



RWA

Primary: Activity Pack 02

Inspirational Surroundings



This Activity Pack was created by: **Royal West of England Academy**, Queen's Road, Clifton Bristol BS8 1PX
The RWA is a self-supporting, independent charity (1070163). If you have enjoyed this activity please consider making a donation to support the RWA by visiting rwa.org.uk/support-us

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RWA is Bristol's first public art gallery. It was built in 1858 with money from Ellen Sharples - a Bristol artist herself - as a place for people to see and make art. Today we show the work of famous and less well known artists in our main exhibitions, and lots of people visit to see it.

Our current exhibition is:

Wilhelmina Barns-Graham & The Artists of St. Ives

In Activity Pack 01, we looked at Wilhelmina Barns-Graham and the artists of St Ives in the 1940s-60s. This is because RWA's current exhibition is all about these artists.

Wilhelmina Barns-Graham moved to St Ives in Cornwall in 1940 after studying art and travelling the world.

But did you know that long before the 1940s there were already artists living and working in St Ives? You can find out about some of these artists yourself.

The first recorded artist visit was from JMW Turner in 1811. Following the development of the railway, in the mid-1800s other artists started visiting St Ives, including the American artist James McNeill Whistler, the English painter Walter Sickert and Henry Moore the English marine and landscape painter. At this time, painting outdoors in the open air was popular and artists were depicting changing light with freely brushed colours (Impressionism). St Ives is known for its quality of light and clean air. Even today, artists still try to capture the special light of St Ives in their paintings.

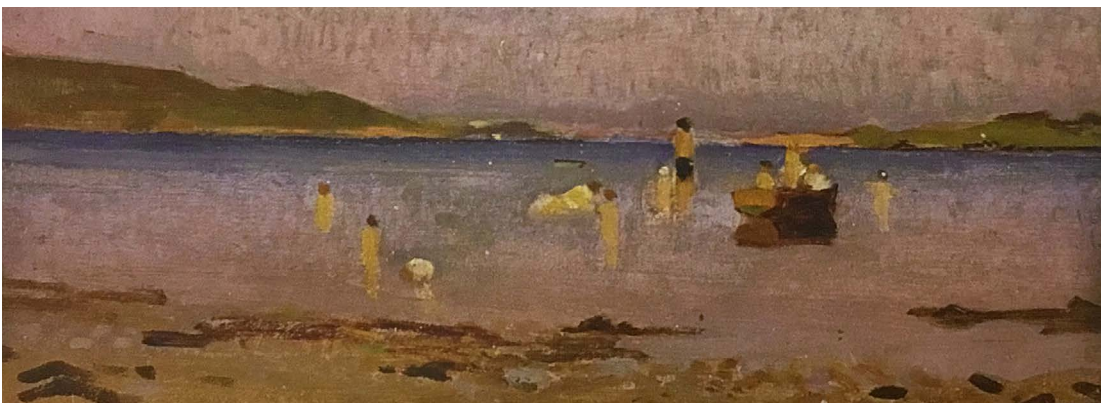
Some early St Ives artists:

Albert Julius Olson: With his artist wife Kathleen he designed a hotel that became a studio and art school in St Ives. He was an artist who was keen on boats and inspired by the sea. During WWI he was in the (volunteer) navy, which gave him the opportunity to paint naval ships in action.

Adrian Stokes: He used atmospheric effects in his landscape paintings and was well travelled (like Wilhelmina Barn-Graham was, years later). He married the artist Marianne Stokes and spent time in France, Denmark, Slovakia and Hungary.

Elizabeth Forbes: Going against roles for married women at the time, Elizabeth Forbes continued to be an active and successful artist after her marriage to painter Stanhope Forbes, and she had a national reputation. Her work is mainly figurative (meaning she painted people).

William Holt Yates Titcomb: As a figurative oil painter, he was known for his pictures of Cornish fishermen. He moved to Bristol in 1909, where he was already an elected Academician of the Bristol Academy of Fine Art - which later became the RWA!



Frederick Appleyard,
Paddlers, oil 29x40.5cm,
RWA Permanent Collection

Features in the landscape

Wilhelmina Barns-Graham is an artist who lived in St Ives (Cornwall) and St Andrews (Scotland) from 1940 onwards. She visited many beautiful countries, sketching and painting all sorts of features in the landscapes she encountered on her travels.

This is a painting that Wilhelmina Barns-Graham made using acrylic paint mixed with volcanic dust! She has used marks like dots, dashes, and lines to make patterns, and bright colours to make a really vibrant image.

Find something to inspire you to create a new drawing or painting. You could even mix something unusual like sand or soil or grass into your paint if you have some paints to use (ask an adult first).



The exhibition was curated by the Wilhelmina Barns-Graham Trust.

Wilhelmina Barns-Graham, *Lanzarote*, 1992, Acrylic and Volcanic Dust, 80.1 x 99 x 4.8 cm, © Wilhelmina Barns-Graham Trust. Photo credit Wilhelmina Barns-Graham Trust



Sections

How does Wilhelmina Barns-Graham make it look as though you can see through sections of the glacier to other parts of it, in *Glacier Snout Pink*? Try drawing some basic shapes and colouring some of them in with paint, pencils or crayon. Notice that not all the Glacier Snout sections are painted blue, some are left just as outlines. Now draw lines or shapes over the top of your coloured shapes, and see whether you can make it look as though we can see 'through' parts of your picture.

Wilhelmina Barns-Graham, *Glacier Snout Pink*, 1978, Gouache, 78.9 x 97.9 x 3.1 cm, © Wilhelmina Barns-Graham Trust. Photo credit Wilhelmina Barns-Graham Trust

Pattern sequences

Can you continue the repeating patterns below?

❖	⊗	+					
⊙	■						
○	+	⊗					

What could you make using these repeating patterns? You can also come up with your own symbols and repeat those. Look around your home to find new patterns to copy and make your own repeated pattern design.



A journey through time



Use the timeline below to map out a piece of creative writing based on the history of St Ives as an artists' town. You could write a diary entry (from the perspective of a fisherman, for example), or a newspaper article, or a poem or a story.

1888

The town's first School of Art was established in St Ives in 1888. Would you like to attend a school to make art every day? What do you think you would learn? How would you spend your time?

1920s

By the end of the First World War a generation of painters had either moved away or died. In the 1920s, artists and craftspeople started settling in St Ives, and poets and writers came too. How do you think that changed the town?

1927

In 1927, St Ives Society of Artists was formed (some of the members are listed on page 2). How do you think this helped the artists?

WW2

At the outbreak of WW2, Barbara Hepworth (sculptor) and Ben Nicholson (painter) moved to St Ives along with their friend Naum Gabo (sculptor). These artists made 'abstract' or 'constructive' art which makes what you see in real life look like just colours, shapes and textures.

1900s

When the Great Western Railway connected St Ives to some important places like London, new artists began to arrive. In the early 1900s this coincided with people not fishing and mining so much any more, so artists took over fish-lofts for studio spaces and started living in the town. What do you think the miners and the fishermen felt about this?

1920s

Bernard Leach and Shoji Hamada (both potters) made St. Ives internationally famous in the 1920s when they began to make pots influenced by both Eastern and Western techniques in their pottery at St Ives.

1930s

In the 1930s the St Ives School of Painting at Porthmeor Studios was established. This was in the area where most artists worked.

1950s-1960s

In the 1950s-1960s a group of younger artists together with Hepworth and Nicholson were all inspired by the landscape of West Cornwall and used its shapes, forms and colours as a source for much of their work. This was the best time for the St Ives School of artists. Can you imagine why?

The artists' town

**What are the names
of the artists in your
imaginary town?**



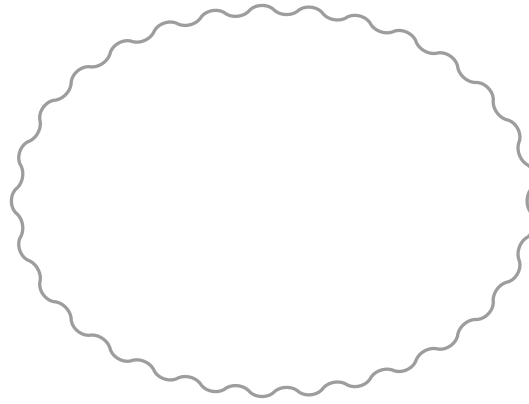
St Ives became known as an artists' town and somewhere all sorts of creative people wanted to visit.

Did you know that **Bristol** is full of artists, craftspeople, poets and writers?

Why not find out what you can about some of them?

For example; performers/poets Helen Dunmore and Vanessa Kisuule or visual artists Luke Jerram and Beth Carter.

Make your own poem about an artists' town – you could even illustrate or decorate it once you've written it.



**What do
they look
like?**

**Where do
they live?**

**What happens
when they meet
together?**

**What
inspires
them?**

**Who gets to see
their work?**

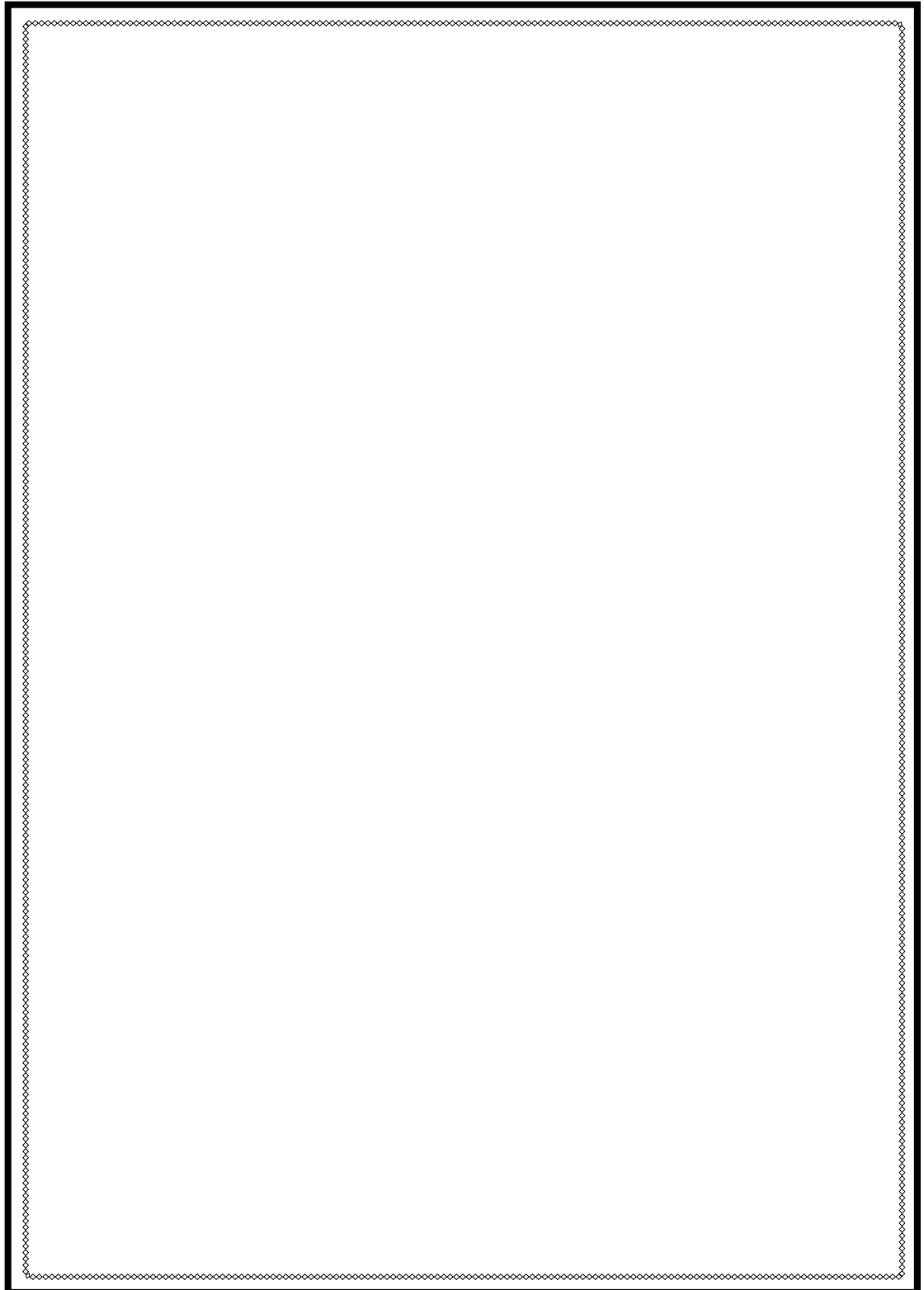
Railway Poster of St Ives



Travel poster

Between the war years, the big railway companies asked St Ives painters to make colourful paintings for them to use as posters to advertise holiday destinations on their routes.

Design a poster in the style of the St Ives rail travel posters. Where would you like to travel by train? Your poster can be of an imaginary destination or a real one. Make it bold, colourful and eye-catching! Remember to show what makes your destination desirable. Is it secluded? Are there some recognisable or distinguishable features (like a castle, a lake or a beach)? What can people do at the destination (swim, explore, sail, climb)?



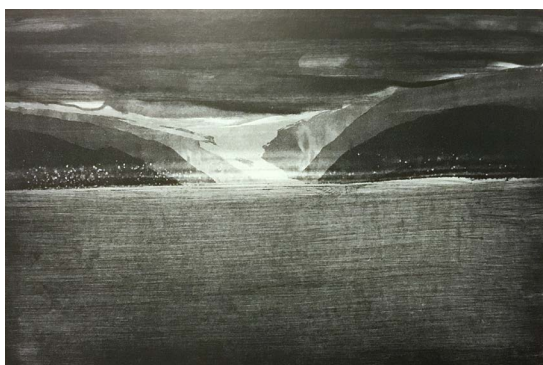
Look at the Science Museum Group website for some great examples of the old railway posters for Cornwall <https://collection.sciencemuseumgroup.org.uk/objects/co227918/cornwall-great-western-railway-poster>

Mountains and Valleys

Wilhelmina Barns-Graham created many drawings of rock formations, glaciers, mountains and hills. Why do you think these landscapes inspired her?

See if you can find out any interesting facts about them - for example, the largest glacier on Earth is 60 miles wide and about 270 miles long!

Wilhelmina Barns-Graham, *Lava Forms Lanzarote 3*, 1993, chalk, 49.7 x 60.7 x 3.1 cm, © Wilhelmina Barns-Graham Trust. Photo credit Wilhelmina Barns-Graham Trust



James Beale RWA, *Loch Arkaig*, etching and aquatint 30.5x43cm, RWA Permanent Collection



Boats

St Ives has always been a busy place. What do you think made it feel busy when artists first started to settle there? Have you noticed what seems busy and what seems a lot quieter recently? There was a lot of coming and going of people, goods and boats at St Ives. Have you ever tried making a model of a ship or a boat? Why not give it a try with some paper or card.

Donald Milner PPRWA, *The Slipway*, oil 30.5x40.5cm, RWA Permanent Collection

Colouring in Patterns



Colour the bird

Copy and repeat the patterns on the bird, or draw in your own and then colour it all in. It has a strong black outline that you can copy onto a fresh piece of paper - you can draw some more and make a whole family!

