

## Ikon Gallery, Birmingham

**Young reviewers tour the Ikon Gallery in Birmingham for Museums and Galleries month - but come away with no plans for a repeat visit.**

The new, modern and revamped Ikon Gallery is not situated in the best of places. After a half hour bus journey into the centre of the city and a tiring hour's walk searching, we were ready to give up when we found a lovely old, gothic type building tucked away in a neat little corner.

On first entering the gallery, its modern surroundings welcomed us and we were looking forward to looking around. But after climbing countless stairs and entering Gallery One, which boasts work by British artist Graham Gussin, we were disappointed. There was very little to look at or do, but the big cinema-screen style presentation was very clever.

Wondering what all of the fuss was about, we climbed ever more stairs and entered Gallery Two, this one containing work by Birmingham-based artist Ivan Morrison.

We discovered a hidden little bit of fun - a 'resource room'- but even there our fun was short lived. There were videos, a poetry book (containing poetry by local young people) and a sand box full of shells encouraging us to 'feel free to create your own alien landscape'. But we felt it was aimed at younger children who wouldn't understand the clever idea based on Gussin's work unless they had read the page and a half of promotional literature - which although it was meant to educate and inform, we found rather confusing.

There was a space for comments in the resource room. Other young people had found the Ikon 'inspirational' and 'amazing' - unfortunately we failed to see why. We thought young people would be hard pushed to choose the Ikon Gallery over the many other places to go in Birmingham.

On our way out, we asked the woman at the information desk about the Plant Seed Project, an event that was advertised as a celebration of Museums and Galleries Month. The woman told us to look at some brochures.

We leafed through these booklets and found lots of information plugging the Ikon Gallery, plus how to donate money, but we found nothing about the only thing flagged up as part of Museums and Galleries Month.

We decided that we will stick to weekends in coffee shops, music stores and the ice rink rather than looking around an uninspirational gallery in the company of uninterested staff and a few bored people sheltering from the rain.

### About the team

This review was produced by Sam Hunt, 15 Kevin Dutton, 15 and Andrew Hopkins, 15. It was published in the Museums Journal. For more reviews, see column, left.

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