

## **Teachers' Exhibition Resource**

**Wilfred Ukpong**

***Niger-Delta / Future-Cosmos***

**Exhibition run: 16 Feb – 1 Jun 2024 at Autograph**



Wilfred Ukpong, *By and by, I Will Carry this Burden of Hope, till the Laments of my Newborn is Heard #2*, 2017

## Before the exhibition visit: introduction for students

### About the exhibition

Afrofuturism is a form of cultural expression, that combines science fiction, history, and fantasy, to reimagine and reclaim the past and present, creating an empowering future for black/African diaspora.

Wilfred Ukpung uses Afrofuturism as a tool to explore the impact that the climate crisis is having in the Niger Delta region in Africa. Each of the scenes in the exhibition is set in a different part of the region where social-political and environmental issues are rife. The artist uses these visual metaphors and stories as a tool to spark constructive debate and awareness.

### About the artist

Wilfred Ukpung is an artist and activist who works between photography, film, video, sculpture, installation, sound, and performance. His practice tackles social and environmental issues and include community participation and intervention. Born in Southern Nigeria much of Ukpung's work raises awareness about the environmental crisis in the Niger Delta due to pollution caused by major oil spills by the fossil fuel industry.

Follow the artist on [Instagram](#).

### Looking at a photograph

Present the photograph *Are My Dreams too Bold for the Carbon Skin I Bear #1, 2017* to your students before the visit.

Get the class to respond to these questions:

Describe what you see in the photograph.

What does the photograph makes you think and feel?

How is this picture different from real life?

What title would you give to this photograph?

## In the exhibition: prompts for your students

### Prompt 1: How does it make you feel?

They will need:

Pen

Paper

Move around the exhibition and then stop at your favourite photograph.

Write down why it resonates with you. **Why did it make you stop?**

Now write down an adjective or a short sentence that describes the mood of the image. **How does the photograph make you feel?**

Finally write at least one keyword that describes the composition, colour, form, or other formal elements in the image.

### Prompt 2: Re-staging a photograph

They will need:

A group of people

Camera

In small groups select a photograph to re-stage.

Now, define roles for yourselves. Who will be the characters? Who will become the shapes or lines within the composition? Someone may need to direct the scene and another person will need to take the photograph.

Try to mimic the formal elements, consider how can you portray the repetition, movement, pattern, form, line, drama, mood, or emotion.

## **After the exhibition visit: classroom based activities**

These activities can be delivered in Autograph's education studio straight after visiting the exhibition or back in the classroom.

### **Activity 1: Group discussion**

Get the class to sit in small groups. Ask the students to discuss in their groups what the most important social or world issue for them are right now? Why is that?

Now get each group to feed back on what they discussed. Is there a consensus within the class as a whole or does it vary?

### **Activity 2: Create a visual story in response to Wilfred Ukpong's work**

You will need:

Pen

Paper

Thinking about the issues raised in Activity 1, invite the students individually to create their own fantasy future using the questions below as prompts.

What would your 2060 look like?

Where would you set the scene and why?

Describe the climate and landscape.

Is there any social justice or injustice, harmony or discord in your imagined future? Can you describe this?

Who are your heroes or antiheroes and why?

They can respond with a piece of writing or by drawing a scene.

## **Extension Activity: Creating a still photograph**

Taking inspiration from photographs in Wilfred Ukpong's exhibition, invite the students to create a still that tells the story of their own fantasy future.

What materials will you need?

How could you create this visual story on a very low budget?

Could you try to create this outside of the session?

## **Share your outcomes**

We'd love to see your student responses!

Please email any work to [learning@autograph-abp.co.uk](mailto:learning@autograph-abp.co.uk)

## **Further material**

[Playlist: African Cosmologies](#)

[Article: From the Niger Delta to Southall: Understanding Race and Climate Justice](#)

[Image gallery: Afrofuturism, Mysticism and Climate Justice](#)