

Our overall aim for this project was to gain a better understanding of East Asian - more specifically Chinese culture at the time and exploring the impact of the British Empire on Chinese Culture and art. We wanted to then take this, and create a series of outcomes inspired by old and new Chinese art.

In our application, we said that we would raise £30 each for this project. We managed to do that relatively quickly! Within our local communities me and Emily collectively covered things like baby-sitting, pet-sitting, pet walking and so on. Us both staying local really made us feel we were having an impact, however small, on the community.

Once we found out we had successfully applied, we planned further how we were going to get there, what times and locations. We started with transportation, as entry to the British Museum is free and it didn't really matter what time we ended up there. Firstly, the £32.10 for two, off-peak, child travel cards meant that we could get on the train/tube/bus at any point, but we needed to agree on a time to meet at the train station. We picked a train station in between where we lived, which ended up being 'Whittlesford Parkway'. We met at 9:00am for the 9:20 train, to allow us plenty of time to get tickets and allow us to buy drinks, snacks, etc. Emily then bought those £32.10 tickets, and our accompanying adult (Isaac's Mother) bought hers as well. The train was roughly 1 hour and 30 minutes, in which Emily and I utilised by looking on the British Museum website and planning our route around the British Museum. We decided that we would start in the main: 'China' Section and work our way outwards. When we arrived at London Liverpool Street, we then went down into the tube and changed until we got to Tottenham Court Road, the closest tube/train stop to the British Museum. This independent practice of using the tube and train networks in London was really beneficial to our confidence in using public transport, and our confidence of being able to get ourselves in and around London in the future. There were clear signs when we came out of the station as to where the British Museum was. Once we arrived, we had to queue for the bag check - but because we'd planned the trip so our visit to the British Museum would be done by lunch, there weren't as many people there as there were later. Looking back, we think this was a smart and tactical choice to get into the British Museum early. It meant that we had more time, more space and more flexibility when looking at the various artefacts, artwork, ceramics and jewellery in the various galleries. Once we got into the museum, we went straight for the Chinese Gallery, and started in the most recent exhibition space: 'The Jade Room' - here, ancient artefacts made and carved out of jade were showcased, and it was incredible. We were both amazed at the intricacy and the sheer amount of detail in the carvings, even when they date back to thousands of years ago. We decided immediately that the beautiful colour of the jade should be included in our art outcomes, and so Emily took some photos of the Jade to remind us of the colour but the photos didn't do it justice! We then moved on to the calligraphy and landscape section, which was quite large with large pieces of art on display. The scale and the detail in some of these outcomes were amazing. They used ink and water, basic art supplies, but created such beautiful and complex

outcomes. The calligraphy down the sides was translated to be telling a story of the image, and this particular ink and water landscape and calligraphy on both sides - some of which still can't be deciphered. Continuing to focus on the calligraphy, we looked at a Calligraphy book, with loads of writing within - a book designed for practising calligraphy used thousands of years ago. We both really wanted to include calligraphy in our art, and we were noting some repeating symbols we saw next to various drawings. Finally, in this calligraphy section, we saw stamps of the symbols, and we were amazed at how intricate and detailed these stamps were. At the end of the stamp, the symbols had been delicately carved out and the ink would rest on the outline of the symbol, resulting in a beautiful set of stamp marks. We then moved on to the older Chinese ceramics (The ones that aren't in the ceramics section of the British Museum) These ceramics were elegant looking, clean, and well-preserved. We both loved the blue and white traditional Chinese coloured patterns that decorated these ceramic pots, and we wanted to include this fusion of floral and wavy patterns with the white and blue in our art pieces. Isaac also saw the ceramic pot that he'd read about on the website, which we took a photo of to hopefully try to add to our artwork. The various other older ceramics in this section were much smaller, but we couldn't get good photos of them due to the glare in the protective glass that was around them. Because of this, we moved on. The next section was all of statues, mainly depicting humans, gods, and spirits. We both found the portrayal of people, with brighter colours and larger features to be really interesting and vibrant, in contrast to the artwork being produced in the Western World at the time, being a period of less vibrant and more serious portraiture. This contrast really showed us how people were presented to be - not as serious, vain and solemn like they may be presented in Western Art - but rather more jolly, happy and powerful. The poses in which these statues of people were in showed a level of pride and power. We also noticed a difference in attitude towards body image and what was an ideal body for the time. In a description next to a particular smaller statue with a more rounded figure, it said that it was believed, through the celebration of statues like those, that older Chinese Culture celebrated people that weren't slim like the western world preferred at this time - and actually, not being slim was a sign of strength, power, authority and most importantly: wisdom. This is where we got our first taste of what the rich Chinese culture was like before the impact of British Colonialism, the main aim for our visit. Before going to the larger ceramics section, we wanted to have a look at the small area of the larger gallery which had more modern art. In this area, we were immediately struck by how different it was to the other areas. The artwork was duller, more abstract and had lost the colour we were amazed at in previous areas. This artwork was produced after the first century of British Colonial presence in eastern Asia. This really highlighted to us the stark contrast between pre and post British presence in Asia, and the effect it had on Chinese Art. It had started bright, colourful and traditional - utilising calligraphy and resources around them link ink and water, large amounts of clay to make large statues, to now being duller, more abstract - even promoting some western ideas in

one. Lastly, we went to the larger Ceramics section, which showcased hundreds of ceramic pots - most originating from southern and central China. As the museum was now filling up quite quickly, we only briefly went around this gallery and took photos of the ceramics that stood out to us as unique, had interesting patterns, or had aspects of them that we wanted to take further to our art.

We then went out of the British Museum and took various tube stops again to the Leicester Square stop, the nearest to Chinatown. Again, this independent practice of getting accustomed to the tube and train network was really beneficial to both of our confidence levels, especially when utilising public transport in the future. During the more refined planning process post-successful interview, we organised and chose a cheap, convenient, and not crazily busy restaurant in the corner of Chinatown.

There, we chose a variety of different smaller plates and really took in the atmosphere. Everything was vibrant, colourful and busy! This really aligned with our perception of older Chinese art - being colourful, jovial, busy (where the eye can look at many different things). This really cemented the effect of British colonialism, or the influence of the more general Western Culture in China and the wider East Asia.

We then took a direct train back to Whittlesford Parkway, and we both went home. In terms of outcomes, we both originally agreed that we would both raise £30 each, to cover the cost of food and for the canvases needed. However, we encountered some difficulties when organising the meetup over Summer. Unfortunately, Isaac got COVID once he had come back from holiday - resulting in a delayed start to producing these outcomes. We lost around 2 weeks from that and had a couple of days to plan the outcomes together before school started. As this is our last year at Secondary School, and we are preparing for our Mock Exams, neither of us could find time to organise meetups to create these outcomes, instead resorting to meeting up during lunch to create outcomes. We collectively decided that it would be fairer and easier on us if we created one outcome, which included all of the ideas which we had accumulated over the trip. This was quite frustrating, but we had resolved the issue before buying the canvases, a good choice otherwise it would have been a waste of money that we had earned. We used a variety of media, such as pencil, brio, acrylic, ink and pattern outline tracers. This fusion of media resulted in an amazing, refined outcome which really demonstrated our understanding of the time period, the impacts of the British Empire and the foundations of what Chinese art represented and demonstrated. To make up for the other art outcomes we ended up not using - we decided to write another essay - this time more History focused, which used our 'History' notes from the trip and some further research to show our understanding of the history fully. We are both History GCSE students, so this history essay writing process was both beneficial to our research skills as well as our writing skills; the essay being a quicker way of demonstrating our understanding of the trip, the art, and the culture. This history essay will be linked separately.

If we were to do this project again, we both agree that we would try and do the actual trip earlier in the summer and if possible - late Spring. The only reason why we couldn't do it in Spring this time was because our Mock Exams took priority until the

beginning of June. This would've meant that we would've had more time to create more outcomes, which was one of our goals to begin with.

We have both really valued and treasured our time planning and doing this time. We both really enjoyed this project and would like to thank the: Henry Morris Trust for funding this project. We have learnt so much from the experience, including using transport in and around London, art skills when creating our outcome; essay skills and research skills used in our History-Focused Essay. We both agree that we would love to do this whole experience again, perhaps when we have more time on our hands, and have learnt so much in this wonderful process.

Thank you again for your funding!

Isaac Arena and Emily Yau.