

July – September 2004
news



projects2004

gallery TS1

Gallery TS1

Middlesbrough's town centre hosted a creative, funky, open air gallery in August when Gallery TS1 landed.

Gallery TS1 is an arts apprenticeship scheme for young people that ran throughout most of the summer holiday period. The idea was developed by Middlesbrough Council's Cultural Services based on a project initiated in Chicago and developed in Birmingham. The project broadly aims to motivate and inspire young people through cutting-edge creative arts opportunities, developing skills, revealing talent and building self-confidence through training and 'work type' experience. Many of the 25 participants were recruited via the government's e2e scheme – which engages young people in activities in order to develop employment potential and confidence.

In a specially created, visible town centre location, participants attended training sessions to learn specific, professional / commercial arts and crafts skills that enabled them to create high quality arts items for display and sale in an on-site shop.

Participants were able to choose from six projects within which they learned specific crafts and skills. Projects were led by professional artists and included: textiles – including fashion and home design items; digital technology; print work; framing; 3D construction; jewellery making; chocolate sculpting and customised, limited edition skateboards.

Gallery TS1 was funded via **tees valley arts'** European funded project In:volve, and Middlesbrough Borough Council's Community Cohesion Fund.

Training workshops took place in a specially created 'gallery and workshop' site housed timetabled sessions for public viewing of 'work in progress' and opportunities to speak with both trainees and artists.

The Gallery TS1 team also visited youth centres throughout Middlesbrough in order that the young apprentice team could share their experience with their peers. All items produced in the workshops were then sold in the on-site gallery shop.



Headland Young Parents Creative Writing Project

This project has now completed its second series of workshops based at the Headland Library in Hartlepool. Two artists Bob Beagrie and Adrian Moule have been working either together or individually along side project manager Moira O'Neill. The participants have been young mothers and their children who live on the Headland in Hartlepool. Each session has provided the opportunity for the women to work with their children and also as there is a crèche provided they could work alone if they wished to. The sessions have incorporated story telling / sharing, creative writing, illustrative techniques and photography and have encouraged the women to develop their own creative writing and storytelling abilities, to share the results with the rest of the group and to produce pieces for exhibition. The group have been involved in exhibiting their work both in the Borough Hall on the Headland and also in the central Library in Hartlepool.

In addition to producing the artwork they were involved in setting up and designing the exhibitions themselves. The exhibitions were featured in both the Hartlepool Mail and the North Hartlepool Partnership publications. In more recent weeks both the women and their children have been developing children's stories illustrating them together.

The next series of workshops are due to take place over the summer holidays and the group has requested longer sessions during the day rather than on an evening. These are to take place in the Borough Hall on the Headland. The group are keen to be involved in the ECO festival, which takes place on the Town Moor in September and will be working on projects associated with that.





SYMO

Two short films have been produced in the last three months. Both have young disabled people as their focus, but are very different in approach. 'The Family Matters' is an exploration of how having disabled parents affects children. A SYMO member with MS gives us a unique insight into his life and what results is a 'warts and all' portrayal which shows, sometimes painfully, how relationships can be strained, how children can feel they miss out when their parents can't play 'bendy-down games' and how, despite those hurdles, family bonds can endure and strengthen.



'Transition Matters' is a documentary which looks at the choices available to young people with learning difficulties who are moving from one stage of education into another or into employment or day service provision. Through interviews with students and teachers, we can discern that the provision which is available is limited and that some young people return to the safety of the Special School after having frustrating and difficult experiences in further education or employment. The most valuable aspect of the 'Transition Matters' project, though was that SYMO was able to form a relationship with young disabled people who were interested in making films about their lives and experiences. SYMO is seeking to attract new people and the experiences of those leaving school today are vastly different to those of disabled people leaving school even ten years ago.



In addition to these projects, we have learnt that the film we produced last year, 'Killer Cure', has been selected for screening at the second Moscow Disability Film Festival. This is great news, as there were entries from all over the world and it's fantastic that we should be among the few selected. Discussions have been held about the creation of a SYMO website – watch this cyberspace!

A Place to Call Home

The Social Futures Institute at the University of Teesside recently hosted a two-day conference – 'A Place To Call Home' – looking at issues of location, dislocation, regeneration, exclusion, etc, etc. Light relief and creativity of a non-academic kind was provided by **tees valley arts**, mostly through the appropriately named You Are Here project. On the first day of the conference, Adrian Moule created a Mandala in the foyer of the Centuria Building, and eventually managed to get some sociologists to live a little and join in, and Gassan Mohammed exhibited some beautiful wire sculptures. Then the Diaspora group performed the rainbow piece to great acclaim.

On the evening of the second day (all sounds quite biblical...), Rowena Sommerville, Project Co-ordinator spoke about the You are Here project and how it had come about, then we premiered the 'Safe Havens' film - looking at issues of refuge with and for Key Stage 2 children - as an introduction to their keynote speaker, John McCarthy. John was absolutely inspirational, which made his praise for the film and its intentions doubly welcome.

Thanks to Tony Chapman, Director of the Institute and conference organiser, for having the vision to include us.



Roaring Mouse

The group have been working very hard recently on a number of projects. In association with Carpet Films and Hartlepool Social Services Department, we have been developing a new and revolutionary method of consultation with people with learning difficulties. A trial DVD has been produced, entitled, 'Accommodation: where we live'. The concept is that of bringing the mountain to Mohammed. It has been proved that people are not engaged by paper-based methods of consultation and that a true picture of their needs and desires is not gained this way. In order for them to make informed choices they can be shown footage of, for example, various types of accommodation available and choose which they think they would prefer. Most people watch television and many can operate a DVD remote control or a computer mouse.

This can put the process literally in their hands. Carpet Films have produced a trial version which is visually appealing, accessible and a good representation of what we may be able to achieve with a larger and more comprehensive project.

Early trials with groups of people with learning difficulties indicate that it could be extremely useful, and we have learned a lot from this stage of the project. Funding is being sought to expand the accommodation DVD and also to move into other areas such as education, employment, relationships etc. the DVD was presented at a very successful event, 'The Mice Will Play', which was attended by people from the Social Services Department and also by Nigel Devine from Paradigm UK, a leading national organisation which promotes new methods of involving people with learning difficulties in the decisions which affect them.

Some of the Mice have been learning how to be workshop leaders. They were invited to Hexham ATC recently to perform 'I'm not That Innocent' and to run a drama workshop. Much was learned from that visit, and plans are ongoing to develop this activity within the group.

refugee**week**

the**world** is in this room

The "Bard of Barnsley" Ian McMillan spent a week working with Refugees and Asylum Seekers across Teesside. Below is a poem he wrote whilst at the North East Refugee Service offices in Middlesbrough.

I wrote this sitting in the reception area in the Centre on a warm Monday morning. What struck me first was all the languages being spoken, echoing round the room. I listened to the staff trying their best to help, asking if there was more they could do. People came and went, clutching pieces of paper; phones rang, the traffic outside was noisy. In the middle of all this a little baby (a month old, I found out later) slept, dreaming, moving his arms and legs, sucking at something imaginary. The first line came to me, and then the ideas and the lines flowed...



The world is in this room,
And all the languages are dancing.

And the baby is sleeping,
Dreaming of a new world;
Waving in his sleep
Like someone waving from the deck of a ship.

Is there any way we can help you ?
Is there any more we can do for you ?
You need to come back tomorrow.
We all need to come back tomorrow...

And the baby is sleeping
Dreaming of a new world;
Running in his sleep
Like someone running somewhere lovely.

And the people in this room
Are concentrating on the smallest detail
Of print on a letter
Or the pattern on a table...

And the baby is sleeping
Dreaming of a new world;
He's still now,
The stillness of waiting...

And the world is in this room
And all the languages are dancing
And everyone is here to help
And the baby is awake

you**are** here

You are here, now. Look:
You are here. You are pointing
To the map, and your finger
Is tracing the route you took

To be here, now. Look:
You were there. You were crying
In the dark as the engine
Groaned its way across the map

To be here, now. Look:
New is here. New is pointing
At you on the street and
You are gasping at the risks you took.

You. Here. Now. Look:
Listen, we are listening
As you unfold the map of your world
And you begin to sing.

You are here.
I am here.
We are here.
All singing.

Education Through the Arts in Science and Industry (EASI)

The Artists in Residence in Science (AiRiS) pilot projects have proved so successful a new programme has been established: Education through the Arts in Science and Industry (EASI). The E.A.S.I. project placed two artists in Kirkleatham Hall Special School for one week of full-day workshops. A dramatist and set designer worked closely with two groups of children and the school staff, to create a performance piece based upon sea life and pond life. It looked at different aspects of the science curriculum, focussing on specific knowledge requirements and key words. The subject of transition underpinned this theme, following the children's move to the next stage in their schooling - key stage two to key stage three. The project was documented with photographs and a school journal. The three performances were a great success.

"Both teachers and support staff were amazed at the hitherto undiscovered abilities some pupils displayed in response to drama and the dramatist".

Lesley Dixon, science co-ordinator, Kirkleatham Hall School.

Funding from the Arts Council's Grants for the Arts will support the implementation of the E.A.S.I. Special Schools Project in a further two schools. Priory Woods School has chosen the Human Skeleton - movement and structure, as the curriculum subject to be explored with a sculptor and dramatist over ten weekly sessions; whilst Abbey Hill Technology College is taking a week of full-day sessions to focus upon sound and music.

The Video Project at St Michael's School, Billingham, based on the pupils reflections of their visit to an industrial chemical site in Seal Sands has been successfully completed. The final editing process is underway and the completed DVD will be distributed to the school and the funders.

Professional development for teachers and artists will be held in November with a series of INSET days based on the EASI programme. A follow up twilight session will be offered to interested teachers to expand the training in their school's science department. It will be based upon the teaching manual created in the earlier AiRiS projects.



Local Education Authorities

Darlington Local Education Authority has contributed funds, joining the four other boroughs (Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Stockton, Redcar & Cleveland) in supporting our work in education. The Arts Council will match fund this to help begin our project development.

Bioanimations

The Bioanimations Project took place in three primary schools in the Tees Valley, with each school selecting an aspect of the key stage two Biology curriculum to be developed into an animated film focussing on specific knowledge requirements and key words. Writer Helen Rennie developed a text with children which was then recorded as a narration by animator Chris Kent who went on to illustrate the text using children's artwork. The films are now in the editing process and will be used by the schools as a teaching resource when teaching the topics in the future.

EIGHT

The Eight Project reached its conclusion on Wednesday 14th July with the final Platform Event at Eston City Learning Centre. The project placed eight artists in nine schools across the Tees Valley Region, with the aim of developing relationships between schools and artists. Each term artists led INSET Training Sessions enabling contact staff to continue work between artist led sessions.

The event at Eston CLC was the last of three Platform Events, which took place at the end of each term. Artwork was exhibited demonstrating how participating children have been involved in an engaging learning experience with a high level of skill and expression evident in their work. Musical performances from two groups were both atmospheric and joyful, with children relishing the opportunity to share their newfound musical skills. An innovative animation was shown, demonstrating a high level of creativity and inventiveness from participating children. Teachers, children, parents and artists were given the opportunity to share their experiences, and try each other's artforms through taster workshops as well as viewing the work and performances.



The Muse programme: professional development for teachers

As part of the Creative Partnerships Tees Valley Programme (CPTV) **tees valley arts** is delivering stage two of a creative programme for staff across CPTV schools, called MUSE. The first two MUSE days were successfully completed in March. Following the success of the courses we are now opening the programme to all schools in the Tees Valley.

During March and September 2004, through training and consultation, schools will be provided with a series of opportunities to contribute to the development of creative skills amongst staff, working alongside some of the regions most experienced arts practitioners. The courses are open primarily to teachers within each school but may also accommodate support staff and governors.

All of the courses come together for two full days in September at Eston City Learning Centre and Darlington Arts Centre. Each will include practical workshops, consultation and discussion. All of the courses are funded through the CPTV programme - there is no charge for participation.

Art:works

The Art:works programme for the next academic year has been launched to all the schools in the Tees Valley with a new information leaflet designed by Ripe Design. The response has been excellent.

Art:works arranged a week of arts activities at Captain Cook Primary School. From Monday 14th to Friday 18th June 2004 children explored the theme of "clowning around" with circus skills workshops. Illustrator Chris O'Neill made banners with children from the school exploring the theme with cartoon style drawings and actor Leslie Simpson taught comedy slapstick movements culminating in performances at the Summer Fair on Friday. Musician Dominic Nelson-Ashley was also involved leading creative music making workshops with music technology techniques. The arts week was very successful receiving coverage in the local press.

Art:works is currently setting up several projects for the Autumn term; Bollywood dancing at Northgate Primary, textiles projects in Rossmere School, and Galley Hill School and an animation project at Gillbrook Technical college.

Grangetown Dragon Rises from the ashes!

Grangetown Primary School played host to two Dragons who had until recently been nestling in the blast furnaces.

Twenty four children and several volunteer teachers joined artists Carl Sims, Bob Beagrie and Moira O'Neill for a series of workshops, which took place during the first week of the summer holidays.

The year five and six children developed the story around the Grangetown dragons and were involved learning dance moves based on the traditional Kung Fu 'Dragon' Dance, percussion rhythms to accompany it and the construction of two Chinese dragons. The week culminated in a performance involving all of the children and staff, a smoke machine, full lighting rig and PA! All had a great time and the school commented.

'This has been a model project, we have achieved so much more than we could have hoped for.'

Strategic development

Our organisational emphasis at **tees valley arts** over the last few months, has focused on the development of ideas towards new creative programmes that will address outreach and integration for a number of different special priority groups in the Tees Valley. Partnerships have been forged and potential funding streams identified. We will be working closely with a fundraising consultant, Clive Rawson of Training and Development Services, Saltburn, to rationalise our development and fundraising procedures and ensure that we are appropriately networked and resourced.

The office space at Melrose House is about to undergo a transformation. We intend to lighten and brighten the space, sort storage problems once and for all, and establish an informal area that will we hope be used for discussing new ideas and developing partnerships and collaborations.





tees valley arts is a cultural education agency which operates throughout the Tees Valley, to lead cultural education across the region through developing partnerships for delivering innovative creative programmes. For more information about these and other projects please contact **tees valley arts**.

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