

Gayle Chong Kwan

Gayle works within photography, sculpture and mixed media. She explores themes of travel, trade and waste and holds two degrees in Politics and Modern History from the University of Manchester and Fine Art from Central St. Martins. Before her PhD in Practice based Art at the Royal College of Art she studied MSc Communications at University of Stirling and MPhil Fine Art at Royal College of Art.



Gayle looks at what links Mauritius with the Isle of Wight using photography, moving image & sculpture.



Layers of time are explored through the coloured sands that can be found both on Mauritius and in Alum Bay on the Isle of Wight.



Sugar and sand have very similar textures and are sometimes the same colour.



Gayle also looks at her own family history. She spent time researching Mauritius and its diverse communities, with people deriving from India, China, Africa and Madagascar.



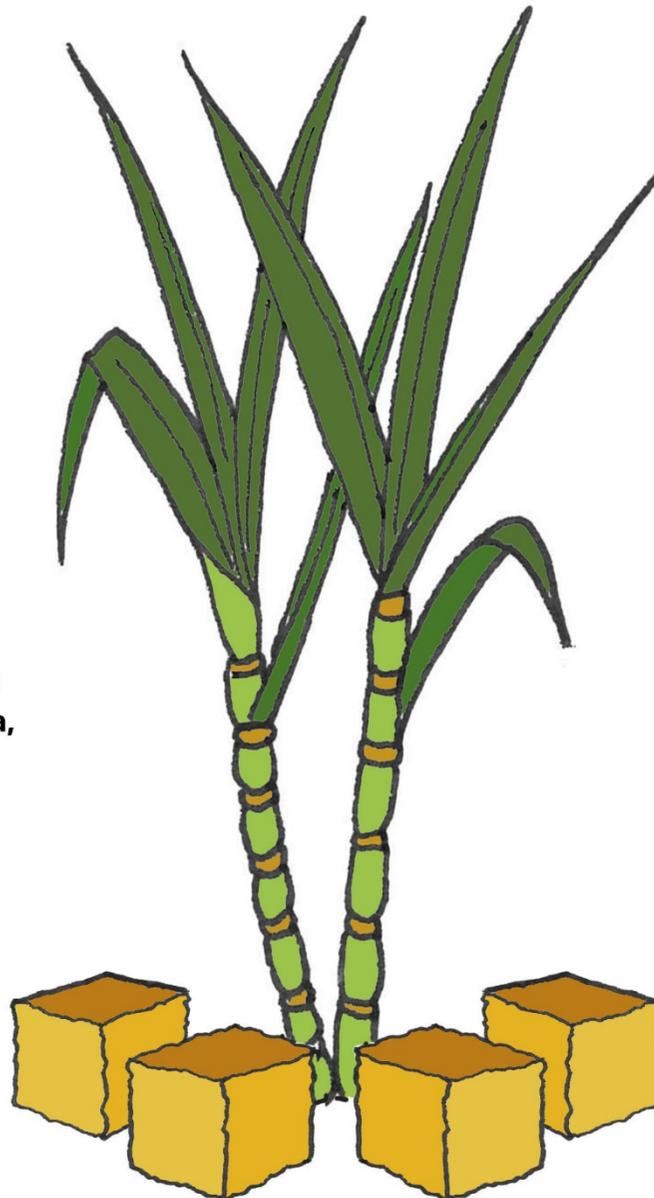
She uses Bagasse, a by-product of sugar production to explore the history of colonialism.



Gayle has also explored the links between the two islands through the lives of two children, one living in Mauritius and the other the Isle of Wight.



Gayle is interested in how we treat immigrants, and how this changes our geography.



Key words:

Colonial

The characteristics of a colony. A colony is a country or group of people who are taken control of by another country.

Geography

The way the Earth looks, acts or grows and the people and animals who survive in different landscapes.

Ecological histories

Looking at how humans live in their environment throughout history.

Mauritius

An island country in the Indian Ocean, near Madagascar.

Isle of Wight

An island off the coast of Hampshire, near Southampton and Portsmouth.

Immigrants

A person who goes to live in a different country to where they were born.

Bagasse

A dry, pulpy material that is left over after crushing sugar cane to separate the liquid.

Plantation

A large farm, usually in a hot part of the world where one particular item is grown.

East India Trading Company

A British company used to transfer goods in the Indian Ocean between 1600-1874.

Carisbrooke Castle

A castle on the Isle of Wight built in the 12th century.

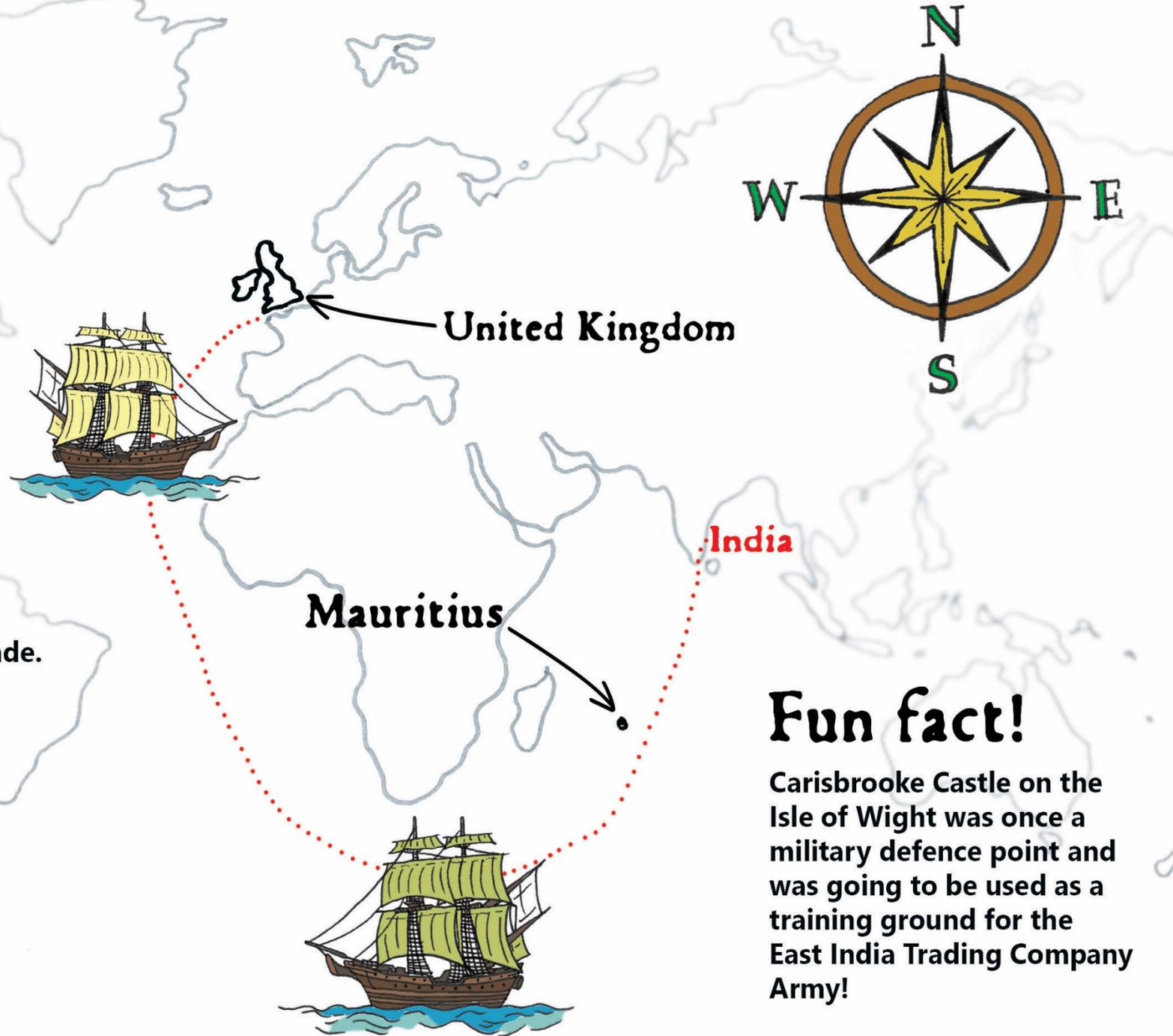
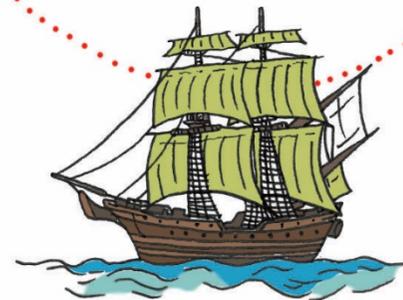
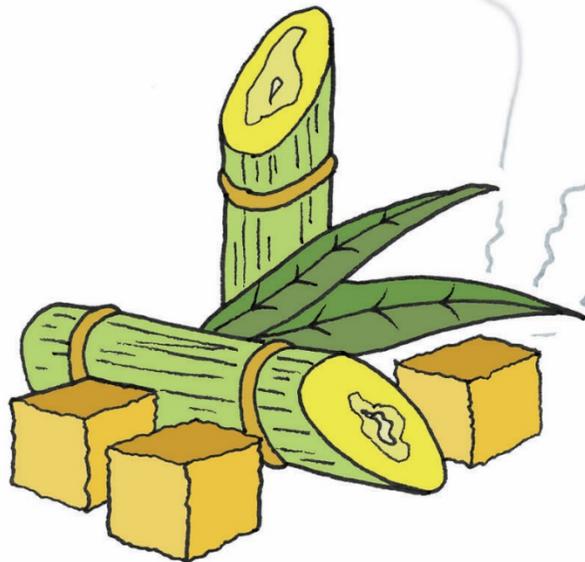
Why sugar?

Much of the land in Mauritius was destroyed to make room for sugar plantations.

Mauritius was on the route for East India Trading Company ships, so the land was used for goods to take back to Europe.

The East India Trading Company had a base on the Isle of Wight which is also an island like Mauritius.

Gayle is exploring how these two islands are linked by the sugar trade.



Fun fact!

Carisbrooke Castle on the Isle of Wight was once a military defence point and was going to be used as a training ground for the East India Trading Company Army!