# GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP THROUGH ART AND DESIGN

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Key stage 2 & 3 Resource pack: Exploring diversity and ustainable development in the artworks of HUANG XU

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#### What is Global citizenship?

".....Global Citizenship is more than the sum of its parts. It goes beyond simply knowing that we are citizens of the globe to an acknowledgement of our responsibilities both to each other and to the Earth itself. Global Citizenship is about understanding the need to tackle injustice and inequality, and having the desire and ability to work actively to do so. It is about valuing the Earth as precious and unique, and safeguarding the future for those coming after us. Global Citizenship is a way of thinking and behaving. It is an outlook on life, a belief that we can make a difference"

Oxfam's definition of global citizenship http://www.oxfam.org.uk/education/gc/



# Huang Xu

Huang Xu was born in Beijing in 1968. He established the Substratum Art Studio in 1989, the Migrant Bird Art Studio in 1991 and the Big Basin Studio in 2003. He has exhibited in Australia and China and works as a professional artist in Beijing.

#### **Processes**

Huang Xu's oversized chromographic prints explores the fragile nature of the contemporary global economy. The tattered remains of plastic bags from rubbish heaps in China are collected and digitally remodelled in the 3D scanners normally used by archaeologists, to produce images of haunting luminosity. Evoking the aesthetic of the sublime, Huang Xu's vast prints capture freeze-frame shots of decay in a maelstrom of economic change.

#### Silk route to waste route

For Huang Xu, the mundane history of the plastic shopping bag is a critical commentary on China's acceleration towards a free-market economy and the global shift in the fortunes of capitalism. An estimated 3 billion plastic bags are used in China every day, many of which end up in makeshift rubbish heaps, clogging the cities and countryside with plastic. The few recycling facilities that exist are further strained by the import of used plastic bags collected by European supermarkets. Levels of plastic pollution were so high in the months before the Olympics that China decided to impose a ban on lightweight plastic bags. In China, this environmental crisis was widely perceived as symptomatic of the negative impact of the country's recent race to embrace capitalism; Chinese shops had only begun giving out plastic bags in the early 1990s.

Huang Xu elevates this detritus to sublime dimensions. Far from resembling waste, his densely textured, luminous prints suggest the fine silk textiles of Imperial China, evoking an age of decadence and wealth, and recalling the historic trade links between China and the West. Chinese silk was traded across Europe, Asia and Africa from as early as the 11th century BC, and was valued so highly as to almost bankrupt Oh bin fairy! magic my waste away!

the Roman Empire. These histories ironically foreshadow the current balance of economic power, and give a wry commentary on the trade in materials: whilst China once shipped silk to the West, the West now ships used plastic bags back to China.

#### The Chinese invented noodles, which is the original fast food. China had the world's first fast food restaurants well over a thousand years ago – and there are noodle stalls still found on the streets of every Chinese city. Because noodles are virtually the same recipe as pasta - it is thought that Marco Polo took the idea

back to Venice.

# **CHINA** in the World



#### There are people of Chinese heritage living all around the world. There are many great explorers and every day travellers set out from China, from centuries ago to the modern day. Many of these people settled in other countries, and that is why you can find communities all over the world.

There are China towns all over the UK, for example London, Liverpool, Newcastle, Manchester, Leeds, Glasgow.

# The first paper banknotes appeared in China in about 806

**AD**. The first use of paper was for letters of credit transferred over large distances. We can learn a lot about china from the images on these bank notes.

What about the images on our bank notes, do they represent your idea of Britain? What would you choose to put on a bank note to portray your Britain?

### China is made up of contrasts, and just like any other

**COUNTRY,** it's a very large and diverse place. We must be careful not to make generalisations.

There are 55 officially recognised ethnic groups in addition to the Han Chinese. The landscape and weather is just as diverse with a tropical climate in the south to subarctic in the north.

**Tea originates in China.** The Chinese first drank tea around 2737 B.C. and it is now grown in nearly 40 countries. Nearly two and a half million tons of tea is consumed every year in the world, and Britain and Ireland consume the most in the world per capita!



# How many electrical items in your home were made in China?

Thanks to China's innovative technology many of our electrical goods and gadgets are made in China. But due to the European trend in upgrading electrical goods regularly, we generate a lot of waste. In fact the average person in the UK creates 3.3 tonnes of electrical waste in one lifetime.

We send most of our electrical goods waste back to China, Kenya and India, often illegally, to be processed, where large scale burning of goods causes environmental and health problems.

#### We have links with countries all over the world through the clothes that we

**Wear,** but none more so than China. Workers in China manufacture over 28% of all our clothing, including school uniforms.

Clothes imported from China are cheap because wages are low.

Ask in clothes shops, if they are signatories to the Ethical Trading Initiative and if you want to know more, read The Good Shopping Guide and subscribe to The Ethical Consumer magazine.



# How many carrier bags do you pick up when shopping?

China produces and sends us almost all of our carrier bags, using oil based plastics. 100,000 tonnes of plastic bags are thrown away each year in the UK.

Those that don't end up in landfill in the UK go straight back again to landfill sites in China, or to be recycled there.

But Ma Jun, one of the world's most influential environmental campaigners is making headway with pollution levels in China. Thanks to his setting up the Institute for Public and Environmental Affairs, there are now nearly 3,000 environmental NGO's in China and his work has pushed 6 huge multinational companies to agree to have environmental audits.China has also banned shops from giving away free plastic bags to encourage shoppers to use reusable bags.

# What the Chinese Did For Us?

#### Activity:

What you need: camera, map, scissors and glue

What you do: Can you find examples of these inventions in your local area? Take photos or find images in magazines of the items below. Stick them onto a map of your local area onto places where you might find them. For example you may find a compass in an outdoor adventure shop or gunpowder in your local museum.

#### 1. Gunpowder 🛁

Chinese taoist alchemists were looking for the secret to eternal life in the 2nd Century BC, but instead discovered an explosive by combining sulphur and saltpetre. This was later developed in the 8th Century: mixed with charcoal to produce huayao, or gunpowder.

#### 2. Seismoscope

A Chinese philosopher, Chang Hêng, invented the earliest known seismoscope in 132 A.D. It was a six-foot wide jar with eight dragon-heads holding balls in their mouths, with eight toads directly below. Facing the principal directions of a compass, one of the balls would fall if an earthquake occurred. It is said this seismoscope detected an earthquake 400 miles away. We still use seismoscopes today to try and anticipate large-scale earthquakes.

#### **3. Compass**

Chinese fortune tellers in the 3rd Century BC realised that the lodestones used to construct fortune telling boards were able to point to real directions. They designed the compass on a square slab which had markings for the cardinal points and the constellations. Years later in the 8th Century AD, China was the first country to use magnetised needles as compass pointers, and in the 1400s, Zheng He was the first person recorded to have used the compass as a navigational aid.

#### 4. Iron

Engineers in 4th Century China developed blast furnaces to obtain cast iron from iron ore 1200 years before the first blast furnace appeared in Europe.

#### 5. Paper

Cai Lun presented his new invention, paper, to the Emperor in 105 AD. Cai Lun greatly improved the papermaking technique and made it possible to use a variety of materials, such as tree bark, hemp, and rags.

#### **6. Farming Methods**

In Europe, as in the rest of the world, farmers practiced scatter seed farming where seeds are thrown in fields at random. This lead to loss and some seeds not growing. The Chinese developed a method of planting individual seeds in rows that reduced loss and allowed for intensive hoeing, which reduced weeds.

#### 7. Suspension bridge

Invented by the Chinese in the 1st century AD, these were not constructed in the West until 1800 years later. The Clifton Suspension bridge is one of the most famous in England, designed in 1830 by Brunel.

#### 8. Wheelbarrow

Chuko Liang is considered to have invented the wheelbarrow in the 3rd Century AD. He was a general who used wheelbarrows to transport supplies to injured soldiers. The Chinese wheelbarrows had two wheels and required two men to propel and steer it.

#### 9. Indian Ink

Despite its name, the Chinese invented and perfected Indian ink. Invented by a Chinese philosopher in the 3rd century BC, it was a mixture of soot from pine smoke and lamp oil mixed with the gelatin of donkey skin and musk.

#### 10. Tea

We wouldn't have a 'brew' or a 'cuppa' if it weren't for the Chinese. They first drank it around 2737 BC. An unknown Chinese inventor designed the tea shredder, a small device that shredded tea leaves for drinking. The tea shredder used a sharp wheel in the centre of a ceramic or wooden pot that would slice the leaves into thin strips.

#### 11. Toothbrush

The bristle toothbrush, similar to the type used today, was invented in 1498 in China. The bristles were actually the stiff, coarse hairs taken from the back of a hog's neck and attached to handles made of bone or bamboo.

#### 12. Kites

Around 400 BC, kites were used in religious ceremonies in China. They were made out of silk and bamboo and provoked thoughts about human flight. Effectively, they were the forerunner to balloons and gliders.

#### 13. Fireworks

Popular across the world, fireworks came about following the Chinese development of gunpowder. They were originally used for shows, but later to scare enemies in battle. The fireworks were mainly small bamboo cases filled with gunpowder and a fuse on the side.

#### 14. Fan

The Chinese first manufactured the fan, which was mostly carried by women and soldiers. Most of the fans were made out of bamboo and silk.

#### 15. Acupuncture

A main branch of Chinese Medicine which is now a popular form of alternative therapy in the West. Its practice in China can be traced back as far as the 1st millennium BC.

#### 16. Silk

Until the 2nd Century BC, silk remained known only to the Chinese. It wasn't until some monks from Constantinople smuggled some silk worm eggs out of the county around 550 AD that silk production began in the West. Our silk worms came from these few stolen eggs.

#### 17. Abacus

This early form of the calculator was invented by the Chinese sometime in the 2nd Century BC.

#### 18. Porcelain and China

Porcelain was one of the first crafts in China. White or cream coloured, artists started painting them with blue cobalt paint in the 13th century, giving us the famous Chinese blue and white decorative patterns such as the Blue Willow design. Pottery was made for everyday use, and became know in the west as China.

#### **19. Playing Cards**

The documented history of card playing began in the 10th Century, when the Chinese began using paper dominoes by shuffling and dealing them in new games.

#### 20. Umbrella

The Chinese were the first to waterproof their umbrellas for use as rain protection. They waxed and lacquered their paper parasols in order to use them for rain.

#### 21. Paper Money

The first paper banknotes appeared in China about 806 AD. The first use of paper was for letters of credit transferred over large distances.

# Oh bin fairy, magic my waste away!

Activity: How much do your students know about plastic? Take the plastic quiz and find out.... Whilst China once shipped silk

#### 1. What are plastics made from?

a) petroleum b) trees c) water d) animals

#### Answer: Petroleum

The majority of synthetic plastics are made from polythene, which is sourced from petroleum. By cutting down our use of plastics we will reduce our dependency on them. Pupils might also be interested to learn that shellac and the horns of animals were used as plastic materials before the first synthetic plastics were discovered.

#### 2. Can plastic be recycled?

Answer: Because there are so many different types, plastic is very difficult (and expensive) to recycle. In fact, unless burned (which can be very dangerous as this releases toxic fumes) plastic never really disappears from our planet.

## 3. If it cannot be recycled where does most of our plastic end up after we have disposed of it?

a) landfills b) our oceans c) they are reused

#### Answer: the oceans

The report "Plastic Debris in the World's Oceans", by international environmental group Greenpeace, said at least 267 marine species are known to suffer from entanglement or ingestion of plastic debris. An estimated 1 million seabirds choke or get tangled in plastic nets, or other rubbish every year. After a plastic bag has killed an animal, its body decomposes and the plastic is released back into the environment where it can kill again.

# 4. About four-fifths of marine litter comes from land, swept by wind or washed by rain off highways and city streets, into drains, down streams and rivers, and out to sea. How much of this waste is floating plastic?

a) 20% b) 60% c) 90%

Answer: 90%

#### 5. How many pieces of plastic debris do you think are floating in one square mile of ocean?

a) 46 b) 460 c) 46,000

Answer: 46,000

In June 2006, a United Nations Environmental Program report estimated that there are an average of 46,000 pieces of plastic debris floating on or near the surface of every square mile of ocean

#### 6. On average how long do we use a plastic bag before throwing it away?

a) one day b) one month c) 12 minutes

to the West, the West now ships used plastic bags back to China.

Answer: On average a person uses a plastic bag for 12 minutes before disposing. It then lasts in the environment for between 500 to 1000 years.

#### 7. How many bags do you think an average person uses a year?

a) 1000 b) 50 c) 300

Answer: The world uses over 1.2 trillion plastic bags a year. That averages about 300 bags for each adult on the planet, or one million bags being used per minute. In Britain, approximately 13 billion plastic bags are given out to shoppers every year and at least 200 million end up as litter on our beaches, streets and parks.

## 8. Which of these countries have restricted (bags are not given away free) banned or are planning to ban the plastic bag?

Bangladesh, Rwanda, Israel, Canada, Western Indian State of Maharashtra, Botswana, Kenya, South Africa, Taiwan, Singapore, China and Ireland

#### Answer: all of them

Many countries have banned plastic bags or imposed taxes to reduce their use, but the UK is not one of them. Only some towns in the UK have gone Plastic Bag Free www.plasticbagfree.com Bangladesh, Rwanda, Israel, Canada, Western Indian State of Maharashtra, Botswana, Kenya, South Africa, Taiwan and Singapore have banned, or are moving towards banning the plastic bag. China has banned free plastic bags. Ireland took the lead in Europe by taxing plastic bags, reducing consumption by 90 %.

#### 9. What is the difference between reusing and recycling?

Answer: To reclaim is to use an item beyond its original purpose. For example you may reuse your ice cream tubs or chinese take away boxes as lunch boxes or storage. Reusing is vital because the manufactoring processess in recycling use a lot of energy and goods needs to be transported which causes pollution.

#### You can find further information on:

#### www.messageinthewaves.com

Extracts from the film online can be shown to students to demonstrate the environmental and human impact of global plastic pollution.

#### www.plasticbagfree.com

How can you make your town plastic bag free?

#### www.mcsuk.org

Marine Conservation Society – UK charity dedicated to the protection of the marine environment and its wildlife. Produces the annual Good Beach Guide, as well as promoting public participation in volunteer projects and surveys such as Beachwatch, Adopt-a-Beach, Seasearch and Basking Shark Watch. tel. 01989 566017

#### www.oceans.greenpeace.org

Greenpeace 'defending our oceans' campaign – Find out why our oceans are in crisis and become an ocean defender.

www.unep.org/regionalseas/marinelitter United Nations Environment Programme

#### How do we know its working? A toolkit for measuring attitudal change

www.risc.org.uk

**Activity**: this is designed to find out what pupils know and think about the impact of our choices in relation to consumption and waste.

#### Learning objectives

- To help pupils understand that people's behaviour has an impact on the environment
- To equip pupils with the understanding and belief that they can make a difference
- To foster a sense of responsibility for the environment and for the sustainable use of resources
- To help pupils develop an understanding of their own and each others' rights and responsibilities
- · To encourage pupils to express their own opinions and value the opinions of others

#### What you need

•Nine cards, with each of the following words

- A Reuse
- B Recharge
- C Refuse (say no!)
- D Recycle
- E Refill
- F Rethink
- G Reclaim
- H Reduce
- I Repair

• A question sheet asking, 'What's the best way to tackle waste?'

#### What you do

• Spread the cards out so the pupils can see them all and ask them to look at them. A short explanation of each card may be necessary, depending on the age group. Without picking them up, each pupil should identify a card that they think is the most important and one that's not so important. Ask the pupils to arrange the nine cards in a diamond pattern with the most important at the top, the least important at the bottom and the others ranked in between. They can swap the cards around as long as they can give a reason for doing so. Record their comments and explanations.

• Once the group has reached a consensus use the letters on each card to record the pattern. A digital camera can be useful for this.

#### How to analyse and interpret the results

Score the results the top cards are given the score of 9 then decending down the diamond 7, 5,3,1
Add together all the scores for each card.

Card	Total score	Comments
A REUSE		
<b>B</b> RECHARGE		
C REFUSE (SAY NO)		
D RECYCLE		
E REFILL		
F RETHINK		
G RECLAIM		
H REDUCE		
I REPAIR		

#### What you look for

•The priority pupils place on 'Recycle' compared to 'Refuse', 'Reduce' and 'Rethink' Try repeating the activity after your work on sustainability and bags.

#### How to know if your teaching has been effective?

When you repeat the activity you are looking for:

• Positioning of 'Recycle' in the bottom three as it's one of the least energy efficient ways of dealing with waste.

• Positioning of 'Refuse', 'Reduce' and 'Rethink' in the top three.

#### This is what we did!



#### The plastic spiral at Clanfield Primary

Pupils were asked to bring in all the plastic bottles their household used in a week. These were arranged according to size in a spiral on the school field. This provided lots of opportunities for cross-curricular work with maths/science/ESD - estimating etc. Pupils later made bottles into mini composters.







Pupils at Caversham Primary weighed out all the packaging waste in their lunch boxes. On seeing how much waste they produced they set themselves the

**zero lunchbox challenge**! Knowing that they would need the support of parents they held an after school meeting and together decided to find ways of reducing lunch box waste.

Students at Reading Girls School collected school and domestic waste to create sculptures for their school garden. This was part of the sculpture, which the students aptly named '*The tongue of consumption.*'

# **Be creative! Art and design projects**

## Don't Dump it use it! A few ideas on binding your plastics to make them more stronger and more durable.

## You can knit plastic bags!

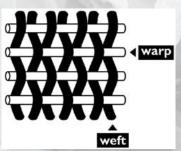
Cut your bag into one long strip by cutting your bag as if you were cutting a spiral. Get some knitting needles and away you go!

Fuse plastic bags together to make a

stronger more durable plastic bag or sculpture. Place around 6 layers of plastic between parchment-paper on your ironing board. Ensure that the printed side of the bags are face down on the board otherwise it will be a bit messy. Iron together and 'voila' you have a strong piece of plastic material that you can sculpt or stitch into another bag.

Find instructions online and pics: http://etsylabs.blogspot.com/2007/05/ long-overdue-fusing-plastic-bag.html

Weave it start by building a weaving frame from bamboo or wood, remembering your weft and warp you can weave a colourful wall hanging.



Can you think of any other techniques you can use to join plastic bags together?

## Activity: making art inspired by the work of Huang Xu

## Introduction and discussion

Show pupils Huang Xu's photographs. The best way to imitate the actual scale of his work would be to project the images on a large screen or wall. Ask Pupils:

- What do the images look like?
- What are they made from? Can they guess it's made from plastic bags?
- What processes and techniques does he use? Are they painted, drawn or photographed?
- Why do they think the artist has chosen to use plastic bags in his work?
- Why do you think he has increased the scale?
- What do you think the artist feels about plastic? Is he celebrating the material?
- What do you do with your plastic waste?

#### Activity: playing with shadows

**You need:** a dark room, desk lamps or a more powerful stage light Ask pupils to collect broken plastic bags, plastic bottles and other plastics heading for the recycling bin.

You will also need: scissors, tape, needles and threads.

#### What you do:

• Make a plastic waste tip in the middle of your classroom. Are they suprised at the amount of plastic that they have collected?

• Ask pupils to work in pairs to create figures from their plastics by joining them together. As a sculpture it may only look like a pile of rubbish however when you shine a light source behind your sculpture onto a screen or on to the wall you can create the shadow of a figure. It may be useful for pupils to work in a darkened room with the lamp so that they can see the shadows they are producing as they create their figures.

#### Activity: photography

You will need: plastics, a variety of backgrounds (black, silver), lighting gels

#### What you do:

· Create abstract sculptural forms from plastics inspired by Huang Xu photographs.

• Pupils will then place their forms against various backgrounds and photograph them. You may also want to use lighting gels, coloured acetate, sweet wrappers and a magnifying glass as camera filters. Give pupils action words (spin, photograph from below, photograph from above, sharp, shadow, zoom) to incorporate into their image.

• The final images can then be projected to increase their scale and also be manipulated and animated.



#### **Activity: Painting and projection**

You will need: plastics, OHP, glass paints, acetate, scissors and glue

#### What you do:

• Ask students to make plastic sculptures and hang them off washing lines. Pupils can create images on acetate using glass paints, drawing shapes that are inspired from their sculptures.

• They can then place these pieces on an OHP and play around with projection and shadows.



## **Design & Technology and** Global Citizenship key stage 2&3

This project will enable pupils to:

• Develop ideas for a product and think about what they want their design to achieve. For example: minimising environmental impact, a bag with a long shelf life, a useful carrying devise, its aesthetic qualities, encourage and inspire other shoppers to stop using throw away bags.

 Take inspiration from non-plastic bags made by communities across the globe and consider how are they used and who uses them.

• Explore the properties of a variety of natural or reclaimed materials. How do the characteristics of a material change when they are used? Will it survive certain weather conditions? What happens when you combine different materials?

- Investigate various techniques for joining and fixing materials.
- Devise ways of testing out their bags and make improvements if necessary.
- · Communicate the concepts behind their bag design how the bag was made, materials used and the advantages of their bag to a throw away plastic one.

• To think creatively and find solutions to problems, that will improve the quality of our lives and our environment.

- To explore issues of sustainable development.
- To take positive action for change.
- To become responsible global citizens.

Knowledge and understanding

bags from around the world

- · Raise awareness of over consumption of our finite resources.
- Understand the relationship between human activity and the environment.

 Consider actions they can take to minimise their impact on the environment.

#### Packing tape basket: Swaziland

This bag was made from waste packing tape from South Africa. There is a long tradition of basket making in this area and the basket makers are experimenting with brightly coloured reclaimed materials, including telephone wire.

# Ask pupils to research into sustainable

Weaving a bag- online instructions www.instructables.com/id/Packing-Strap-Bag/



Number plates: A laptop bag from South Africa made from reclaimed number plates.

**Crisp packets**: Re use all those old crisp packets, that you see floating on your pavements and hiding in trees by weaving your own bag

Tetra Packs: Tetra packs are difficult to recycle. They can be cut into strips and woven, they are light and durable.

Online weaving instructions: www.gumwrapper.com/build.htm This is the link to begin the weave.... www.candywrapperpurse.blogspot.com



## Activity: alternative plastic bag design project

## **Design Brief**

To design an innovative bag that provides shoppers with an ethical and fashionable alternative to a disposable bag. It should be so stylish that its owner would never forget to take it with them! The whole school can take part in this project, resulting in an exhibition and fashion show. Pupils, staff and parents can vote for their favourite design!

#### All designs need to be:

Made from reclaimed materials, for example old clothes, plastic, metal, milk bottle tops, cups, containers, broken carrier bags or natural items such as twigs. You can use any number of materials in your design.

Reusable, for example a paper bag would need to be made strong enough to be used more than once.

Make sure the bag is not larger or heavier than the person using it!

It could be multifunctional. For example a bag that can be transformed into an emergency rain hat or a bag/lampshade, bag/jacket, bag/bike basket; be as crazy as possible!

Think about how your materials are joined or fixed together. Can they be woven? Can one material be used as a joiner or to make a frame?

Think about the shape of the bag, how can you make your bag stand out from the rest?

Fun and inventive! A design that is a conversation piece, art that is functional.



Huang Xu, fragments no.26' chromograph 122 x 215cm

## Bag gallery

The following fabulous examples were designed and made by young people in Reading in 2008 for an alternative bag competition. The bags were exhibited and their creators modelled them in a fashion show to encourage members of the public to ditch their disposable plastic bag habits and make their own!



sewn Bottle tops on fabric



plastic ironed between bubble wrap



graffiti t-shirt and fabric shoulder strap

dad's old pants





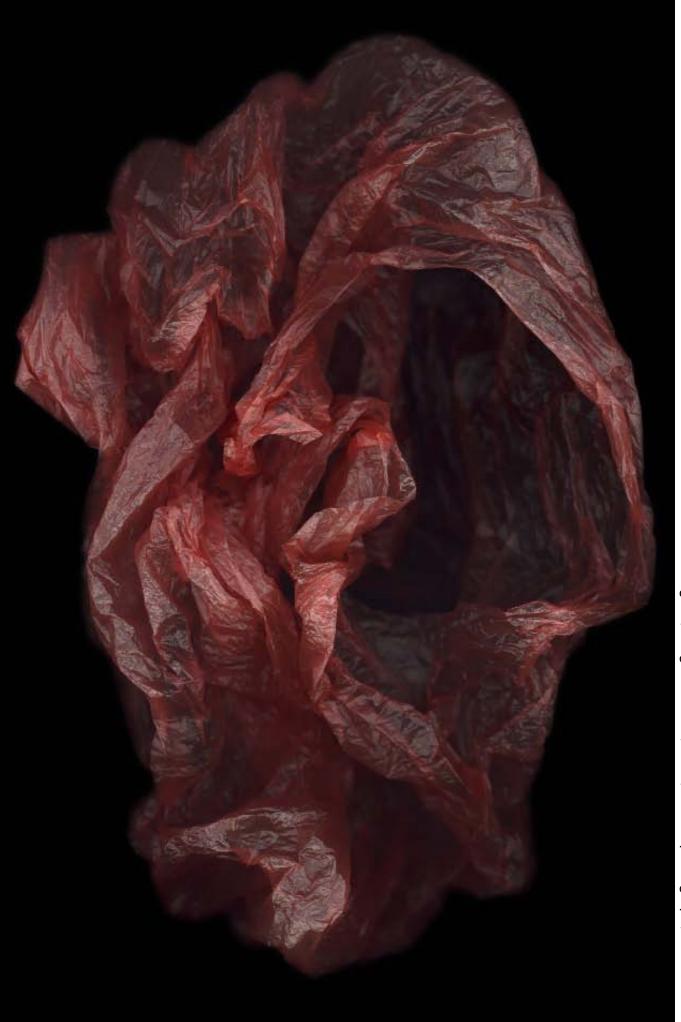
# Huang Xu, Fragments

Huang Xu, Fragment No.1, 2007, chromophotograph, 244 x 122cm



Huang Xu, Fragment No.4, 2007, chromophotograph, 215 x 122cm









Huang Xu, Fragment No.23, 2007, chromophotograph, 244 x 122cm

#### Your comments

Please send your comments and any images of pupil's work and responses to shehnoor@risc.org.uk

Teacher's feedback:

Were you able to successfully deliver both Art & Global Citizenship through this project? Please tell us about what happened

Which GC concepts did you look at: Human Rights; Interdependence; Sustainability; Peace & conflict; Diversity; Social justice?

What were the strengths of this project?

What were its weaknesses?

Pupils responses:

When we did this art project I thought about.....

The best thing about this project was......

Something I learnt that I didn't know before.....

Before we did this project I thought...... but now.....



www.octobergallery.co.uk/participate

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