



Arts & Minds Newsletter

Autumn 2022

www.artsandmindsnetwork.org.uk

Non-Fungible Tokens

Fe finds out about non-fungible tokens and how they are used to sell digital art (page 6)

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A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to the autumn 2022 edition of the Arts & Minds newsletter. There has been lots going on since the last newsletter including a brilliant event at Temple Newsam, where Arts & Minds member Sandy Holden led workshops in response to the decorative arts at Temple Newsam house, and the annual member's Buzz group.

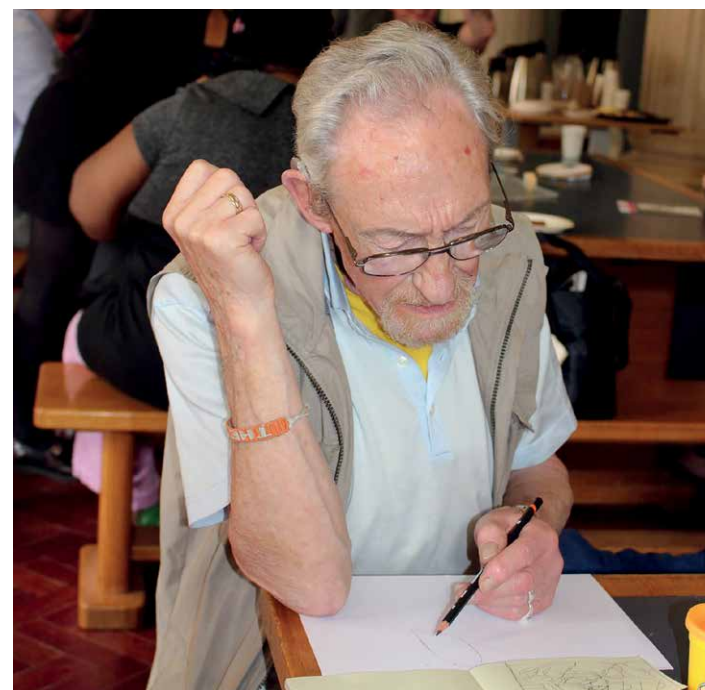
I would like to say a big thank you to all the members who attended the Buzz Group and filled in our online survey, it is hugely valuable getting member's feedback about the work we have been doing, how we can engage with members more and the work you would like Arts & Minds to be doing in the future so please keep the ideas coming!

Please see the What's On section at the back of the newsletter for details about the next Arts & Minds event which will be at Leeds Industrial Museum on Tuesday 20th September. The event will be a fun packed afternoon of printing with a lino cutting workshop, as well as a chance to try different printing techniques, and a tour of the fabulous Industrial Museum.

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. Please also keep checking the Arts & Minds eBulletin and website for more information.

REMEMBERING BARRY FOX

We are sad to announce that Barry Fox has passed away. Barry was an active member of Arts & Minds since its start and regularly featured his beautiful work in our annual exhibition. He was always generous and supportive of other members and volunteered regularly to help hang the show. He was also an enthusiastic attender of Culture Club and enjoyed many trips to theatres and galleries. Barry will be sorely missed, but his artistic legacy will live on. Rest in peace Barry.



SELLING DIGITAL ART USING NON-FUNGIBLE TOKENS

Fe talks to **Steve Manthorp**, an artist working solo and in co-practice with Shanaz Gulzar as ADEPT. He creates large scale public projections, immersive live events, digital art and video games. He is currently creating work using Google's 'Deep Dream' artificial intelligence algorithm, which can be used to create powerful and surreal digital images.

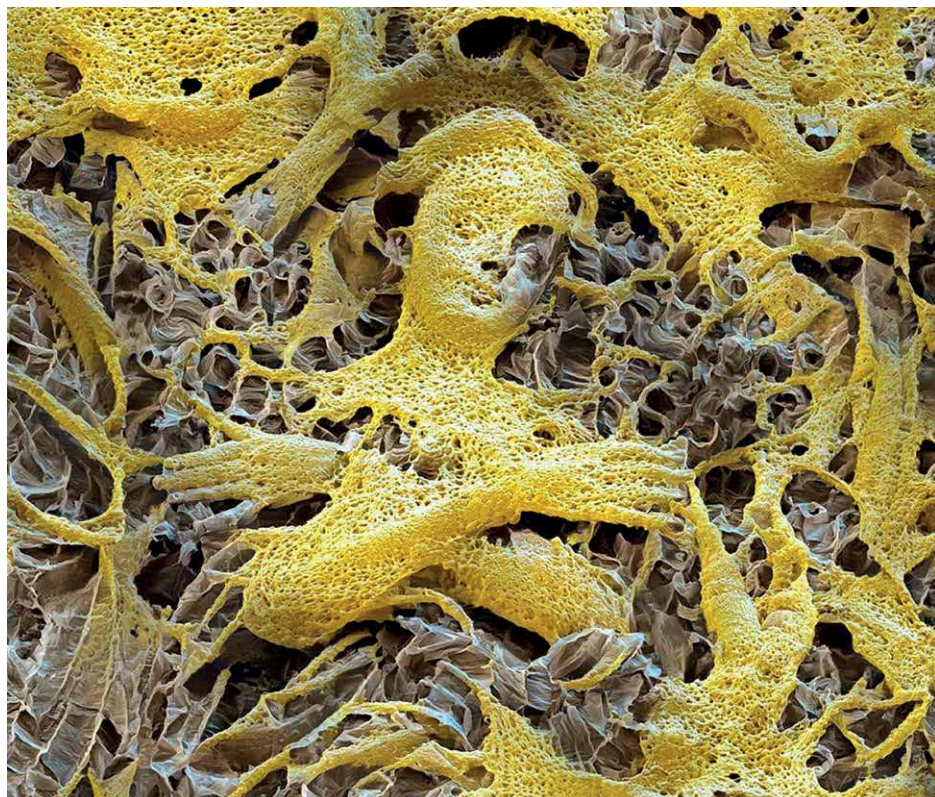


I have no idea what a non-fungible token (NFT) is. What exactly is it?

So first I have to explain blockchain. Blockchain is the thing that makes Cryptocurrencies (digital money) like Bitcoin work. It also powers NFTs. The blockchain is like a giant digital ledger. There are many copies of it distributed all over the internet, and they are all being constantly compared with each other, to make sure they're identical. So the amount of Ethereum I own (Ethereum is another cryptocurrency) is recorded in the blockchain and nobody can change the entry in the ledger. If I buy something with my Ethereum, that's recorded in the blockchain too. Every cryptocurrency transaction gets an entry in the blockchain. The block chain, as you can imagine, is huuuuuge.

That still sounds a little complicated to me. How is blockchain used to sell art?

The big problem selling with any digital art – images, audio, moving image – has been that any digital artefact is reproducible. If I attach a jpg of Lola (my cute new cat) to an email and send it to you, suddenly there are two copies of that image. Well, three as I copied it to my desktop first. In business language, we can say that the three copies of the picture are ‘fungible’, which means that they are absolutely identical, and any one of them could be swapped for any other.



Okay, got ya so far...

So, the value of art depends on its uniqueness. Nobody can dispute the uniqueness of the Mona Lisa because it's quite clearly a unique object: but nobody can say for certain that a digital object is unique because of how easy it is to reproduce. Until blockchain came along, that is.

Aaah, right. That makes sense.

If I want to say that the picture of Lola I send you is the first and original version, I can make an entry in the blockchain which says when and where and how it was made. Once I've made that entry, that particular first copy of the image is now unique, and I can prove that any copies made from it aren't original. So that image is now non-fungible – it's different to any copy made from it, and you can't swap a copy for the original.

Well that's pretty cool. Specifically for digital artists, how does this work?

What that means for digital artists is that they now have a way of making any digital artefact unique: and that gives their work commercial value and gives the artists a way of protecting their work from being reproduced without permission.

NFTs are being used much more widely than just the art world: you can buy Liverpool FC NFTs and Justin Bieber NFTs and NFTs for just about anything you can imagine. What you get for your money is an image – maybe of your favourite player – and an entry on the blockchain that says it's uniquely yours.

Generally, these wider, big business NFTs have been a disaster.

However, for artists, it's different. Artists are trying to make exciting images, and sounds, and videos in the first place. Making them unique is just a way of making their work more commercially attractive. It's a guarantee that the work is original and unique. There's a list of top-selling NFT artists here: www.gothammag.com/top-selling-nft-artists. Artists who first came to fame through other routes are now selling NFTs, too. Damien Hirst has produced a series of his dot paintings which are also NFTs. When you buy one, you have a choice of buying the actual painting itself, or an NFT image of it. If you buy the NFT, the original painting will be destroyed.

Do you think NFTs are a fad or the way if the future?

I don't think that the huge prices that NFTs attracted when they were first launched will last. I think it was just the novelty of them, and the success, at the time, of cryptocurrencies that generated those daft prices. But in May this year, the cryptocurrencies crashed, and people lost faith in them and in NFTs.

I believe that NFTs will continue to be a useful way for artists – especially digital artists – to guarantee the uniqueness and originality of their work; and I think that the use of NFTs in the art market will only grow. Turning a piece of your own work into an NFT is really quite easy and costs very little. There are loads of how-to guides on the web.

Article by **Fe**

POETRY CORNER

The Last Autumn Leaf

The last autumn leaf.
It hangs precarious,
on a big tall tree.
The wind is howling.
The leaf stands firm.
I wish I could help it,
but I'm blown away.
On the winds back.
Can't control the direction it takes.
The wind is fierce,
so I admire the leaf,
clinging onto the life nature gave.
It's facing the elements.
How much can it take?
It's felt the full force.
The wind cries in vain.
No matter what it does,
this leaf is so brave!

Poem by **Daniel White**

Thank you for reading my poem. Yours artistically and autistically, Daniel.

OH BRAVE NEW WORLD: ACCESSIBILITY AFTER LOCKDOWN

It is no secret that COVID-19 worsened our mental health and (not unrelatedly) interrupted our ability to connect through art practices. The end of lockdowns has brought a resurgence in the arts and a concerted effort to address the mental health impact of both the virus itself and the measures put in place to slow its spread. The return to in-person events is giving many people access to vital sources of support and shared creative energy.

Yet, in the midst of this new beginning, there is a new and urgent challenge, which is how we make our spaces, resources, and events accessible to people who have heightened vulnerability to the virus. This is particularly important because the stringent isolation and severe danger of the virus have increased the mental health risks to clinically vulnerable people and their loved ones.

As numerous disabled people have observed, lockdown facilitated accessibility measures, such as the ability to participate remotely. Migrating the bulk of our lives online opened up possibilities for rethinking what disability equity might look like. In the aftermath of government

...lockdown facilitated accessibility measures, such as the ability to participate remotely.

requirements, it is up to organisations and individuals to make use of lessons learned and also to account for the new level of risk that clinically vulnerable people face.

As the partner of a person with a compromised immune system, I've been paying hawk-eyed attention to how arts and mental health organisations in Leeds are making their offerings accessible to people who have heightened vulnerability to COVID-19. Here are some useful practices I have found:

(1) CLEAR INFORMATION

Information about the event space and expected attendance can help vulnerable individuals assess risk. A good example of this is Open Source Arts, which describes its event spaces and its safety measures on a section of its website titled 'COVID-19' and indicates in its advertising whether events will be indoors or outdoors. As the Operations Manager, Myra Rowland, explained to me, *"We think of accessibility as helping people prepare and be able to make decisions about how they could show up to our activities"*.

(2) MESSAGING THAT ACKNOWLEDGES COVID-19

Moving through a world where the signs of COVID-19 have largely vanished can be alienating. Acknowledgement that the virus is still a risk and indication that people are welcome to wear masks can increase the feeling of belonging that is so important to mental wellbeing.

(3) PROVISION OF MASKS AND HAND SANITISER

Some organisations, such as East Street Arts, are continuing to stock sanitising stations. This enables attendees to undertake protective measures and also provides a visual reminder that maintaining accessible shared spaces is a collective responsibility.

(4) SOME SOCIAL DISTANCING MEASURES

Some organisations are still running events with limited numbers, asking participants not to attend if they have COVID-19 symptoms (in some cases, such as the Thackray Museum of Medicine, offering a refund), and making use of well-ventilated spaces.

One strategy that I have yet to encounter is the implementation of social distancing measures such as masks and capped numbers for specific events, enabling vulnerable individuals to attend with reduced risk.

(5) ONLINE EVENTS

Some organisations, such as Arts & Minds and Space2, offer specific events online and others in-person. Occasionally, organisations offer two versions of the same event or stream live performances.

Accessibility after lockdown is both a challenge and an opportunity...

(6) OUTDOOR EVENTS

Some organisations continue to organise outdoor events that enable in-person connection around art while minimising the risks of infection. A good example is The Bookish Stroll, a monthly outdoor book club that meanders gently through wheelchair-accessible parks. Since the likelihood of transmission is lower outdoors, this can also enable some clinically vulnerable people to participate without wearing a mask.

Accessibility after lockdown is both a challenge and an opportunity: the likelihood of future pandemics increases with the ecological destabilisation that climate change causes. Imagining new possibilities for accessibility will increase our resources and deepen our ability to care for one another, to connect through art, and to foster resilience in an unpredictable world.

Article by **Jessica Wright**

LOCKDOWN LEGACY

Covid and especially 'lockdown' was a life-changing time for everyone, but especially for art and crafters and artists overall. Sales streams such as craft fairs and commissions were suddenly brought to an abrupt end. However, for some people the enforced solitude enabled them to either re-ignite a former 'Arty' passion or take up a new hobby in whichever arts and crafts field they felt attracted to.

For myself it has also allowed me to launch my own www.theartfulrambler.com website to share my photographs and articles. Since the restrictions were lifted, there is now a welcome return to arts and craft fairs around West Yorkshire and beyond. Having had stalls at various fairs I have seen a change in approaches both in buyers and sellers. The acceptance of card payments via mobile card readers have helped me in obtaining sales as I know from earlier painful experiences of losing sales because I was only able to take cash payments. Due to the ever-increasing cost of living or the struggle just to survive for some people has resulted in people being extra careful with their money and thinking twice before buying a non-essential item. The sad fact of modern life is the no-brainer of spending your hard-earned cash on food and electric rather than on a piece of art and craft work, however beautiful and tempting, such is the realities of life on 2022. However for me, even if there's not a sale involved, the social inter-connection is brilliant for my mental health and well-being.



I asked some Arts and Crafts stall holders of how things have changed for them in the past couple of years.

Leanne Bell (Illustrator)
[linkedin.com/in/leannerosebell](https://www.linkedin.com/in/leannerosebell)

"The lockdown in a way helped with my store as it gave me time to add products to sell and other people had the time to view it. I also think my online presence was better during lockdown due to having unlimited time to do anything, compared to now where I have to physically go to work and find the time to not only have an online presence but make art for that too. The markets so far have all varied, some being unsuccessful and others amazing. It's nice being able to see peoples reaction to your work, and be able to sell to people you wouldn't have thought had been interested."

Helen Collins (Crafter)www.facebook.com/hezzy69

"I started hiring a stall from a woman in Skipton on a Saturday. This was just after the lockdowns. It was a busy market with coach parties coming in regularly. I then decided to do my own stall at Bramley Mini-Market. The 1st couple of stalls seemed good, a decent footfall. I also started going to working men's clubs and schools but I found that these venues were not right for my items. I then bought a gazebo and introduced more stock onto my stall. Street markets and large galas seemed a better fit for me. At first people were coming out with the intention of spending but since the energy bill crisis I've noticed a big slump in people buying from crafters. Speaking to several stall holders on various different venues they agree that people are being a lot more careful with money and tend to browse a lot more or look at cheaper items, although as they browse they take the time to be very complimentary about the crafts which really is so lovely to hear!"

Victoria Husseywww.vanityscareart.com

"The covid lockdown helped me increase my sales! As I had the time to perfect my website and make it easier to shop from. Prior to this I had mostly been selling things direct through Instagram as my website wasn't quite ready, I had only just started Vanity Scare a few months before, so it was only early days at this point. I spent a lot of time growing my online presence through lockdown. I did have quite a few Instagram followers before lockdown



but I was able to grow this massive over time. I think this has been a massive benefit to my business in the long term, I made valuable contacts online during this time which have been useful after the lockdown ended. I have found that the footfall at fairs was up and down during 2021, however, in 2022 things seem much more back to normal, the fairs I have attended recently have been quite busy and I hope that this continues in the future."

Anji Dey Clark (Artist and Designer)www.anjanadeyclark.com

"Lockdown affected my sales because I couldn't do face-to-face art fairs from which I make most of my sales. I've only sold once through my website, and that's only because they saw me at an art fair! It didn't do anything for my online presence. I'm not very good at all that really; promotion and all that is not me - I'm an artist, not

a business woman. Since coming out of lockdown It's been fantastic! I say that but that's just been in the case of the last two I did where in total I made a lot of money. However, on the whole, I don't make good sales each time I do a fair. It really varies."

Alexandra Francis (Artist)
www.artistalexandrafrancis.online

"I found that when I have been exhibiting my artwork as part of art walks, that in the first year of covid, people were reluctant to buy artwork from me, and that seemed to be a common occurrence during the art-walks that I attended. In 2021 however, I began to have sales once again, particularly focussing on my time spent as an exhibiting artist as part of the Horsforth Walk of ART. I realised during the art walks that visitors were more inclined to purchase small keyrings and sculptures as opposed to the larger, and somewhat more expensive pieces. I sell the majority of my artwork on art-walks, so during the lockdowns I did not make any sales online, which was ok, as it gave me the opportunity to create more fresh and new pieces of artwork. I felt like it improved my online presence as there seemed to be more opportunities to exhibit your work on the internet as opposed to at a physical venue, especially during the lockdowns. This meant that my artwork was being exhibited to a wider audience and thus felt that I had received more traffic to my website and social media accounts, which then resulted in further opportunities becoming available to me."

Article by **Paul Abraham** of www.theartfulrambler.com

MAKE SPACE

Make Space was set up as a weekly meeting not long after the start of the pandemic when all in-person meetings stopped. By my reckoning that means it's been going for about two and a half years now. In that time at the online meetings a lot of chat has been had, a lot of tea has been drunk, and a lot of things worked on.

For those of us not able to make in person meetings or workshops it's an opportunity to take time out for creativity during the day whether we're at home or at work. It's an informal get together and a chance to have a bit of a breather and work on something be that a drawing, a





piece of sewing, felting, knitting – whatever people have felt like doing, but although the meeting is called Make Space, you don't have to be making anything, you can come along just to chat – it's whatever people feel most comfortable doing and you don't have to put your camera on if you don't want to.

It's not like a workshop where there is someone teaching a technique but there is always the chance to ask for informal advice on how best to sew something or where's good to get patterns, art materials and how best to use them or to ask for feedback on something you're working on. Knitting is my chosen activity for the hour on Tuesday lunchtimes – I find knitting a good way to help quieten the anxiety I usually feel. During the time I've been attending I've knitted booties, little creatures, and lots and lots of dishcloths. Other attendees embroider, colour in or make collages.

I look forward to Tuesdays as I know that lunchtime I'll see friendly faces from the comfort of my own home without having to have stood at the bus stop getting cold or wet

in order to see them. Not having to think about travelling time and transport costs has made it much easier for me to attend regularly plus as it's an online meeting I'm not worrying about how well ventilated the room is or how busy it's going to be or who I'll be sat next to – all of which make me anxious about attending events in person.

It would be lovely to see more faces at the meeting though - all you need to take part is internet access and the Zoom meeting details which you can get by emailing info@artsandmindsnetwork.org.uk and asking for them, we can also give you help on how to use Zoom if you need it. Plus, if you want something to do whilst you're at the meeting but you're not sure what to do, have a look at the Make Space page on the Arts & Minds website for some links to colouring in pages and how to videos.

I'll be at the next meeting with knitting needles in hand and I hope to see more of you there soon.

Article by **Morticia**

LINKS TO RESOURCES:

Various how to knit videos on YouTube (just search "how to knit for beginners" in the YouTube search box) as well as lots of other art and craft ideas and tutorials:

www.youtube.com

Free colouring in pages:

www.printablefreecoloring.com

www.coloringhome.com

www.justcolor.net

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. 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 have returned to meeting face-to-face.

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



PRINT WORKSHOP

An Arts & Minds event at Leeds Industrial Museum

Join **Arts & Minds** for an afternoon of printing inspired by the fabulous **Leeds Industrial Museum**. Supported by **Seagulls Reuse**, participants will be shown how to make their own linocut artwork as well as learning about and trying different printing techniques.

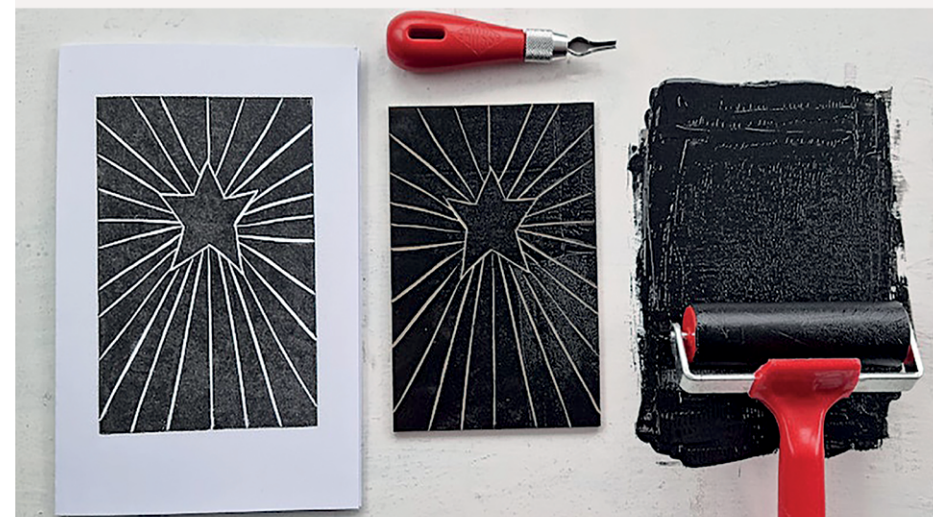
All materials and equipment will be provided and the workshop is suitable for both complete beginners and experienced artists who want to try something new. As part of the event you will also be taken on a tour of Leeds Industrial Museum where you will discover the industrial heritage of Leeds including collections of textile machinery, printing equipment and much more!

Light refreshments will be served both before and in-between the workshop and tour.

Tuesday 20th Sept 2022 • 12.30pm to 4.30pm

Venue: **Leeds Industrial Museum**
Canal Road, Leeds LS12 2QF

PRINT WORKSHOP



Places for the **Leeds Industrial Museum** event are limited and are by RSVP only. To book a place on the workshops please email Jane at: info@artsandmindsnetwork.org.uk

You will be sent a confirmation email with all the details for the day. This event is for Arts & Minds members only. If you are not an Arts & Minds member you can join for free at: www.artsandmindsnetwork.org.uk/join-us

www.artsandmindsnetwork.org.uk
www.museumsandgalleries.leeds.gov.uk/leeds-industrial-museum
www.seagullsreuse.org.uk

This event is a partnership project between **Arts & Minds** and **Leeds Industrial Museum** supported by **Seagulls Reuse**



Leeds Industrial Museum



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**

email: **info@artsandmindsnetwork.org.uk**

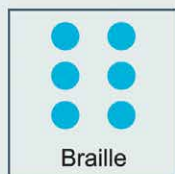
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