

THE
NATIONAL
GALLERY

Escape

Creative questioning, inspired by the National Gallery,
created by the Young Producers.

Our definition:

Zine /zi:n/

Noun

A non-official, small-circulation, homemade magazine. Often made in a low key and DIY way, like with a photocopier.

Escape from and question life around you.

**Escape from the pressures and expectations
that society may place on you.**

We're in a strange time of lockdown and social distancing. Normal life is on hold, but will it ever come back? Maybe we don't want it back, maybe there's a new way. This time might be a big leap forward for you, for your community, or for the world.

Sometimes we all need to escape, but that's not always possible in the ways we might like. We've been thinking about another way out, a different kind of freedom – out of the everyday and into fresh ideas, unleashing your creativity. You can get away from daily distractions and take more notice of your surroundings, or even escape from them. This is your chance to take some time to focus on yourself and be imaginative!

In this zine, we've taken inspiration from some of the National Gallery's paintings. We've designed some creative stuff you can try out at home, for young people, by young people. We've chosen paintings that are full of dramatic stories, new visions and bold ideas to inspire and excite you.

Whether you need to escape from your environment, from society or just into another world, jump in.

**Escape from the world you inhabit
and experience something different.**

Escape from your environment

Sometimes, the first place we go to escape is into our own environment. I like to sit on my bed and sort through my stuff, taking the time to dust and tidy them away. If you have ever done this, you know how easily you can be distracted and get lost in the forgotten corners of your room. However, sometimes we want to just leave and experience something new. During lockdown this may not be possible, but putting that intention out there sometimes helps. Watching the world around you like many artists do, is another way of exploring from your chair. Take a moment and escape your environment...

ONE

Look

Have you ever overlooked something in your daily life? Sometimes we don't notice the things we see so often. Look around you. Is there anything you aren't paying attention to?



Jan van Kessel's *Insects with Common Hawthorn and Forget-Me-Not*

Jan van Kessel's *Insects with Common Hawthorn and Forget-Me-Not* highlights the beauty in the everyday. He's paused and captured a moment in time. Here are things which might be important to him but can be missed by a lot of people.

Find

Dig through your bag, pockets, wallet, or purse

AND/OR

Assemble knick-knacks from around your room.

Question

Why have you got this?

Where did you get it?

Does it trigger a memory?
How does that make you feel?

Create

Select the objects that stick out most to you.

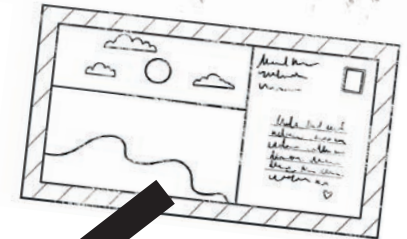
Lay them out and create an image like Jan van Kessel's painting.

Our definition:

Knick-knack /'nɪknak/

Noun

An item in your belongings that sticks out to you but is otherwise worthless without the memory or emotion e.g. cinema tickets, postcards, ornaments etc...



When was the last time you used that object?
Has someone made it for you, or did you make it?
Is there anything here that you wouldn't want someone else to see?
Can you form a timeline of events from these objects?

TWO

Now that you've thought about where you've been, think about where you want to go...

Claude Monet's *The Gare St Lazare*



Imagine

Take what you've seen and think about where they may be going.

Where would you want to go? Write down a few places you would like to explore. It doesn't have to be far – it can be as simple as the seaside or as pleasant as the park.



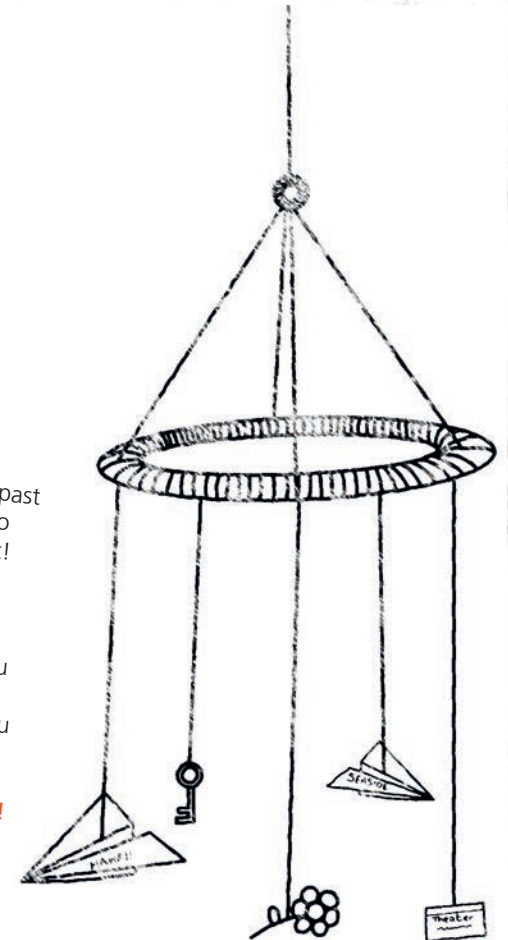
Look

If we step into this painting, we are in the middle of a busy station, watching hazy figures boarding trains to anywhere. Peek out of your window – can you spot a person setting off on their own journey?



Create

After reflecting on your past and future, it's time to do something in the present! Using the knick-knacks you've collected, make a mobile using household items. Make it capture you – where you've been, and where you want to go. You could use cardboard as a support and string to hang your objects. **Be inventive!**



Escape from society

Sometimes in our lives, society puts pressure on us to act, look and feel a certain way. Being creative can help us to free ourselves from what's expected, by looking closely at ourselves/our own identities. A big pressure on young people like us today is that of stereotypical 'beauty', which social media often makes even harder for us to deal with. Another force we feel, is how perhaps in our childhood, society made us be someone we are not. Is this true for you? Take a moment to think how we could escape from societal expectations...

ONE

Look

The artist Quinten Massys painted *The Ugly Duchess*. But what exactly makes her ugly? In this painting you can see a confident and hopeful woman. Isn't this beauty? She contrasts the typically 'beautiful' goddesses we see in a lot of paintings; can you see the beauty in her?

Quinten Massys', *An Old Woman ('The Ugly Duchess')*



Now try and see the beauty within yourself. Grab a bold pen and draw a self-portrait – be confident in your features. Try and draw what you see, find a mirror or even use the camera on your phone.

If you have access to a phone/camera you can create your own digital version!



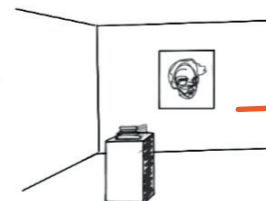
Create



Take your drawn self-portrait and hang it behind you.



Place your phone in front of you – you can balance it on some books. Then go to your camera and set it to self-timer.



Pose in front of your drawn portrait so that it makes you feel bolder and more confident!



Try and highlight the features that you like the most about yourself. To do so, use any props you like, such as mirrors, or even some plants. **Be creative!**

TWO

Societal expectations can be difficult to escape and they're often seen through the ways that we're dressed.

Anthony van Dyck, *The Balbi Children*



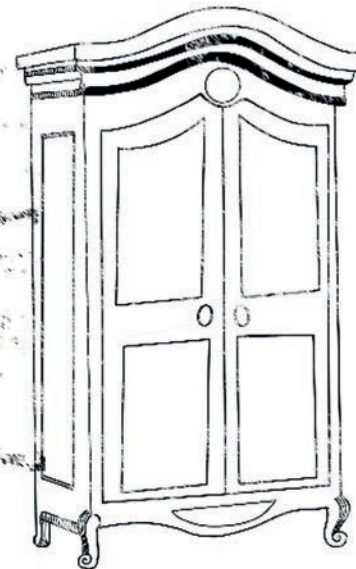
Look

The clothes that the children wear in this painting reflect the various expectations that were placed on them, including what their role would be in society and the importance of the continuation of their family legacy.



Reflect

Recall a time when something similar has happened to you. Try to find a photo or even sketch what you wore, in the box provided. How has your style changed since?



Create

Take inspiration from what you wore then and reimagine it into something you'd wear now. Search through your stuff for items that are similar in colour or pattern and piece them together into something that represents you.

THREE

Look

Sometimes we focus too much on how we look to others that we forget about how we really want to be seen. *The Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian* by the del Pollaiuolo brothers shows Saint Sebastian unmoved by people shooting arrows at him while he is tied to a tree. Today he is celebrated by many as an LGBTQIA+ icon because he is represented in paintings as a very handsome young man with a body to die for! Though when he was alive, he probably saw himself as a Christian ready to die for his faith.



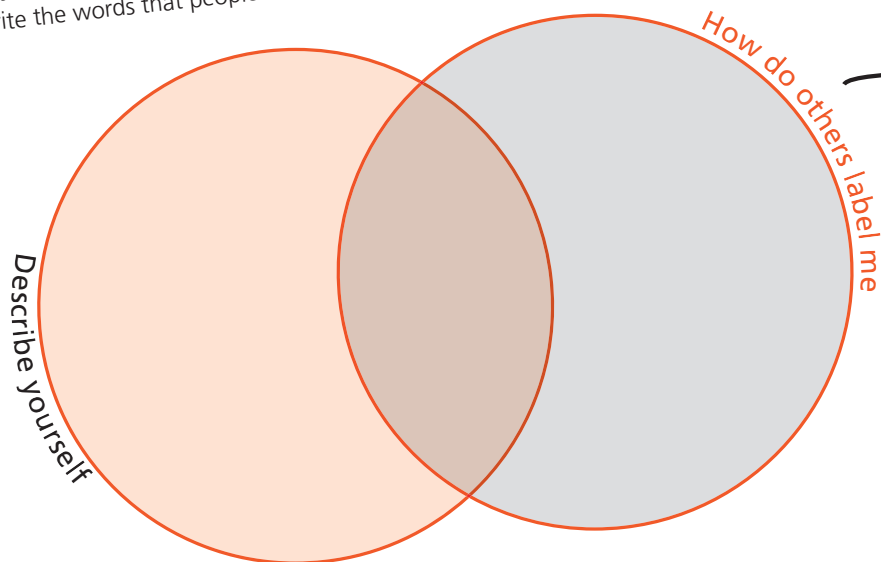
Antonio del Pollaiuolo and Piero del Pollaiuolo,
The Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian

Do

In the Venn diagram below:

Take a bold pen and write words that describe you. You might be energetic, creative or shy – list as many as you like.

In the other section, use a pencil and write the words that people label you as.



Look at the words that people labeled you as, think about the ones you don't agree with and scribble them out. People's opinions are temporary and can always change, and that's why we can remove labels we don't want.

Then in the gap between the two, put 2 or 3 words that you would want people to see you as.

Listen

This podcast traces the lives of powerful women in art 500 years ago – how much progress have we made since then?



Rachel Ruysch was an artist who defied the societal norms of her time. Listen to a short talk by Dami, one of the Young Producers, about her painting *Flowers in a Vase*.



nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/rachel-ruysch-flowers-in-a-vase

Escape into another world

Sometimes when the world around us seems overwhelming, escaping somewhere else can really help. We all know what it feels like to want to be elsewhere, especially because of lockdown. We like to reimagine the world through creativity. You can transport yourself through creating your own different world or even by entering one already made, such as in a painting. Take a moment to escape into another world...



Titian, Bacchus and Ariadne

Ariadne
 @cretan_princess

Just met Theseus on the island of love – it's the first time I've felt so strongly about someone.

23 March 2020

248 Retweets 4K Likes

Ariadne
 @cretan_princess

Is he the one? I think he feels the same...

26 March 2020

Ariadne
 @cretan_princess

I've been having such a dream with Theseus, I've totally neglected my diary. Feels like it's only us on this island.

3 April 2020

150 Retweets 12K Likes

Ariadne
 @cretan_princess

Theseus says he's leaving the show! He's rejected me... I can't believe it.

1 May 2020

400 Retweets 15K Likes

Ariadne
 @cretan_princess

I feel so alone out here. Abandoned. And so embarrassed.

2 May 2020

248 Retweets 4K Likes

Ariadne
 @cretan_princess

I'm shaking with anger – did I not mean anything to him? I actually had to watch him sail away into the distance. I just stood there, frozen, on the verge of tears. I reached out towards him but somehow I couldn't cry out. I stayed until he was just a dot on the horizon.

Ariadne
 @cretan_princess

I heard a sound. Maybe it's him and he didn't really leave? No – it's not him. Not Theseus. A curly-haired God is walking towards me. I swear the stars from the sky are reflected in his gaze. Our eyes just met. Maybe he'll save me from this loneliness.

3 May 2020

345 Retweets 17K Likes

Ariadne
 @cretan_princess

Thank God Bacchus has joined the show now – it's love at first sight (hopefully!)

4 May 2020

600 Retweets 45K Likes

Create

Imagine you are Ariadne. Create or write a playlist of songs to reflect her changing feelings of infatuation, abandonment, anger and new love.

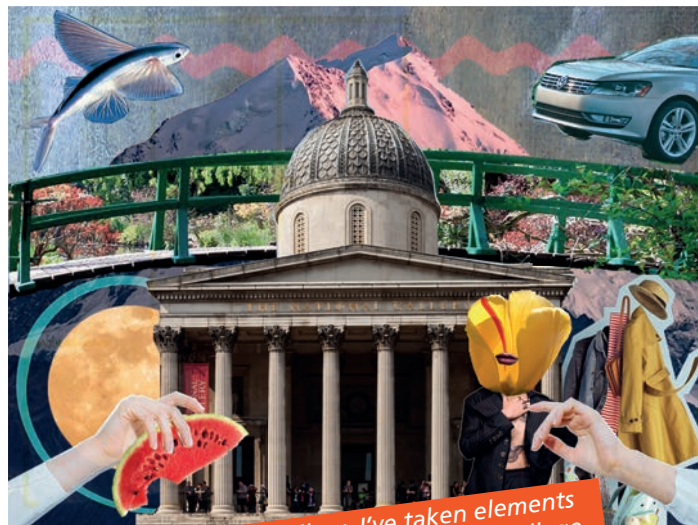
Watch

In this video, spoken word artist Abstract Benna connects paintings of Empire and to his own community in Brixton.



youtube.com/watch?v=XebW5NPxLEc

TWO



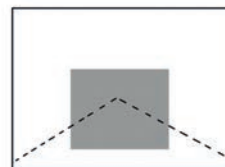
This collage is based around the National Gallery, I've taken elements from paintings that I admire and used it to inspire parts of my collage. As a digital collage, I was able to use images from all over the place to create this, although if you are using more abstract and nonsensical, don't be afraid to create something more abstract and nonsensical.

Create

Try making your own collage of an alternative world. You can use paper and cut up magazines, or an app on your phone or computer. Here's some tips and tricks to help you along the way.

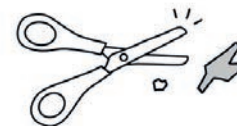
Choose your main image. Place this onto the page and work around this to create your collage.

Play with different layers in your collage: bring important images to the front to emphasize them or put plain colours in the background to add texture.



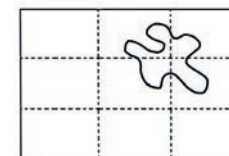
If you want to draw the viewer's eye to a certain point of your collage, you can lead them there using the angle of other objects – like the hands point to the gallery in this collage.

Don't be afraid to make mistakes, if you've accidentally cut through a picture, think about how you can use this new shape in your collage.



Rip, tear and scrunch to create new textures with your collage. If you're working digitally, try new filters and effects.

Divide up your page into a 3x3 grid, play around with placing your images on the lines or the intersections of the grid. This will help balance your composition.



If your collage is looking too heavy on one side, think about what is drawing your eye to that part and add a counter to this by adding something of the same value to the opposite side.

Collages are all about self-expression, do what feels right to you. Have fun with it!



Watch

In this video, artist Bethan Durie turns paper into a jungle



youtube.com/watch?v=eAdFH-51YpM

Stuck? Turn your collage upside down, this can bring you a fresh perspective!



*Dr Gabriele Finaldi
Director of the National Gallery*

I've been Director of the Gallery since the summer of 2015. I was a curator at the Gallery back in the 1990s when I looked after the Italian and Spanish collections. The first time I learned about art I was hooked! I found that there was an innate enthusiasm for looking and learning about pictures and they seemed to open up windows on the past in a very alive way. I thought 'this is so marvellous – this is what I want to do!'

I love art museums; one of the greatest thrills for me is to stand at the door of a museum I've never visited and to step over the threshold to see what is there. I think the Gallery in the past belonged to the curators, whereas now we're much more conscious that it belongs to everyone and needs to be able to speak much more broadly. My view of the Gallery is as an open organisation with greater participation by all sorts of people.

If you want to build a career in the arts, the first thing I'd recommend is that you feel a natural enthusiasm and a natural interest... that it's something that arises from within rather than is forced on you from outside, because that's what will sustain you. It's not going to be easy to make a career in the arts but there are lots of opportunities; there are lots of museums, lots of galleries, and opportunities for learning!

I would say focus on what your real interests are, make sure you get the right training and then grab the opportunities when they arise.

ESCAPE is brought to you
by the National Gallery
Young Producers:

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Charlee Jane Kieser
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Jacob ter Voorde
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The National Gallery has a diverse programme of events and resources for 15-25 year olds, produced by and for young people. To find out more and get involved, email us at:
youngproducers@ng-london.org.uk