

The Big Draw

PRESS RELEASE

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A Visual Learning Adventure for Educators

TODAY, on the eve of GCSE results day, arts education charity The Big Draw announces an event for Britain's educators.

On 10 September, the STEAM Symposium: Laboratory of Visual Exploration, organised by The Big Draw in partnership with the University of Lincoln and BALTIC, will take place at BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead.

The event will shine a spotlight on the role of **visual literacy** and **drawing** across the curriculum and diverse national industries, as the number of students completing art and design GCSEs fails to increase for the **third year in a row**.

The arts and culture industry is worth **£7.7 billion** to the UK economy [1]. However, in England the number of students taking art and design subjects in 2016 has declined, by **5.5%** at GCSE and by **4%** at A-level [2]. This is despite an overall increase in GCSE entries, according to exam watchdog Ofqual.

Described as '**A Visual Learning Adventure for Educators**', the day-long event will see the worlds of **digital technology, science, art, and engineering** converge to demonstrate the importance of art alongside and within other subjects. Expert contributors, special guests, visual literacy advocates and innovators will discuss and demonstrate the integral role of creativity and drawing within their disciplines. Educators will be invited to take part in workshops, digital drawing demonstrations, interactive experiments and innovative installations, which aim to show why **STEM** should become **STEAM**.

The event will outline the definition of what the partners mean by visual literacy,

and underline the huge role that 'drawing', in its widest possible interpretation, plays in underpinning professional practice across a spectrum of disciplines. It also aims to raise awareness and understanding of the role of visual literacy as a 'mode of thinking' and the vital role this plays in our contemporary culture.

Kate Mason, Director of The Big Draw said:

“Visual Literacy is a mode of thinking that helps us understand and navigate the world around us and is a vital tool in an increasingly visual and digital age. This ‘mode’ deserves greater recognition and currency – I hope in time even the term ‘visual literacy’ itself will become more firmly embedded in the mainstream lexicon.”

The evening before the symposium, on Friday 9 September, 6-8pm, a reception will take place at an adults-only playground to demonstrate the vital role of play in creativity and innovation. Guests will be invited to make new friends, get the latest schoolyard gossip, and take their turn on the Lozziwurm – a giant tubular play structure.

Special guests include **Carenza Lewis**, Professor for the Public Understanding of Research at the University of Lincoln, of Time Team fame, who will work with The Big Draw’s Drawing Associates and ambassadors to flex memories and imaginations in a “no artistic skills” required drawing activity.

This event is sponsored by The University of Lincoln as part of a three-year relationship with The Big Draw, and is supported by the BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead. It is part of The Big Draw’s annual programme of events funded by Arts Council England, which also includes The STEAM Powered Big Draw Festival, which will take place from 1-31 October.

Professor Matthew Cragoe, Pro Vice Chancellor of the College of Arts at the University of Lincoln, said:

“The arts form such an essential component of the British economy that the decline in the number of students pursuing art and design subjects at GCSE and A Level should be a cause for national concern. We hope that this wonderfully interdisciplinary event on visual literacy will both focus attention on the problem and

give people a wide range of exciting ideas to take away with them.”

Emma Thomas, Head of Learning & Engagement commented:

“We are delighted to be supporting The Big Draw Symposium this September. BAL TIC’s Learning programme engages over 78,000 visitors a year and encourages the use contemporary art as an alternative lens through which to view the world. Visual literacy and drawing, in its widest sense, form the cornerstones of what we do and we are excited to share and support, more widely, the belief that STEM should be STEAM.”

Peter Heslip, Director of Visual Arts and London at Arts Council England commented:

“We are pleased to be able to support The Big Draw as it seeks to reach more people across England and encourage them to participate in drawing, particularly through The Big Draw Festival. For the last sixteen years The Big Draw (formerly The Campaign for Drawing) has sought to epitomise John Ruskin’s philosophy that art is intrinsic to society. The charity’s work around the STEAM agenda will play an important role in raising awareness of how visual literacy is an essential part of the cultural education that children and young people should have access to.”

Tickets for events on both the Friday and Saturday cost £35 or £25 for concessions (students, PGCE students, teachers) and can be bought at <http://www.thebigdraw.org/steam-symposium>.

[1] Creative Industries Focus on Employment, June 2016, DCMS.

[2] Summer 2016 exam entries: GCSEs, level 1 / 2 certificates, AS and A levels in England, May 2016, Ofqual.

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#thebigdraw #STEMtoSTEAM #STEAMsymposium

Notes to Editors

STEAM Symposium: Laboratory of Visual Exploration

Evening reception

Date: Friday 9 September

Time: 6 - 8pm

Venue: BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, in The Playground Project

Symposium

Date: Saturday 10 September 2016

Time: 10am doors + registration, 10.30am-5pm symposium, 5-7pm, reception

Venue: 4th Floor, BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead, NE8 3BA

The STEAM Symposium and evening reception is organised by The Big Draw in partnership with The University of Lincoln and BALTIC, with support from Arts Council England. It will outline the definition of what we mean by visual literacy; underline the huge role 'drawing' in it's widest possible interpretation plays in underpinning professional practice across a spectrum of disciplines; raise awareness and understanding of the role of visual literacy as a 'mode of thinking' and the vital role this plays in our contemporary culture. For further information visit:

<http://www.thebigdraw.org/steam-symposium>

The Big Draw

Founded in 2000, The Big Draw is an arts education charity that promotes visual literacy and the universal language of drawing as a tool for learning, expression and invention. The charity leads a diversified programme encompassing advocacy, empowerment and engagement, and is the founder and driving force behind the The Big Draw Festival – the world's biggest celebration of drawing. The Big Draw manages collaborative research projects, campaigns and educational conferences on visual literacy, digital technology and STEAM. The charity supports professional and emerging artists through The John Ruskin Prize and exhibition, and through events, awards, and competitions, creates platforms for each and everyone who wants to draw. www.thebigdraw.org.

University of Lincoln

The University of Lincoln is a forward-thinking, energetic institution with a beautiful campus in the cathedral city of Lincoln. Ranked 49th by the 2017 Complete University Guide, Lincoln was placed 11th in the UK for student satisfaction in the latest National Student Survey and took first place for its broad-ranging Design portfolio which includes Fashion, Graphic Design, Interactive Design, Illustration, Interior Design and Product Design.

BALTIC

BALTIC is a major international centre for contemporary art situated on the south bank of the River Tyne in Gateshead, England and has welcomed over 6 million visitors since opening to the public in July 2002. BALTIC presents a distinctive and ambitious programme of exhibitions and events, and is a world leader in the presentation and commissioning of contemporary visual art. Housed in a landmark ex-industrial building, BALTIC consists of 2,600 square metres of art space, making it the UK's largest dedicated contemporary art institution. BALTIC has gained an international reputation for its commissioning of cutting-edge temporary exhibitions. It has presented the work of over 350 artists from 53 countries in 190 exhibitions to date.

The STEAM Powered Big Draw Festival 2016

Launched in 2000, The Big Draw Festival has encouraged over three million people back to the drawing board. It has notched up two world records – for the longest drawing in the world (one kilometre) and the greatest number of people drawing simultaneously (over 7,000). Every year, The Big Draw Festival includes hundreds of drawing activities in schools, galleries, museums, libraries, heritage sites, village halls and town squares. In 2015, the festival launch took place in 10 leading cultural institutions across Oxford. There were events by more than 1000 organisers on seven continents, engaging around 400,000 people.

The 2016 theme, The STEAM powered Big Draw Festival 2016, is part of the charity's campaign to give the Arts subjects parity with Sciences, Technology,

Engineering and Mathematics, so that STEM becomes STEAM. Anyone can take part in The Big Draw Festival, by finding their nearest event or organising their own. Find out more: <http://www.thebigdraw.org/the-big-draw-festival>

Patrons of The Big Draw

Sir Quentin Blake | Andrew Marr | Bob & Roberta Smith RA | Lord Foster of Thames Bank | David Hockney OM CH | Sir Roger Penrose OM | Gerald Scarfe CBE | Posy Simmonds MBE | Chris Riddell