

## Evaluation Report

# A Hill with a View: Here's looking at You

2002

Generously supported by Richmond Parish Lands Charity and MGM 2002/DfES

### INTRODUCTION

*A Hill with a View: Here's Looking at You* was devised as a special artist-led project to link in with the *Arcadia in the City* 2002 celebrations. These celebrations were been organised to coincide with and mark the centenary of the first legally protected view - the famous view from Richmond Hill. This view was protected by a parliamentary law passed in 1902, which prevented any future development on both sides of the river Thames. To mark this important centenary, the gallery hosted a special exhibition displaying a number of historical works from the Richmond upon Thames Borough Art Collection depicting views to and from Richmond Hill, entitled *A Hill with a View*. *A Hill with a View: Here's Looking at You* played a vital part in these celebrations.



Pamela Well's finished piece

## **AIMS**

The *A Hill with a View: Here's Looking at You* project aimed to boost community involvement in the celebrations through the creation of a new, participatory work of art recording the view. Thus the project hoped to produce a final product which would reflect the thoughts and feelings of the whole community contained within a cherished landscape. Involving large numbers of the community in the project, we aimed to increase awareness of the gallery, and also of the view itself as an asset to be protected and a focus for civic pride.

## **OBJECTIVES**

- To work with a variety of people living and working within the grid of the Hofland painting to create a piece in collaboration with artist Pamela Wells.
- To draw in new audiences, in particular non-visitors, by engaging them in this project.
- To present a vital, participatory contribution to the centenary celebrations with direct relevance to those living in the view.
- To work together with artist Pamela Wells, building upon and extending our outreach work, providing Pamela with an opportunity to extend and develop her practise.
- To reach out to a wide variety of people via the project web-site.

## **FACILITATION**

### **Planning**

Artist Pamela Wells was selected as the gallery's partner on the Hill with a View project, having previously been involved in a residency for Orleans House Gallery with a local school funded by Artworks for the National Children's Art Day, 5<sup>th</sup> July 2001. This project involved the creation of a large installation in plastic in response to works from *A River Runs Through It* by year 5 pupils. Through this project Pamela had become familiar with works from the permanent collection which depict views from and to Richmond Hill and she expressed an interest in developing a project specifically for the centenary celebrations.

Thomas Christopher Hofland's *View from Richmond Hill*, an important work from the borough art collection, was selected as the centre piece for the *A Hill with a View* exhibition and the starting point for the project. The final product of the project was to be a re-creation of the painting using waste materials found within the view. Pamela identified the geographical area depicted in the painting and this became the focus off her investigation, both in terms of gathering materials with which to recreate the painting and interacting with the community.

Within the grid of the area in the painting, the gallery identified specific groups to take part in the project. These will included schools, community groups, and centres such as the Cassel Hospital. In addition to workshops and sessions with these groups, two general workshops were set up at the gallery. The aim was to involve a variety of sectors of the community in the project, allowing them to participate in the celebration of their environment in a meaningful way.

To this end, a project website was established. The website contained information about the project and contact details for the artist, and acted as a changing record, allowing participants to interact with the project as it progressed. Pamela also obtained a mobile phone number to use in relation to the project, so that those interested could easily get in touch with her.

Funding for the project was secured through the generous support of the Richmond Parish Lands Charity. In addition, specific workshops were supported by a grant from DFES Schools Partnership programme, managed by engage for the Museums and Galleries Month 2002, and a grant under the government's empowering the learning community initiative managed by engage for Museum and Galleries Month 2002.

### **Promotion and Publicity**

Community involvement was vital to this project so dissemination of information was of the utmost importance from the outset. The establishment of the website at the start of the project made extensive information accessible, and allowed people to read about the project, follow its progress and get in touch with the artist.

In order to raise awareness of the project and the website, A6 postcards were printed, with the text "Have you seen this painting? (You're in it)". These incorporated a photograph of the view, Hofland's painting and details Pamela's planned recreation, as well as the dates of the exhibition of the final work at the gallery, the web address, and a mobile phone number allowing people to text the artist. These were made available around the borough, and carried by Pamela on her travels through the view so that interested passers-by could have access to detailed information about the project. They were also distributed during a gallery-run activity at the Queen's Jubilee visit to Bushy Park, which is itself part of the view.



Postcard printed to publicise the project and the website

Pamela's strategy when creating the work was to wander through areas identified in the view, collecting materials and talking to people she met. In this way awareness of

the project was raised through one to one contact, which could then be reinforced or followed up through the information contained on the postcards and the website.

Several of the specific workshops were organised directly with teachers at the relevant schools, and so did not require promotion. Others, such as the sessions at the Local Studies archive, were advertised through specifically produced fliers, and also promoted to sectors of the community for whom the sessions were thought to be of particular interest, for example the Friends of the Museum of Richmond.

As the exhibition approached, the *Hill with a View; Here's Looking at You* project played a part in all press releases and promotional material surrounding the exhibition.

### **The Workshops and Events**

The workshops took place as Pamela's recreation of the Hofland painting developed. Each was tailored to its specific audience, but all gave Pamela the opportunity to introduce a new sector of the community to the *Hill with a View; Here's Looking at You* project specifically and to the celebrations surrounding the centenary in general. Each workshop began with an introduction to the website so that participants knew where to access information regarding the project.

- Public event at gallery – 12<sup>th</sup> May

This event focussed on a previous project, 'The Dinner Party', which worked with excluded young people from the borough. The final product of the project, an installation in the Octagon, was on display to the public. Many families attended the event. Pamela spent the afternoon at the gallery, meeting people and talking to them about the *A Hill with a View; Here's Looking at You* project. She showed visitors the digitally produced version of the Hofland painting that would serve as a pattern for her work, and gave out postcards with contact details. This event allowed Pamela to introduce the idea to gallery users and gave visitors the opportunity to talk to a practising artist as the very start of a project.

- Christ's School – 13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup> May

This part of the project was devised to meet the aims of the Museums and Galleries Month 2002/ DfES 'Do You KS3?' initiative, and was funded through a Schools Partnership Grant. Pamela worked with a KS3 group from the school over two days, introducing the students to the project through the website at school then taking them out to the view to draw and gather materials to develop into their own 'plastic landscapes', which were then displayed on the project website. On the second day the students walked through the view with Pamela to visit the gallery, see current exhibition including another young people's project, 'The Dinner Party', and see the Hofland painting.

A full evaluation of these workshops including feedback and images is attached at the end of this report.





Students from Christ's School in the view, and at the gallery

**The View from Richmond Hill**

The historically protected view from Richmond Hill was recently the subject of an art project developed together with Orleans House Gallery in Twickenham, professional artist Pamela Wells, and students from the art department at Christ's School.

Christ's School was the link secondary school for this exciting project. The Department for Education and Skills awarded Christ's a substantial grant to participate in this initiative. Students worked on Richmond Hill and at Orleans House Gallery producing artwork which was on public display at the Gallery in July. The standard of artwork at Christ's School is outstanding. Head of Art, Callie Barnwell,

also works extensively in the local community as well as developing strong links with galleries including Orleans House, the Tate and the British Museum.

You can visit the students' work online at:  
[www.hillwithaview.co.uk](http://www.hillwithaview.co.uk)



[www.hillwithaview.co.uk](http://www.hillwithaview.co.uk)

Report of the project in Christ's School newsletter

■ Local Studies – 23<sup>rd</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup> May

This part of the project was devised to meet the aims of the Museums and Galleries Month 2002 'Get it Together' initiative, and was funded through an Empowering the Learning Community grant. Pamela Wells and Curator Mark de Novellis worked with

Local Studies Librarian Chris Turfitt to run two workshops in the Local Studies archive. Pamela introduced the project using the website, and explained how the participants could contribute. Contextual images and information relating to the view held in the archive, along with research material from the gallery and reproductions of works from the borough art collection were used as a starting point for discussions about the view. A digital camera was used to record some of the source material, potentially for incorporation in the final work. The ideas raised during the session were documented by Pamela on the project website.

A full evaluation of these workshops including feedback and images is attached at the end of this report.

- Chase Bridge School – 10<sup>th</sup> June

Pamela visited the school to work with two year 6 classes. She introduced them to the project, showing them the website and answering their questions. The children then went outside to draw the 'view' from their school, which includes the Duke of Northumberland's River. The students then developed their drawings into their own plastic landscapes, which were displayed on the project website. Having seen the website at the start of the session, the students were excited to know that their creations would become a part of it.

The workshop was followed up by a visit to the gallery on 9<sup>th</sup> July, allowing the students to see Pamela's finished piece in situ, along with the Hofland painting and the other works in the *Hill with a View* exhibition.

- Edgar Road Community Centre, Hounslow

Pamela visited the centre to talk about the project. After a fruitful discussion explaining the project to the centre manager, Pamela left postcards so that users of the community centre could access information about the project.

- Cassell Hospital – 11<sup>th</sup> June

Pamela spent an afternoon with the children at the Cassell Hospital, Ham Common, telling them about *A Hill with a View; Here's Looking at You* and discussing the project with them.

- Strathmore School – 24<sup>th</sup> June

Rachel and Pamela spent the day with a group of eight students from the school aged twelve – fourteen. After introducing the students to the project and the Hofland painting through the website at school, Pamela walked with them to the terrace to draw the view and collect materials. They then walked 'through' the view down to the river before returning to school to work in groups to develop their drawings to produce three plastic landscapes. These were photographed for display as part of the project website. The students collected plastic from around school for Pamela to incorporate in the final piece.

A report of the day from the school is attached.

- Meadlands Primary School – 26<sup>th</sup> June

Pamela visited the school to work with a class of year 5 students. They looked at the website and talked about the project before going outside to draw their own view.



These drawings were then used as a starting point to create plastic landscapes during the afternoon. The finished landscapes were displayed against a window and photographed for the website. The students enjoyed the idea of their work being displayed on the web, and took advantage of the opportunity of working with Pamela to ask questions about what it is like to be an artist.

Once Pamela's work was installed in the gallery, it was used, along with the rest of the exhibition, as a starting point for workshops for various groups including local schools and the Orleans House Gallery After School Art Club.



School workshop (L) and Art Club session (R) inspired by Pamela's work

### **Production of the final work**

Working in response to the Hofland painting, Pamela collected views, images and objects from the corresponding geographical area to areas within the painting. The participants with whom she established a dialogue, either through the organised workshops or chance encounters, actively contributed to the work by interacting with the artist, expressing views, making suggestions and offering items to be included as part of the work. This interaction took place both in person as Pamela spent time 'in the view' meeting people, and also on line via the project website. As the project progressed, items and photographs will be pasted onto the website creating an ongoing record of the development.



Pamela at work on the re-creation

Pamela used a computer-generated, simplified version of Hofland's painting to provide a pattern for her final work, which involved stitching together pieces of plastic found in the view along with acetates printed with text. The result was a full size, colourful recreation of Hofland's canvas created out of materials gathered during the project. The website also constituted an important part of the final product, and was made accessible at the gallery during the exhibition. Displaying the documentation of the development in this way highlighted the importance of the participatory process leading to the creation of the work.

## **EVALUATION**

The project effectively widened community awareness of, and participation in, the gallery's *A Hill with a View* exhibition and the *Arcadia in the City 2002* celebrations in general. The participatory nature of the project and the emphasis placed upon documenting the process of production allowed various sectors of the community to feel genuine involvement in the final work when it was exhibited.

### **Positive Outcomes**

#### **For the gallery:**

- Value added to *A Hill with a View* exhibition through inclusion of specially commissioned art work.
- Increased relevance of exhibition due to participation of various sectors of the community in the production of the final piece.
- Increased awareness of the gallery, the borough art collection, the exhibition and the *Arcadia in the City 2002* celebrations among the local community.
- Experience of working with Local Studies.
- Experience of designing workshops targeting Key Stage 3 leading to increased understanding of the needs and curriculum-objectives of this age group.
- Experience of using internet to make project more accessible.
- Experience of co-ordinating a multifaceted project encompassing participants of various ages and interests.
- Active participation in the *Arcadia in the City 2002* celebrations, creating basis for future collaborations with the Thames Landscape Strategy.
- Developed a richer understanding and interpretation of Hofland's painting.

#### **For the participants:**

- Experience of working with a practising artist to develop a new work with a clear focus.
- Experience of seeing own contribution to project logged on website and final work exhibited in exhibition.
- Experience of working with unfamiliar media.
- Increased awareness of the gallery, the borough art collection, the exhibition, the *Arcadia in the City 2002* celebrations and the view itself.
- Promotion of civic pride derived from participation in a community wide, locality inspired project.





Pamela leading a plastic landscape workshop

**Areas to learn from:**

- Importance of clear aims and ongoing evaluation within such a wide-ranging project.

**Further Projects:**

- **aRTful**

A number of the schools who participated in the workshops went on to participate in aRTful, an exhibition celebrating excellence in the visual arts in Richmond upon Thames schools.

- **My Richmond**

My Richmond, generously supported by Boots the Chemist, was a photography competition instigated by the Mayor of Richmond, as a Civic Pride Initiative, in collaboration with the gallery, Richmond and Twickenham Photographic Society, and the Thames Landscape Strategy. Local children and schools were invited to explore the borough and submit photographs on the themes of 'What Makes Richmond Special' and 'Nature and Wildlife in Richmond'. The winning entries were displayed at the Mayor's Parlour, York House, and subsequently as part of 'The View' exhibition at Orleans House Gallery, once again adding value to the exhibition through a community-participatory element. All the entries will form part of the Local Studies archive, documenting the locality in 2003. This project saw the gallery building on relationships with Local Studies, the Thames Landscape Strategy and local schools formed through the *Hill with a View* project.

- **B is for Boat and R is for River**

A community art project planned for spring 2004, aiming to create an inspiring art installation as part of a new playground at Twickenham Riverside. This project will once again see the gallery collaborating with local schools and Arcadia in the City to celebrate the unique riverside environment and its history.

## Conclusion

*A Hill with a View: Here's Looking at You* was a great success in bringing the concepts of the *Hill with a View* exhibition to the wider community. The final piece, and the website, constituted a vital part of the exhibition and allowed participants to feel active involvement in the celebrations of their locality. Furthermore members of the community were able to see the paintings from the borough art collection in a new light, not only as beautiful and interesting records of the locality in the past, but as starting points for future creativity.



School group looking at the Hofland painting