

Butler's Creative Arts School

Est. 2008

Report 2015-2018



The **BARBER**
Institute of Fine Arts

**RUSSELL
GROUP**

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Key facts BCAS 2015-2018

The Masterclass programme, directed by Michael Butler, an educator and British abstract painter, who is also the Head of the Arts Programme, saw participation from schools situated in various towns and cities. Breaking away from conventional norms, Mr. Butler pioneered a unique model for art education. Rather than establishing a traditional school building, he partnered with museums and art galleries in the West Midlands to provide art lessons for gifted and talented students from Key Stage 3 to 5, including weekly after-school art classes. From 2015 to 2018, Mr Butler worked full-time as an art and design teacher or cover supervisor in the West Midlands, thus giving him the time to organise the extracurricular Masterclass programme.

Butler's Creative Arts School (BCAS) thrived on collaborations with leading art institutions. These partnerships granted students unparalleled access to artefacts and renowned artworks that would not be available at the schools the students attended.

Exclusively tailored for students studying in England, the classes catered to those exhibiting outstanding talent in drawing and painting. Entrants were handpicked by Mr. Butler based on the merit of their art portfolios, whether GCSE or A-Level work. The collaboration with the **Barber Institute of Fine Arts at the University of Birmingham**, a distinguished member of the Russell Group, and other museums in the Birmingham region, proved to be instrumental. From 2015 to 2018, over **100 students** benefited from this programme, and many of the participants continued studying art-related courses at university.



Roles and responsibilities

Organiser: Mr. Butler meticulously plans and oversees the Masterclass program, ensuring compliance with all safeguarding policies and practices. He is responsible for selecting high-ability art students to attend the Drawing and Fine Art Master Class, cultivating an environment of artistic excellence. The teaching and delivery of the class are specifically tailored for these high-ability art students.

Director: In his role as Director, Mr. Butler provides leadership and strategic direction, making decisions that advance the goals of the Masterclass program.

Head of the Arts: As the Head of the Arts, Mr. Butler champions the arts by curating programs and ensuring that artistic standards are upheld at the highest levels.

Patron: Mr. Butler also acts as a patron, offering financial and moral support for the program. He promotes growth and champions artistic excellence within the West Midlands of England.

Learning & Access Officer at The Barber Institute of Fine Arts University of Birmingham: Jen Ridding

As the Learning and Access Officer at The Barber Institute of Fine Arts, University of Birmingham, Jen Ridding plays a pivotal role in devising educational initiatives for a wide audience spectrum.

She ensures that the institute's collections are accessible to everyone, emphasising inclusivity for underserved communities and individuals with disabilities. Furthermore, her position involves fostering collaborations with educational and community groups while also providing the necessary training and resources to achieve these objectives.

10 Towns and Cites in England

- Birmingham
- Dudley
- Sandwell
- Solihull
- Willenhall
- Bromsgrove
- Halesowen
- Shropshire
- West Bromwich
- Wolverhampton

10 Schools

- Bromsgrove independent school, Worcester Road.
- Colton Hills Community School
- Hamstead Hall Academy, Craythorne Avenue
- Kings Norton Girls' School, Selly Oak Road
- Phoenix Collegiate, A Business, Sport & Enterprise College
- Pool Hayes Arts & Community School, Willenhall
- St Michael's Church of England High & Business Enterprise College
- St Thomas Catholic School, Darlaston Lane
- The Kingswinford School
- The Lacon Childe School

Mr Butler has been teaching art and design for over a decade since graduating with a BA Honours degree from the University of Wolverhampton in 2008. He has an excellent track record of delivering art and design classes in both England and China. In 2019 he was at the forefront of introducing the Art and Design Cambridge IGCSE and A-Level at Nanjing's Han Kai Academy in China.

He has played a pivotal role in linking schools with museums for cross-curricular collaborative projects in England and China. Michael Butler has been a professional artist for 20 years, exhibiting his abstract paintings to the public and painting daily in his studio complex in England and China.

His role as an art teacher has been pivotal in unlocking pupils' creative minds, enabling them to realise their creative potential, and identifying those who are gifted and talented.

Michael states, "I aim to instill confidence in students about their creative expression that they may not already possess." With the support of parents and teaching staff, the students can decide whether they wish to pursue a creative or academic career.

Butler's Creative Arts School

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Report 2015



Project Description



Butler's Creative Arts School (BCAS) was established in 2008 and underwent significant development in 2015 under the leadership of its director, Michael Butler, who is also a senior tutor. The core philosophy of Butler's Creative Arts School is to champion excellence among students who demonstrate exceptional artistic talent from Key Stage 3 through Key Stage 5. The programme is designed to offer students an expansive and deep cultural experience that transcends the conventional school setting, enriched by a diverse array of art projects.

Partnerships with art galleries and museums will grant students access to archival materials and artwork, which are instrumental in fostering imagination and inspiration. Students will have the opportunity to interact with their gifted and talented peers across various year groups, as well as with alumni from diverse educational institutions, including schools, colleges, and universities.

Engaging workshops led by current or budding artists and designers will provide a glimpse into the world of the arts industry. Such exposure is invaluable for students aiming to attain higher academic grades or those considering further exploration and commitment to the arts.

Barber Institute of Fine Arts



The event took place at the prestigious Barber Institute of Fine Arts in Birmingham, an integral part of the University of Birmingham. This gallery exhibits artworks from some of the art world's most recognisable artists, including Vincent van Gogh, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and Pablo Picasso.

During the Drawing and Fine Art Masterclass, students from secondary schools throughout the West Midlands region, encompassing areas such as Birmingham, Wolverhampton, and Willenhall, were in attendance.

Tour of the university



Central to this project was offering students the opportunity to engage with peers from different schools. Instilling a mindset of positive networking with other creatively inclined teenagers early in their academic journeys can significantly bolster their self-esteem and foster a holistic appreciation for education.

Throughout the day, a variety of activities were conducted. It began with a short film in the lecture theatre presented by Michael Butler, followed by an insightful talk from Jen Ridding. She highlighted the reasons behind the Barber Institute of Fine Arts being recognised as a centre of excellence. Michael Butler further emphasised the significance of art and the artist's role in society through his presentation.

Participants were treated to a tour of the university, its musical auditorium hall, and the library. Based on their proficiency in their chosen art form, such as pencil or ink drawing, they were then divided into distinct groups for a drawing workshop.

Groups



- Excelling Emeralds
- Junior Masters
- Powerful Pearls
- Rare Rubies
- Super Sapphires

All groups were invited to a private viewing room to study archives and subsequently attend another in-depth talk about the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood art movement. The participants were granted unique access to analyse these masterpieces and engage in rich conversations about the artistry behind them. It is noteworthy to mention that such revered art pieces are typically not accessible to the general public. The Barber Institute of Fine Arts was exceptionally accommodating, ensuring that the participants received an enriched educational experience. This programme also aimed to build upon the students' existing knowledge of art and British culture.

Statement from Michael Butler



“having the privilege of teaching at more than 20 schools”.

The Masterclass stands out as a distinctive programme primarily because it offers selected students a complimentary opportunity to attend. My insight into this initiative stemmed from a thorough examination of the interactions between art galleries in the West Midlands and secondary schools, and vice versa. Over time, I discerned certain limitations of these galleries: they often overlooked students possessing exceptional artistic abilities. The museums and galleries struggled to draw participants from beyond their immediate vicinity, and additionally, I observed that schools infrequently organised extracurricular visits to galleries. Most students, I found, would possibly visit a museum or a contemporary gallery only once or twice during the academic year.

Having served in diverse educational roles over the past ten years, I have consistently emphasised the importance of gallery and museum visits to students. To engage with artwork in person, I would often ask, ‘How frequently do you visit art galleries?’ Alarming, a vast majority of students, from Key Stage 3 to 5 studying art and design, revealed that they had never set foot in an art gallery or museum, interacted with a practising artist through an art talk or art workshop, or experienced firsthand the allure of a painting or sculpture within a gallery setting. Their feedback was profoundly enlightening and became a foundational pillar for the Drawing and Fine Art Masterclass.

Two fundamental elements underpinned the success of our collaboration with the Barber Institute of Fine Arts. First, it was essential to understand the aspirations of our young participants; every student yearns for intellectual challenges that enhance their academic development. Second, most art institutions, including museums and galleries, are eager to establish deeper connections with educational establishments, particularly when catering to students who demonstrate excellence in drawing, painting, sculpting, or digital art. This collaboration required a hands-on approach from my end—initiating meetings with faculty heads and school principals to introduce the programme, followed by on-site interactions to explain the programme’s nuances to the students. On many occasions, I reacquainted myself with students I had taught in the past, either as their primary art educator or as a substitute teacher. Over the years, I have served as a substitute teacher, having the privilege of teaching at more than **20 schools** on a short-term basis. This experience not only sharpened my teaching skills but also allowed me to foster valuable connections with fellow educators before selecting the schools where I wanted to work long-term as an art teacher.

Schools



It's imperative to encourage students to attend artist talks and make regular visits to museums. Keeping them informed of compelling exhibitions in cities like Wolverhampton, Birmingham, and London will not only expand their horizons but also accelerate their growth in art and design.

The Media

Local newspapers, magazines, online blogs, and other media outlets are instrumental in championing the Master Class programme. As the initiative gains traction among schools and colleges, we anticipate hosting more frequent events throughout the year. Such a strategy will amplify the synergy between galleries and educational institutions. For our forthcoming event, my objective is to broaden our reach by collaborating with more educational entities. Moreover, I plan to extend the duration of the Drawing and Fine Art Master Class, potentially spanning two to three days, across prominent art institutions in both Birmingham and Wolverhampton. This extended framework will offer participants richer exposure to an array of artistic mediums and disciplines.

Patrons of the BCAS



As a Patron of BCAS, you play a pivotal role in championing the dreams and aspirations of gifted art students.

Becoming a Patron of Butler's Creative Arts School offers a distinctive chance for schools, businesses, and individuals to actively endorse the arts.

The programme epitomizes excellence, showcasing how educational institutions can broaden horizons by immersing students in real-life art sessions and enlightening talks.

History of Patrons:

Throughout art history, patrons have been at the heart of commissioning and supporting the arts.

Evidence of their profound impact can be found across art history - from intricately designed manuscripts, magnificent public monuments, to timeless paintings. From ancient Egyptian pharaohs and wealthy Flemish merchants to esteemed European officials, patrons have underscored the critical role of art and culture in society.

The high renaissance was illuminated by works from artists like Michelangelo, who produced masterpieces that continue to captivate us. Without the support of influential patrons such as Pope Julius II and Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco de' Medici, perhaps the world might never have witnessed Michelangelo's unparalleled genius.

While history often paints a picture of patrons as individuals hailing from affluent and influential families, the twentieth century ushered in a democratization of patronage. Thanks to modern technology and the internet, art patronage has become accessible, allowing the broader public to partake in championing artists and their craft.

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Report 2016

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Project Description



“students from Poland, China, Hong Kong, and Greece were also in attendance”.

Drawing and Fine Art Master Class 2016

The students who participated in this year's Drawing and Fine Art Master Class (DFAMC) at the Barber Institute of Fine Arts were selected for their exceptional artistic abilities. Schools from various areas across the West Midlands, including Dudley, Halesowen, West Bromwich, Bromsgrove, and Shropshire, actively engaged in the DFAMC. This programme serves as a true testament to cultural diversity and exemplifies how state-funded and independent schools can collaborate to meet the needs of their students. Furthermore, on the day of the event, students from Poland, China, Hong Kong, and Greece were also in attendance.

Each participant spent a significant amount of time in the Barber's Prints and Drawings Study Room, engaging in gallery sketching and closely examining artworks.

The DFAMC stands out as a unique programme that not only promotes artistic growth but also acts as a catalyst for broader collaboration across the West Midlands. This is partly due to the Barber Institute of Fine Arts' affiliation with the University of Birmingham, a prestigious member of the Russell Group. This esteemed collective represents twenty-four leading UK universities committed to outstanding teaching and research.

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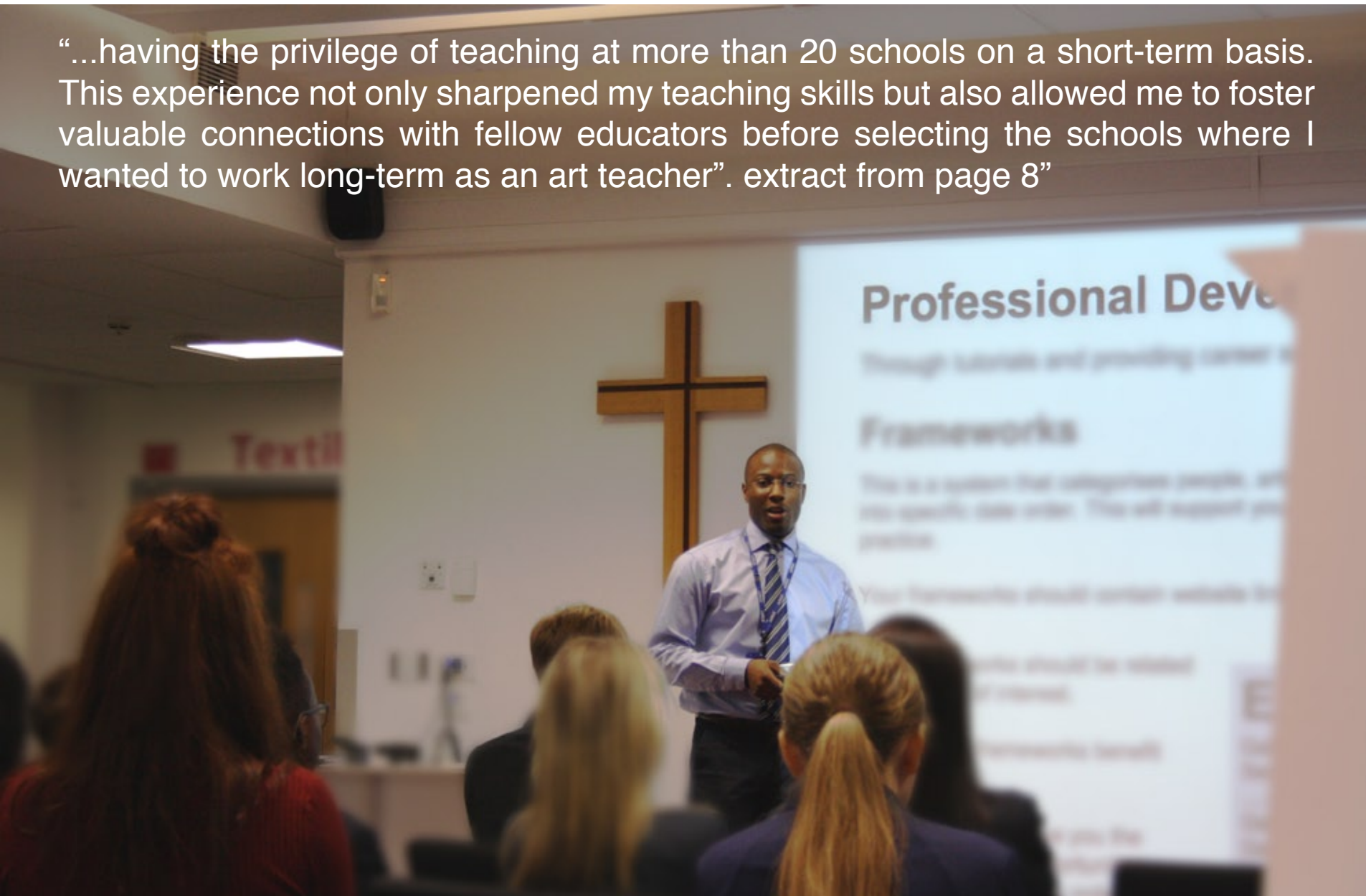
Report 2017



Michael's Masterclass Mondays



“...having the privilege of teaching at more than 20 schools on a short-term basis. This experience not only sharpened my teaching skills but also allowed me to foster valuable connections with fellow educators before selecting the schools where I wanted to work long-term as an art teacher”. extract from page 8”



Michael Butler Head of Art

Michael's Masterclass Mondays commenced in October 2013, offering private art lessons to gifted and talented students ranging from Key Stages 3 to 5 (11–18 years old). All participants have high aspirations and exhibit unwavering dedication to pursuing their creative and academic goals. The primary objective of these weekly sessions is to impart knowledge about major art movements from a global perspective, presented in a chronological manner. Students will be instructed in utilising materials and techniques in both innovative and traditional approaches. However, the emphasis lies not in emulating specific artists but in the students mastering their own craft and engaging in artistic experimentation. The classes will encompass the following topics:

- Art history
- Short talks and films
- Career support
- Drawing and painting
- Working with artists

Birmingham, UK



In September 2018, Michael Butler achieved his goal by personally contacting the heads of the art departments in the specified regions below. The heart of the programme lies in the active involvement of schools and colleges, with the intention of reaching out to gifted and talented students specifically. This comprehensive outreach to all these educational institutions ensures a fair selection process, offering every student the opportunity to become a part of BCAS (Butler's Creative Arts School). Consequently, the communication with these establishments has been meticulous and precise, to the extent that Michael Butler is familiar with the names of the heads of the art department faculties within the mentioned boroughs:

- Dudley
- Sandwell
- Wolverhampton
- Walsall
- Solihull

He will now actively promote the Master Class to schools and colleges in Birmingham, Worcester, and Coventry. He specifically liaises with the heads of the art departments because they bear the responsibility of acquainting their students with BCAS and other creative prospects throughout the West Midlands.

Schools that enrol their gifted and talented pupils in BCAS have recognised, through parental feedback, the vital need for such a project. However, schools and colleges that neglect to inform their students about the Master Class programme are depriving creative students of the opportunity to nurture and expand their creativity. It is crucial to acknowledge that from 2015 to 2016, the programme was entirely cost-free for pupils to participate in, with all art materials generously provided by sponsors such as Chroma Inc. from the USA.

International Sponsorship



“Let us discard mediocrity in the West Midlands and champion genuine artistic excellence within our state-funded schools”.



Butler's Creative Arts School continues to benefit from sponsorship by esteemed companies such as Global Art Supplies, Derwent, and Golden Artist Colours, based in New York, renowned for their commitment to producing top-quality art materials.

Michael Butler has a long-term vision for the programme, which profoundly informs his creative journey as an artist. Painting and art instruction will remain his primary focus.

Statement from Michael: The arts hold significant importance, and greater efforts must be made to foster and deliver artistic excellence beyond regular school hours across the West Midlands. At times, state-funded schools may underestimate the value of the arts, perceiving them as either pretentious or of little tangible significance in the curriculum. Establishing regular engagement with museums, art galleries, and artists is essential. Let us discard mediocrity in the West Midlands and champion genuine artistic excellence within our state-funded schools.

Butler's Creative Arts School

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Private Art Classes



The private art classes offered through BCAS have a definitive long-term goal, which is committed to helping the more able and talented pupils. The policies and action plan have been outlined in the manifesto and prospectus.

These weekly art classes challenge the most able students across the West Midlands. They also provide opportunities for students who attend BCAS to develop their creativity, thinking skills, and confidence, aspects that are integrated into the three programmes:

- Michael's Masterclass Mondays
- Summer Drawing and Fine Art Master Class
- Drawing and Fine Art Master Class

What I found when interviewing pupils is that the arts curriculum does not offer the breadth, depth, and flexibility to meet the needs of the more able and talented students. Due to excessive workloads and bureaucracy, art teachers find it somewhat difficult to prioritise their teaching with gifted and talented students, while organising frequent visits to museums can be non-existent for pupils at Key Stage 3 to 5. Unfortunately, this can leave potentially talented pupils feeling discouraged and left behind compared to peers who attend independent schools.

West Midlands



Their competitors will subsequently gain access to a deeper level of learning through regular trips to galleries and will be introduced to the history of art, which will maximise their knowledge and understanding.

At the same time, this will propel them into the arts industry equipped with all the relevant skills that employers require. The question of what strategies we have for challenging our most able students becomes irrelevant because some art teachers within the West Midlands are detached from what artistic excellence entails in relation to offering a broader arts curriculum that is interwoven with art history and professional development, which are inseparable at BCAS. Budgets and staff cuts have inadvertently confined art teachers within the four walls of the classroom. This has restricted pupils' learning, particularly affecting those who are gifted and talented.

My findings may be quite contentious towards art teachers; however, I am not suggesting that the delivery of art and design subjects is inadequate in the West Midlands. I have observed and spoken with a vast number of creative teachers who teach art with dynamism and enthusiasm. However, due to increased class sizes and other factors, it has become almost impossible for them to provide the level of service necessary to enrich their most able students.

State Funded Schools



If gifted and talented pupils are not nurtured, and state-funded schools fail to provide extra academic activities, there will be a continuation of the more able and talented art students not being given the opportunities to progress and express their creative ability.

Statement from Michael



The arts hold significant importance, and greater efforts must be made to foster and deliver artistic excellence beyond regular school hours across the West Midlands. Sometimes, state-funded schools may underestimate the arts, perceiving them as either pretentious or of little real significance within the curriculum. Establishing regular engagement with museums, art galleries, and artists is crucial. Let us cast aside mediocrity in the West Midlands and champion genuine artistic excellence within our state-funded schools.

Michael Butler
Michael Butler
Artist & Head of Art at BCAS

Patron Level



BCAS Patrons

Platinum Patrons

Gold Patrons
Michael Butler

Silver Patrons

Bronze

BCAS is also pleased to acknowledge support from the following organisations:

The Barber Institute of Fine Arts, Ms J Ridding, Learning & Access Officer. Chroma Inc. USA, Ms J Jones, Operations Manager and Mr F Kirkwood Managing Director. ColArt Fine Art & Graphics and Daler Rowney, M McLoughlin, UK Administrator and A Cunningham. Colart; Winsor & Newton, Ms K Robinson, Marketing Manager. Derwent, Escoda Artist Brushes, Mr R Escoda. Great Art , Golden Artist Colors, Global Art Supplies Ltd, Mr J Mackie, Marketing Director. The New Art Gallery Walsall, Ms C James, Education Assistant.

Contacts



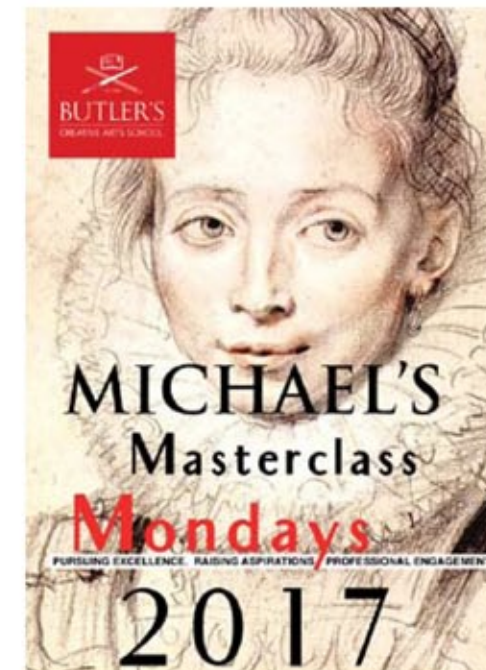
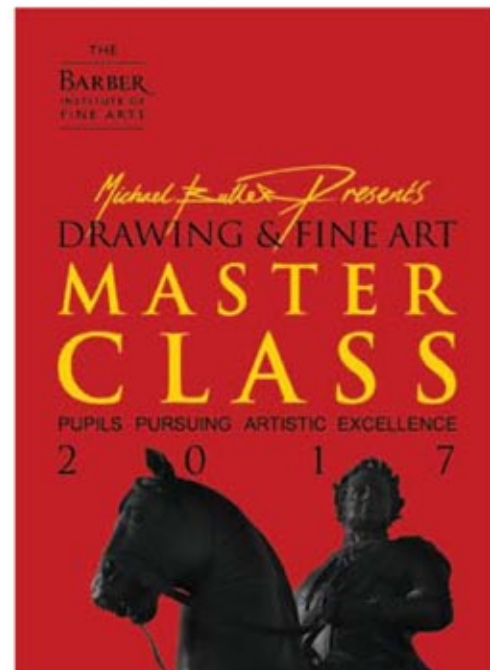
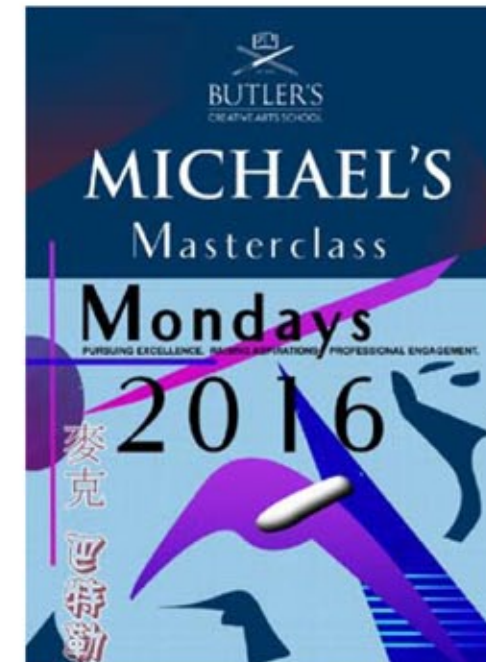
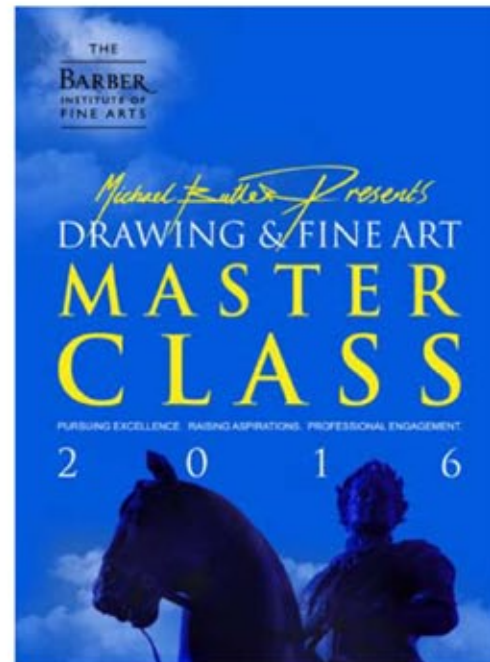
Written by: Michael Butler

Designed by: Michael Butler

Photography by: Phil Baro Thomas and
Michael Butler

Advertisements

Designed by Mr Butler



Drawing & Fine Art Masterclass

Barber Institute of Fine Arts, University of Birmingham. 2015



Drawing & Fine Art Masterclass

Barber Institute of Fine Arts, University of Birmingham. 2015



Drawing & Fine Art Masterclass

Barber Institute of Fine Arts, University of Birmingham. 2015



Drawing & Fine Art Masterclass

Barber Institute of Fine Arts, University of Birmingham. 2015



