

# Big Draw 2007 at Orleans House Gallery:

## *Discovering Inside Outside*



### **What we did**

Our event, planned to tie in with Campaign for Drawing's *Big Draw 2007* promotion, explored the theme of *Discovering Inside Outside* through large-scale collaborative drawings on paper and black boards located around the site. Families were introduced to a range of drawing materials including chinks and charcoal attached to long sticks to encourage them to make a variety of marks.

On arrival, families were greeted by education team staff who explained the activity, demonstrated the different drawing materials available and directed participants to the variety of drawing surfaces and locations available. Adults were asked to complete registration forms on behalf of the family group. Workshop artist Caroline Jones, along with gallery education team staff and volunteers, moved around the workshop spaces, offering guidance and encouragement as well as making their own contributions to the large scale drawings. Volunteers also supported participants by replenishing drawing supplies, offering refreshments and encouraging participants to move around between the inside and outside spaces.

This dynamic activity asked everyone taking part to spend some time drawing ideas of the outside on panels and paper within the Coach House education centre – itself designed to bring the outside in through its huge glass doors. Here, in the warmth of the Coach House, participants filled the boards and paper with images of the outdoors – trees and branches, wild animals, the elements – allowing nature to

dominate the interior space for the afternoon. Participants were then encouraged to move to the outside to continue drawing, this time filling the outdoor paper and boards with ideas of the inside (both real and imaginary) – cosy armchairs, animals curled by the fire, kitchen tables, teapots and plates of biscuits, bedrooms filled with toys and even sitting rooms with Christmas trees.

People moved back and forth between the two drawing zones, contributing their ideas to the ever-changing images to create an artistic space where inside and outside met. Using chalk and charcoal with continual drawing and redrawing meant that the surfaces gradually evolved their own unique images, which were captured at regular intervals using digital photography to create the project DVD. The end works will then remain *in situ* for a further week, exposed to the elements, with gradual changes recorded using digital photography.

The digital images were then edited to produce a DVD to be shown in the gallery.

The evolutionary aspect of the drawings created during the event also echoed themes present in the current exhibition 'Images of the Divine' including the transience of materiality and its transformation through time.

## **Objectives**

Our event aimed to get families learning through drawing together in a relaxed, supportive and above all inspirational environment, encouraging experimental mark-making and imaginative drawing. Working collaboratively, we wanted families to feel they were making a unique contribution to a group artwork, helping to shape a significant project together.

By focussing on the theme of *Discovering Inside Outside* we hoped to provide opportunities for participants to engage creatively with the spaces around our Stables Courtyard – a historic area of our site which is undergoing an ongoing transformation from forgotten space to dynamic hub of creativity. Built in the nineteenth century, the stables and coach house lay neglected for decades following the demolition of the large house they serviced. In 2006 the Coach House gained a new lease of life as the gallery's education centre, and in February 2008 we look forward to re-opening the rest of the stables courtyard with a refurbished gallery space, café, heritage display and artist in residency space. Encouraging participating families to explore these spaces creatively during this period of transformation was an important aspect of the event.

We wanted the activity to be as accessible as possible, and aimed to encourage families from priority groups to participate fully (see **Target Audience** below).

### **Learning outcomes for participants:**

#### **Knowledge and Understanding**

Knowledge and understanding about family learning provision available locally and how to access it

#### **Skills**

Communications skills working together as a family and with members of other families

Using a range of unfamiliar materials

### **Attitudes and Values**

Pride in family contribution to large collaborative creative project  
Perception of gallery as an enjoyable, accessible venue for learning for all the family  
Feeling of connection / ownership with Stables Courtyard  
Belief in positive benefits of taking part in creative learning activities together as a family.

### **Enjoyment, Creativity, Inspiration**

Enjoyment of learning together in a relaxed atmosphere  
Enjoyment of trying something new in a supportive environment

### **Behaviour, Progression**

Intention to participate in future family learning activities together, at the gallery or elsewhere

## **Target audience**

As free activity, our Family Learning Week 2007 event plays a vital role in promoting accessibility to the gallery's learning programmes, bringing together families who regularly take part in creative learning activities together with those who need more support to do so, particularly families from priority groups who have previously taken part in our highly targeted family learning courses. We were particularly keen to encourage participation from priority groups identified within our Family Learning Provider Plan, especially fathers, ethnic minority families, and families living in disadvantaged areas.

## **Partnership work**

We worked in partnership with local schools, libraries and other heritage sites to promote our Family Learning Week event. By associating the event with the nationwide Big Draw 2007 campaign, run by the Campaign for Drawing, we were able to benefit from the increased marketing profile provided by this campaign including website listings and toolkits.

We worked in partnership with gallery educators from Gasworks Contemporary Art Gallery to recruit two volunteers to support learners at the event.

## **Promotion**

We promoted the event through a range of channels including local listings, our website, fliers and posters. As well as sending information out through our family e-bulletin and family mailing list and to members of our gallery after-school clubs, we sent invitations to families who had taken part in our targeted family learning programmes over the past year through our family learning passport scheme. The passport scheme aims to support families who have begun to access family learning provision through specific targeted courses, which often take place over an intensive period and may be delivered as outreach in the borough's disadvantaged areas. These families are issued with a 'passport' with the dates of free, open-to-all family learning events taking place throughout the year at our main gallery site, with spaces for participants to collect 'stamps', encouraging these families to begin to access universal family learning events on our site. This helps us to monitor families' uptake of activities and helps us to sustain relationships established through targeted courses, as well as encouraging families to get in the habit of taking part in family learning activities.

## **Evaluation techniques**

Families were asked to complete standard monitoring forms, allowing us to capture data relating to age, ethnic origin, disability and address. This helped us to assess how successful we had been at creating an accessible event which appealed to families from our priority groups. We were very pleased that this year's FLW event attracted participants from previous targeted family learning courses, as well as attracting a high percentage of fathers and male carers (38% compared to a national average of 8% participating in Family Learning activities) and an ethnically diverse audience (43% of participants were non White-British, compared to a borough average of just 12%) demonstrating the wide appeal of the activity.

To capture qualitative responses, all families were asked to complete questionnaires asking them to record aspects of the activity they had found particularly enjoyable, aspects they had found challenging and also whether they felt they had tried anything new during the activity. Many completed the questionnaires with very full answers (see below for some responses). Families were also asked to comment upon the over all organisation of the activity and suggest areas for improvements. As well as allowing us to assess how much families enjoyed the event and how we might improve for the future, this evaluation encouraged families to consider and record their own learning during the activity, allowing us to assess how well we had supported learners to achieve the learning outcomes we had identified using the *Inspiring Learning For All* generic learning outcomes framework.

## **Signposting**

As noted above, our Family Learning Week event is part of the Family Learning Passport Scheme currently being piloted by Richmond Arts Service to promote signposting between our targeted family learning courses and our free open-to-all family days. 'Passport families' (those who have previously taken part in targeted family learning courses) received stamps in their passports to record their ongoing participation in Family Learning. Those attending the event were encouraged to join our family mailing list / e-bulletin and were given information about forthcoming activities run by the Arts Service and our local partners. In addition, the informal atmosphere of the event meant that Arts Service education team staff were able to talk to individual family members about their families' needs and signpost them to future activities where appropriate (both future family learning provision and learning opportunities for individuals within the family).

## **Family feedback**

This was overwhelmingly positive, with most participants giving the event an over all score of 8 or above out of ten.

When asked what they most enjoyed, participants recorded a range of responses. Many commented on the overall atmosphere, noting the 'friendly gallery staff' and appreciating the 'laid back atmosphere'. The word freedom was used many times to describe positive aspects of the activity, for example, 'Free drawing with so many people;' 'Freedom of drawing;' 'The freedom to experiment (me & the children).'

Participants enjoyed the family learning focus, which encouraged generations to take part in a creative activity together, as well as the opportunity to work with others on a truly collaborative drawing activity. Specifically, individual participants enjoyed

'Working with my son'; 'Communal drawing and in a family as well'; 'The communal feel'.

People enjoyed the range of materials available, especially the novelty and the challenge of using charcoal, which many had never used before. Specific comments on this theme included, 'Good Quality resources available to everyone;' 'Using different materials;' 'Using charcoal for the 1<sup>st</sup> time in about 30 years;' 'Drawing with sticks.'

The theme of the activity also generated enthusiastic responses, with participants enjoying, 'Drawing outside and inside (free flow),' and 'Watching the paper getting covered over and over with marks.'

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