

London Lost Objects - Microteach Plan

At the end of 2023 London experienced one of the first floods it had in almost 100 years. It's thanks in part to the Thames barrier that we've been protected from these natural disasters. We can feel disconnected to the forces of the natural environment as city dwellers, but environmental factors are changing this. I grew up in London, the Eastenders opening credits were as close as I got to the water of Thames.

Recently there has been a renewed interest in getting physically closer to the Thames, in the form of mudlarking. What was a 19th Century way of scavenging a living for young people has become a 21st hobby. Objects that somehow made their way into the river **"can also inspire the discovery of hidden histories, stories that disrupt what we typically know of the past"** according to Malcolm Rusell, author of Mudlark'd.

So, inspired by the mudlarkers, we have some artefacts from a 21st Century London Archives, in a bid to explore whose stories are told, lost and found, and how we, as future curators, bestow objects with value. Item 1 is from No License, South East London's most comprehensive Grime Archive, based up the road in Peckham.

Exercise 1 - Introduction and Group discussion / 10 mins

- First, can you describe the item?
- What associations does it bring up for you?
- How would it be used in a story? Or what story does this item open up for you ?
- Who do you imagine owned it and where are they now?
- How can we think about the emblem of the river as a signifier?
- Anything else it evokes for you
- Where would you go to find more information about this object

Exercise 2 - Mapping London and Sharing / 10 mins

- Add something to the map of a connection to London's waterways that holds stories or memories for you?
- What does the river symbolise for you?
- Group comes back together to share contributions with the group

Session Aims:

- To encourage participants to draw on their own personal histories of the city
- Reflect on clothing as a tool for connection to place
- Facilitate collective discussions
- Visual literacy (ability to 'read' objects, to find meaning from them)
- Design awareness and knowledge
- Team working
- Critical analytical skills