Sonic Postcards

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Nan Tait sonic display is first class

FROM July 1 – 3 Art and Technology were combined to stunning effect at the Nan Tait Centre in an exhibition of 'Sonic Postcards' created by pupils from Barrow Island Community Primary School and pupils from Lindal and Marton Primary School.

Funded by NESTA, the National Endowment for Science Technology and the Arts, Sonic Postcards is a unique and innovative project that enables pupils from across the UK to explore and compare their local sound environments, through the exchange of sound postcards with other schools, via the Internet.

The children listen to the sounds that are unique to their particular environment and capture these sounds using hard disk recorders.

These sounds are then uploaded onto the school's network for the pupils to create a composition.

Using digital music technology on computers, pupils then become sound designers themselves - making their own sonic postcards using free downloadable computer music software.

The project then encourages schools to exchange the completed postcards with other schools via broadband internet connections, gaining a unique insight into their own environments and sharing a range of environments with other schools - from the urban inner city to the rural countryside, opening windows on new places, other lives, and different cultures.

Pupils from Years Five and Six from Barrow Island have explored the sounds of Grizedale and Roanhead to discover what makes their locations sonically unique.

Pupils from Lindal and Marton had the opportunity to visit a wind farm.

PHOTO COURTESY STUART BASTIK

PROJECTING IDEAS: Work on display at the Nan Tait Centre

PHOTO COURTESY STUART BASTIK

OFF THE WALL: Project helps broaden pupils perceptions of art and the environment it is made in

Dan Stone, Project Manager, said, "The exhibition is the culmination of all the hard work the pupils, teachers and workshop leaders have put into the project.

"It has been a great success and the project has really enabled the pupils to listen to and appreciate their unique environment."

Around the room a number of CD players, with headphones, played a variety of sounds from 22 different locations across the UK, from as far away as Kent and the Shetlands.

Colourful images were projected onto the walls. Some showed the actions that produced the sounds, while others combined art and poetry, and the overall effect was remarkable.

Barrow Island School's Resident Artist, John Hall, who was Visual Artist on the project, said, "This is a great project.

"It has broadened their perceptions of what 'art' can be, and provided them with an excellent, hands-on, practical introduction to digital sound technology.

"Our boys and girls have gained a lot from working on it."

Words and poetry were by Kate Davis, who told me, "My role was officially as Trainee Workshop Leader.

"However, I spent a lot of my time exploring sounds with the groups.

"We also worked on more conventional poetry, collecting words and using them to convey a sense of place and experience.

"I think the children had a great deal of fun doing it.

"They understood the concept and produced some stunning results."

"This has raised the kids' awareness of their sound environment," added sonic artist and the project leader, Shaun Blezard.