

What makes Melrose?

Mural project proposal for Melrose Primary School

Vivian French



Vivian French has been writing stories for picture books, fiction, narrative non-fiction, poetry and plays since her first publication in 1990.

She has collaborated with illustrators from all round the world, and has run workshops in schools, libraries, and at festivals from Orkney to Oklahoma. (She is to be found at the Borders Book Festival every year!)

Co-founder of the Picture Hooks mentoring scheme, she also teaches at Edinburgh College of Art. In 2016 she was awarded an MBE for services to literature, literacy, illustration and the arts.

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Astrid Jaekel

Astrid Jaekel is an East Lothian based artist / illustrator and Illustration lecturer at Edinburgh College of Art.

Her current practice encompasses a variety of disciplines, from commissions and collaborative projects to public installations. Astrid has worked extensively with clients across Scotland to conceptualise and create artworks that explore places, histories and communities. Recent clients include Essential Edinburgh, Edinburgh World Heritage, RSPB, Wigtown Book Festival, English Heritage and Cairngorms National Park. Astrid has run workshops for children at the Wigtown and the Borders Book Festivals as well as in West Lothian Council schools.



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Melrose offers a treasure-trove of inspiration for a vibrant mural that combines engaging words with captivating illustrations. We are keen to represent elements of Melrose's stunning natural surroundings as well as its rich cultural heritage and contemporary events. What matters most to us, however, are the children in Melrose. We want to know their favourite places to play, relax, and eat. We want to hear their stories and memories about Melrose, to capture what makes it special to them. Understanding what resonates with Melrose's children will help us create a mural that truly reflects their community spirit.



DESIGN PROCESS

Step 1: Prep-tasks to be set by teachers

Inviting pupils to participate

While it may prove challenging to work with all 320 pupils of Melrose primary School, we do want to give all children keen to participate the chance to be involved. To facilitate this, we propose a preliminary task to gauge interest and identify those eager to share their ideas about Melrose. Teachers will encourage students to express their thoughts through drawings or written submissions. Based on these contributions, selected children will be invited to join our workshops.

Gathering of materials to be re-used

It would greatly enhance the educational experience if the school encouraged students to collect papers and cardboard, including packaging, cardboard boxes, and unused wrapping paper etc. These materials could then be repurposed during workshops to educate students about the importance and practice of reusing resources.

Step 2: Workshops

Vivian brings three decades of experience working with children, inspiring and guiding them to share their unique stories and ideas through workshops held at both schools and book festivals. Astrid, an experienced illustrator, is passionate about fostering creativity in children of all backgrounds and ages, encouraging them to engage with the arts and cultivate a love for creating. In our collaborative workshops, we believe that our combined expertise will allow children to unleash their imagination and explore the joy of making art while reflecting on “What Makes Melrose”.

Each of our three workshop days will be divided into two parts. In the morning, we'll gather to share ideas and stories about Melrose. Then, in the afternoon, we'll transform these ideas into large collages, slowly building up a large (temporary) interior classroom mural over the three days of our visit to Melrose Primary School.

Creating an Interior Classroom Mural

First, we'll paint the gathered recycled paper and card using a limited colour palette of 4 – 5 bright colours. A similar colour palette will later also be used for our final, exterior mural. Using the same colours will give the children a greater sense of directly contributing to the final artwork. After the painted sheets are dry, we'll cut out shapes and silhouettes relating to the stories and ideas gathered in the morning. We will use these shapes and motifs to slowly collage together our interior mural on one of the classroom walls. Using bold shapes will keep the imagery simple at this stage. This simplicity, focusing on shapes rather than intricate details, will make it easy to transfer motifs from the interior mural to our exterior painted mural later on, with the help of some of the children.

Workshop Schedule

Mornings: ideas and stories gathering and development

Afternoons: visualisation of ideas / creation of interior mural collage

Workshop Day 1, **17th June:** Children from P1 - P2

Workshops Day 2, **18th June:** Children from P3 - P4

Workshop Day 3, **19th June:** Children from P5 - P7

Step 3 - evaluation and designing of final artwork, gaining approval

Evaluation of the Interior mural.

Astrid to design the entire composition for the final mural

Submission (as a digital file) to client for approval

Step 4: Completing the mural

Surface preparation

For maximum quality and lifespan of the mural the brick wall should be cleaned and then primed and painted. If the budget allows, some of the brick and grout could be filled in. Priming and painting the entire background will give a much easier surface to work on. **We have not factored this into our cost** as a professional painting service will be able to do this much more efficiently. Perhaps the council works with or has their own building maintenance service that can do this cost-efficiently.

Once the wall is prepared, Astrid will outline the entire design on the wall before filling it in with colour. Any pupils willing to contribute will be welcome to join in and given guidance. Protective clothing will need to be worn and health and safety procedures put in place, for example ensuring that children do not climb on ladders unless supervised by an adult.

Mural painting – proposed schedule (possible dates):

July 1st – July 5th

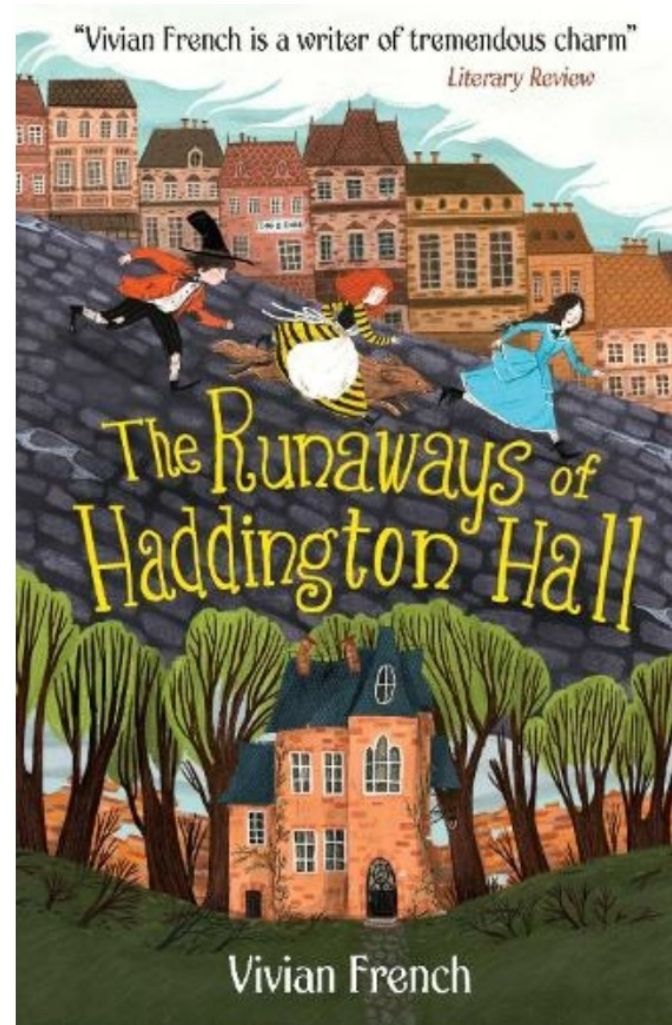
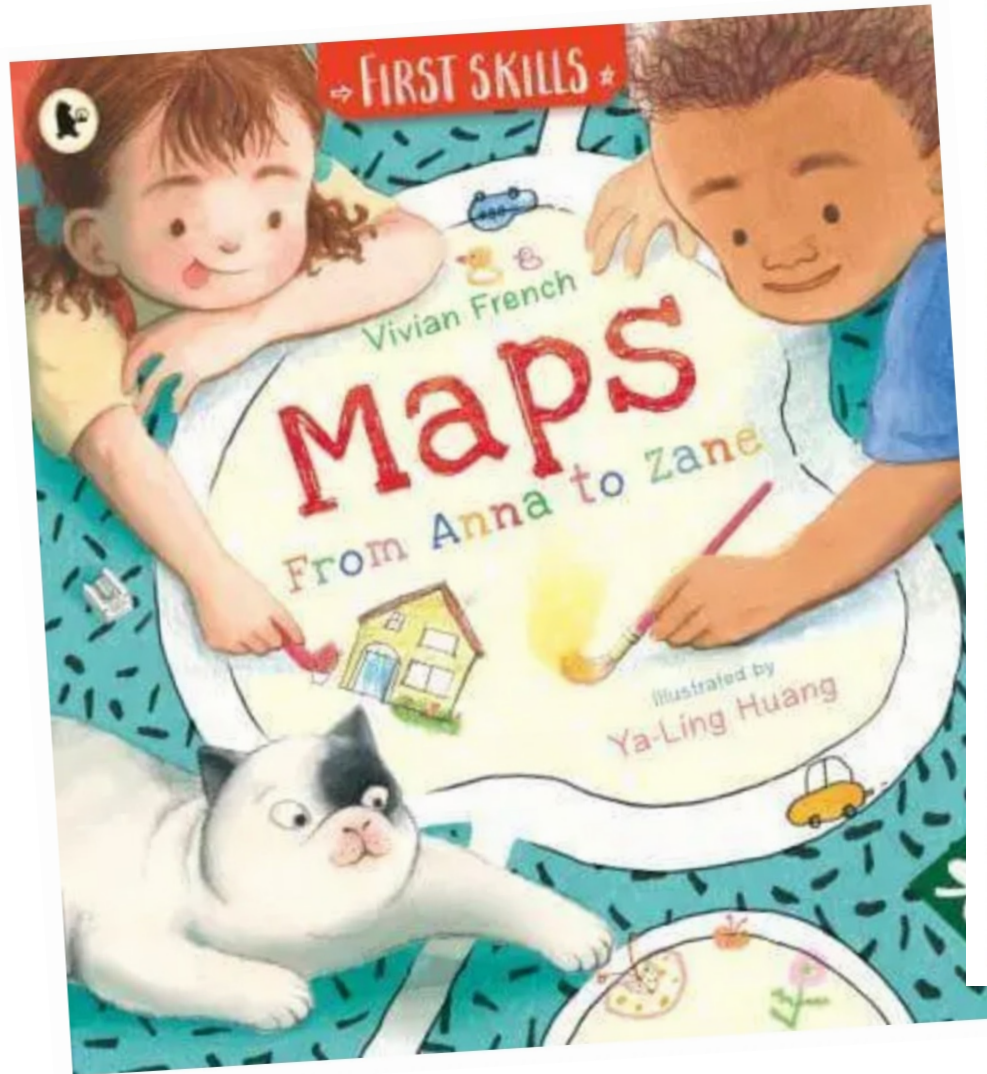
July 15th – July 17th

July 29th – August 1st

Further dates are available throughout August

Work examples | Vivian French

Recent publications





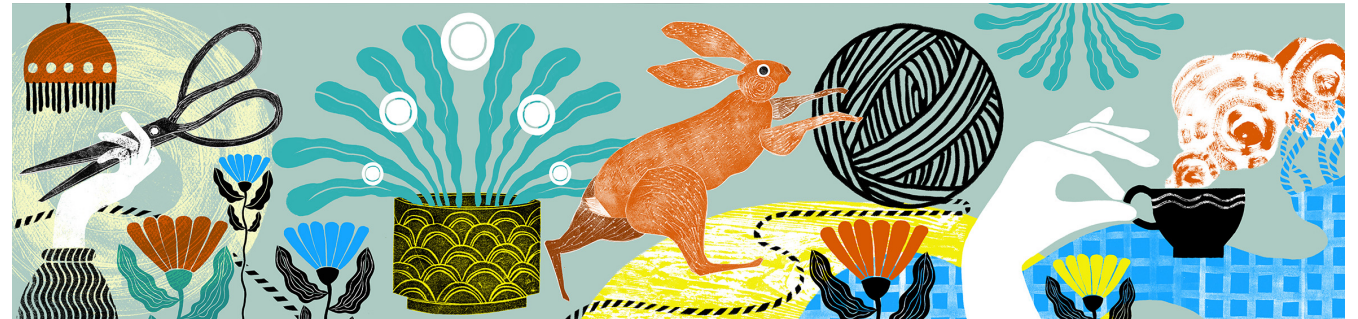
Work examples | Astrid Jaekel

Processions (Edinburgh Meadows) 2014



Work examples | Astrid Jaekel

If These Walls Could Talk (Wigtown Book Festival) 2018



Work examples | Astrid Jaekel

Create, Make, Reuse. (Haddington) 2023

Work examples | Astrid Jaekel

Use of colour



COST CALCULATION

Working hours

3 x workshop days + Workshop evaluation (VF + AJ) = £2000 (total figure)

Design of murals composition including all image and words (AJ) – 2 days = £700

Completion (painting) of mural (AJ) 4 – 5 days = £1400

Total: £4100

Workshop Materials

Gouache paints for workshops: £50

White tack: £ 25

(school to provide scissors and markers/pens)

Total: £75

Materials for mural painting

Acrylic paint: £250

Brushes and painting accessories: £150

(Please note that this figure does not include the priming and white painting of the wall)

Total: £ 400

Travel expenses

Astrid: 3 x return train travel from East Linton (£26.00 each) = 78.00

Vivian: 1 x return train travel from Edinburgh = £27.20

Total: £100