

CENTREPIECES

Mental Health Arts Project
Registered Charity 1160300



ARTISTS UPDATE

WINTER 2024/25

2024 was a year of considerable success for Centrepieces. Having achieved the Kings Award for Voluntary Service (KAVS) representatives then went to the award presentation at the Tower of London in May and later others to a garden party in the grounds of Buckingham Palace. In between we had a fabulous photo shoot at our Stables Gallery Exhibition with the local Mayor and Deputy Lieutenant. We were told that it had been a very competitive process, and had done well as the first organisation in Bexley to be successful.

RIP Alex Spendley 24.3.60 – 24.10.24

It was with much sadness we learned of the passing of Alex Spendley, a major contributor and founder member of Centrepieces who was well loved by everyone who knew him. Alex was a talented and creative artist in many areas including photography, sculpture and creative writing. A commemorative gathering was held at the Pop Up Sidcup Manor House following his funeral which was well attended by his family and Centrepieces.

CHRISTMAS / NEW YEAR ARRANGEMENTS 2024/25

Both the Lodge and Sidcup Pop Up premises will be closed from Friday 20th December reopening on Monday 6th January.

The traditional Volunteers Christmas lunch took place on Monday 16th December at the Star pub at Sidcup Place.

A Xmas party for all will be happening at 12pm at the Lodge on Thursday 19th December. Details have been sent out for contributions etc.

During the Xmas/ New Year period there will be an online Quiz and possibly other events, dates and times to be announced.

PREMISES

We have received an extension to our current lease at Sidcup Manor House until March 31st 2025. Following this we are hoping to secure further premises for Centrepieces through Bexley Council in a timely way, having already looked at one possibility.

The 'Pop Up' has been well used this year with our 18 Artists Studios nearly fully occupied and regular art workshops taking place both there and at the Lodge.

EXHIBITIONS

We held two major exhibitions in 2024, the first in March – April at the Stables Gallery at Hall Place and the second in May at the Drill Hall Sandwich.

Both of these exhibitions focused on the Mental Health Awareness Week theme of Movement and Mental Health with our artists producing some great work which went down very well with the general public. Sales of artwork were excellent at Hall Place along with cards and our other accessories. The Hall Place exhibition was managed and stewarded extremely well by C/P volunteers who have now gained more experience in how to do this.

Looking to 2025

We have 2 exhibitions currently booked, another for the Drill Hall in May and one at the Stables Exhibition 17th July – 13th August. The Stables Exhibition will be entitled 'Reflections on Where We Live' in view of the 60th anniversary of Bexley as a London Borough and 2025 is also the 25th anniversary of Centrepieces. A first Artist Brief has already been sent out and we will be organising workshops around the theme to help artists create work for this exhibition.

As you are probably aware we try hard to keep to major mental health themes such as that of Mental Health Awareness Week and World Mental Health Day although the announcement of these themes does not always give our artists much time to complete relevant work. This means we can sometimes be more flexible about what artwork is being shown.

We have an exciting opportunity to show/auction artwork at PwC, the workplace of one of our new Trustees Sharan Sanger, which will be a great step for Centrepieces as this is a major multinational company. The date for this is currently being decided.

Another exhibition is being organised at the Canvas and Cream Gallery in Forest Hill by Centrepieces artist and tutor Wendy Clay. This was originally scheduled for International Womens Day in March but will now more likely happen around Easter time. It is hoped to fund the exhibition through SANE artist award applications by 4 Centrepieces female artists if successful.

We are always encouraging Centrepieces artists to show their work in small groups or even solo if they feel that is achievable and will try to give support where possible. If you are interested then please contact Geoff at the Lodge on 01322 554 589 or info@centrepieces.org as soon as possible as galleries get booked up well in advance.

PICTURE LOAN SCHEMES

We currently have picture loans schemes at The Repton Community Centre in Ashford Kent, Slade Green Community Centre and the Kings Arms pub in Bexleyheath where C/P artist Trevor Whiting is showing his work. These schemes provide good publicity for the artists and Centrepieces as well as an opportunity for our artists to sell their artwork.

WORKSHOPS

Our art workshops have continued to grow in 2024 with a rich and diverse monthly programme covering a multitude of themes and media led by around 10 art tutors and overseen by Karen Larkin. There were many highlights this year including the introduction of Portland limestone to the sculpture workshops and some excellent Black History month workshops based on 'The Sorrow Songs' stories of people freed from the slave trade who came to live in the UK. A Blog about these has been created and can be accessed via our website on this link

<https://centrepieces.org/web/black-history-month-write-up-2024/>

The Sculpture workshops will be led by a new team in 2025 and our patron Willow Winston has offered to lend her support. The first Acrylics based workshop on the 'Reflections on Where We Live' theme also took place in October. And the Creative Writing group has gone from strength to strength with a publication nearly ready to go to print.

AWARDS

A number of Centrepieces artists were again successful in their applications for SANE AWARDS in 2024 and likewise we will be hoping for further success when the outcome of the current round is announced in the next few weeks. Congratulations to Centrepieces artist Lilani Dilrukshan who in addition to her 2024 SANE award also won the 'Charles Bracken Award' from the same organisation for one of the best pieces of artwork.

And to Abdul Waheed Adeniran who curated his first exhibition 'Creativity of Freedom' at the Apthorp Gallery in North London.

FUTURE PROJECTS

We have a number of ideas for future projects in 2025 and possible funding sources and will circulate these as they develop, some of which may include exhibitions or public art.

VOLUNTEERS AND TRUSTEES

As everyone knows Centrepieces is entirely dependent on the people who give their time, expertise and commitment for free to organise and run the project. As ever we have had a turnover of Volunteers and Trustees who have left in 2024 and new people joining. So a big thanks to everyone both old and new for making the organisation work so well !

New Trustees include Sharan Sanger, Freddie Clough and Sujatha Thaladi. We wish Rosie Eaglen well and thank her for the support she has given to Centrepieces for many years. We currently have 10 Trustees who meet every 2 months, some of whom are on our Arts Committee.

We have over 30 volunteers so can't mention everyone but the plan is for Carla Diniz and Natalie Whiten to take on more senior roles in 2025. Carla currently leads on Social Media and Website development and Natalie supports the running of the Pop Up premises at Sidcup Manor house.

