

Artworks to be displayed during the Entoto
Exhibition With brief explanations

Rivers of the World Artworks

APRIL 2021

Abune Gorgorios Primary School Addis Ababa

2019

Abune Gorgorios is an Ethiopian Orthodox school where traditional church songs can be heard throughout the day and traditional dress is often seen. This artwork brings together different elements of the life of the school through the traditional song Abay, Abay, Abay. Students learnt the song then painted small food tins to add rhythm to the melody. These tins were then combined to create the embroidery pattern on a traditional Ethiopian dress.

"I enjoyed it because it is very useful for our country and our world."
Afomia-Fikremariam, 2019



2021

The Merseyside Beat Poets put their lives into words with humour, rhythm and rhyme. Students at Abune Gorgorios first listened to poems by Beat Poet Roger McGough then learnt about the Mersey River; how it flows through country and city communities before reaching out into the Atlantic Ocean. Students formed their first reactions into poems, which flow, laugh and reflect on The Mersey finally coming together in one artwork to form a river of words.

"Our work will show people how water is important and how it is important for our life"
Edelawit, 2019



Africa Andinet No.1 Primary School Addis Ababa

2019

Africa Andinet School is in the heart of Piazza, a central shopping area of Addis. Bustling markets full of colourful fruit, vegetables and shopping bags, make up the surrounding culture. One activity in the school is to sing and learn through singing. After discussing the Blue Nile students created their own songs about the river set to famous Ethiopian melodies. The artwork combines the Piazza culture through colourful bags decorated with ideas about the river from the students' songs, which they then represented through dance, striking poses for photographs.

*"Today made me happy!
It taught me about countries
I don't know."
Eyobe, 2019*



2021

Students at Africa Andinet observed that many of the Beatles' songs, famous for being from The Mersey River areas, were about love. What do we love? They asked themselves. Art, music, family and friends were some of their answers. They also love to dance. After practicing dance styles from 1960s rock and roll routines such as the hand-jive and the twist students developed their own moves that they danced to their favourite Beatles song. Their moves were then photographed and represented in the colours, they love best.

*"I love it, it is very
participatory, we are learning
about other countries too
and I learnt new skills."
Fikir, 2019*



We love
music art football music religion football family
art dance gymnastics art mum acting art Ethiopia



Bethlehem Secondary School Addis Ababa

2016

The Kechene River near Bethlehem school is polluted by industries like battery and paint factories, and tanneries. The river runs through Addis feeding the reservoir, which supplies Addis. On its journey it irrigates vegetable crops, which supply the markets of Addis. The students wanted to express the idea that the people of Addis are what they eat - the fruit and vegetables irrigated and polluted by the Kechene. Inspired by Italian artist Giuseppe Arcimboldo who paints portraits made of vegetables the students created a sickened man from sculptures of vegetables made with leather, metal, paint and waste materials.

"We learnt so much about art and how we must care about the pollution of rivers and how it can disease parts of our body."
Bethlehem student, 2016



2017

In 1536 King Henry 8th sentenced his wife Queen Anne Boleyn to execution by beheading for adultery, incest and high treason. Anne Boleyn was taken by boat from Hampton Court Palace down the Thames through London. The boat travelled under London Bridge, which was ornamented with spikes displaying the heads of those previously executed and finally into the Tower of London prison. Bethlehem students created Abstract Expressionist paintings to express the emotions they imagined Anne Boleyn felt on her final journey, a journey which ended with the blood red of her execution.

"I like the way you made us create something that's just an image in our mind. Now you've showed me what I am capable of, when I started I thought it was impossible, but it wasn't."
Bethlehem student, 2017



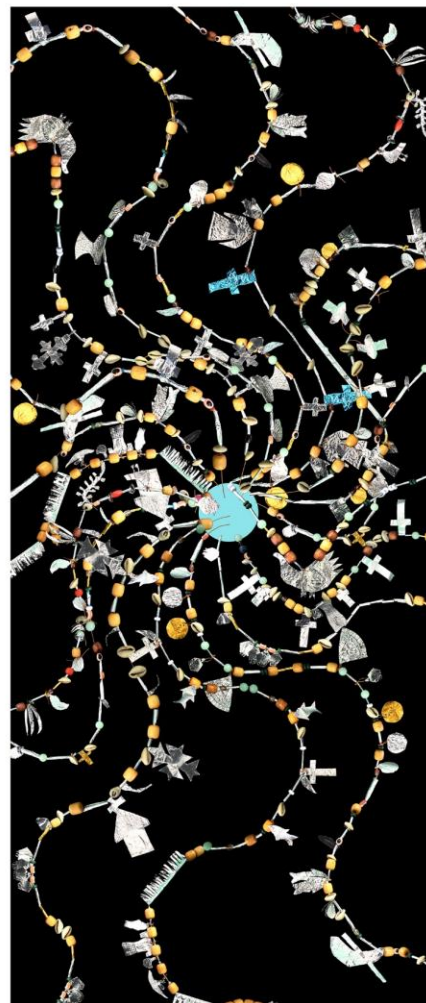
Fasilo Secondary School Bahir Dar

2019

Bahir Dar means Sea Shore in English. The city by the huge sea-like lake is a trading post for goods from the Blue Nile and the many islands in Lake Tana, which the Blue Nile flows through. Students considered how their city had grown up because of the networks of trade due to its river and lakeside location. They created silver, shell, and bead necklaces in the local style, decorating them with pendants representing traded goods such as bananas, mangos and fish, and cultural ideas, which were also shared along the trade routes.

"Please continue this inspiring project, I wish it could be embedded in the curriculum."
Ayenew Terefe (teacher), 2019

"I am very, very happy."
Andualem, 2019



2021

Students at Fasilo School in the centre of Bahir Dar studied the Liverpool docks, huge warehouses that stored goods brought along the Mersey River and across the ocean. They considered what materials might be transported to and stored in the docks today, then designed new dock warehouses, creating them from bright collage paper representing the colourful cotton that the original dock buildings were built to house. The students' artwork was then compiled into a 'miniature portrait', a popular style of portraiture in the UK when the Liverpool Docks were built.

"I want to continue this creative work in the future"
Tariku, 2021



Ghion Secondary School Bahir Dar

2016

Long journeys are taken to collect holy water from the sacred Ghion or Blue Nile River especially from Gish Abay, the spring in the Ethiopian highlands where the river starts. Gish Abay is named after an ancient tale describing a priest leaving his bible in the spring for safekeeping. Using a traditional bible scroll technique of painting on leather the students created illustrated stories and poems describing what precious item they would leave with Gish Abay. The background is a mud wall representing the ancient mud churches on islands in Lake Tana, which the river runs through.

"Through this training you have worked wisely, helping us to know and understand then communicate this message, thank you."
Ghion student 2016



2017

In 1858 the Thames River was nicknamed The Great Stink due to its foul smelling pollution. The problem was so severe that debates in the Palace of Westminster, by the Thames, were cancelled as MP's were revolted by its odour. Following the British tradition of using satirical cartoons to express opinions students made drawings and collages to create comic images of MP's in Parliament suffering the effects of The Great Stink. They depicted the polluted river using black and grey paint on canvas. Their work was collaged into the shape of the Houses of Parliament with the Thames flowing past.

"From a river, which we never knew, you told us the history and importance of it, which is very interesting."
Ghion student 2017



Ghion Secondary School Bahir Dar

2019

The Blue Nile, which runs past Ghion School, creates a resource for communication between students in Ethiopia and students in Sudan. Students in Ghion School considered what messages they would like to send to fellow students in Sudan and how to get them there. They studied patterns found in different types of art and considered what ideas they represented. They refined their messages to one word such as unity and friendship, and invented patterns to represent them. They painted their patterns inside old water bottles so their messages could float down the Blue Nile reaching students in Khartoum.

"I love working on this project, it made me believe that I can do it!"
Betelhem, 2019

"Art has no boundaries, no limits, you can use anything anywhere to make art."
Ghion student, 2019



2021

The Future Flower sculpture is a 14 metre steel flower with windmill petals, which spin to generate electricity to light them at night. It was commissioned to represent regeneration, symbolising new life beside the Mersey River near Widnes in the UK. Students at Ghion School brought flowers and natural materials from their homes to create their own symbols of new life such as pregnancy, a peace dove and a tree heavy with fruit. These were compiled into a huge flower combining all their symbols.

"I made a flower to show new life, I didn't know I could be this creative"
Kalkidan, 2021



Rivers of the World

Magnificent river-inspired artwork by young people from Ethiopia and the UK!

Rivers of the World is the Thames Festival Trust's international art and education project delivered in partnership with the British Council.

Rivers of the World is a two-year programme involving pupils learning about their local river in the first year then learning about a river in another country in the second. The project encourages young people in the Ethiopia, UK and across the world to explore and reflect on local and global issues, giving them the experience to build the skills they need for life and work in a global society.

Over the last five years students in Ethiopia have created artwork about The River Nile, other Ethiopian rivers and UK rivers The Thames and The Mersey. Art workshops with professional artist Martha Hardy and British Council facilitator Zeny Zerfu helped students understand the importance of rivers and the environmental challenges they face. The creative process the students went through with a professional visiting artist provided the opportunity for them to imagine the potential for art in their lives.

The students' ideas are given agency through the design, creation, and public display of beautiful artworks.

#riversoftheworld



Ghion school, Bahir Dar, 2019

"I enjoyed this project because it is very useful for our country and our world!"
Afomia-Fikremariam,
Abune Gorgorios School,
Addis Ababa



Artwork about the Nile by students at Beamont Collegiate Academy, UK with artist Kirsty Hall. Partnered with Africa Andinet No.1 Primary School, Addis Ababa



Artwork about the Nile by students at Sir Thomas Boteler Church of England High School, UK with artist Kirsty Hall. Partnered with Nazereth Primary & Secondary School, Addis Ababa

Menelik II Primary School Addis Ababa

2019

The Tekeze River, which twists around mountains in the northern highlands of Ethiopia, is a main tributary of the Atbarah River, which flows into the Nile. Backlogs of manmade and natural waste build up in the Tekeze, covering the water's surface with debris. Viewed from a far the pollution is hard to define, but close up the waste materials are suddenly recognisable. Students depicted this by creating standing sculptures of things that should be in the river like birds and boats, but making them from the debris of human life such as old boxes and sweet wrappers.

"I liked it, I was happy, because I got support, because I worked equally with others."
Tsedenya, 2019



2021

The Students at Menelik II Primary School reflected on photos of Anthony Gormley's metal sculptures that gaze out to sea where the Mersey flows into the Atlantic Ocean. They wondered what his sculptures were looking at? How they were feeling? Why they weren't huddled against the cold or protecting their eyes from the sun? Using the often-found waste material of aluminum foil students sculpted themselves just as Anthony Gormley had, imagining how they would stand looking out over the Atlantic ocean, their feet in the sand with the Mersey waters rushing past.

"It makes us responsible for the rivers."
Abel, 2019



Nazereth School Addis Ababa

2019

The Blue Nile drives hydroelectric power stations providing electricity for Ethiopia. Students explored how power is created from the movement of water and considered how this could be expressed visually. They created circular artworks using shoelaces, which are sold on the street in central Addis Ababa where their school is. Nazereth is a girls school and this artwork also reflects traditional circular basket designs traditionally made by women in Ethiopia, and the work of female Ethiopian artist Mihret Debebe who sometimes uses shoelaces as her primary material. They added paint splatters blown across paper to represent electrical sparks.

"I enjoyed being free to see art like a way to provide information. I did know art was important but not as much as I do now, it gave me a whole new way of making art and boosted my creativity."
Ruhama, 2019



2021

The year 2020 was a year of masks, some made with cotton covering our faces with layers of fabric to protect against the Covid 19 virus. Many years ago the Merseyside area was developed through the cotton industry with raw cotton transported by ship from the Atlantic Ocean up the Mersey River to factories that wove it into clothes. Students at Nazereth School decorated masks with their ideas representing the Merseyside cotton industry such as industrial warehouses made from paper and knitted cotton plants. Their creations were curled together into large flower patterns representing the origins of cotton.



Time's Choice Academy Bishoftu/Debre Zeit

2016

The Wedecha river is named after the Wedecha tree, which grows on Yerer Mountain where the river starts. The river's water is used domestically and was used for flower farms. However the Wedecha trees are being cut down causing rainwater to flood instead of feed the river, reducing it's flow to the farms. The students expressed the idea that the trees and river are mutually beneficial; they painted the trees and river as one. They made leaves and grass from handprints representing the river's domestic use and designed flowers showing how they can bloom if the river and trees are strong.

"We developed our skills and the work made us active with positive ideas."
Time's Choice student, 2016



2017

Two Tree Island is visible from Times' Choice's UK partner school in Southend. As the Thames Estuary tide changes a rich feeding ground surrounding the island is revealed for migratory birds, who live there during summer. The food fuels their annual migration to Africa and it's possible these birds are found in Times Choice's garden during winter. To express this amazing connection students made stencils and painted a flock of migratory birds shaped as the moon, reflecting the force behind the tide. They used patterns and colours of the flags of the African countries which the birds travel to.

"It was amazing, I liked it and we all had fun. I was taught to express my ideas freely."
Time's Choice student, 2017

The trees full of migratory birds in the playground of Time's Choice Academy



Thank you