

Constructing Connections: Four Schools – Croxteth: a 'pandorama'

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This summer, students from four schools – The Hawthorne's Free School, St Margaret's Church of England Academy, Kilgarth School and UTC Warrington – have been developing projects that respond to Robert Tressell's book, *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* and Croxteth Hall. These projects run parallel to 'Did the Raggies paint Croxteth Hall?' and the exhibition *Constructing Connections: Fiction, Art & Life*, and will culminate in an exhibition *Constructing Connections: Four Schools*, which opens this Monday (September 18th) at the Liverpool John Moores University, School of Art and Design. Here is a sneak preview of what the students have been working on:

The Hawthorne's Free School: students aged between 10 and 12 visited Croxteth Hall on an inset day earlier this summer. For many of the students, the history of the hall and the lives of low-income workers at the turn of the 20th Century were new areas of research and the students were keen to respond creatively to the site and its history. One student has proposed writing and performing a song.

St Margaret's Church of England Academy: six Year 12 students visited Croxteth Hall and documented their experience through photographs. They have been exploring the history and architecture of the building and will be sharing images from their trip in the exhibition.

Kilgarth School: a group of 14 and 15 year-olds from Kilgarth School have been learning about *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists*. They visited Croxteth and were particularly interested in the sharp contrast between the luxury of the family rooms and the starkness of the servant's room. The students worked together to explore the concept of 'trace'. Reflecting on the physical exertion of being a servant and on the long walks along corridors and up and down staircases, they drew their footprints on large piece of paper and then erased the footprints, leaving behind faint traces of where they had walked. This process echoed the actions of the servants as they cleaned up after a days' hard work. On Monday, the students will present video and audio work, alongside these documented traces.

UTC Warrington: Pupils from Year 10, studying Art / Architecture and Design Engineering learnt about contemporary art alongside the novel *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists*. The students focused on architectural images of Croxteth Hall, in particular, the symmetry of parts of the building. One student was inspired by the work of artist [Helaina Sharpley](#), and she has been working on a wire sculpture. Other students interviewed a painter and decorator and have been creating a short documentary that looks into the life of a modern-day worker. A selection of the students work will be in the exhibition on Monday.

Please come along to the Private View of *Constructing Connections: Four Schools*: it is from 4.30 – 6.30pm on Monday 18th September at LJMU Liverpool School of Art And Design, Liverpool L3 5RD.

Please share your images and photos of the exhibition with @CroxtethPandora on Twitter #constructingconnections

Featured photograph: Croxteth Hall. Image from Jessica Holtaway.

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