

ArtSway

Contemporary Visual Art in the New Forest



Alex Frost: BBQ

23 February – 6 April 2008

Teachers' Pack

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Alex Frost: BBQ

BBQ at ArtSway is an exhibition of new work by the Glasgow-based artist, Alex Frost. The exhibition will include a range of new sculptures and drawings that relate directly to the residency Frost undertook in late 2007. These works play upon the concept of the rural retreat in contrast to the artist's urban, or specifically suburban, standpoint.

The works for ArtSway contain subtle suggestions to wholesome and improving lifestyles. These include floral motifs adorning a box of slimmer's tea, a small crop of vegetables decorating a carton of vegetable juice or an image of a yucca houseplant. These motifs all share an uncomfortable relationship with their rural setting as well as collectively referring directly to it. In one example, a large mosaic sculpture of a packet of vegetarian hamburger-mix mimics high street signage, but its meaning is left deliberately ambiguous.

Previous projects by Frost have included a series of large-scale, misshapen, mosaic sculptures that complement the 'blind drawing' series. These mosaics depict the commercial packaging of products such as Ryvita, Earl Grey tea and After Eight mints. These items were chosen for their references to sophisticated, social and grown-up lifestyles - all suggestions that contradict the playful aesthetic inherent in the work. The sculptures, versions of which will be exhibited at ArtSway, refer to civic sculptures or murals and have been sited both within the gallery setting as well as in the public domain. They have been installed in a range of urban environments - areas of wasteland fenced off awaiting development, an outdoor cafe, within a multi-purpose arts centre and on the exterior of a gallery overlooking a flyover. These sculptures and drawings simultaneously echo a handcrafted intensity and hands-off technological processes that are integral to the artist's work. In particular, the 'blind drawings' use a technique specially developed by Frost where images are rendered in pinpricks that perforate a sheet of paper. Enamel is then painted through these perforations to create an image with a surface that refers to both circuit boards and needlework: a virtual clash between the handcrafted and the technological. Frost's work combines elements of art, architecture and sculpture to create both thoughtful and playful pieces.

The work to be shown at ArtSway uses new and recycled motifs that are fed through a 'pastoral filter' with jarring results. For example, a series of mosaic panels depict logos as if seen through the surface of a pool of water; these panels reference nature through their rendering but the logos represent technological formats such as Compact Disc, DVD and Dolby. The watery rendering of these images refers more to a cultivated habitat, such as an atrium fountain, or perhaps a public lido.

About Alex Frost

Alex Frost lives and works in Glasgow. Recent exhibitions include Adults, Milton Keynes Gallery; Format Wars, Tramway, Glasgow, and Adults, Galerie Sandra Buerger, Berlin. Alex Frost is represented by Sorcha Dallas (www.sorchadallas.com). He graduated from Glasgow School of Art in 1998 (MFA) and in 2006 was the recipient of the CCA Glasgow Residency.



Page 4: **Themes and Ideas for Lessons and Workshops**

The following themes and ideas are explained more fully in the **Exhibition Information section of this booklet** – which is based on a gallery handout that accompanies Alex Frost's exhibition at ArtSway, a document that is intended to provide visitors insight into his work and ideas.

Below are suggestions and ideas that are designed to stimulate working with your students in general art & design classes, as well as across other subjects – such as history, citizenship and craft. All of the ideas below are loosely linked to suggestions for areas of work that can be found on the National Curriculum website.

1) Alex Frost has used a variety of old techniques in his work, but with a very modern twist. One particular media that he uses is mosaic – but very often-referencing computer pixels and other forms of modern technology.

- **Using pieces of coloured torn card – ask your students to think of something that is quintessentially modern. Something they like to do – such as playing a computer game, going to the cinema, etc. Ask them to produce a 'mosaic' –using the card – depicting their choice.**

2) Drawing is a very important part of Alex Frost's artistic practice. His 'blind drawing' series see him using photocopies, pricking the paper and then painting through the holes onto another piece of paper to produce an image made up of tiny dots.

- **Ask your students to think of as many different ways of drawing as they can. Each student will choose a 'radical' way of drawing (such as pricking holes in the paper, and then rubbing charcoal through the holes to create an image on another piece of paper). Ask each student to produce a self-portrait in their chosen style.**

3) Alex Frost's work also looks at the outside versus the inside. One work in particular – *BBQ (VegeBurger Mix)*, 2007 (for an image of this, please see the front page of this booklet) – is situated in a tree in the grounds of the Forest Heath Hotel pub. This work is meant to connect the outside world to the inside of the gallery space.

- **Lead a discussion with your students about any 'public' art that they may have seen (even such things as Nelson's Column in Trafalgar Square). What do they think about this work? How would it look inside the gallery – would it be different? What is the purpose of this outside sculpture? Then lead the group in making a temporary outside**

sculpture in the school grounds – that will only last for a few weeks.

4) Many of the works in BBQ focus on how Frost – now an adult – recalls himself thinking of ‘grown-up’ things when he was a child. Much of his work is a humorous look at the ‘trendy’ things adults buy and eat to seemingly make their lives better.

- **What do your students think are ‘trendy’ and desirable things that adults buy. What kind of consumer objects do their parents buy to make themselves happy? Perhaps ask your students to produce a collage – using images and headlines from newspapers – that will make fun of trendy objects and foods that they consider unnecessary.**

The following images are installation shots from *BBQ* at ArtSway.





Page 8: **FREE Guided Tours and Workshops at ArtSway**

ArtSway is keen to welcome school groups visiting the gallery. Please see the **Information for Schools Visiting ArtSway** section of this booklet for more information. **Please note:** we would only be able to accommodate between 20 and 25 children in the galleries per visit.

Free Guided Tours

One of the best ways to experience an artist's work, as opposed to looking at images in books and on the Internet, is to actually visit a gallery to see their work in the flesh. ArtSway has hosted many school group visits in the past, offering Guided Tours around the gallery by the Curator, Exhibitions and Education and Audience Development Officer.

The tours sometimes involve PowerPoint presentations, but usually consist of ArtSway's staff taking the students from work to work, explaining the origins and content of the works on display. A tour will usually end with a question and answer session.

On some occasions it may be possible to have the artists present for a school visit.

Free Workshops

ArtSway employs a wide range of artists to lead workshops. However, they are all professional artists who will charge a fee to lead a workshop. If a school is interested in scheduling an artist to lead a workshop, please contact the gallery. Contact details are in the **Information for Schools Visiting ArtSway** section of this booklet. In some instances we will provide an artist free of charge.

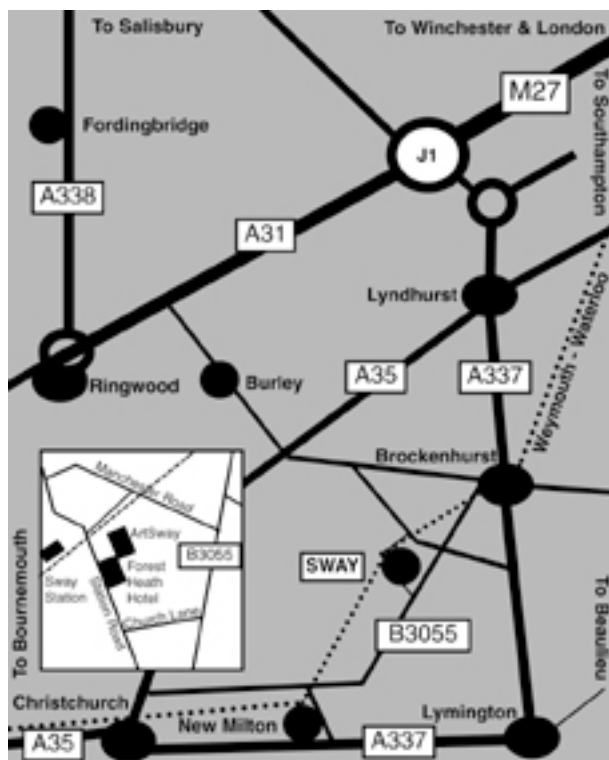
There are a series of **FREE** one-hour workshops available. These workshops take place after the tour of the exhibition, and involve simple drawing and paintings techniques and are based on the themes outlined in the **Themes for Lessons and Workshops** section of this booklet.

A Timetable of a Typical School Visit to ArtSway

- 10.00am – 10.10am: **Introduction and welcome to ArtSway.**
- 10.10am – 10.30am: **Tour of the exhibition.**
- 10.30am – 11.30am: **Workshop activities.**
- 11.30am – 11.45am: **Discussion and round up of activities.**
- 12.00pm: **End of workshops and school visit.**

The following is information for school groups visiting ArtSway for **Guided Tours and Workshops**.

Getting to ArtSway:



By Rail: Sway Station is on the London Waterloo to Weymouth Line.

By Car: Follow signs to Sway from Brockenhurst, Burley or Lymington, then follow signs for Village Centre & Train Station. ArtSway is just behind the Forest Heath Hotel on Station Road.

Access: All parts of the gallery are accessible via level access.

Parking: ArtSway has its own car park that is reached along the access drive between the surgery and chemist on Station Road in the centre of Sway.

Etiquette and Good Behaviour in the Galleries

Works of art are very fragile and cannot be touched. The installation *BBQ* has large objects and fragile objects in it - we ask that children visiting the gallery take care both of their own safety and of the artworks on display. Teachers and their assistants are responsible for their groups. At the beginning of the tour the relevant ArtSway staff member will give a brief explanation to the visiting children of what they can and cannot do in the gallery.

Contact Details for ArtSway

If you would like to discuss a visit to ArtSway, or what we could offer in terms of educational resources, please contact:

Peter Bonnell, Curator Exhibitions and Education on Telephone: 01590 682260 (extension 14), or Email: peter@artsway.org.uk

Address: ArtSway, Station Road, Sway, Hampshire, SO41 6BA
Telephone: 01590 682260 **Fax:** 01590 681989

Email: mail@artsway.org.uk **Web:** www.artsway.org.uk

Opening Times: Tuesday to Sunday, 11am – 5pm. **Admission is FREE.**