

Art & Soul: Ten

Celebrating Mental and Emotional
Well-being through the arts

Supported by the Richmond Parish Lands Charity and
The Hampton Fuel Allotment Charity

Evaluation Report Art & Soul: Ten

2 October – 30 November 2008



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Stables Gallery, Orleans House Gallery, Riverside, Twickenham TW1 3DJ

This year, Art & Soul celebrates its tenth anniversary. This member-led organisation offers individuals the opportunity to creatively express and convey mental and emotional issues through the visual arts and poetry.

Free admission
Gallery open: Tuesday - Saturday 1.00 - 4.30pm
Sundays 2.00 - 4.30pm
Phone: 020 8831 6000
galleryinfo@richmond.gov.uk
www.richmond.gov.uk/arts

LONDON BOROUGH OF RICHMOND UPON THAMES
This exhibition has been made possible through the generous support of Richmond Parish Lands Charity and Hampton Fuel Allotment Charity.

INTRODUCTION

Art & Soul was established in 1998, and is a project culminating in a biennial exhibition open to all people with mental health issues and disabilities living in southwest London, particularly those living in the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames. It is an on-going programme, organised by a collaborative team of local arts professionals, mental health workers and service users. Contributing groups included Age Concern, Art Aloud, Centre 32, Doorway Arts, Ham Friends, Integrated Neurological Services, Madison n Mind, Mind Action Centre, Stepping On Out, Sutton Drop in, The Vineyard Project and Central and Cecil Housing Trust, together with 13 individual members. The formal Art & Soul committee comprises 2 co-chairs, an administrator, curator, individual members and mental health professionals who meet regularly to discuss issues and plan future events and exhibitions. Art & Soul works in partnership with Orleans House Gallery, which has organised and been the venue for all activities and exhibitions to date.

AIMS

Our aims are:

- To offer people the opportunity to creatively explore and express themselves.
- To raise confidence and self-esteem.
- To create a social and support network for a wide range of individuals.
- To offer members skill-sharing opportunities and vocational work experience through workshops and associated gallery activities, such as exhibition installation and invigilation.
- Raise awareness of mental health issues to the general public.

VENUE

In 2008 the exhibition returned to its original venue, The Stables Gallery, after its refurbishment as part of the Phase 111 Heritage Lottery Fund development of Orleans House Gallery. The project was shortlisted for the prestigious Art Fund Prize in 2009. The facilities have been greatly enhanced, with the installation of improved lighting for illuminating the exhibits, an effective heating system and display areas.

PLANNING

Planning for the exhibition began in spring 2008. Applications to charities were made for funding, and Art & Soul were very grateful for the support received from Hampton Fuel Allotment Charity, who donated £3,000, and Richmond Parish Lands Charity, who donated £5,000. The London Borough of Richmond Arts Service contributed the venue and staff time.

An initial letter was dispatched to Art & Soul member organisations and individuals on our database, announcing dates and venue for the 2008 exhibition. The majority of contributors had exhibited in previous Art & Soul exhibitions, but we additionally received new submissions from Stepping On Out, Richmond Carers and Feltham Footsteps, who participated for the first time.

As usual, there was no formal selection process, and one artwork by each member contributing was exhibited.

PROJECT BUDGET FOR 2008

Income

Start balance	£ 195.80
Hampton Fuel Allotment Charity	£3,000.00
Richmond Parish Lands Charity	£5,000.00
	£8,195.80

Expenditure

Workshops	£3,000.00
Administration	£ 397.00
Exhibition materials	£ 199.46
Framing/mounting/labels	£1,450.56
Publicity	£ 715.00
Hospitality	£ 313.92
Installation	£ 560.00
Evaluation	£ 150.00
Invigilation/Taxi	£ 198.00
Curation	£1,000.00
Total	£7,983.94

Balance	£ 211.86
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OHG

Curation	£1,400.00
Venue/workshop space	£2,000.00
Total	£3,400.00

PROMOTION

A watercolour by Paul Gadd was selected to feature in the Orleans House Gallery annual brochure and for the private view cards. Since Art & Soul began in 1998, the committee has selected an image by an individual artist that is visually powerful and expresses the Art & Soul ethos. This year, in order to introduce a more democratic approach, and represent a decade of work and development, the committee agreed the poster should display multiple images of artworks featured in the exhibition. As usual, posters were distributed throughout the borough to libraries, health centres, hospitals, Tourist Information Centre, Civic Centre, museums and galleries and Art & Soul member centres. Posters were also sent to local and central London art galleries. The exhibition was promoted through editorials in the local press, including The Richmond and Twickenham Times, and was listed in various event guides.

On 7 November 2008, The Richmond and Twickenham Times published a feature on Art & Soul: *Ten*, which included an interview with member Paul Gadd. He expressed appreciation of the opportunity for people with mental health problems to express themselves through art, and said it was an invaluable opportunity for sufferers to find relief (see appendix)

WORKSHOPS

A programme of Expressive Arts and Junior Art & Soul workshops was planned and delivered before and during the Art & Soul: *Ten* exhibition, led by Julia Ruppert and Jessica Shaw. Both hold post-graduate Diplomas in Art Therapy.

Julia Ruppert:

“Overview: Art & Soul’s Expressive Arts workshops took place over an 8 week period with a total of 8 workshops, and included: 45 family members, 17 adults, 30 adolescents and 11 support staff. Participants were sourced from the Aquarius Acute Adolescent Mental Health Unit at Springfield Hospital, Richmond Carers in Twickenham and via a poster campaign at local mental health centres and schools. In addition and with the support of two local artists, we offered one family drop-in workshop in celebration of World Mental Health Day on 10th October.

Aims and objectives: The aims and objectives of these workshops were to follow Art & Soul’s theme of expressing mental health and well-being

through artistic activity, whilst providing opportunities for success, task completion, creative exploration and successful termination.

Project 1 (youth and adults): A light introductory activity in which participants were asked to create a 'visual recipe for well-being'. These were laminated and assembled to form a 3D group installation for the Art & Soul exhibition.

Project 2 (youth and adults): Participants were provided with materials to build boxes, from which an inner light source could illuminate drawings that supported the concept of 'positive mood'.

Project 3 (youth): In this group, we discussed the idea of animal spirit guides (as expressed in films such as *The Golden Compass*) and which animal each youth would choose. Participants were also given an opportunity to look at the symbolic history of their particular choice in reference material. The chosen animals were then drawn, etched, printed and framed.

Project 4 (youth and adults): In our final session, each participant was asked to think of one sentiment, idea etc. they would choose above all else if granted one wish from a magic wand. After selecting the words and sourcing the letters from magazines, participants were supported to make their wish 'real' by creating it sculpturally.

Our final adolescent project took place at Orleans House Gallery's Education Centre. This session demonstrated the group's full potential and the degree to which, away from the grounds and 'definitions' of the unit, the group rose to their clearly-defined, uninterrupted and fully supported challenge of 'making positive art'. The resulting level of activity and industry was almost profound. As group leaders, we had the privilege of watching each of these youths transform from 'patients' to 'creators' as demeanour, expression, movement, attitude and energy changed. At the end of the session, this group left smiling and clutching the session's accomplishments of wishes which included: responsibility, confidence, stability, expressing feelings, and starting a clean slate."

Outcomes: Much of the completed work was exhibited as part of the Art & Soul's exhibition and all participants were given the option of showing their work. Day trips were planned for participants to view the exhibition and feedback demonstrated that showing work publically was a positive and self-esteem raising experience.

Conclusion and recommendations: We believe that there is huge benefit to be had by running these workshops on a regular basis and have had requests from the participating organisations and individuals

to continue this work. We also found Orleans House Gallery Education Centre to be an excellent venue from which to run this programme.”

EXHIBITION

The response from Art & Soul organisations and individual members was large – 127 works were exhibited, lower than 2007 as some Day Centres have closed. As well as two-dimensional artworks in a variety of media, such as oil, watercolour, acrylic paint and pencil, submissions also included ceramic tiles, a video recording, and a papier maché sculpture. As always, the varied subject matter determined the thematic layout, with sections on portraits, landscapes, animals, flora and fauna, and a few abstract and spiritual pieces. A visitors' book and gallery feedback forms were available, and many appreciative comments were received (see Feedback). In response to a suggestion from last year, prices were included on the labels rather than on a separate price list. A total of 16 artworks were sold, the highest to date.

It was helpful that once again many of the works were mounted and framed before submission. In addition, a professional framer dealt with those artworks requiring mounting and framing and Orleans House Gallery made available a number of stock frames for this purpose.

The exhibition was on display for eight weeks, compared to the usual three weeks for previous shows, to attract more visitors, encourage group visits by participating organisations, and to coincide with World Mental Health Day (10th October). The total number of visitors was 1440.

PRIVATE VIEW

The Private View took place on Thursday 2 October from 6 - 8 pm in the Stables Gallery and Courtyard. The new café and artist studios were specially opened on this occasion in order that Art & Soul members could view the new development. It was a well-attended and enjoyable evening. Guests included artists with their families and friends, and some staff from the day centres.

During the evening, Rachel Tranter, co-chair of Art & Soul and Head of Arts, made a speech, in which she thanked everyone for their hard work and dedication. She also confirmed the commitment and support of Orleans House Gallery, through Art & Soul, to the promotion of mental and emotional well-being through artistic expression. Orleans House Gallery received an award for access at the Richmond AID event, where many Art & Soul members exhibited work.



INVIGILATION

We are very grateful to Paul Gadd, a long term member of Art & Soul, for invigilating the exhibition from beginning to end, sharing his experiences and enthusiasm with visitors.

DISSEMINATION

Curator Mark De Novellis, Art & Soul Administrator Janet MacLachlan and individual member Paul Gadd were invited to attend the Richmond Parish Lands Charity AGM on 19th November 2008, to give a talk on Art & Soul and an overview of its aims, activities and achievements over the previous decade. The talk, which ended the event, was introduced by a powerpoint presentation and talk by Mark De Novellis, followed by a question and answer session between Janet MacLachlan and Paul Gadd. This was followed by questions from the audience. The audience were very interested and supportive of Art & Soul's activities and were particularly moved by Paul Gadd's honest, powerful and insightful discussion into mental health, its perception and stigmas, and how essential Art & Soul is.

The Art & Soul exhibition coincided with the Orleans House Gallery exhibition *Eloquent Obsessions* 30th August – 19th October 2008, which showcased 'outsider' and visionary art. It was highlighted as 'Pick of

the week' in *Time Out* 18th – 24th September 2008 . This attracted visitors to the concurrent Art & Soul exhibition.



FEEDBACK

As usual, there were many positive and appreciative comments in the Visitors' Book. A total of 156 visitors wrote comments.

Sample Exhibition visitor comments

'Really interesting and at times quite moving'.

'Good exhibition, tastefully arranged pictures. Worth travelling to'.

'The organisers and team have done a wonderful job for the community by bringing life and colour as seen and shown by others who would otherwise not have such opportunity'.

'Excellent work and a great service'.

'Extremely exciting visually!'

'Wonderful diverse range of paintings and drawings. Thank you!'

'Most interesting. Some very desirable pictures!'

'Wonderful work! Very inspiring and life affirming'.

'I feel that these paintings are created by how people and their hearts dictate'.

'Very poignant, touching and full of feeling. Very beautiful also'.

'Encouraging and heart-warming to find a window of expression by the truly extraordinary. Thank you'.

'This is a really beautiful, inspiring exhibition which means a lot to lots of people, with wonderful artwork'.

Exhibitor comments:

Geoff Tomlinson, Art Aloud: "The latest Art & Soul was very good. Art Aloud had 6 works included and 4 members attended the private view - one of our works was sold. We had heard about the workshops but it was a bit too far to attend those as we are based in Wallington."

Gunna Finnsdottir, Centre 32: "It was as excellent as ever! Beautifully presented. We also went on to show a selection of the work at the Richmond AID exhibition (where Orleans House Gallery won the access award). The private view was great – it's always a lovely event but it would be nice to have more food next time as it went very quickly! We hope to work with the gallery again soon on the Shakespeare sculpture project."

Helen Robinson, Ham Friends: "We enjoyed producing and submitting work for Art & Soul. The book of photos exhibited went to the Richmond AID exhibition afterwards which was good, as it opened people's eyes to what happens in Ham. It was much better that the Art & Soul exhibition dates were longer – it made it more accessible. We brought a group over for an exhibition visit. They were amazed by the quantity and quality of the work on display. They spent a long time there, got a lot from it and the work was very thought-provoking."

Maggie Hughes, Integrated Neurological Services: "I have been speaking to the Art Group at INS about the Art & Soul exhibition and how they felt about having their paintings exhibited in the Stables Gallery. The response was really good and in fact they positively glowed. It was such a boost to them seeing their work mounted and framed and being able to show it to their friends and family. They felt very special and the icing on the cake was when 3 paintings sold and 2 more went on to the Richmond AID exhibition. It has done wonders for their confidence within the group."

Personally I thought the exhibition was excellent, possibly the best so far. The fact that so many of the paintings had been framed and hung so well made it feel as though their work was being 'honoured'. Considering the difficulties that each member of the group faces, these paintings are a great achievement. Most of them have little or no use of one of their hands plus various speech, language and cognitive problems. Painting is such an important means of expression when words are so often a problem. It aids concentration, co-ordination and most of all a sense of achievement and worth.

Most people who have had a stroke or have a progressive neurological condition experience periods of depression and lack of confidence at the loss of their independence and autonomy. Painting in the Art Group can help to build up that confidence and self-esteem, and exhibitions such as Art & Soul can only help to consolidate this. I hope there will be many more!"

Jasbir Garcha: (individual member) "I was happy to show work again. I didn't get time to come along to the exhibition but when I collected my work I saw a lot of it. There was a nice selection – I loved the really big canvas with the faces. It would be nicer to see more colourful work for positive thinking."

Imma Maddox(individual member): "I started weaving twenty eight years ago, when the voice I hear said "weave" and I got myself funding and a college place at Digby Stuart College, 1980. Since then, I have woven about two hundred rugs, four major tapestries, one of which went to Winchester Cathedral, Southwell Minster and Hay on Wye Castle, and much else. My work is not generally flat or something you will have seen something like, and it is very difficult to sell.

Eight years ago, after my work was lent to Orleans House by the Bethlem archives for an exhibition, I was invited to join Art & Soul, and what a welcome relief after all that time in isolation. There is a real network of artists around Art & Soul. We are fun people to meet at the previews. We offer our work generously at peppercorn prices to get seed corn money for more work. It is displayed brilliantly - especially in the Stables.

Janet, Rachel and Mark all answer my questions equally. They don't say see one of the others usually. They are flexible about handing in and collecting days, and they pour the fizzy water with a big smile.

Thank you Orleans House team."

Jenny Cooper, Sutton Drop-in Centre: "Art & Soul is a wonderful opportunity to display work and gives focus to the group and a

deadline to work towards. We visited the exhibition – it's quite a way from Sutton – so it was a real day out. We found that this time there seemed to be less work overall. Photography would be good to submit in future. With the timing of the private view – perhaps have this earlier in the day as some of the clients do not feel comfortable going out when it is dark.”

Our aim is that the Art & Soul exhibition will provide an opportunity for artists to display their art professionally in a public gallery, and will help to develop self-confidence and self-esteem. Once again we were delighted to receive so many submissions – the total was 127. We had to limit submissions to one per artist, and to increase display space two temporary panels were constructed to accommodate the large number of works.

Once again, we felt that a valuable aspect of the Art & Soul project is that it provides the opportunity for members to interact with other members and also the visiting public, in addition to working with members of the Arts Service staff.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- More regular activities and exhibitions. This had already been addressed by programming the Art & Soul exhibition for 2008, instead of 2009, in order to sustain the positivity of the 2007 Art & Soul exhibition at the Riverside Gallery. The original date for the next Art & Soul (October 2010) was brought forward to May 2010 on the suggestion of an Art & Soul member.
- The committee meets more frequently (5 meetings in 2008) in order to raise & discuss issues, and plan the next exhibition and associated events well in advance.
- The Junior Art & Soul /Expressive Arts programme of workshops has been successfully piloted, and the aim is to sustain and develop this provision strand.
- Member database rationalised and updated (led by Penny Lee).
- Improvements to systems – delivery/collection/labelling.
- Improved display – uniform framing.
- Improved labelling – addition of prices.

- Increased participation from younger members.
- Longer exhibition run.
- Increase in members taking part in exhibition installation and de-installation.
- Centre 32 members participated in the Shakesperiana project, part of the *Face and Figure of Shakespeare* exhibition (18th April – 7th June 2009).

AREAS FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

- Develop closer links with local mental health providers and organisations, including CAMHS and Richmond Mind.
- Target and encourage participation from new individual members.
- Develop a marketing strategy for Art & Soul to ensure a wider public presence, including the internet.
- Explore the potential of the Orleans House Gallery artist-in-residence programme working with Art & Soul.
- Encourage centre and hospital participation in the annual ARHouse open studios festival.
- Support 'back to employment' and independent living through developed volunteering initiatives.
- Improve internet presence.

CONCLUSION

Once again we were delighted with the response to the Art & Soul *Ten* from participants and visitors. Comments have been positive and encouraging. Orleans House Gallery, in making available gallery space on a regular basis for Art & Soul exhibitions, provides a valued opportunity for artists with mental health issues to exhibit their work in a mainstream setting. We aim to significantly raise the positive profile of mental health by giving visitors an opportunity to gain a greater understanding of the value of art in the promotion of good mental health.

