

Getting Creative at MAO

In the gallery there are lots of opportunities for you to get creative.

Can you see the collection of objects in our Studio?

Use the materials provided to create your own assemblages. Is there already one in there made by someone else?

Can you find out where the artists were working, and what artworks they created?

Use your imagination to draw or write down your ideas in the space below.

Can you find our Studio?
Here you will also find lots of exciting activities that you can do to help you explore the exhibitions.

We also have a gallery on our ground floor for you to explore.
We have looked back at our archives and found projects where artists worked in lots of different places.

What is a commission?

A commission is a new work that an artist creates specially for an exhibition. In this exhibition, three artists who have been inspired by Barbara's work have been asked to make new commissions.

Can you find all three commissions? There are some hints below...

Eloise Hawser

Both Barbara and Eloise liked to collect newspapers. They can be a good record of time and what was going on in the world. Eloise's work is supporting Barbara's big collection of newspapers.



Barbara's newspaper collection from 2010-2020. Photo by Greg Gorman.

Anne Bean

Anne's work was created during the opening night of the exhibition.



Anne Bean. 'I Find Myself' at Modern Art Oxford, 2021. Photo by David Blair.



Did you know?

When you do a piece of performance art live you're never 100% sure how it will go or what will happen!

Can you find the pieces of her artwork that have been left behind in the space after her performance?

Laure Prouvost

Laure worked very closely with Barbara, and has created an installation thinking about this time.



Laure Prouvost. 'In the Air' at MAO, 2024. Photo by David Blair.

Can you find her film projected over Barbara's objects?

Can you see when she started collecting them?

Modern Art Oxford

I Find Myself Barbara Steveni

Barbara Steveni portrait, 2000. Image courtesy of the Estate of Barbara Steveni.

Welcome!
This guide has been created for you to read as you walk through the exhibition. There are lots of different things to notice in the gallery.

Activity Sheet



Barbara Stevini's studio with collected objects. Artway Road, Poole, Dorset, 1995. Image courtesy the Estate of Barbara Stevini.

About Barbara

Barbara Stevini was an artist who worked in the UK, and was raised in both Devon and India.

Barbara collected lots of things over her lifetime, which she used to tell stories about her life and work. She thought of herself as an archive. An archive is a collection of materials (perhaps old photos, letters, or information) which help us to remember things about the past. Archives often connect us to our memories, and help us share them with others.



Artist Placement Group, The Sculpture - Local State exhibition view, Between 6, Kumballe District, 1971, Image courtesy the Estate of Barbara Stevini.

Barbara created the Artist Placement Group. They were a group of people who believed that organisations should work with artists to make decisions. They arranged for artists to work in zoos, factories, and in government, as well as lots of other places. It is really helpful to have lots of different people with lots of different skills working together to come up with a plan or make a decision!

About the Show



Portrait of Barbara Stevini, Head with her work Barrow, 1973. Image taken at Between 6, Kumballe District, 1971, Image courtesy the Estate of Barbara Stevini. Photo: John Mallinson, Image courtesy the Estate of Barbara Stevini. 1979, South London Gallery, 2007.

You probably have your own archive of your life. It might include photos, something you kept from an important day, or special toys that you used to play with. Share your favourite items from your archive below:



Can you see?

Barbara also collected lots of objects that she came across, which she found interesting and thought might become artworks at some point.



Did you know?

You don't have to be able to draw, paint, or sculpt to be an artist!

Barbara's work might be a little bit different to what you might normally think of as art. She believed that artists and creativity should be in all areas of our lives. Lots of her work was to do with gathering and organising people and things.



Barbara Stevini and Artist Placement Group, contributing to the way of thinking concerning contemporary art, part of the exhibition 'On Objects' at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, 1979. Image courtesy the Estate of Barbara Stevini.

Can you find the artworks Barbara created by gathering together different everyday objects?

This technique is called 'assemblage'. Often artists create these works with things that they find, and they're a bit like a 3D collage.



The objects Barbara picked were just things that interested her. She was thinking about what happens when you bring different things together.

Do you think the meaning of the objects change?

Activity

You could try this at home or in our Studio: gather 5 things you can find around you (maybe the ones you thought about from your archive) and join them together.



Do they work differently now?

Do you like them more, or less? What about if those things were food?

Meals are often 'assemblages', and the act of bringing the ingredients together changes how we feel about them (and changes the taste!). The recipes we use to make them are also often part of a family archive.

Do you have any favourite recipes in your family?