ANIMATED BATTLES

ALDERBROOK PRIMARY SCHOOL, LONDON

10–11 YEAR-OLDS

Year 6 were interested in how we could use media to retell the battle in the painting, having explored drawing and animation throughout lockdown. We learned more about animation techniques in a series of workshops and decided that stop-motion animation would be best. Through our discussions we realised that the pandemic has been like a modern-day battle. Our final animation shows the start of Niccolò's battle in San Romano alongside our battle with Coronavirus.

Creative Arts Leader

'I wanted to include the airport as people used to be able to travel. This will show how life is calm before the battle starts, like when the pomegranates are growing peacefully before the battle breaks in San Romano.'

Student, aged 10

TAKE ONE
PICTURE
CHILDREN INSPIRED BY PAOLO UCCELLO'S
THE BATTLE OF SAN ROMANO

ARMOURED BEASTS

BEAVERS COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL, LONDON

7–8 YEAR-OLDS

The children thought that some of the armour in the painting reminded them of different animals, such as woodlice, armadillos and dragons. So, we investigated animals with built-in armour including scales, spikes, shells and exoskeletons, before deciding to make our own. We found a box of medical gloves and explored different ways of adapting them to make an armature – we also thought about the gloves being a modern type of protection. The children then chose what they were going to use to build up their beasts. They painted them with silver acrylic paint and dry-brushed them with black to resemble armour.

Art Lead

*'It has an exoskeleton and also spikes,
a bit like a Thorny Devil.'*

Student, aged 7

EXPLORING FRUITS AND FLOWERS

BRIDGEWATER PRIMARY SCHOOL, NORTHAMPTON

3–4 YEAR-OLDS

We introduced the painting by showing the children small details and asking them what they saw. They soon noticed the flowers and oranges in the bushes, leading to conversations about the fruits that we like. We tried tasting different fruits and developed our vocabulary by comparing them. We also talked about the idea that flowers grow outside, and we planned a walk around the school to find some. The children chose fresh flowers and leaves and used them to create a collaborative print.

Art Lead and Year 1 Teacher

'I like oranges, but I do like satsumas too.'

Student, aged 3

THE FRUITS OF SAN ROMANO

BROMLEY HIGH SCHOOL GDST, KENT

4–5 YEAR-OLDS

Children in Reception Class asked lots of questions about the painting and we learned new vocabulary such as 'foreground' and 'background'. Exploring the background led us to look closely at the pomegranates in the bushes. We experimented with colour, shape and pattern to create our own interpretations of the plump fruits. We made vibrant and bright pomegranates using beautiful colours inspired by the painting.

Early Years Teacher

'My pomegranate is the same colours as the soldier's hat.'

Student, aged 5
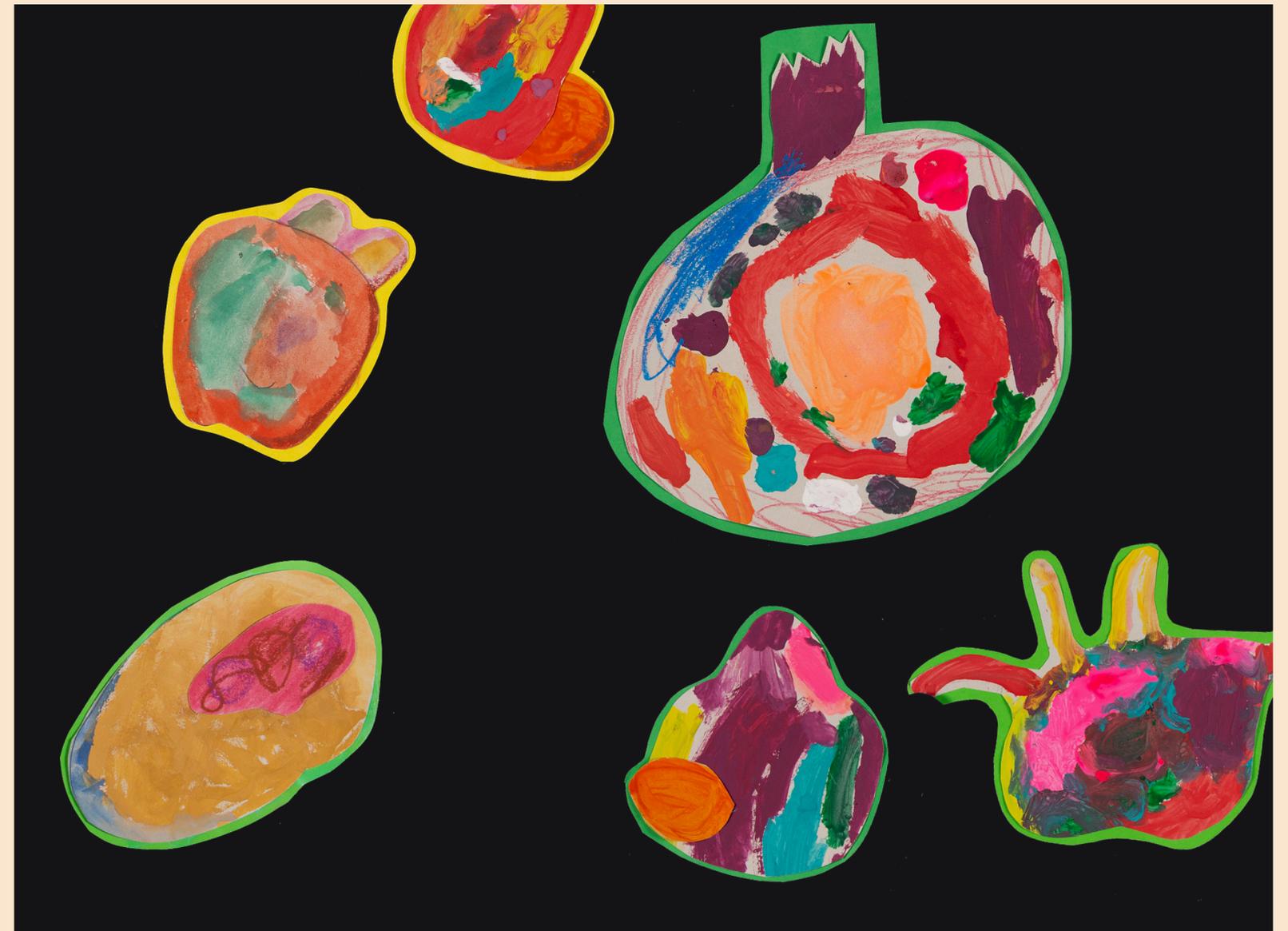
HERO MEDALS

CAROLINE CHISHOLM SCHOOL, NORTHAMPTON

5–6 YEAR-OLDS

TAKE ONE
PICTURE
CHILDREN INSPIRED BY PAOLO UCCELLO'S
THE BATTLE OF SAN ROMANO

Year 1 were interested in the elaborate red hat worn by Niccolò da Tolentino and its significance to the painting. They thought it was strange to reward someone with a hat. The children thought that the soldiers should be given a gift too, as they were all heroes fighting in the battle. The discussions about heroes gave the children time to reflect on the everyday heroes in their lives, and they decided to make medals that they could award to these special people. The labels show who the medals are awarded to and why.

Teaching Assistant and Art Specialist

'I liked learning about the red hat. My medal was for my mummy because she works hard.'

Student, aged 6

VISION OF THE PAST

CLEVELAND ROAD PRIMARY SCHOOL, ESSEX

7–8 YEAR-OLDS

Some of the children thought that it would be interesting to recreate the battle, but they discussed how this might be difficult to organise and film. One child then pointed out that animation could work as well as a live-action video. They researched different animation techniques, eventually settling on a zoetrope as their choice. The children drew images from the painting with small changes in each frame, and then slotted these images into the zoetrope, which was made using card and hot glue.

Class Teacher

'I enjoyed making the fight come to life by making the zoetrope. It was like watching a film.'

Student, aged 8
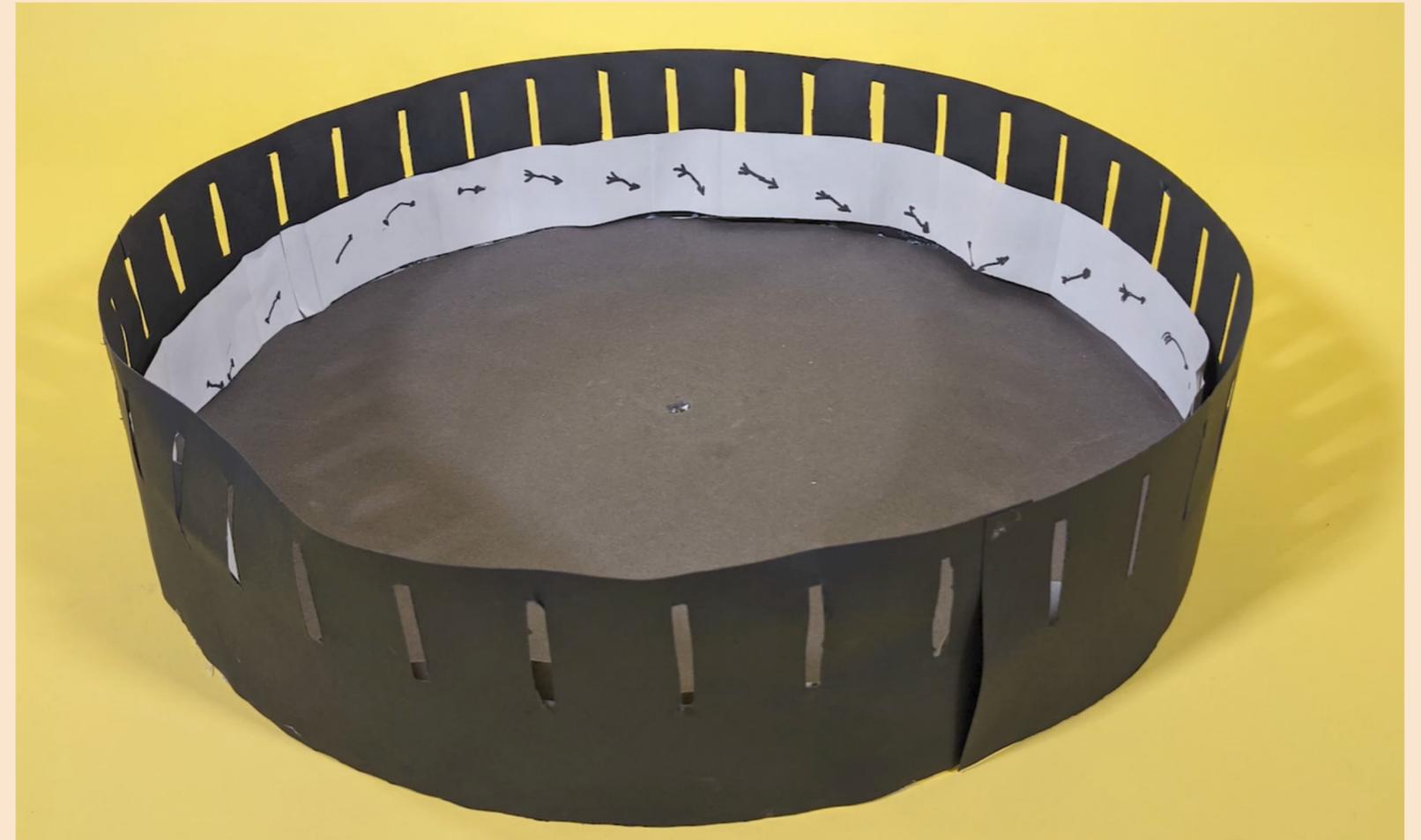
ABSTRACTIONS

ETON END SCHOOL, BERKSHIRE

10–11 YEAR-OLDS

Year 6 were inspired by the abstract qualities of the picture. Looking closely, we isolated the interesting lines, colours, shapes and patterns. We then looked at the artwork of Robert Reed – a contemporary abstract artist who was also inspired by *The Battle of San Romano*. We noticed that there were lots of similarities between the elements we had chosen and his work. Finally, we made our own abstract responses to the painting.

Head of Art

'We concentrated on things like its perspective, colour, movement and shapes … it took a long time, but I really enjoyed my painting.'

Student, aged 11

BATTLE CHARACTERS

ETZ CHAIM JEWISH PRIMARY SCHOOL, LONDON

7–8 YEAR-OLDS

TAKE ONE
PICTURE
CHILDREN INSPIRED BY PAOLO UCCELLO'S
THE BATTLE OF SAN ROMANO

The children reflected on what they liked about the painting, before deciding that they would like to add a new figure. They had to think about what kind of character would be appropriate for the painting and what they might need. They drew their characters in their sketchbooks and annotated them to show what they were including and why. Some children also planned which resources they would need to make a 3D version.

Year 3 Class Teacher

'It was so fun and I thought it was really creative.'

Student, aged 7
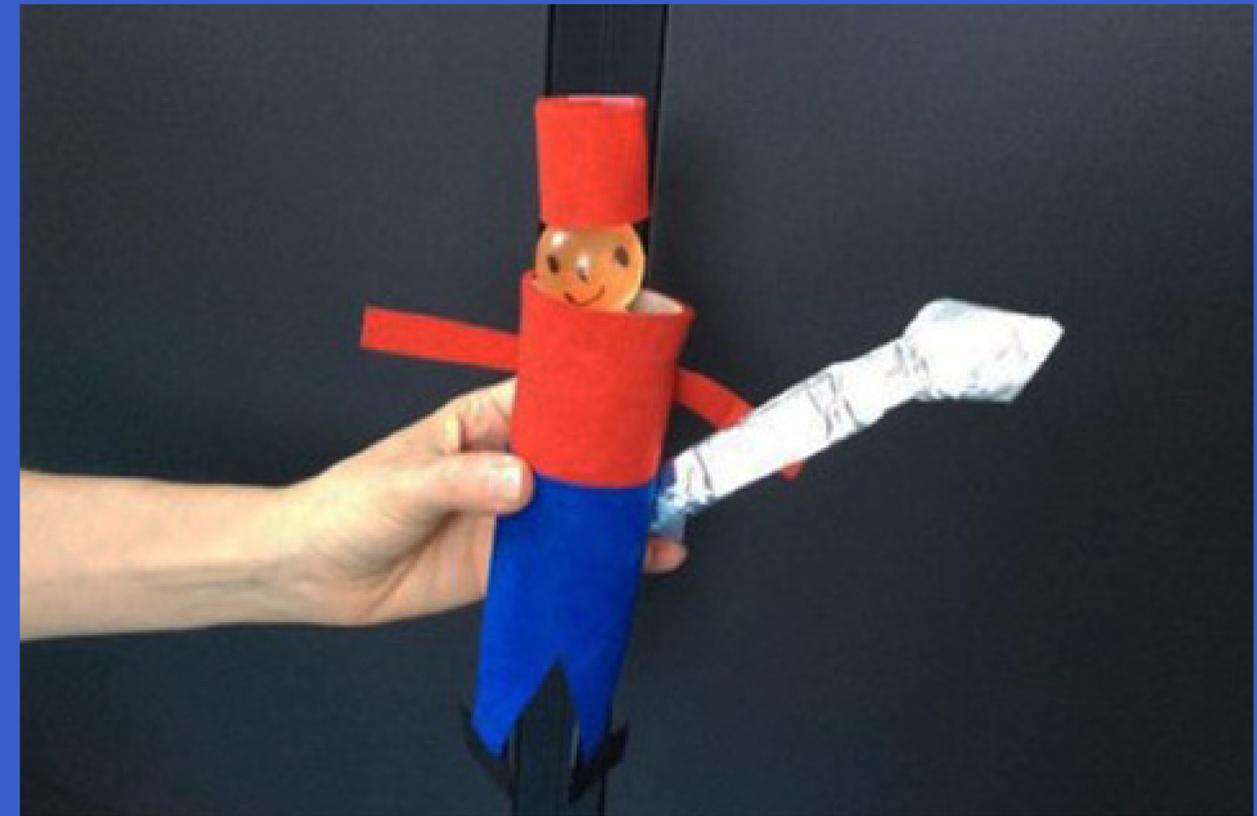
DESCRIPTIVE WRITING AND DRAMA

EXETER JUNIOR SCHOOL, EXETER

9–10 YEAR-OLDS

We started our project by listening to the Gallery's soundscape for the painting and encouraging the children to describe what they heard using emotive language. We imagined that we could walk inside the picture and wrote creative descriptions of the battle using all our senses. We then stepped into the shoes of Niccolò da Tolentino, in a post-battle interview. The beginning of our project was delivered remotely during the first lockdown, facilitating wonderful cross-curricular learning at home.

Art Coordinator

"I really enjoyed doing this art project and I was surprised that we could study it in subjects like English and Maths too … It has made me look at paintings in a new way.'

Student, aged 10

The Battle of San Romano

It was early morning when suddenly came a distant roar, the army of the Sienese. Not long later the clinging of the swords, the galloping of the horses and the roars of the army begin. The man who usually leads the Florentine, his name is Micheletto. He used to wear the hat of red and gold but he had lost too many battles and he was the leader no more! As the Florentine fought desperately under their new leader by the name of Niccolò, he now wore the hat of red and gold.

On and on the armies fought each side desperate to win this battle, The Battle of San Romano. For the Florentine it didn't look good as they were losing land rapidly, and land was the key to winning this battle, The Battle of San Romano.

Hours had passed and dusk was soon, but the Florentine did not give up, they couldn't give up now. But little did they know that one final strike from Micheletto would win the battle for them.

They had done it! The Florentine had won! Micheletto had won it for them, but will he get the hat of red and gold back?

'WARESS'

GORDON PRIMARY SCHOOL, ESSEX

7–8 YEAR-OLDS

Year 3 brainstormed lots of ideas about the painting and shared their thoughts with each other. A common theme was that the battle scene reminded them of a chessboard, with a square pattern on the floor, black and white horses, and knights. They decided to make their own chessboard using different materials and added a backboard to replicate the scenery in the painting. They named their project 'Waress', as a composite of 'war' and 'chess', and made a booklet to show their planning work.

Year 3 Teacher

'It has Italian flags to show that the battle of San Romano was in Italy.'

Student, aged 8

WE SAW HORSES!

GORDON PRIMARY SCHOOL, ESSEX

3–4 YEAR-OLDS

After looking at the painting and discussing what the children liked about it, we focused on the horses. We started by drawing horses, before moving on to junk-modelling. We worked in teams and spent a long time choosing the different boxes we were going to use, thinking about the size of the body and head, and counting how many legs we would need. We covered our horses in papier mâché and painted them to match the colours of the horses in the painting. The work was then put on display for the whole school community to enjoy.

Nursery Teacher

'I am helping making the head for the horse.'

Student, aged 3

THE BATTLE OF OUR TIME

GORDON PRIMARY SCHOOL, ESSEX

4–5 YEAR-OLDS

The painting was revealed to the children in stages and they noticed that the men were wearing armour for protection. They also thought that the man in the middle might have been a brave superhero wearing a cape. One child started talking about people being brave during the pandemic and the group soon made the connection between the type of protection worn in the painting and the facemasks we wear to protect ourselves and others from Coronavirus. We decided to make our own facemasks, printed with patterns and colours inspired by the painting, and gathered them together to create a superhero cape.

Reception Teachers

'They are wearing armour for protection.'

Student, aged 4

A VISIT TO THE NATIONAL GALLERY

GRAFTON PRIMARY SCHOOL, LONDON

8–9 YEAR-OLDS

We initially decided to make a short film about the painting. We split into groups and took on lots of different roles, from scriptwriting, storyboarding and designing, to directing, acting and filming. Each scene was planned through group discussion with every child having a say. The children quickly elaborated on their original idea to create a wonderfully comic and complex series of events. The post-production was completed by the school's Artist in Residence, but the children learned about the key concepts of editing and using a green screen throughout the process.

Class Teacher and Artist in Residence

'My favourite part was directing the action. I liked seeing it happen through the camera lens. It made me feel confident.'

Student, aged 8

COLLECTED IMPRESSIONS

GRUNDISBURGH PRIMARY SCHOOL, SUFFOLK

5–6 YEAR-OLDS

Year 1 focused on the flowers, oranges and pomegranates in the bushes, as well as Niccolò da Tolentino's grand hat. We noticed that his hat was also decorated with pomegranate flowers. This led us to wonder which plant might have been used as decoration if the battle had taken place in Suffolk. We collected vegetation from the local area and decided to use it to print fabric for our own hats, using a gel mono-printing technique.

Art Lead

*'He has a big hat and big clothes.
They look heavy.'*

Student, aged 5
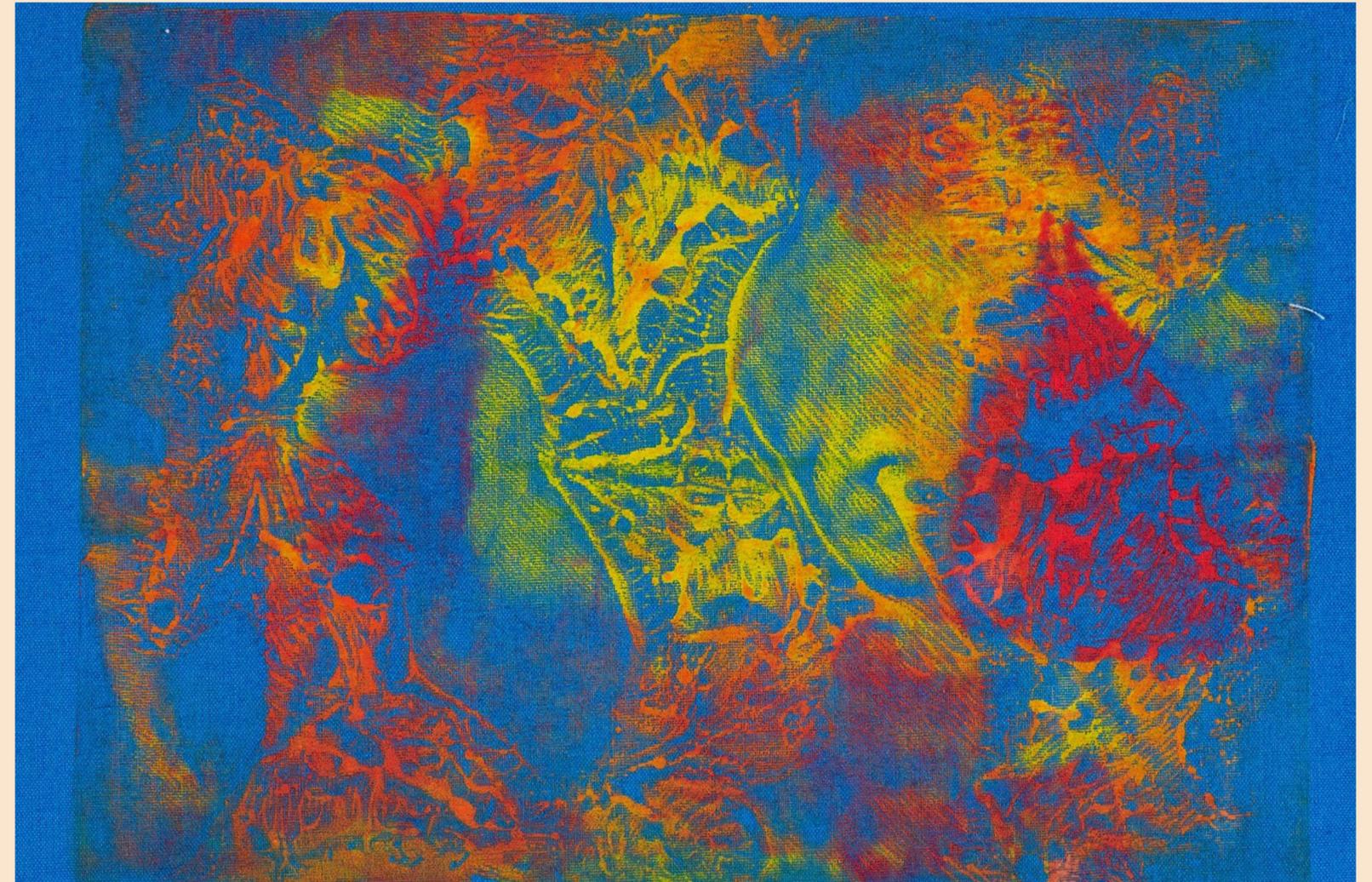
CELEBRATION FACES

HARTWELL PRIMARY SCHOOL, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

4–5 YEAR-OLDS

The children thought about how it would feel to celebrate winning a battle and what this might look like. They captured their faces in expressions of celebration using iPads and mirrors, and made collages to replicate them. The children focused on the shapes, colours and proportions of the faces they created, and tried to make them look as much like themselves as possible. They also included different textured papers to make their artwork more realistic.

Reception Class Teacher

'It was fun to create faces.'

Student, aged 4

PERSPECTIVE DRAWINGS

HARTWELL PRIMARY SCHOOL, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

8–9 YEAR-OLDS

The children used the theme of winning and losing to create freeze-frames. They thought about the shapes that would be created with their bodies while performing each activity and took photographs. They then focused on the perspective within their images, looking at scale and foreshortening. Each child chose a section of their photograph and carefully considered how they could accurately replace the rest of the image with drawing. They used shading to create the depth and tone needed to match their photograph.

Class 4 Teacher

'The objects that were far away were a challenge to draw.'

Student, aged 8

EMBOSSED BREASTPLATES

HILL TOP CE PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY, BRADFORD

9–10 YEAR-OLDS

Year 5 were impressed with the colours, armour and horses in the painting. Through conversation and questioning we gradually focused on the horses. One child asked what the gold circles on the horses were, and we found out that they were ornamental breastplates. We decided to make our own by using embossing tools and foil, before attaching them to faux leather using our sewing skills. The project led us to research animals in warfare: learning about Michael Morpurgo's *War Horse*, the Animals in War Memorial in London, and making purple poppies to remember the animals that died during the World Wars.

Parental Involvement Worker

'That's not fair, those horses might get hurt!'

Student, aged 9

FRUIT PRINTING

HYDE PARK JUNIOR SCHOOL, PLYMOUTH

7–8 YEAR-OLDS

Year 3 were interested in the pomegranates and oranges in the painting. We began our project by creating detailed observational drawings of fruits and leaves, experimenting with different sketching and shading techniques. After this, we used our drawings to create printing blocks by tracing the designs into polystyrene using a sharp pencil. We then used a variety of printing inks to create individual designs.

Art Lead and Year 3 Lead

'Peeling the printing was challenging because you had to do it really slowly and carefully.'

Student, aged 8
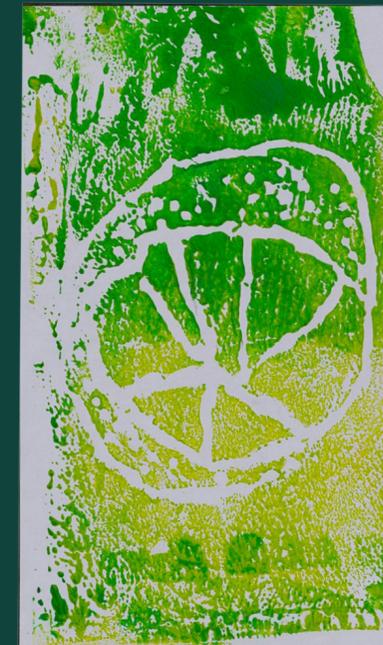
WIRE HORSES

HYDE PARK JUNIOR SCHOOL, PLYMOUTH

10–11 YEAR-OLDS

Year 6 thought that the horses in the painting reminded them of carousel horses, so we asked a local artist to give a workshop on how to draw horses in a 'carousel style' using charcoal. The children then made observational drawings from photographs, and used soft pencils to create different shades and tones. We decided to translate our drawings into sculptures by working in pairs to bend and shape the wire.

Art Lead, Year 6 and Curriculum Lead

'It was really interesting to use a different material that I had never tried before.'

Student, aged 11
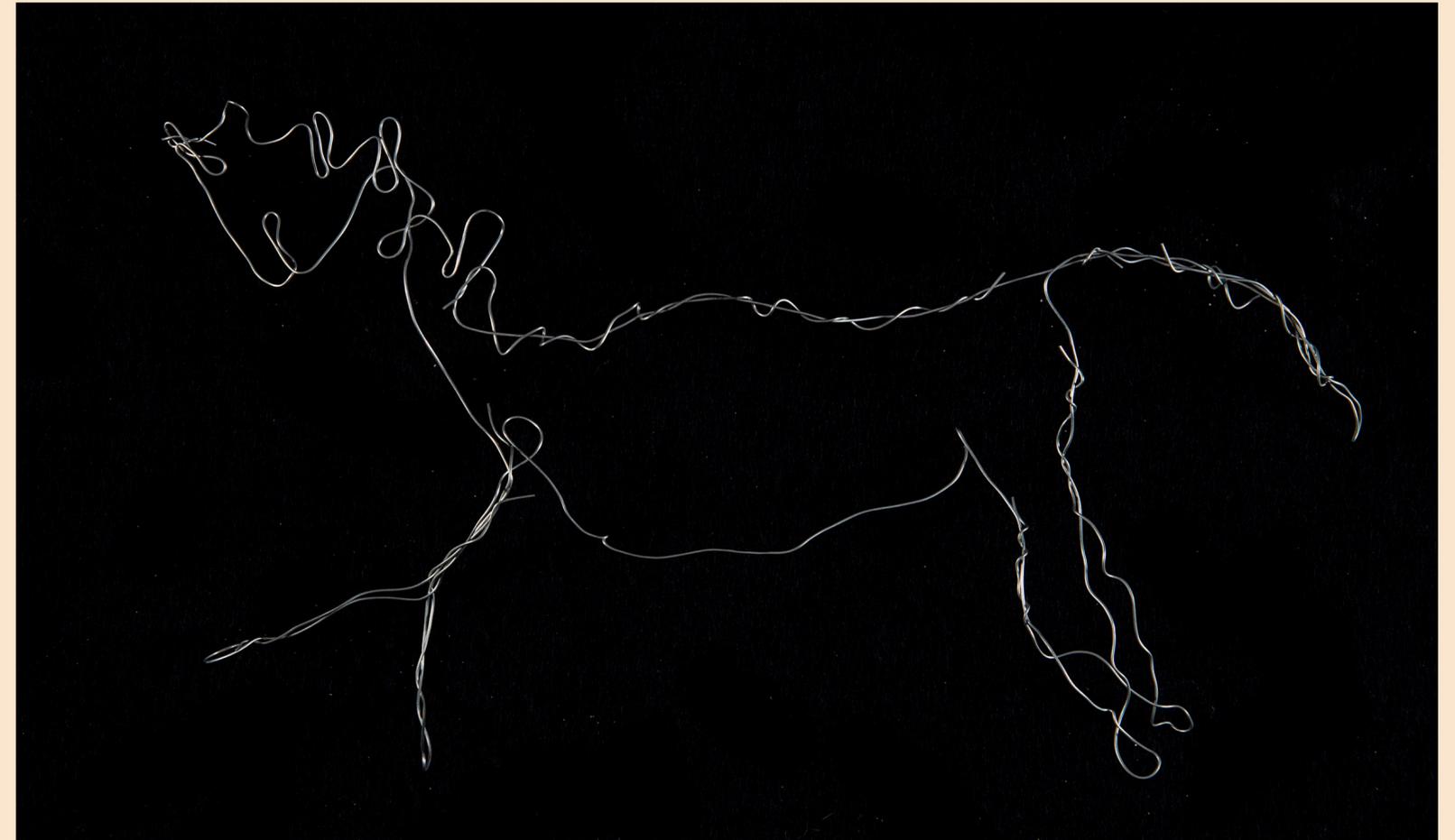
GOLD LEAF SHIELDS

JOHN BUNYAN PRIMARY SCHOOL, ESSEX

7–8 YEAR-OLDS

We focused our attention on how the soldiers in the painting would have been identified and why this was so important. The children spent time looking at traditional Italian shield designs and the simplicity of the shapes, lines and colours used. They realised that the design needed to be bold and easy to read. We talked about how gold leaf was used in the original painting and how the children could incorporate this into their work. They used pre-cut wooden shields and imitation gold leaf to complete their final pieces.

Year 3 Teacher

'I liked the shields we made because we could make our own like they used to, with the same detail, and the gold leaf was fantastic!'

Student, aged 7

BATTLE IN BLACK AND WHITE

KING EDWARD'S JUNIOR SCHOOL, BATH

9–10 YEAR-OLDS

We liked the overlapping lines of the lances in the painting and wanted to represent this in our artwork. We decided to create sculptures that give a sense of layering, as well as a feeling of movement and action. We built armatures by drilling into scrap pieces of wood and inserting wooden sticks. These were further developed with pieces of cardboard and plenty of masking tape. The children then worked in pairs to cover each model with wet plaster bandages. Some pupils decided to paint their models black to give the effect of two opposing teams, as on a chessboard.

Head of **Art**

'There was an amazing transformation from some sticks and masking tape to an actual sculpture.'

Student, aged 9

A COMMUNITY OF HATS

KINGSWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL, GLOUCESTERSHIRE

5–11 YEAR-OLDS

The children were fascinated by the central figure's hat, asking lots of questions including: 'What is that crowny thing?', 'What is that chef's hat?' and 'Why is one man wearing a hat, not a helmet?' We thought that this hat must be very special. We decided to investigate this further and put notices around the village asking local people to tell us about their special hats. We learned all about hats from different places and periods of history, before deciding to design and make our own hats, reflecting our individuality.

Year 3 & 4 Teacher

'Is the man in the fancy hat a king?'

Student, aged 9

CODING MOVING HORSES

KINGSWOOD PARKS PRIMARY SCHOOL, HULL

9–10 YEAR-OLDS

Our project involved combining Art, Design Technology and Computing to code moving horses. The children started by practising their sketching skills and drawing horses, before painting their drawings and attaching them to strong cardboard. In our DT lessons, we then constructed buggies for the horses to be attached to, whilst in our Computing lessons we coded the buggies to move so the horses could charge at each other. Once this had been recorded, we were able to use a green screen to make the painting into a backdrop for our battle.

Year 5 Class Teacher

'I enjoyed the project because it brought art and coding together and these are two things that I enjoy.'

Student, aged 9

KNIGHTS IN SHINING ARMOUR

NORTH MYMMS ST MARY'S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL, HERTFORDSHIRE

4–5 YEAR-OLDS

The children in Bubble 1 were shown the painting and encouraged to say what they saw. Lots of the children talked about the soldiers or knights and noticed their shiny armour. They also spotted that they were holding lances and weapons. We looked at lots of different types of soldiers and knights throughout history, discussing what they would do and what they would wear. We decided to make our own knights in shining armour, using paper, paints and collage materials.

Art Subject Leader

*'My knight is wearing shiny armour.
I made it with shiny paper.'*

Student, aged 5

THEMATIC PLAINCHANTS

LADDINGFORD ST MARY'S C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL, KENT

5–11 YEAR-OLDS

The children identified four key themes in the painting – nature, chaos, death and victory – and we decided to use these to inspire a musical composition. We started by writing haikus to form the lyrics, before composing modal melodies inspired by Medieval and Early Renaissance music. Older children from our school choir learned the pieces and were recorded singing them in our church hall. For the instrumental sections, the children used tuned and untuned percussion instruments to create different musical atmospheres based on the themes.

Year 3 & 4 Class Teacher

'It was great to work on the songs in class whilst looking at the painting and then to be able to sing them together.'

Student, aged 9

The sight of oranges, shining like suns
The sound of birds singing, in the rose bushes
The smell of blossom floating, in shimmering air

The feel of swords nearly touching us
Our shields bracing against our chests
The sound of swords clanging, vibrating from the clash

THE SAN ROMANO HONOURS

MAB'S CROSS COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL, LANCASHIRE

7–8 YEAR-OLDS

Our project developed from one child's question:
'What happened after the battle was over?' We explored how people might celebrate the end of a war or battle and made links to the recent VE Day celebrations. We researched ways that soldiers would be rewarded and learned that certain medals were awarded for particular acts of bravery. The children decided to design and make their own medals to help celebrate the victory of Niccolò da Tolentino. They made sure that the colours and designs were in keeping with the man's obvious sense of style.

Art and Culture Lead

'I loved making the medal with the clay and using the metallic paints and fabrics to match his hat.'

Student, aged 8

TAKE ONE
PICTURE
CHILDREN INSPIRED BY PAOLO UCCELLO'S
THE BATTLE OF SAN ROMANO

3D BATTLE

SELLINCOURT PRIMARY SCHOOL, LONDON

4–11 YEAR-OLDS

Our investigation into perspective started with the question: 'Why is the man on the ground so little?' We experimented with photography and one-point perspective drawings before deciding to make an artwork using the 'anaglyphic' drawing technique (where the outline of an object is drawn in two different colours, slightly offset). We took photos of our classmates running during PE lessons and then traced over them in red and blue, adding armour and weaponry. When viewed through glasses with red and blue lenses, our figures appear to be 3D and running towards you.

Art Teacher

'It jumps off the page!'

Student, aged 9

RENAISSANCE HELMET DECORATIONS

ST BENEDICT'S PRIMARY SCHOOL, LONDON

8–9 YEAR-OLDS

Year 4's favourite part of the painting was the armour. They researched different types of armour and thought about the identities of the soldiers who wore them. They also learned about the various styles of decorative plumes that would have been worn in Renaissance Italy. To begin the making, they drew their own designs inspired by the painting and their research, before creating initial models out of coloured paper. The final pieces had to be stable and strong, as well as colourful and eye-catching.

Head of Art Design and Technology

'We painted our helmets and used many materials like feathers, pipe cleaners and coloured paper.'

Student, aged 8

RUNNING FREE

ST JAMES CE PRIMARY SCHOOL, LONDON

7–8 YEAR-OLDS

The children noticed that Uccello painted his horses to look strong and powerful, which made us think that they were an important factor in Florence's victory. We thought about why horses have been used in battle over the centuries and questioned whether this was fair. We then looked at the ways Uccello had made it look like his horses were moving, and compared this to Eadweard Muybridge's photographs of a horse running. Using all of these new thoughts and observations, we decided to make our own artwork of horses in motion, but running free instead of in battle.

Class Teachers

'*I learned that you can draw horses to look as if they are moving.*'

Student, aged 7

OUR COMMUNITY: A COAT OF ARMS

TRINITY PRIMARY ACADEMY, LONDON

10–11 YEAR-OLDS

Students in Year 6 noticed the flag, shields and armour in the painting. We discussed how these items could have patterns and symbols on them to represent different sides, cities, countries or families. The children decided that they would like to design their own shields to represent themselves. They involved their parents by asking them questions and learning more about their own family's culture and heritage. Their final results include a unique variety of images, text and symbols to represent their identities.

Year 6 Teachers

'My shield is primarily red because I come from China and it is the colour that represents my country. I have also made a lion and a horse on my shield as my nationality is English.'

Student, aged 11

MODERN BATTLES

TWO MILE ASH SCHOOL, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

10–11 YEAR-OLDS

After looking at the painting, we started talking about what the battle might look like if it took place in 2020. We thought about different types of modern-day battles or conflicts and made links to the recent 'Black Lives Matter' protests. We discussed why battles might happen, and the different causes we fight for today – including equality, girls' education, mental health and banning animal testing. We each made a protestor with a placard showing the cause that they are fighting for.

Art Coordinator

'Some of us agreed on our causes and some of us learned about new and important issues we hadn't discussed before.'

Student, aged 11

THE DAILY POMEGRANATE

TWO MILE ASH SCHOOL, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

10–11 YEAR-OLDS

Year 6 were particularly interested in the significance of Niccolò da Tolentino's patterned hat. A number of children pointed out that 'raman' in Arabic translates as 'pomegranate' in English, leading us to wonder if 'Romano' meant pomegranate. We then talked about whether we could trust the scene shown in the painting or if it was just showing one side of the story. We decided to write newspaper articles to report the events of the battle and stained the paper with tea to make it look old.

Art Coordinator

'We used the painting as our inspiration for newspaper names including The Daily Pomegranate! *A must-read if you live in Italy!'*

Student, aged 11
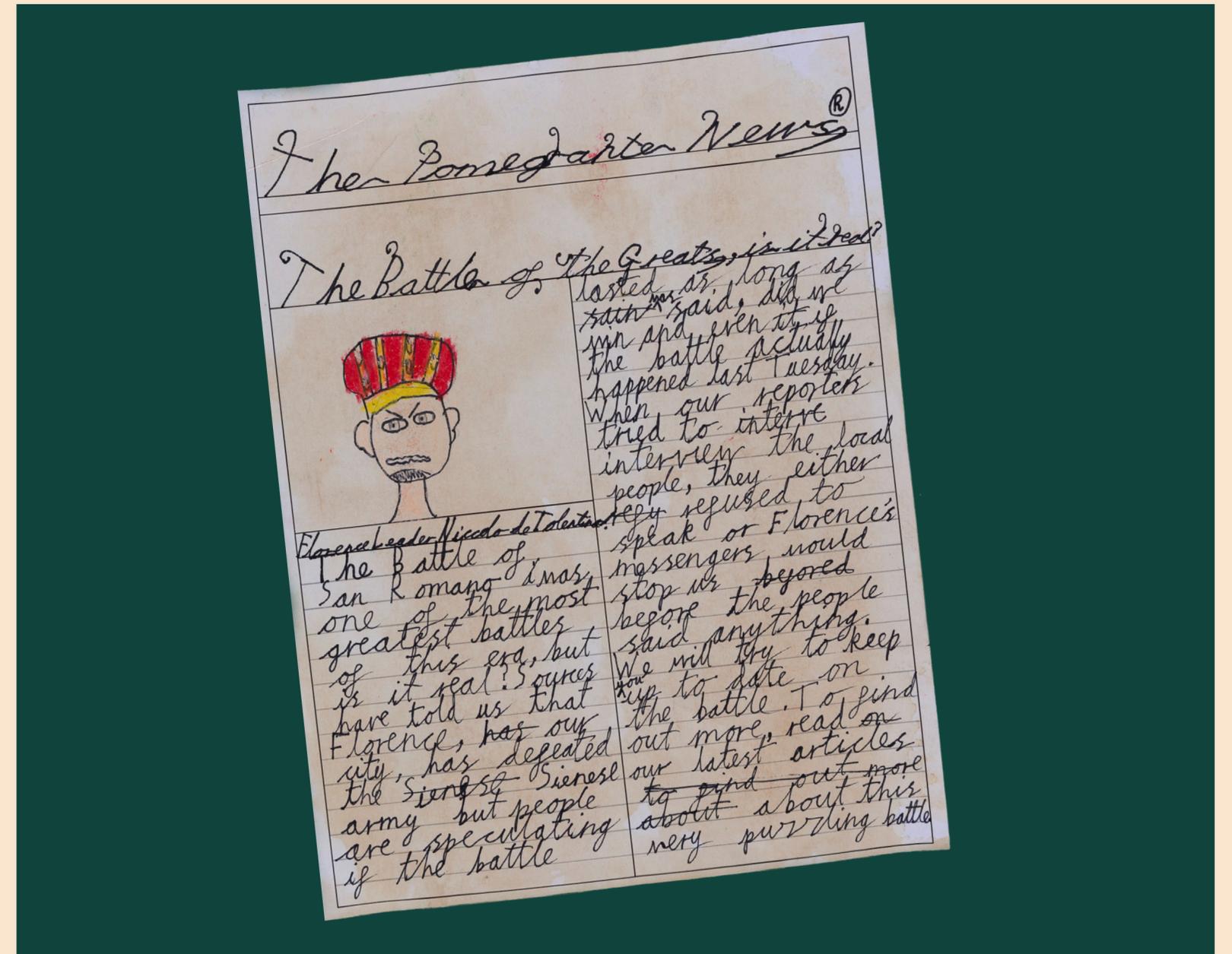
SIGNS OF HOPE

WOODFORD HALSE PRIMARY ACADEMY, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

9–10 YEAR-OLDS

Year 5 pupils looked at the oranges and roses in the painting. Some children thought that they represented life, growth and hope 'amongst all that war'. Embroidery was chosen to illustrate the greenery and fruit, as it was a skill that the children felt they would like to develop. Some chose to draw their designs onto the fabric, others worked freehand, and everyone created their own interpretation. Many children commented on how embroidery was a relaxing activity to do, and that it made them feel calm.

Class Teacher

'We chose the bushes because the flowers stand out by representing peace during the war. I learned how to sew … to look at the different shades of green and to know how peaceful colours can be.'

Student, aged 10
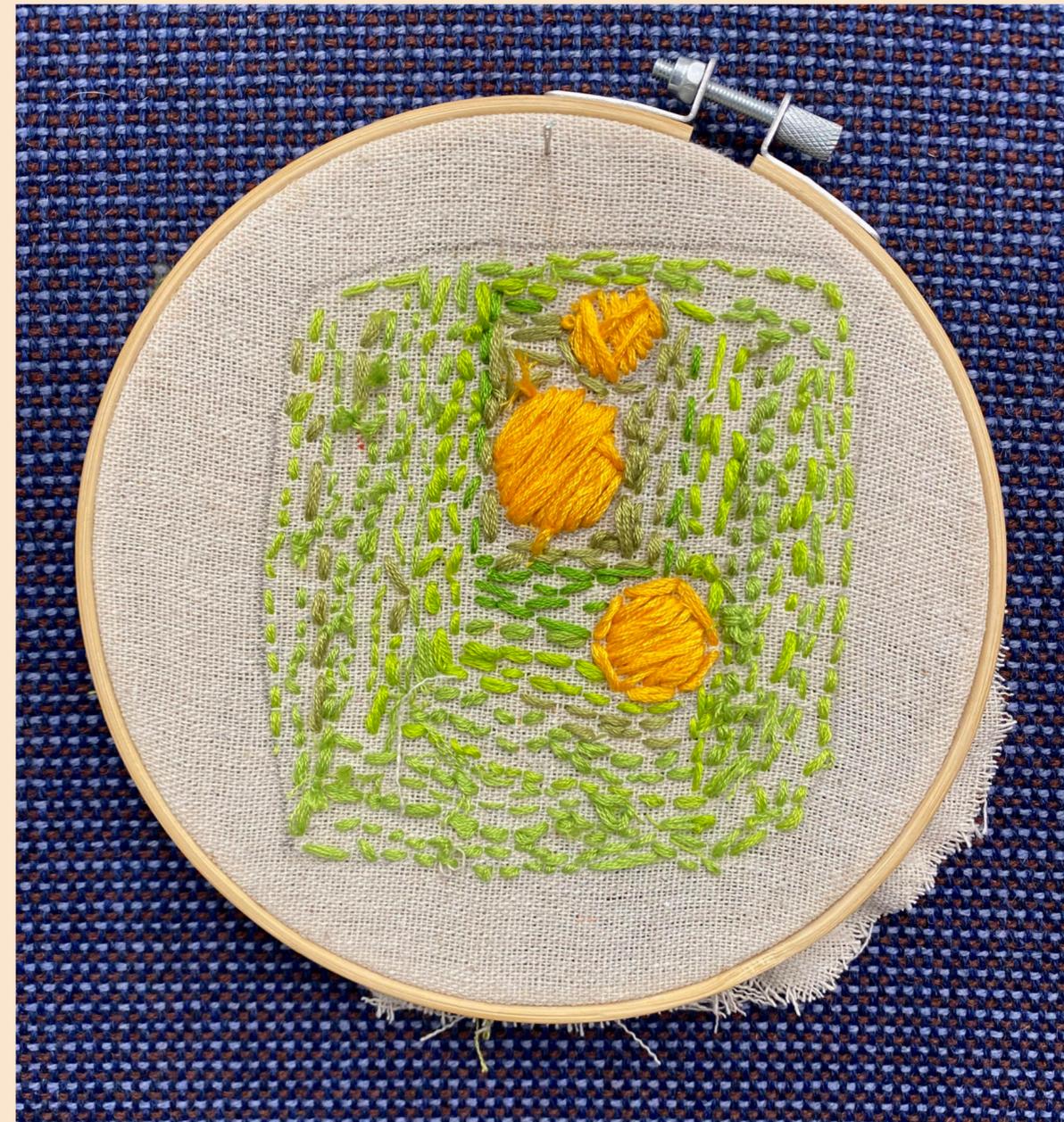
NICCOLÒ DA TOLENTINO'S FLAG

GATEWAY SCHOOL, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

10–11 YEAR-OLDS

Our students were drawn to the flag in the picture and one child asked how big it would be in real life. We decided to make our own flag to scale to find out! We started by making small paper flags and learned how to enlarge the shape while keeping it perfectly to scale. The children were curious about the symbols on the flag and what the rest of it would have looked like. We contacted a flag expert who spoke to us about the colours and designs used for Italian Renaissance flags, and suggested a range of possible answers to our questions. To finish our project we created our own, full-size version.

Maths Teacher

'What would it look like if you could see the whole flag?'

Student, aged 11
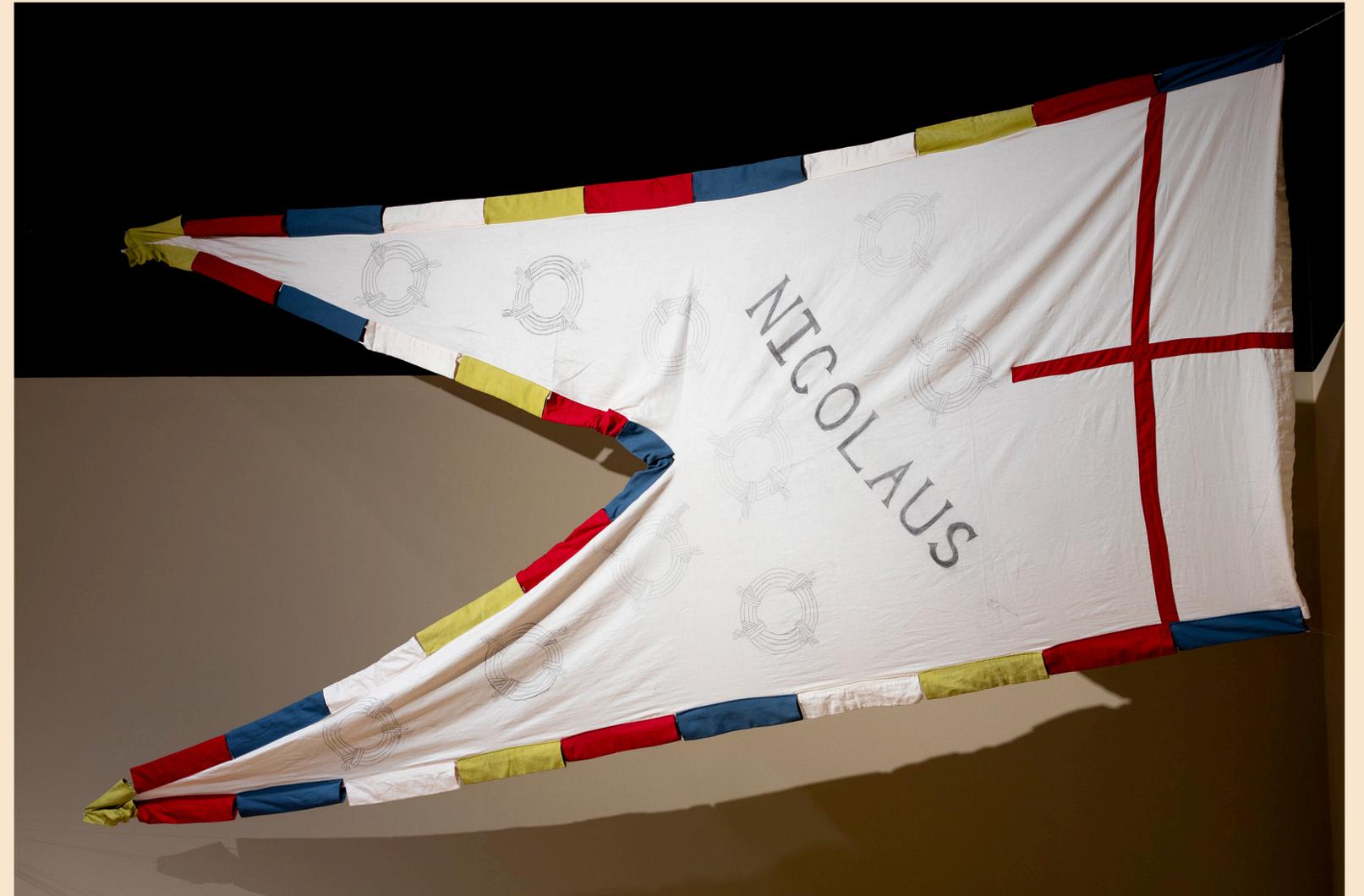
LET FAITH BE MY SHIELD

HORNBILL SCHOOL, BRITISH FORCES BRUNEI

7–11 YEAR-OLDS

The children looked at the picture and compared it to other paintings depicting battles. We then invited a Gurkha veteran to talk to us about real-life situations and personal battles in warfare. We had recently learned the song *When a Knight Won his Spurs*, which got us thinking about the values we fight for. This led to the idea of creating our own 'values battle' scene, with each soldier shown fighting for their chosen value. We discussed the values that are needed to overcome challenging times and came up with a list including love, hope and truth.

Art Teacher and Arts Leader

'I wrote love on my horse because if you go into battle or challenges with love you will overcome them.'

Student, aged 8

WARHORSE

ST BENEDICT'S JUNIOR SCHOOL, LONDON

10–11 YEAR-OLDS

Our inspiration came from the horses in the painting. We drew Uccello's horses and practised showing their proportions and positions. We also looked at other famous paintings and sculptures of horses, including George Stubbs' *Whistlejacket* and Andy Scott's *Kelpies*. The children loved the idea of making our own horse sculpture, so we practised by making miniature models with paper and straws before moving on to our final piece. We made the structure using wire and covered it with aluminium plates that we hammered, burned and tarnished to look like the armour in the painting.

Head of Art Design & Technology

'Making the horse was really fun and it took a lot of time and effort. I am very happy with the finished result and how it looks.'

Student, aged 10