

## Stay Perky in 2020...



This issue of the newsletter is specifically designed to inspire you. We have an exclusive interview with Arts & Minds member, “The Perky Painter”. What makes her tick? Why is she so perky? Find out on page 3. Every issue in 2020 will feature interviews with different Arts & Minds members. Get in touch if there’s someone you think will inspire others with their amazing art!

### Also in this issue

Writing & Mental Health:	p.6	Art & Mindfulness	p.14
Sonia Zoref interview		Stitching & Well-Being	p.16
Reasons to Stay Alive	p.10	Love Arts Update	p.20
Theatre Review		Listings	p.22

## Goodbye Tom!

Tom Bailey is leaving Arts & Minds at the end of December 2019. "I've been here 10 years," he says. "Now it's time for someone new to take over!" But he'll still be connected with Arts & Minds. "I'll carry on being a member. I'm trying to set up lots of arts and mental health projects. And I'm really passionate about making Love Arts bigger and better - so will be part of a team that applies for funding to do this" See page 21 for more details. "It's been a privilege working with such amazing creative people over the last decade," says Tom. "Thanks for having me!"

## Newsletter Team

You'll notice a few changes in this issue's newsletter. We now have a Newsletter Team who gather stories and write articles. We wanted the newsletter to be a hearty read, something that inspires people and helps Arts & Minds members find out a little more about projects and people in Leeds. A magazine with a bit of "oomph" that told you a bit about the personality of our members. The team meet every 2 months to decide what articles could be written, then they busy themselves interviewing people, visiting projects and seeing interesting things. The resulting articles are edited and presented here.

We decided there will be different kinds of articles:

**Member Interviews** - find out a bit more about an Arts & Minds member, and why creativity is a part of their mental health journey

**Project Focus** - an in-depth look at a particular art form or an organisation in Leeds going great work

**Personal Stories** - an individual take on a particular topic, or a story about someone's life in the arts and recovery

**Reviews** - films, music, plays - with a mental health theme

If you have ideas or want to write please let us know and join the team! Just email or phone Arts & Minds.

# The Perky Painter

An interview with Helen Gibson by Paul Abraham

Within minutes of being in the company of Leeds artist Helen Gibson it is easy to see why she is known as “The Perky Painter”: she exudes happiness and joy as soon as you meet her. Helen reveals, “I’m not really sure when the name appeared, it just happened and seems to sum me up perfectly”.

Her passion for art started as soon as she could hold a paintbrush. She recalls, “I always loved painting. At primary school all the different colours used to fire my imagination, the brighter and bolder the better and it’s something that I’ve carried on to this day.”

Being in an educational surrounding which encouraged its students helped Helen. “Oh undoubtedly, my art teachers were fantastic, they could resonate with my passion for creating my own style and gave me the confidence to create art as I saw art.”

Helen’s preferred choice of materials is acrylics. “With watercolours once you’ve started it’s difficult to change the shades if you’re not happy with them, but with acrylics it allows you more freedom to express yourself, it allows you to add layers until you’ve got on the canvas what you have envisaged in your mind and imagination”.



“View Through The Flowers”

## The Perky Painter (contd)

Her inspirations again reflect Helen's love of the abstract and bold paintings with Salvador Dali, the figurehead of surrealism and an iconic figure and the Russian born Wassily Kandinsky, who is generally credited as the pioneer of abstract art at the top of her list. "I just love the boldness of their art, as I'm not a straight line type of artist, I just relish the richness of their art. I'm so passionate about colours that it can take me an hour just to get the right colours on my palette before I touch the canvas for the first time."

As stress levels rise throughout society, anything that can help reduce those levels is to be welcomed and supported and art can have a major role to play. As Helen says, "You can have had such a bad day at work and are really stressed out and then you go to your easel and palette and all the frustration you've had during the day, all the steam you've wanted to let off can be released and conquered with a few brush strokes, especially if you include mindfulness as you paint, it's a win-win situation,"

Helen points out that as a painter it's very much a spontaneous art. "Unless you're doing commission work then being an artist is very much in the moment and "let's do it" scenario, whereas authors have a specific number of words to write within deadlines, painting gives you more flexibility to create what you feel when you feel it".

The Perky Painter now has an amazing website showcasing her talents in many different avenues of her art. She has been running art workshops for a number of years, as she explains in her inimitable joyous persona. "I love the workshops, I actually started out by doing a workshop on creating your own Christmas cards and it's now evolved in to family art workshops. It makes everything I do so worthwhile when I see children so happy and engrossed when doing their own little masterpieces. If they're not happy with their first attempt, we don't start again, we move on to the next one so everything about the workshop is positive"



After being in the company of the Perky Painter for 45 mins, I want to go to the nearest art shop and buy canvases, paints and brushes and start painting. The passion, joy and happiness that she portrays is like having an injection of feel good vibes. If we had a Perky Painter available on the NHS in every city, what a different and wonderful country we would be living in.

**See The Perky Painter and her happy art every Saturday on Albion Place and every Sunday on Briggate up till Christmas and visit her solo exhibition at The Arch Cafe - on now until January. Check out her website at [www.theperkypainter.com](http://www.theperkypainter.com)**

# Serendipity: writing & mental health

## An interview with Sonia Zoref by Fe

Using art and creativity for healing used to be seen as alternative, hippy-like or even wacky, but now the mainstream health scene has finally embraced the clear benefits of people participating in creative activities and have incorporated it into their services. The NHS (depending on where you live) have poetry, music, creative writing and art workshop type therapies available as an in-patient or an out-patient. As well as this, people have been running their own workshops, set up by themselves as a result of unsatisfactory results from mainstream healthcare and also from being inspired by other people who have been delivering effective art therapy workshops that yield positive and tangible results.

Sonia Zoref is one such lady. From having a major mental health episode herself eight years ago, her profound journey has led her to starting up her own charity called Serendipity, which helps other people who are dealing with mental health issues. I had the privilege of having an interesting and enjoyable phone chat with her about that very journey...

**Fe:** Hey Sonia!

**Sonia:** Hiya! Hang on a minute. I have a cat around my neck!

**Fe:** Ha ha! What is your cat is called?

**Sonia:** Albert. I've got two cats. They're rescue cats. I have a wolf dog too. He's got three legs. I like broken things.

**Fe:** Aaaw, you look after the broken. How are you this Sunday morning?

**Sonia:** Having a lazy weekend. I woke up late, had a coffee and a fag and went straight back to bed. I chill out on the weekends.

I like to switch my phone off and stay away from my computer. It's the mindfulness thing. We lead such fast lives and don't actually just stand still and pause. We are even made to feel guilty about it. My kids love phones and they are on them all the time. So I decided. Every Sunday at 3pm, we will all have Sunday dinner together with no phones! Absolutely no phones allowed.

**Fe:** Which is great as I feel the lack of proper communication is a factor for mental health issues. When did your mental health first take a turn for the worse?

**Sonia:** Most of my life I'd say. I just didn't realise back then. It wasn't really recognised and I didn't really know myself. I was a teenager in school, so I just thought I was weird. It was eight years ago when I had a breakdown. I left my husband, my house, my job. I took my kids with me and just left everything else.

I think I was just running away. I didn't know what else to do. I ended up in Huddersfield. I'm a strong woman, but it was just a series of bad events that caused the mental health issues.



## Serendipity (contd)

**Fe:** What kind of orthodox medical help were you given?

**Sonia:** Anti depressants mainly. I've been on them most of my life. I struggled to find a GP with any real understanding. Help really came from family and friends and going to the things that Sai does.

**Fe:** Yeah, Sai Murray. He introduced me to you for this article, so have to give him some props!

**Sonia:** Yes, his writing classes kept me alive. When I found Sai it was a real lifeline for me. It's always worth doing your own search to find your a group for yourself, don't only rely on what the GP says.

**Fe:** What advice or encouragement would you give to people who are dealing with mental health issues?

**Sonia:** Find a safe space with somebody to talk to. Getting help is vital! As I say, help doesn't necessarily come from your GP. Find groups and support in your community. Definitely getting involved with the arts.

**Fe:** High five to that! Tell us about the group you set up.

**Sonia:** Okay, so I completely believe the arts are a great way of reducing poor mental health in day to day life. And poetry or the written word is cathartic and theraputic. We are a prescriptive arts creative writing group and the aim is to create more community led groups, reduce isolation and loneliness and promote inclusion and cohesion. You don't have to be a writer, although, we have some amazing writers. Everyone gets to have their say, and we can usually get good quality creative written prose out of everyone, even those that are dyslexic. We want people to feel valued; that their voice counts, that THEY count.

**Fe:** That is really important and empowering. So, how does the workshop run?

**Sonia:** The workshops run for 2 hours and we start with a 5 minute sitting mindfulness exercise, just to relax. Then there is a 5 minute freewriting warm up session.

**Fe:** Freewriting is where you write whatever comes into your mind?

**Sonia:** Yes. This gently gets the brain geared up for writing. I provide a topical exercise - something like Christmas, Mother's Day, World Mental Health, these kind of things and we read for 5 to 10 minutes. Although we provide the topics, I encourage people to bring in things; poems, theirs or others, or maybe discuss something they want to discuss. I'm quite organic in that I try to get a feel of the group before I give them an exercise. Sometimes we have people with more severe mental health challenges, so its quite tailored to fit people's requirements and depending on how large the group is, depends on how many exercises we can do.

**Fe:** Very flexible and inclusive too.

**Sonia:** I'm collating a collection from all the groups to publish a POETRY ANTHOLOGY and hopefully at some point next year, there will be a party launch. We are a fun group. We talk a lot, laugh a lot, sometimes cry, and then there's the cake eating... And its all FREE! We run term time. We are on Facebook too, so anyone can add us to get more details, or feel free to contact me for more information and to find out about special events throughout the year.

**Fe:** Well, it all sounds great! Thank you so much for having a chat with me and sharing a bit about your journey and what you do.

**If you'd like to know more about Sonia's Serendipity creative writing project email her at [soniazoref@hotmail.com](mailto:soniazoref@hotmail.com)**

# Reasons To Stay Alive

A theatre review by Hayley Mills-Styles

**“At 24 Matt’s world collapsed under the weight of depression. This is the true story of his journey out of crisis; a profoundly uplifting exploration of living and loving better. The first theatrical adaptation of Matt Haig’s frank and funny bestseller. This play with music and movement, imagined for the stage and directed by Jonathan Watkins, celebrates what it means to be alive.” April De Angelis**

A good friend of mine is a big fan of the author Matt Haig and has shared lots of his tweets with me over the years, but I have never read any of his books. Matt was born in Sheffield; he has written books for children and adults including Dead Fathers Club and The Girl Who Saved Christmas. Perhaps one of his most well-known books, Reasons to Stay Alive has been adapted into a performance for the stage which is currently touring the UK.

**“It’s wonderful to see a book take on other life forms, especially a form as exciting and radically different as this one. I think this production will provide a fascinating way to look at depression and mental health.” Matt Haig**

I went to see the play in the Courtyard Theatre at the newly refurbished Leeds Playhouse. The seats were comfy and had more leg room than you might expect to get at the theatre. Other viewers were commenting on this before the performance began.

Going into the theatre I was worried about how watching the performance would be for a person who suffers from depression and anxiety and I was happy to see that it was a short piece at just 70 minutes long. The performance was signed by a British Sign Language interpreter and the audience was invited to stay for a discussion after the show.

The cast is very small with only six performers, Phil Cheadle playing older Matt and Mike Noble playing younger Matt. We start by meeting start by meeting older Matt as he sits on the stage, a really simple background with three moving sections. Soon, younger Matt enters the space, he is really overwhelmed by his own thoughts and he wants to take his own life by jumping from a cliff in Ibiza where he is living with his girlfriend Andrea (Janet Etuk).

The set had some interesting ways of being moved by the actors, they climbed onto sections of it and moved them around the stage to create different scenes. I really enjoyed the way that the actors used their bodies and a small number of props to create a different place or mood. There is a scene where Matt, Andrea and Matt's parents are sitting around a dining table, created by the actors holding a blanket between them to resemble a tablecloth. This was a really clever use of a small prop being used in different ways in the performance. The blanket is used again to tell the story and protect younger Matt as he struggles with his mental health.

The performance was good at referencing common themes and phrases that people may have heard when discussing their own mental health with family and friends. The comparisons to physical health were something I have personal experience of. **“So, a parachute failed, chin up!” – Connie Walker as mum.**



## Reasons To Stay Alive (contd)

The performance had a really good use of lighting and music for the different scenes. When younger Matt first enters there were some flashing lights and loud music which could have been overwhelming for some viewers but this was signposted outside the theatre and on the Leeds Playhouse website under triggers and advisories.

Throughout the performance we see older and younger Matt engage with each other, with older Matt giving support and advice to his younger self. They talk about how depression is a mystery to everyone including people who suffer from it. I enjoyed the part where they are discussing his first panic attack:

**“Things you think during your first panic attack... This won't end!”**

I felt the performance explored how relationships between people can be affected by mental health, younger Matt's conversations with his partner Andrea and his mum and dad (Chris Donnelly) are handled really well as they try to understand what is happening to their partner or son.



Even though the subject of the performance is serious, there were some funny moments where the audience laughed out loud.

**“Things you get sympathy for more than depression... IBS, living in Hull, bad Amazon reviews.”**

There were some parts of the performance that I found a little bit strange, in particular, the scene when Matt and Andrea have moved to Leeds. Matt is beginning to explore what he wants to do as a writer with support from Andrea. The scene was very busy with the actors coming in and out the set talking about books and reading quotes as the books are attached to spikes inside the largest set piece. I also found that there were a lot of quotes from famous people like Albert Einstein and Georgia O’Keeffe which I found a little distracting from the honest performances by the actors.

At the end of the performance we see that Matt has become a published author and has been able to get control of his panic attacks but is frightened about how being an author will change his life. Older Matt and younger Matt have swapped roles their feelings with younger matt now feeling stronger, offering support and guidance to older Matt and giving him reasons to stay alive like his marriage to Andrea and their children.

The performance ends with **#reasonstostayalive** from Twitter and some of the quotes from people responding to his book. This was a warm and uplifting end to the performance, knowing the small things that help people to stay positive. Outside the theatre there was a noticeboard where people could write their own **#ReasonsPlay** thoughts and feelings.

**Reasons to Stay Alive appeared at the Leeds Playhouse. The tour is now over but you can buy the original book by Matt Haig, published by Canongate at £9.99.**

## Arts & Mind (fulness)

by Paul Abraham

As shown in the previous editions of the newsletter, art in its various forms can help inspire and improve a person's Mental Health. Fe (the Art Activator) has proved in her articles of trying different ways to create something unique.

The diversity of art in its many forms allow someone to experiment in several areas until they find the one that they feel comfortable and at ease with. Art as a hobby and a Mental Health improver needs to be something to enjoy. There's enough difficulty within people's lives without something which is intended to calm and relax them causing them more anxiety and stress.

As a qualified Mindfulness teacher, I help people manage stress through various Mindfulness techniques, but Mindfulness can also be applied to numerous avenues of art. If you're painting, then put yourself in "the moment" even more, by concentrating on how the paint brush feels in your hand, how much pressure you need to exert to have a firm grip. How is the texture of the paint as you prepare to insert the brush in to the solution? How does it feel different when using oil or acrylic paint to watercolours? What does it feel like when you actually feel the paintbrush touching the canvas? What smells are produced as you take your first strokes? While you're concentrating on all these small but important things your blood sugar levels decrease and your anxiety/stress is diminished.

The same can be applied to anything. While sewing or doing a paper/card display: what does the materials feel like? Are they smooth, rough or textured? How much effort do you need to produce a line of stitching? What does the paper glue smell like as you squeeze some on to the card or paper? How much thumb and finger strength do you have to employ to get the last bit of glue to appear from the tube?

Combining a mindful approach to your art will add another dimension to the enjoyment you can achieve while creating your masterpieces.

Swarthorne Education Centre will be running Mindful Art courses in 2020, The course is run in a friendly supportive environment. All learners will be given instruction from the class tutor and encouraged to share their ideas with fellow learners in class discussions and to give and receive feedback.

In a mindful art class you will be using mindful techniques to focus your mind on all the five senses allowing you to be in the present moment. When taking part in a mindful art task, the focus is on the process of creating rather than the end result, meaning anyone can take part and benefit.

During each session there will be an element of meditation and discussion on famous paintings and their mindful interpretation Your tutor will continually assess your progress to ensure that you are getting the most out of the course. At the end of each lesson you will have the chance to participate in class discussions and give feedback. Each week you must fill out a weekly log which will state what you have been taught and what you have learnt, these logs, together with your self-assessment forms will ensure that you are reaching the course aims and your own personal goals

### **Swartmore Mindful Art 2020 - dates:**

**Tuesday 10am - 12pm 7th Jan - 11th Feb 2020 (6 sessions)**

**Tuesday 10am - 12pm 25th Feb to 31st Mar 2020 (6 sessions)**

**Tuesday 10am - 12pm 21st Apr to 19th May 2020 (5 sessions)**

**Tuesday 10am - 12pm 2th Jun to 7th Jul 2020 (5 sessions)**

**To enrol or for more information please phone 0113 243 2210  
or visit [www.swarthmore.org.uk/course/arts/mindful-art](http://www.swarthmore.org.uk/course/arts/mindful-art)**

## Threading Together

A personal take on **Stitching & Well-Being** by  
**Hayley Mills Styles**

I've been working as an artist and tutor since 2012 which has given me the chance to work on some amazing projects. These projects were aimed at helping people use creativity to improve their mental health and well-being. My own work tells stories about my life using fabric and thread. I work with embroidery, a traditional craft technique, which I use to make drawings and sculptures. My mental health is often the story behind the work and I have made pieces that talk about depression, anxiety and obsessive-compulsive disorder.

Mental health and well-being is something I'm really passionate about, and I want to help other people learn a new craft and find a happy place where they can make something. Well-being is a word that we hear at different events but what exactly is it? For me, it means taking some time to help ourselves feel better. Stopping for a while to make something with our hands, read a book or listen to some music. I've been working with my hands for many years and I know how much it benefits my mental health.

My first community project took place in Manchester in 2012, working with arthur+martha and two homeless charities in the city. Lois Blackburn and Philip Davenport (arthur+martha) have a lot of experience working with different groups of people including older hospital patients, holocaust survivors and young children.

The Warm & the Cold gave me the chance to work with professional artists and use my skills to help other people tell a story about their life. The project outline was to work with homeless people to create a group quilt inspired by the Ted Hughes poem of the same name. We worked in two venues in Manchester, the Big Issue offices and the Booth Centre.

From the first meet up, I was amazed by how warm the people were. They shared stories about their lives and shared a joke or two with us over a cuppa. I made friendship bracelets with people and helped them learn how to embroider using simple stitches onto a piece of denim fabric. The project was a wonderful way to bring together people stories and from the small pieces of denim we made a quilt that was exhibited in The Holden Gallery at Manchester Metropolitan University.

After the Warm and the Cold, I went on to work on different community projects in Leeds like 365 Leeds Stories, a collaboration with Matthew Bellwood and Alison Andrews. This project brought stories from older Leeds residents to life using hand embroidery and old maps printed on to fabric.

In 2018, Arts & Minds awarded The Yorkshire Centre for Eating Disorders at Seacroft Hospital a creative grant to allow them to work with a professional artist. I worked with the staff and patients to help them develop creative skills using textiles. The workshops lead to a piece of work to display in the reception area of the ward. The grant was also used to buy sewing equipment so that staff and patients could continue to work with the skills they had learned.



## Threading Together (contd)

It was great to see how the patients and staff worked together on the project, supporting each other at the sessions and during the week. People grew in confidence as the weeks progressed and this came together to create a piece of work called the Positive Patchwork. Using their recovery as a starting point we created a banner which gave out positive messages of hope for the ward.

**“The Positive Patchwork aims to spread messages of hope and optimism for the future, and to motivate us all to sustain positive changes in our lives” Jo Taylor, OT at Connect.**

In March of 2018, I was invited to visit the House of Lords with Linda Boyles to talk about the Creative Health report from 2017. The report is about how the arts can help keep us well, help our recovery and support longer lives.

**“It is time to recognise the powerful contribution the arts can make to health and wellbeing. There are now many examples and much evidence of the beneficial impact they can have.”  
Creative Health Report, 2017.**



I have been continuing to work on community projects that help inspire people and benefit their wellbeing. My latest project has been in partnership with the Thackray Medical Museum and Getaway Girls, an organisation based in Harehills who work with young women from different backgrounds including young mums, women with low self-esteem and women seeking asylum.

**“Getaway Girls empowers young women to build confidence and resilience, develop new skills and take positive risks in an environment which offers co-operation and support.”**

Stitching for Well-being is inspired by the Lorina Bulwer Scroll, a piece of hand embroidery made by a woman living in a Great Yarmouth workhouse in around 1893. The scroll is a very long hand-stitched letter that talks about people Lorina knew alongside current events of the time, interwoven are her thoughts and outlook on a world that had deemed her insane.

Thackray Medical Museum is currently closed for redevelopment. During this closure, the museum has been engaging with the community through projects like the Emergency Museum, a decommissioned ambulance gifted by Yorkshire Ambulance Service that has been turned into a mobile museum.

Lorina Bulwer has been the inspiration for the project and each week I have visited the young women from different groups at Getaway Girls with Thackray Museum staff members, Charlotte and Leah. Taking with us a handmade sample of the scroll, we are sit around the table, sharing food and stories as we stitched onto a fabric. People shared stories about their mental health, friends and children as I showed them how to stitch.

The workshops have been a great experience for me as an artist, I love sharing my skills as an embroiderer with people, helping them to make a piece of work they are proud of. For more pictures from my workshops you can follow me on social media [@hmillsstyles](#).

## News In Brief

by Tom Bailey and Linda Boyles

### What's Happening with Love Arts Festival?

We want to thank everyone who has contributed their ideas to our think-ins and survey about the future of Love Arts Festival. There were loads of fantastic ideas that we want to make happen with your help. However this will be a long-term plan that will take time to realise. See below for details.

In the meantime we're going to run a smaller festival in October 2020 that is more achievable for our tiny team's capacity. Arts & Minds will continue to run its regular activities, including the annual exhibition in the spring.

So what's happening in 2020?

### Arts & Minds Annual Exhibition

May 18 – 24 is National Creativity and Wellbeing week, which is joining forces with the BBC Get Creative Festival and the Mental Health Foundation Awareness week to make the country wake up to the benefits of creativity to mental health. We want the Arts & Minds exhibition to be part of this exciting development, and will be hosting our annual open exhibition over this period at a venue tbc. Information about submissions will go out in February, but in the meantime get May 2020 in your diary.

### Love Arts 2020

In the new year we will invite partners to contribute their performances, films, artworks, conversations, or workshops to an exciting jam-packed festival day that will take place in late October. We want to help you showcase the amazing work that we know is going on all around the city. Love Arts 2020 will be a one-day event at one venue in Leeds. Look out soon for details on how you can help us make this happen.

## The Long Term Plan

There is a huge potential for Love Arts. Traditionally we've been a 2-week festival in October. But there could be a year round series of events that bring the city together under the banner of creativity and mental health. However, it's certain that the Arts & Minds team can't manage this. So we're currently exploring ways to fundraise for a dedicated Love Arts project. This may be a separate entity in itself! The plan is to hold quarterly Love Arts get-togethers to share progress on these big ideas. The first thing is to unite on a vision – decide exactly where we want to go and what we could achieve together. So, if you want to see a future for Love Arts, please let us know by emailing [tom@loveartsleeds.co.uk](mailto:tom@loveartsleeds.co.uk)



## Geeks & Mental Health

Arts & Minds have been working with a group of Leeds Geeks to see how they can support each other around their mental health. You might not be aware but there's a really supportive community of people in Leeds who are all into things like Dungeons & Dragons, role-playing games and other geeky stuff. They'll be starting a new monthly Sunday afternoon meet-up for anyone who identifies as a geek who has had mental health issues. The group will be meeting at Geek Retreat in central Leeds, starting in early 2020. Please contact Arts & Minds if you'd like to know more and get involved.

## Listings

### Culture Club

Culture Club is a brilliant group, run by volunteers. They meet to see plays, gigs, exhibitions and make art together. They are a really friendly group and meet on the second Monday of every month, 5pm at John Lewis Community Room, 4th Floor. 2020 Dates: 13th Jan/ 10th Feb/ 9th March. Contact Arts & Minds for more details.

### Create & Connect

A monthly group for Arts & Minds members to meet and connect and be creative. There's a different workshop every time and plenty of interesting creative people to drink tea with. We also have iPads and will help you sign up for workshops and courses online. Meet at the Tetley on the first Monday of every month, 2 - 4pm. 2020 Dates: 6th Jan/ 3rd Feb/ 2 March. Contact Arts & Minds for more details or just come to the Tetley and join in. The Tetley, Hunslet Road, Leeds LS10 1JQ.

### Black & Asian Creative Women

This is a new group that will be starting in 2020. The idea is to provide group peer support to creative women who are black or Asian. There isn't a start date yet but if you think you might benefit from a space to talk and meet other women please contact Arts & Minds to register your interest.

### Arts Together

Arts Together is an Opera North project that tries to bring all the great community arts opportunities under one "roof". Their website lists all the brilliant things you can get involved with in Leeds. Some examples are: dementia friendly theatre performances; cheap opera tickets for community groups; private views of exhibitions for people with autism; free workshops connected with particular exhibitions and events. The website is well worth a look:

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

### East St Arts Courses

East St Arts offer a cornucopia of courses, aimed at adults who want to improve their arts skills or try something new. Most of the courses are free to people on benefits. Some courses are specifically aimed at adults with learning disabilities. There are new courses starting in January so get your skates on and sign up! Check out the range of courses (which includes textiles, painting, drawing, photography, using iPads) at [www.eaststreetarts.org.uk](http://www.eaststreetarts.org.uk) or email them at [adultlearning@esamail.org.uk](mailto:adultlearning@esamail.org.uk)

### Slung Low Community College

The Cultural Community College is a place to come and learn, free at the point of use, a wide array of classes and courses for adults aged 18+. There are some amazing creative courses on offer: choir, ukelele, performance skills, writing rhymes, dance - and more. All of the courses are you pay what you decide – you decide how much you think the activity is worth after you taken part and the courses will be based at The Holbeck, Slung Low's home in Holbeck. It is located at Jenkinson Lawn, Holbeck LS11 9QX. Check out the full range and book your place online at [www.slunglow.org](http://www.slunglow.org)

### Aire Place Studios

Aire Place is one of the most supportive places for artists with mental health issues in Leeds. They are really friendly and they welcome everybody in a really meaningful way. Go and meet them and say hello! Aire Place's Creative Cafe is every Wednesday 10am - 3pm. They have: Exhibition space to hang and photograph work with lovely folks to help; Equipment hire, including lino printing, sewing machines; On-hand creative staff to help with projects, problem solve and learn new skills from; Affordable hot drinks and snacks; PAYF art supplies; Dogs! For all creatives no matter what experience. See [www.aireplacestudios.com](http://www.aireplacestudios.com) or email them at [enquiries@aireplacestudios.com](mailto:enquiries@aireplacestudios.com)

## What is Arts & Minds?

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

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 celebration of creativity and well-being in Leeds.



If you want to know more, please contact us using the details on the front cover. You are welcome at any of our events or workshops, if you are a member or not. You can join Arts & Minds for free at: [www.artsandmindsnetwork.org.uk/join-us](http://www.artsandmindsnetwork.org.uk/join-us)

### Would you like this information in an alternative format?

For a translation of this document, an interpreter or a version in:



or



or



or



please contact the Interpretation and Translation Support Team on [0113 85 56418/9](tel:011385564189) or [translation.lypft@nhs.net](mailto:translation.lypft@nhs.net)