

The return of Converge



Drama at Leeds University

After a successful pilot in early 2017, Converge is returning to Leeds to offer free arts education courses to people who have experienced mental health difficulties.

Converge is a collaboration between health services and the major universities and colleges in Leeds. The idea is to give everyone the opportunity to learn new skills in a safe environment, exploring self expression, creativity and communication.

"When you enrol with Converge you become a student," says Karen Pearse, the Programme Manager. "You're part of a community and you get access to all the most up-to-date equipment – for free!"

Courses include Singing, Song Writing, Sports Journalism, Drama, and Music Production. All courses start in early 2018, so sign up now. Please see over the page for all the details.

Also in this issue: Love Arts 2017 Review



Love Arts Festival 2017 took place over two weeks in October and was a great success. Now it's all over, you can read about some of the people who took part on pages 9 -11. Thanks to photographers Mat Dale and James Clark for the wonderful images. Many thanks and WELL DONE to everyone involved in this year's festival. You're all amazing! We will return next year for more exhibition, gigs, performances, workshops, and other delights.

Converge Returns...

Converge is offering a variety of courses at different universities:

Sports Journalism at Leeds Trinity University

This course will cover the basic skills of writing sports articles at a professional level as well as looking at different techniques used for creating entertaining and informative content relating to the world of sport.

When: Wed 2-4pm
17, 24, 31 January. 7, 14, 21, 28 February

"This is a brilliant scheme, I have no idea where else I could have found something like this."

Song Writing at Leeds College of Music

Whether you are a complete beginner or experienced musician and band member this project is offered to anyone who would like to learn or develop instrumental skills and skills in songwriting as part of a band. All abilities welcome.

When: Thurs 5 - 6:30pm
25 Jan. 1, 8, 15, 22 Feb. 1, 8 March

"The self-critical voice in my head had definitely been challenged and scared away to a little distance. The feedback I have received has made my confidence blossom. I put myself forward, my critical voice back. Nowhere else could I find such a rich and supportive environment in which to develop my confidence and my drama skills."

Converge Singers at Leeds College of Music

Whether you enjoy singing for fun or you're seeking to develop your skills as a singer, or maybe you want to just try singing, come and join us and perform some famous and loved pop standards amongst a group of friendly musicians.

When: Wed 6:30 - 8:30pm
24, 31 Jan. 7, 14, 21, 28 Feb. 7, 14 March

Drama Programme at The University of Leeds

In a group setting, we will develop a step-by-step approach to building a believable setting, understanding character through improvisation and concentrating on skills such as listening, acting and reacting.

When: Tues 5:30 – 7:30pm
13, 20, 27 Feb. 6, 13, 20, 27 March. 3 April.



Drama Performance

Electronic Music Production at Leeds Beckett University

This course covers a wide range of musical styles that employ electronic technology ranging from electronic dance music through hip hop.

When: The course will take place at Leeds Beckett University, beginning in February and running for 8 weeks. Dates and times to be confirmed.

"To be able to do a course at a university gives hope for the future and what I can achieve."

To enrol by phone, for more information or to request an enrolment form call Karen Pearse on 0113 305 5800.

Enrol by post by completing the enrolment form and returning it to:

Converge, Leeds Mind, Clarence House, 11 Clarence Road, Leeds LS18 4LB.

Enrol by email by sending us your completed form to converge@leedsmind.org.uk
Download an enrolment form at: leedsmind.org.uk/converge

Sculpture Prize for Love Arts

Holmfirth based sculptor Nigel Wood raised £120 for the Love Arts Festival while exhibiting at the "Art&2017" show, which took place at York racecourse during October 2017.

Nigel, who works with drift and salvage materials to produce unique sculptural pieces, generously offered his "Just another high-wire walker" as the main prize in a raffle on his stand. The winner, Jo Jo Palmer, pictured with her new acquisition in place at her home, appears to be sharing a modest joke with the said sculpture – but Nigel assures is she was simply delighted with the way it worked in her conservatory.

There's more to follow next year as Nigel will produce a sculpture in support of 2018's Love Arts Festival theme and handwrite everyone's name onto the new piece who entered the draw – or who cares to make a minimum donation of £2 between now and next October, when the piece will be shown as part of the festival activities for 2018. More details will be available nearer the time. Even though it's likely to be quite a large sculpture, space will be limited and Nigel assures us he writes pretty big.

You can find more of Nigel's artwork at: www.aintlifewonderful.co.uk

Thanks Nigel!



East Street Arts: Creative Courses

East Street Arts Adult Learning Courses are a rolling programme of creative courses for a wide range of adults living in Leeds. East Street Arts delivers courses at different venues to specific groups as well as offering courses that are open to anyone in locations around the city. The programme is aimed at adults who would like a creative focus to improve their confidence and well-being. Courses include drawing and painting, printmaking, textiles, photography, arts and crafts, exploring specific themes, making individual work to take home, making group work to exhibit and more...

"The course is fun, enjoyable and challenging. I look forward to it each week."

"a very supportive and encouraging environment."

"I enjoyed learning, drawing and making things."

"Getting out and working with people keeps me happy."

"It is crucial to have a course like this as it impacts on many levels, it brings people together, breaks boundaries and restores some positive qualities within individuals who might be in difficult places."

"We deliver a programme of informal and accessible learning citywide," says Elaine Barrow from ESA. "We welcome new participants and partners to get in touch and find out more. It is great to see positive outcomes for everyone involved and I hope that this continues far into the future!"

If you are an individual or know someone who would be interested in a place on one of the courses please contact Linda Makin: linda@esamail.org.uk

Please call in, email or phone for more specific details about the programme.
Union 105, 105 Chapeltown Road Leeds LS7 3HY 0113 262 6633
eaststreetarts.org.uk

A Celebration of Creativity in York

Though our work is primarily in Leeds, Arts & Minds does work with some services in York. Many thanks to Jady Robinson from Clifton House in York for the article about a recent creative project there:

Early in July 2017, a series of posters started appearing on the doors of Clifton House. These welcomed staff and patients to contribute poetry, textiles, painting, sculpture, photographs, cakes, prints... just about anything they had created, for an exhibition to be held at the hospital. The date set for this 'Celebration of Creativity' was the 23rd of August. A core group of staff and patients from Riverfields male rehabilitation ward took the responsibility for organising the event.

MIND and 33 Clarence Street provided presentation boards free of charge, a local picture framers provided free picture mounts, and managers put their hands into the coffers for Velcro and canapes!

With a mixture of enthusiasm and anxiety people started putting work forward for the exhibition. It became apparent that there is a lot of hidden talent amongst patients and workers at Clifton House. A wide variety of objects writing and artwork started piling up in the on-site hair salon, ready for display. A lot of time was spent ensuring that all this work was professionally presented and mounted, with artist statements next to each work– though some chose to exhibit anonymously. A patient from the male ward provided two substantial paintings for raffle, which became very sought after!

On the day the atmosphere was buoyant. It was great to see everyone's amazement at the extensive talent, and to hear people discussing their work and passions. Everyone pulled out all the stops. The ladies' wards prepared refreshments, and a female patient ran the raffle.

It remained a completely collaborative venture between staff and patients. The quotes below are from service users who worked hard to ensure the event took place: Paul, whose enthusiasm motivated the Commissioners to attend; and Mark, whose consistent organisational skills and hard graft ensured its success.

"I got involved in lots of ways. I exhibited some paintings and poetry, and some of my work was put on the computers for people to see.

On the day of the exhibition I helped set the place up and put all the paints out for people. I started a painting in the Social Space, and invited everyone else to join in. It went really well, everyone had a go. People enjoyed it and it wasn't just a task. It was nice to get peoples' feedback about my work, but it felt a bit odd because people were saying nice stuff about it."

"For me it was a highly enjoyable experience. To have my work valued and held in esteem was affirming, but also to step outside the patient role into organiser was highly therapeutic.

I did indeed feel a sense of responsibility that made me want the experience to be a success. The day I felt went well. We had a good body of work sensitively presented and I hope all felt included."



The artwork shown was by a mixture of staff and service users at Clifton House

The Art Room at LS14 Trust

The Art Room is a brilliant creative therapy project based at LS14 trust in Seacroft. We asked Vivienne Gibbons to tell us more:

'The Art Room' is a local-rooted free art psychotherapeutic service providing support for those facing mental health issues within the LS14 postcode area and is funded by Leeds Community Fund to offer free places for local people.

The programme operates 3 days a week for 36 weeks of the year and offers a range of creative art psychotherapy groups for adults and 1:1 clients sessions, which are also suitable for adult clients and dyadic sessions for parent and child therapy. The duration being a 12 week programme for groups and 1:1 sessions alike.

The approach is person centred and tailor-made to individual requirements through an initial consultation and subsequent therapy sessions which develop a therapeutic alliance between client and therapist, ensuring that client's individual strengths, hobbies, interests and networks are taken into account and there is an on-going reflective practice throughout the course of therapy. A wide range of art materials can be used in therapy – it's not all about painting or drawing.

During our course of therapy over the last year we have engaged with 44 people of all ages 18+, and parent and child support. As the therapy sessions take place in a community setting there is also the opportunity to take part in other activities which are on offer at LS14 Trust's community space 'The Digital Lounge'.

As well as a café, where lunch is prepared freshly every day there are a variety of activities throughout the week including: Crafty Cuppa, Creativi-tea, Stitch Up, Seacroft Stompers (walking group) and Gardening Group (currently seasonal). On top of activities there is also the opportunity to volunteer in wherever your interests or skills and knowledge lie. Participants have gone on to support the digital lounge by volunteering long-term and short-term over the course of the year.

People who have taken part in therapy have said:

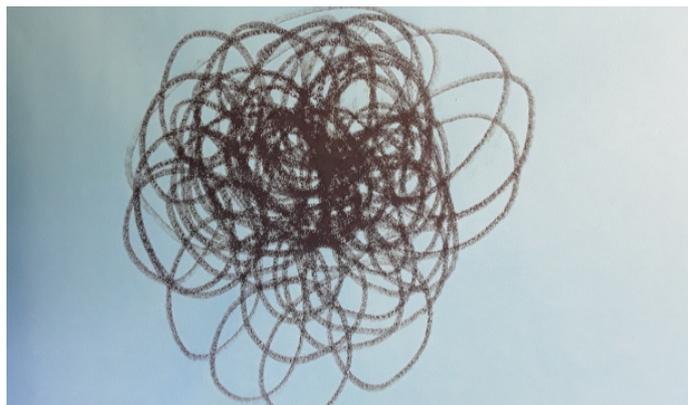
"When I started art therapy I had also started rehab for my substance misuse. It came at the right time as the art therapy gave me extra support and making the art gave me an outlet to express my emotions and feelings and see what I needed to change in my life to be more independent."

"Living with bereavement is difficult. Sharing my feelings in a group with the art making has helped me."

"I find it hard to say how I feel in words. Even though I don't think I am good at art I can show myself and the therapist how I am feeling through the art that I make. I was surprised how the art can get my feelings and thoughts across."

The Art Room at the Digital Lounge. Group sessions on Tuesdays and Thursdays. 10.30 - 11.30am. 1:1 sessions available Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.

Contact: Vivienne Gibbons, The Digital Lounge, 45 Ramshead Hill, Seacroft, Leeds, LS14 1BT. 0113 3180522 viv@ls14trust.org



Pieces made during sessions at The Art Room at LS14 Trust

Studio 3: Following in the footsteps of John Sell Cotman

In November 2017 Artlink's Studio 3 group had an intervention into the John Sell Cotman exhibition at Leeds Art Gallery. Throughout the project, Studio 3 artists were invited to examine and respond to the works of Cotman prior to the gallery re-opening. With special access to the collection and support from Artlink artists, Jill Johnson and Rozi Fuller, Studio 3 were able to test new ways of working with watercolour including sketching and painting on a trip to Knaresborough, following in the footsteps of Cotman himself.

The group made practical studies of Cotman's techniques, extensively researching and resourcing materials as close to those available to Cotman. They tried out wet-on-dry watercolour, studied the geometric and negative shapes in Cotman's compositions, then moving on to watercolour to develop their own ideas and interpretations. As Studio 3 grew in confidence, they began to experiment with a range of media including pencil, pen drawing, water-soluble pencil, ink sticks, silk painting, photography, acrylics, oils, emulsion paint, animation and book binding.

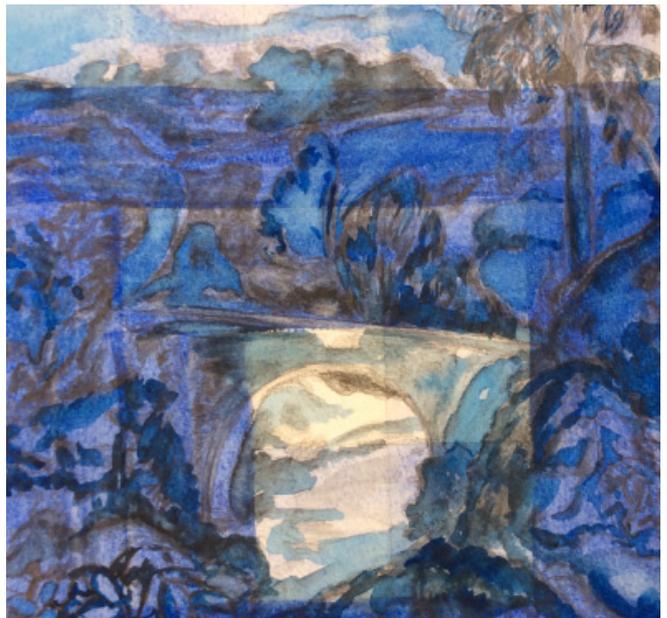
Many of these sketches, studies and explorations were exhibited near to the Cotman work they most relate to and from where inspiration was drawn from. As such, they showed 'work in process' in much the

same way as many of Cotman's sketches do. The key to this intervention was the depth of the exploration of Cotman's work, both technique and subject matter.

One person perhaps summed up the reflection of the whole group when he said:

"It was a really nice way to access an artist's work, to engage with it and learn how to use watercolour. It gave me a focus, narrowing the parameters down, giving a really creative way to work. It was a bit like being given an 'artist's brief' to work to. I felt very professional, as if we were being treated as artists ourselves."

The enthusiasm for Cotman and watercolour has generated a large body of work by Studio 3 and the intervention was a small sample of this, some of which can be seen here and at www.artlinkwestyorks.org



Artwork by Studio 3 artists

Outsider Art at The Tetley

The latest show at The Tetley, "Your Consequences Have Actions" by artist Saelia Aparicio, also features work from six female outsider artists from the Musgrave Kinley Collection.

Victor Musgrave and Monika Kinley began collecting 'Outsider Art' in 1981. Musgrave and Kinley chose to collect artwork that they felt was genuinely original, intuitive and made by artists outside the mainstream system of art education and galleries, including artists with mental and physical disabilities. They collected work by celebrated artists, such as Henry Darger and Adolf Wölfli, and also sought out new artists to bring to international attention. The collection comprises of over 800 works, including sculpture, painting and drawing by artists from across the world. Intended as a public collection from the beginning, the collection was donated in its entirety to the Whitworth, The University of Manchester in 2010.

"Saelia Aparicio has been very inspired by Judith Scott, one of the artists in the collection," said Bryony Bond, artistic director of the Tetley. The 'outsider' art on show includes sculptures by Marie-Rose Lortet and Judith Scott, and drawings by Aloise Corbaz, Madge Gill, Lee Godie and Martha Grunenwaldt.

"Your Consequences Have Actions" is at The Tetley, Hunslet Road, Leeds, LS10 1JQ until 28th January 2018. Arts & Minds may organise a tour of the show – look out for emails about this in the new year.



'Chambre de Lin' by Marie-Rose Lortet, 1994. Courtesy of The Whitworth, The University of Manchester. Photo by Jules Lister.

News in Brief

Creative Afternoons

Thank you and well done to all the Arts & Minds members who have been involved with the Creative Afternoons sessions at the Tetley over the last year or so. We've had some brilliant workshops and met some great people. The workshops have stopped now but may return in some form in the future.

Buzz Group

The next Buzz Group will be at the Tetley on Monday 5th February at 2 - 4pm. This is your chance to have your say and get more involved with Arts & Minds. Please join us in the Learning Studio on Floor 2.

Instrumental - can you help?

We need volunteers to help run the monthly gig at Inkwell. Can you help? No experience necessary - just enthusiasm. Contact us at the usual email address.

Musical Becklin

Many thanks to volunteers Jack and Rory (in association with Cloth Cat) for visiting the Becklin Centre to run a music technology workshop for the service users.

This was an interactive session where all service users contributed to the recording of a track. Each service user played a separate instrument and the sounds were layered to form the song. The structure of the session meant that all service users could be involved whether they had musical talent or not, resulting in a rewarding session for all.

The feedback from the group was that the group "leaders were enthusiastic", "Seeing all the amazing equipment and band play" was enjoyable and all service users would be interested in attending the sessions again.

Thank you!



Jack at the Becklin Centre

Culture Club

The Arts & Minds Culture Club is a friendly group who meet regularly to go and see exhibitions, plays, operas and loads more. Recently they were awarded funding to help travel to Hull, the UK City of Culture. We asked volunteer Margaret Wilkinson to sum up the Culture Club's experience in Hull:

Hull was appointed as the UK Capital of Culture for 2017, with much scepticism from the Art World - and from our family and friends, some of whom asked, "Whatever would you want to go to Hull for?"

Hull took the path to actively engage its citizens in the year-long celebrations. The City wanted people to have a completely fresh conversation about art.

This was too much of a challenge for the Culture Club! We had to go and see what it was all about. We opted to travel by train, which allowed us to talk between ourselves and to fellow travellers about Hull. This tied in nicely with the Love Arts theme of "Journeys".

The Culture Club have had 3 visits to Hull over the last 6 months, each visit expanding our exploration of Hull giving a different insight to what the city had to offer.

We were not disappointed. In fact, we were enthused with the new and old city; the Docks and the Deep; and the exhibitions at the Feren's, Maritime, Artlink (Hull) and Humber Street Galleries. We have gained a greater understanding of the history of Hull. We have looked at classical, contemporary, interactive and modern art and discussed what we thought and liked. Our horizons were definitely broadened and it gave us an added interest to snippets about the UK City of Culture on the news and media.



Culture Club Selfie

We were so inspired that we converted our interpretations onto canvas through the medium of painting, collage and poetry. We hung our 25 canvases as a mosaic in the outline of a ship's hull, which are seen everywhere in the city. The mosaic was shown as part of Love Arts Festival in the St John's Centre.

On our most recent visit to Hull we visited the Turner Prize 2017 show. Our group were gladdened with the edict, "Whatever you think about the Turner Prize 2017, you're right!" The exhibit definitely generated lots of comments...

We also saw "Skin", a dramatic exhibition of major works by Lucian Freud, Ron Mueck and Spencer Tunick. Of particular interest were Tunick's photographs of the stunning sea of painted naked people. Our group were keen to see if we could recognise anyone. We played with the interactive exhibits in State of Play; we became experts in scrimshaw; we admired the delicacy of Rembrandt's double portrait of the Shipbuilder and his Wife; and we were emotionally moved at the photographs and biopics of the King and Queen exhibition.

The Hull Year of Culture has not all been about pictorial art, every type and form of art expression has been performed. The art has addressed global issues like pollution of the oceans, anti slavery and access for disability and disabled artists. The exhibition Alien Sex Pod was very colourful!

And we have been influenced by the fantastic volunteers in their turquoise tops and the people of Hull who are so proud and enjoying their Year of Culture.

Thanks Margaret! If you would like to join the Culture Club, please get in touch with Arts & Minds.



The Mosaic

Love Arts 2017

Love Arts 2017 was our biggest and most ambitious festival yet! Two weeks of amazing workshops, exhibitions, performances and more. We asked our Festival patron Rob Young (below) to share his thoughts after attending the Opening Event:



What struck me about the Love Arts Festival was its warmth. I work as a communications consultant for the NHS. As an organisation, much of the text that we produce is full of jargon and phrases our Service Users cannot understand. To spice up these bone-dry documents, we add fashionable words like Community, Empathy and Impact but they are peppered so freely they lose their effect. It's as if the words themselves have lost their meaning.



Love Arts Pop Up

Or at least, that's what I thought, until I attended the opening event of the Love Arts Festival. There, before my very eyes, was a community and a robust one at that. For those of you who have forgotten what that community means in the real world, it looks like this: a bunch of people talking and laughing. That's it! Different people of different genders, colours and different minds: some with 'mental health issues' and others with plain-old idiosyncrasies but hey, who cares, it's a party. We're humans beings and what we enjoy most is being a community.

Which leads me on to the second word, Empathy. What does that look like? In the real world? It is the face of an old man. He stood there, enthralled, as a young artist explained what her painting was about. She was depressed but by putting it on canvas, it helped them both. And he 'got' it, in that moment, she raised his awareness. The distilled essence of empathy.



Citizen Clown

As for Impact, it's impossible to quantify, even for a quantitative researcher. How do you put a price on the smile of a schizophrenic? Or an initiative that sees big companies and individual artists cover a city with a sense of wonder, as we all look up to see smiley clouds floating over Leeds? And that's not a metaphor, they really were foam clouds.



The Art Doctors

What touched me about the opening event was the warmth. It takes great courage to share intimate moments with the public and the fact that they responded with such overwhelming positivity was both humbling and profound. It wasn't about the art at all, that was just a device to open up a conversation. The real art was the echo and that was a privilege to witness.



Highlights

The artist opens a window. The stranger peers in and says hello. That's all it is. Small and yet, gargantuan.

Love Arts Festival in people

We asked some of the people involved in Love Arts 2017 to tell us something about themselves and their event. Here are a small selection. More (unedited) stories are on our website at www.loveartsleeds.co.uk

Who are you? Morticia

What do you do? I am an artist, a student and a kind of 1950's housewife.

What did you do for the Festival?

I introduced the Love Arts Weepie (Now Voyager) at the Hyde Park Picture House.

Why? It's full on 1940's Hollywood glamour with Bette Davis and Claude Rains so what's not to like? And it's on 35mm film too – a real treat for cinephiles like myself.

How will that help? Going to the pictures is one of my favourite ways to relax and distract myself from day to day anxieties. I think that's why a lot of people like going to the cinema. Plus weepies are traditionally a way of letting out sadness in what is hopefully a safe way and place.

How do you practice well-being?

Taking time out to distract myself, by going to the pictures or going for a walk.

What one word sums up Love Arts?

Inspiring

Who are you? Yolanda Mercy

What did you do in the Festival?

Performed my play Quarter Life Crisis

Why get involved? Because the show's themes are very important to me and those I know. To start a conversation around feeling the pressure to grow up.

What one thing did you hope to achieve? Meet new audiences and share a meaningful story

Proudest moment? Doing this show

How do you practice well-being?

I meditate

What one word sums up Love Arts?

Important

Who are you? Mindy Goose

What did you do for the Festival? Led a psychogeographical walk focusing on the challenges faced by people with reduced mobility.

Why? Because I have a recent neurological disability and accessibility is something that has become very applicable to my own life (I had only seen it as an outsider who works with disability before). The walk asked pertinent questions at intervals, about accessibility, loneliness, and isolation due to illness, and the extra challenges those with disabilities face.



Morticia



Yolanda Mercy



Mindy Goose

The participants were encouraged to write, sketch or photograph their journey.

What one thing did you hope to achieve? Showing people that those with chronic illness, reduced mobility, and other impairments, that they are only disabled by what society creates, and that there are choices that can be made that can facilitate to give much better accessibility to all – and above all to give people a voice through a creative outlet.

Best thing about the Festival? It gives ordinary folk the opportunity to exhibit and showcase their work to a large public audience; it gives people a sense of pride and achievement; it can boost confidence; and it can help create friendships from the people we meet at the events.

How do you practice well-being? Walking (even if it is not as far as I used to go), walking my dog, walking my dog and taking photographs.

What one word sums up Love Arts? Inclusive

Who are you? Chris O'Connor

What did you do for the Festival? I brought a short play called *The Life and Soul*, about mental health issues among young men, for a couple of performances at Chapel FM and the Hyde Park Book Club.

Why? I've written this piece to try and raise awareness of how many people with

mental health issues suffer in silence and how it can affect anybody, sometimes the people you would least expect.

How do you practice well-being? I meditate most mornings, I exercise regularly either by going to the gym, boxing or playing football, I eat well and I make sure I get as much sleep as I can.

What one word sums up Love Arts? Inspiring.

Who are you? I am a traveling man who loves art by the name of BoThai.

What do you do? Currently, I am a senior studying international studies at University of California, Irvine. I am an activist, an advocate for immigration rights in the U.S., and an artist.

What did you do for the Festival? I shared my life and thoughts as an undocumented immigrant through my art.

Why? Because some stories are not often heard, and when it's heard, it is not from the people impacted.

What did you hope to achieve? I hope that at least one person who sees my art will ask himself or herself what those artworks mean and look into immigration in the U.S. and educate them about what is going on.

How do you practice well-being? I practice wellbeing by exercising, eating healthy, drawing, introspecting, and talking with my loved ones and friends.



Chris O'Connor



Artwork by BoThai



Season's Greetings

Thanks to Arts & Minds member Rejactamental for letting us use her artwork for this seasonal image. Even if you're reading this in January we hope this brings a smile to your face in the dark, cold months. You can see more of Rejactamental's work on her website

'Wendy the Aerialist'
by Rejactamental
www.rejactamental.com

What is Arts & Minds?

Arts & Minds is a network of people who are interested in creativity and mental health in Leeds. We include carers, health workers, artists, performers, people who've used mental health services, OTs... anyone with an interest.

We are involved with lots of different projects in the city. One of our aims is to link people up so they can take advantage of all the cultural opportunities in Leeds.

We want to get people talking about how the arts can help mental well being. We work closely with mental health services (we're funded by Leeds & York Partnerships NHS Trust) and encourage workers to use creativity in people's care. We also run the annual Love Arts Festival, a 2 week celebration of creativity and well-being.

Get involved!

If you're new to Arts & Minds please join up as a member online. It's free and you don't need a referral. You'll get money off in art shops and regular emails about arts and health things going on that might be of interest. We run regular events to get together. Every event is in a different cultural location, usually in the city centre. It's a good way to meet creative people and find out what else is going on. Or you could join the Culture Club to see lots of plays, operas and art exhibitions with a friendly group. Every 3 months we have a Buzz Group for members to share ideas and get more involved.

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