



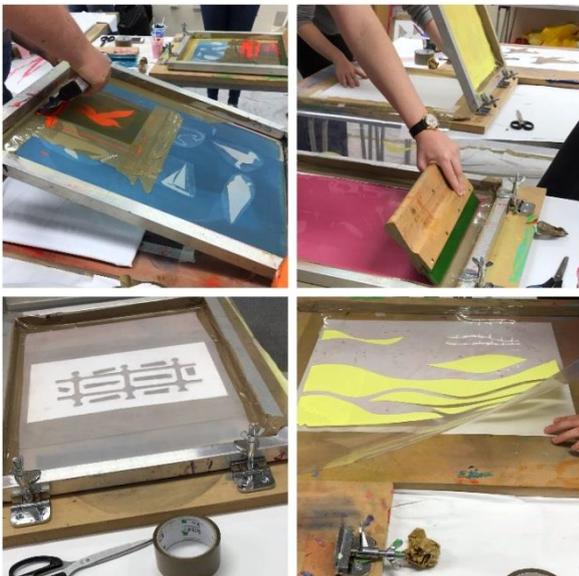
West Kirby Library

Kate Hodgson

Over just one week artist Kate Hodgson led a series of screen-printing workshops in West Kirby Library. Two groups of 16-24 olds, all from the Wirral, worked alongside Kate to create screen-prints around the theme of West Kirby.

Screen-printing is a process that is not dissimilar from stencil making. A screen made from fabric that is tightly stretched over a frame, which is then used to print. A stencil can be made from, paper, painting onto the screen or using a light sensitive emulsion. Screen-print's material qualities are often flat, even surfaces of strong colour and are a direct result of the process of pushing paint or ink through a screen to create an image. The process creates clean lines and bold colour.

Historically, of all the printing methods screen-printing is the oldest. Initially the method was mostly used to decorate clothing, walls and some objects and it wasn't until the 19th century it became popular in the world of advertising. In the early 20th century Samuel Simon officially patented the technique in England. Around this time several printers experimented with photo-reactive chemicals, which eventually revolutionized commercial screen printing. By the early 1960's screen printing techniques became mainstream and Andy Warhol is credited for bringing screen printing into the public eye with his screen printed depiction of Marilyn Monroe.



Each workshop began with an introduction to Kate's practice and to the process of screen-printing. After a short demonstration of how to make stencils and how to print, participants then got to work making paper stencils to place onto the back of their screen. This was a simple way to introduce each group to the process and to familiarise them with stencil making. The groups practiced printing on paper and overlaying their prints – which created some interesting results.

After an initial making session the groups began thinking about the theme of West Kirby. They discussed local landmarks, shops, Marigold's fish and chips and the marine lake . They then set to work drawing free hand stencils that ranged from seals to the library building. The stencils were then used to print on paper to make West Kirby themed posters and wallpaper.

At the end of the first day the groups sat down and evaluated their work. They discussed, what worked well and which prints they thought were most successful. The groups talked about how they would develop these prints for the following sessions and how the images they created would translate onto textiles.

Day two began with an introduction of printing on textiles, which is slightly different process from paper. The group learnt how to line up their images and print using fabric paint. Using their stencils from the previous session and some pre-made stencils they began to practice on tote bags and pieces of fabric. Each participant printed around 4 tote bags all with different designs on. After lunch it was time for t-shirt printing which can be a little trickier, the groups however, were confident and were comfortable with diving straight in.

By the end of the two sessions everyone had made two t-shirts, tote-bags and numerous paper prints. All of the participants were either studying art, textiles or had a general passion for art and making which meant that the results were varied and creative. They combined West Kirby themed stencils with their own artistic practices, which made for some really exciting designs.

The two groups brought a new dimension to the library and it was lovely to see a young and vibrant group of people enjoy being creative within the library setting.

