

THE MUSEUM OF HUMAN VIOLENCE

Learning Violence: Schooling

4 - 10 July 2063

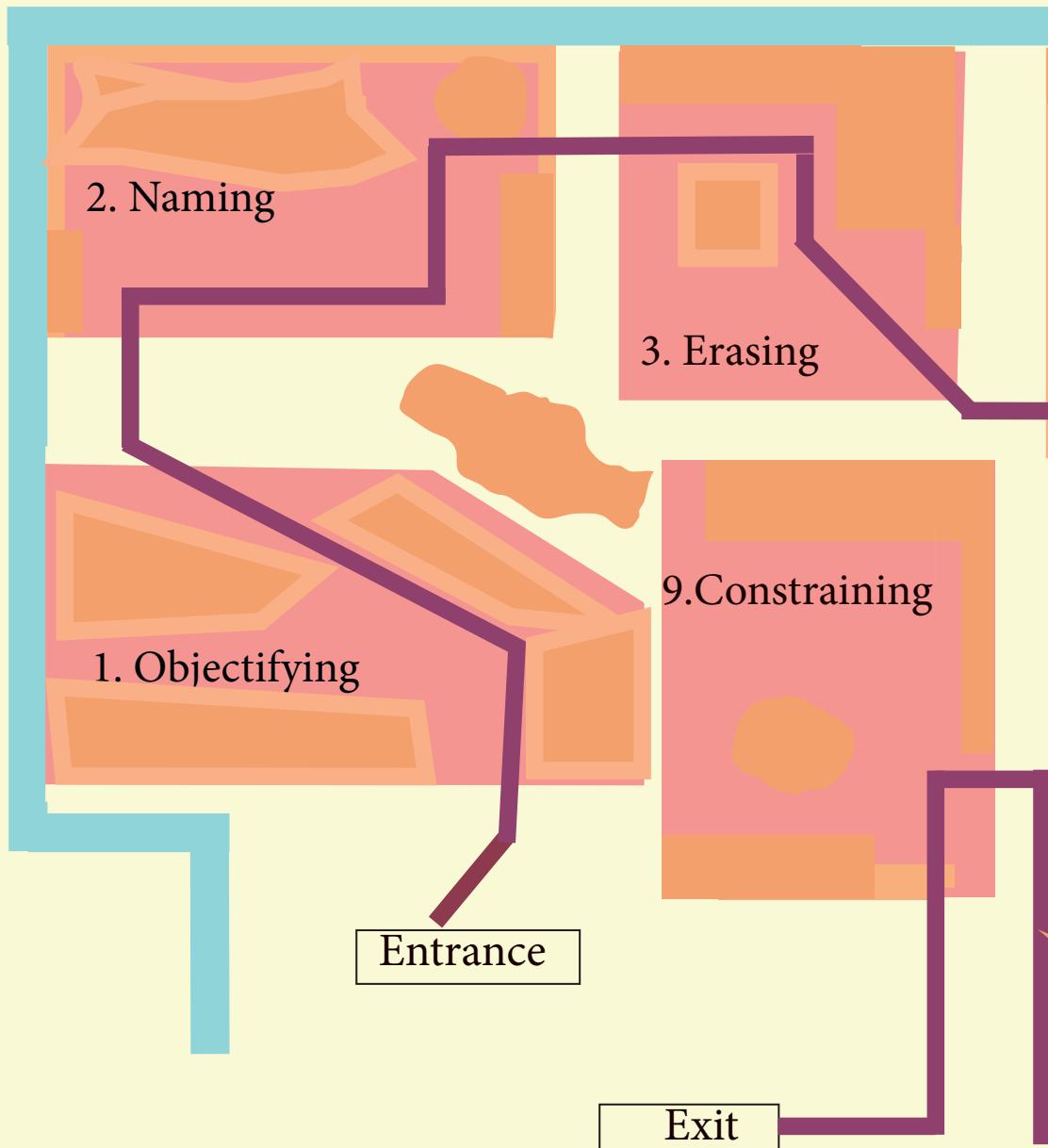
Darkness cannot
drive out darkness;
only light can do that.
Hate cannot drive
out hate; only love can
do that.

- Dr Martin Luther King Jr.

LEARNING VIOLENCE: SCHOOLING is the latest Gallery to open in the Museum of Human Violence.

The focus is the system of schooling that teachers and children struggled to learn within: while there were surface changes in schools in the 100 years prior to the Giant Rupture, the underlying system remained constant. Almost universally, this was based on social values, beliefs and practices arising from modernism and humanism - beliefs in the superiority of some and worthlessness of others; values of competition and hierarchy; practices of measuring and labelling and dividing. This Gallery is organised around 9 of these violent, overlapping social and schooling practices that normalised violence:

1. Objectifying
2. Naming
3. Erasing
4. Dividing
5. Controlling
6. Competing
7. Conditioning
8. Privileging
9. Constraining.



4. Dividing

5. Controlling

6. Competing

7. Conditioning

8. Privileging



1. Objectifying

Humans turned non-human, each other, children and land into objects whenever they treated them as 'things'. All the 'Stops' in this Gallery are concerned with objectification, but here Measurement is specifically explored.

In the 100 years before the Giant Rupture measurement through tests turned children into manipulable objects, and turned knowledge itself into 'objects' to be consumed and regurgitated as 'bite-size' facts.

What did you learn in school today
Dear little boy of mine?
What did you learn in school today
Dear little boy of mine?
I learned to get high marks in standardised tests.
I learned I'm brighter than the rest.
I learned to know I rule the roost
Feeling superior gives a boost
And that's what I learned in school today
That's what I learned in school.

All lyrics adapted from the song by Tom Paxton, 'What Did You Learn In School Today?' 1964



2. Naming

This ‘Stop’ explores the way language was used to confer superiority and privilege. Labels were used in relation to perception of behaviour, like ‘bad’ or ‘good’. Labels also followed measurement; including ‘talented’, ‘clever’, ‘successful’ on the one hand; or ‘low-ability’, ‘slow’, ‘lazy’, ‘failure’ or even ‘stupid’ on the other. Labels may or may not have been shared with children.

In this ‘Stop’ language is also explored in relation to how it impacted relationships between different social groups and between humans and non-humans. For example, ‘like an animal’ might have been used when criticising human behaviour. It’s likely neither tormentor nor tormented perceived that this was abusive and derogatory of non-humans. Lanuage was used to separate and denigrate ‘others’.

What did you learn in school today

Dear little girl of mine?

What did you learn in school today

Dear little girl of mine?

I learned when I talk in the class that I’m bad

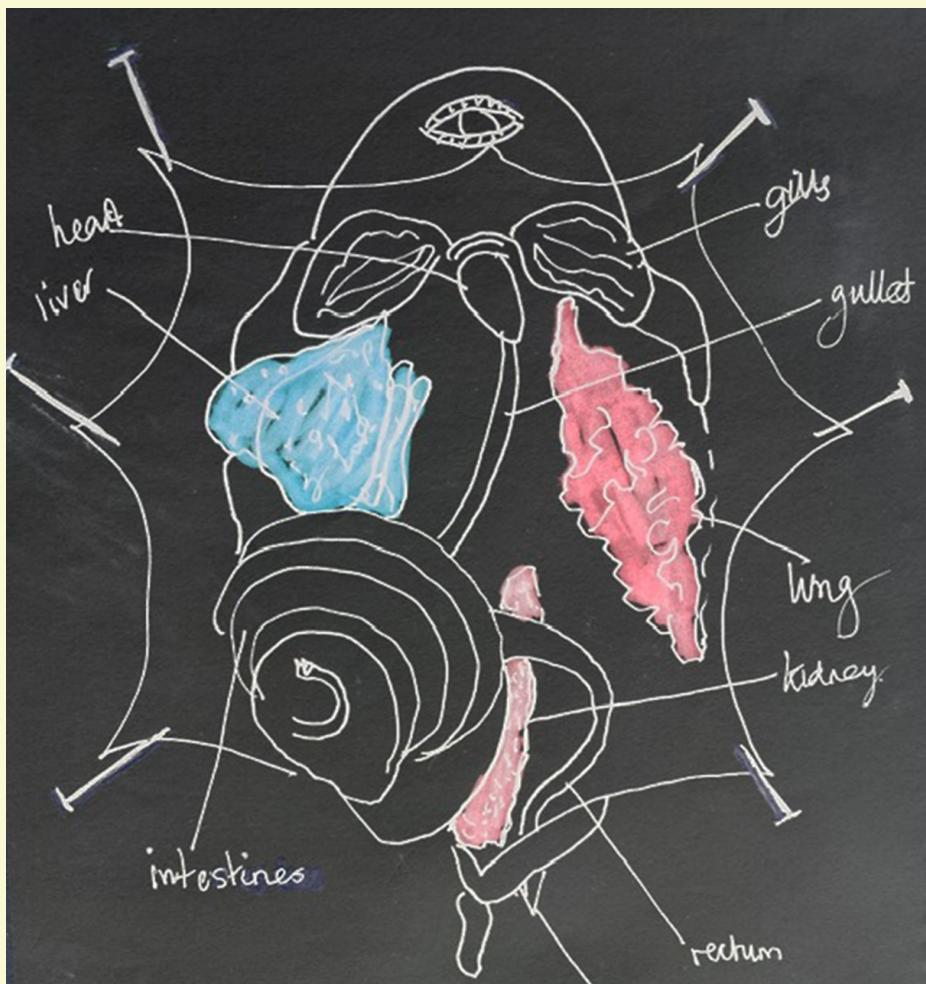
Being called names makes me so sad

I learned I’ve got to try harder

I leaned Liz and Beth are cleverer

And that’s what I learned in school today

That’s what I learned in school.



Three month old tadpole dissected. Adapted from figure 32.5
'Introduction to Biology', D. G. MacKean. Page 170

3. Erasing

Humans made non-humans, other humans and the land invisible in many ways. Erasing involved viewing 'others' as lacking 'essential' qualities, like rationality (humans supposed they were rational). This assumed 'lack' justified abuse.

'Others' were erased in many school subjects: in History many people's stories were erased. In Domestic Science others were cooked and eaten.

In this 'Stop' a frog is dissected in Biology. (Frogs were common on Earth before the Giant Rupture. The life of the frog was ignored as a subjective being).

Classification was central to Biology. The ways that Humans looked at other life before the Giant Rupture, including classification itself, are examples of Anthropocentric views.

Humans forgot that all life existed in inter-dependent and symbiotic relationships. This lead to their own near-erasure.

What did you learn in school today

Dear little boy of mine?

What did you learn in school today

Dear little boy of mine?

I learned in Biology to cut frogs apart

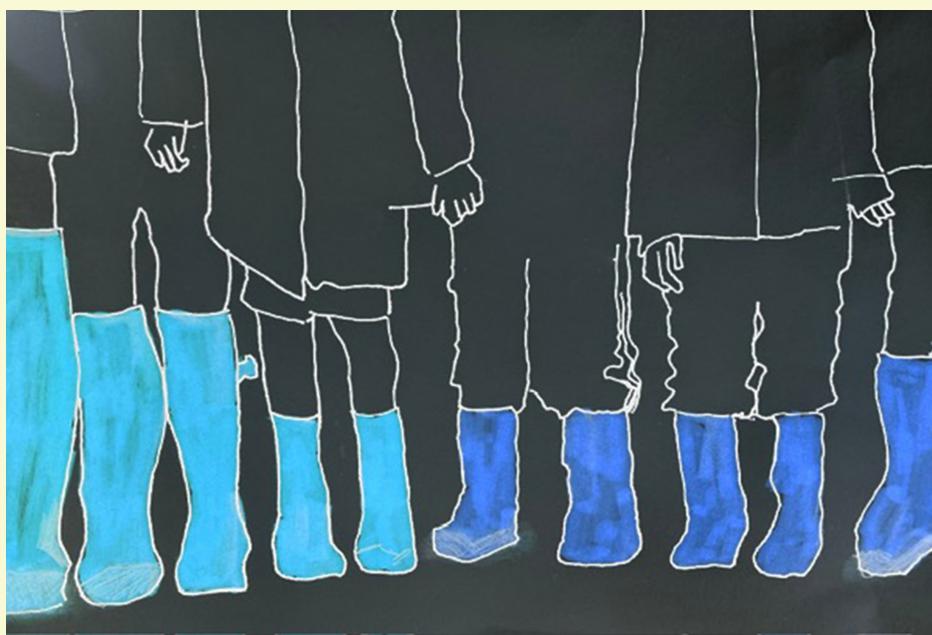
And that was only just the start

I leaned to slice earthworms in half

in Art was shown a pickled calf

And that's what I learned in school today

That's what I learned in school.



4. Dividing

Dividing life was a human preoccupation before the Giant Rupture. This 'Stop' explores some of the ways that division was practiced in schooling, including by age, sex, faith, and wealth.

Knowledge was also divided into separate subjects and the school day was divided into hours, as if learning happens in discrete slots and as if attention can be turned on and off like a tap.

Children were often separated by 'streaming', for example, put into the 'A', 'B', 'C' or 'D' stream for every subject, or they might be separated into 'ability' groups within the same class.

What did you learn in school today
Dear little girl of mine?

What did you learn in school today
Dear little girl of mine?

I learned we must hurry from science to math.

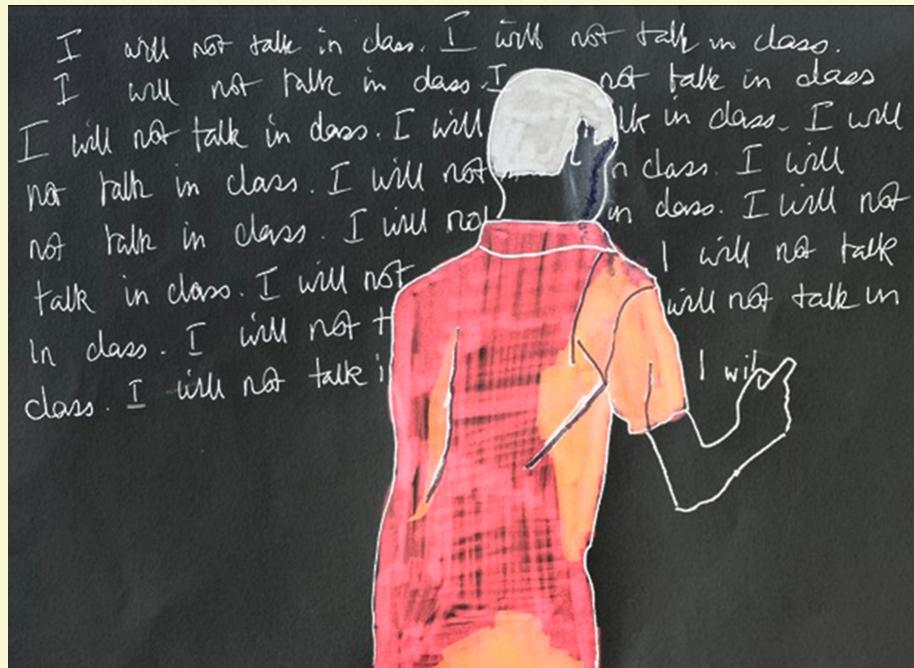
I learned Chemistry's not my path.

I learned my day's ruled by a bell

And I learned schooling's tiring as hell

And that's what I learned in school today

That's what I learned in school.



5. Controlling

‘Stop 5’ explores more obvious ways that Schooling ensured obedience, regimentation and ‘silencing’.

Children were often discouraged from displaying individuality through dress: school uniform was usual. School rules were ubiquitous. For example, putting up the hand to speak or ask for permission to go to the toilet. Sometimes children were lined up in single file and only allowed in the classroom when they stood still and in complete silence. Infringement of rules usually meant some form of punishment, for example, staying after school for detention.

When interviewed, some survivors of the Giant Rupture talked about friendships developed during school, support from teachers and having fun. Whether Schooling was experienced as fun or traumatic, it was steeped in the message that society sanctioned control of the less powerful by the more powerful, and controlling practices, rooted in domination and subordination, should not be questioned.

What did you learn in school today

Dear little boy of mine?

What did you learn in school today

Dear little boy of mine?

I learned always to do whatever I’m told .

And keep the rules even when old

I learned to stand still, out of sight

And I learned the teacher’s always right

And that’s what I learned in school today

That’s what I learned in school.



6. Competing

Competition was a cornerstone of pre-Giant Rupture society. Humans competed even when this was not necessary for survival. At every level of society and in every arena, prizes were given out for 'winners'. Usually the winners were ranked 1st, 2nd, or 3rd, and everyone else was a loser- so the majority were always losers.

One outcome of this obsession with 'winners' at the time was the cult of the 'celebrity': people who were revered because of how much money they had and how much time they spent on public show.

This understanding of 'success' was dominant in schools, and prizes and tokens given, for being 'top' in sport, for 'good' behaviour or, for example, judged 'best' in an essay writing competition.

What did you learn in school today

Dear little girl of mine?

What did you learn in school today

Dear little girl of mine?

I learned it's most important to win, win, win.

Coming second is like a sin.

I don't get the tokens or prize

"failure's opportunity" is lies

And that's what I learned in school today

That's what I learned in school.



7. Conditioning

Schools were essentially centres of conditioning: places where children learned the ‘rules’ of society, how to fit in, and how not to question the rules. Questioning the rules usually meant being ostracised. Some of the rules taught children to accept violence. For example, children might tolerate bullying of another child, in order not to have the bullying turned on them.

Other aspects of conditioning related to not having an opinion different to the acknowledged leader. Eating was strongly socially conditioned. In schools most children ate the lunch provided. This included ‘serving’ the flesh of other animals.

Conditioning meant that autonomy and freedom was severely restricted.

What did you learn in school today
Dear little boy of mine?
What did you learn in school today
Dear little boy of mine?
I learned to be part of the group to survive.
Alone I am barely alive.
I learned to fit in and play dumb
I learned to pretend better than some
And that’s what I learned in school today
That’s what I learned in school.



8. Privileging

Along with systems of dividing, were systems of privileging and classifying that contributed to notions of superiority and inferiority and to separating humans from each other and from ‘other’ nature. Hierarchical relationships are one example. In some schools, particularly in the fee-paying system, it was common to have a ‘head’ prefect. All schools had a ‘Head’ teacher.

Privileging was closely related to ‘ranking’; schools themselves were ranked according to their test results, adding to competition and division.

Many of the examples in all the ‘Stops’ draw a picture of lack of collaboration in schools, but this only reflects lack of collaboration within Nations and between Nations. It is this lack of collaboration that is now seen as responsible for the destruction of all non-human species, the land and other humans in the years leading up to the Giant Rupture.

What did you learn in school today
Dear little girl of mine?
What did you learn in school today
Dear little girl of mine?
I learned I’m a leader and have to stand tall.
I’m a beacon of light for all
I learned the school depends on me
My essential qualities are key
And that’s what I learned in school today
That’s what I learned in school.



9. Constraining

The idea of constraint relates to practices that physically limited what children were allowed to do. They imposed rigidity, rather than flexibility. Like other practices explored in the Gallery, they were aimed at surveillance and domination. Examples at 'Stop' 9 include seating arrangements that made the children sit in rows facing forward where the teacher stood as a figure of authority who could easily watch everyone. Twelve feet high fences were build around some schools, locks on entrance doors were common; these measures were justified on health and safety grounds. It seems attacks on schools were increasing before the Giant Rupture. However, they were exceedingly rare and these practices add to the impression that schools were places of detention.

Constraint on 'others' against their will was a common feature of society, including of humans who disagreed with the system; and non-humans in zoos constrained as a spectacle for human entertainment, or other non-humans constrained for experimental purposes.

What did you learn in school today

Dear little boy of mine?

What did you learn in school today

Dear little boy of mine?

Learned I'm a prisoner though I did no crime

I Learned I'm shut in for all time

I learned to be chained to my seat

learned to accept it and get my treat

And that's what I learned in school today

That's what I learned in school.

The **MUSEUM OF HUMAN VIOLENCE** was opened 30 years after the Giant Rupture. It is dedicated to remembering, understanding and forgiving human violence in all its forms in the 20th and 21st centuries, including physical, emotional and spiritual, and including all the seemingly inconsequential acts of violence that lead to normalisation of violence in society. The Museum adopts the International Community Pledge (ICP), borrowed from the Buddhist monk, Thich Nhat Hnhn:

“When you understand you cannot help but love...practice looking at all living beings with the eye of compassion.”

The museum is dedicated to the countless billions of non-human and human animals, and destruction of the land, resulting from Human violence before the Giant Rupture. In alignment with the ICP, it stands for the right to peace, protection and respect for all non-humans, humans and the land, everywhere on Earth.

The Museum of Human Violence is a House of Many Rooms including:

- * violent economic systems
- * violent food systems
- * violent political systems
- * wars

It also includes collections relating to how violence was normalised and learned, including:

- * learning violence: the home
- * learning violence: the media
- * learning violence: entertainment

Opening Hours:

Tues - Sun 11.00-17.00

45-65 Peckham Road, London SE5 8UF