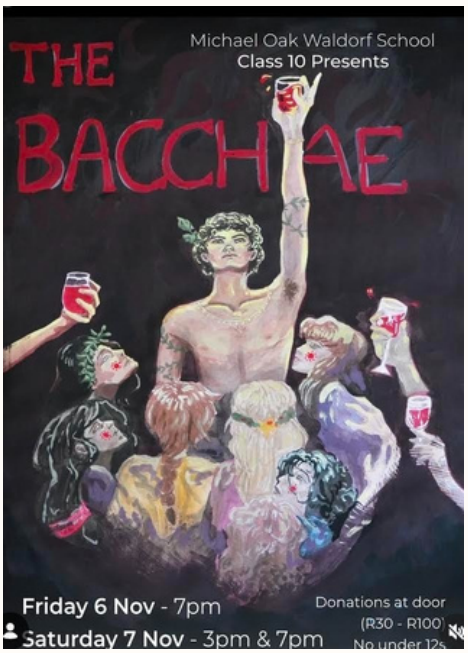
School Paper Issue 5 27 November 2026

INK & OAK

SCHOOL EVENTS

By Rapahelle Richman

GREEK TRAGEDY



On 6–7 November we had Class 10 perform their Greek tragedy, The Bacchae. The production brought an ancient Greek story to life and gave the class the opportunity to showcase their acting skills and deduction.

The play was not done traditionally on the stage as it has usually been done in the past; it was presented in the middle of the hall and they used the space around them to create the fantastic story of The Bacchae. An anonymous source stated that the way they conducted it could change the way we do theatre here at Michael Oak.

"THE MONTHLY STUDENT BULLETIN



EURYTHMY PERFORMANCE



Meanwhile Class 11 was getting ready to put on their Eurythmy pieces and they put on a fantastic spectacle with the guidance of Perry and Tim, who provided the music that helped shape the wonderful pieces.
Doing eurythmy in Grade 11 is important because it helps learners develop coordination, concentration, discipline and self-expression. It teaches us to work together as a group, understand movement and rhythm and express ourselves through body language. It also encourages creativity, confidence and teamwork. Most importantly, it gives us an opportunity to experience something different from our usual academic subjects and appreciate the importance of art and movement in our education.
"To me, 'One Summer's Day' creates a feeling of questioning life and searching for answers while still holding on to optimism and hope. But beneath that optimism lies the reality that not every answer is what we wish it would be. The piece also creates a deep sense of longing, as if you are missing something or perhaps a part of yourself that you cannot quite find again. It feels like looking back on something meaningful, knowing that you can never fully return to it." — Leo

WORKSHOP THEATER

Something new is **w**aiting in the wings…
We wait anxiously as our Class 11s work tirelessly to perfect their workshop theatre: Time to Change. It has whimsy, chaos and laughter.
They open on Thursday 3 December and carry on until Saturday 5 December. With unexpected moments, unforgettable characters and plenty of laughter, this is a performance you won't want to miss. Our learners have put their creativity, dedication and passion into bringing this production to life.
The stage is set, the cast is ready and all that's missing is you!



ART IS FOR EVERYONE: 7 FEMALE SOUTH AFRICAN VISUAL ARTISTS TO EXPLORE

By Amelie Bernade

Mary Sibande explores the intersection of gender, race and labour through her alter-ego Sophie in installation and sculpture. She takes on the protagonist's stance while in a domestic worker's uniform in Sibande's 'blue phase', sheds them in power in her 'purple phase' and is a warrior of righteous anger in her 'red phase'.



Jane Alexander is an installation and sculpture artist best known for her sculpture 'The Butcher Boys' of three pale creatures malformed by hatred, which was banned under Apartheid. She continues to make artwork exposing oppression, cruelty and trauma through strange creatures that are raw in emotion.



FaithXLVII is a travelling multidisciplinary artist who started out as a street artist in South Africa. She explores themes like oppression through beauty, geometry and nature. She has painted flowers on ruins in Gaza, sewn together tapestries of maps and you may have seen her De Waal mural over District Six.



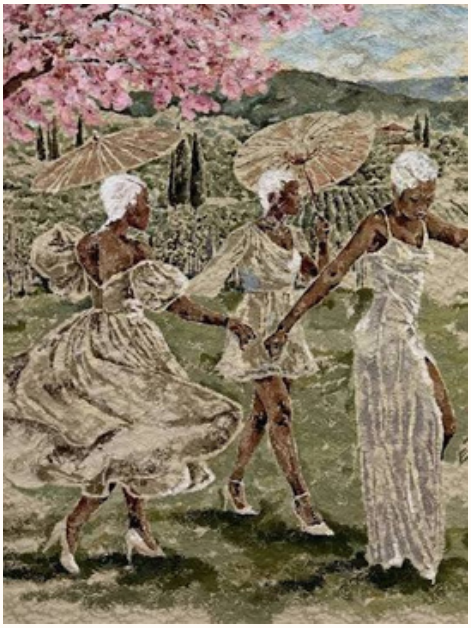
Rosie Mudge is best known for her large-scale ombre, pastel, glittery colourfield paintings. She also utilises beading, glitter, popular lyrics and motivational, girl-power style slogans to subvert feminised, girlish mediums and treat them with imposing reverence. She explores themes of materialism and positivity.



Kirsten Sims showcases her observance in expressive paintings that depict people going about their lives in colourful, recognisable locations around Cape Town. Her visible brushstrokes and gentle humour give them a narrative, children's-book quality, which makes sense as she began as an illustrator.



Zanele Montle explores a questioning of what defines black identity in her artworks depicting everyday scenes in daily life. She uses clean lines, shapes and silhouettes with a strong sense of design elements and vivid colour to create a sense of belonging, familiarity and home. Her artworks depict intimate scenes of community.



Baqaqawuli Nobakanda, also known as the 'Lace Lady', uses acrylics on lace paper, creating a stipple effect, as her primary medium to paint relaxed and glamorous black women. The delicate lace symbolically subverts their historical endurance and trauma, a hyperfeminine celebration of black joy.



REFLECTION ON MY FIRST YEAR AT MICHAEL OAK

By Isabella Kannermeyer

I haven't been a Waldorf student for very long. This year was my first time experiencing everything our school has to offer. And you wouldn't believe how different the mainstream and Waldorf curricula are. As someone who came from a very academically based school, I felt as if everything I was doing was leading towards some exam, test, presentation or grade. Nothing had a purpose besides achieving the highest marks, which I constantly felt I was falling short of compared to my peers. Every term's award ceremony felt like I was slipping further from the goals I've always wanted to accomplish, my ambitions and hope dropping like bugs in the summer. Competing with 200+ learners for the number one spot but never getting it always left me with the most hollow, incomplete feeling, never seeing my name on those awards or feeling what it was like on that stage.

Us as a Waldorf school have art intertwined in our every subject, more than we realise. It is done so purposely. We are given chairs to see over the walls and limitations we are so gifted to not know exist. I was once on the floor of these limitations, always shown the wall stopping my path, one I was told I couldn't move or change, and that to ever get past them would require resources I wasn't given or told how to acquire. So like many of my other peers, I tried to climb, always falling short, never even getting to see a glimpse of what I could get. But here we are lifted and encouraged and never held back. We are allowed to see beyond but also shown below, so we walk and carry the knowledge that allows change in the circumstances we live in. We are gifted to see everything as a whole and not just one side.

We are given so much more than I think we give credit for. From my first week I knew Michael Oak wasn't going to be anywhere near what I was used to. There were so many things I picked up within my first few months, like how free each student is when it comes to expressing themselves with one another. And this may seem like such a simple thing, but everyone would say what their opinions and thoughts were even if they disagreed with everyone else's opinions. It was always said and expressed in such a free sense, like there wasn't anything wrong with sharing a thought that differed from the crowd, and no one ever judged them for it either.

Michael Oak creates such an opening feeling where, no matter your age or where you sit on the school board, everyone is given respect, attention and the right to voice their opinions. Teachers giving us the space to say things as we truly feel is something that was strange to me back when I first experienced it, but now I am beyond grateful for it. It creates a space where we learn to articulate how we feel while still being aware of how those around us respond to how we verbalise things. This is a skill that I think many go without knowing, creating blunt, inattentive and insensitive people who struggle to see their wrong and take ownership for it. And I know many of our teachers must have a lot of patience to sit and allow us to learn how to care better for our words, and to instruct us into better articulating them without shutting us down completely from expressing ourselves.



HISTORY: THE SHANG DYNSTY

By Grace Molver

The Shang dynasty is one of the earliest Chinese dynasties that was ruled by a royal family from c. 16th–11th century BC. They were ruled by powerful kings and had a strict social hierarchy. They were eventually defeated by the Zhou dynasty.

The Shang dynasty was located in the Yellow River valley, centred on the North China Plain, spanning modern-day Henan, Shandong, Hebei, Shanxi and Anhui provinces. The dynasty's capitals moved multiple times during its rule before finally settling in Anyang (also known as Yin).

The Shang dynasty had a clear patriarchal social hierarchy with the kings at the top, their local governors and their nobles and the local masses at the bottom. Most of the citizens worked in agriculture and supplied for those above them on the social ladder.

The Shang dynasty designed a calendar system of 360 days with twelve months and each month being 30 days long. The king used this system to predict the optimal planting time.

It was during the Shang dynasty that Chinese writing began to develop as it was helpful with keeping track of the calendar. The symbol for the moon is the same symbol that is used for month. Their calendar tracked both lunar and solar cycles and they added intercalary months when it became important for them to adjust the lunar year to the seasonal reality of the solar year.

The architects of the Shang dynasty built houses made of timber over rammed-earth floors, they used wattle and daub for their walls and had thatched roofs. Wattle and daub is a way of constructing walls using vertical wooden stakes and weaving them with horizontal twigs and branches and then covering them with clay or mud. The dead were buried in tombs dug in clay with paintings on the wall that clearly resemble some of the ornamentation and animal shapes in the bronze work of this period.

Despite the bronze being underdeveloped it was made into many cooking and serving utensils and a range of ornaments. They made three-legged li for cooking and on it you could put a bronze zeng (a bowl with a hole in the bottom to function as a steamer), together they were called a yan. Often these utensils were beautifully decorated.

They also made a lot of necessary items from clay, being skilled potters. Some of these clay artefacts show evidence of being created on a pottery wheel. The pottery included bowls and dishes in a white glaze for ceremonial use and black pottery with a rich brown glaze for more mundane uses.



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The people of the Shang dynasty created beautiful ceremonial weapons and swords out of jade as well as jade fittings for actual weapons. There are also ornamental figurines of humans and animals carved out of jade and these are often found in tombs. They also made tiny figurines from carving bone or ivory.

There is no surviving literature from the Shang dynasty although numerous texts of ceremonial inscriptions, general records and family or clan names carved into or brushed onto bones or tortoise shells. These records are the earliest known writing in China and are made up of pictographs, ideograms and phonograms.

One of the leaders of the Shang dynasty was King Wu Ding. One of his three royal consorts was Fu Hao, and her story has been pieced together from objects found in her lavish tomb near Xiaotun. In her tomb there were also inscriptions on tortoise shells and ox scapulae (oracle bones) used in divination ceremonies performed by her husband Wu Ding. These inscriptions have led us to believe that she was not only a royal consort and mother of the heir apparent but she was also a military general second in command to the king and had some of the most important Shang generals in history under her command. Fu Hao led thousands of troops (including 600 recorded women) in military campaigns against hostile tribes beyond the Shang borders, often emerging victorious.

Fu Hao owned her own land and was a high priestess making very important and special rituals and sacrifices. She participated in sacrificial rituals to honour and appease the ancestral spirits who the Shang people believed influenced all aspects of their lives. Detailed inscriptions on oracle bones left in Fu Hao's tomb describe her capturing enemies in battle and brutally murdering them and sacrificing them to her ancestors. She did this through cooking, boiling, beheading and burning them alive.

Although Fu Hao was powerful and had a high status in society she was not granted a tomb in the royal cemetery; she was buried 200 metres west from the capital ruins of palaces, temples and oracle bone archives (fortunately for us this was not a place grave robbers had thought to check). The tombs in the royal cemetery were all looted but Fu Hao's remained untouched until its excavation in 1979. The discovery of her tomb gave us our first true idea of the vast wealth and lavish burial customs in the Shang dynasty.

Fu Hao's tomb was filled with 1 600 burial objects, 16 human victims and 6 dogs. The dogs were found in a yaokeng (a sacrificial pit) at the bottom of the tomb with a sacrificial human victim, the other sacrificial human victims were placed in the outer coffin niches in the tomb shaft above on a burial ledge around the perimeter of the tomb shaft. The tomb also contained 468 bronze objects of which 130 were different weapons, 755 jade objects, 63 stone objects, 5 ivory objects, 6 900 cowry shells, 564 bone objects and 11 pottery items. Mirrors and ring-handled knives found in her tomb could suggest Fu Hao came from a non-Shang background although it is likely she gathered these on her conquests.

There are many oracle bones that the Shang dynasty left behind and they have been hugely important and necessary in our discoveries of the Shang dynasty as many of their texts are recorded on these bones. We would not know as much about this dynasty as we do today.
The Shang dynasty shows us that in this time people lived within a patriarchal social hierarchy under one king. They had large organised labour forces of poorer citizens and everyone was bound together under a polytheistic worship of multiple gods or ancestral spirits.
I kept your British spellings (centred, metres, artefacts) and left the italics off the Chinese terms except the three vessel names, which are usually italicised. One thing worth checking: the tomb was excavated in **1976**, not 1979 — that's the date most sources give.





GIFTS FOR LOVED ONES THIS FESTIVE SEASON

By Cilla Rijsdijk

Hey, I get it – December is sneaking up on you and there are so many gifts you still have to buy! Here are some helpful ideas for affordable and easy-to-make gifts that are special and unique. Enjoy!

For your cooking family member/friend:
MAKE

1. Infused oils: put garlic and a herb of your choice (sage or thyme, for example) into olive oil for a couple of days.
2. Embroidered apron (a plain apron costs about R90 and even doing a tiny little flower or bird is easy, really – it will only take an hour or so).
3. A homemade recipe book (this one takes some time but would be so sweet to fill a notebook with some of your own recipes and decorate it).

BUY

1. Cute salt and pepper shakers (you can get really unique ones for R40 to R100).
2. Christmas kitchen towels (R30 to R150).
3. Iced coffee glasses (anywhere from R70 to R150).

For your self-care family member/friend:
MAKE

1. Body scrubs (make with sugar or Epsom salts and coconut oil in their favourite scent).
2. Toiletry bag (very simple patterns you can find online and you don't even need a sewing machine).
3. Sticker set (can be made with baking paper and clear tape and you could draw something or use pictures of the two of you).

BUY

1. A massage candle (about R250).
2. A set of fluffy socks (sets are usually about R160).
3. Clip-on book lamps (around R160).

For your indie family member/friend:
MAKE

1. Altoids wallet (dream gift of any indie friend. Usually has wired earphones, cherry lip balms and/or little trinkets inside, but Pinterest has the best inspo).
2. Button clips (so easy and adorable in sets. A pack of plain clips costs like R30 and then just hot glue cute buttons on them).
3. A can light (good luck convincing me you don't have a drink can, a paperclip and R10 for a battery light candle. These are going straight on their desk).

BUY

1. A CD or record that reminds you of them (anywhere between R20 and R300 depending on whether they are new or thrifted).
2. A funky pencil mug (best thrifted for around R40).
3. Weird eyeliners (fancy ones are like R300 but you can get them a bunch of cool ones for around R30 each).

Anyways, I hope you got some ideas and that your festive season goes amazing!



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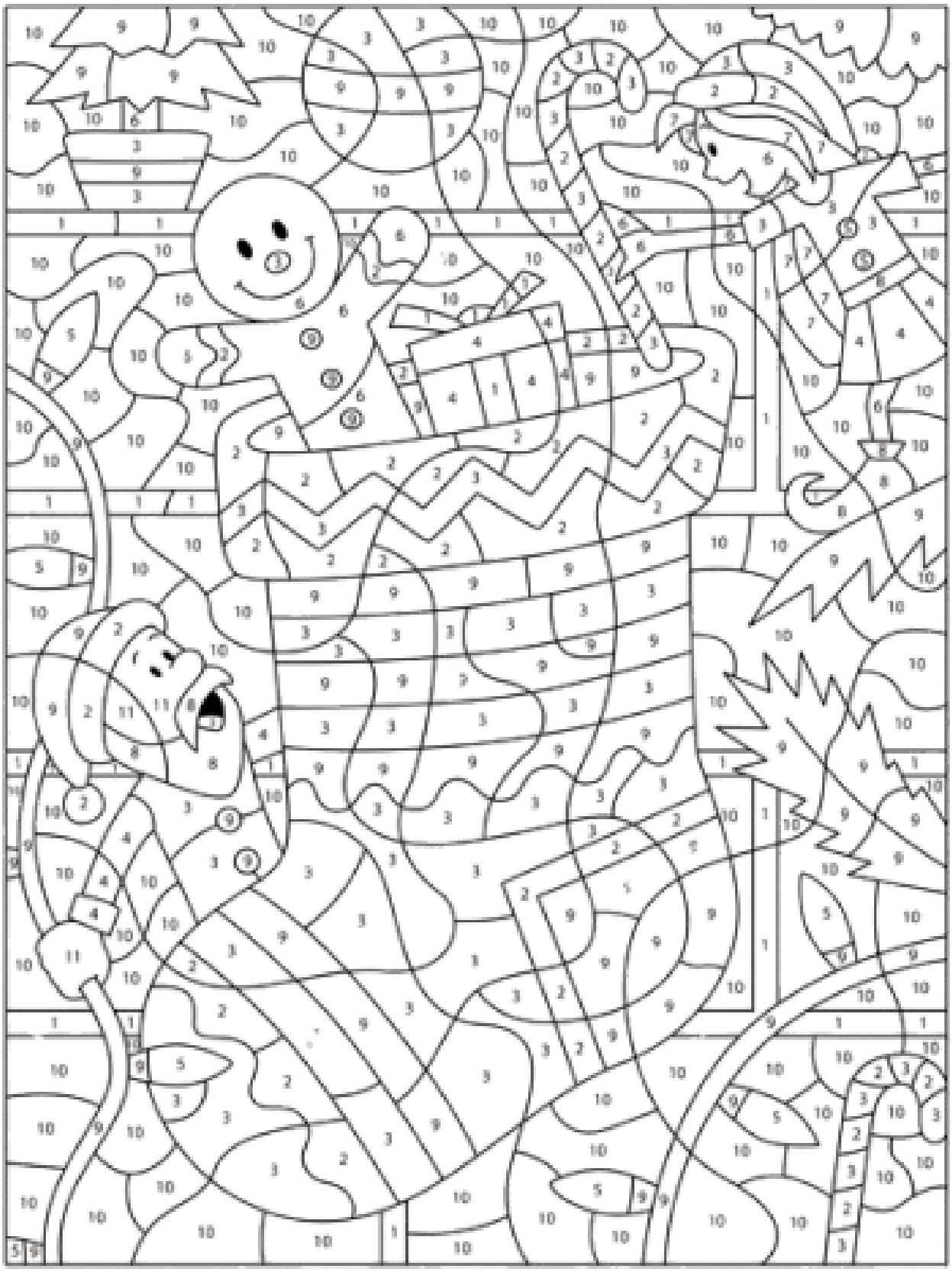
Name _____ Date _____

Color by Number!

Color the picture using the color by number guide.



1 Light Blue

2 White

3 Red

4 Blue

5 Yellow

6 Light Brown

7 Dark Brown

8 Gray

9 Green

10 Light Yellow

11 Peach

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A Special Thanks...

I would like to give a proper thank you to everyone who made this first year of newspapers possible,
To the student forum who have been helpful with digital distributiom
To all the writers this paper would be nothing but an idea with out you.
Thank you so much Clare for printing and stapling many copies of these papers on short notice