

## CELEBRATE!



Studio 3 Arts '20:20 Vision', a highly polished, vibrant and inspiring exhibition of photographs taken by a group of ThinkArts Volunteers, took place at U.E.L. (University of East London) at the end of November.

The exhibition commemorated the 20th Anniversary of Studio 3 Arts involvement in community participatory arts projects, and public artworks. ThinkArts Volunteers, Adrian, Amanda, Naheed, Jason, Julia, Linda, Maggie, Russel, Sanae, Sayuri, and Stavros, worked with Studio 3 Arts Project Manager Martin Swan in the six month project, to photograph, produce and curate the exhibition, which was very well received.

Studio 3 Arts wrote in the introduction to the exhibition: 'As a body of work the images exemplify the vision and creativity of the ThinkArts Volunteers. In their choice of images for the exhibition the group have symbolised the importance of participatory arts – individuals empowering themselves through unique and confident 'self-expression'.

ThinkArts Volunteers attended the exhibition, joining in the celebrations. The opportunities provided by the project were at times challenging and hard work, but Volunteers reported gaining in skill, experience, and confidence, and were certainly pleased with the results!

£50

Design A Logo Competition  
see inside for details

£50

## The Editor writes

Since coming into post last year I have been inspired by the creativity of the thinkarts members, and we have had some memorable creative ventures, 6 Days in a lifetime, 20:20 Vision, and Paint the Town Red are a few examples of the culmination of much individual creativity and effort. Read more about them in this issue.

This year, I hope to see us build on the work that has been going on over the past few years, and see Thinkarts grow. There are new and exciting projects in the wings, in particular the development of a public artwork on the housing development site at Goodmayes will provide great opportunities to participate, create, be involved and contribute. We will also be looking to set up a membership consultation group, and a team to work on the newsletter production.

On a more outwardly looking note, have your say and give your views on the proposed art work which will be specially commissioned for The Fourth Plinth in the north-west of Trafalgar Square, in central London. Built in 1841, the original intention was for an equestrian statue, but it was left empty for years. It has been decided keep the empty fourth plinth on Trafalgar Square in use as a rotating site for new public arts

Since 1999, when The Royal Society of Arts launched its quest to fill the empty fourth plinth, we have had some inspirational contemporary art displayed for so many to see. Rachel Whiteread's Monument (2001) and Marc Quinn's sculpture of the pregnant Alison Lapper (2005) provoked much interest. Currently, Thomas Schütte's colourful Model for a Hotel has been in place since November. There are six shortlisted contenders for the next commission, Tracey Emin, Anish Kapoor, Antony Gormley, Jeremy Deller, Bob & Roberta Smith and Yinka Shonibare. To see their artworks, and give your views, go to: <http://www.london.gov.uk/fourthplinth/>



Vivienne Wheeler



## thinkarts contacts

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POEMS BY  
**RUTH  
HILL**



Once a lady bird  
crawled onto my hand  
up my shirt  
her little legs  
tickling on my chest  
I laughed, trying to get the lady bird  
out from under my t-shirt  
I carefully let her onto my hand  
laid her carefully onto the grass  
but within minutes  
the lady bird was back  
It didn't seem to want to leave  
so I let her stay for a while  
until I said  
okay, it's time to go  
I put her on the fence  
and guess what it did?  
It opened it's wings  
and flew off into the air

**Laughter is good  
Laughter helps  
Laughter cures distress  
Laughter releases energy  
Laughter is better than crying  
Laughter helps you get through  
a stressful day in a positive way  
and in a funny way**

Feeling tired today  
you're not sure what you've done  
to make you feel so tired  
It's not as if you've been for a run  
yet you feel like you've walked for miles!  
Why are you so tired  
Tired everyday  
You're sleeping fine as well  
Yet you feel exhausted  
At half past three  
you feel like you could fall asleep  
but what's the point of that  
when you got hours  
till the day has finished  
You can't miss anything  
even if there's nothing to miss  
you'll feel  
lazy for going to sleep  
in the middle of the day  
There's no need to rush around  
There's no point in it  
If you want to go out  
later you can  
if you don't  
then you don't have to

Tick tock  
goes the clock  
At night I lay upon my bed  
everything but sleep  
is going through my head  
I listen to the clock  
I get up for a while  
I can't handle this lot  
Tick tock  
goes the clock  
Tick tock  
I listen frustrated to the ticking of the clock  
and before I know it  
I find myself dismantling the stupid clock  
and I go back to bed  
to sleep

## Paint The Town Red

To celebrate World Mental Health Week (October 2007), Redbridge Concern for Mental Health joined forces with thinkarts to create a colourful, diverse and imaginative art exhibition - Paint The Town Red - at Ilford Central Library.



Launched in 2006, our annual art exhibition is proving to be a popular event. This year we exhibited over 80 pieces of work and we had contributions from over 30 different artists. A team of volunteers set up the exhibition and created a vibrant and eye-catching display. Donald, a visitor to the library commented:

*"I enjoyed this lively and diverse exhibition which had a lot of strong character and an outgoing attitude. It is art so very different from the routine prescribed shows in the conventional mode."*

The opening of the art exhibition was coupled with a talk by Dr Nathan Abrams, a film lecturer at Bangor University, on the subject of Mental Illness and the Moving Image. Discussion explored how the way mental illness is portrayed in the media has a direct impact on the lives of people experiencing mental health problems because people learn about mental illness from what they see and hear on the television and film screen and also by what they read in the newspapers.



# CULTURAL CONVERSATIONS

Naheed Malik participated in a cultural conversations event in November 2007, she wrote:

"I was given the opportunity to participate in cultural conversations to commemorate different cultures as part of mental health week and black history month and to reflect muslim celebration of eid at the time. Anyone that knows me knows how much I love talking but even more so how much I love talking about my faith and beliefs and culture. In addition I could speak about how my interest in art has evolved since being in the mental health system. The arts provides an outlet through which to express ourselves, and allow our cultural identity to take centre stage, and in expressing myself I found a way of letting people know who I was, where I came from, and the identity that has developed across cultures. 'cultural conversations' for me represents a pathway to increase our understanding of others and ourselves, breaking down individual cultural barriers that might be preventing us from living together in harmony".

El Nou (Light)



Islamic art often depicts things of nature as below (my own piece) but often geometrical designs that are inspired from nature's beauty.



In her presentation she gave an introduction, outlined the essentials of Islamic art, and went on to present these in more detail. Here we reproduce Naheed's introduction and outline of the essentials of Islamic art:

## Introduction to Islamic art

Islamic art is not restricted to religious work only and the term "Islamic" refers to more artistic traditions in Islamic culture, not just religion. Islamic art is vibrant and distinctive. Its aesthetic appeal transcends time and space, and differences in language and culture. Some common features exist in all Islamic art regardless of country or time. Though strong regional characteristics, and influences from other cultures are also visible.

## The essentials of Islamic art

Includes all Muslim art, not just explicitly religious art

Islamic art seeks to portray the meaning and essence of things, rather than just their physical form

Crafts and decorative arts are regarded as having full art status

Painting and sculpture are not thought of as the noblest forms of art

Calligraphy is a major art-form

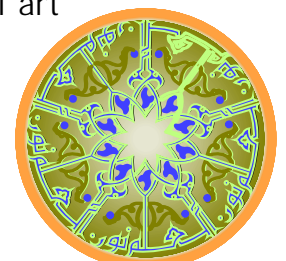
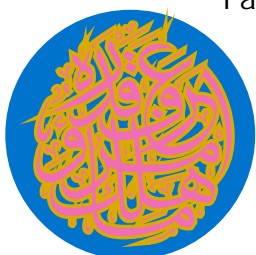
Writing has high status in Islam

Writing is a significant decoration for objects and buildings

Books are a major art-form

Geometry and patterns are important

People do not appear in specifically religious art



Naheed observed in her presentation "I have been influenced by Islamic Art which is reflected in my work as it tends either to be abstract pattern or design with religious spiritual meaning in its interpretations.

## 6 Days in a Lifetime

6 Days in a Lifetime, a thought provoking photography exhibition, was opened by the Deputy Mayor, London Borough of Waltham Forest, at the Vestry House Museum in mid December. The Deputy Mayor, Cllr Sheila Smith-Pryor, viewed the exhibition, talking with project participants about their work.

This exciting project led by volunteer Jason Kelvin, was supported by Thinkarts, and Waltham Forest Thinkarts Link worker Matt Lewis. In the introduction for the exhibition, Jason noted "This project was born out of a desire for individuals experiencing mental health problems to learn about the medium of photography and how it can be used as a powerful tool for self-expression... The project involved 12 participants from various areas of mental health and cultural backgrounds to stick to a 6 week schedule.



At 1pm on a Thursday, for 6 weeks, participants were asked to photograph their environment, wherever they had found themselves at that time.



They were free to capture whatever it was that motivated them, whether it be a self portrait, a garden, an event, or even the sky. Anything they felt applied to them right there and then...

In this way a visual diary was created over the six weeks and participants could compare what they were doing at that time...This was an opportunity for each photographer to express themselves freely, to explore the medium of photography as a tool for creative visual communication, and most importantly to have some fun and enjoyment"

### Newsletter production team plans revitalised!

Thinkarts plans for establishing a small editorial and production team of volunteers to coordinate and produce the newsletter are being revitalised. Editor, Vivienne Wheeler, says " If you are interested in the arts, and contributing to magazine publishing or new media, this is an opportunity to gain skills and experience"

An editorial style book and skills development package have been commissioned, and we are establishing a group, to be involved in the production of the newsletter. If you have existing skills (technical, written, photographic, visual etc) or would like to develop your interest, please contact me:

via: [admin@thinkarts.org](mailto:admin@thinkarts.org)

## Design A Logo Competition

Thinkarts would like to invite you to design a logo which will be used in all correspondence for two services which are merging together.



OT Day Services and Voluntary Services will be merging together, also included in this service will be Vocational Opportunities.

The new Service will be called

**" The Redbridge Progress Team "**

A new eye catching, recognisable logo is needed

THE CURRENT LOGO IS



Can you help?

### Background

This new merged service will provide therapeutic groups, vocational advice, voluntary opportunities and work experience for service users in Redbridge to promote independence and recovery. There will also be opportunities for mainstream volunteering and work experience and the service has a fundraising role. The types of groups include Anger Management, Anxiety Management, Self-esteem, Sports, Tai Chi, Community Clubs, Social /activity groups on some of the wards, Allotment Group and Relaxation. The service also runs the Internet Cafe and the Breakfast Bar.

**Entries must be in by Friday 28th March 2008**

Please send your entry to:  
Vivienne Wheeler, OT & Art Therapy Dept,  
Goodmayes Hospital, Barley Lane, Goodmayes IG3 8XJ  
Or email to [Mary-Anne.Cable@nelmht.nhs.uk](mailto:Mary-Anne.Cable@nelmht.nhs.uk)

## New Mental Health Directory

A thousand copies of the new Waltham Forest Mental Health Directory are soon to be rolling off the presses and all the artwork for this important resource has been completed by a Thinkarts member.

The producers of this third edition of the directory wanted a fresh and interesting image for the cover that showed a local scene and also got the message across that mental health problems can affect anyone.

The Thinkarts member took some photographs of people shopping in Walthamstow market and then carried out some stunning graphic work to add colour and detail to the picture.

Several versions were produced and then one chosen for the cover. This will now be distributed across the borough to users of services and staff with one thousand hard copies and also two hundred CD Roms.

The directory is also going to be on NELMHT's website and Waltham Forest Primary Care Trust's website.

Mark Weston who helped put the directory together said "we are delighted with the end result which shows a recognisable local scene and makes this third edition of the directory so distinct from the previous two

If people would like to know more about the directory and how to reserve a copy then they can contact Mark Weston on 0844 600 1271 or email him on [markweston@nelmht.nhs.uk](mailto:markweston@nelmht.nhs.uk)

### 'Hope And Hopeless'

After receiving a flyer forwarded from Thinkarts titled M.A.D.art - (Making a Difference) from MIND, the ladies of the Creative Therapies Workshop at Hornchurch CMHT created a wonderful poster depicting their journey through mental health to enter into the London installation event.

The process of creating this poster generated great enthusiasm, with everyone contributing and discussing ideas of how they perceived their mental illness, their coping strategies and their way of life.

Finally an idea was agreed, to create a fabric and paper collage titled Hope and Hopeless. It was to depict a person, looking out through a window, half of the window showed a bright sunny day, with a tidy garden in full bloom with butterflies flying around the flowers. The other half was a grey miserable day, there were a few leaves left on the tree and people were hurrying by with their umbrellas up because of the rain. The ladies agreed that sometimes you look out and feel that the world is bright and inviting, on other days it is grey and miserable and you do not want to join it. They all agreed that because of their mental health sometimes they do not want to go outside at all regardless of what is out there.



Some group members visited Dray Walk Gallery in Brick Lane, to see their 'masterpiece' with Selina Farmer and Diane Paramor, who had supported the project. They reported having an entertaining and thought provoking afternoon. Reported by Dianne Paramor OT, Hornchurch CMHT, Thinkarts Link worker