



A GOLDSMITHS CCA SCHOOLS RESOURCE



S-U-B-T-L-E T-I-E-S

RESOURCE OVERVIEW

#FridayFact is a new, cross-curricular resource for schools to support children and young people consider their identity and sense of the world around them, through critically and creatively exploring the histories and legacies of sugar and slavery. The resource centres around a new online video artwork by artist Holly Graham, commissioned by Goldsmiths Centre for Contemporary Art, with lesson plans and supportive materials for four accompanying workshops, designed for KS2 learners (but adaptable for older or younger groups).

Workshops are structured to aid students to explore colonial histories of sugar production and exploitative labour, while looking at the contemporary impacts of past events on our lived experience today. The session plans touch on themes of movement and migration, culinary culture, and racism and the Black Lives Matter Movement. Over four sessions students will work with different creative skills (printmaking, painting, creative writing and bookbinding) to research and develop whole class recipe books, embodying work on the different thematic strands.

Holly Graham's film #FridayFact is split into four sections, focusing on the river and trade, historical story-telling, sugar and sweet treats, and more. The title is taken from a tweet release by the Treasury in 2018, which announced that living British citizens help to end the slave trade through taxes paid up until 2015.

"Here's today's surprising #FridayFact.
Millions of you helped end the slave trade
through your taxes.

Did you know? In 1833, Britain used £20 million, 40% of its national budget, to buy freedom for all slaves in the Empire. The amount of money borrowed for the Slavery Abolition Act was so large that it wasn't paid off until 2015. Which means that living British citizens helped pay to end the slave trade."



The tweet received criticism for its inaccuracy and insensitivity, particularly in relation to a celebratory tone that foregrounded abolition while neglecting to mention that this repayment was in the form of compensation to slave-owners. The quotation within the artwork's title aims to highlight the recent nature and ongoing present impact of these histories, while encouraging reflection on the risks of oversimplification of such narratives.

The film uses archival imagery of sugar production, along-side contemporary footage shot on the artists' iPhone, featuring locations along the river: Deptford Dock with a view of Canary Wharf, Woolwich with a view of Tate and Lyle Factory, and Rotherhithe.

The video artwork is part of a wider body of work Graham has been developing over the last few years, called Sweet Swollen. You can see more of that project here:
<https://www.hollygraham.co.uk/sweet-swollen>

More information about the tweet:

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/feb/12/treasury-tweet-slavery-compensate-slave-owners>

Handmade: Sugar with Holly Graham – a podcast about Graham's work with sugar.
<https://open.spotify.com/episode/6QWIkKG79IHeDzyXzEdDq>

Sweet Swollen: You Can't See It But I Have One Here and I Can Show You – edited interviews with V&A African Heritage Tour Guides:
https://soundcloud.com/holly_graham/sweet-swollen

Resources:

- *Link to video*
- *Plain text video transcript*
- *4 x Lesson plans*
- *4 x PowerPoint presentations, incl.:*
 - *Step-by-step potato print guide*
 - *Step-by-step camp coffee painting guide*
 - *Audio sweet treat interview examples*
 - *Sweet treat poem example*
 - *Step-by-step book binding guide*
- *Print-out flashcards*
- *Template pages for recipe book*

If you need additional support to deliver this programme or would like to attend a free online briefing session email learncca@gold.ac.uk for further information.

Reading list and other references:

Akala, Natives: Race & Class in the ruins of Empire

Elizabeth Abbott, Sugar: A Bittersweet History

Felipe Fernandez-Armesto, Food: A History, 2001

Stuart Hall, 'Old and New Identities, Old and New Ethnicities'. 1991

Sidney W. Mintz, Sweetness and Power, 1985

Nikesh Shukla [ed.], The Good Immigrant, 2016

Andrea Stuart, Sugar in the Blood A Family's Story of Slavery and Empire, 2012

James Walvin, Sugar: The World Corrupted from Slavery to Obesity, 2017

Key words:

Migration

Colonialism

Empire

Labour

Slavery

Exploitation

Montage

Collage

Metaphor

Mariner

Caricature

Racism

Metaphor

Repetition

Subtle

Fact

Factoid