





**BLUE PORTAL**

## INTRODUCTION

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Blue Portal documents a series of creative workshops working with staff and students at Eastbourne Academy in 2024 as part of iniva's CoLab Eastbourne Programme, facilitated by artist Arpita Shah, therapist Misgana Berhane, and arts educator and project manager Anne-Marie Watson.

This programme was inspired by the work of artist Maria Amidu who is producing a new body of work for Towner Eastbourne, as part of iniva's Future Collect programme. Starting with the significance of the colour blue in Amidu's work, the group explored the various ways the colour blue has been used by past and present creative practitioners. From symbolising complex emotions to referencing elements in the natural world such as water and the sky, blue has always been a very emotive colour that can evoke a kaleidoscope of feelings, memories and moods.

Working with cyanotypes, one of the earliest photographic processes well known for its deep shade of cyan blue, students were invited to express themselves through this colour using clothing, drawings and objects significant to them. Throughout the sessions they were able to explore their own memories, identities, and interests through a combination of photography, writing, montage and drawing.

## WHAT DOES BLUE MEAN TO YOU?

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ICE

SKY

SADNESS

COLD

OCEAN

ROSES

FEELING

MOON

FREE

WATER



JESS

LILLIA

Blue



Beautiful

Lovely

Unreal

Effect

Cold

Fish

ice

Water

blue

Sad

and

blue











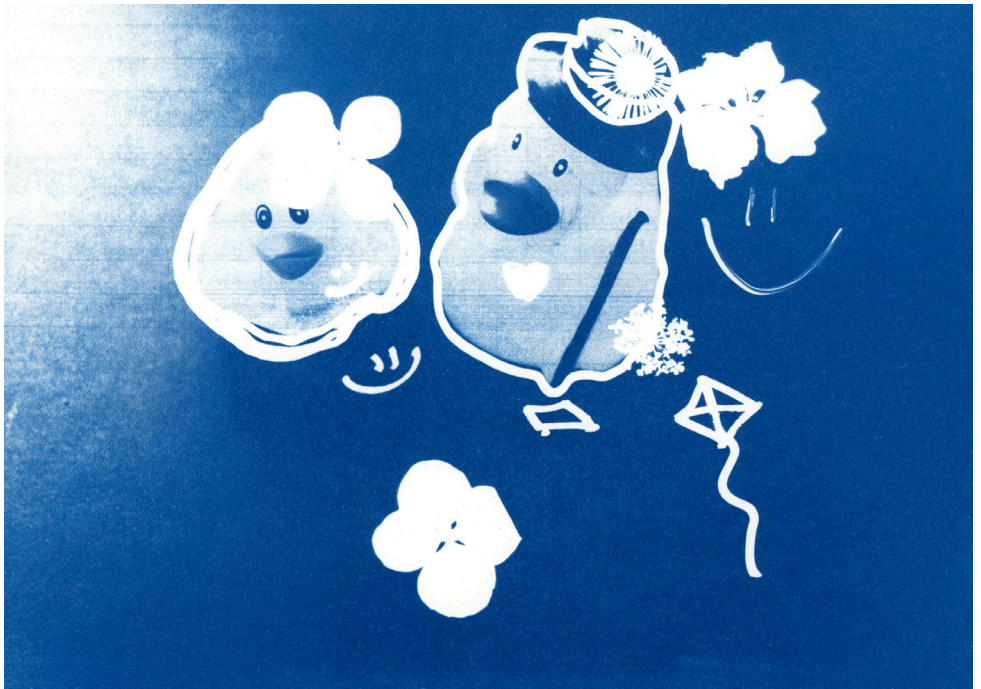








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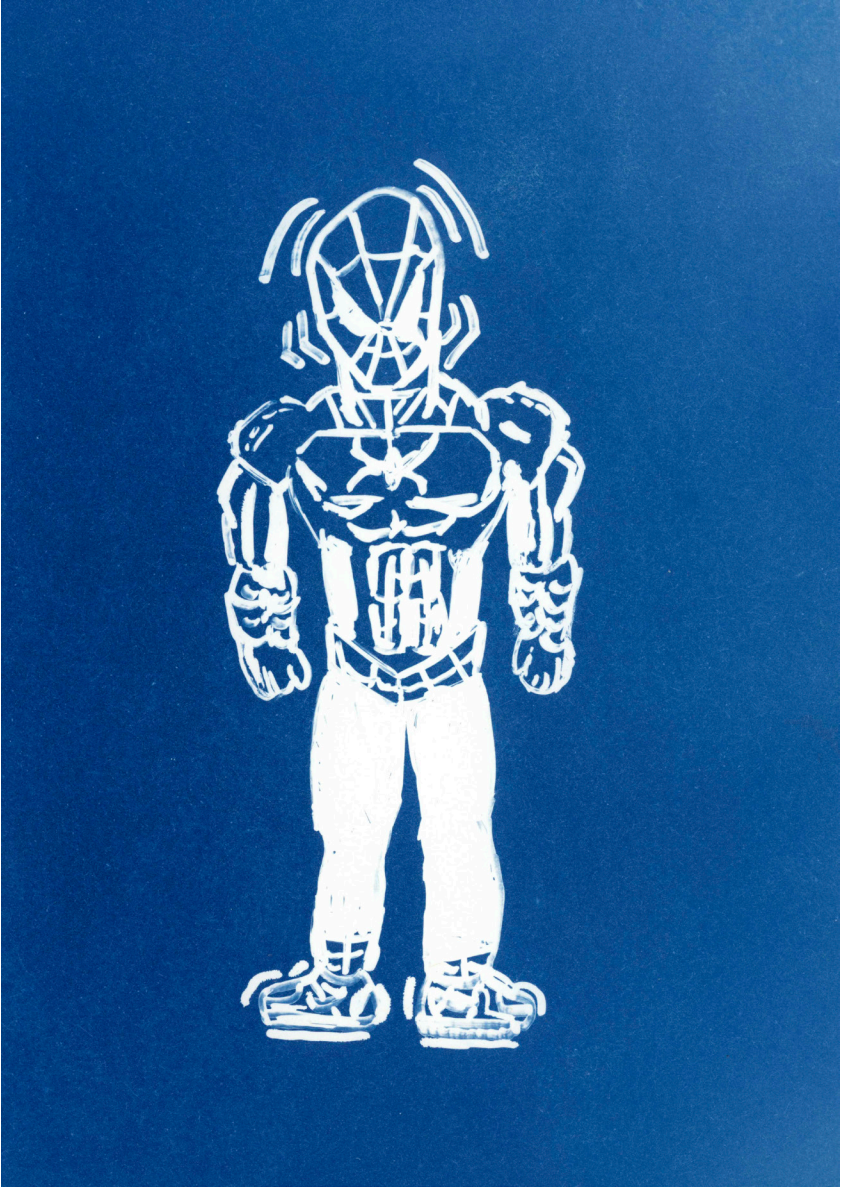






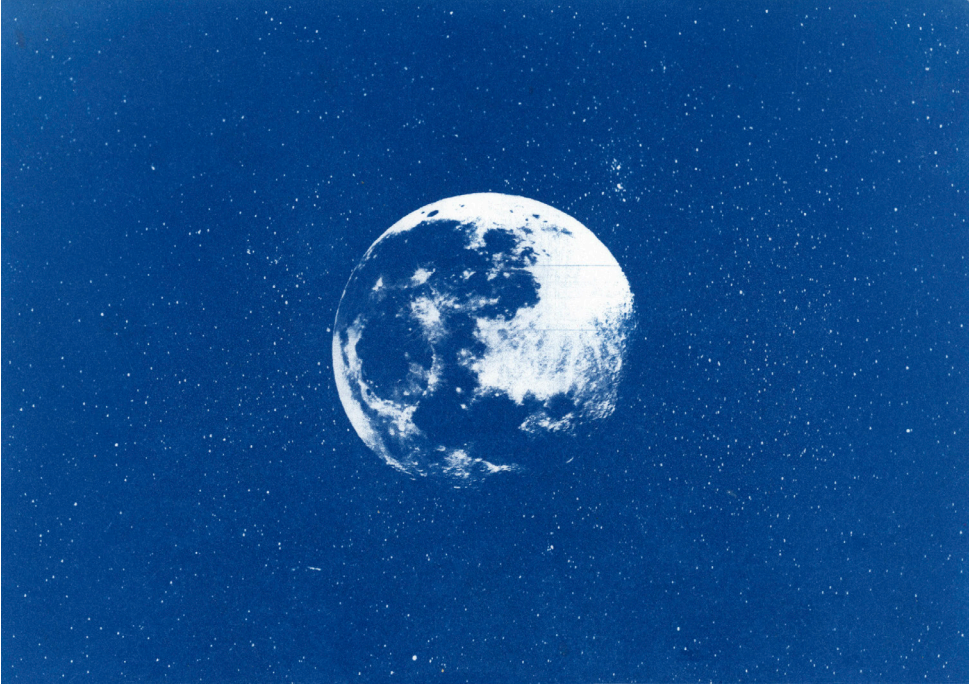










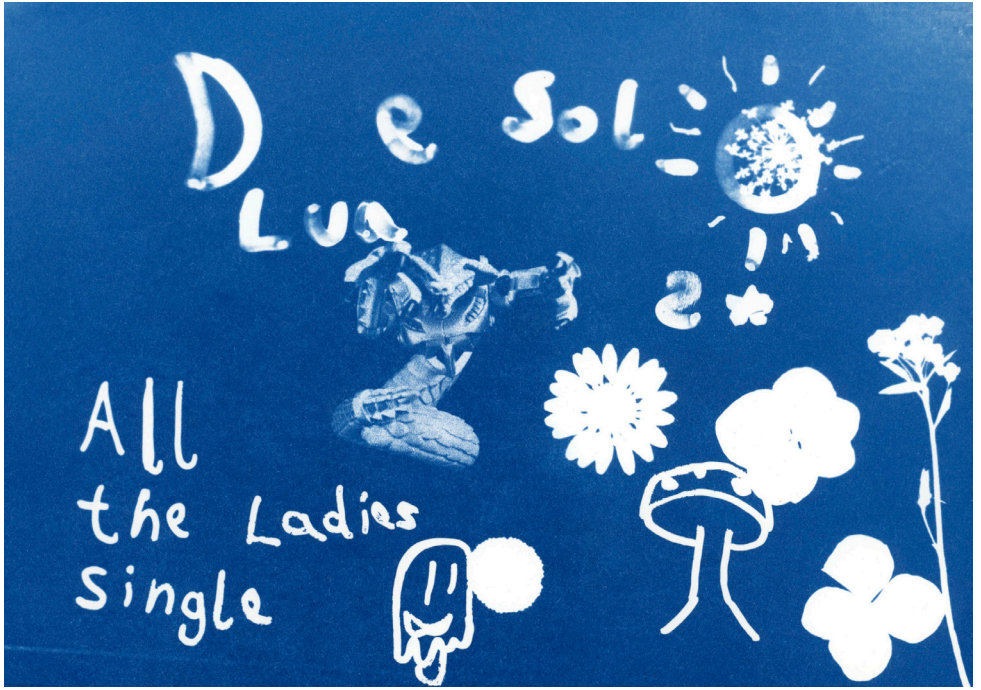














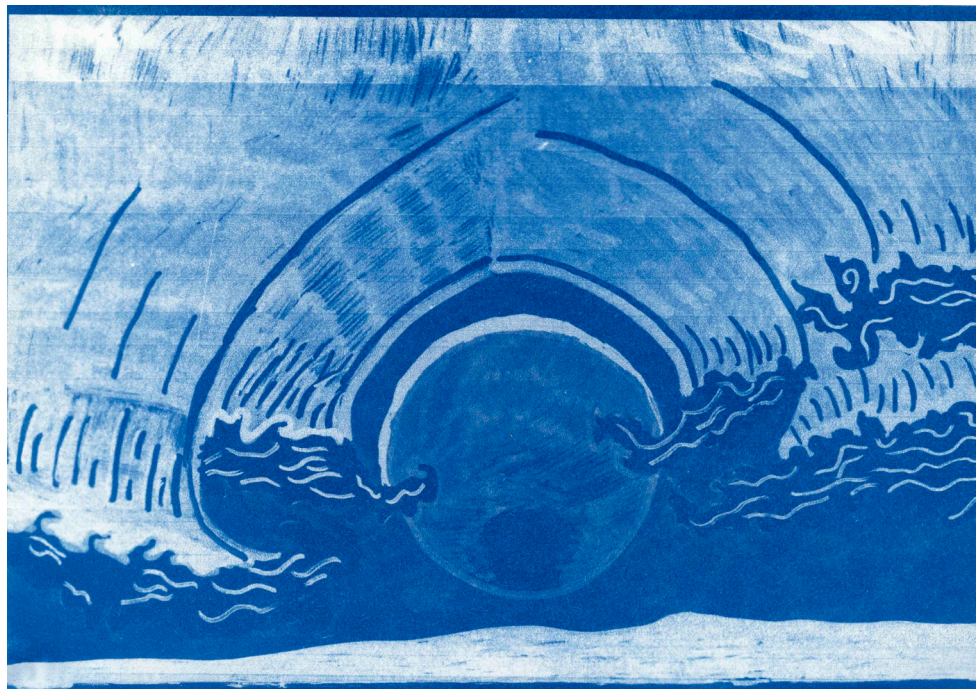
Just  
Dance



MURIEL



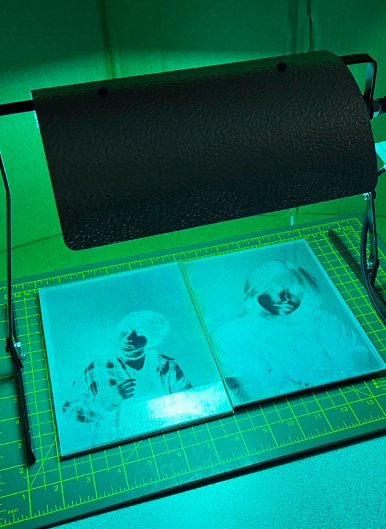












# DIY CYANOTYPE



## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Pre-coated cyanotype paper in a lightproof bag (A5 size recommended)
- Frameless clip frame (A5 size recommended)
- Assortment of flattened objects or specimens, such as pressed flowers, leaves and feathers
- Mini Binder Clips
- Medium sized plastic tray
- Rubber gloves

## PART ONE: DESIGN AND PREPARE

1. In a lowlight indoor environment, dismantle your frame so the glass and backing board are separate.
2. Layout the objects you want to use on a flat surface.
3. In a darkened space carefully take out one sheet of pre-coated cyanotype paper.
4. Place the paper (yellow side up) on the backing board of the frame.
5. Arrange your objects directly on top of the sensitised paper to make your photogram.
6. Place the glass sheet on top and secure everything by placing mini binder clips around the edges.

## PART TWO : EXPOSE, WASH AND FIX

1. Take your frame outside and keeping it on a flat surface place directly under the sunlight.\*
  2. Leave your frame outside for 30 minutes.
  3. Back inside, fill a tray with fresh water.
  4. Put on rubber gloves.
  5. Bring your frame inside, dismantle frame and submerge the exposed paper into the water (image side up) for 5 minutes.
  6. Using your hands and moving the tray, ensure the print is always under the water.
  7. Pour the water out and refill with fresh water.
  8. To fix your image, immerse the paper for another 5 minutes or until all the yellow solution has disappeared and the water runs clear.
  9. Hang your print on the washing line with a peg or lay on a drying rack
  10. As your print dries it will turn into a darker blue.
- \*Depending on how bright the day is, exposure timings may vary.

## TEAM BIOGRAPHIES

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**Arpita Shah** is a photographic artist and educator based in Eastbourne, UK. She works between photography and film, exploring the fields where culture and identity meet. As an India born artist, Arpita spent an early part of her life living between India, Ireland, and the Middle East, before settling in the UK. This migratory experience is reflected in her practice, which focuses on the notion of home, belonging, and shifting cultural identities.

Her work has been shown internationally in the USA, India, United Arab Emirates and across the UK. She is the recipient of the 2019 Light Work and Autograph ABP Artist in Residence programme in Syracuse, New York and her work is held at the National Galleries of Scotland and Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery.

**Misgana Berhane** is an accredited person-centred therapist and a member of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP). Her 18 years of experience includes, working for the NHS running CBT based workshops on anxiety and depression for adults; counselling young people at YMCA and working with Sexual Assault Referral Centres.

Over the years she has specialised in Eye Movement Desensitisation Reprocessing (EMDR). This is a powerful and NICE approved therapy designed to help people recover from traumatic events in their lives including: anxiety, anger, depression, loss and grief, racial trauma, childhood abuse and neglect. She is also a clinical supervisor and qualified trainer and intergenerational family mediator.

**Anne-Marie Watson** is an artist, arts facilitator, curator and project manager specialising in creative arts and wellbeing. She has worked with different organisations, with a range of groups including children and young people, people with mental health issues, adult carers, people seeking refuge and children and adults with complex needs. Organisations include Arts on Prescription, Culture Shift, Devonshire Collective, Hastings Community of Sanctuary, Project Art Works and Towner Art Gallery.

She was artist in residence at Hastings Museum and Art Gallery in 2023. She is chair of Women's Voice a charity which aims to empower and support women, trans and nonbinary folk in Hastings and St Leonards and is studying counselling skills to strengthen her work with groups.

# EASTBOURNE ACADEMY STUDENTS



Elya

EVANA★

Radu

Libbia  
Thompson

Alyx♥

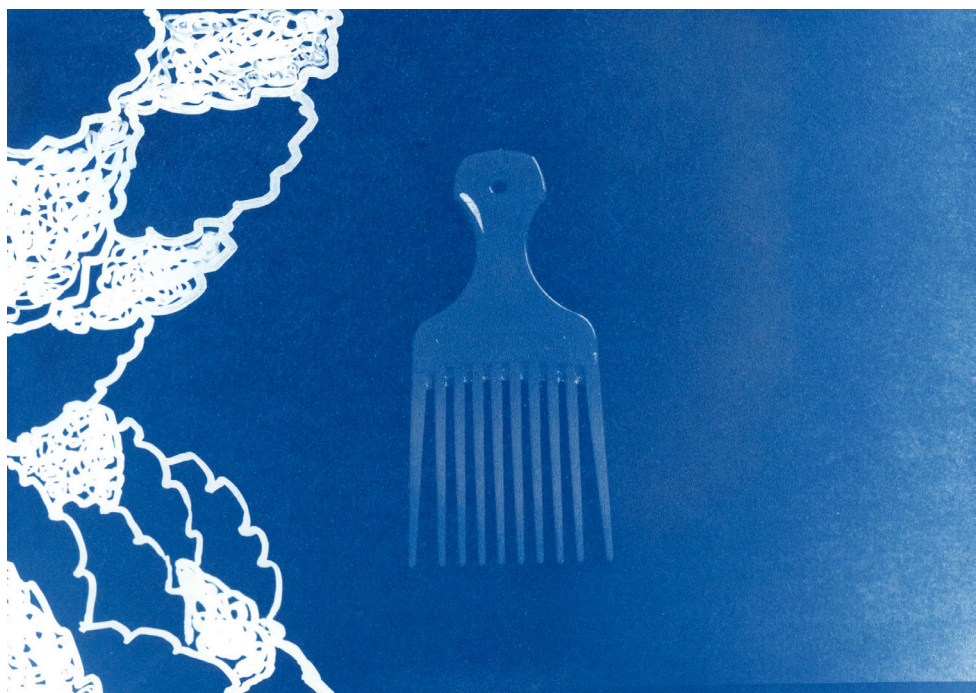
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## COLAB EASTBOURNE 2024

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iniva's CoLab Programme brings together artists, mental health workers and educators to take iniva's artistic programme to schools. CoLab artists deliver a series of workshops for students, while developing resources for educators, culminating in a permanent artwork that is left as a legacy within the school(s) and a publication for the Stuart Hall Library.

In 2024 CoLab took place at Eastbourne Academy. The project aimed to extend the legacy of iniva's Future Collect programme, which in partnership with Towner Eastbourne, commissioned artist Maria Amidu.

Artist Arpita Shah reflected on Future Collect's objectives and Maria Amidu's practice, and delivered a series of workshops for young people at Eastbourne Academy with therapist Misgana Berhane and arts educator and project manager Anne-Marie Watson.

[www.iniva.org](http://www.iniva.org)

Thanks to Maria Amidu, Mark Fowler, Mira Homer, Beatriz Lobo, Chris Neophytou and Phoebe Wingrove. Staff and students at Eastbourne Academy and teams at Towner Eastbourne and iniva.



