

TULIP CAFÉ GALLERY OPENING



From l to r: Sandra Lee-Down, Mayor E. Obasohan, Andrew Law, Androulla Symeou, Vivienne Wheeler and Jason Leskos

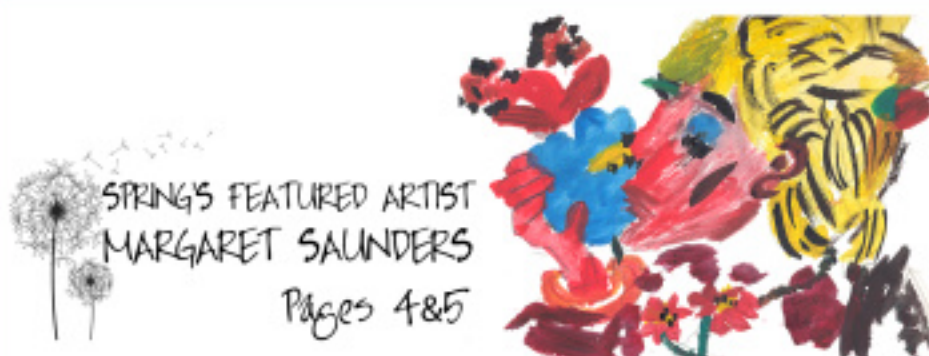
The official opening of the Tulip Café Gallery in the Town Square development in Barking took place on 12th February 2009. The café looked stunning and welcoming, enhanced by the display of art work by thinkarts members Androulla Symeou, Sandra Lee-Down and Fozia Hussein.

Thinkarts was approached by Tulip while the new Tulip Café Gallery was being built, with the opportunity for thinkarts members artwork to be displayed. Artists were selected from art seen in the annual exhibition 'Paint the Town Red' organised by thinkarts and Redbridge Concern for Mental Health, held at Ilford Library during world mental health week in October. A small curating group, led by thinkarts member Jason Leskos, hung the stunning display in time for opening just before Christmas.

Continued on page two.

Spring Edition Contents:

Page 2
Tulip Gallery Opening
 Page 3
Serpentine Exh. & Workshop
 Pages 4 & 5
Featured Artist: M. Saunders
 Page 6
Tate Modern - Finding Inspiration
 Page 7
Book & Media Festival
 Page 8
 Coming up



TULIP CAFÉ GALLERY OPENING

The artists who were invited to the opening, were delighted with this opportunity to show their art work.

Sandra Lee-Down, describes being "a self taught artist, with an interest in photography stretching back to school days, when I would develop and process the textural photographs I used to take. Alongside photography, I paint, my preferred media is acrylic, with textural additions such as sand, or polyfilla". Sandra says "Art work is a meaningful occupation, and I was encouraged to pursue it as a strategy to help me manage life's challenges. I can get completely absorbed in my art work, particularly with the technical processing. And it is helpful in sustaining well being".



Androulla Symeou has painted with acrylics, oils, and pastels over ten years. Interested in subjects from abstracts to landscapes, wildlife and animal portraits, she is a self taught artist who has exhibited locally. Androulla began painting as part of a therapeutic recovery programme run by Occupational and Art Therapists during a hospital admission. She reports that "getting into art lifted me from rock bottom, and gave me a new lease of life, boosted my confidence and hope. It connected me with life! Having art in my life has given me a boost of energy and keeps me well; it is something to get up in the morning for and keeps me going..."

The third artist, **Fozia Hussain**, currently in her last year of her Higher National Diploma at Barking College, hopes to realise her dream of going to university to do a BA Honours in Art. Her theme, reflected in her art work in the Café Gallery, is galaxy impressions as she is fascinated by the stars and the bright colours of the galaxies.



Creativity & Healthy Lifestyle

Get involved in your physical creativity, dance and movement. Why not take advantage of these local activities and get healthy as an added bonus!

The "Walk to Health" group offers weekly organised walks in the local parks across Redbridge led by qualified leaders and it's all for free. Contact 0208 708 3746 for a walks timetable.

LINE DANCING – Tuesdays

Time: 2.15-3.45pm Venue: Town Hall, High Road, Ilford
Price: £2.80/£2.70 Leisure Pass holder. Contact: 0208 708 0952

SALSAAEROBICS – Mondays & Saturdays

Times: Monday 5.45-6.30pm Saturday 9.30-10.30am
Venue: Wanstead Leisure Centre Price: £5.80/£3.20 Contact: 0208 989 1172

BARN DANCING – Thursdays

Time: 2-3.30pm Venue: St Andrews Church, St Andrews Rd, Ilford
Price: £2.80/£2.70 Leisure Pass holder. Contact: 0208 708 0952

BELLY DANCING – Mondays

Time: 1-2pm Venue: Vine Church, Ilford
Price: £3/£2.80 Leisure Pass holder. Contact: 0208 708 0952



Visit www.redbridge.gov.uk/healthy.cfm
for more info.
Or call 0208 708 3746
for a healthy lifestyles programme.

SERPENTINE EXHIBITION & WORKSHOP



During February, thinkarts again had the privilege of visiting the exhibition at the Serpentine Gallery, based on the work of various Indian artists living and working in their native country today. In what can only be described as a colourful, versatile and eye opening exhibition, we not only developed a new appreciation for Art in its different forms, but also gained more understanding of the history and current political events of India, as interpreted through the hands of the artists.

As the educational space at the gallery formed part of the exhibition, thinkarts also had the privilege of hosting our own Serpentine workshop at Thornbury Day Unit a week later. The workshop was facilitated by artists Bhajan Hunjan and Chila Burman and Serpentine Education Officer, Eleanor Farrington.



Attendees spent the afternoon creating life-size collages using points and inspired by Asian tradition and culture. It was an opportunity for thinkarts members to work collaboratively on a large project by getting to know each others', creative process, how each of us find inspiration and how to merge all of the above to form a unique and eye catching end product.

Words used by thinkarts members to describe their experience of the workshop included; 'brilliant', 'enjoyable', 'different', 'and 'playful'.



Both Bhajan and Chila (artists) also enjoyed working with thinkarts on this project and thought that the end results were 'vibrant and dynamic, with movement and colour'. Eleanor Farrington from the Serpentine had nothing but praise for the afternoon: 'It was rewarding and interesting to work collaboratively! The group exchanged ideas, processes and shared different opinions with each other throughout the session. It was thought-provoking and enjoyable to see the striking end results and hear the group's experiences of making the work.'



SPRING'S FEATURED ARTIST MARGARET SAUNDERS

In this edition of thinkarts we're delighted to be featuring thinkarts member Margaret Anne Saunders, an accomplished poet and artist. Mary-Anne, thinkarts administrator, met and explored with her what motivates and inspires her.

Margaret first discovered her love for all things creative during her early years at school. During this time, Margaret found herself realising her love for the written word and flourishing in arts & crafts lessons.

Where do?

Where do all the odd socks go?

From legs walk by on tip toe.

Socks of different colours, sizes,
don't just walk off in disguises.

Lying in a heap, poor soles without any feet.

Need washing and drying for every days feet.

Two, four, six, eight, ten,

into the wash they go again.

Round and round, up and down,

open the door, in a mound!

Quite puzzling what I found,

another sock missing not around!

The poetry Margaret writes now however differs a great deal from her early years as a budding poet. Life experiences both joyous and heart rending have enabled Margaret to compose some of her most poignant, moving and emotive work.

Margaret explained that expressing herself through her poetry has helped her to deal with some heartbreaking events that life has presented to her, including the loss of her oldest child Richard. He was born on Remembrance Day 1979 but he tragically died aged 24 when he fell from a building whilst at work. Being able to communicate her feelings through her writing and poetry has been an extremely comforting, healing and therapeutic experience.

Margaret's sense of humour has also helped her cope, enabling her to write about things that "just are" like the "Where do" poem (featured).



And what about her artwork? Margaret is passionate about wildlife and living things as well as enjoying painting and sketching still life. She is mainly self taught through books. Margaret explains *"my artwork area is my sanctuary, my world"*.

With a difficult divorce behind her and following the challenges and demands of motherhood she explains *"I feel like my maternal world is complete and I'm more settled. It's like you have to rediscover yourself and find out who you are again"*.

Margaret has certainly done that writing over 2000 poems and producing many pieces of artwork. Over 27 of her poems have been published worldwide and used on BBC Schools & Colleges.

What about her dreams for the future? She would love to publish a book containing her poetry and begin to sell some of her artwork. In Margaret's words *"it's now my time"*.

A Room to Let

A room to let, it has a comfortable bed you bet!
It has occupants they come and go at regular times.
A meal I will throw.

The wallpaper like a book, every picture tells a story.

Day and night, I held you and loved you so.

The pillows we laughed and cried on.

The carpets we curled and sat upon,
talking out your wildest dreams.

The door is always open, without you the room is bare:

A welcome mat is always there!

For one day, into a room to let, this we will have to share.



Four Pennies

Four pennies you hold them in your hand,
you hold onto them tightly.

Four new pennies shining brightly.

No bank in town can hold their interest.

In your hand, cannot be passed from shop to shop.

They would never lose their sparkle or never be out of date.

They will never devalue!

Inflation could never take their place.

They all have heads and faces.

Flip them over, laughter will flow.

The laughter from my children.

will fill a taxman's purse!

My heart is like a pocket,
into this my four pennies immerse.



Last November 'inspiration' was sought and found within the galleries of the Tate Modern. Thinkarts members were in attendance to undertake a workshop facilitated by Eden Solomon, a community group's facilitator, entitled 'Finding Inspiration'.

The workshop focused on the use of different media within art making and explained how and why particular artists have at times been motivated to use unconventional materials within their work.

Firstly, the group were introduced to a vast painting by the artist Anselm Kiefer. Through the use of handling objects such as pieces of wire, candles or copper plates the group were encouraged to make connections and offer ideas and feelings about the image. Narratives began to emerge about what might be happening in the

picture and all opinions were welcomed, however disparaging of the artist's talent!



Joseph Beuys

The work of Joseph Beuys provided more food for thought. Before being told about the artist the group were again supported in considering a large body of his work taking up one whole gallery. This work included a VW van, felt suits, jars of lard and other apparently random objects within glass cases. Again, themes emerged and were shared within the group before Eden explained how the artist's own life experiences had fundamentally influenced the particular materials used.

The last section of the workshop allowed the group to get to grips with some materials of their own as they responded to the

work of various artists on display. A good array of art materials were provided and although time was short individuals were able to get down to art making and consider the influences around them.

David Lucioni, Thinkarts member, said: "The Tate staff were really helpful and gave us interesting information on the artists. My main interest was the lovely work in the last gallery, including some by Picasso and other modern artists. This work gave me lots of ideas for my own paintings."



SPRING PHOTO COMPETITION

Now that the days are longer and the weather better, why not get out and about and send us your spring photos. Winner to be published in our next edition.

So get snapping and let us have the original by 31st May. Send to thinkarts (address on back page)

It needs to be in high resolution at least 300ppi or a printed copy 6x4 which we will scan.



PHOTO TIPS

A short series of tips to help you create photographs for thinkarts or just for the fun of it!

Storage and Image Quality

The first thing you need to do before taking any photos for the thinkarts newsletter is to go through the camera settings which is most case default to the second best compression and resolution settings for quality.

Most digital cameras allow you to reduce their resolution or increase the compression to get more images on to the memory card. However, both these will reduce quality. Unless you have a very small memory card, select the highest resolution pictures and lowest Jpeg compression settings.

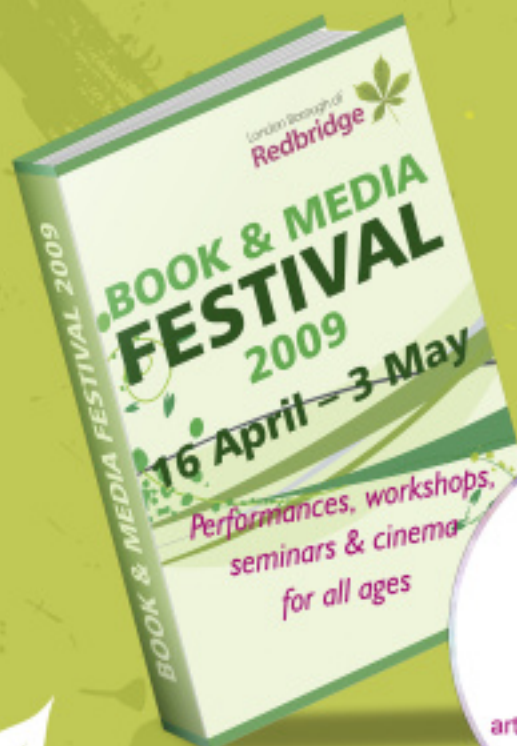
When it comes to how much resolution you need, it depends on how much detail you want to capture. More mega pixels means higher detail and bigger enlargements or crops before you the image starts to become pixelated.

Photos sent to thinkarts for use in the newsletter need to be 200 or 300 dpi (dots per inch).

Next issue: choosing a memory card and cropping your photos.

CREATIVE WRITING WORKSHOP

MANGA CLUB LAUNCH



EASTERN EDGE FILM

SHORT STORY COMPETITION

FAMILY DAY AT VALENTINES MANSION



FIT FOR 2012 SPORTS DAY

2nd July 2009
11am – 3pm

**If you are interested in helping to man the thinkarts stand
on this day for a couple of hours please contact:**

Mary-Anne on 0844 600 1218

or

email admin@thinkarts.org

thinkarts

members' galleries can be found on our
website: www.thinkarts.org

If you are a member and would like to exhibit
your artwork online please contact:
admin@thinkarts.org

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*Coming up in
the Summer Edition:*

New featured artist
Manga Comic Strip
News on Fit for 2012
Studio3 arts Redbridge Mapping Project
Competition winners