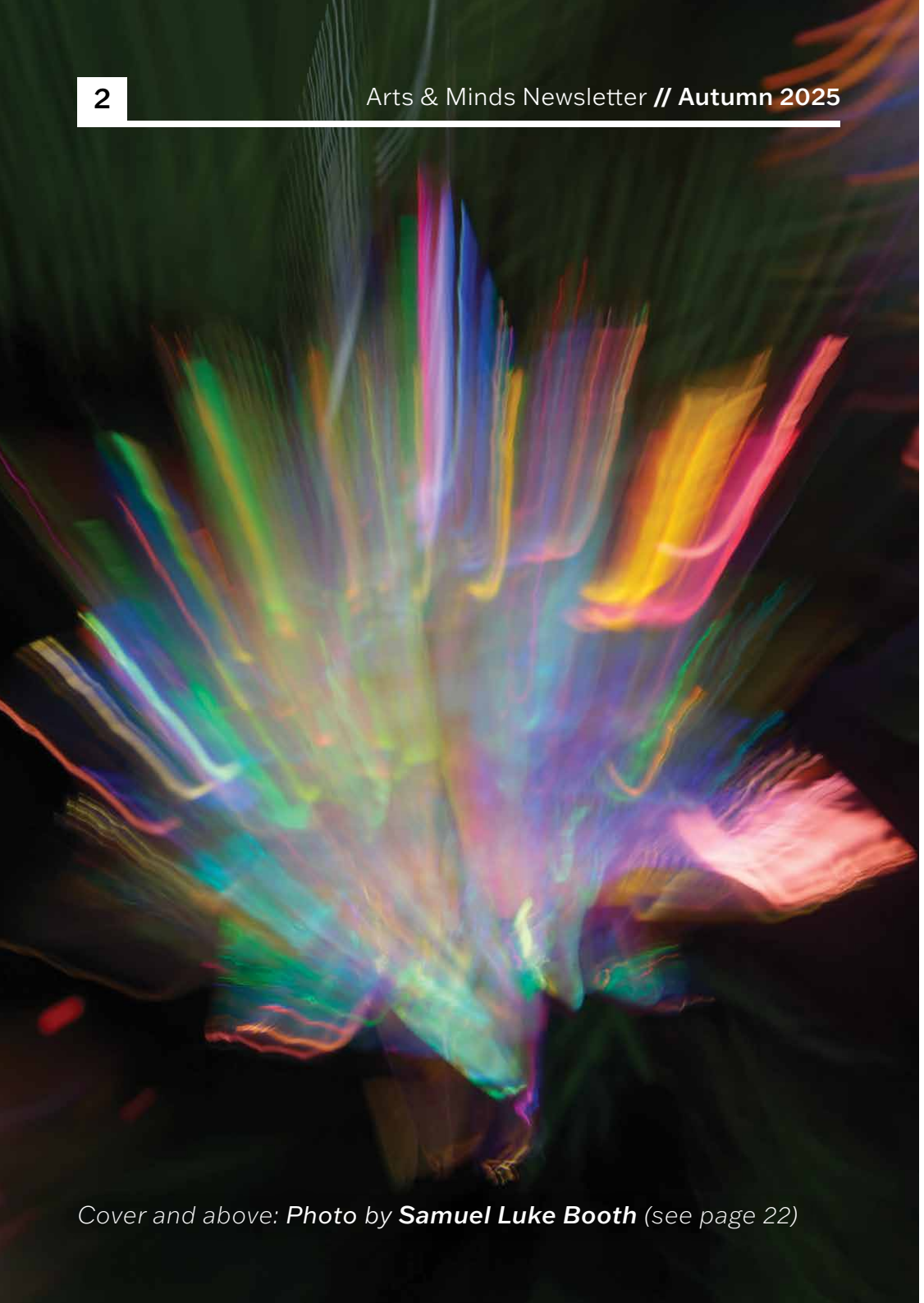
arts & minds

Arts & Minds Newsletter

Autumn 2025

www.artsandmindsnetwork.org.uk



Cover and above: ***Photo by Samuel Luke Booth*** *(see page 22)*

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A WORD FROM THE (NEW) EDITOR

Welcome to the Autumn 2025 edition of the Arts & Minds newsletter. I joined the Arts & Minds team as the new Development Worker at the end of June this year and have loved putting my first edition of this newsletter together along with the help of our wonderful team of article writers – Dave, Fe, Jacob and Paul.

Since I joined the team, I have really enjoyed facilitating our monthly Connect & Create sessions at the Discovery Centre and have picked up skills in foil embossing, silk painting and book folding along the way! Our Quarterly Event at Space 2 in Gipton was fantastic. We made beautiful imprinted tiles and sculptures using air dried clay – a huge thank you to Lauren and Camille at Space 2 for making the afternoon so enjoyable. Other highlights included Scarecrow decorating at Harewood House and creating paper flowers and messages of hope for an art installation by Sandy Holden at the Becklin Centre for World Suicide Prevention Day. Thank you Sandy for all your hard work.

Please see the 'What's On' section on page 34 for details about our monthly Connect & Create group that meets at Leeds Discovery Centre and our upcoming quarterly event at Abbey House. If you want to find out more about Arts & Minds and what we do, you can email us at: **info@artsandmindsnetwork.org.uk**. You can also check the Arts & Minds e-bulletin and website for more information.

Sarah Bradley

SEASONAL CHANGE AND PERSONAL GROWTH

Summer is usually a pretty trying time for me. I've never been a fan of the heat or humidity, and increasingly the situation with climate change and heat waves can make it all feel like a harbinger of doom. It's a time I have to really set aside in terms of mental health to manage anxiety and depression, almost like a kind of reverse seasonal effective disorder. In many ways I'm happier when it's cold and rainy.

This summer has had some challenges. I've got seasonal asthma to contend with now, although it's been a relief to be better at managing that. It's really made me reflect on how things are with me in general. It feels like I'm doing a lot better these days, and I can really attribute that to art and music. Funnily enough, when I initially had a meeting about writing this article, I was assuming I'd be having an awful time over the summer and that my article risked being a whinge fest!

"It feels like I'm doing a lot better these days. I can really attribute that to art and music"

But the more I've thought about it, the more it makes sense to have a reflection on where I'm at personally and artistically. It's been such a mixed up windy road over the past couple of decades certainly, and creativity has always been the biggest healing factor for me. I'm finding myself more enthusiastic about going out to a park with my tongue drum and practising, then applying that to recording and producing. If I do have a low few days, I'll try and motivate myself to get out and about with a camera and take photos, then I've got art to create from that. I'm lucky enough to be able to create my own projects, and use them to manage any difficulties that I might still have to contend with.

"Intense Stare" by **Dave Lynch**

It's a really nice way to measure progress and keep in touch with that side of myself. Art can be such an important key to recovery and growth that I sometimes take for granted. I'm looking forward to finally finishing a big body of work, and I've been able to get involved with a new Arts & Minds project as well as look forward to submitting artwork to their upcoming exhibition.

I'll certainly remind myself how grateful I should be to be tapped into art and music more in the future.

Article and Photos by **Dave Lynch**

FANCY A BIT OF FUN?

One of my fellow Arts and Minds volunteer writing team members, mentioned in our newsletter Zoom meeting, how difficult it is to find creative things to in the summer months. It's funny, because one would think summertime is a time for abundant activities, as the kids are out of school. The problem is, most activities are for kids. Finding adult activities, isn't so easy. A lot of adult activities that run throughout the year, shutdown for summer or redirect their activities to cater to children, to keep them occupied throughout the school summer holidays.

Here is a fabulous creative activity adults can take part in and that runs throughout the summers months too.

'Just For Fun' With Hannah Platt

Hannah Platt is a Leeds based visual artist, who mainly focuses on photography. I love Hannah's work, because I feel it speaks to everyday people, because she captures everyday situations. To me there is much beauty, inspiration and wisdom in the so called mundane. The wonderful daily moments and situations, that we don't take time to notice properly – Hannah's work captures these delightfully.

When asked why she is so drawn to the mundane, Hannah said, *"I like to think of it as the everyday, and not so much the mundane – I feel like the term mundane has quite a sadness to it and I like to think of my work as joyful, and sometimes silly. I think a lot of the time my work captures*

subtle human presence and hints of humour, ultimately that's what draws me in – moments that remind us of each other and the passing of time. Visually this looks like, bold shop fronts, handwritten signs, pops of colour and changes to our landscapes. With our highstreets and neighbourhoods being lost daily to the overbearing building developers, its so important to capture what we can when we can, as who knows when it'll be next."

I love regularly browsing though Hannah's website **www.hannahplatt.com** and looking at her photography exhibitions over time. Her photography is a real feast for the eyes of those people who enjoy the extraordinary ordinary of people's immediate environments, all over the world. The immediate nows, that get documented in a snapshot, to be shared with people in the future who will be documenting their own immediate nows. The unintentional collective

history of Hannah's work is just so special. Things we may at this point, bare not much mind to – in the future become intriguing, historical photographic gems.

So when I stumbled upon Hannah's 'Just For Fun' collaborative photography project, I jumped for joy! I had already had the privilege of being apart of a previous Hannah Platt lead project, 'Leeds Through The Lens' which was a collaboration with Arts and Minds Network and The Leeds Art Gallery's Meet and Make group, held in July 2024. With Hannah's learned guidance, we took photographs of Leeds and collectively curated the photographs into a charming little book called 'About Town'. It was without a doubt one of the most creative, edifying and enjoyable collaborative experiences I have had. I didn't want the project to end!

I see Hannah's 'Just For Fun' collaboration as an extension of 'About Town'. Each month Hannah picks a theme and then the collaborators have to go and photograph the theme and all photos are uploaded and shared for that month under that theme.

When asked what inspired her, Hannah said, *"I'm always looking for ways to encourage people to engage with their own environments and surroundings, and what's really heart warming is when folk send me photos of things that they've seen that they'll know I'll like. Just For Fun is a way to encourage that even more, and prompt people to seek and not only see. It came together very organically, and is exactly what it says on the tin – just for fun, absolutely anyone can get involved and play, with no pressures or strict guidelines."*

I'm so excited and intrigued by what theme will be coming up each month. I literally have no idea and I relish that anticipation. It all adds to the fun and surprise of the challenge.

When asked about inspiration for the monthly themes, Hannah said, *"The idea actually came about during the design phase of my yearly calendar, and I decided to allocate a brief per month for the whole year back in October 2024, so each month has already been decided for us – inspired by the photos from the calendar. Now the project and idea has evolved, I'll probably do this differently next year and have it as a bit more of a reactionary process, learn from my mistakes – like briefing umbrellas in the sunniest month of Spring."*

I absolutely love this collab! It is such a fabulous and fun way to keep creatively engaged, each month. With all our best intentions to keep engaged with creativity on a regular basis, we still often fail at getting something creative achieved. Daily life and tasks, etc always seem to get in the way. However, Hannah's brilliant idea to create a monthly roll on, photography collab is just perfect for regular and continual creative engagement. You can get super hooked on being so determined to find the theme to snap. It's such great fun to go about hunting for the theme, or even being creative in presenting the theme – if you can't get a literal snap of the theme. It gets all of your creative neurons ignited, I tell ya!

'Just For Fun' is for all levels and no levels of photography. This is what I appreciate about Hannah's approach to photography. She's dissolves barriers. Not having to worry about your technical equipment, skills or education

in photography, I feel helps you to focus on the art and creativity of photography more. Tech is simply a tool, but you have to be able to spot the art of whatever you are taking a photograph of first. Education can be a guide, but

you need to be able to take your own guidance as well. As I often say, Life starts with art and art begins in the heart.

Check out the 'Just For Fun' project and other photographic treats on Hannah's website **www.hannahplatt.com**

Article by **Fe,** Photos by **Hannah Platt**

GESTURES OF PROTEST AND PRIDE

Friday the 15th August was a significant day for the ever-innovative Mill Gallery in West Leeds as they launched "The People's Gallery" – a new free space dedicated to accessible, inclusive, and community-led creativity, made possible with support from the People's Postcode Lottery.

The evening proved to be a massive success as it brought a broad range of ages who soaked up the intoxicating works of art from a diverse collection of artistic styles. Each piece delivering a powerful story.

The first night attendees were treated to the collection titled "Gestures", the debut exhibition from the Resilient Artist Cohort: six Leeds-based artists embarking on a

year-long journey of artistic growth and collaboration. This live, evolving show explores how movement, mark-making and intention shape creative practice. From emotionally layered landscapes and vibrant strokes alive with energy, to abstract compositions rooted in memory and heritage,

Gesture invited you into a space where process and possibility meet. It's an open-ended experiment – and just the beginning.

The first exhibition in the People's Gallery was the amazing and thought-provoking "Protest & Pride" which is a celebration of LGBTQIA+ creativity, protest and radical joy.

The powerful show brought together artists using their work to speak up, resist, and connect, from political movements to personal acts of defiance. The exhibition was about anger and celebration, resilience and visibility because art can be protest, and joy can be resistance too.

This exhibition ran alongside the Mill Gallery's workshop "Art of Protest: Creative Solidarity with the Trans Community", and together they open a new chapter in the venue's mission to make art more accessible, inclusive, and shaped by the local community.

The Exhibition ran from 15th August until 5th September and showed again what an important role art can have in changing attitudes and perceptions. Please check out the Mill Gallery website for all the latest news and forthcoming exhibitions – **www.themillgallery.co.uk**

Article and Photos by **Paul Abraham**

MEMBER CHAT: SAMUEL LUKE BOOTH

Photo by **Fe**

At the stunning, yet controversial Harewood House, I interviewed recent member Samuel Luke Booth about his unique and fascinating photography.

WHAT TYPE OF ART DO YOU CREATE?

I call it abstract photography. I do standard photography as well, like flower photographs, but the abstract photography is a way I can show my pain. Rather than showing for example, just a flower. It's my feelings or what I'm experiencing either during my painful moments or showing the positive side of the pain, because there's a bit of a contrast between the two.

WHAT BROUGHT YOU TO YOUR ART?

I guess my brain injury. I've never been able to explain my injury before and then through my Masters of Fine Arts, I got to do these movements with the camera, which I've been making for years, which is sort of the fun side of it, but it seemed to also bring out this monster, which was a visual representation of my pain, which I've never been able to explain until that time. It was quite enlightening. So, I wanted to show the side of the pain which is actually the monster, but also the positive side - because it's not all bad and I wanted to show that balance of the two and it's been amazing to be able to do that. The power of art I guess.

"My Pain Monster 2" - Photo by **Samuel Booth**

WERE YOU ARTISTIC BEFORE YOUR BRAIN INJURY?

My background is actually sport development, but Ive always loved photography. My Duke of Edinburgh is when I started taking photographs, more of a hobby side of the Duke of Edinburgh Award and then it's just been… maybe an obsession because I do it all the time. Every time I go somewhere I have the camera and when I've got the camera, I feel content if that's the word. I was the one who did all the family photos for weddings and family occasions when we all get together, but I've also done photography

"Beautiful Beading" – Photo by **Samuel Booth**

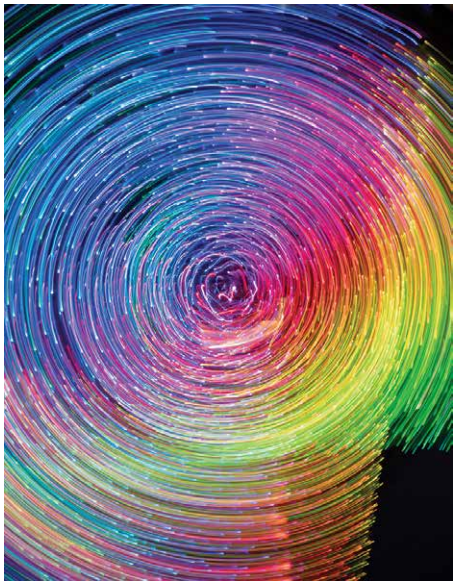
on holidays and of flowers and there's something about the photography. I've always had a passion for photography, but never been able to use it for anything, until recently.

DID YOU HAVE THE PHOTOGRAPHY PASSION SINCE YOU WERE A CHILD?

Yeah, I love looking at the old photos of my family and it's a bit like at Harewood where you see the old garden pictures, I wanted to do something like those photos but with a modern twist.

DESPITE IT BEING A PHYSICAL INJURY THAT BOUGHT YOU TO YOUR ART, HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THE NEW ARTISTIC YOU?

Confused! I don't really know the business side of stuff. I don't have a clue to be honest. I've only done the photography course dealing with how to show the concept, to be able to show the monster. My partner said set up as self employed and try and make something with the photography and that's where the Horticap exhibition came from. They said do you want to come and exhibit your work, the positive side, not the monster.



"Kaleidoscope of Colour"
Photo by **Samuel Booth**

THE WORK YOU ARE DOING NOW IS INCREDIBLE, SO WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF AND YOUR ART GOING?

I never really saw myself as anything in photography. Just somebody who loves photography. My tutor at university used to give me feedback and he would bring me to tears

> *"For me to be called an artist was one of the biggest compliments"*

– in a good way! He said, "you're an artist." I think there's always been in photography a bit of a confusion, if you are classed as an artist if you do photography, because you don't create art in the same way that artists were considered in the past, but for me to be called an artist was one of the biggest compliments. He said it was authentic. I am my own worst critic though.

WOULD YOU TAKE US THROUGH THE PROCESS OF CREATING YOUR PHOTOGRAPH AND IMAGES?

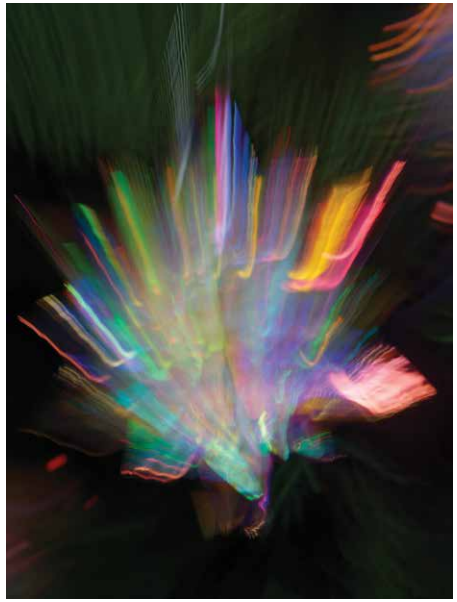
I'll describe the abstract one. In an interview with Billy Connelly and Ken Done, in the 90's on their world tour of Australia, Ken Done said "It doesn't have to be a cow, when you're painting, it's the feeling of the cow, or the feeling of the sunset." I've sort of applied that to the

colourful pictures. This is where the positive side and not so much the negative side - the monster pictures. It's what I'm feeling at the time and expressing it through the movements. It's been difficult to explain, because it just happens. I don't plan it.

It's something I feel, a sensation in the movements and it creates these pictures. I don't concentrate too much on the technical side. I just do it and not think too much. The more I think about it, the less it seems to come out.

YOU'VE WRITTEN BOOKS AS WELL, HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT WRITING BOOKS?

It was quite emotional, because it was almost like I was confronting the pain monster, that I've lived with for sixteen years since the injury. With the photographs, I had a way to show the pain as a visual representation, but also with the writing, it was very personal writing and I guess that within itself was a therapy as well. I'm not the best writer, I probably need to take some pointers from you. The monster, was like being able to come to terms, to get some closure with my situation and that



"Goodbye Pain Monster... For Now"
Photo by **Samuel Booth**

was really tough – it got me really down, probably the lowest I've ever felt in all of my life, but by doing that, I was able to make sense of stuff and that helped. So, even though it got me really upset, I was able to use that to make sense of something I've been trying to make sense of for years.

HOW DOES YOUR BRAIN INJURY IMPACT YOUR ABILITY TO CREATE ART? DOES IT HINDER IT?

I think it's gone the opposite way, especially with the abstract pictures. It's almost like I've got a way to be able to show my feelings, that I've never been able to do before and that's been amazing. You are able to paint a picture of your emotions, both the good and bad side, especially about my injury - it's changed my life in a positive way.

DOES YOUR ART HELP YOU WITH YOUR HEALTH?

Definitely! It's been a real therapy. I did the volunteer diary at Harewood in the garden, to show what I've done as a volunteer, but also I've been able to change that into something completely different, as well as keeping the diary of other places, it shows that's it's always helped me in my life. It's help me to remember stuff, when I do the pictures and to be able now to paint the pictures of the pain, it's amazing and wonderful.

WHAT OTHER FORMS OF CREATIVITY DO YOU DO AND HOW DOES THIS HELP WITH YOUR PHYSICAL AND MENTAL WELLBEING?

Playing the piano… music! Bono's 'With or Without You' and ' The Stories of Surrender' is what I was hearing at the

moment I was able to paint the picture of the pain. There was something in the melody. The lyrics “give yourself way…” and something clicked and that’s when I was able to show that monster. I play it all the time on loop and I find it takes me to a place, I can’t always explain. I’ve always loved music, but that’s the song that helps me create it.

HAVE YOU EXHIBITED YOUR WORK?

Yes I have. I missed my university exhibition, sadly because I couldn’t get across to Belfast. I was gutted. I couldn’t afford the flight, unfortunately. It meant I didn’t have anything to do with the exhibition and I’d never done an exhibition before, then Horticap called me in December and asked me if I wanted to do the January to March exhibition (2025). I had no idea what I was doing, but I got a bit of help from the curator there and they extended it twice, which has been amazing. It’s also been a bit stressful, because you have to plan everything. Also because of no income, but with support of friends and family, I was able to put it on. The feedback also bought me to tears. People had been so nice about the work, saying how they could see what I was trying to show and that in it’s self is priceless.

WHERE WOULD YOU LIKE TO TAKE YOUR ART IN THE FUTURE?

I’m not sure. I’d love to do a PHD. That’s always been my dream. It’s difficult because I’m also trying to balance having a family as well. Bono talked about it in ‘Stories of Surrender’, about being on stage and that it’s difficult to put all the effort into one thing and still have a family. I’m

sat in my room, trying to do my work and my little one is coming up, but it’s amazing for me to be a father. John, my son has helped me with some of the creative work as well. The sentimental sonogram photo is when John was a baby, so he’s featured in my work too. With my brain injury, I’m doing too much and need to step back and really only do one thing. The PHD was the dream, if it’s not possible then the exhibitions, which were fantastic. I can’t complain about them, so I’d like to continue doing them.

“Sentimental Sonogram”
Photo by **Samuel Booth**

DO YOU HAVE ANY ADVICE FOR PEOPLE DEALING WITH HEALTH CHALLENGES, THAT MAY STAND IN THE WAY OF THEM DOING THEIR ART?

I guess I can only speak from my experience, but what happened to me, I was very lucky, my tutor was like a mentor and said these photos are working. Give yourself away and let go and allow the process to happen and that’s what I did and it helped me. I would say to have a medical person or councillor with you. I didn’t really have this and on reflection if I had somebody who could help me on those side of things, it would have been a lot easier. I do think is to do what works

for you. Find what you enjoy. Find what helps you. With me, I'm lucky. I've got the gardens and photography and this is my therapy. Try different things and once you've found what works, do that and enjoy the process.

HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN WORK TRANSLATE THROUGH YOUR PHOTOGRAPHY?

I'm not the world's greatest gardener, in terms of my knowledge. I enjoy doing the work and they say I'm a good worker. It's more that I get inspiration from the garden, like the flowers are so beautiful. The hops…. Everything in the garden, there's always something. I guess like a child, I sometimes look around and find things in the garden. It takes up too many pictures, but these pictures help tell the story as to why it's so inspirational to me and that connection to nature. When we were talking about touching the trees, there's something about that connection to the soil. Harewood, Yorkgate and other places that I volunteer, I've found it helps, with my pain levels, it reduces them. Medication hasn't helped me with this. That's my only real therapy.

Sam's Socials

www.instagram.com/samuel_booth82/?hl=en-gb

www.facebook.com/sambooth82

www.curatorspace.com/artists/SamBooth82?page=3

north.art/directory/artist/samuel-booth/

Article by **Fe** and Photos by **Fe** and **Samuel Luke Booth**

CULTURAL CONNECTION: HARMONY IN COLOURS

Being a lover of the Oriental style in its many varied forms I was very fortunate to meet W. Y. Vivian YEUNG of the Lazy Cover Art Studio while on a photographic shoot at Leeds Kirkgate Market at another highly successful Art House Art Fayre.

Born in Hong Kong and now residing in Leeds, Vivian is highlighting Chinese and Oriental art to a new and enthusiastic audience. With a lifelong passion for all forms of art, from calligraphy, painting, papercrafts and sewing, Vivian is an incredible and unique talent who successfully blends Chinese, Oriental and Western styles to create cross-cultural pieces which are unique and joyful.

Her wonderful creations can be seen at her stall in Morley Market, Leeds as well as various art fayres around West Yorkshire. Vivian offers original artworks for sale and accepts commissions, with each piece carefully crafted as a one-of-a-kind masterpiece - perfect for adding

sophistication and charm to any space or venue.

Funded by Leeds City Council through the Leeds Cultural Investment Programme, Vivian's studio also runs cultural and creative workshops open to all ages.

These sessions provide a fun, relaxing way to explore your own artistic side and leave with a beautiful handmade creation.

I have attended her workshops in a photographic capacity and can vouch for the sheer enjoyment experienced by attendees as they immerse themselves in the calm,

welcoming environment which guarantees an inspiring and memorable experience.

I have for many years been mesmerised at the beauty of Chinese Calligraphy and to see Vivian encouraging and nurturing the young and old, the complete beginners to the much more experienced is wonderful to behold.

The rhythmic flow of each symbol is both calming and expressive and creates something much more than a word or sentence.

Vivian's style and skill already has a gallery in France requesting her work to exhibit while she has many more exciting projects planned for 2026 and beyond.

Contact details

Address: Lazy Cover Art Studios, Unit 65, Morley Market, Queen Street, Morley, Leeds LS27 8DS

Email: lazycover.info@gmail.com

Facebook: Lazy Cover Art Studio

Instagram: @lazycoverartstudio

Article and Photos by **Paul Abraham**

OUR PERSPECTIVE: A MEMBERS EXHIBITION

In October - as the nights began to draw in and the weather turned distinctly chillier - the evening launch of the Arts and Minds members exhibition at Northlight Arts Centre, provided us with a much needed bit of light, warmth, creativity and celebration.

The exhibition had no theme which meant we received a wide variety of art, with differing inspirations and starting points in a range of different mediums. From textiles to watercolour, collage to photography, mosaics to paper rolling, there was something for everyone to enjoy and plenty to be inspired by.

As a relatively new member of the Arts and Minds team, Iwas blown away by the creativity and skill our members exhibited and I really loved hearing the wonderful stories behind their pieces. It reminded me again how healing making, exhibiting and viewing art can be and how important it is to create and keep showing and celebrating the things we make.

Seeing so many of our network members in attendance, enjoying the food, speeches, relaxed ambiance and the brilliant artwork, was fantastic, but even more so was seeing how the exhibition really brought members together and was the catalyst behind them sharing stories and inspirations with one another. It was a wonderful night and I left with a spring in my step feeling happy and energised, already looking forward to next year's exhibition!

Article and Photos by **Sarah Bradley**

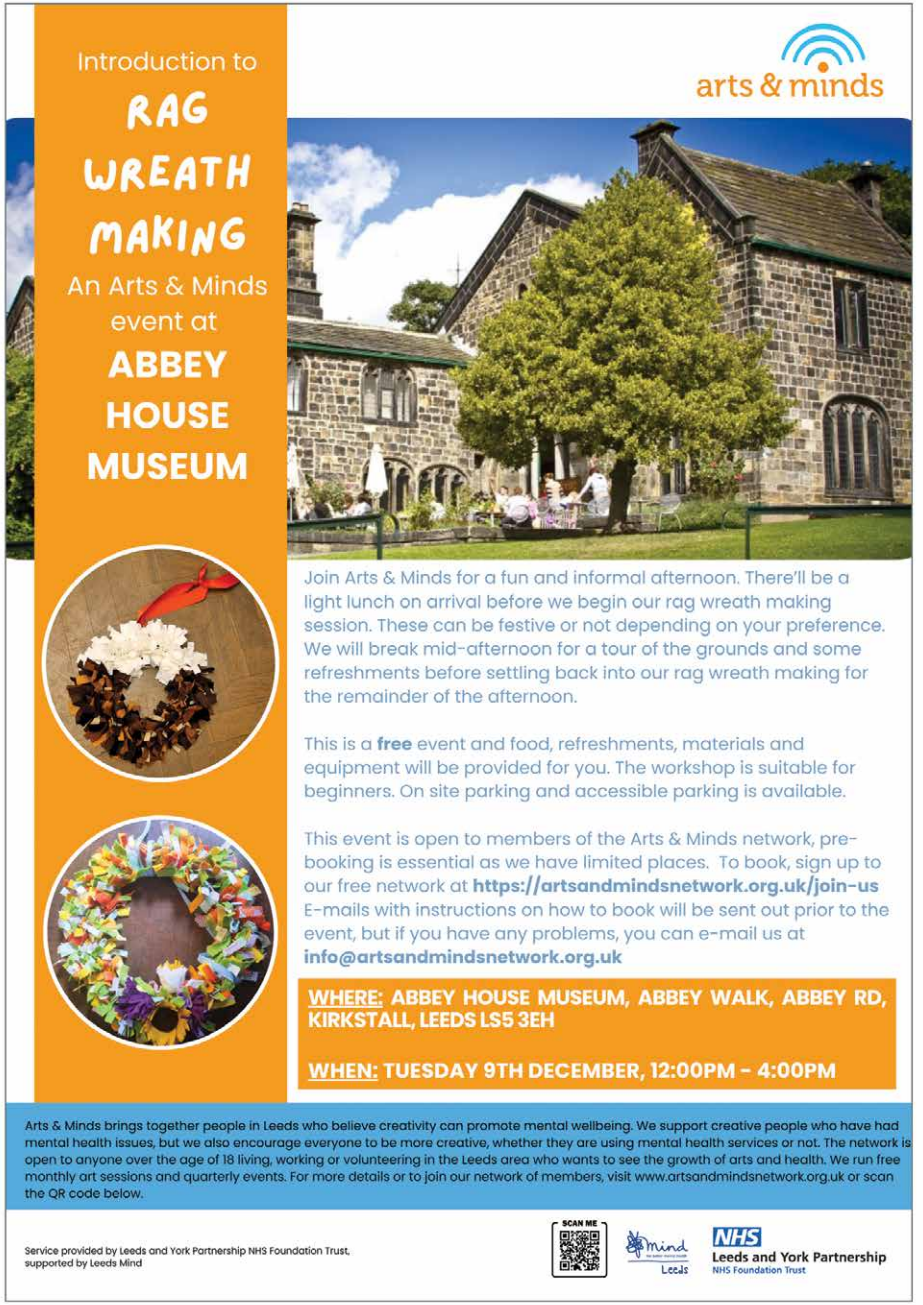
WHAT'S ON...

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 about 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.



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**

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facebook: **facebook.com/artsminds**

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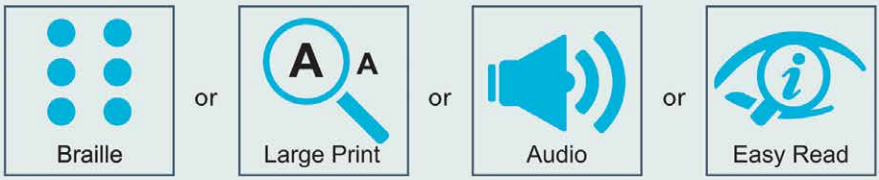

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