



Creative Partnerships

2012 Film Portraits

Islington Arts & Media School
and Eelyn Lee Productions



Context

A team of practitioners from Eelyn Lee Productions including performance poet Adisa the Verbaliser worked with six year 7 students from Islington Arts & Media School over two days exploring the 2012 Olympic opportunity through poetry and filmmaking. Prior to the project, the media teacher ran a poetry session to identify students who had an immediate connection to the lyrical art form – on this occasion it just happened to be all boys.

What we did

We began with four points of discussion:

- Who I am
- Where I live
- What I've got to offer the world
- Who I'll be in 2012 and what London will look like

Following a lively brainstorming session, Adisa facilitated students to write two lines of poetry about each point, using Olympic metaphors where appropriate. Once each poem was refined and rehearsed we recorded the students reading their verse to camera. In the afternoon we trained the students in basic camera techniques. Students filmed portrait shots of each other and an object that they felt represented them. Liam chose his glasses, Calvin a guitar and Kwame a book.

With some film production experience under their belts we finished the day with a session on generating storyboard ideas for each poem. The challenge was that all locations had to be within the school grounds so it was a matter of working with what we had to hand.

To best represent the student's poetry we encouraged them to think about images that were symbolic or worked as visual metaphors. This resulted in some creative ideas such as Calvin jumping off the wall, Luke lifting a heavy object on his back and the animated stack of chairs that features in Calvin's poem to represent 'the building blocks of life'.

On day two we shot the storyboard ideas and other ideas that presented themselves whilst filming on location. In the afternoon we edited 'rough cuts' of each film poem that were later completed at our editing studio.

Young People's Aspirations

Using the Games as a framework for this short and intense project proved to be ideal for tapping in to young people's aspirations. The four points of discussion we began with provided a clear starting point for students to engage in thinking about their dreams and their identities.

Visually illustrating these lyrical ideas through film pushed their engagement further as they had to think of ways of representing themselves. When in control of this process of self-representation, the outcome is never short of empowering and affirming.

The result is the six autobiographical film portraits on the DVD attached opposite. Also included in this pack are the six original poems.

My favourite line:

**'...I'll triple jump the sandpit
of fear, for my gold...'**

Eelyn Lee

www.eelynlee.com

Creative Partnerships is a programme managed by Arts Council England, the national development agency for the arts in England.

It gives young people in 36 disadvantaged areas across England the opportunity to develop their creativity and their ambition by building partnerships between schools and creative organisations, businesses and individuals.

Creative Partnerships aims to demonstrate the pivotal role creativity can play in transforming education in every curriculum subject for children of all ages and abilities.

London East and London South were established as two of the first sixteen Creative Partnerships areas in 2002, delivering programmes with schools in Hackney, Greenwich, Islington, Lambeth, Lewisham, Newham, Southwark and Tower Hamlets over a four year period. In April 2006 the two areas merged to form one Creative Partnerships area delivering a joint creative programme in eight boroughs.

Creative Partnerships London East and South

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