

CENTREPIECES

Mental Health Arts Project

Registered Charity 1160300

ARTISTS UPDATE

WINTER 2023/24

KING'S AWARD FOR VOLUNTARY SERVICES !

We are very pleased to announce that Centrepieces has been successfully nominated for this prestigious award (KAVS) which is equivalent to an MBE for organisations in the voluntary sector. It is a great testimony and worthy recognition for all the hard work, dedication and commitment which has been undertaken by so many people over the years since the inception of the project in 1999. We are now awaiting further instructions about a visit by the King's Lieutenant to formally present the award which will then be followed by an invitation to Buckingham Palace Gardens in the Spring/Summer of 2024 for 2 representatives of Centrepieces, along with representatives of all other charities and projects in the country who have been successful. In the meantime we will be ordering some medals and badges to commemorate our achievement and be able to use the award to help publicise who we are and what we do and of course to assist with any future fundraising. This Award is for life, well done everyone !!

CHRISTMAS ARRANGEMENTS 2023

There will be a party for everyone at the Lodge on Tuesday 19th December 12 – 3pm. Contributions welcome for the buffet table.

The Lodge and Pop Up in Sidcup will be closed from Friday 22nd December reopening Monday 8th January. There is a Christmas ZOOM Quiz on Wed 27th December, email Sue on suet998@gmail.com to book a free place.

EXHIBITIONS

Some highlights of 2023 included The Inner Me Exhibition at Erith Exchange which showed artwork produced through a series of workshops funded by a William Kendall grant. The exhibition opening was attended by the Mayor of Bexley at his first outing, who then

went on to adopt Centrepieces as one of his main charities for fundraising in his term of office.

The Drill Hall in Sandwich hosted our next Exhibition in May/June with the theme of Mental Health Awareness Week 'Anxiety'. This exhibition went down well with the public and we were informed that our exhibitions at this venue are very popular and sell the most artwork. Next year's exhibition is planned to be installed on 29th April and will run until 3rd June. More to be announced in the new year and we will publicise the 2024 MH Awareness Week theme as soon as it is announced.

The Stables Gallery Exhibition in Aug/Sept 2023 was a huge success as well as a learning experience for Centrepieces. We sold the most artwork, merchandise and cards that we have ever done through a great team effort by stewards and other helpers (over £4K taken altogether). The public responded well to the Mental Health Themes, the reasonable prices and the opportunity to talk to our artists and volunteers. We included work from the Inner Me, Anxiety Exhibitions and the World Mental Health Day theme 'Mental Health is a Universal Human Right'. We aim to provide additional training for stewards and volunteers at the next Stables Exhibition to help with our additional responsibilities in both stewarding and taking payments now that the Stables Gallery shop has closed.

There were also a number of successful solo exhibitions held by Centrepieces artists in 2023 including the current show by Fatma Durmush in the Woolwich Front Room 'Meet the Arts' which runs until Dec 22nd which has been publicised separately, and Dorota Chioma's Exhibition in Walthamstow 'Into the Woods' earlier in the year 'a journey through the woods of our minds and lives showcasing creative approaches to telling stories about mental health'

The Stables Exhibition 2024 is our next major show due to be installed on Thursday 21st March and taken down on Wednesday 24th April. Submissions are now being accepted, contact Geoff at the Lodge on 01322 554 589 or info@centrepieces.org At the moment we do not have a theme but please feel free to submit anything you are working on. Please make sure that all artwork is photographed before putting on any reflective covering. Nicki will be offering demos for anyone who needs help with photographing artwork. There will also be training sessions for stewards before the exhibition starts. We are particularly encouraging those attending workshops to think about submitting work to the next Stables Exhibition which will need to be prepared eg framed etc in the normal way. All tutors need to discuss with artists as appropriate.

Solo/small group exhibitions in 2024 We have a few possible venues for these exhibitions including Creek Creative in Faversham but they get booked up quickly so it is essential to enquire as early as possible. Please contact Geoff if you are thinking about holding an exhibition next year to discuss the various ways in which Centrepieces can offer support if you might require this and to check availability. Call office landline 01322 554589 or email info@centrepieces.org

We are also exploring other spaces for exhibitions such as the Elixir Gallery at QEH Woolwich, various galleries in Ramsagate and local libraries. If you are aware of any other possible venues to show /sell Centrepieces artists work then please contact Geoff at the Lodge.

PICTURE LOAN SCHEMES

We have a new venue for exhibiting and selling artwork, the Kings Arms Pub in Bexleyheath. Centrepieces artist Trevor Whiting is currently showing artwork there on a rotating basis and has already sold three pieces. We continue to exhibit artwork at the Repton Community Centre a thriving project in Ashford Kent.

SIDCUP MANOR HOUSE (THE POP UP)

Our new Pop Up space has been up and running since May. This has only been possible through the commitment and hard work of our enthusiastic team of volunteers who have created a welcoming environment which is showcasing artwork produced in the art workshops taking place there and from the 19 studio spaces which some of our artists are now working in. Although full at the moment please contact Karen if you think you might be interested in taking on a studio space in future as they become available. The current cost is £25 per month. The team have also created a shop in the foyer which is full of interesting merchandise, books and art related products. This is not generally open to the public as it is not permitted, but it is there for anyone attending events and art related activities such as workshops, some of which include the public. There was an official opening/ launch in October this year which was a huge success with workshops and live music which was well attended by many people including the Mayor of Bexley.

ART WORKSHOP PROGRAMME

Weekly workshops continue at both the Lodge at Hall Place and the Pop Up in Sidcup Manor House. Some are still available on Zoom, details of these and the exact location of each session are contained in the monthly programme. This year has seen a tremendous variety of workshops covering a wide range of mediums influenced by the interest of our tutors and those attending the classes. We are very grateful to our patron, international sculptor and educationist Willow Winston, who in 2023 offered 2 series of workshops, one utilising naturally found woodland materials and another on creative bookmaking.

The outdoor sculpture workshops on Thursday mornings at the Lodge continue over the winter period for those able to work unsupervised, with a programme of indoor 3D workshops being planned for the first 3 months of 2024. There will also be some new sculpture sessions using the Portland Stone which we have acquired when outdoor sessions restart in March/ April.

Fortnightly art and craft sessions which are also open to the public continue on Saturdays at the Pop Up in Sidcup.

Please continue to check the Monthly Art Workshop Programme sent out to the artists@centrepieces.org email group or by post, for amendments and updates notifying any changes during the month, and contact Sue Turner on suet998@gmail.com for any workshop related queries.

Payments for workshops continue to be paid by ART Credits so it is important to keep these topped up. ART Credit payments can be made in person (by prior arrangement) at the Lodge or by Bank Transfer – see workshop payment information at the end of this update for more details – *Please note that we can't use our new SumUp Card reader for ART Credits but can now take card payments for the sale of items from the Lodge.*

Current Centrepieces Tutors and Artist Facilitators include: Lucy Thomas, Karen Larkin, Nicki Lessing, Alex Spendley, Liam Davies, Nadia Halliday, Mandy Fernadez, Sue Wieck, Wendy Clay, Andrea Montague, Dawn Tomkins and Willow Winston.

The monthly calendar and flyers are sent out via the email group or posted where necessary and are also available to view on the website, www.centrepieces.org

QUEENS GALLERY ROYAL COLLECTION The Queens Gallery continues to offer free Community Zoom sessions on a Wednesday, details of which Sue circulates on the Centrepieces email group.

Zoom login details are usually the same for each session although they do change so always check for emails announcing new log in details.

Those for December 6th were:

<https://zoom.us/j/9044769010?pwd=ZmwwdVZKdjFMVnNjWlMvbXRzOUUpSdz09>

Meeting ID: 904 476 9010

'LOCKED IN'. This exhibition proposal is based on the work of people who have been incarcerated and have expressed their experiences through art (not connected in any way to lockdown or the pandemic). Having secured an agreement with the Linden Hall Gallery in Deal Kent to hold the exhibition at this prestigious venue we are now looking to crowd fund to match the amount which the gallery has donated to Centrepieces for this purpose

MERCHANDISE:

The following are available from the Lodge or the Pop Up shop in Sidcup:

Centrepieces T shirts and Sweat Shirts at £10 and £18 (£8 and £15 respectively to volunteers).

Centrepieces Trustee Britta Von Zweigbergk's books 'Words from the Edge' a collection of Words, Pictures, Poems and Objects from the Bexley Hospital 1973 – 1996 at £8.99 and 'Centrepieces, A Story of Mental Health and Art in Bexley' at £14.99, reduced rate to Centrepieces artists and volunteers £12.99.

Also available very soon are Britta's three recent books 'Pictures from the Edge', a visual introduction to art therapy in Bexley Hospital, 'People and their Pictures', the stories and images of artwork produced by Bexley Hospital patients, and 'Talking about Art' a series of essays, all published through Centrepieces Press, prices to be announced.

Ann Cronin's excellent little booklet 'Creative Insomnia' is still available for a minimum donation of £1 to Centrepieces and Ann's new follow up book 'Creative Insomnia 2' for £2.

Dorota Chioma's books, 'Mental Health in Pictures' comprising artwork, narrative and poetry exploring varying states of mind and mental health is available at £18 for Centrepieces artists and volunteers, and 'Notes from Postnatal Depression, Healing through Art' similarly rich in beautiful artwork and accompanying poetry, containing a lot of interesting information about postnatal depression including Dorota's personal experiences, also priced at £18. Dorota co-produced a publication entitled 'Sleep and Mental Health' which is part of the regular 'This Zine has Issues', a journal devoted to breaking the stigmas attached to mental ill health. Copies available at the Lodge for £15. Dorota has also recently published a Colouring Book called 'Tinctured, Mental Health in Pictures' also available from the Lodge, priced £10.

2023 Xmas Cards with designs selected from Centrepieces artists submissions are now being printed to order. The cards cost 75p each or 6 for £4. The catalogue was sent out separately in November, deadline for last orders is the 2nd week in December.

DIVERSITY ACCESS PROGRAMME:

As well as incorporating the art and influence of established artists from a wide range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds into our art workshop programme we are now planning to include experiences of our artists in our Stables 2025 exhibition in relation to the changing demographics of Bexley over the last 60 years since it became a London Borough. How we will do this is something we will start to work on after our next Stables Gallery in March 2024 when we will send out a brief to artists for contributions on this theme with the working title 'Reflections On Where We Live'.

SCHOOLS PROGRAMME:

Red Hill Primary School: The Rainbow Mosaic Mural to commemorate this school's 70th anniversary is currently being finished at the Pop Up in Sidcup and should be completed by the end of the year ready for installation. It comprises 6 large panels that are looking very impressive.

SANE INDIVIDUAL ARTISTS AWARDS: 8 Centrepieces Artists applied for these awards earlier in the year and most were successful. 12 of our artists have applied this time round following a visit in August by Tom Andrews from SANE who organises the scheme. Tom

spent the day talking to C/P artists who were interested in applying and has offered his support with their applications. The awards are for between £100 - £300 and results should be announced in early 2024.

DISCOUNT CARDS: The Centrepieces Membership Card offers artists a 10% discount at a range of local venues. These currently include: Hobbycraft in Crayford and Gallery Gifts in Bexleyheath, Jambs Owls and Riverside Café (volunteers only) at Hall Place. Mala Morgan is also offering 50% discount on her workshops at the Movie Shack in Bexleyheath Shopping Mall. These are available to all those who have paid their annual subscription and to our volunteers.

ART AUCTION: We have not been able to hold our traditional art auction this year due to other commitments and lack of a suitable venue. We will however pursue alternative ways to sell artist work through venues such as auction houses and corporate opportunities.

FUNDRAISING: 2023 has generally been a very successful year in fundraising for Centrepieces. We were approached by 2 retail outlets, Morleys in Bexleyheath who gave us space to sell our art and related products and run workshops for children, and Lush in Bluewater who sold some products fundraising on our behalf. Our volunteers gave a lot of time to these events over two weekends and altogether we raised around £2.5K. We have also received help from Argos/ Sainsburys in Erith and will continue to do so next year. We have also continued to receive significant donations both privately and from local organisations such as the Sidcup Rotary Club.

VOLUNTEERS: New volunteers include Natalie Whiten who has been helping to run the Pop Up in Sidcup and other artists who have stepped up to help there including Andrea Montague and Lesley Etienne. We are currently exploring suitable mental health training for Centrepieces volunteers and tutors who take on a higher level of responsibility within the organisation and still recruiting for further volunteers in a number of important roles.

AGM: The Centrepieces 2023 AGM will take place a little later on Wed 31st Jan 2024, in the Hall Place Education room in the Visitors Centre. Full details and invites to be sent out in the next few weeks.