CREATIVE CONNECTIONS

Year Two: Ealing

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*Creative Connections* is generously supported by the Palley family.
Year Two: Ealing
Creative Connections is a four-year project connecting young people in London with contemporary artists to create new responses to the National Portrait Gallery’s Collection.

The spotlights for the second year of the project are the London borough of Ealing and the portraits and biographies of selected individuals who have local connections. The project partner is Brentside High School, Ealing’s Specialist Arts College and, the artist is film maker Eelyn Lee.

GCSE Art students worked with Eelyn Lee over five months to explore notions of endeavour, vision and creativity epitomised by the lives and achievements of the sitters. Together they learnt about the Gallery; its Collection and the language of portraiture; researched their local area and developed creative and technical skills in photography and film. The film An Ealing Trilogy is the culmination of the ideas they generated together and the partnerships formed.

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An Ealing Trilogy by Eelyn Lee was made in collaboration with Brentside High School and commissioned by the National Portrait Gallery 2013–14.

Self portraits by the Creative Connections participants
Ealing is the home of the Creative Connections project partners Brentside High School. Described at the end of the nineteenth century as the ‘Queen of the Suburbs’, Ealing had been a fashionable place of residence for some time. The extension of the Great Western Railway in the mid-1800s and the creation of Ealing Broadway station transformed the area, making it attractive to commuters. After the Second World War people from countries and regions including the Caribbean, India, Pakistan and Poland settled in the borough and made it their home. Today, Ealing is one of London’s most diverse boroughs.

Ealing has a rich cultural history. It is home to Ealing Studios, the oldest continuously working film studio in the world, renowned for the Ealing comedies and Carry-On films. The Ealing Music Club, where notable groups such as the Who started their careers, is known as the place where ‘British Rhythm and Blues began’. Ealing Art College, now part of the University of West London, attracted celebrated artists and musicians to teach and study.
The project story

Learning about portraiture

Researching the sitters

Discovering local places and landmarks

Identifying the sitter’s characteristics

Investigating the sitter’s portraits
Developing ideas

Planning at the home of Trevor Baylis, Hanwell Community Centre, Pitzhanger Manor and the Metropolitan Film School, Ealing Studios

Creating An Ealing Trilogy with Eelyn Lee and crew

Photographs and artwork by Daniyal Motaleby, students from Brentside High School and the National Portrait Gallery
SIR JOHN SOANE (1753–1837)
Architect

John Soane was the son of a bricklayer who began his education in the architectural office of George Dance. In 1771, he enrolled in the Royal Academy Schools where he won a gold medal. In 1788, he was appointed Surveyor to the Bank of England. The security of this position allowed him to develop a highly idiosyncratic architectural vision. Many other public and private commissions followed, among them Dulwich Picture Gallery (1811–14).

Ealing Connection: John Soane purchased Pitzhanger Manor, Ealing in 1801. He first worked on the house as a teenager when he was George Dance’s assistant and later rebuilt it as his country home.

By Sir Francis Leggatt Chantrey
Pencil, c. 1827
Given by Mrs George Jones, 1871
NPG 316a (111)

ADA LOVELACE (1815–1852)
Computer pioneer

Daughter of the poet Lord Byron, Ada Lovelace was brought up in the sole custody of her mother. Lady Byron feared that she would be a writer like her father and therefore had Ada educated to be a mathematician and scientist. At seventeen she met Charles Babbage who introduced her to his “calculating engine”. Her written commentary on his process has led her to be considered the world’s first computer programmer. In 1979, the computer software language for the United States Department of Defence was named ‘Ada’ in her honour.

Ealing Connection: Ada Lovelace taught at the Ealing Grove Industrial School founded by Lady Byron; the first of its kind for underprivileged children.

By William Henry Mote after Alfred Edward Chalon
Stipple engraving, published 1839
NPG D5123
MARGOT FONTEYN (1919–1991)
Ballet Dancer

By the time Margot Fonteyn was twenty, she had danced the lead in Giselle, Swan Lake and Sleeping Beauty. Her life-long collaboration with choreographer Frederick Ashton transformed her into a ballerina of international fame. In 1962 Margot Fonteyn’s career was extended when Rudolf Nureyev was invited to dance with her at the Royal Ballet. Despite their age difference (she was forty-two, he was twenty-three) they formed one of the greatest ballet partnerships with their unparalleled rapport and chemistry.

Ealing Connection: Born Peggy Hookham, Margot Fonteyn lived in Waldeck Road and later Elm Grove Road, Ealing and attended dance classes locally.

SIR WILLIAM HENRY PERKIN (1838–1907)
Chemist

While still a student at the Royal College of Chemistry, William Perkin discovered a process for creating the first ever synthetic dye. The dye was named ‘mauve’ from the French word for the purple-coloured mallow flower. William Perkin’s discovery and his continued research led to the replacement of natural dyestuffs by artificial dyes in the textile industry. He received nine honorary degrees and a knighthood for his achievements.

Ealing Connection: In 1858, William Perkin opened a chemical factory with his brother and father in Ealing. Today there is a plaque from the Royal Society of Chemistry at the site to commemorate his work. The uniform of William Perkin C of E High School in Ealing is mauve in honour of his discovery.
**LILLIAN BOARD (1948–1970)**
**Athlete**
Lillian Board set a European junior record for the 400 metres in 1967 when she surged from the back of the field on the final bend to first place. She became an overnight sensation hailed as ‘Princess of Pace’. At the Olympic Games in Mexico City in 1968 she won the silver medal for the 400 metres. Board was awarded an MBE in 1970 for her contribution to sport but died soon after of intestinal cancer.

Ealing Connection: Born in South Africa, Lillian Board moved to Ealing with her family aged seven. She attended school locally at Drayton Green Primary and Grange Secondary Modern for girls. Lillian Board Way and Lillian Avenue, Ealing are named after her.

By Jorge Lewinski
Bromide print, April 1970
NPG P1044

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**PETER CROUCH (b.1981)**
**Footballer**
Peter Crouch is a footballer for Stoke City. He has scored twenty-two goals and played forty-two games for England. He is one of the tallest players in the professional game. In 1998 he joined the youth team at Tottenham Hotspur and has since played for teams including Queens Park Rangers, Portsmouth, Aston Villa and Liverpool. He is known for his celebratory robotic dance on pitch.

Ealing Connection: Born in Macclesfield, Cheshire, Peter Crouch moved to Ealing with his family aged four. He attended school locally at North Ealing Primary and later Drayton Manor High.

By Spencer Murphy
C-type print, 2010
NPG x134389
VISION

TREVOR BAYLIS (b.1937)
Inventor

Inspired by a 1991 television programme about HIV and AIDS in Africa, Trevor Baylis invented the wind-up radio that revolutionised access to information. In 2001 he demonstrated his battery-charging shoes and raised money for charity by walking 100 miles across the Namib Desert. In 2003 he founded Trevor Baylis Brands to help inventors protect and promote their work. He was awarded an OBE in 1997 for services to Africa.

Ealing Connection: Trevor Baylis was born in Kilburn and grew up in Southall, Ealing. His first job was at a Soil Mechanics Laboratory in Southall and he studied mechanical and structural engineering at the local technical college. Trevor Baylis was a special guest for Creative Connections and appears in the film An Ealing Trilogy.

By Tom Miller
C-type print, 17 July 1997
NPG x88404

PAUL CANOVILLE (b.1962)
Footballer

Paul Canoville was the first black footballer to play for Chelsea in 1982. His obvious abilities as a footballer were overshadowed by the significant racial abuse he experienced. He was forced to retire from the game due to an injury whilst playing for Reading. Canoville has overcome racial abuse, drug addiction as well as severe illness, and today draws on his experience to help motivate young people.

Ealing Connection: Paul Canoville attended Brentside High School Ealing, our partner for this year’s Creative Connections project. While at Brentside he played for Sunday league team Hanwell Celtic.

By Hugh Hastings
Bromide print, December 1981
Given by the photographer, 2014
NPG x139612
STEVE MCQUEEN (b.1969)
Artist
Steve McQueen is an acclaimed film maker. McQueen’s interest in film developed during his time at Goldsmiths College, London. His early work includes Bear (1993), Deadpan (1997) and Drumroll (1998). He won the Turner Prize in 1999. His first feature film, Hunger (2008), depicted the story of IRA hunger striker Bobby Sands. His most recent work 12 Years a Slave was awarded the Oscar for Best Picture in 2014. McQueen was awarded a CBE in 2011 for services to the visual arts.

Ealing Connection: Born to parents from Grenada, Steve McQueen grew up close to Ealing Studios. He attended school locally at Drayton Manor High.

SPENCER PERCEVAL (1762–1812)
Prime Minister
Spencer Perceval is the only British Prime Minister (1808–12) to have been assassinated while in office. He supported the anti-slavery campaign led by William Wilberforce and co-founded the African Institute in 1807 to safeguard the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act. He was shot in the lobby of the House of Commons by John Bellingham, a merchant with a grudge against the government. Bellingham was executed soon after.

Ealing Connection: In 1808, Spencer Perceval purchased Elm Grove Manor in Ealing. All Saints Church, constructed in his honour, now stands on the site. The Ealing Council Offices are located in Perceval House.
SIR CHARLIE CHAPLIN (1889–1977)
Actor and Director

Charlie Chaplin, one of the world’s most recognised film stars and the comic genius of early cinema, began his career in London’s music halls. The opportunity to work in America led to overnight success. In 1914 he developed his character ‘the little tramp’. Chaplin went on to direct and control the production and distribution of world-wide classics such as The Kid (1920), The Gold Rush (1925) and Modern Times (1936). He was awarded a knighthood for services to entertainment in 1975.

Ealing Connection: From 1896 to 1898, Charlie Chaplin attended the Central London District Poor Law School. The building is now the Hanwell Community Centre, Ealing, a plaque marks Chaplin’s time there.

ELLEN WILKINSON (1891–1947)
Politician

Ellen Wilkinson was a trade unionist and politician. She read history at Manchester University and became the national women’s organiser for the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers in 1915. She served as Labour MP for Middlesbrough East (1924–31) and for Jarrow (1935–47). In 1936 she joined 200 local men on the 300-mile Jarrow to London march; a protest about mass unemployment and poverty in the north-east of England.

Ealing Connection: The Ellen Wilkinson School for Girls in Ealing was named after her.
PETE TOWNSHEND (b.1945)
Musician

Born to parents who were professional musicians, Pete Townshend played the guitar and banjo from an early age. In 1964 he became part of the Who. Many of Townshend’s songs, including ‘My Generation’ and ‘Substitute’ profoundly influenced the London mod scene in the 1960s. During this period he developed his trademark ‘windmill guitar strum’ and the practice of smashing his instruments on stage during performances.

Ealing Connection: Pete Townshend attended school locally at Acton Grammar and went to Ealing Art School. In their early days the Who played at venues across the borough, including the Ealing Club. Marshall Amps, whose first two shops were in Ealing, supplied the band with the speakers that created their distinctively loud sound.

GURINDER CHADHA (b.1960)
Film Director

Gurinder Chadha’s first full-length film Bhaji on the Beach (1993) featured three generations of Asian women on a day trip to Blackpool. Her later production Bride and Prejudice (2004) combined Bollywood musical with a Jane Austen story. While focusing on British-Asian culture in her narratives, Gurinder Chadha’s focus on family dynamics reflects the universality of experiences.

Ealing Connection: Gurinder Chadha was born in Kenya and moved to Southall, Ealing with her family in 1961. One of her most successful films, Bend It Like Beckham (2002) is set in Southall. A fan of Ealing comedies, she wrote and filmed It’s A Wonderful Afterlife (2010) at Ealing Studios.

CREATIVITY
FREDDIE MERCURY (1946–1991)
Musician
Freddie Mercury, lead singer of the rock band Queen, challenged the conventions of rock and pop music and was admired for his vocal abilities and live performances. Queen achieved mainstream success in 1974 with ‘Killer Queen’. The hits continued with ‘We Will Rock You’, ‘We are the Champions’ and ‘Bohemian Rhapsody’. By 1982 they were Britain’s highest paid musicians. Mercury issued a statement confirming he had AIDS the day before he died.
Ealing Connection: Born Faroukh Bulsara in Zanzibar, Freddie Mercury’s family moved to London when he was a teenager. He studied at Ealing Art School, part of Isleworth Polytechnic, where he met Brian May and Roger Taylor, they formed Queen in 1970.

FRANK AUERBACH (b.1931)
Painter
Born in Berlin, Frank Auerbach was sent to England by his parents in 1939 as part of the Kindertransport programme to escape Nazi Germany. Taking British nationality in 1947, he attended Saint Martin’s School of Art (1948–52) and the Royal College of Art (1952–5). Recognised as one of the most important painters living today, his style is energetic with an obsessive intensity. Self-portraits are a rare aspect of his work and this drawing, which he produced over seven years, is one of five in existence.
Ealing Connection: In the 1960s Frank Auerbach taught at Ealing Art School.
**DUSTY SPRINGFIELD (1939–1999)**

**Singer**

‘Queen of Soul’ Dusty Springfield was a pivotal figure in 1960s pop music. She made her home in America and worked with producer Jerry Wexler, which resulted in her unique sound and classic hits such as ‘Son of a Preacher Man’. She led the way for future female pop musicians by maintaining control over her work. Dusty Springfield received an OBE for services to the music industry in 1999.

Ealing Connection: Dusty Springfield moved to Ealing in 1950 with her family. She attended school locally at St Anne’s Convent where her passion for singing and blues music developed. After school she worked part-time at the Ealing Branch of Bentalls department store.

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**SID JAMES (1913–1976)**

**Actor**

Sid James, born Sidney Joel Cohen in South Africa, to Jewish music-hall entertainers, was a successful hairdresser before pursuing an acting career. He had appeared in at least forty-seven films by 1954 when he began a successful partnership with Tony Hancock. He went on to star in nineteen Carry On films. With his trademark cackling laugh, he was one of the most popular comedy actors of his time.

Ealing Connection: Sid James acted in numerous films made at Ealing Studios, including *The Lavender Hill Mob* (1951) and *The Titfield Thunderbolt* (1953). His home in Gunnersbury Avenue, Ealing is marked today by a blue plaque.
The varied abilities of architect Sir John Soane; the open-minded intelligence of Trevor Baylis, inventor of the wind-up radio, together with the focus and skill of footballer Peter Crouch were all aspects of endeavour enjoyed by the young people. The notion of a perfect marriage or exchange of ideas at the moment when original thought occurs was epitomised in an imagined meeting between the chemist, William Perkin and mathematician, Ada Lovelace.
Charlie Chaplin’s early life as a pupil of Ealing’s poor school and subsequent rise to international stardom captured the students’ imaginations. They saw him employing performance, comedy and perseverance to realise his vision. Steve McQueen’s film 12 Years a Slave and its themes of inequality, dignity and determination, together with the stories of campaigners for a more just and fair society such as Ellen Wilkinson and Spencer Percival, resonated with the young people’s ideals and aspirations.
The chance to explore the stories of sitters associated with Ealing Film Studios, Art School and Music Club captivated the students, who perceived the artists and performers as having distinct public and private lives. They interpreted this separation as being ‘extravert’ and full of light or ‘introvert’ and dark. Stories of Dusty Springfield’s success in America, Freddie Mercury’s theatricality and the stage antics of Pete Townshend were especially potent within this.
The display
I want to help other people by making up my own ideas and sharing them.
Private View

Young people, their family, friends and the school community celebrate the project launch with the project supporter, artist and the Gallery team.
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Eelyn Lee

Eelyn Lee is the artist film maker for Creative Connections. Her work uses rich imagery and soundscapes to tell multi-layered stories about people and place. She is interested in groups of people, both as subjects and collaborators and enjoys building relationships that are conducive to the creation of bold and original work.

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