

# Case Study

## 'Digital Sketchbooks'

### The project

In 2014-15 the Ashmolean Museum worked with The Marlborough Church of England School to explore how tablets can be used on a museum art trip. With support from Arts Council England through a Major Partner Museum grant, we created an online learning package that includes a series of short films:

[www.ashmolean.org/education/dsketchbooks](http://www.ashmolean.org/education/dsketchbooks)

### Background

- Each year we welcome 16 000 secondary students, many studying Art & Design. Through our involvement with the Oxford Art Teach (OAT) network we are aware that art teachers are grappling with how to integrate new technologies into their practice.
- We have a small set of teaching iPads but it is not viable for the Museum to provide sets of tablets for large Art and Design groups. Our aim was to create materials to inspire and support teachers and students to bring their own tablets to the Museum

### Project aims

- To raise art teachers' awareness of how tablets might be used in a museum setting
- To develop a series of short films and support materials for teachers wishing to use tablets on a museum art visit
- To develop workshops that provided opportunities for students to research, record and be creative using tablets on a museum visit



### What we did

- We consulted with teachers through the Oxford Art Teach (OAT) network and recruited a local secondary school to work with on the project.
- Working closely with teachers we designed 2 workshops that focused on the use of 3 apps: PicCollage, Brushes3, 123DCatch
- The workshops were delivered in 2 separate sessions to Year 9 and Year 12 students. These were filmed to provide material for the online package.
- A follow up visit to school to see how pupils had developed their work was also filmed, as were interviews with teachers and pupils.

## Project outcomes

- Working with iPads has really captured the imagination of students. Those with access to iPhones and iPads have downloaded apps to use and share for art projects
- Year 9 students enjoyed the immediacy of working with an iPad to create high quality designs. Year 12 students were able to conduct more in depth research eg analysing paintings
- Using tablets seems to break down the barrier of visiting a traditional museum like the Ashmolean – there is an increased awareness of the Museum as a valuable resource for Art & Design
- Teachers report an improved understanding of working with digital technologies. Their experiences have been shared with the Oxford Art Teach network, contributing to ongoing wider discussion about emerging technologies in Art & Design
- Museum staff have improved their knowledge and understanding of working with apps, as well as how we can best support teachers in this area

**‘I have been able to express my art and ideas in a simple and easy way, whether it’s for homework or just for fun’**

**(Year 9 student)**

**‘a quick, eclectic way for the students to generate ideas based on first hand observations, whilst at the same time generating images from a cultural experience’**

**(Art & Design teacher)**



## What we learnt

- Apps that don't require internet access are more reliable to use in a workshop scenario
- Simple apps worked better than sophisticated ones – ensuring the focus on museum collections was not lost
- Secondary students often have access to smart phones and tablets, but don't necessarily see them as a learning tool
- Teachers are overwhelmed by the number of apps available and welcome recommendations and examples of how they might be used - there is potential for museums to support

## Key contacts

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We worked with Oxford University Media Production Unit on the creation of the films.

[www.ashmolean.org/education](http://www.ashmolean.org/education)