



# Arts & Minds Newsletter

## Spring 2025

# CONTENTS

## 4. FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to the Spring 2025 Arts & Minds newsletter

## 5. FEEL THE FEAR AND DO IT ANYWAY!

Paul recalls how he got involved with Arts & Minds

## 8. 2025 AWAITS

Jacob gets up, gets out and gets involved in the new year

## 12. NO FUSS PHOTOGRAPHY FOR EVERYONE

Paul plans a new community photography group

## 16. ONWARDS AND UPWARDS

Dave contemplates his approach to the new year

## 18. ARTS & MINDS MEMBERS RESPOND TO EXHIBITION WORK

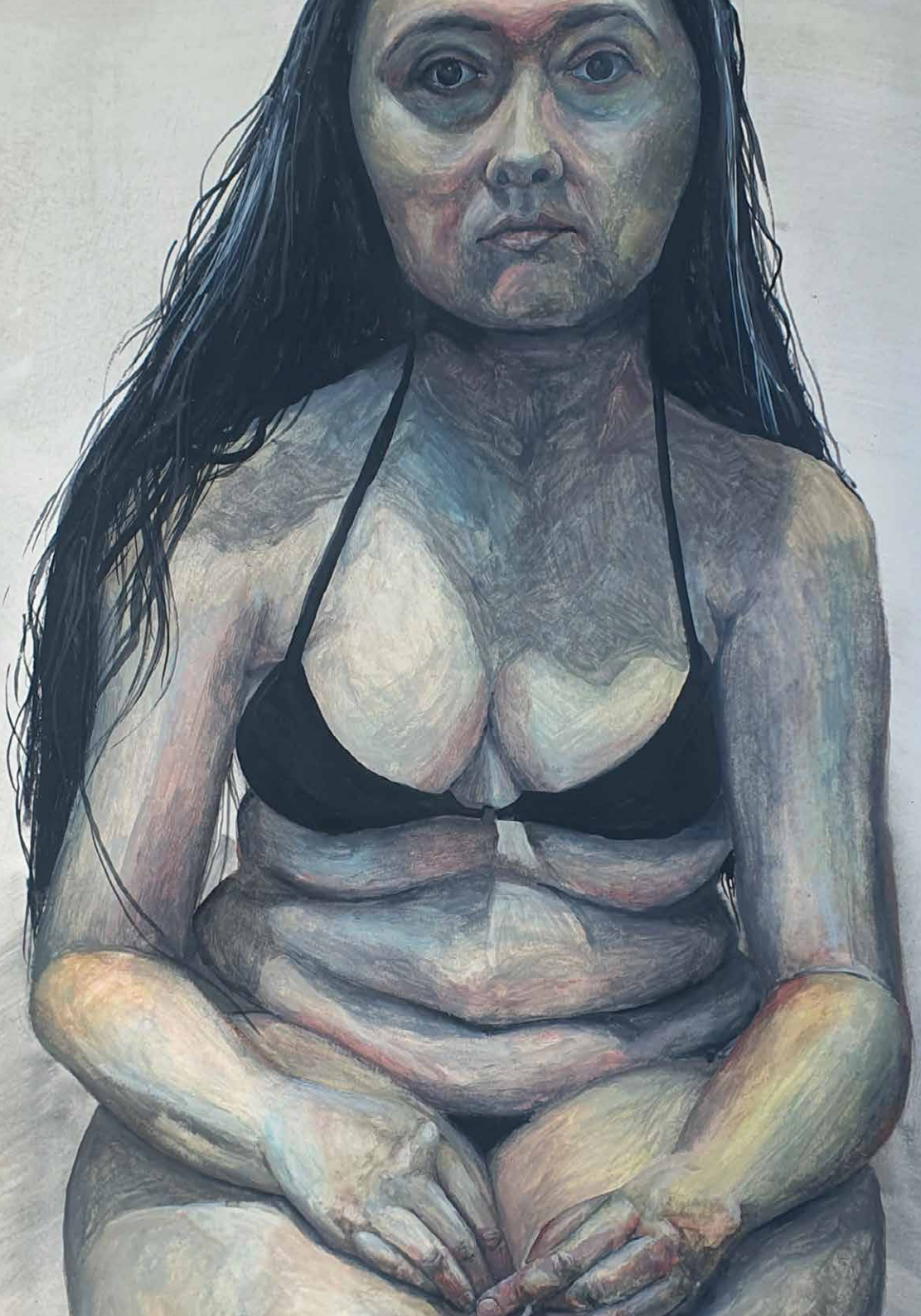
Poetry by Daniel and Fe, written in response to the Arts & Minds annual member's exhibition

## 24. THE MILL GALLERY

Paul checks out The Mill Gallery in Bramley

*Cover image: 'Fearless' by Lydia Rain (see page 18)*

*Left: 'Invisible Illness' by Emma Brackenbury (see page 21)*



## FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to the Spring 2025 Arts & Minds newsletter. To kick the year off with a bang, we have edition for you full of articles from our amazing newsletter team. As we move into the spring season, it feels like there is some welcome warmth, colour, and new life coming back into the world after what seems like a very long, cold and wet winter.

Arts & Minds would like to say a huge thank you to the Swarthmore Education Centre for hosting a fabulous event for us in January (and to all the Arts & Minds members who battled through the heavy snow we had that day to get there). Those attending got to try out two taster sessions, having a go at wirework and paper mosaic, to get a flavour of the creative courses that Swarthmore offers. If you don't already know about Swarthmore, they have a wide range of creative courses you can sign up for. You can find more information on their website: [www.swarthmore.org.uk](http://www.swarthmore.org.uk)

We are planning more events and projects for our members in 2025 so watch this space for what you can get involved in. If you are not already a member of Arts & Minds, it is free and easy to join, just fill in the short form on our website: [www.artsandmindsnetwork.org.uk/join-us](http://www.artsandmindsnetwork.org.uk/join-us)

As always, I am looking for creative outlets that members can engage with. If you have an idea of how to do this, or you want to find out more about Arts & Minds and what we do, you can 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.

## FEEL THE FEAR AND DO IT ANYWAY!

It is human nature to doubt oneself and fear the unknown but taking a chance can bring an enormous amount of pleasure and fulfilment. My association with Arts & Minds brought such emotions when I first became involved. Fate certainly played its part as I first met Arts & Minds collaborator Fe by accident at an art shop in Leeds Kirkgate Market which was owned by a mutual friend. We chatted and after meeting up a few times Fe asked if I'd be interested in writing for the Arts & Minds newsletter about mental health issues as it has been something I've suffered with from childhood and how photography has played its part in me finding a 'refuge' to take myself to and hide away from the demons within.

I've always enjoyed writing and doing research, but the thought of me being involved within the arts terrified me. Yes, I'd always been interested in art especially the great artists and my love of photography had brought me great pleasure in studying the great photographers such as Bailey, Litchfield, Donovan and Duffy. But as someone who had attended state schools which had virtually no art on the curriculum and had you shown your more 'Arty' side then the hardcases as well as some of the teachers would have ridiculed you and made your life hell. So, there was never the opportunity to take art as a subject and a place at Art School or College were further away than a trip to the Sea of Tranquillity on the surface of the moon!



I met up with Fe and she introduced me to Linda and Tom (the editor) and a couple of other collaborators at a meeting in the Corn Exchange in Leeds. Despite my trepidation the welcome I received, and encouragement given, gave me the confidence to get involved and contribute my first article. Due to the Covid Pandemic the physical meetings were put on hold and Zoom meetings started to take place. Editor Tom Bailey left (hopefully not due to my arrival!) and Toby took over and the newsletter went from strength to strength and became an important and integral anchor through the lockdown period for both contributors and readers alike.

Many articles have followed, and friendships forged and the opportunity to meet up for away days at Harewood House, Kirkstall Abbey and Meanwood Valley Farm has given everyone the opportunity to meet in person while learning new skills and making plans for the continued development and success of the newsletter.

So, whatever your interest and experience in the arts I really encourage you to take a chance and become involved. You will be welcomed and encouraged in a non-judgemental atmosphere by the newsletter family and will open a new and creative paradise for you. So, feel the fear and do it anyway, you won't be disappointed or regret it, I know I don't as it was one of the best decisions I've ever made.

Article by **Paul Abraham**  
[www.paulabraham.info](http://www.paulabraham.info)

*Photos by Paul Abraham taken at the Arts & Minds volunteer's away day at Kirkstall Abbey. Top: Toby tries out the tongue drum for the first time as Dave and Jacob look on. Bottom: Dave shows how it should be played!*

# 2025 AWAITS

## GET UP, GET OUT, GET INVOLVED

New years are always tough. The various punctuation marks life throws at us are always difficult to stomach. I see so clearly how the end is built into the beginning. It defies logic, yet it is devastatingly apparent and has been my firm mindset for as long as I can remember.

My solution to New Year's Eve in recent years has been escape. Namely, booking into a faraway hotel and spending the evening with a notepad, my laptop and some music. It is both a soothing remedy and emotionally damning – but it works.

Thankfully, as we enter a new year, the equivocal 2025, there are lifeguards in my life. Music, which has always been a prominent and important part of my day-to-day survival, has recently reached biblical new heights. I am in love with music. It brings me the most divine sense of assurance, identification, understanding and sheer relief. I gladly drown in music every day. My writing, of course, as always, follows. My output at the moment is consistent and is the only way I could possibly try to contextualise my time on this earth. It's undoubtedly a dramatic notion, but that is a requirement of the so-called 'creative process'; it must be life or death or there is simply no point.

Getting involved in things, or simply just 'doing stuff' is also so, so crucial. You find yourself in your adventures, in your actions, in people. The outside and the inside are not

as far apart as once thought. See the world and view your soul – feel things, speak to people, escape the prison walls of your own brain. Recently, I ventured to Prague for a long weekend and had a wonderful trip. The city, the people and each hour embraced me. It reminded me that I am indeed alive and breathing. This is how you know you're alive.

My plans for the new year intrigue me, which I think is the most crucial part of any good plan. New writing is

*“Music, which has always been a prominent and important part of my day-to-day survival, has recently reached biblical new heights.”*

continual, as are my plans to travel to different events and places. I am hoping to record and put to music some of the poems from 'The Dream Must Die', my third collection of poetry released at the end of last year, in the coming weeks. I am also already booked to perform at events in Manchester, Halifax, Morley and Castleford in the next few months. Sometimes I am intensely unsure if the 'real me' exists solely off or on the stage. I am beginning to feel as though the everyday is the real performance.

I am also looking forward to deepening my involvement with the James Burke Foundation this year, a fantastic mental health foundation which I am sure will soon be back to its very best.

New years are challenging, as are relationships, loneliness, self-worth, sleep, work, life, death... the list is endless. But the antidote and the answer is getting involved. As Morrissey said at a concert in Las Vegas last July, "*get up, get out, get involved*".

Article by **Jacob Davies**

## YOU MADE ME BELIEVE

You made me believe in Sundays  
 You made me believe in 'someday'...  
 I have had the same four thoughts  
 On repeat, since the moment I was born  
 But you made me believe.

You made me chase the faces  
 Of my hallucinations,  
 Search for diamonds in the rough  
 And believe that one life is not enough  
 How wrong I was.

You made me think, hope-swirled  
 That this is not a godless world,  
 In gravelly, tobacco grazed voices  
 I believed in the joy and the promise of everyday choices  
 You made me believe.

You made me think  
 That there was kindness within,  
 That the core wasn't so rotten  
 And that this heart could love before it stopped and  
 I don't believe anymore.

You said that there was a way  
 And you begged me not to lose faith  
 With a look of honesty on your face  
 You made me believe  
 In me and you  
 You made me believe in happy little lies  
 And in truths, that were untrue.

Poem by **Jacob Davies**

# NO FUSS PHOTOGRAPHY FOR EVERYONE

Having facilitated various workshops over the past couple of years I have decided to try to concentrate on creating a workshop / group / community titled 'No Fuss Photography' during 2025.

The aim of the project is to use a community venue for children and adults to experience and learn:

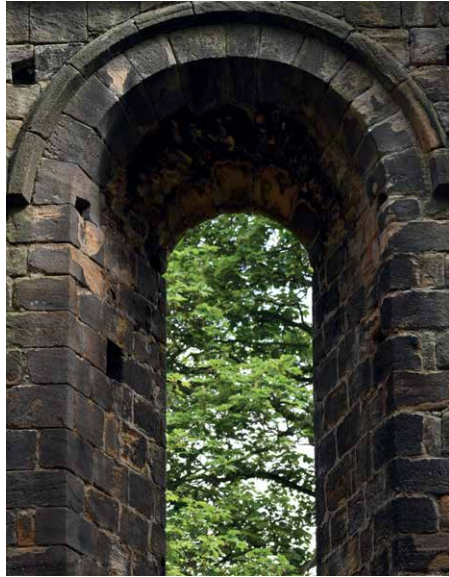
- How photography and mindfulness can improve a person's mental health and wellbeing.
- Have social interaction through a shared theme.
- Be in a safe and non-judgemental environment for people to meet and become encouraged to become involved and share experiences.

The workshop will last approximately 90 mins and will include unique activities to teach and encourage the attendees to get the most from their mobile phone camera or digital / analogue camera. The aim is to make the workshop enjoyable and fun while learning but without getting over technical with all the depth of field, shutter speed or aperture settings mumbo-jumbo. Learning how to get the best composition of the image and how to avoid simple mistakes which can ruin your picture while being introduced to various little projects to take your picture-taking to a more enjoyable and exciting level.



Following the workshops (potentially, one for children and one for adults) the setting up of a No Fuss Photography group, with this a monthly get-together would be held in conjunction with the local hub, where people can show the group their latest images, talk about photography, seek/ give advice or just enjoy the friendly and non-judgemental atmosphere. There could also be a private NFP Facebook group to keep attendees connected plus a potential 'hands on' visit to Kirkstall Abbey or a similar location to try out their new skills in a practical environment.

I have had positive discussions with a local venue and charity which already has access to potential interested groups. The biggest task is to try and get some funding in place through the local political councillors or other potential



funding avenues. To achieve all the planned activities for them to be accessible for all, the following expenses will have to be considered.

- Venue rental and refreshments expenses.
- Materials and printed matter for attendees to take away to use in their own time.
- Transportation costs and facilitators fee.
- Equipment rentals.

With my DBS, insurance and safeguarding requirements up to date the next step is to try and obtain funding and confirm the dates of the workshops and group sessions to take place as well as then having all the printed matter compiled and ready for production.



Hopefully I'll be able to write an update in a later edition of the newsletter of how, hopefully, things have progressed and evolved.

I am always interested in being involved in collaborations with individuals or groups in regard to promotion and education through my photography or coaching experience, which can be viewed via [www.paulabraham.info](http://www.paulabraham.info) and [www.headingonwards.com](http://www.headingonwards.com), so if you have an idea please get in touch and let's see what we can create.

Look up more, but don't forget to look down.

Article by **Paul Abraham**  
[www.paulabraham.info](http://www.paulabraham.info)

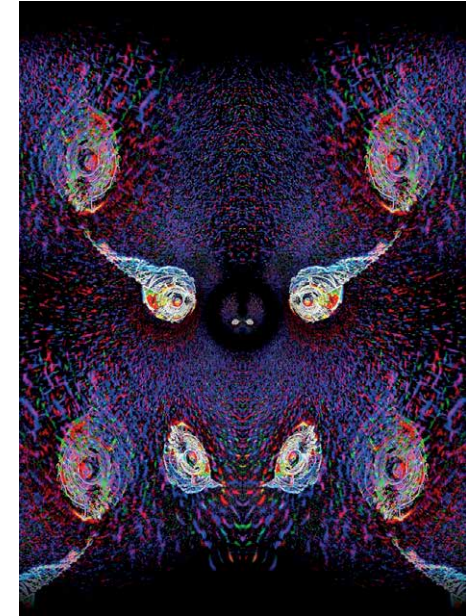


# ONWARDS AND UPWARDS

New Year is always an interesting, possibly challenging time for many of us. Probably like most people, for me it's a combination of looking back on the previous year – weighing up highs and lows, successes and shortcomings, and planning ahead. For those of us who struggle with our mental health, the start of a new year can be a number of things, from a breather to a fresh start to rather overwhelming. There needs to be a balance of expectation for sure. Does it have to be 'new year, new me', or is that piling on the pressure straight away?

I've certainly had a mixed bag of a start to 2025 creatively and mentally, and I've realised pretty quickly that at the moment I definitely do need a rational balance. On the one hand, the idea of jumping straight into things has felt a bit daunting, but on the other I'm getting out a bit more and seeing live music, going for walks, recording my own music, taking more photos and I've created some new art from early January onwards.

There certainly is a sense of determination to get into things which is really positive. But it also feels like a good idea to not overdo it, to not totally plunge into a flurry of activity that could lead to burnout. It's certainly something I'll have to take time to meditate on. I'm happy with what I've been able to do with Arts & Minds over the past couple of years, getting artwork into exhibitions and being a part



of projects that I would tend to think were out of my reach. I'm also feeling more confident with recording music finally, which has previously been a real slog.

But I also need time to slow down, take stock of things and focus on maintaining my mental health. It still feels like a strange post-Covid adjustment where sense of time and perspective has been skewed a bit. I definitely have some ambitions this year, all revolving around my art and music. Being involved in projects after the lockdowns was certainly a challenge for me in terms of anxiety management, but I'm approaching 2025 feeling positive as well as tentative. That's not a bad mindset to be in at all. Onwards and upwards.

Article by **Dave Lynch**

# ARTS & MINDS MEMBERS RESPOND TO EXHIBITION WORK

During the Arts & Minds annual exhibition at Northlight, Arts & Minds members Fe and Daniel White responded to four of the works of art with the following poems...

## FEARLESS

Artwork by **Lydia Rain**  
Poem by **Daniel White**



She has no fear.  
Not in her eyes.  
She wears a tiger  
Around her neck.  
It can never change its stripes?  
Or maybe its the torch the naked  
Woman carries for him?  
The sea is a mixture of calm and swirls.  
She isn't sinking and she's not even  
Swimming.  
A vortex opens up.  
I would bury myself naked  
In all the worlds troubles.  
But she is bold.  
Bold and brave.  
She is an icon for  
FEAR  
LESS  
And now I see the tiger has closed  
Its eyes for a nuzzle.  
It is contented to go against type.  
There is a golden aura around this  
Woman.  
Her hair is long and unbothered.  
There's a star in the top left of the  
Frame.  
It's another world where she came from.  
She is not of this Earth.  
There is a pattern in the sky I  
Can't quite make out.  
It is heralding a new dawn.

## THE HAND WAVING

Artwork by **Peter McDonagh**

Poem by **Daniel White**



The hand waving goodbye,  
 Or is it hello?  
 Is it sinking  
 Or swimming?  
 Losing or winning?  
 The green moss on the river or lake  
 Could muddy the picture?  
 But it brings light and colour.  
 The fingers are fat like people or  
 Soldiers you could dip in an egg.  
 I'm thinking this picture is cracking.  
 I'm even breaking apart.  
 I'm losing my mind in this poem  
 And my heart to the sea.  
 I wave goodbye.  
 I was always lost really you sea!

## INVISIBLE ILLNESS

Artwork by **Emma Brackenbury**

Poem by **Fe**



What you get,  
 isn't necessarily what you see.  
 I created this portrait,  
 because it is me.

My body,  
 my mind,  
 my heart that is kind.

My hair,  
 my face,  
 my spirit of grace.

The colour of my skin  
 and the shades  
 that are within.

My solemnly pose,  
 my slightly crooked nose.

My offset smile,  
 I will hold for a while.

My stunted eyes,  
 that care not to ask,  
 why?

My questioning hands,  
 that never make demands.

My trusty torso  
 and ample thighs.

They all make my body.  
 The lows and the highs.

My soul is inside.  
 My soul is intact.  
 But hiding in somewhere,  
 to avoid the attacks.

I'm safe in this portrait,  
 I'm safe in this frame.

And yet the portrait  
 and the person  
 are really the same.

Can you see me now?  
 Did you see me then?

Will you know who I am,  
 'til the very end?

## UNTITLED ABSTRACT

Artwork by **Nicola Garvey**

Poem by **Fe**



Pouring.  
Warring.  
Making my way down to earth.

I fell from the highest point,  
because I sold my worth.

As I'm falling down,  
I'm waning,  
of any morals,  
remaining.

Colours appear,  
from my melting soul  
Descending away from  
HEAVEN  
my natural home.

I'm calling,  
I'm falling,  
The fear never ends.  
I cry out to my My Creator,  
to make my amends.

I repent! I repent!  
I cry broken hearted.  
But, nothing can ease the pain,  
of being departed.

I'm on my knees  
I start my pleas  
and await my fate.  
Am I really too late?

# THE MILL GALLERY

## SPECTACULAR LAUNCH AT THE MILL GALLERY IN WEST LEEDS

“Wow”, “Amazing” and “Fabulous” were the most used expressions heard at The Mill Gallery as it launched two captivating exhibitions on February 7th.

Titled ‘The Still & Me’ and ‘Art By Chance’, both collections were stunning as the evening also celebrated the grand opening of the venue’s brand-new gallery space.

With refreshments available, the many visitors enjoyed viewing the exceptional artwork while being able to



converse with like-minded people in a very welcoming and impressive environment.

The Mill Gallery is managed by Aire Place Studios and is a space that celebrates innovation and inclusivity. Their mission is to provide a platform for emerging artists and to showcase their work to diverse audiences.

As an artist-run space the ethos is that art belongs to everyone, artists and audiences alike. Their exhibitions successfully combines creativity, self-expression, and conversation, where voices that are often silenced, are not just heard but are celebrated. In a world where art spaces are often gatekept or out of reach, The Mill Gallery is reclaiming artistic ground for artists, by artists.

They empower artists to take the reins, curate boldly, and share their work in ways that are authentic and true to



them. The Mill Gallery isn't just a space, it's a powerful hub where creativity roars, artists lead with confidence, and solidarity drives everything they do.

The friendly and inspiring hub allows anyone, to experience and practice their creativity through the facilitating of a curated programme of hands-on sessions, expert-led classes, and interactive experiences designed to inspire and elevate your craft in an engaging and supportive ambience. Whether you're looking to develop new techniques or explore a fresh hobby, their workshops are the perfect opportunity to connect, learn, and grow. Explore the programme of upcoming events and find the perfect workshop to ignite your passion.

The Mill Gallery is located at **Unit 5 Cardinal House, Swinnow Grange Mills, Leeds LS13 4EP** and is open every Friday from 1pm until 6pm.

Contact details

Email: [hello@themillgallery.co.uk](mailto:hello@themillgallery.co.uk)

Phone: 0113 824 2935

Website: [www.themillgallery.co.uk](http://www.themillgallery.co.uk)

The exhibition runs until the end of February and includes:

## ART BY CHANCE

Art by Chance at The Mill Gallery is a bold, playful exhibition that embraces randomness as the ultimate curator. This unique showcase invites artists from all backgrounds to submit their work, with spots on the gallery walls granted by pure chance alone. With no selection panel and no juried process, the exhibition lineup is determined entirely by the spin of a bingo wheel, creating an open and democratic art experience.

Participating artists purchased numbers to represent their entries, and once the submission period closed, The Mill Gallery assigned them their numbers. In a series of live bingo draws on Instagram, the wheel selected numbers at random, filling the gallery 'house' one artwork at a time until all spots were claimed. This light-hearted process breaks down traditional barriers to entry, offering artists an equal chance to showcase their work and bringing an element of thrill and unpredictability.

## THE STILL & ME

The Still & Me: brings a fresh perspective to the classic art of still life. This exhibition invites artists to explore the timeless theme of still life in creative and unexpected ways, blending tradition with modern sensibilities. From bold paintings to innovative sculpture, discover how contemporary artists breathe new life into a centuries-old subject.

Article and photos by **Paul Abraham**

# 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 get in touch using the details below. You are welcome at any of our events or workshops and you can join Arts & Minds for free at: [www.artsandmindsnetwork.org.uk/join-us](http://www.artsandmindsnetwork.org.uk/join-us)

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

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

facebook: [facebook.com/artsminds](https://facebook.com/artsminds)

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

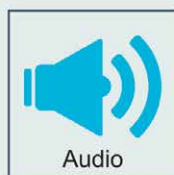
For a translation of this document, an interpreter or a version in:



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)

Supported by Leeds Mind

