



# Arts & Minds Newsletter

## Winter 2021

[www.artsandmindsnetwork.org.uk](http://www.artsandmindsnetwork.org.uk)

# 2021 Exhibition

Take a look at all 38 submissions for the 2021 Arts & Minds online exhibition (page 14)

Image: 'Fibonacci Spiral' by Krystyna Spink  
Cover: 'Secret Cove' by Ashley Ferrari

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# A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to the winter edition of the Arts & Minds newsletter. As the days grow shorter and the cold nights draw in, we are pleased to be able to bring you a bit of colour in this edition with all 38 submissions to the 2021 Arts & Minds online exhibition! See pages 14 to 22 for all the amazing artwork created by Arts & Minds members this year.

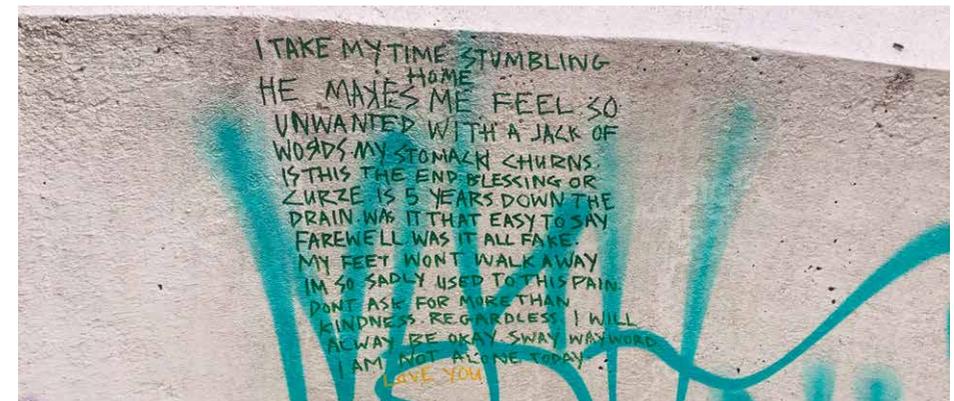
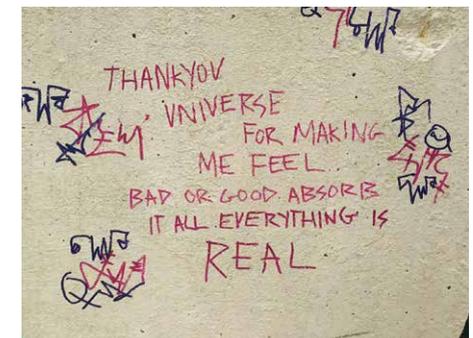
After the brilliant event at the Thackray Museum of Medicine in September when poet Sai Murray led a creative writing workshop (you can read two of the group poems written by Arts & Minds members on page 23) we are excited to announce that the next Arts & Minds event will be at Leeds Art Library on the 15th December. This time, textile artist and Arts & Minds member Hayley Mills-Styles will be running a hand embroidery workshop in response to The Leeds Tapestry on display in the Central Library building. See the What's On section at the back of the newsletter for full details about how to sign up as well as information about other things you can get involved with.

As always I am looking for ways for us all to stay connected and for creative outlets that members can engage with. If you have an idea of how to do this, or you want to connect up, please email me at: [toby@artsandmindsnetwork.org.uk](mailto:toby@artsandmindsnetwork.org.uk). Please also keep checking the Arts & Minds eBulletin and website for more information.

# GRAFFITI POEMS

## POETRY IN THE STREETS

I came across these three graffiti poems one day, in a space I don't often walk through. Quite fortuitous. They initially looked like scribbblings at first glance, set amongst some larger markings on the concrete seating that didn't look like they had any kind of meaning. They didn't even look like tags, so I wasn't interested. I was well on the way to ignoring them, but something about the writings drew me closer to take a deeper look...



As I started to read the words, I realised that the words weren't a random bunch or nonsensical scribbles. Nothing like that at all. They were words with feelings, pain, joy and humour. As I read all three pieces, I felt so graced to have read them. Somebody has left some words on a wall, expressing their inner thoughts and feelings. I have no idea who the person / people are, yet they have touched my soul in some significant way.

I started wondering who had written the words. What kind of life are they leading? Was this just a random – one time – never to be seen again personal expression of theirs, or do they regularly express themselves like this? Are they still feeling this way? Or have things changed? What exactly was going on with them in the moment they wrote these words? I had so many questions in my head.

I felt compelled to pause and take some time to take in the words, because I wanted to show an amount of respect to the fellow human-being who wrote them. The fellow earth brother or sister who left a piece of their heart and soul behind to share with anybody who may happen across their words.

I was so moved by the writings, I decided on the spot to come back another day to photograph what was written, because I didn't want their writings to be only left to people walking by and seeing them by chance. I felt the expressions deserved more than only that exposure and hoped this spontaneous act of sharing how they felt would inspire other people to share their inner feelings as well. Whether it be in the form of writings or another form. I wanted more people to see these writings to remind us all how fragile we are as humans and we can reach out to others and indeed we must. We must find a way.

I'm glad to say the writings are still, albeit covered up a bit more with some wack looking toy tags. I'm grateful to whomever wrote them and that I came across them. I really do like the idea of poetry and writings in the streets. I feel if we have to be assaulted by advertisements at every turn, breaking that up with graffiti art of paintings, drawings and words can only be a good thing!

## MARK'S POEM

Life upon these dreary streets  
it hurts my heart it hurts my feet  
coz this is not the way to be  
its not my life it is not me  
so please my lord come rescue me  
come help me out come set me free  
there must be more in life for me  
I live it out and I will see  
so pray to god one day be free  
and people will stop hurting me  
if you would truly notice me  
you would not see bad bone in me  
so stop your lies and you will see  
the truth of all the inner me



Homelessness like loneliness  
its not so good  
could draw my blood  
but thats a sin  
I cant give in  
must fight the dark thoughts deep within  
I must not stray  
but all I say  
it could be you on streets one day  
So dont you frown  
and dont look down  
dont look at me like im a clown  
coz all i am is just a man  
I live this life as best I can  
I cannot say I get things right  
ut live this world as best I might  
Maybe one day my time will come  
nd then I will not be so glum  
So i must think of happy thoughts  
or else my life comes to nought

Mark used to be homeless, but is now in temporary accommodation in one of the far suburbs of Leeds. During his time in the streets, he's built up quite a network of people from all walks of life, he now knows and has become a bona fide member of the community. Everybody knows Mark and people are happy to pass the time of day with him or help him out with things if they can. He still sits in the community with his spirited (yet friendly!) companion dog Luna. He's a fixture for sure. So much so his presence was immortalised in the Little Woodhouse Community Association tagger's wall art project that was created in the summer of July 2020, which included some lines from his poem.



I had a little chat with Mark and asked him about his poetry...

**I asked him when he started to write poetry:**

*“Since I was a kid. I didn’t really write much at school though. The teachers never embraced my writing because I’m left handed and I was forced to write with my*

*right hand, which made my handwriting scruffy; so they put me in the lower sets for that.*

*Nowadays, they don’t do that. They don’t judge you for it. Everything school did it was because of my writing. Being left handed wouldn’t even effect me now.*

*If I could go back to school now, back to junior level and be a little kid again and go through it all again; I’d do it a hell of a lot better. Even at the level I was at, I still got a GCSE maths.”*

**I asked Mark what inspires him to write:**

*“I write poems when I get bored, but I don’t write much anymore. If I get in a dark place, it’s hard to write. I wrote poems as a kid, because I couldn’t write essays.”*

**I asked Mark what motivates him to continue to write poetry as an adult:**

*“I sometimes write poetry to get things out of me. I also like it because I’m able to rhyme and I buzz off being able to rhyme. People write poetry that doesn’t even rhyme. How is that even poetry!”*

**I asked Mark when he wrote this particular poem:**

*“I wrote this poem ten years ago. I was a chronic alcoholic when I wrote it. I wrote it drunk! They were hard times, but I came through it.”*

I love this poem by Mark. It speaks from the heart to the heart. From his heart to ours. It’s real, honest and even better that it is written in his own handwriting which gives it a more authentic vibration. When I read it, I feel like I am right there in the moment when he wrote it, his words are so vivid.

Article by **Fe**

# HOW THE SEASONS AFFECT CREATIVITY

If shorter days and changes in the weather deplete your energy and make you feel blue, you've got classic symptoms of a seasonal mood disorder. Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) is a form of seasonal depression triggered by the change in seasons that occurs primarily in winter. A theory is that the changing seasons disrupt hormones such as serotonin and melatonin, which regulate sleep, mood, and feelings of wellbeing.

As someone who suffers from Seasonal Affective Disorder the early afternoon darkness of the winter months brings a dark invisible cloud over my mind and emotions. Although, as a keen photographer, winter also



brings many opportunities to increase my portfolio of winter and snow scenes which in turn gives my motivation and imagination a welcome boost.

Thinking about the effect winter has on my moods and emotions I decided to see what effects, both positive and negative, winter has on other people working in creative industries and here are the insights I received...

**Charmaine Riley** (Poet)

*"I struggle with my creativity at any time of year but the greyness and coldness of winter does seem to make it even harder to find the motivation and inspiration to write."*

**Clinton Lofthouse** (Advertising Photographer)  
[www.clintonlofthousephotography.com](http://www.clintonlofthousephotography.com)

*"I think as autumn comes in, as a creative you have to set up your mornings differently. It's easier to fall into a slump because of the dark mornings and dark evenings. I make sure to blast myself with light, and exercise, to wake my body fully and to start the day on a good note. From there I make sure I have a walk as soon as the sun comes up."*



**Nabeela Ahmed** (Writer, Poet & Storyteller)

[www.instagram.com/nabeela\\_\\_ahmed](https://www.instagram.com/nabeela__ahmed)

*“Winter use to make me feel warm and cosy as the nights got longer and you gathered in front of the heater or with a blanket over you. Then something changed a few years ago the thought of winter meant loss of colour in my garden, the grey sky that never goes blue. Leaving the house in the dark and returning in the dark. Cold that made my body ache and a fear of emptiness and no hope that the sunshine brings. In between this dread I manage to fill my heart with all the autumn colours and wait for the snow. As soon as it starts I go for walks and take photos and listen to silence and watch everything become clean and sparkle. Before I know it snow drops appear and I know the daffodils are next and colour and warmth is on its way.”*

**Alexandra Francis** (Artist)

[www.artistalexandrafrancis.online](http://www.artistalexandrafrancis.online)

*“There is nothing more inspiring than creating artwork whilst watching the snow fall from outside of your window. Everything in life is a cycle – how snow melts to water and then freezes over, it is always fluctuating, as does the artwork that I create as part of my artistic practice. The only negative aspect of creating artwork in winter is that if I choose to exhibit my artwork outside, then I feel as though I cannot do so during the winter period, in fear of my work being damaged by the elements.”*

**Satnam Galsain** (Musician)

[www.linktr.ee/satnamgalsian](http://www.linktr.ee/satnamgalsian)

*“During winter, performances tend to be few and far between but I use the time away from performing*

*positively. I practice and focus on making plans for the coming year, working out what needs to be done and how I will achieve my targets for myself as a solo artist and for my band, Kinaara. Being a freelance musician, I am involved in working with different organisations, so even though I’m not performing much I’m still busy working on other projects and I work with Manasamitra as a Social Media / Community Development Coordinator on a freelance basis. This year has been particularly busy and I’m looking forward to a few days break over the festive season.”*

**Amanda Burton** (Multidisciplinary Artist)

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

*“Autumn / winter and the change in season and all it’s colours should be an inspiring time. The change in light levels however really seems to affect my productivity. My most productive hours as an artist have always been in early evenings, sometimes working well into the early hours. As someone who suffers with mental health I find the darker months draining and just as the fiery colours appear on the trees and on the landscape my energy levels seem to slow down. Living in the heart of a big city also means that there is less colour to see and maybe the vibrancy of autumn passes me by as I shelter from the winds and rain. The grey and brick work here seems to remain the same. However, once my body and mind settle into the change in light I usually begin to start work after a month or two. Being born and having lived in the tropics as a child I have always been a summertime person and my work is usually bursting with colour and I feel more energised and inspired.”*

Thanks to everyone who contributed to this article.

Article by **Paul Abraham** of [www.theartfulrambler.com](http://www.theartfulrambler.com)

# 2021 EXHIBITION

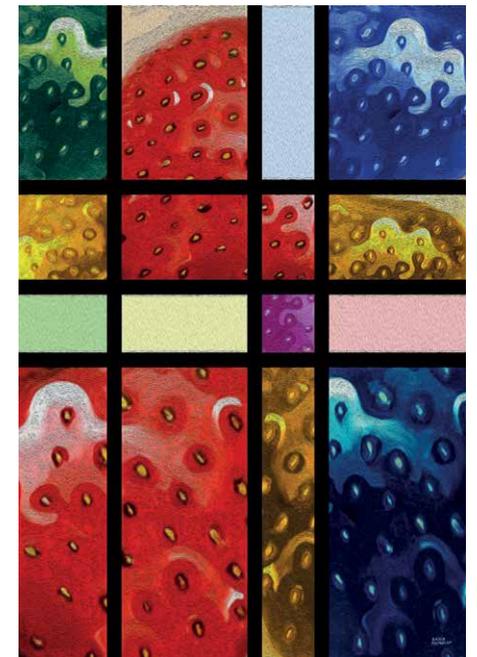
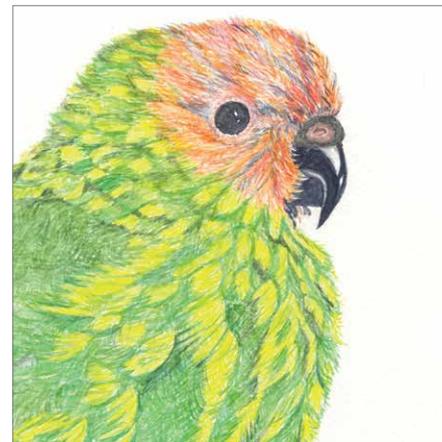
In October, Arts & Minds partnered with CuratorSpace to organise the 2021 annual online exhibition. The exhibition features work by Arts & Minds members and is available to view on the Arts & Minds website: [www.artsandmindsnetwork.org.uk/exhibition-2021](http://www.artsandmindsnetwork.org.uk/exhibition-2021)

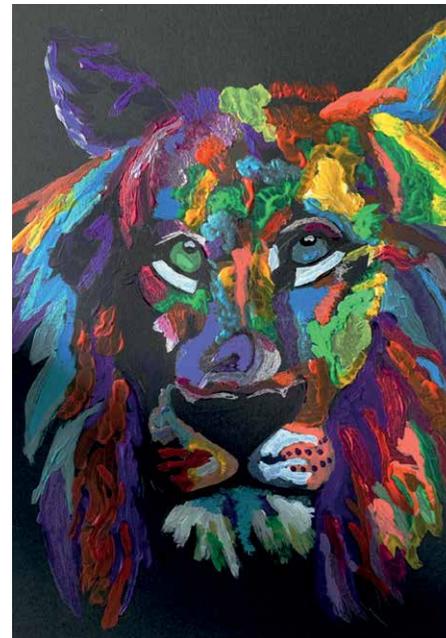
The online format allowed members to show work in a wide range of media and to include larger or more fragile works which might ordinarily be precluded from being shown in a physical venue. All 38 submissions for the exhibition are below and on the following pages. We hope you enjoy this rich display of artwork!

Artwork by (clockwise from top left on each page):

Below **Anjana Dey-Clark; Carrieanne Vivianette.**

Right **Barry Tobin; Cassy Burton; David Keighley; Annette Plummer.**

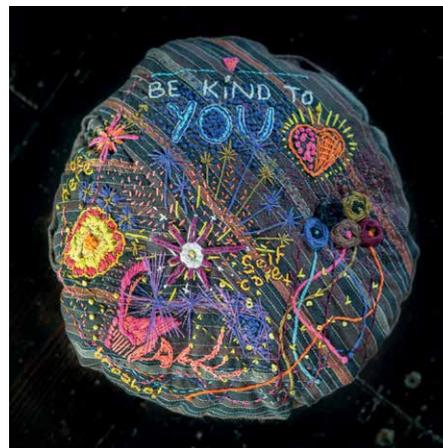




Artwork by (clockwise from top left on each page):

Left **Chloe McGenn; Nicola Meaden; Jane Mullins; Ashley Ferrari.**

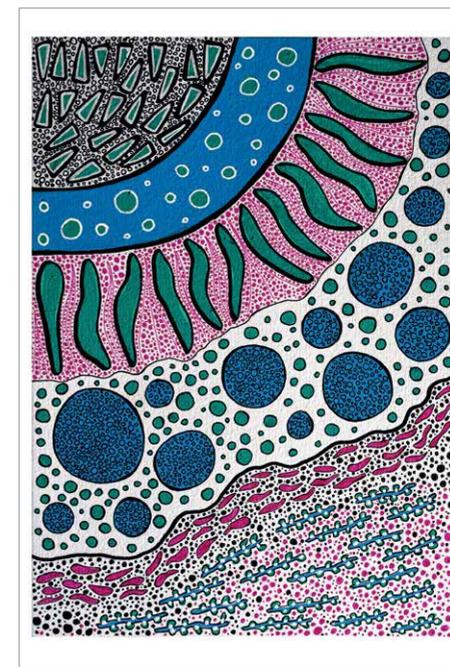
Above **Debbie Crouch; Donna Lawson; Emma Christie; Elaine Mills.**



Artwork by (clockwise from top left on each page):

Left Fe; Geraldine R Montgomerie; Pixiebiscuit; Jodie Beardmore; Jane Gibson.

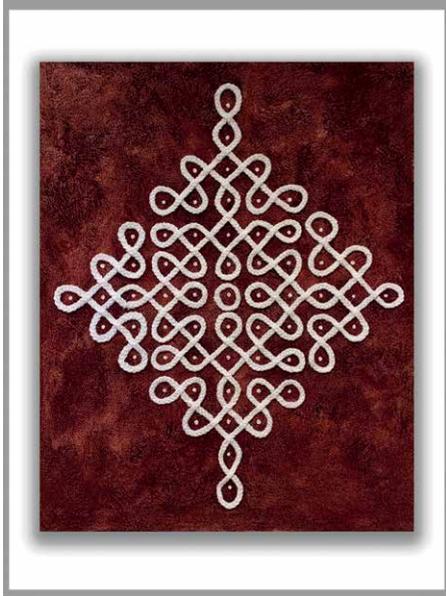
Above Jon Eland; Nicola Garvey; Phillippa Plock; Tim Gomersall; Peter McDonagh; Paul Abraham.



Artwork by (clockwise from top left on each page):

Left     **Julia Holmes; Krystyna Spink; Marlene Chandler; Michelle Love;**  
**Laurence Pusey; Lydia Rain.**

Above   **Maureen Rich; Morticia; Mindy Goose; Natalie Breeze.**



Artwork by (clockwise from top left): Preethi Ravichandran; Sascha; Patrick Hanratty.

## WHAT IS NORMAL?

On the 21st September, writer, poet, performance and graphic artist Sai Murray ran a creative writing workshop exclusively for Arts & Minds members at the Thackray Museum of Medicine. The workshop explored the question 'What is Normal?' using automatic writing techniques to create group poems, two of which you can read below...

### GROUP POEM 1 - WHAT IS NORMAL?

*Is Tuesday normal on a Wednesday?  
 Tomato, tomatoe – fruit or vegetable?  
 Who is to say whether an orange is sweet or bitter?  
 If I don't fit in what happens then?  
 Oh no, what is normal?  
 Am I normal? I hope not.  
 I don't agree with anyone here!  
 But we are still looking at the same thing.  
 My red is your green.  
 Laughter is medicine for the soul.*

### GROUP POEM 2 – WHAT IS NORMAL?

*Tormal, bormal, formal.  
 Quick, quick, slow, slow, slow.  
 Status quo.  
 Following what everyone else does, says.  
 Yard stick of measurement.  
 I offer you the gift of acceptance.  
 Not giving them the acceptance of conforming.  
 Not going against the grain.  
 Is normal actually something we should go back to?*

# SEA WALL FLOWER

This year has been a really hard year for some of my friends and family, we have lost a few loved ones and had to adapt and battle on, regardless of the very worrying times we are all facing.

Sometimes it feels like an uphill struggle just to get up in the morning, getting dressed and having to face another day. Keeping positive is hard to do at times but is a way forward to be able to move on and face more troubling times.

Looking out for and being involved in the little things such as hobbies in which we can lose ourselves in, like drawing, singing, sport or going for a short walk can really help to keep focus on our own wellbeing.

I have had to force my way out of the 'comfort zone' of my four walls and have taken up swimming, walking, painting and a little writing for Arts & Minds all in this last year, so I have drawn an inner strength from these testing times.

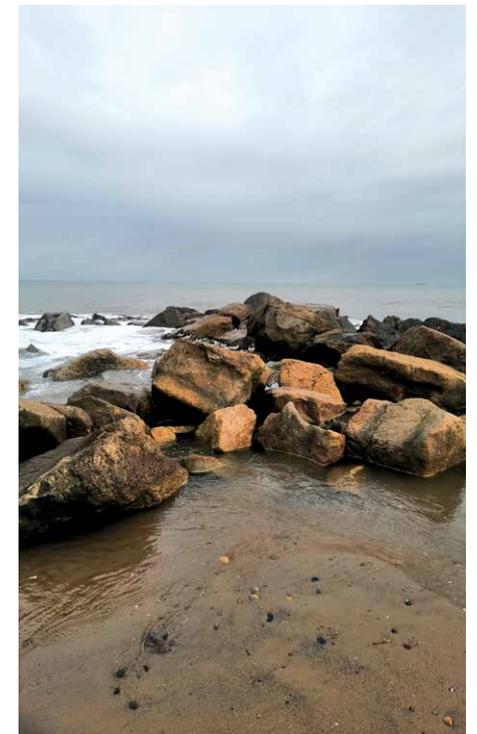
When I was really low in spirit not so long ago, I was lucky to stay in Barmston with a family and decided to do the



six mile walk from there along the beach into Bridlington. At first, I was telling myself I wouldn't make the long walk but within minutes my mind was taken up and distracted by the sights, sounds and smells around me.

I took a few photographs along the way, some happy, some sad but most of interest and intrigue to me. A few were of poor creatures that had passed away and which were caught on the sand at low tide, on the beach, not something I have done before, maybe I am coming to terms with death in a different way. I would usually walk on and not look.

Whilst taking photos of the unforgiving but beautiful sea and the rocks and pebbles, especially the marks and



grooves on them made by the lashing seas, words and feelings started to flood my mind evoking thoughts. I noted them down into my phone and this is where I got the inspiration to write the poem below.

I saw connections between the ferocious destruction that the sea can cause on the landscape and the unwanted traumas I have had bestowed on me in the past. I had to share the feeling so that some other people might relate to the words in my poem.



The sea painting was created by me and it is the first time I have painted the sea. I also took the photographs.

## SEA WALL FLOWER

*I'm like the sea wall, taking on all the recurring motions, knocks and crashes from the unforgiving sea, each cutting in scars, leaving pattern-like harsh grid lines and ruts like deep wounds as a reminder across my surface and skin.*

*I am not invincible and won't be here for ever, even though I feel like I have been here for a thousand years surviving and standing the test of time.*

*My deep scars will never fade, plaster and mortar could never smooth over the cracks which are now porous, weathered and furrowed forever.*

*I will one day become part of the sea, tiny grains and particles diluted into the dark depths.*

*At times I just stare, stare out to the abyss wondering when the next storm will hit gripping and violently trying to break me, I am always hoping I can see through it and recover with vigour.*

*Even though I love and cherish and am part of the enemy that is destroying me, I live in hope and draw strength and focus on the little things that matter, like the sun on my face, the sound of laughter or bird calls on the wind, thus giving me the courage to ride the next challenge that lies ahead of me.*

I hope you enjoy the words and pictures I have put together. Thank you for reading it.

Article by **Cassy Burton**

# PROFILE: JULIE GILL

## CREATING AND GIVING THROUGH MOSAICS

“Life is what you make it” is Julie’s favourite quote and perfectly describes her attitude and drive during the effects of the pandemic and lockdown. Being a self-employed fitness instructor the enforced lockdown could have sapped her strength and enthusiasm, but instead it has enabled Julie to pursue her love of mosaic art and crafting with mosaic tiles. Two one to one workshops with a professional artist and Julie was hooked on a new and exciting vehicle for her artistic talents.

Now a regular at Art and Craft Fairs around Leeds she is quickly building a following with her unique and colourful creations. However this is only part of the “lockdown” story. Being a qualified complementary therapist, Julie is now using the profits from her creative skills to provide free massage and circuit training classes for individuals who would not normally be in a financial position to be able to afford such classes.

The elderly, disabled adults and children are all benefitting from Julie’s expertise and generosity but Julie is also feeling improvements in her own mental health and wellbeing, due to the escape from the pressures of being self-employed in a pandemic with her creative mosaics outlet. As she says “Life is what you make it”!

For more information, please contact Julie on her Facebook page [julie.gill.3720](#) or by text on [07783 786776](#).

Article by **Paul Abraham** of [www.theartfulrambler.com](#)



# WHAT'S ON...

## CONNECT & CREATE

Connect & Create is a monthly group where Arts & Minds members can connect, share skills, and take part in creative workshops led by other members. Each month's offer will be led by a different member and is free to attend. The workshops are on the **first Monday of every month** from **1pm to 3pm** with the exception of bank holidays, in which case they are on the following Monday.

The Connect & Create group meets at Leeds Discovery Centre, Carlisle Road, Leeds LS10 1LB. There is free parking if you are coming by car and the centre is a short walk from town if you are coming by public transport.

For more information, or to sign up for the workshops, email [info@artsandmindsnetwork.org.uk](mailto:info@artsandmindsnetwork.org.uk). Sessions are by RSVP only at the moment and there is a limit on numbers so please get in touch if you want to come along so we can book you a place.



## MAKE SPACE

We would love you to join us at the weekly Make Space Zoom session, where the focus is on connecting with other members, and taking time for yourself to continue with your creative project, poetry or artwork. Bring along a cuppa, and tune in for your time out session between **1.00pm and 2.00pm every Tuesday**.

Arts & Minds started the Make Space during lockdown as a way to stay connected with members while we were not able to meet up in person. Due to the success of the group, and the continued demand for online sessions, we are continuing to run the Make Space group online as other Arts & Minds groups and sessions return to meeting face-to-face.

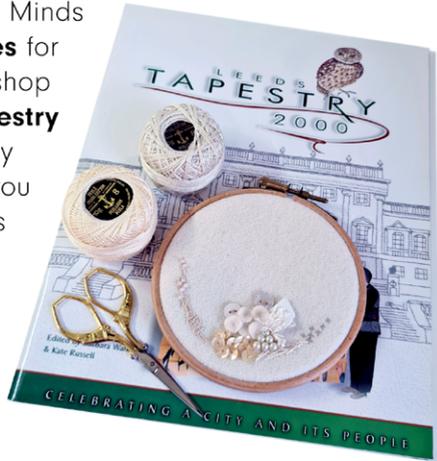
For more information, or to sign up for the sessions, email [info@artsandmindsnetwork.org.uk](mailto:info@artsandmindsnetwork.org.uk). You will be sent a Zoom link to join in with the sessions.



# Doodle Stitching

An **Arts & Minds** event at **Leeds Art Library**

Join textile artist and Arts & Minds member **Hayley Mills-Styles** for this hand embroidery workshop inspired by **The Leeds Tapestry** and beautiful Central Library building. Hayley will show you how to use different threads to create pattern and texture. You can also add embellishments like buttons, beads and sequins to your piece to add some sparkle.



All materials and equipment will be provided and the workshop is suitable for both complete beginners and people with embroidery experience who would like to try something different. As part of the event you will also be taken on a tour of the tapestries and shown around the Art Library.

**15th December 2021 • 1.00pm to 4.00pm**

Venue: **The Drawing Room @ Leeds Art Library**  
Leeds Central Library, Calverley Street, Leeds LS1 3AB

# Doodle Stitching

About **The Leeds Tapestry**

The 16 tapestries on display at Leeds Central Library were created between 1992 and 2002 to celebrate the millennium. They depict a rich tapestry of Leeds life, involving different sectors of the city, each with a separate theme including education, health, transport and industry. They were made using techniques ranging from embroidery to photo printing and rag rugging.

About **The Drawing Room at Leeds Art Library**

The Drawing Room is a creative art and craft studio ideally situated in the Art Library at Leeds Central Library. It actively promotes art and creativity by providing opportunities to explore, create, develop, learn and be inspired by Art Library collections. The Drawing Room is a collaborative and informative space for sharing skills and inspiring creativity in visual arts for the people of Leeds.

Places for the **Doodle Stitching** workshop are limited and are by RSVP only. To book a place on the workshop and tapestry tour please email Jane at [info@artsandmindsnetwork.org.uk](mailto:info@artsandmindsnetwork.org.uk).

You will be sent an email confirming your place and with details of the event. **This event is for Arts & Minds members only.** If you are not a member you can join for free at: [www.artsandmindsnetwork.org.uk/join-us](http://www.artsandmindsnetwork.org.uk/join-us)

[www.artsandmindsnetwork.org.uk](http://www.artsandmindsnetwork.org.uk) • [www.leeds.gov.uk/libraries](http://www.leeds.gov.uk/libraries)

'Doodle Stitching' is a collaboration between **Arts & Minds** and **Leeds Art Library**



Just turn up ... no need to book and it's free

"People start to heal the moment they feel heard"

Cheryl Buchanan

# PeerTalk®

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- ✉ [enquiries@peertalk.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@peertalk.org.uk)
- 📷 [peertalkcharity](https://www.instagram.com/peertalkcharity)

EVERY TUESDAY 6.30<sup>pm</sup> – 8.00<sup>pm</sup>

Fairfax Hall, Room 121,  
Leeds Beckett University,  
Headingley Campus,  
Leeds, LS6 3QT.



The PeerTalk Charitable Foundation, registered charity no.1169830.

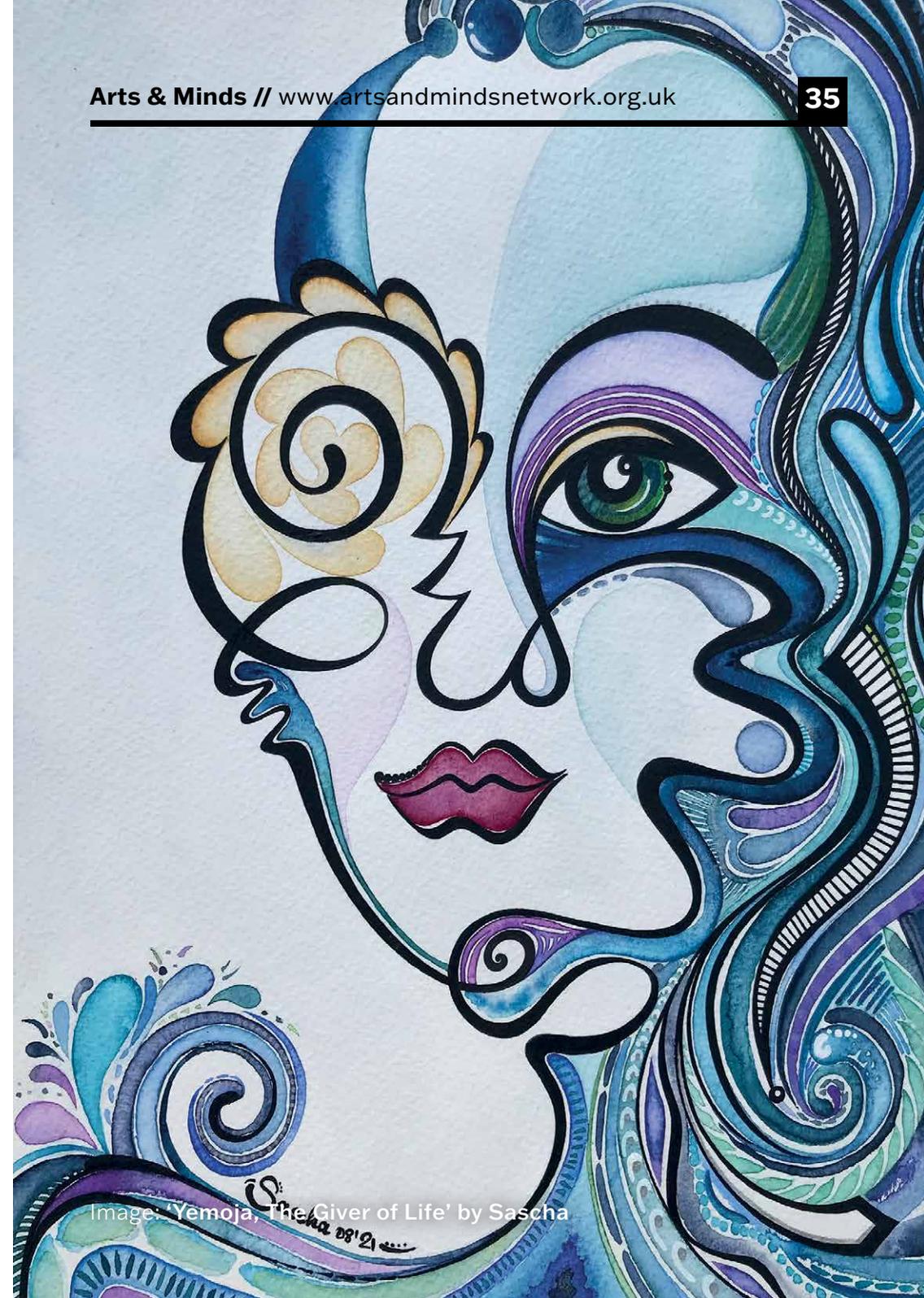


Image: 'Yemoja, The Giver of Life' by Sascha

# About 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 have used mental health services and OTs. We want to get people talking about how the arts can help mental wellbeing.

If you want to know more please contact us using the details below. 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)

**Arts & Minds, 31 Potternewton Lane, Leeds LS7 3LA**

phone: **0113 262 3128**

email: [info@artsandmindsnetwork.org.uk](mailto:info@artsandmindsnetwork.org.uk)

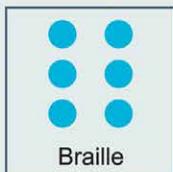
web: [www.artsandmindsnetwork.org.uk](http://www.artsandmindsnetwork.org.uk)

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