



theatre company

BLAH
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The Raft of the Medusa

The Story of a Painting • The Painting of a Story

This package
includes a scheme
of work for Drama,
History, Art and
PSCHE

*“As a cross-curricular learning tool it is some
of the best educational work we have seen.”*

Head of Drama, Cockburn High School, Leeds.

About 'the Blahs'

The company has been making theatre for young people in schools since 1985. Our way of working using participation has developed in collaboration with teachers, pupils and drama specialists into a 'hands on' learning experience which explores great stories rather than just telling them.

This is the fourth tour of The Raft of the Medusa since its creation in 2008 by The Company of Teachers (four Drama and English Teachers working in collaboration with the Blahs and Rotherham LEA). Theatre Company Blah Blah Blah is proud to be an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation. With their support, we are aiming to raise the bar in theatre in education – offering high quality theatre at a subsidised rate.

A participatory theatre event

- The students are introduced to the world of the story and the characters within it.
- We work with a small group of students so each individual can contribute to bringing the story to life. They will experience it not just as themselves but 'in role' from the viewpoint of people inside the narrative.
- The students' investment grows with the story because they see their ideas being incorporated.

"I really enjoyed being able to take part and feel like we were there, feeling the pain and sorrow".

Student, Brinsworth School, Rotherham





A scheme of work developed by experienced teachers

A well researched and comprehensive teacher's guide to a fascinating story focusing on:

- Drama – Using a painting as a starting point for devising theatre.
- History – Making links to Black History Month.
- Art – Deconstructing a painting and reconstructing the process behind its creation.
- PSCE – Exploring human issues and themes connecting to citizenship from different times and cultures.

Booking details

Price: £450 for a two hour participatory theatre event with a maximum of forty students and including the scheme of work. £750 for two events in one day.

Availability: Morning and afternoon sessions between 23rd September and 15th November 2013.

Contact: Cas Bulmer, Tour Organiser,
Theatre Company Blah Blah Blah, Roundhay Road Resource Centre,
233–237 Roundhay Road, Leeds LS8 4HS.
tel: 0113 380 5646 email: cas@blahs.co.uk

“The way the company involved the young people on so many levels – this was a true piece of Theatre in Education as the young people not only grappled with a sophisticated theatre form, they also learned valuable lessons about themselves, working in a team and what it means to be human.”
Head of Drama, Boston Spa School, Leeds

The Story

The Raft of the Medusa explores the story behind Théodore Géricault's masterpiece that hangs in the Musée du Louvre in Paris.

In 1816 the Medusa led a small fleet of French ships, loaded with soldiers and settlers, on a colonial expedition to Senegal in West Africa. Just a dozen miles from the Senegalese shore the Medusa ran aground on a sandbank. Lifeboats and small crafts could provide safe passage for the fortunate or the powerful. But for some 149 men and one woman there was no immediate rescue. In a daring and desperate endeavour to save their lives, they used the timbers of the stricken Medusa to build a huge raft that might be towed to safety. Twelve days later just 15 survivors landed on the coast of Africa.

What had happened during those days on the raft? Why had so many perished? Was this a story of bravery and triumph ... or was it one of desperation and savagery? As the emerging story of the raft of the Medusa stunned the French public, the artist Géricault began work on a masterpiece that was to shock French society and outrage the artistic establishment. The story of the raft's journey and of Géricault's struggle to portray the truth of that experience is the subject of this participatory performance of The Raft of the Medusa. As a microcosm of society Géricault's indelible image of the survivors on the raft resonates across the centuries – still challenging and intriguing us today.

"The Raft of the Medusa is a fine example of theatrical storytelling ... the audience is invited to comment and make decisions. It is also within the nature of the subject that valuable links are made between verbal and visual arts."
Taffy Thomas MBE, UK Laureate for Storytelling 2010.

