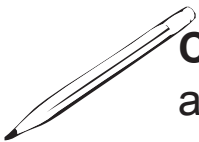




The road not taken

An exhibition of new works by David Bridgeman



Collect
a pencil.

Go on a journey through
the exhibition.



Discover
Caymanian
works of art.

★ **Look, learn and have fun!**

TEACHERS'/PARENTS' GUIDE

- ★ A star occurs next to various individual **ACTIVITIES** students are expected to complete.
- A circle occurs next to **Follow Up Activities** which the students should do for homework and continue to enrich their learning.
- E** An 'E' occurs where you have a chance to teach more about the **Elements of Art**; see reception if you require additional teaching materials.
- P** A 'P' occurs where you have a chance to teach more about the **Principles of Design**; see reception if you require additional teaching materials.

David Bridgeman was born in Oxford, England in 1959 and grew up in the market town of Abingdon, on the outskirts of West Oxford. As a child, school trips to the big London galleries forty miles away were quite frequent and helped to nurture an artistic awareness from a young age.

David's other main interest at school was science and he went on to study biology as part of his degree in education at the University College, Worcester, in England. After working in Chatham, Kent and Liverpool as a science teacher, David arrived in the Cayman Islands in 1987 to take up a teaching post in one of the government schools. It was here that he came into contact with other artists and felt inspired to begin painting. Over the years David has added to his self-taught repertoire through workshops and collaborations with other artists.

His paintings have been described as austere and aggressive. One artist commented that his paintings were distinctive not so much by what was put in as by what was left out. Most paintings have strong emotional ties to the landscape and the figure. Symbols are often used to convey a thought or a feeling, together with strong gestural strokes and colours.

Bridgeman has examined the way landscape painting has evolved since the 17th century in Britain and considers how his own work fits into a new appreciation of the landscape.



Image: David Bridgeman, *Industrial Landscape*, (2014)
from the collection of the artist.

★ **FIND** *Industrial Landscape*.

★ **FIND** the following iconography in the painting:



The Wittenham Clumps

A pair of wooded chalk hills – Castle Hill and Round Hill – in the Thames Valley, in the civil parish of Little Wittenham in Oxfordshire.



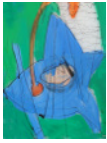
Didcot Power Stations

A combined coal and oil power plant (Didcot A Power Station) and a natural-gas power plant (Didcot B Power Station) in Oxfordshire.



Thistles

The common name of a group of flowering plants characterised by leaves with sharp prickles on the margins.



Bluebells

Sweet-scented violet-blue flowers, with strongly recurved petals and now a protected species in the UK.

- ★ **CONSIDER** the significance of these images and what they might symbolize.
- ★ **DISCUSS** the artist's use of line and colour and how they contribute to the painting.
- **Follow Up Activity FIND** how the artist continues the use of this symbolism in this exhibition. **DISCUSS** if the messages he conveys are consistent throughout.

The road not taken is a meditation on choices made (or not) in life. It surveys a landscape that binds the worlds of the past and present – of the Caribbean and Britain – and attempts to create an emotional and expressive view of a world as seen by both child and adult.

The culmination of many years' work, this series is based on the combined landscapes of the artist's native England and his long-time home, the Cayman Islands. Says David, "My landscapes are inextricably linked with the country of my birth but rely heavily on the fact that I have lived in this one very different place for twenty-seven years. The forms constantly referenced are Cayman's red birch trees and the ironshore rock. The spaces created within the artwork relate to places where I grew up, such as the Oxfordshire landscape. The whole piece is bound together with a strong sense of belonging and contains the intricate fabric of memory which, I think, helps to uniquely define some artists." The exhibition also draws on the wider themes of environmental stewardship and sustainability.

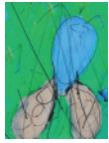
- ★ **FIND** the artist's repeated use of reddish brown vertical lines representative of Cayman's red birch trees and the black circles on fields of gray symbolic of ironshore.

- ★ **CONSIDER** why these are so important to the artist that he uses them so often.



Image: David Bridgeman, *The Apple Never Falls Far From The Tree*, (2013) from a private collection

Another recurrent symbol in David's body of work is the eucyclops undra morbis - his version of a water bug he experimented with while studying science at university.



Eucyclops Undra Morbis

A water-borne, parasitic crustacean

The eucyclops also symbolises David's struggle with illness. He has expressed his second experience of Hodgkin's lymphoma in his *Nightmarr* series. "The lymphoma caused a buildup of fluid on the brain and the symptoms resulted in dementia-like effects where I was virtually unable to communicate with people; I couldn't communicate with the therapist who continually questioned me about what I could see or was thinking," he said.

- ★ On a page in your sketchpad randomly **DOODLE** about a dozen lines in pencil.
- ★ Close your eyes for a moment and randomly **ERASE** a few areas. Once you open your eyes, tidy up your erasing.
- ★ Close your eyes again and **CONSIDER** all the recurring images in this exhibition. **SKETCH** a few of these from memory, keeping your eyes closed.
- **Follow Up Activity COLOUR** in your sketched symbols with pastels.

The *Landscape Of The Soul* is an installation around which the exhibition is centred, comprised of 23 tubes of painted Lexan symbolic of trees in a woodland. The tubes surround a central tree – the Poem Tree, containing the poem by Robert Frost which lends the exhibition its name – and are illuminated within to show a number of markings and symbols depicting red birch tree bark, ironshore, micro-organisms, plants and views of a changing landscape.

- ★ **FIND** the Poem Tree in the installation and locate all the repeated images from the drawings and paintings on the tubes.

- **Follow Up Activity VISIT** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EIZdiqvvREU> to watch a segment on Bridgeman's installation at *A Day In The Life II*. **COMPARE** that exhibition with *The road not taken*. **WRITE** concise notes on the similarities and the differences.