

Arts & Minds Newsletter

Autumn 2023

www.artsandmindsnetwork.org.uk

REFLECTIONS

REFLECTIONS

An anthology of poetry by Arts & Minds members
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A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to the Autumn 2023 edition of the Arts & Minds newsletter. There has been lots going on since the last edition including a brilliant event at Hyde Park Picture House where Arts & Minds members had a go at creating their own movie sound effects and had a look around the newly refurbished cinema. Please see the What's On section at the back of the newsletter for details about the next Arts & Minds event which will be a Mini Masterpieces Workshop at Northlight Arts Centre in response to the annual Arts & Minds members edition that will be on display there from the 11th to the 30th October. During the event Arts & Minds members will get the chance to create their own small scale masterpieces!

The edition also has a strong poetry theme with Jacob's article on the next page, in which he gives the reader an insight into his creative writing process, and a look back at the recent 'Reflections' poetry project run by Rommi Smith at Leeds Art Gallery on page 16.

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.

MY PROCESS OF POETRY WRITING

WRITING, INSPIRATION & THEMES

The process of crafting a poem is a journey that I approach with a commitment to natural flow. Often at the most inconvenient time (such as driving or falling asleep) an idea for a poem, line or structure will come to me, demanding immediate attention and capture. I then collate these fragments of similar topics and concepts and attempt to weave them into something at least slightly coherent. Writing for me really is a constant process. If I decided to stop writing, I'd last about twelve minutes. I can't stop. It's an addiction, a compulsion, the only sense of a true identity I have, and a never-ending process. It's both a blessing and a curse.

A poem can stem from a line or couplet, a title idea or simply a vivid image or emotion I wish to project. My work also often holds a rhythmic quality with a strong metre – sometimes this is planned and written before the words themselves. A poem I have written and performed this year titled 'Quarry Hill' is an example of this, as the words were orchestrated to fit within the flow of the poem.

My inspiration for writing comes from many places, but primarily in two ways: my observations of people and places within my immediate sphere, and from artistic mediums,



particularly music, poetry, and film. I love writers, lyricists and ideas that focus on ideas of Confessionalism and Romanticism, as well as just about anyone who is daringly unique. This is increasingly hard to find. In my eyes, monotony is the artist's worse enemy, and something I work very hard to avoid in the media I consume. Morrissey, Anne Sexton, Christina Rossetti and Stuart Murdoch are just some of the many names who have influenced my writing a great deal. I never intend to be influenced by something – it simply happens or it doesn't.

As with most elements of my writing, there are no set themes or pre-determined notions. It remains firmly an unmechanical process and therefore is resistant to over-planning. I do however have certain styles and paths that

I like to use and follow. My poetry almost always rhymes (sorry, contemporaries), and wordplay with notions that could be perceived in different ways. I adore the more cryptic and enigmatic side of expression and writing, and frequently try to use this to create something different and interesting to readers. My interest in etymology and traditional English culture often fuels and adds something to my writing. I am guided by principles of authenticity and realism; if it isn't honest and completely true to me, it isn't worth writing.

There are certainly recurring themes in my work – but this is never purposeful. Clearly, I think about some things more than others! When looking to put together a collection of poetry, I seek to find similar threads and connections between poems, in order to ensure an anthology that exudes unity rather than randomness.

EDITING

I only have a few golden rules when it comes to editing my poems. When something isn't quite having the intended effect, I often break it down and work out exactly what is and isn't working – whether this is the language or the structural framework. Reading aloud often helps during this stage, and is useful for ironing out any creases and parts that might not fit. I also make sure I'm never too precious or protective of a poem, structure or idea. If it doesn't work and have strong potential early in the writing process, I try not to waste too much time persisting with it, it's important to me not to create something false or something I resent. I'm also incredibly careful and



selective with who I'll share my work with at this early stage, and often I don't share it at all until I feel it's ready.

There is no set editing time for a poem, and this varies greatly. Sometimes I am happy with a poem after one draft, and others take months of tweaking.

THE FINAL PRODUCT

Ultimately, the poems that I feel are strong enough, and meaningful enough to me are published in books and online, and earning spots in my setlists for live performance. To date I have two published collections of poetry, *'The Things They've Never Seen'* and *'Every Night is November'*, alongside other works of recorded poetry. I had the opportunity to showcase my poetry further this year, as I embarked on my second UK tour in July and August. It was another fantastic experience to perform new work and meet new people.

I am also working on a third complete collection of poetry, to be released next year. I am hoping it will be my best yet.

Article by **Jacob Davis**

QUARRY HILL

I slogged through the storm, my oh my
At Quarry Hill, that was my life
How dare I ask why, as I watch my flesh mesh into time.
All of autumn nestles in your hair, whereas, I...

Smirked just slightly – upon Normanton by-pass
But I swear, no further than that could I laugh
I'm so easily sold by a smile, you'd only have to ask
To count each regret inside, these given-up, scarlet-shot eyes.

I find it odd; we decide not to think too often of our heartbeats
Or where we go when we fall asleep
I don't emerge from darkness, I drown in spite,
Somehow each day, you survive, whereas, I...
Am on the floor, my oh my
At Quarry Hill, I saw irony coated recklessness I try so hard to justify
I could beg why, or just watch you as I bleed out and die
And if I don't run now, this might go on all night...

...

Because I'm sure once you looked me in my boyish eyes
And I....
Didn't feel such pain, upon the lap of that delight.
My reality now, is to come and go with time
Watch me! Watch me! See me... pass by
Too late.

I swept as God wept, my oh my
At Quarry Hill, I dropped to the pavement that night
Huge problem, I might even love you and I'm
Not entirely sure of anything, that's mine
Anymore.

JACOB DAVIS

A NEW CHAPTER

I'm writing this article as both a new and old Arts & Minds volunteer. New in the sense that I've never written for them before so having something in the newsletter is exciting, and old in the sense that I've been involved with numerous Arts & Minds events in the past, either as an organiser or musician / performer, or sometimes both. It's nice to be involved again.

The pandemic has obviously been a very challenging time for people from all walks of life for an infinite number of reasons. A lot of friends of mine have struggled with the social isolation that the lockdowns brought. I must admit I was more comfortable with that than most, and spent the time writing blogs and recording music. Bouts of severe depression and anxiety over the years have meant I've had to become content being an introvert and being OK in my own company.



But that has unfortunately meant that returning to things post pandemic has proven challenging. Before covid, I used to frequently play open mics and gigs, either as a solo acoustic guitarist or a drummer for other acts. That was just what I did and for the most part I loved it. The lockdowns inevitably forced me to back away from all that, and getting back into it has been really tricky. I've done the occasional open mic here and there but I still need to reacclimatise myself. Pre-existing anxiety has made that even harder.

So it's been really good for me to get involved with Arts & Minds again, and I've been genuinely grateful for the opportunity. Back in 2021 I got an email about a project called 'Behind The Scenes', a collaboration with Leeds Art Gallery. A small group of artists (and in my case a musician) created new work inspired by certain works in

the gallery. Having already made tongue drum albums over the previous two years, I ended up writing and recording an EP that got featured in an exhibition at the gallery itself. The whole project was great fun, and also a great way to socialise again.



From that, I've been getting back into photography and digital art which is creating its own opportunities. I've managed to get artwork in an exhibition for the first time at Northlight Arts Centre in Chapel Allerton. I doubt this would have happened if not for previous Arts & Minds involvement. It's opened doors I didn't even know were there.

I recently got involved with a workshop with Arts & Minds and SongPath, where I had the chance to play music at Kirkstall Abbey. It's not every day you get to do that! Following a really welcoming volunteer picnic, I'm now writing for the newsletter. I'd highly recommend getting involved in Arts & Minds. It's really helping my mental health overall. I'm personally really excited about what might be round the corner.

Article by **Dave Lynch**

www.phoenixtonguedrum.bandcamp.com

CHANGES WHICH REIGNITED A FORMER PASSION

Life throws many challenges and enforced changes at us during our life and this was even more evident as we faced the pandemic and forced lockdown. We all had to readjust and while this was a challenge, it also gave us the opportunity to use the enforced 'leisure' time to our advantage. For many people it gave them the opportunity to return to hobbies which had been neglected for some years and rekindle the enjoyment it once gave.



One such person was Phil Crann, who once held the position at Rank Film Laboratories, of Film Technician (Viewer). It was his responsibility to view the 16mm 'daily rushes' as they came in from Yorkshire TV or the BBC, or indeed any other film production company. The 16mm negative films were processed through the lab, to produce either positive 'rushes', or 'A' and 'B' rolls



for editing. He would report on any camera, or film stock defects to the relevant camera man, so that a decision could be made as to whether they might need to re-shoot a sequence. He viewed productions such as Jimmy's (hospital documentary), The Beiderbecke Tapes (drama), and jet engine tests, amongst others.

Working from home during lockdown and with extra time on his hands, Phil decided to return to his love of painting, which in the past (between 1979-1982) had included replicating a rendition of 'étoile du matin' or 'Star of the Morning', a famous Art Nouveau piece by Alphonse Mucha on the family bathroom door, when he left home he took the door with him, thankfully for everyone else, he replaced the door with one from their kitchen! While Alphonse probably used oil paints on canvas, Phil's effort was produced with household gloss paint on the door!

His first efforts removed the rustiness of his brush strokes and his artistic eye was soon focusing on bigger and more technically challenging projects. A bonus for Phil, and other budding artists at this time was the showing on BBC4 of the Bob Ross 'The Joy of Painting' series. Each

episode was filmed in real time and showed Bob creating a completed painting in thirty minutes which encouraged viewers to try new things and enjoy themselves.

As lockdown eased Phil started to attend an Art group in Pudsey. While no hands on training was given, it enabled each painter to work at their own pace and exchange tips and ideas with fellow enthusiastic artists in a non-competitive atmosphere. The group which meets every Monday between 1.30pm and 3pm at the Pudsey Wellbeing Centre was the brainchild of Geoff Lea, an artist of immense talent with a passion for encouraging people to enjoy participating in art. When Geoff sadly passed away recently the group, being keen for the group to continue, asked Phil to take over the running of the class, especially as their exhibition was fast approaching. Despite not being an art teacher in the formal sense, his passion for art and being a natural communicator as a former systems trainer, he was the obvious choice and he is enjoying the role and looking at ways to encourage more people to take up their brushes again and create.

Their exhibition took place in late July and was a great success with art lovers from near and far attending and purchasing many of the works on show and available for sale. Should you wish to join or learn more about this group, please contact Pudsey Wellbeing Centre or call in to one of the sessions where you'll receive a warm and friendly welcome. The centre is based at 23 Robin Lane, Pudsey LS28 7BR.

Article by **Paul Abraham**

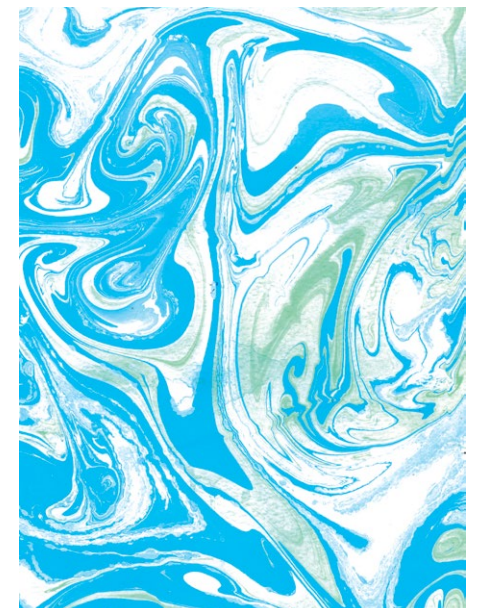
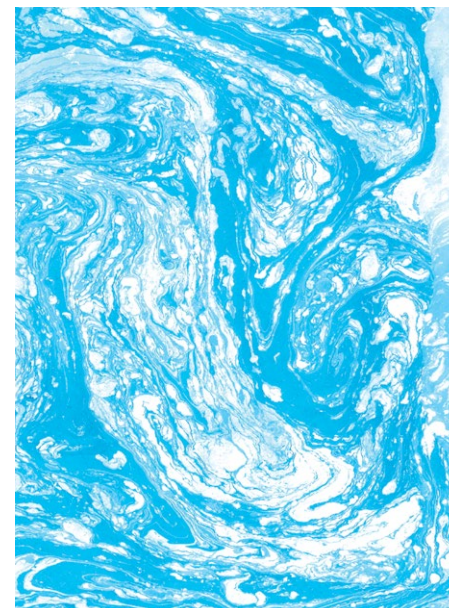
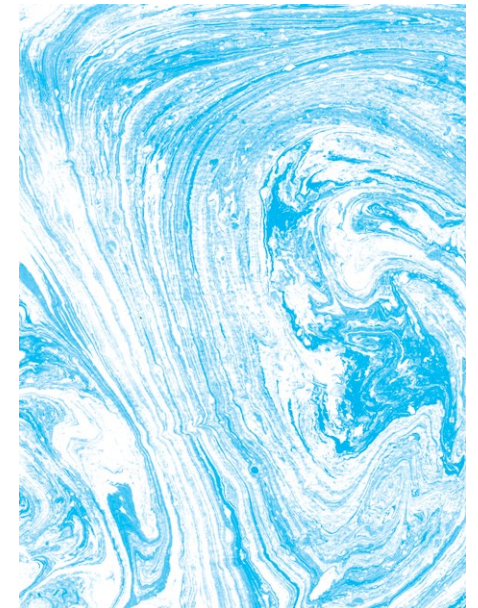
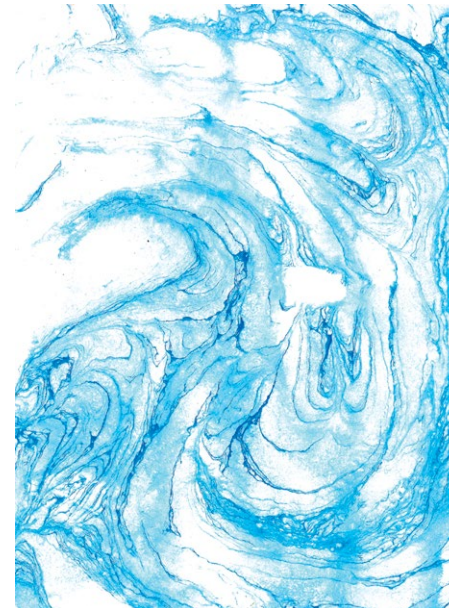
www.theartfulrambler.com

REFLECTIONS

'Reflections' anthology of poetry was published in July 2023 after months of hard work by members of Arts & Minds Network working with award-winning poet and performer Rommi Smith. Members were invited to respond to the exhibitions showing at Leeds Art Gallery in February and March 2023, and to focus on those that related to the theme of the sea. Exhibitions included: Object, Space, Time; The Leeds Artists Show; and the permanent collection of the Ziff Gallery.

Object, Space, Time was an exhibition curated by Nigel Walsh that explored the work of John Tunnard and his peers through themes of water, the sea and their relationship to land. Flowing through the ethos of the space was the invite to slow down, dwell and let your imagination wander. The Leeds Artists Show showcased artworks created by 90 artists from across the city. The exhibition featured drawing, painting, photography, performance, sculpture, textiles, film and video and celebrated the richness and diversity of the city's art scene. The Ziff Gallery features aspects of the Gallery's permanent collection and includes several works by Victorian artists related to the sea.

Nigel Walsh introduced the group to the inspiration, themes and narrative of the exhibition Object, Space, Time. This was followed by a series of poetry workshops led by writer Rommi Smith, where participants were enabled to shape their own written responses to the



collection. Members' experience of poetry and creative writing varied hugely from those that had no experience to those that had.

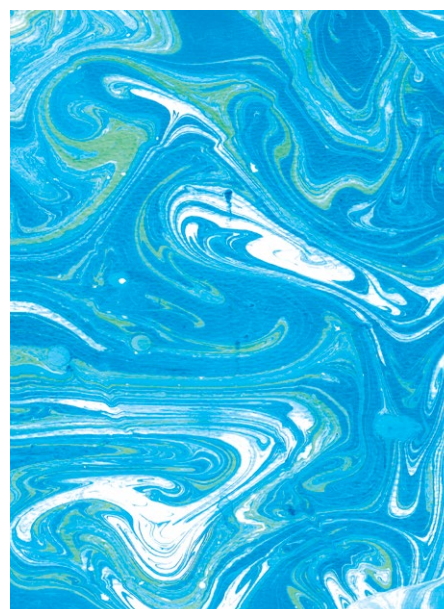
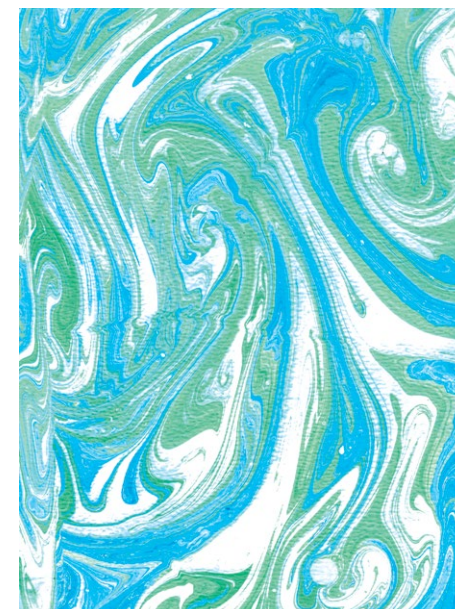
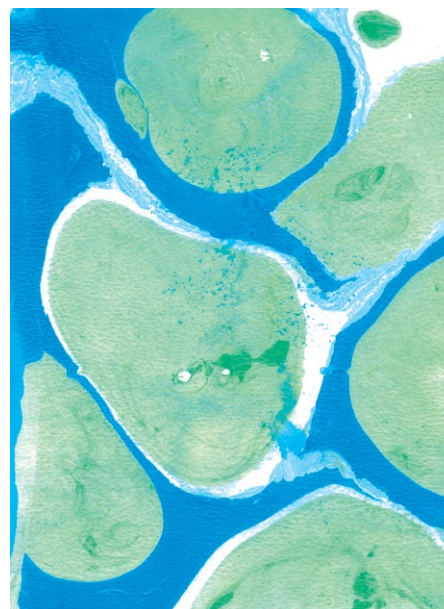
Many group members described the positive benefits the project had on their mental health, as well as their increased confidence, knowledge, and skills to write poetry. Participants also created the artwork that features in the book and directed the book's shape and format. The poems follow the order of the workshops, as the group wanted the book to illustrate how their work had evolved over the course of the project.

Reflections is packed with a rich variety of styles and approaches, and contains a fresh, raw collection of poems by new and emerging writers that will delight and surprise the reader. We hope that this eclectic work also gives readers new insights into the Gallery's collections, helping you see them anew, and even inspires your own poetry.

This project was a collaboration between Arts & Minds Network and Leeds Art Gallery, joint funded by both partners. Many thanks to all who made this beautiful book possible. Special thanks to the amazing writers, and to Rommi for revealing this rich vein of undiscovered talent. Some of the poems from the book are included for you to read over the next few pages.

Reflections was a partnership project between Arts & Minds and Leeds Art Gallery

LEEDS
ART
GALLERY



THE VOICE OF THE SEA

Fanning out, the sea's movement is guided
by constraints of boundaries
and points of passage,
ferocity of wind or gentleness of a breeze
an enduring reminder of its capriciousness.

Darkness settles on restless waters
where reflected light dances atop gentle ripples,
here a patch of gold, there a hint of green.
Moving, teasing

before sliding back in the shadowy water
only to rise again, like wet claws
beaconing landlubbers to search again
for rhythmic lights that delight the eye,
provide merriment.

But it keeps not its promise.
Ripples swell, reflections fracture
The sea now threatening,
dark, disturbing, deceitful.

Robbing all of illusion of safe passage
It's strength roars,
It will not be constrained
Its movements, mystery and light, cannot be controlled.

Like the Sea, I must be free
and you must discover
your own ebbs and flows.

MAUREEN RICH

SPIRIT OF THE SEA

I push towards the surface
so the nymphs can float in me –
They tread my water and levitate
Looking towards the oncoming ship.

The sirens beckon the sailors
Towards the abyss of my unknown
Depths. I hit the ship with
All my force, the ship crashes into

The Mermaids Rock, breaking up
Into pieces. The men fall into the
Beckoning arms of the sirens –
Who hold them up for a short,

Blissful time. As the ship breaks,
The sailors try desperately to hold
on, trying to find the support of
The mermaids, the Nymphs, the Sirens.

Flailing arms splash frantically in
My waters. There is a gravitational
pull as the Sirens spirit lure the men
into my cold waters. Tempting, enticing,

Attracting, coaxing, alluring, persuading.
I press hard against the gasping,
Rapturous, drowning bodies
Until their spirits conjoin with
the Sirens spirit.

JANE AUSTWICK

OPENNESS

I have darkness within me
I am black sea
I shall draw you into my world
I am in conflict
I have the sun burning within me
You can see yellow burning within me.

But to say I am darkness and light
is rather simplifying the issue.
I am blue, green and red.

I appear to be a blank canvas,
a white sky,
but it would be a mistake to think
I need some depth,
you are missing out on the
blue, red and yellow within the white sky.

HALIMA MAYAT

‘Reflections’ is on sale now!

A limited printed run of ‘Reflections’ has been produced which are available to buy for £5 at Leeds Art Gallery. Please contact clare.jolley@leeds.gov.uk for copies. All proceeds will go towards further writing workshops at Leeds Art Gallery.

UNTITLED 2

can feel the sand between my toes here,
no-one shouts ‘pick your feet up’
free of heavy boots
wandering along the sea’s edge
watching it retreating, forwarding, forwarding, retreating
cloud-watching without terror
specks in the sky are just birds circling on thermals
concrete scars are barnacle and seaweed-softened
soothed by the sea, forwarding, retreating, retreating,
forwarding
golden even on an overcast day

MORTICIA



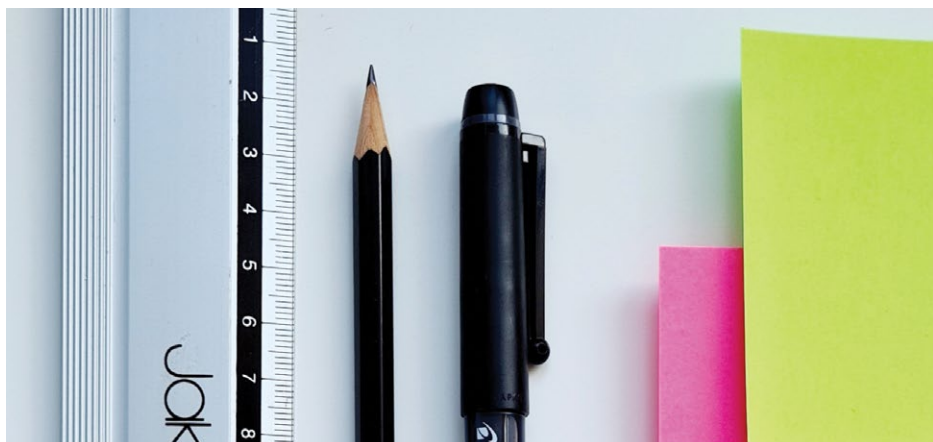
WHAT'S ON...

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 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.



SPOTLIGHT

ARTS & MINDS ANNUAL EXHIBITION GOES LIVE... AGAIN!

This year, the annual Arts & Minds Annual Exhibition will take place in the real world again, after a three-year hiatus when covid pushed us online. This will be the 18th year of the show with Arts & Minds members showcasing their work at the fabulous Northlight Arts Centre.

Spotlight will open on 11th October, after World Mental Health Day, and will run until 30th October. We hope the exhibition will be a timely reminder of the important role creativity can play in people's wellbeing and recovery. However, this is not just an exhibition about mental illness, it is about the wellbeing of all. There will be some great work on display so come down and have a look!



Northlight Arts Centre

31 Potternewton Lane
Chapel Allerton
Leeds LS7 3LW

Phone: 0113 212 9097

Northlight Arts Centre is open Monday to Friday from 11am to 6pm as well as on some weekends dependent on events. It is a friendly and informal space where you can drop by and get coffee and cake from the cafe, relax and enjoy the art on display.

Mini MASTERPIECES

An **Arts & Minds** event at **Northlight Arts Centre**

Join us for a **Mini Masterpieces Workshop** at Northlight Arts Centre. The workshop will be an immersive art experience inspired by the Arts & Minds exhibition 'Spotlight' and hosted by the talented artist and Northlight studio holder, **Monair Hyman**.

- Explore and discuss the exhibition as a source of inspiration.
- Delve into techniques such as mark making and color mixing.
- Create your own mini masterpieces with Monair's guidance.

Whether you're a novice or an experienced artist, this workshop promises a fabulous creative experience. Come join us, express your artistic self, connect with a community of passionate individuals, and let your creativity shine! Light refreshments will be served before and during the workshop and a wide array of art materials will be provided for you to experiment with.

Tuesday 17th October 2023 • 12.00pm to 4.30pm

Venue: **Northlight Arts Centre**
31 Potternewton Lane, Leeds LS7 3LW

About Northlight Arts Centre

Northlight Arts Centre hosts an array of courses, workshops, and exhibitions that encourage the exchange of ideas, bringing together seasoned artists and enthusiastic beginners alike. Northlight is dedicated to promoting creativity, engaging the community, and contributing to the cultural development of the people of Leeds.



How to book a place

Places for the **Mini Masterpieces Workshop** are limited and are by RSVP only. To book a free place on the workshop 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.northlightartscentre.org.uk

This event is a partnership project between **Arts & Minds** and **Northlight Arts Centre**



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**

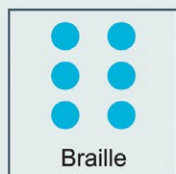
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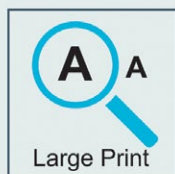
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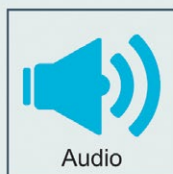
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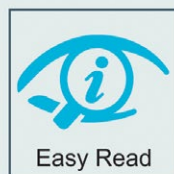
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