

Gloria Ojulari Sule

■ Biography

Date of birth: 6th November 1950

Place of birth: London, UK

Date of arrival in Bristol: August 1996

Gloria Ojulari Sule is a talented Bristol-based artist who studied for a degree in Fine Art in Norwich. Her art work shows her personal experience as a Black woman of dual heritage (mixed race) and her interest in what being Black and British means. She is also influenced by African Art.

Gloria grew up in a children's home in Suffolk and she attended a village school nearby. Her mother was a white English woman, and her father a Black Nigerian man. Unfortunately her parents split up so she had to go into care. Gloria found the experience of living in the home unpleasant because there was a complete lack of awareness about her needs as a Black child (like how to look after her hair).

Since coming to Bristol in 1996, Gloria has worked with many schools, community groups and organisations both locally and nationally. In the early days she created many murals such as the one decorating the entrance of St. Werburgh's Primary School, and the one in Brooke Road St. Paul's. Some of her paintings can be seen in Plantation Restaurant, Cheltenham Road. She published her own set of greetings cards in 2002 and illustrated a book called Delicious by Doreen Baidoo in 2003.



Gloria's mural in Grosvenor Rd
Photo courtesy of Gloria Ojulari Sule



Gloria working in her studio
Photo courtesy of Gloria Ojulari Sule

Gloria travelled to Sweden in 2000 to meet up with artists from towns and cities that are twinned in Europe and Africa. Beira in Mozambique, Africa was represented which is one of Bristol's twin cities. Three local schools, Luckwell, Colston's Primary and Henbury Secondary School are linked with schools in Beira, and Gloria helped them to create banners for the Throne of Weapons exhibition shown at the City Museum, Bristol in October 2005. The throne was made of weapons used in the Mozambique Civil War.

A big inspiration to Gloria has been discovering the culture of her African heritage. Her father comes from the Yoruba people in Nigeria who are responsible for an outstanding, diverse and exciting art tradition. Although she did not know much about it when she was young, when she was an adult she was able to research her Yoruba background and now her art shows her links with her Nigerian heritage.

In May 2006, Gloria visited Dak'Art Biennale of Contemporary African Art in Dakar, Senegal, Africa. There she met artists and organisers, reviewed exhibitions and made a film about her journey which she now takes to schools. She finds it important to look at modern African art to help her teach young people about art as well as refreshing her own work.

One of Gloria's best known murals, pictured below, was painted on the walls of a dentist's surgery in Sussex Place showing the diverse communities who have settled in Bristol since 1945. Gloria won a civic award for this beautiful work of art but sadly five years later the mural was painted over when the building was sold.



Gloria's mural in Sussex Place
(sadly, since painted over)
Photo courtesy of Gloria Ojulari Sule

Gloria's message is:

“Children and young people shouldn't feel that because they can't draw they can't do art.”

Gloria Ojulari Sule

■ Teachers' Background Notes

Gloria Ojulari Sule is a talented artist who has been Bristol-based since 1996 when she graduated from Norwich School of Art and Design with a degree in Fine Art. Her work draws on her personal experience as a Black woman of dual heritage and her exploration into notions of Black British identity.

Gloria grew up in a children's home in Suffolk and she attended a village school nearby. It was a fairly traumatic childhood and living in care and her parents splitting up affected both who she is and her art. Her mother, a white English woman, and her father, a Black Nigerian man, faced many pressures in their mixed race marriage and this was the main reason why they decided to separate. In the children's home Gloria found the experience unpleasant because there was a complete lack of awareness about her needs as a Black child, for instance she remembers that nobody bothered to understand how to look after her hair.

Since coming to Bristol, Gloria has worked extensively with schools, community groups and organisations both locally and nationally. In the early days she created many murals such as the one decorating the foyer of St Werburgh's Primary School, which was designed with the help of pupils. Another mural in Brooke Road, St. Paul's, was created in teamwork with pupils from St. Barnabas School. One of Gloria's best-known murals was painted on the walls of a dentist's in Sussex Place showing the diverse communities who have settled in Bristol since 1945. Gloria won a civic award for this beautiful work of art but sadly five years later the mural was painted over when the building changed hands.

Gloria treasures the many opportunities her art has opened up to her. It has enabled her to work in the community and travel to other places. She went to Gottenburg, Sweden for a Samporia event in 2000 to meet up with artists from towns and cities that are twinned together in Europe and Africa. One of the places represented was Beira in Mozambique, Africa, one of Bristol's twin cities. Three local schools, Luckwell Primary, Colston's Primary and Henbury Secondary schools are linked with schools in Beira and Gloria helped them to create banners for the Throne of Weapons exhibition displayed at the City Museum, Bristol in October 2005. The Throne of Weapons was made in Africa from weapons used in the Mozambique civil war.

A big inspiration for Gloria's art is discovering the creativity of her African heritage. Her father comes from the Yoruba people in Nigeria who are responsible for an outstanding, diverse and vibrant art tradition.

Unfortunately she was not aware of this part of her heritage as a child because her African background was completely ignored by the adults around her. When she was an adult she was able to research her Yoruba heritage and now her art identifies her as a Black person of Nigerian descent. The people, music, sounds, smells and colours of Africa, as well as African and Black British artists inspire her.

In May 2006, Gloria made a visit to Dak'Art Biennale of Contemporary African Art in Dakar, Senegal. There she met artists and organisers, reviewed exhibitions and made a film about her journey that she now takes into schools. She finds it important to view modern African art to help her teach young people about art as well as refreshing her own work. She can pass on more up-to-date information about what artists are doing in Africa so that we do not uphold a narrow view about forms of art in Africa.

It is possible to see Gloria's murals and paintings in public spaces like Grosvenor Street, St. Paul's, the library at St. Paul's Family and Learning Centre or when having a meal in Plantation Restaurant, Cheltenham Road. She published her own set of greetings cards in 2002 and illustrated a book called Delicious by Doreen Baidoo in 2003. She often takes the cards to schools to show children her work and sometimes even brings along original paintings so they can get more of an idea of her as an artist. One day, perhaps, children might visit her studio at Spike Island, Bristol!

Gloria's message is:

"Children and young people shouldn't feel that because they can't draw they can't do art."

Gloria Ojulari Sule

■ Suggested Activities

These are suggested activities based on Gloria Ojulari Sule's biography. The activities in bold print have a detailed lesson plan on following pages.

Foundation Stage/ KS1 Activities	KS2 Activities	KS3 Activities
<p>Colour Visit or look at examples of Gloria's art in St. Paul's – Brook Street, Grosvenor Street, and St. Paul's Family and Learning Centre. Look at her use of colour. Back in school make own picture using colour in a similar way.</p>	<p>Multiple heritage issues Read <i>That's My Mum from Mantralingua</i>*. Discuss pupils' experiences of their heritages. Explore famous multiple heritage people and create display.</p>	<p>Bristol's link with Beira Bristol is linked with Beira in Mozambique. If teachers or schools want to contact Bristol Link Beira Education Working Group, contact davespurgeon@blueyonder.co.uk Bristol/Beira webpage* (Geography)</p>
<p>Investigate art in the school's local area. Take pictures and use to discuss what we like and what we don't. Visit or look at an example of Gloria's work. Describe the style. Would it improve the local area?</p>	<p>'Looked after' 'In care'. What does this mean for some pupils? Explore this issue ensuring that any Looked After pupils in the class are happy to share their experiences. Children's book and TV character -Tracey Beaker.*</p>	<p>Multiple heritage issues Read poem titled <i>Half-Caste</i> by John Agard.* Read and discuss. Discuss pupils' experiences of their heritages. Collect acceptable words related to people's ethnicity and colour. (English)</p>
<p>Angels Read <i>An Angel Like Me</i>*. Use Gloria's paintings of angels to look at differences and similarities.</p>	<p>Art Project Invite Gloria into school to interview or work with the pupils on a project.</p>	<p>African Influences Explore the Yoruba/ Nigerian artistic influences that Gloria mentioned in her biography. What are the links that her art shows with this Nigerian descent? (Art and Design)</p>

*See the resource list for details

■ Lesson Plan: Angels and diversity

(FS – Social /PSE/CLL/K+U/Creative, KS1 – Literacy/Art/PSHE)

Learning objectives

- To stimulate talk about ourselves.
- To explore issues and value diversity.
- To know how Black and minority ethnic people have contributed to the field of Art.

Key words/phrases	Resources	Organisation/Grouping
Angels	Biography and pictures	Whole class
Wings	Selection of cards depicting angels including Gloria's.*	Individual
Parts of body – skin, hair and eyes	<i>An Angel Like Me</i> by Mary Hoffman*	
Like	Skin colour pencils/ pens/paints*	
Different	Tracey Beaker books*	
The same as	Variation photopack*	

Suggested activities

- Read/share Gloria Ojulari Sule's biography.
- Read *An Angel Like Me*.
- Discuss what we look like. Look at a range of pictures of angels including some of Gloria's. Pupils to make their own angel/figure using the skin colour pencils. (Note – In Islam there are angels but it is considered blasphemous to have pictures of them – in the same way there are no pictures of God. Muslim children should not be asked to draw an angel).
- Talk about our differences and similarities.
- Use Variation photopack on breazshare.net to explore diversity in human forms.

Plenary

- Display pupils' angels on Christmas tree or pupils' figures in class display, being positive about the diversity of hair, skin, eye colour etc.

Learning outcomes/Success criteria

- Pupils can talk about themselves and others.
- Pupils can talk about similarities and differences.
- Pupils know about Gloria's life and her contribution to Bristol.

Assessment opportunities

Pupils display a positive self image and express positive statements about others.

Homework task or Parent/Carer involvement

Draw a picture of Mother/Father/Carer.

*See the resource list for details

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■ Lesson Plan: Art in the local community

(FS – CLL/CD, KS1 – Art, DT)

Learning objectives

- To express feelings and preferences in response to own work and that of others.
- To learn about the work of one artist.
- To learn that Black and minority ethnic people have contributed to the field of Art.

Key words/phrases	Resources	Organisation/Grouping
Descriptive words	Biography/picture of artist	Whole class
Question words	Camera	Group
Why/because	Visit from artist	

Suggested activities

- Talk about Gloria and show her picture.
- Take pictures of art in the locality/school environment.
- Discuss what we like or what we don't. Give reason to justify preferences.
- Visit or look at an example of Gloria's work. Talk about the artist's style and discuss whether it would improve the environment, and what is liked/not liked about her work.
- Create own art piece, building on the discussion about the style of the artist.

Plenary

- Pupils to share work that they have created.
- Encourage pupils to show and justify preference.

Learning outcomes/Success criteria

- Pupils can show and justify preference of art in the community.
- Pupils have created own art piece.
- Pupils know about Gloria's life and her contribution to Bristol.

Assessment opportunities

Language of observation.

Homework task or Parent/Carer involvement

To find pictures or works of art from magazines, newspaper etc. liked by family members.

■ Lesson Plan: Multiple heritage issues

(PSHE, Literacy)

Learning objectives

- To know the correct language to use to describe people's ethnicity and heritage.
- To raise awareness of multiple heritage people in the school and society.
- To know that Black and minority ethnic people have contributed to the field of Art.

Key words/phrases	Resources	Organisation/Grouping
Multiple heritage	Biography/pictures of Gloria	Whole class
Dual heritage	<i>That's my Mum</i> by Henriette Barkow*	Groups
Mixed race	Pictures of famous multiple heritage people*	
Ethnicity		
Black	Glossary*	
White		

Suggested activities

- Read/share Gloria Ojulari Sule's biography.
- Read *That's My Mum* by Henriette Barkow.
- Discuss pupils' experiences of their own heritages and of others (including Welsh, French etc).
- Ensure pupils use correct terms and know those that are no longer acceptable.
- Share pictures of famous multiple heritage people – (Mary Seacole, Oona King, Bob Marley, Tiger Woods, Jackie Kay, Lewis Hamilton).
- Ask pupils to research these people's heritages and produce a short biography about their lives.
- Use to create a display celebrating diversity.

Plenary

- Pupils to consider what questions they would like to ask some of these people.

Learning outcomes/Success criteria

- Pupils use correct terms to describe ethnicity and heritage.
- Pupils are aware of the contribution of multiple heritage pupils to society now and in the past.
- Pupils know about Gloria's life and her contribution to Bristol.

Assessment opportunities

Questioning skills.

Homework task or Parent/Carer involvement

Collect other names of famous multiple heritage people.

*See the resource list for details

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■ Lesson Plan: Multiple heritage issues

(PSHE, English)

Learning objectives

- To ensure that pupils are aware of and can use acceptable language in describing identity.
- To read, understand and appreciate John Agard's poem *Half-Caste*.
- To know that Black and minority ethnic people have contributed to life in Bristol.

Key words/phrases	Resources	Organisation/Grouping
Ethnicity	Biography/picture of Gloria Ojulari-Sule	Pairs
Multiple heritage	Text/recording of Poem: <i>Half-Caste</i>	Groups
Race	by John Agard*	
Black		
White		
Asian		

Suggested activities

- Read/share Gloria Oulari Sule's biography.
- Paired work. Read/listen to poem: *Half-Caste*. Discuss the poem. Talk about the use of Creole in the poem. How does this contribute to the poem?
- Discuss the main issues raised in the text. Talk about the effects of language in describing ethnicity. Why is the term 'half-caste' unacceptable? What are more acceptable words?
- Pairs of pupils to talk about themselves and each other to describe their own identities. Agree acceptable language and then write a brief description of each other.

Plenary

- What did they find easy or difficult to talk about? Discuss the issues related to talking about ethnicity.
- Share descriptive writing.

Learning outcomes/Success criteria

- Pupils can use acceptable language to describe their own and others' identity.
- Pupils know about the life of Gloria Ojulari Sule and her contribution to Bristol.

Homework task or Parent/Carer involvement

Find and read other poems by John Agard.

*See the resource list for details

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■ Resources

- <http://www.gloarts.co.uk> – Gloria’s official website.
- *An Angel Like Me* -by Mary Hoffman. ISBN 0711211795.
- *That’s my Mum* by Henriette Barkow published by Mantra Lingua.
- Angel cards – contact Gloria Ojulari Sule.
- <http://www.mixedness.org.uk>
A website set up by the CRE to explore multiple heritage issues.
- Find a copy of *Halfe-Caste* by John Agard on this website
www.intermix.org.uk
- <http://www.starlightenterprise.co.uk>
- *Delicious* by Doreen Baidoo available from Elaine King at Kuumba -
0117 944 7510.
- Bristol/Beira webpage* www.bristol.gov.uk
- *The Story of Tracy Beaker* by Jacqueline Wilson.

Contact details

Name:	Gloria Ojulari Sule. (Gloria is happy to negotiate with schools a fee for working in the school).	
Email:	gloria@ojulari.fslife.co.uk	
Website:	www.gloarts.co.uk	
Willing to be contacted by teachers for further questions?	Yes	
Willing to come into school to talk to pupils?	Yes	