



# Looking Out

Looking Out was a project for a group of artists who identify as learning disabled, autistic and neurodiverse. The project aimed to develop their professional creative practice as artists and curators. With a mixture of studio-based practice and on-line support, the project would result in exhibitions of new and existing work.

This is a summary of some of the activity that took place as part of this project.



## May - September 2022



Thanks to our funders for making this project possible.



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**



# May 2022 - studio begins

We started working at Lawrence's art studio in Hove. The group consisted of 7 artists, most of us met in person, one of the artists worked remotely via Zoom

We got straight into our first exhibition with Artists open houses, Devils Dyke Farm – the theme was Towards the light.

We asked artists to select to choose up to 5 images and bring them to the studio, these could be the actual artworks or works could be shown online to the rest of the group.

We discussed ideas with artists

Artists then feedback about each other's work

Some artists knew what they wanted to show, others took a longer time to decide.

As this was the first exhibition as the new Figment Arts group, we were flexible with the deadline to ensure artists felt comfortable with the work they choose.

We asked artists to give titles and information about why they choose the work they selected to show how their works relate to the theme of Towards the Light.

Some artists found it easier to talk in the group and get feedback on their work than others.

We did a mock up of the exhibition space that each artist would have at Devils Dyke Farm

Each artists used the board to try out their work

Artists were involved in discussions re where to place their work and what would work well together.

Some artists knew already how they would like to display their work



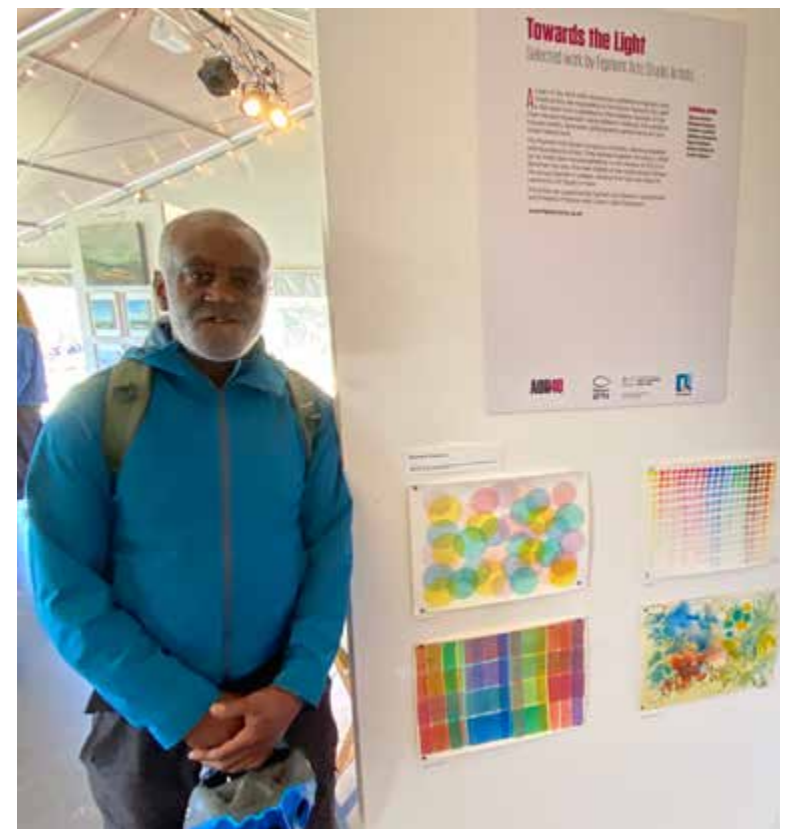


# Outcomes

Kirsty and Will made new work.

It was an opportunity for Sarah to show the photos she took with Simon Roberts, who mentored Sarah in 2019.

Kirsty sold a piece of work. Ryan sold two pieces of work.



## What worked well

This was a great opportunity for the Figment Arts artists to all show their work together for the first time and be part of a city wide visual art event which has lot of publicity.

## Challenges

We had quite short timescales to work to, this put a bit of pressure on the artists at the start of the project.





# Sarah Watson invited to be on the selection panel for Artists Open Houses

There were 220 images and artists statements and information why their work related to the theme Towards the Light. Clare made a shortlist of 50 artists and images for Sarah to look at.

Using the criteria that AOH set out, Clare put information in an easy read table with scoring and comments.

Clare met with Sarah on 5th April to go through the shortlist and to get Sarah's comments. Sarah made a further shortlist to include 30 artists.

Clare then added in Sarah's comments to the easy read document.

Clare met again with Sarah on 6th April.

Sarah used the document as a guide when we meet with Judy, Chris (Artists Open Houses Festival Directors) Nicola (Selection Panel member) and Claire (AOH Curator) on zoom on the 6th April.

## Outcomes

Sarah enjoyed being part of the selection panel.

Sarah made an important contribution to the Artists Open Houses exhibition *Towards the Light*

We went to Regency Town House to see the exhibition Artists Open Houses, 40th anniversary exhibition which Sarah was on the selection panel for. Judy Stevens and some of the other artists were there which gave Sarah, Debbie, Will and Richard the opportunity to speak to them and ask questions. We also went to see the other exhibitions including work by students in the basement. All the artists were engaged in the art and there were some good conversations.



## What worked well

Sarah's comments were listened to and Judy commented on how useful and insightful her comments were.

Good experience as it made Sarah think and comment about artworks on a different level.

At the opening of the Regency Town House exhibition, which Clare went to, Judy gave a special thank you to Sarah and said her comments were very helpful.

Nicola also thanked Sarah and Clare for supporting Sarah





# Interviews with the artists

How did you select and curate the work for the Towards the Light exhibition?

**Kirsty:** They were my first ever drawings I did on my tablet. I was working to the theme. It was so good to work in the studio and get advice and help from others.

**Sarah:** I usually work on my Ipad, I exhibited my photos, I wasn't sure which ones to show, so we worked as a group and I asked other people what they thought. I hadn't done any selecting of my work for about 2 years, so it was quite difficult.

**Debbie:** I enjoyed displaying my four paintings, it's been a long, long time since I exhibited. I'm so pleased that the lockdown is over and it's encouraging to show my work to others. We worked together and cooperated, I loved that. I like getting feedback from others.

**Will:** I had in mind to find work that would relate to the theme, what would stand out. I decided to put together a compilation of short animated clips I had made alongside a sculpture and some drawings. I wanted to show the range of things I could do. I wanted the Animation to be the centrepiece, with the sculpture and drawings around this to compliment the animation.

What benefits did you gain by being part of a larger group of AOH artists at Devils Dyke Farm marquee?

**Kirsty:** I was looking forward to it - my first exhibition, it was good to get our art out there – I sold a piece of work!

**Debbie:** I felt supported, being part of a group gave me confidence.

**Will:** It was generally nice to have lots of artists together in one space, seeing your work alongside each other was really interesting.



**Sarah:** It was a lovely place, with a lovely view so it was really nice to visit there and see my work.

Your next exhibition will be in Worthing; can you tell us a bit about the exhibition, what performances and other special events you are planning there?

**Will:** We've all been to visit the gallery, to help us visualise the space and decide what we're doing there.

**Kirsty:** My work looks different, I've moved on to working on an Ipad and it's more experimental now. I've got more confidence in using the Ipad.

**Debbie:** the theme is Looking Out, I like the theme, and the location of the gallery is good, it's an eye-catching space. For me the title is positive and about beauty and the environment.



# June 2022 - Exhibition at Colonnade House - Looking Out

Each artist has time to make new work if they want to.

Kirsty, Will, Sarah and Debbie, David and Clare visited Colonnade House on 18th May to look at space and think about what artwork they would like to show in the space and what would work well in the space.

Discussed the type of work which might be shown and what would work well in the space.

Artists brought up to 5 artworks to be discussed in the studio session relating to Looking Out theme.

David did a virtual mock up of floor plan and space at Colonnade House

Revell came along to the studio today, he has worked with David before. Revell videoed artists asking questions about their artwork and the exhibition at Colonnade House.





# Private View - Looking Out

Eleana did a performance reading a new piece of writing.

The private view was attended by 32 people including artists families, Amanda O'Reilly, Creative Director and CEO at Worthing Theatres and Museum, Gemma Curtis, Engagement Officer Worthing Museum, Terry Adams, Diversity Officer from Arts Council, Karen Simporis, Chair of Adur and Worthing, Creative commissions Trust, Tom Gilham, Trustee at Colonnade House

Visitors during the exhibition included Superstar Arts, Worthing.

I Love everything, fantastic  
work! - Hannah ü









# Kaleidoscope workshops

During the exhibition at Colonnade House, we ran two drop-in workshops for visitors to create patterns and collage utilising the giant kaleidoscope.



Really enjoyed  
the kaleidoscope!





# May 2022 - Working with Superstar Arts

Figment Arts collaborated with Superstar Arts to support a group of learning disabled and autistic participants to make visual art work inspired by the coming of Spring, using Kaleidoscopes, photography, video and mixed media visual art.

We worked with the group to visit Highdown Gardens three times, and to run three workshop sessions at their base in West Worthing.

We used a giant kaleidoscope to create abstract patterns and textures from the photos and videos that the group took.

The work was exhibited at Colonnade House, Worthing (June 13th to 26th), Neighbourhood Store, Shoreham-By-Sea (July 4th to August 3rd) and Highdown Gardens, Goring-By-Sea (planned for December 2022).



Great Fun!!  
Thanks David from  
Superstars! ☆☆☆







# Collaboration with Tanya Raabe Webber and Figment Arts



Tanya Raabe-Webber joined us to run workshops via Zoom.

Tanya sent 4 possible topics for the workshop  
David and Clare confirmed choice of 2 suggestions,  
yellow and shapes and patterns

Clare sent easy read in advance with ideas for artists  
to think about before the session.

Went round each artists who said which topic they  
had choosen and what they were going to work on.  
Tanya showed the group a transfer technique she has  
been using with Modge Podge.





# Window takeover - Neighbourhood Store

During the exhibition at Neighbourhood Store in Shoreham, we had installed a new version of the kaleidoscope for visitors to interact with. Our artists also created a design which was drawn onto the window of the shop. We also partnered with Superstar Arts to include merchandise for sale in the shop. Sales from these items has helped to raise awareness of our work and to support our projects.





# Audience development and reach

We worked with trainee digital producer Revell Dixon, who was mentored by Rosie Blackwell-Sutton. Revell helped to develop a brand new newsletter for Figment Arts and produced video content for the website and social media.



Facebook reach increased by 25% over the period, and Instagram was up by 240%. The top areas for Social Media are Brighton & Hove, followed by Worthing, then Bristol.

The Figment Arts website has had over 17,000 visitors since we started the project in May 2022.

We currently have around 40 people signed up to receive our Newsletter.

Debbie Caulfield, one of our studio artists, was featured on the website of the Creative Visual Arts Network South East.







Our Artists Open Houses exhibition and studio project was featured on ITV Meridian in May 2022.



We had a full page listing in the Artists Open Houses brochure, which has a print run of 50,000 and is distributed across Brighton & Hove.

## Thank You

We would like to thank Lawrence Art Studio for their support and fantastic space:

<https://www.lawrence.co.uk/lawrence-art-studio-courses>

Thanks to Colonnade House for hosting our exhibition:

<https://colonnadehouse.co.uk>

Thank you to Artist Open Houses for partnering with us and supporting us so much this year:

<https://aoh.org.uk>

Thank you to Superstar Arts for being brilliant collaborators:

<https://www.superstararts.com>

Thanks to Associate Artist Tanya Raabe Webber:

<https://tanyasartstudios.co.uk>

Thanks to Em and Gary at Neighbourhood Store:

<https://neighbourhoodstore.co.uk>

Thank you to Highdown Gardens for supporting our work:

<https://highdowngardens.co.uk>

Thank you to all the artists, staff, volunteers and supporters of our work! We're working hard to continue raising funds for our projects, you can find out more about what we do on our website:

[www.figmentarts.co.uk](http://www.figmentarts.co.uk)

We are very grateful for our funders who have made this project possible.



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