



FACT

Learning
Guide

Under
Cinema

26 October 2017 - 18 February 2018

FACT's Learning Programme presents the art centre as an expanded classroom for lifelong learning, critical dialogues and artistic experiences.

The programme of activities at FACT turn the art centre in a space to think about our present and social dream about our future. Art practise promotes critical and creative thinking, and fosters personal development.

Refuge is FACT's programme for Autumn 2017. It investigates the notion of 'refuge' or 'safe-space', in relation to art and art centres and explores issues of identity and community through non-traditional filmmaking, creative technology and social media. It is a platform for narratives and identities usually underrepresented in mainstream media. This programme includes Under cinema, an exhibition by filmmaker Wu Tsang and *Future Aleppo*, a Virtual Reality project by Alex Pearson and Marshmallow Laser Feast.

About this guide

Designed for educators and teachers bringing groups to visit FACT and gain knowledge and understanding of subject matter and enjoy and be inspired by the experience of an art centre visit while supporting learning across curricular dimensions.

This guide includes an outline of the artwork on show, as well as learning objectives, gallery discussions and ideas to stimulate the learning process around the themes of the exhibition.

Sensitive material warning

FACT recommends to visit the exhibition or revise its contents before bringing a group as you should be aware that the exhibition contains material that some people might find challenging. You may also wish to prepare your students or groups for this before their visit.

Teachers and educators will need to use their professional judgement and knowledge of their students in determining the suitability of the material for individual groups and whether they wish to seek parental consent.

General learning outcomes

- challenging existing attitudes and questioning values
- enjoying and being inspired by the physical experience of a gallery visit
- promoting research gathering and information processing and ability for children and young people to express themselves

School curriculum competences

- engage, inspire and challenge young people, equipping them with skills to understand and create art
- equip with the skills to think critically and develop perspective and judgement
- explore their ideas and experiences through art
- evaluate and analyse creative works and understand and develop art forms

This education resource has been co-design in collaboration with Stephanie Plitcha, Teacher, The Studio School, Liverpool; Heather Norton, Expressive Art Coordinator, Newbridge Learning Community, Wigan, Debbie Chan, works with artists & young people to create art for the public realm and and Bella Thomas.

Plan your visit

We can accommodate class sizes of up to 30 pupils (split into two groups) and sessions will last from one hour to an hour and a half.

For more information, or to arrange a visit, please email:
education@fact.co.uk / learning@fact.co.uk

Find us at FACT (Foundation for Art and Creative Technology),
88 Wood Street, Liverpool, L1 4DQ or fact.co.uk/

Opening times Tuesday - Sunday 11am - 6pm, and entrance is free.

About the exhibition

Wu Tsang's new solo show at FACT investigates the ways in which artistic practice can be a platform for less mainstream narratives, different from Western culture and traditional gender discourse.

As a filmmaker, Tsang moves between documentary and fiction, creating an immersive world where her characters are not represented within the traditional categorizations (race, gender,...). They constantly question what it means to be both an individual and a member of a community. Her style can be described as pseudo-documentation, she also explores performance and music.

Under Cinema, 2017 HD Video with sound and installation environment

The film follows the creative process of Kelela, an up-and-coming pop star as she records her first album. Performance and fantasy elements are used to represent Kelela's love for music and her struggle in the global music industry, hungry to exploit black culture without understanding the roots of its history.

The design configuration is also important, as it sits beneath FACT's cinema screen, engages with this idea of mainstream cinema and experimental art forms sharing the same space.

We hold we study, 2017 Two channel projection

The film portrays two duos dancing in different spaces. The one on the left is an open field and the performers wear clothes that relate to their community. On the right channel, dancers are inside a studio with no natural light, wearing plain black, tight fitting clothes. The rhythms are also very different; a constant dialogue of give and take on the left, opposed to non-stop fighting on the right.

These film talks about relationships: intimacy, despair and struggle but also, hope, communication and understanding of the individual identities.

About the artist

Wu Tsang is an emerging filmmaker, artist and performer based between Los Angeles and Athens. Her films, installations, performances, and sculptures move fluidly between documentary, activism, and fiction. Her works are concerned with the failure of traditional language or communication, community in the broadest sense of the word, and the gaps between intent and interpretation.

Tsang's filmmaking style tends towards the pseudo-documentary, favouring slipperiness and magic realism, and focusing on the increasing importance of fantasy in both storytelling and the day-to-day. Her intimate style and constant re-interpretation of the roles of history, music, dance and community creates an immersive, spectacular, other-worldly context in which her characters flourish and explode expectations.

<http://wutsang.com/>



Wu Tsang, *We hold where study* (2017), Courtesy of the Artist and Galerie Isabella Bortolozzi, Berlin. Commissioned by curator Nadja Argyropoulou for Polyeco Art Initiative. Photo: Roman Mensing

Activities

What makes you “you”?

Key term: Identity

- Activity designed for a discussion in classroom before coming to FACT.

What does identity mean? What makes an identity?

Let's watch this video, <https://youtu.be/4OW7jD-pXVrg>, by Juliana Huxtable and discuss different ways to talk and represent identity:

- Looks: how we dress, wear our hair or our make up
- Body language: think about the gestures and body languages
- Socially: are we defined by others?
- Social media and internet: What do social media reveal about a person? Do you think social media give positive reinforce to people?
- Personality and psychology: What is it that makes us strong? Does struggle make us a stronger person? Where does your self-esteem come from? Do our emotions define us?

What is it that makes you who you are?

In *Under Cinema*, Wu Tsang portrays Kelela as a woman who fights for her own identity. The process of becoming a pop star makes her struggle in her believes and she represents herself. We hold we study, is a representation of the struggles and problems of communications in human relationships.

- Activity designed for the classroom or FACT after visiting the exhibition

Identity is a slippery term. It's the word we use to describe all the things that make up who we are. In this activity, you will learn to think about identity and how it is made. Some people think that our identities are hidden inside us waiting to be discovered, others say it's something that we

build or perform.

Discuss: How do you dress when you are at school?

Photograph: Take a picture of yourself in uniform (you can just take a picture of one of the items of the everyday uniform), as if it were ready to post to Instagram. This does not have to include your face.

Write: What defines you here? Write as if you were posting to Instagram.

Discuss: How do you dress in your free time?

Photograph: Take a picture of yourself in your favourite clothes (you can just take a picture of one of the items of your favourite clothes), as if it were ready to post to Instagram.

Write: What defines you here? Write as if you were posting to Instagram.

Discuss: Let's have a look at the photos, in which do you look more relax? If you did not take a picture of yourself, maybe the group can guess which one is your picture based on the photographed items? What outfit made you feel more comfortable? What makes an identity? Where do you get your strength from?

How real is Reality?

Key term: Pseudo-documentary

- Activity designed for a discussion in classroom before coming to FACT.

Self-representation is how people define themselves, usually in relation to others. This is a greatly influence to how they think, feel, and behave, and is ultimately related to the construct of identity.

Let's watch this video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m4-9mYrbXVI>, by Kelela and discuss how she is presenting herself. Is she talking about a situation of struggle? Do you think she is portrayed as a strong person? Discuss the moments and visual elements that support your answer.

Wu Tsang: "The more subjective I could be in telling my own experience of the situation, the more ethical I could be to my subjects and collaborators." Does Wu Tsang's use of the camera and performances make us understand Kelela's story better?

- Activity designed for the classroom or FACT after visiting the exhibition

In this activity you will learn about pseudo-documentary filmmaking and how it offers new ways to describe who we are. A pseudo-documentary is a film or video production that takes the form or style of a documentary film but does not portray real events. Instead, scripted and fictional elements are used to tell the story. Many artists and filmmakers experiment by blending fiction with traditional documentary.

Your brief is to devise a pseudo-documentary (fake documentary, check references for some examples) that explores identity and then to pitch it to the rest of the group. The premise of the documentary is that a well-known social media star visits your school and takes part in lessons as a student for the day. Your challenge is to read and discuss the points below, make notes and then present your idea as a group.

1. Choose a youtuber, celebrity or anyone very used to talk or present him/herself in the media.

Examples:

Alfie Deyes, <https://www.youtube.com/user/Point-lessBlog>

Zoella, <https://www.youtube.com/user/zoella280390>

Mark Ferris, <https://www.youtube.com/user/TheBifflovesyou>

Daniel Howell, <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCGjyIN-4QCpn8XJ1uY-U0gA>

Amazing Phill, <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCHUE4ypXKp7ZkmdWbGJNgJg>

2. Set the scene. Pick a subject, classroom & teacher.
3. Devise a dramatic situation in which someone struggles to be themselves in class. The situation could be like one of these examples.
 - Joel (17) wants to go to the after school dance class, but he's worried his mates will make fun of him.
 - There is a debate in class about homophobia, Jay (13) wants to argue that gay people should be allowed to adopt, but feels scared to speak out.
 - Aisha (15) has made a computer game and is sick of the boys in her class saying that girls can't code.
 - Jasmine (11) falls asleep in class, he's tired because he's staying up late caring for his mum who is ill.
 - Anna (12) is from Yemen and she is sick of being told to 'speak english' in the school canteen.
4. Script a response from the creator.

Key terms

Identity: qualities, beliefs, personality, looks and/or expressions that make a person or group.

Pseudo-documentary: a film or video production that takes the form or style of a documentary film but does not portray real events

Subjectivity: A person's perspective or opinion, particular feelings, beliefs and desires. It emphasizes an individual's having not just a passive relationship to the world and the sense it causes but also agency, an active engagement with it.

References

[Juliana Huxtable](#)

[Wu Tsang about her work](#)

Examples of pseudo-documentaries (fake documentaries)

[Mermaids: The Body Found](#)

[Little Lunch](#)



Wu Tsang, *We hold where study* (2017), Courtesy of the Artist and Galerie Isabella Bortolozzi, Berlin. Commissioned by curator Nadja Argyropoulou for Polyeco Art Initiative. Photo: Roman Mensing