*.

Bushra Sultana

Bushra studied fine art, painting and print making at Bretton Hall College (Yorkshire Sculpture Park). In her paintings Bushra uses mixed media to explore 'Fluid identity' taking inspiration from her own heritage and surroundings. Bushra also teaches art in a range settings to a variety of learners. Recent projects include collaboration with artist Jasleen Kaur (*Gut Feelings Meri Jaan*, Touchstones Rochdale), 2021; *Stories We Tell*, commissioned by Manchester Independents (audio/sound installation piece in an outside space), 2021; Grantham Art Prize 2021 for COP26 Climate Meeting, mural (Rochdale).



Alina Akbar

Visual Artist, Writer and Storyteller: Working in film, photography and installation. Wandering between both digital and analogue mediums. Using her lens and words to create art from both personal and cultural experiences as a British-born Pakistani. With a particular interest in authentic and ethical working class representation and issues of diversity in society; shown through her cinematic eye for capturing raw reality intertwined with poetic narratives as an often self shooting director.

What are the themes?

Gut Feelings Meri Jaan explores a range of themes in relation to identity and how cultural heritage is preserved in local and national archives, including inheritance, belonging, land and migration, tradition and ritual, representation and legacy, trauma and healing practices. Thinking about three of those themes, what do these words mean to you?

BELONGING

Definition: A connection to a place or situation.

The participants in Jasleen's workshops spent a lot of time questioning who they are, the way in which they would like to be described and where they belong.

Some had strong ties to their home countries and countries their grandparents were born in. Some also had strong ties to places in their home town. Where do you feel you belong? How does it look? This could even be a place that exists in your imagination.

ARCHIVE

Definition: A collection of historical documents or records providing information about a place, institution or group of people.

Jasleen's work began by looking at the Local Studies Archive within Touchstones which stores many books, maps, objects and information about the town Rochdale and its community. An archive can exist anywhere, it does not have to be a collection of information in a space like a museum or library. Think about yourself as an archive, what information makes up who you are, your life experiences and where you come from? Think about your room as an archive, what objects are personal to you? What objects would you use to describe yourself to someone?

LANDMARKS

Definition: An object or feature of a landscape or town that is easily seen and recognised from a distance, especially one that enables someone to establish their location.

A statue was used in one of the film scenes for the exhibition. This is an object which was linked to the town's history, but a landmark can also be an object or feature which is an icon of a specific area, town or city. Think about the places where you have history and have personal stories to tell or even what you see around your local area. This could be the shop you visit after school or the park you spend time in with your friends.

Jasleen's Films

The images below and right show scenes from the films made by Jasleen Kaur for the exhibition *Gut Feelings Meri Jaan*. Each scene was filmed in a particular location in Rochdale and the Lancashire countryside nearby, and depicts a reinvented ritual or custom performed in an unexpected setting by Jasleen's group of collaborators:



What do you see in the work?



What does it make you think of?



What do you recognise?

What does it remind you of?



Who are these individuals?



How does it make you feel?

(all) *Gut Feelings Meri Jaan* (film stills), Jasleen Kaur, 2021

- 1) Devouring documents from the archive which have been printed on rice paper;
- 2) Washing the statue of Victorian industrialist John Bright in Broadfield Park with yoghurt;
- 3) Blessing the 100 steps in Rochdale's city centre with water;
- 4) Washing hair with yoghurt on Equitable Street;
- 5) Walking barefoot on stepping machines in a field with cows;
- 6) Cleansing the steps outside the Touchstones museum and gallery with yoghurt.

16mm Film

16 mm is one of the earliest film formats and is still used by artists and film directors today. It was first introduced in 1923 as a less expensive alternative to 35 mm film for amateurs to make their own 'home movies', but was later used extensively during World War II and in the early days of television in the 1950s-1960s. The process involves exposing images onto the reel of film which looks like the image you see on the screen, and that is then loaded into the projector. The images are created using light exposure as 16mm film is light sensitive. Imagine the way you blink - a camera also works in a similar way to create lots of still images - it will blink 24 times in a second to create 24 image frames and when they are played together they create a moving image. With modern technology, 16mm film can now be scanned and turned into a digital file, but in the past it had to be shown through a projector. There is also something called frame rate which we still use today; cinemas often show movies at a 24 frames per second (fps). 24 frames of the film reel make up one second of time on the screen, so if you are shooting a film that is 5 minutes long you will have 7500 exposed frames on the reel of film. It sounds like a lot but all these still images are needed to create a moving image!



The Circus, Charlie Chaplin, 1928



Zoetrope Historical Set, 2019, Ancient Magic Art Tools



Next Landscape, James Massiah, 2020, FW020 collection, C.P. Company

Did you know?

The first film camera to record sound onto the film was developed in 1935 by RCA-Victor (now owned by Sony Music Entertainment)!

Cyanotype

Cyanotype is an image printing process from the 19th Century where the chemicals ferric ammonium citrate and potassium ferricyanide are used to help create prints that all have a distinctive blue colour. The English scientist and astronomer, Sir John Herschel, discovered the process in 1842, and initially developed it as a way of reproducing notes and diagrams such as blueprints due to its accuracy and cheap production cost. The acid solution is photo sensitive and relies on light to help expose the image, so it can be put on sheets of paper and you can then use the sun light to create images and collages. Cyanotype techniques can be applied to a wide variety of surfaces, including paper, fabric, glass, perspex and ceramics. Anna Atkins, an English photographer and botany specialist, was one of the first to publish a series of cyanotypes as an artist. Her first book, *Photographs of British Algae: Cyanotype Impressions* in 1842 is generally considered to be the first published book illustrated with photographs. Cyanotypes are now very popular amongst photographers who use them with film negatives to create these amazing blue prints.



Emma Bowater, *The Arty Teacher*, 2021



Handprinted, 2020



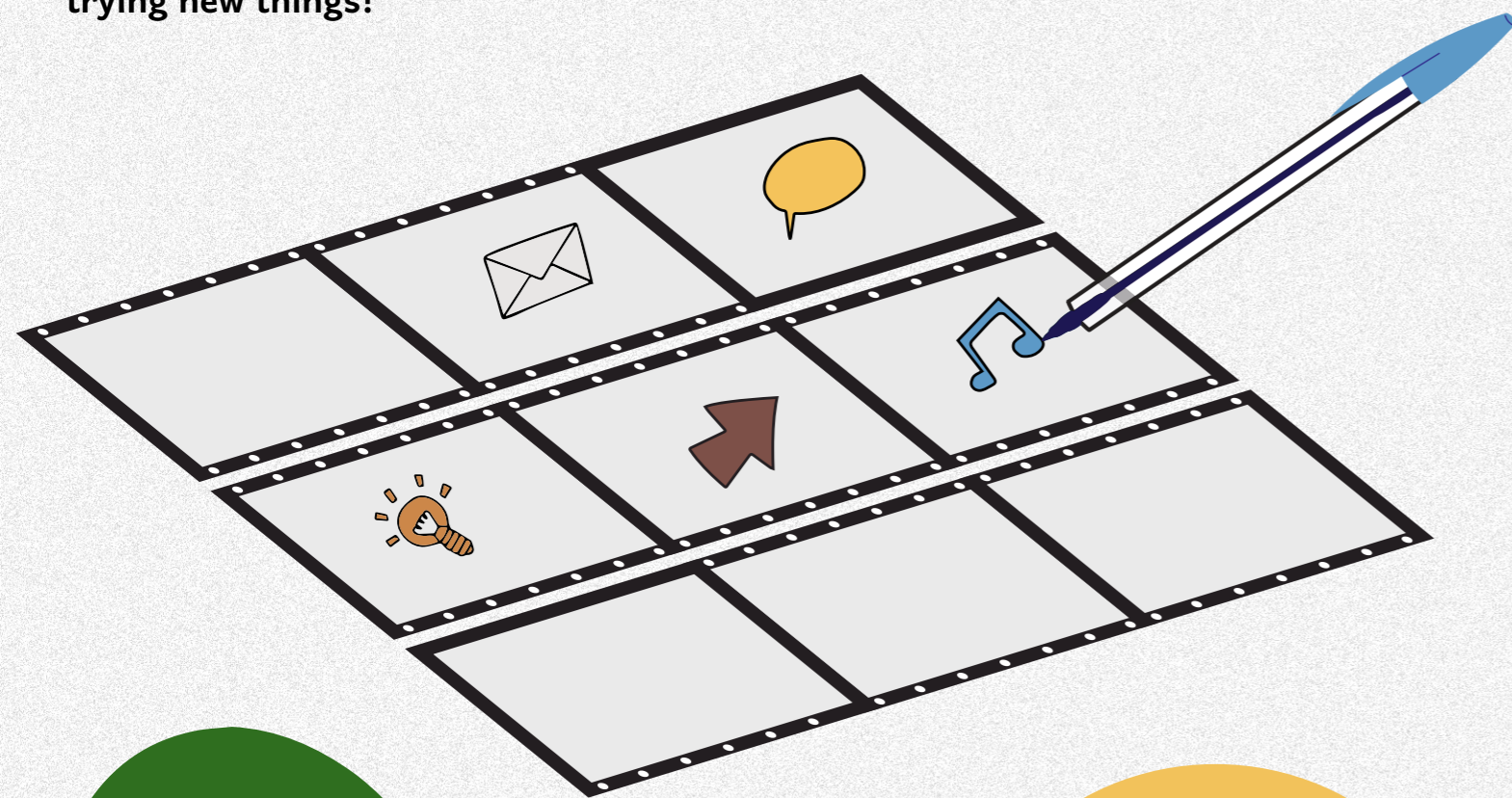
Art Club Blog, 2012

Did you know?

If your cyanotype print fades overtime from prolonged exposure to light, you can restore it to its original tone by storing it in a dark environment!

Activity 1: Draw Your Movie

Use the storyboard template to create individual frames for film using inspiration from your own archive, belonging and landmarks. You can either draw on the next page, or use the larger print out sheet to make your storyboard. You could merge the different ideas you have and plan your own scenes, but think about how you want your story to look - does it have a narrative flow or is it random? Do you want to focus on one of the themes (archive, landmarks or belonging) or a combination of all three? Be as detailed or as abstract as you would like. Film is not always about creating the perfect scene but often about experimenting and trying new things!



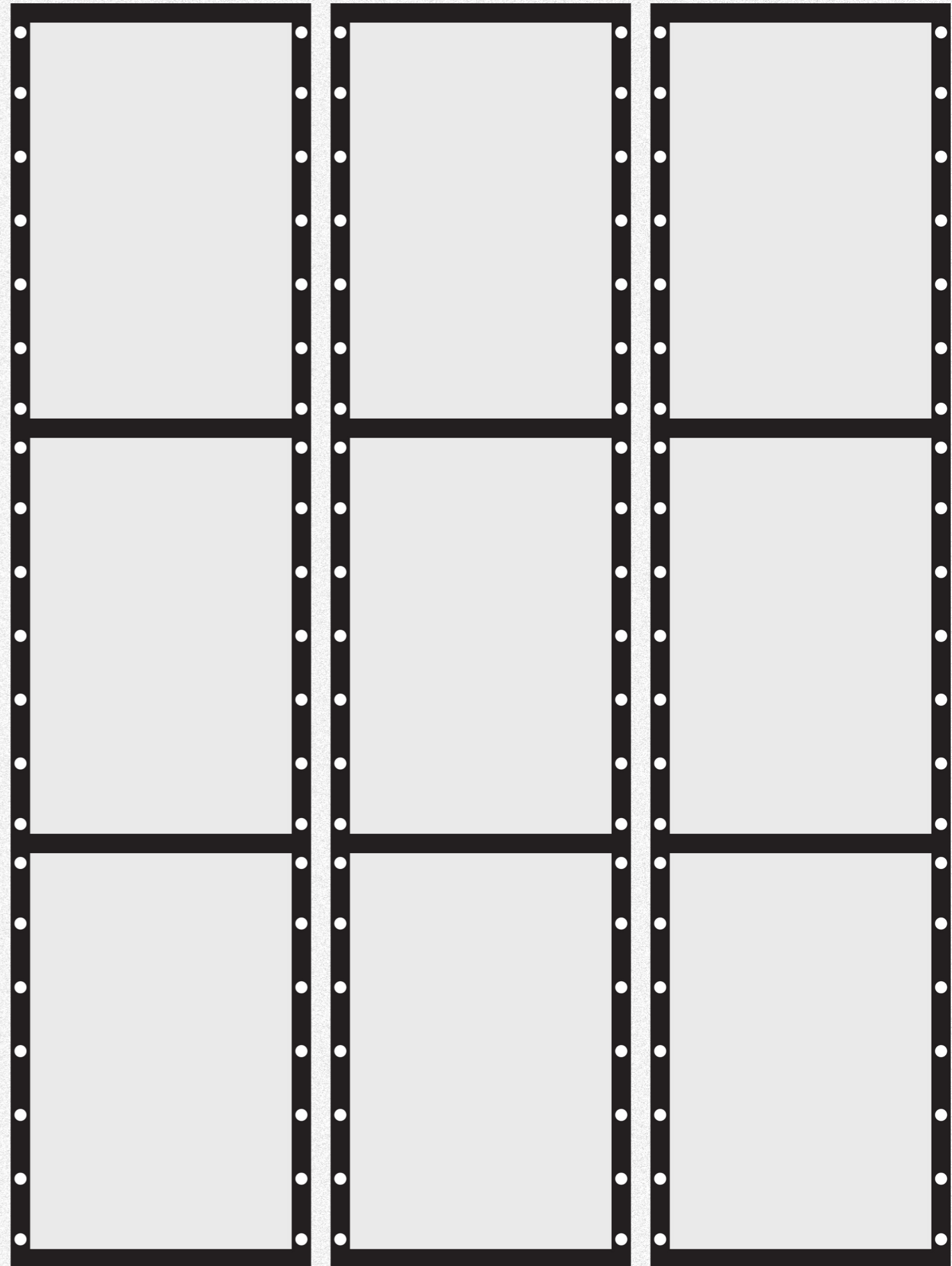
BELONGING

ARCHIVE

LANDMARKS

You will need:

- Pens
- Felt Tips
- Storyboard print out
- Scissors



Activity 2: Make a Zoetrope

Create your own animated film with a blank film reel.

1. Take a strip of blank film reel and start to draw your individual images inspired by objects from your personal archive. Try different coloured pens to make your animation more colourful.

2. Once you have drawn all your images, carefully cut the film reel into separate sections, and put to one side.

3. Next, paint your paper plate or CD with black paint. Once dry, you can either poke a hole in the painted plate with a pencil or pen and attach with tape or glue the pencil into the hole in the centre of the CD - this will be the handle.

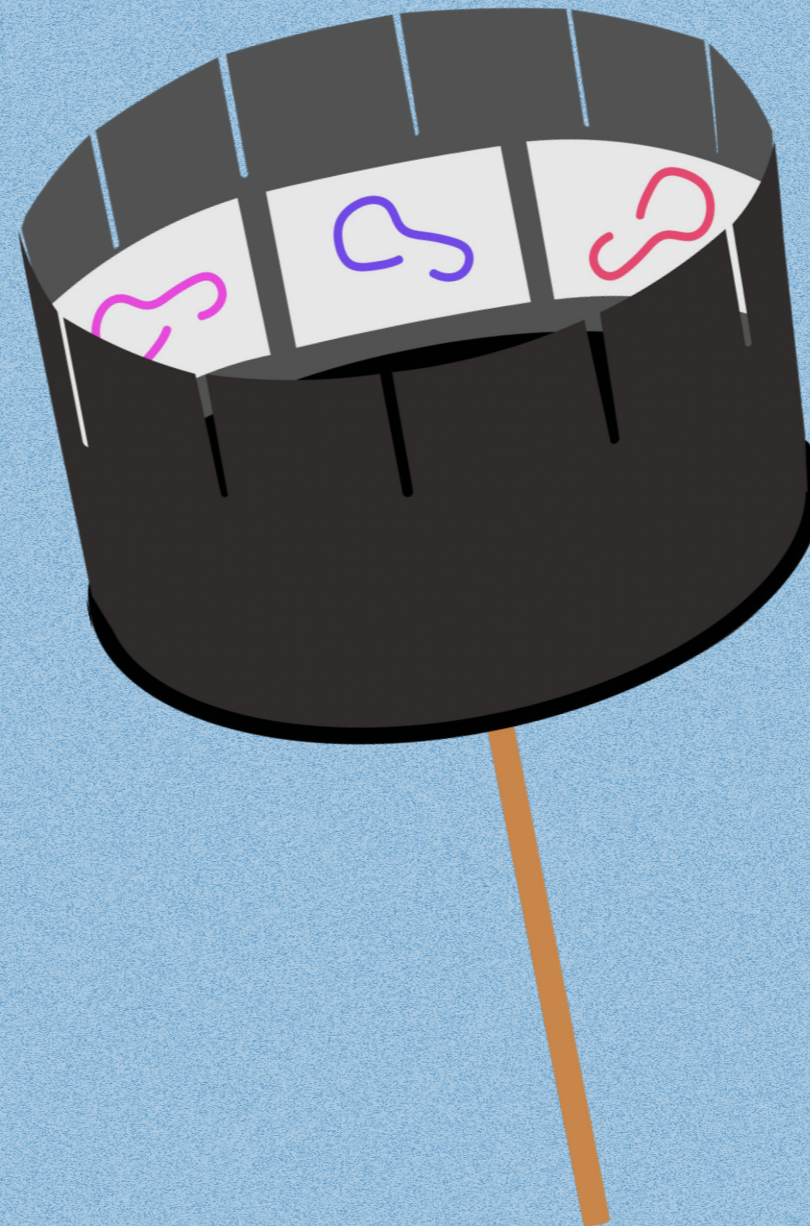
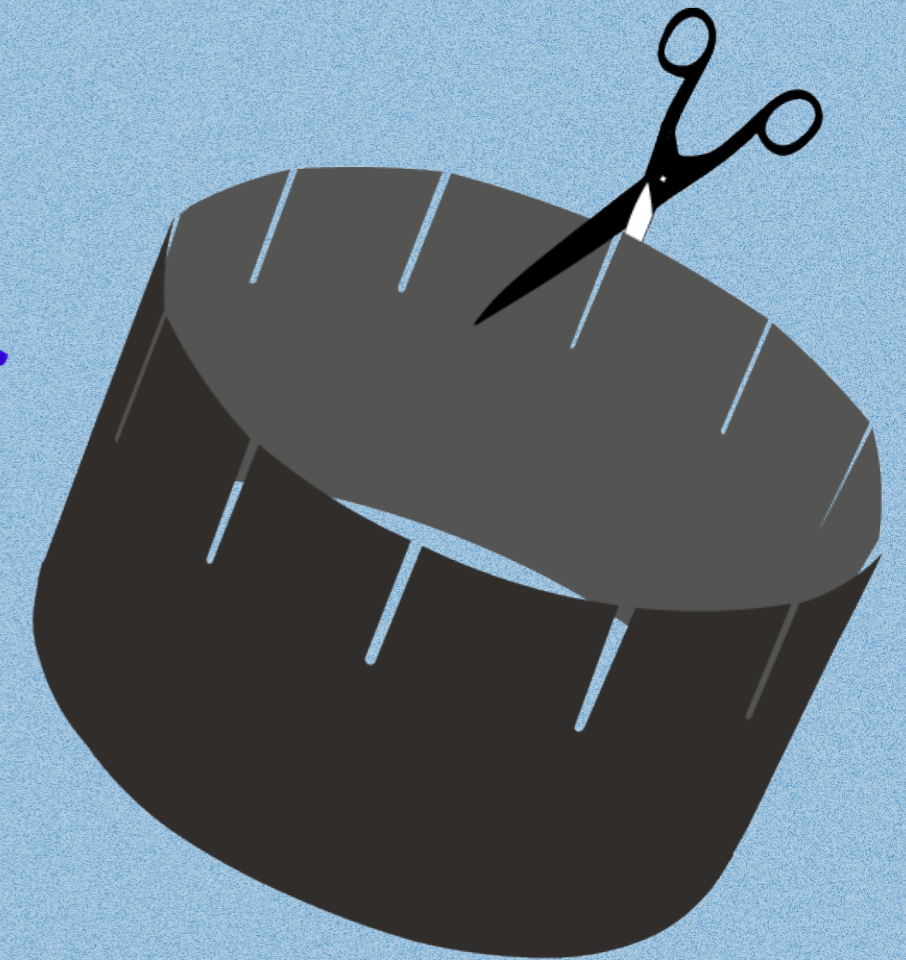
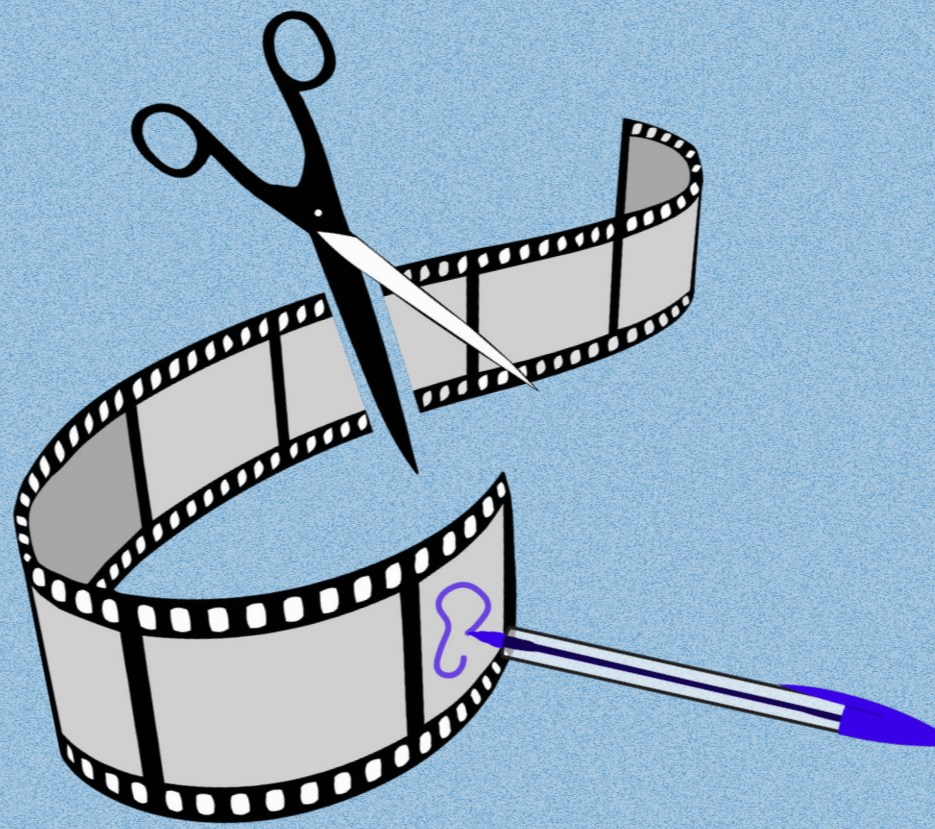
4. Cut a long strip of black card that is long enough to wrap around your painted plate or CD - remember to allow for a small overlap.

5. With a pencil and ruler, draw long thin rectangles (approx. 0.5cm wide x 9cm high) at regular intervals along the length of the card. Cut out the rectangles, these will become the viewing slots for your film reel cut-outs.

6. Wrap the black card around the plate/CD and secure it with tape or glue.

7. Use glue or tape to attach the cut-out film reel sections to the black card, making sure each reel sits between the slots. Now you can animate your reels by spinning your Zoetrope and looking through the cut-out slots!

You could also animate your images from Activity 1 or Activity 2 by making digital scans using an iPad or a computer.



You will need:

- Blank film reel
- Scissors
- Sharpies
- Pens
- Glue/tape
- Black card
- Black paint
- Paper plate/CD
- Stick
- Ruler

Activity 3: Cyanotype Collage

Create your own collage with objects from your personal archive. Think about the different sizes and shapes of objects you could use to make your collage.

(Skip to Step 4 if you have pre-coated cyanotype sheets)

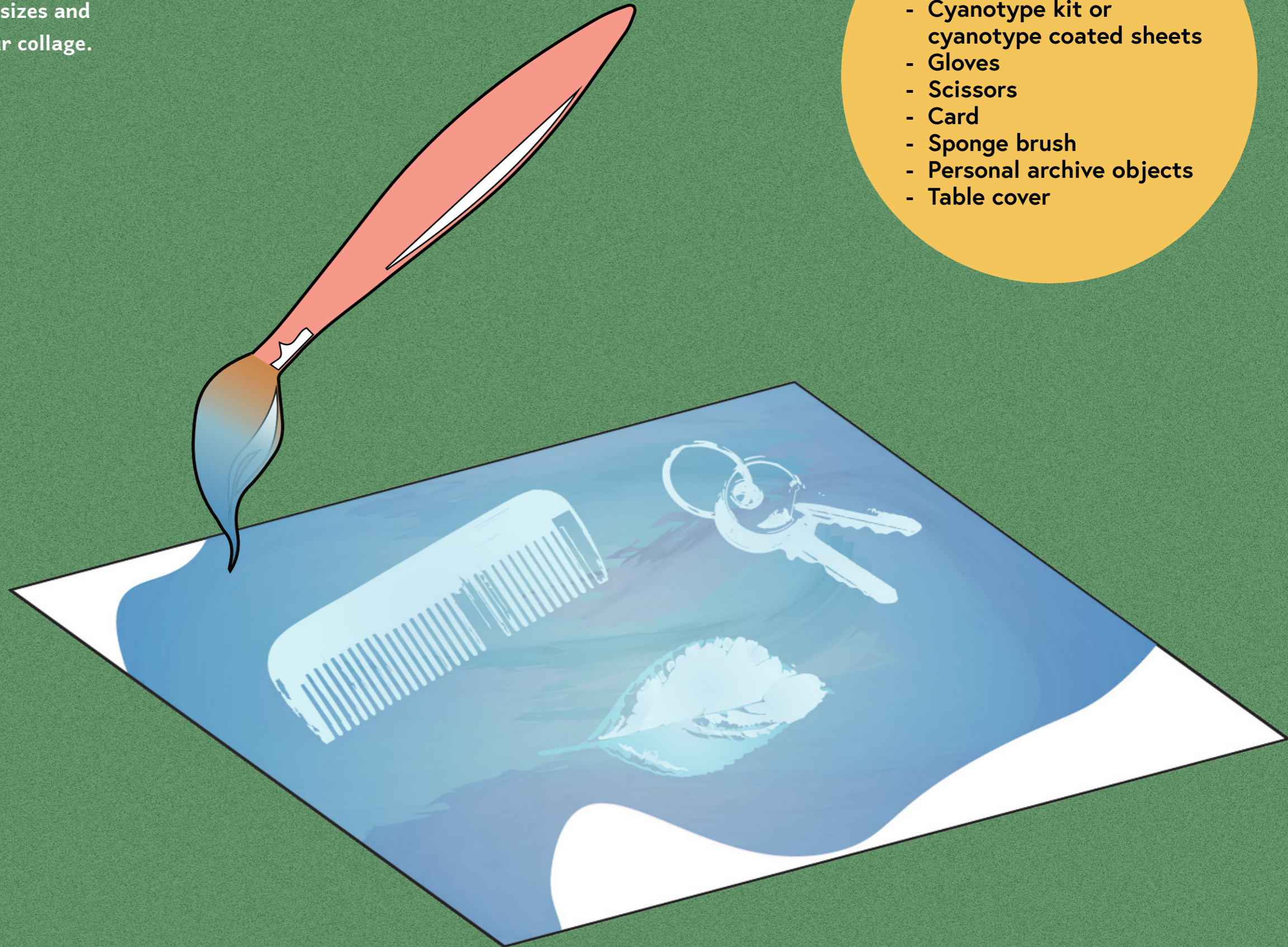
Step 1: Mix the solution as instructed making sure that both chemicals are fully dissolved.

Step 2: Brush the card with the solution using a sponge brush to evenly coat your cyanotype solution. Make sure you avoid natural sunlight but most indoor light bulbs (tungsten lightbulbs) will be fine.

Step 3: Allow your coated sheet to dry in the dark for 24 hours. You can keep your sheets in the dark until you need them again.

Step 4: Collect and place your personal archive objects onto the coated sheet and leave it under direct sunlight to expose. You can place a clear glass sheet over the paper if you have objects you need to keep in place.

Step 5: After exposing your sheet for a few hours, rinse your card under water for 2 minutes and allow it to dry. You will see the blue tones getting darker as it dries!



You will need:

- Cyanotype kit or cyanotype coated sheets
- Gloves
- Scissors
- Card
- Sponge brush
- Personal archive objects
- Table cover

Further Resources

Use the resources below to find out more about the activities suggested in the activity pack and helpful tools for teaching:

Traditional film

Charlie Chaplin - The Lion's Cage

www.youtube.com/watch?v=mpjEyBKSfJQ&ab_channel=JoseMonkeys

Next Landscape | James Massiah

www.youtube.com/watch?v=M2YV71Z-VPU&ab_channel=C.P.Company

2008: a memoir

www.vimeo.com/266212817

Make a Zoetrope, CBBC

www.bbc.co.uk/cbbc/thingstodo/art-ninja-zoetrope-make

How to Make a Zoetrope

www.youtube.com/watch?v=u2v-L-1Kctk&ab_channel=RimstarOrg

Zoetrope | Let's talk Science

www.letstalkscience.ca/educational-resources/interactives/zoetrope

16mm Movie Film

www.analoguewonderland.co.uk/collections/16mm-movie-film

Cyanotype printing

Introduction to Cyanotype - A History Lesson

www.cteonline.org/lesson-plans/nuq7ee/introduction-to-cyanotype-a-history-lesson

Cyanotype Kit

www.handprinted.co.uk/products/cyanotype-kit

Art Club Blog

www.artclubblog.com/2012/07/01/cyanotype-prints/

Cyanotype, Handprinted

www.youtube.com/watch?v=35s2d43gKgM&ab_channel=Handprinted

Exploring Cyanotype

www.theartyteacher.com/exploring-cyanotype/

UP Projects

UP Projects curates and commissions public art, working collaboratively with artists, communities and partners to create extraordinary projects through artist-led community engagement. With an international outlook, activating spaces across the globe and in the digital domain, UP's work explores the multitude of ways in which people can encounter and connect with contemporary art in unexpected places. Our partnership with Touchstones Rochdale began in 2016 with a mission to create a new, research-led, community orientated and location specific commission that explores the heritage of Rochdale and creates further connections between the gallery and its diverse local communities. Jasleen Kaur was invited to undertake this commission in 2017, curated and supported by UP Projects and Touchstones.

www.upprojects.com

Touchstones Rochdale

Touchstones Rochdale is an award-winning arts and heritage centre with an art gallery, museum and local history centre. It has a regular programme of contemporary visual arts exhibitions. Touchstones is part of Your Trust, also known as Rochdale Boroughwide Cultural Trust - a charity that works in the heart of the Rochdale Borough community, inspiring people to live more active, creative and healthy lifestyles. The charity connects people with their cultural heritage, encourages creativity and fosters wellbeing for each and every member of its diverse community.

www.yourtrustrochdale.co.uk/venues/touchstones-rochdale

Gut Feelings Meri Jaan by Jasleen Kaur is commissioned by UP Projects in partnership with Touchstones Rochdale. Created in collaboration with Alina Akbar, Nasrine Akhtar, Rizwana Ali, Shakra Butt, Rahela Khan and Bushra Sultana.

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Share your creations on social media using #gutfeelingsmerijaan

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SUPPORTED BY:



ROCHDALE
BOROUGH COUNCIL



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ENGLAND**