

Larissa Sansour

In the future they ate from the finest porcelain

Art and Ideas

Creating a time capsule

Larissa Sansour's work is about archaeology and history - how the things we find from past civilisations tell us all about how people lived their lives.

Her film, *In the future they ate from the finest porcelain*, tells the story of a group of people from an imaginary civilisation burying decorative pottery called porcelain. They have done this in an attempt to influence history, and change how people in the future will think about the past. They want to convince them that their made-up civilisation really existed. As they are burying these pieces of pottery in the present, they are creating a myth – a story - of a nation for the future.

In this activity, you will create your own time capsule for future generations to find. There are two ways to do this. You can either:

- 1 Make a traditional time capsule which would show people what life was really like in Liverpool today, or
- 2 Create a time capsule which shows a false history and impression of Liverpool today.

Making a traditional time capsule

A traditional time capsule is a great way to leave evidence of your own existence and history for future generations to discover.

This activity will require a lot of team work. It's important to listen to everyone's opinions, as you want to make sure you are burying objects that are important to everyone in your class and that you all agree on.

A good number of objects to have in a time capsule is ten. The objects should be able to give the people who find the box in the future a good idea about what life was like in Liverpool in 2017.

You can put what you like in the time capsule, but think carefully about each object you include. It will be more interesting for people in the future if your information is varied and unusual.

Here are some ideas of what to include:

Music – what popular music do you like that would tell people in the future about us?

Books – are there any books that are really popular today that could tell people in the future about us?

Clothes – fashion changes very quickly. What clothes are in style now?

Toys – toys have changed a lot from the ones that Blue Coat School children played with. Think about toys from then and today.

Pictures of food – children at Blue Coat School ate bread and cheese and drank beer. What does our food say about us?

Pictures of buildings – Bluecoat is central Liverpool's oldest building but the city has changed a lot in the last 300 years. Think about your favourite buildings in the city.

Pictures of people/places – we know a lot about celebrities, but which people might be recognisable in the future? Today we travel much more than people were able to in the past. Are there important places you have visited that should be included?

Letter to the future – you could write a letter to the people who might find your time capsule telling them why you chose the objects you did, and what life is like in Liverpool today.

Information about you and your classmates – you could include a list of people in your class, and photographs of them, and something about your likes and dislikes.

Sport – Liverpool is a very sporty city. Are there any sports or teams you support that you would like people in the future to know about?

Once you have selected your objects, all that is left to do is assemble and bury your time capsule.

1 Your container needs to be strong, watertight and big enough for the objects that you want to include.

2 Make a note to put in the box that will give people the date the box was buried, who you are, and a short message.

3 With the help of adults, choose where to bury your time capsule.

4 As a class/school you might want to decide on a date in the future when you will dig your time capsule up. If you decide to do this, make sure you write down the future date somewhere safe.

Planting a false history

Creating a false time capsule is a very similar process to the one just described. The main difference is that the objects you will bury will not be telling the truth about life in Liverpool today.

Music – what music would you like people in the future to think we listened to, perhaps something very obscure?

Books – are there any books that might confuse people in the future? Could you include these in your false history?

Clothes – fashion tells us a lot about what a time was like. What clothes could you include in your false history? Do we all walk around dressed in tutus and clown costumes?

Toys – what would be your dream toy? You could include this in your false history. You could also imagine what technology might be like in the future and pretend that it is happening today.

Pictures of food – today we know that we should all try and eat healthily, but imagine if people in the future thought that all we ate was chocolate ice-cream?

Pictures of buildings – you could draw pictures of strange and wonderful buildings and pretend they are in Liverpool, or use pictures from other countries, such as the Taj Mahal or Eiffel Tower.

Pictures of people/places – Are there any famous people from the past you would like to meet today? In your false history, you could say they lived in Liverpool in 2017.

Letter to the future – you could write a letter to the people who might find your time capsule telling them why you chose the objects you did and what life was like in Liverpool in 2017, but make it more fantastic!

Information about you and your classmates – you might want to include a list of people in your class, with their photographs, but add some new imaginary people. And add some information about your likes and dislikes.

Sports – can you invent a sport that people in the future would believe we played? For example, *quidditch* from Harry Potter?