



Winter eNewsletter 2011

Opening remarks...

Welcome to the Tees Valley Arts Winter 2011 newsletter.

I'll start off by setting a suitably wintry tone: I recently came across this poem by Nuyorican poet Joseph Pacheco – 'Cold winter morn in Florida' -

*For blood grown thin
forty Fahrenheit is Siberia –*

*breezes suddenly blue
and brittle
shiver the citrus leaves –*

*a birdsong
bleak and off key
chills our sense –*

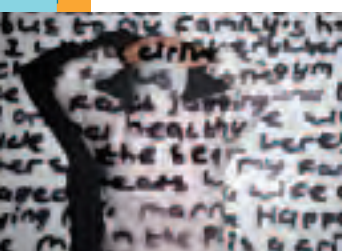
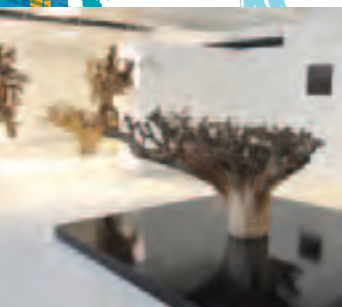
*sunlight, pale and tentative,
shelters us from shade
where wisps of vapour
from our mouths recall
northern winter breath
thicker than cigarette smoke,
that reminds us:*

*Death owns a time share here
and watches,
dressed in warm-ups,
from his lanai.*

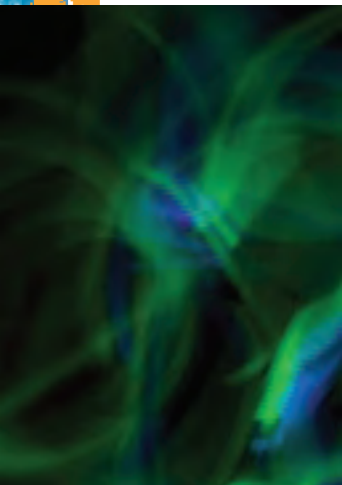
A lanai is a roofed patio, and the poet is complaining about 40 degrees Fahrenheit (about 4 Centigrade)! Eeh, they don't know they're born....but what I like about the poem is the introduction of death's time share, and the chilling sense of that beady eye relentlessly scanning the populace.

Anyway, back to TVA in Winter, hopefully less about deathly chill and more about positivity, even in the current economic climate – honestly, if I've said that once over the years.....

In fact, we have much to celebrate. The big news is that TVA was awarded the princely sum of £100K by the J Paul Getty Charitable Trust, for activities with young people in the care of the Local Authority in all five Tees Valley boroughs, and we're just starting work on the practical planning – a lovely task to have to undertake. This has especial resonance for me, as when I was a young and penniless artist, many moons ago (though some things don't change) I worked part time in two residential units for teenagers in the care of London Councils. The insight that gave me has stayed with me ever since, so I am particularly pleased to be able to contribute some positive and enjoyable experiences to the difficult lives of these very vulnerable young people. We've also been awarded a core grant of £10K by the Ernest Cook Trust for our work in environmental engagement through the arts – their second grant to us.



Opening remarks...



We've been busy delivering Artsmark sessions, have delivered various public and in-house Arts Award Adviser days, and there has been a gratifying upsurge of interest in the stART project – our very successful intervention with young people who are Not in Education, Employment or Training.

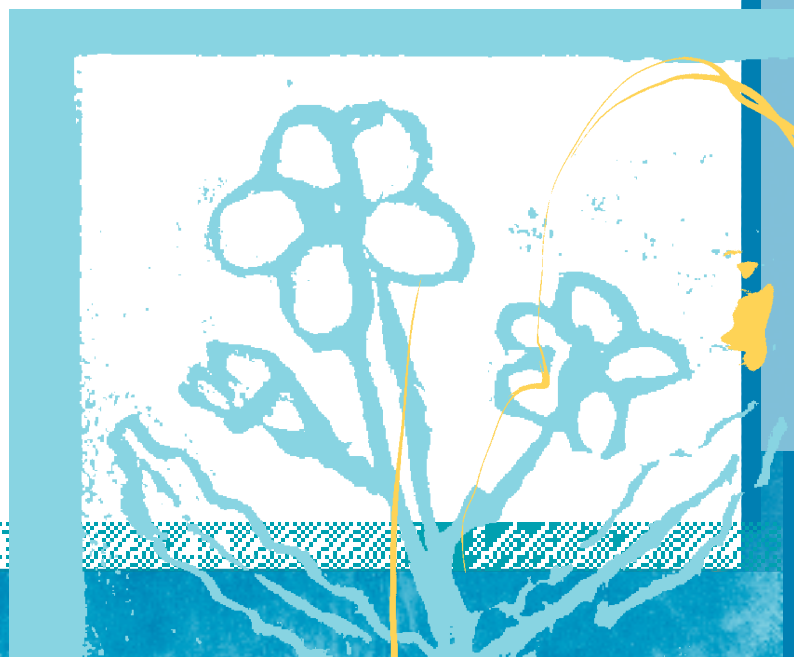
We've just had the TVA Arts Council Annual review (for 2010/11) and for that review we prepare various statistics and round up activity throughout the relevant financial year. We worked out that in 2010/11 TVA delivered approximately 12,000 participant sessions in the Tees Valley; now that is something we can rightly be proud of. Some people will have participated once, and some will have participated more than twenty times; participants have ranged from four years old to over seventy; they have come from utterly diverse backgrounds and from across all five boroughs; they have had hugely varying abilities and skills; many will have overcome societal barriers of various sorts, and their attitudes will have ranged from eager to hesitant to downright reluctant. All of this creative participation has taken place in an area which has nationally significant economic problems, and where the general citizenry have not been much exposed to culture, and certainly not to actually taking part in it themselves.

The Arts Council's strap line is 'great art for everyone' – well here in the North East there is undoubtedly some 'great art', and currently (with the Turner Prize at the Baltic) there is also 'great art' excitement - Tees Valley Arts could really support the Arts Council with the 'everyone' part of that mission statement. Inclusivity is undoubtedly TVA's strength, and without TVA the Tees Valley would undoubtedly be a duller and less creative place (and of course a place with even less employment, networking and support for artists).

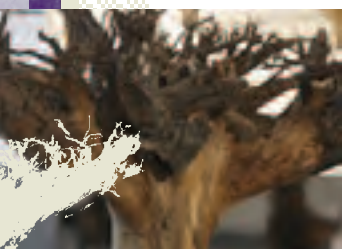
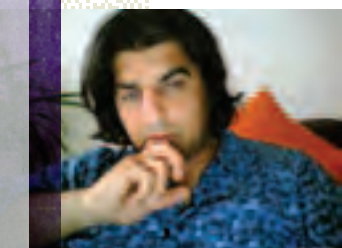
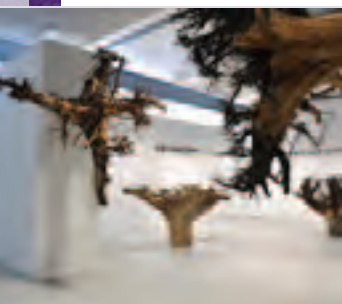
In order to make all these creative opportunities happen for people, the TVA staff continue to work hard, continue to use their brains, hearts and imaginations all together, and continue to strive to make the best things happen for the Tees Valley. Happy Christmas and a pleasant, productive and participatory New Year from me to the TVA crew, and from all of us to all our newsletter readers. See you in 2012!



Rowena Sommerville
Director, TVA



Artist profile - Gassan Mohammed



Many TVA newsletter readers will remember reading about Gassan Mohammed – artist and sculptor from Iraq, now settled in Middlesbrough with his wife and family. Gassan was a professional artist and academic tutor in his own country, but has now had to rebuild his life and his artistic practice, and all in a new language and culture.

Gassan and Ikram have settled happily here, their son and daughter are doing well at school and Teesside (almost) feels like home, but artists rarely find it easy to earn a steady living, and times are hard here for all, as we all know. Despite these pressing issues, Gassan and Ikram have made a commitment to their children's education; Ali is at Nunthorpe Secondary School and is an elected school representative, and Naz is at Pallister Park Primary School, where she takes after her Dad in liking art and design. Gassan says 'I can't do what I dream, but maybe my kids can achieve their dreams'.

Well, Gassan may not be achieving everything he has dreamed of in life, but his work speaks directly of the power of the imagination and of the turbulence life can contain. Gassan has just completed the MA in Future Arts at Teesside University, graduating with Distinction, and being awarded the Graduate Student International Academy prize. His exhibition at the end of the first year was themed around Leonardo da Vinci's flying machines and the powerful flight of the imagination, it was entitled 'Dream migration'; his final exhibition speaks of being uprooted, of turbulence, but also of new life and unexpected new growth. This collection is called 'Dreamlands – air to earth'; quite an elemental thing going on!

Many people have reacted strongly and positively to Gassan's work and are keen to see him establish himself as an artist here, and get the recognition his talents deserve. Let's hope we see that happen, and I am one of many people looking forward to seeing what fantastic work Gassan does next.



Rowena Sommerville
Director, TVA





Inclusion



When I first received an invitation to a Sufi event from Adeel Saeed Chishti, a young Qawwali singer whom I had been mentoring, I was a bit ambivalent I must confess. Was it going to be a religious evening? Would I enjoy myself? Well, I thought I would give it a go; in my youth I had attended Koranic school, so I thought I would know how to conduct myself, even if it wasn't that enjoyable.....

Sufi nights are important in Moslem society – education takes place at both a religious and a social level. Poetry and singing are used to educate the mass of people, in Arabic, Urdu and English; symbolism is used to pass on messages to the crowd. The role of the audience is to listen, to be involved, to be improved. These are admirable aims, but did I really want to be improved? However, as soon as the music started, I was struck by the rhythm track; the music resembled something I had heard before – unbelievably, that was reggae! Immediately I was certainly involved and improved!

Adeel and his brother Waheed Chishti, the leader of the Pakistani band, opened a new horizon for me; I was hearing, enjoying and appreciating music from a new continent. Since then my thoughts are – why don't we create a new fusion – African, Reggae and Sufi musicians working together, forging new musical routes. Maybe we can even start this revolution in Teesside.....

I really thank Adeel and his wife Amina for organising this event, for inviting me, and for opening up a whole new avenue of music to me – read on for the next instalment!



Maurice Dezou
Refugee Arts Worker



Education

Celebrations

Congratulations to the second group of Risky Biz for achieving their Bronze Arts Awards – Brian Wise, moderator, commented on the high standard of the portfolios.

The group have been working with artists Shirley Wells & Nicola Parkin, creative writer Laura Degnan, dancer Michael Sogbetun and photographer Kev Howard to create their own works of art and reflect on the themes of past, present and future. Rowena also enjoyed a creative session learning how to make badges, thanks to Helana completing her Part D Arts Apprenticeship by sharing her new found skills. Rowena has been proudly displaying her certificate of achievement on her desk. We'll be celebrating in style at mima in December, so thanks to them for hosting this event again and to Comic Relief for funding the project.

Enjoy some of the creative writing (done in just two sessions!) by the young people later.

Funding News

As always, it's a mixed bag – some good, some bad. I'm very sad to report that we weren't successful with our application to develop our work with Teenage Mums in Hartlepool, which is such a shame. Our young people are so ready to work on performing live and working towards their Bronze Arts Awards; but we're not giving up, and as ever, will keep searching for alternative funding for this.

On a happier note, as Rowena mentioned earlier, we were successful with the application to the J Paul Getty Jnr Charitable Trust for the Moving On project, which is wonderful news. I'll be project managing this, and am really looking forward to getting started.

Education



Arts Award

As well as the successes of young people achieving Arts Awards, it's been a busy time with Arts Award training recently; I delivered 3 in-house training sessions in one week alone, and was lucky on one of them to be joined by experienced Adviser Nicola Parkin to co-deliver with me. Nicola has delivered Arts Award with so many different young people; always effectively and always to a high standard, and she and her broken leg certainly added to the training – thanks Nic.

We've supported quite a number of young people to achieve their Arts Awards now (see more on AA from Tim) and we have so many positive comments from moderators, that we've decided to display the moderation sheets in the office; sharing the joy, instead of them being locked away in a cupboard. I can definitely recommend doing it - it's so re-affirming to read them on the wall and is a great reminder in low times that we really do offer great art for young people who probably wouldn't get the opportunity otherwise, and who then go on to be artists, audiences and consumers of the future.

As a Legacy Support Programme from Creative Partnerships, we'll be working with some schools to support them with embedding Arts Award into their school.

Artsmark

Rowena and I are the Artsmark Trainers for the Tees Valley during Round 12, and have delivered a couple of training seminars for schools recently. It's great to see Arts Award as a new criterion for Artsmark, and the emphasis on qualitative as well as quantitative information – that focus on quality and development and progression in the arts is I'm sure, one we all share.

We've also been successful in becoming Artsmark Assessors, and look forward to further training on that shortly.

My future

*My future will celebrate
With deafening Catherine wheels
It will dance until the dawn
Drags it to its dreams*

*My future smells like a meadow
It tastes as sweet as
Jelly tots
And listens to punk and rock*

*My future loves to achieve
It enjoys playing
With exotic creatures
And may even own a farm*

Coral

Education

Poem One

*Once I had many friends
Now they have all gone
Then one day I will meet them in heaven with all the angels*

Helana

Future Haiku 2

*My future is full
Of flashing lights, a tiny
Seed, nurtured to grow*

Chloe

My future

*My future flutters in the sky
It has a loving pattern in blue, pink, black and red
It likes the sun; the wind and rain make it sad
It wants it to be sunny all the time*

*If you see it, it will smile at you
It might land on your shoulder and whisper nice things.*

Nicole

Haiku Three

*Engaged, married, wife
Children playing in the park
Happy future – mine*

Ashley

My future

*An expanse of blue,
Never ending colour,
Nice memories too.*

Sophie



Jane Gray
Education Officer



Heritage & Environment



It always baffles me how quickly time seems to pass, as we now find ourselves with short daylight hours and ever increasingly cold and naff weather upon us. Where has the last year gone? It doesn't seem long ago that I was gearing up for another set of Green TV residencies, and now they have all finished!

Now we are nearing the end of Green TV (the conference in June 2012 will come around pretty quick I'm sure), I can reflect a bit more on the project and conclude that it has been a rip roaring success. It has been good on many, many levels and we feel that we have made an extremely good case for delivering environmental learning and engagement through the arts (the evaluation reports from both year one & two will highlight this).

Another very valuable thing which has emerged from this project is the strength of the partnerships with the Tees Valley Wildlife Trust, RSPB, Darlington Parks & Countryside Team, Teesmouth Field Centre and Tees Archaeology. It has been an absolute pleasure to work with these organisations, to learn so much from them about what wonders we have in the Tees Valley (yes we do!), and to be of some benefit in helping them achieve their great aims of environmental awareness, engagement, enjoyment and conservation.

Another delightful outcome of these great partnerships is the way their staff have taken on board and embraced the use of the arts and creative means to deliver their work and messages. It would be doing them a disservice to say this was completely unexpected, as it was anticipated that they would, but the extent and scale of this acceptance really warms my cockles! The wildlife personnel have started to really challenge me (and the artists) in ways that I think has surprised them. Not wanting to blow our own trumpet, but I feel this is more proof that Green TV has worked!



Heritage & Environment

And on the back of Green TV and these strong partnerships, three possible similar scale projects have emerged, and TVA are in the process of working these up to applications to the HLF. So interesting times ahead, as always!

“ One of the most positive outcomes of the project was seeing young people taking ownership of places and developing a real sense of curiosity about their natural environment ”

S. Cooper, Artist working with Golden Flatts Primary School

“ Working with a different artist has enabled me to see Coatham Marsh through an alternative perspective. The artist brought with her a slightly different technique to what I use and I will use these ideas in the future. ”

S. Ashton, People & Wildlife Manager, Tees Valley Wildlife Trust

“ I have had the most brilliant time with Green TV, it has made me think about nature more. ”

Karla, Y5 pupil, Zetland Primary School

“ I enjoyed everything because everything was so new to me. Especially the big massive spider, Cinnabar moth and the European Pine Saw fly larvae do a dance when you come near them. ”

Alanis, Y3, Gurney Pease Primary School

“ All the pupils enjoyed Green TV especially pupils that find traditional classroom work challenging – behaviour was more positive and they were more engaged. ”

J. Teasdale, Teaching Assistant, Zetland Primary

“ The children enjoyed Green TV because it allowed for multiple intelligences to come into play. It was scientific, hands-on, geographic, artistic and historic. The participants had compelling learning experiences every day of the week. ”

I. Lightfoot, Teacher, Macmillan Academy



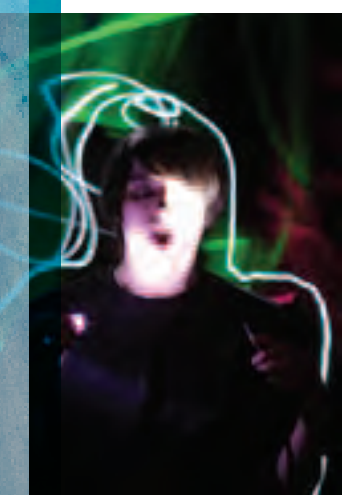
Joe Dunne

Heritage & Environment Officer





The stART Project



I am writing this article in a state of limbo (which feels more like purgatory at times!). stART has stalled; that is to say there are no cohorts underway at present and potential opportunities have not yet manifested themselves into actual money! So I am writing a funding bid to Reaching Communities (Big Lottery Fund) which will, if successful, (prayers and offerings to the Great Funding Spirit) enable stART to run for three years.

StART is needed now more than ever. I have said this before on more than one occasion and each time I meant it (man!). stART is a vital intervention for vulnerable and disengaged young people and is needed more and more because of Middlesbrough's increasingly bleak situation: highest unemployment rate, the least resilient economy in England, highest rate of child poverty in the north east. I'll stop there before I get too depressed; safe to say that it's an extremely challenging time for young people in the UK and it doesn't get much tougher than here in Teesside.

Ok so I've made my case, let's all cross our collective fingers and hope that this genuinely deserving project is recognised as exactly that and that stART's value is valued, oh yeah, and that the project receives not just praise but financial support.

On another note I've been asked to contribute to a new blog space on the Arts Award website (in the test stages at the moment). The blog will be for Arts Award advisers to share personal experiences of delivering the award: challenges, new approaches and new ideas. I look forward to contributing and am interested in what other advisors have to say; let's hope that the Great Funding Spirit smiles on us so that I have a project to blog about!



Tim Coyte
Projects Officer

Simon Says...

In the lead up to our next newsletter where we will be marking our 30th anniversary, I am continuing from the last newsletter where I looked back at events at this time of year over the years :-

5 Years ago (Winter 2006):

TVA had just welcomed 5 new apprentices for the Tees Valley Higher Apprenticeship in Arts Management Scheme recruited from 140 applications received from as far afield as New York City.

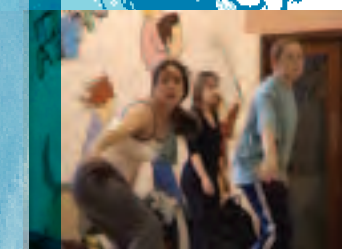
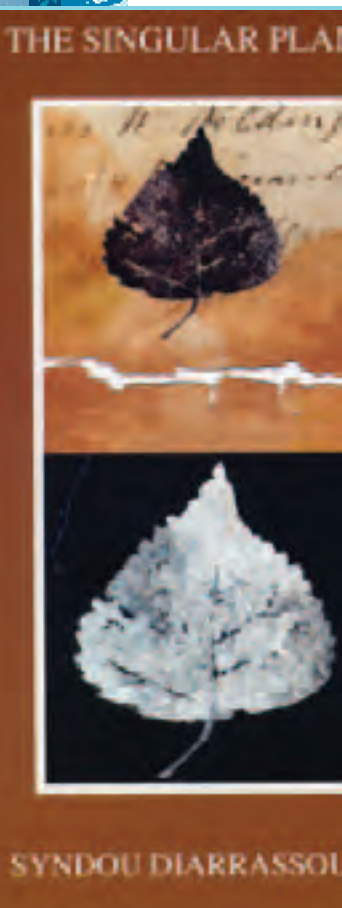
On a sadder note, Syndou Diarrassouba, the Liberian refugee asylum seeker whose lovely poetry had been published by Mudfog and was garnering much praise, was in fear of detention and eventual deportation. I am pleased to report that 5 years down the line, Syndou was finally granted permission to stay in the country this year.

The culmination of an innovative youth project was showcased at Stockton's Arc at the end of September. Fish Supper was an engaging, creative and educational project designed to take young people through a process that would allow them to learn skills and put them into practice as part of a large scale event, funded through the Connexions Kick Start Programme and run by Tees Valley Arts and Twister Arts (Mike McGrother). 24 young people from Stockton took part in a three week programme of training in the lead up to the event including Fishing and Cooking; Healthy Catering; Film and Photography; DJ'ing and MC'ing and technical event skills, (lighting, sound and staging). The young people had inspirational day trips including sea fishing, visiting the IMAX Theatre at the National Museum of Film & Photography in Bradford and the catering group visited Jamie Oliver's Fifteen restaurant in London. The project was celebrated at the Arc in Stockton on Friday 29th September and featured young people performing, award giving and The Wildcats of Kilkenny brought the whole thing together.

10 years ago (Winter 2001):

Caliban: Seen & Heard. An exhibition of youth arts held in The Main Hall of The University of Teesside in November 2001. The work had been developed as part of the Seen & Heard Social Inclusion Programme, and provided a focal point for four projects managed through The Word Foundation to be showcased and celebrated. The launch included DJs and live music from two local bands.

Bodytalk, a dance group of profoundly deaf children, worked with Middlesbrough Youth Dance, under the guidance of Tees Dance Initiative to develop a dance work that looked at issues of integration and communication. The resulting moving dance piece "Breaking the Silence" was performed at Arc as part of a Youth Dance Forum



123 years on through the time an old whitish road with old street lamps
I have not a lot of memories,
walking walking loads of miles, hanging bells against with a spinning car about



Simon Says...



15 years ago (Winter 1996):

Logos, a one day conference on text in public art took place in December 1996 at the Hospitality Inn (now The Thistle), Middlesbrough. The conference brought together literature workers, public art project managers, writers and artists, to discuss the opportunities text brings to a public art project. Cleveland Arts' Literature Development Worker Mark Robinson and later Executive Director of Arts Council England North East gave a presentation at a Poetry conference in Salzburg, Austria entitled "Teesside: Building a literary culture".

20 years ago (Winter 1991):

Sculptor Antony Holloway had successfully completed a major commission to make a sculptural arch and seating for Easerside Primary School, Middlesbrough. Twenty years down the line Easerside Primary have been one of the host schools taking part in the Green TV project.

Indian artist Vivan Sundaram and Polish artist Hanna Luczak had been selected as visiting artists on the Riverscape project exploring the River Tees whilst British artist Graham Crowley had produced many drawings during residencies in Langbaugh (now Redcar & Cleveland), Hartlepool and Stockton and would finish his residency at Middlesbrough Art Gallery.

Jane Margrave completed a large scale interior mural for Physiotherapy Department of North Tees Hospital.

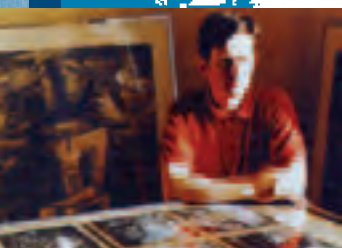
25 years ago (Autumn 1986)

Tees Valley Arts arranged printmaking workshops at the Gray Art Gallery and Museum, Hartlepool to accompany the exhibition "Prints by Manet".

Now on to newer things and if you haven't seen TVA's website recently please take a look because it has just had a fantastic redesign by the lovely people of Proportion Marketing. We think it looks great but do let us know your thoughts – www.teesvalleyarts.org.uk

Simon Smith

Communications Officer





TVA can work with you to plan a programme of creative activities, work up a budget, write funding applications, find suitable artists, and then manage the project both artistically and administratively. If you have an idea that you would like to discuss, please contact us:



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