

South Atlantic Souvenirs and Trouble *Trophies of Empire: The Trophy Cabinet*

1992



The Trophy Cabinet, including cards on the right, which were inserted into every packet of sugar, tea and cigarettes.

In the early 1990s, artist Keith Piper approached Bluecoat with the idea for a series of commissions looking at Liverpool's historic association with Transatlantic slavery. As a result, sixteen artists' projects were selected and presented in 1992 as *Trophies of Empire* in Bristol, Hull and Liverpool.

South Atlantic Souvenirs & Trouble presented a 'trophy cabinet' of products – tea, sugar and tobacco - associated with and enabled by slavery. Every packet came with a picture card that could be collected and stuck into an album, which told the story of 'five hundred years of Imperial violence, pillage and mayhem around the globe'.

Imperial – connected to the British Empire

Pillage – to rob using violence

Mayhem – chaos and violent disorder

THINK ABOUT

- How does this artwork make you feel?

TALK ABOUT

- Why do you think the artists chose these three products?
- What do you think the artists are trying to say by presenting their work as goods to buy in the exhibition?
- What do you think the artists are trying to say by making these objects something you can collect?
- What do you think people thought of this art work when it was exhibited at Bluecoat in 1992?
- Does this artwork tell you something about Transatlantic slavery? Why is it important for us to remember this?

FIND OUT ABOUT

- Can you find information about what products were produced during colonialism and the expansion of the British Empire?
- Products like sugar and tobacco were grown on plantations where thousands of enslaved people were forced to work. Can you find out any information about life on plantations?
- Are there any products that we use today that have any links to the slavery?

Activity

You are going to select three products that are the product of modern slavery and then, using the work by South Atlantic Souvenirs and Trouble as inspiration, design your own packaging for them, and design a set of cards to insert into these products.

The cards will include images and some background information about the product.

Use these designs to discuss why it is important of put a stop to modern slavery.

Lesson aims and outcomes

The children will:

- learn about what life was like for people in the past.
- learn about the Transatlantic slavery, and triangular trade.
- learn about how artists explore difficult topics and emotions
- be challenged to portray emotions and imagine how people in the past might have felt when in traumatic situations.
- work as a group to create a short performance piece which reflects on the issues raised in the artwork.