

arts
award
supporter

Spring eNewsletter 2013

tva
tees valley arts

Opening remarks...

Welcome to the TVA Spring 2013 newsletter.

I'm going to start with an uplifting Spring poem by Billy Collins –

Today

*If ever there were a spring day so perfect,
so uplifted by a warm intermittent breeze
that it made you want to throw
open all the windows in the house
and unlatch the door to the canary's cage,
indeed, rip the little door from its jamb,
a day when the cool brick paths
and the garden bursting with peonies
seemed so etched in sunlight
that you felt like taking
a hammer to the glass paperweight
on the living room end table,
releasing the inhabitants
from their snow-covered cottage
so they could walk out,
holding hands and squinting
into this larger dome of blue and white,
well, today is just that kind of day.*



That is one long sentence of joy, freedom, fresh air and exhilaration – and surely those days will come...

Meanwhile, things continue 'challenging'. Looking back through previous newsletters I should think that 'challenging' is my most frequently used adjective, and almost every time I use it I say something like – 'well, we thought it was challenging before but now it's really...'

Looking at dictionary definitions of 'challenge', I see collocations given: biggest, daunting, formidable, greatest, major, new, serious – followed by: accept, enjoy, face, meet, pose, present, relish, rise to. Let's hope 2013 will be all about 'relishing' and 'rising to', possibly even 'enjoying', and perhaps a bit less of the 'daunting'. We'll see.

TVA has been working with the University of Teesside on its mission to 'internationalise the campus', and we have so far delivered a variety of participatory arts workshops, an evening of exciting African music, and, at time of writing, are helping them prepare for Chinese New Year (in February) with that very traditional Chinese entertainment, a salsa gig!

Opening remarks...

This year will be the Chinese year of the black snake; apparently a snake in your house is a good omen, as it means that your family will not starve (I'm not sure quite how literal that is) and 'year of the snake' born people tend to be thoughtful, careful, intuitive and with a love of beauty and fashion. However, snake years can bring change and instability, and the colour/ nature of the snake can be dark and deep, even abyssal. So, quite challenging, then!

I recently had the pleasure of attending a dinner at the Hardwick Hall Hotel as part of the Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Trust 'Making a difference' awards evening, hosted by our very own patron Steph McGovern, who was in fine form despite having been up since 3.30am! It was all very Oscars – style, as there were four nominations in each of about 8 categories, selected from over 200 entries. I am delighted to tell you that the Evergreen Unit for adolescent in-patients with acute eating disorders had been nominated for the 'working in partnership with other agencies' category for the project with TVA, and we won! So now Evergreen have a glass trophy to (keep safely locked away and) cherish. It was a pleasure to be there with the lovely Craig Halpin (Evergreen charge nurse) and three of the unit personnel, and we hope to work together again in the future (or failing that, to go disco dancing). Thanks to Joe Dunne, who worked as visual artist on that project, and to writer Laura Degnan – you did a grand job!

Finally I would like to draw everyone's attention to the current 'Simple Pleasures' exhibition at Washington Art Centre (on till March 16th), which includes a portrait of yours truly by TVA affiliate artist Adrian Moule. The painting is a re-imagined portrait of me sitting on the seat at the end of my garden, with the cliffs of Robin Hood's Bay in the background. Alongside the painting there is a poem called 'A perfect afternoon in the Bay' which I wrote a few years ago – possibly the last time we had a fine day, as in the Billy Collins poem. I love the picture and really look forward to having it on my walls at home – reflecting back the view.

I hope you enjoy reading about our current TVA activities.

TVA Communications note: following recent upgrading to the Middlesbrough Council phone system TVA will be changing all the staff member individual phone numbers – but at this point we can't say quite when or to what. However, the main number (01642 264651) will remain in use. As soon as we have the new numbers we will update everyone.



Rowena Sommerville
Director, TVA





Education



Winter has involved a lot of reporting, planning, scheduling, and I'm happy to say, meeting and contracting artists for Moving On and Risky Biz. One of the real pleasures of this job is having the opportunity to work with so many talented artists, who are not only able to deliver on artistic quality, but also pull off that, not quite as easy as it might sound, trick of working well with children and young people.

So, my part of the newsletter this time around is dedicated to all the artists we work with, who work very hard, with enthusiasm and dedication, to ensure that all our children and young people have a positive arts experience. As you'll know, many of the young people we work with have not always had an easy time; various difficult circumstances and situations mean that our groups frequently have a number of challenges in their lives, often have very little confidence, and may not have accessed or participated in the arts before. So, the roles of host and visiting artists are crucial ones; in engaging children and young people who might otherwise not have the opportunity, to be artists themselves, and to enjoy, create, reflect and celebrate. So, thank you all, and I look forward to working with you this year.

Talking of positive outcomes for young people, it comes as no surprise to you that we are enthusiastic supporters of Arts Award and Artsmark, and since the last newsletter there's been plenty of activity in the TVA offices. All the projects I'm currently working on (MusicMix, Moving On and Risky Biz) have Arts Award embedded into them; it adds great value to the work we do, and to the outcomes for the children and young people taking part, and they're the ones who matter, after all.

Education



I'm delighted that the next Arts Award training I'm delivering (Discover & Explore) is almost full, and that March sees a host of in-house training sessions, Gold training (26th March) and more support surgeries.

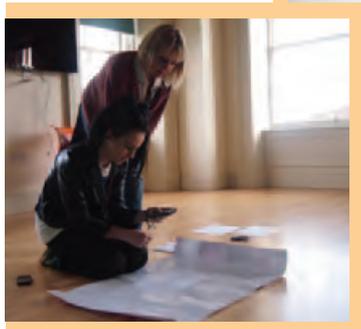
www.artsaward.org.uk

Artsmark is a nationally recognised accreditation for schools and other settings, demonstrating excellence in arts and cultural provision. It is now open for applications, and as part of the new Artsmark Network offer, I will be delivering training on 28th March. For further information, and to apply and book training go to www.artsmark.org.uk

So, as ever, it's busy in the TVA office.



Jane Gray
Education Officer





Refugee Arts

I work for TVA in two capacities – as Refugee Arts Worker (funded by Northern Rock Foundation) and as Music Leader on the Musicmix project (funded by Youth Music).

As Refugee Arts Worker, I support newly arrived people who are interested in the arts, or who have serious ambitions and talents, to establish themselves here and to engage with culture in the UK. The current economic climate, and particularly the diminution of cultural infrastructure locally, means it is very hard for artists to achieve their professional goals, and for those who are newly arrived, with all the additional difficulties and challenges that means, it is next to impossible.

My contact with various artists in these circumstances shows me this painful reality and I was very shocked recently to hear that one of our most talented artists, who has received praise and recognition widely, has been forced to consider abandoning his work as a sculptor in order to get work in a restaurant. I have been meeting with galleries and venues to help them diversify and enrich their public offer, but it feels as though everything is now being done on a shoestring. Even Newcastle, which has done so much through and for the arts in recent years, has now announced crucial funding cuts. In my view 'the arts' should not be considered as an add-on, nice enough when it can be afforded but easily jettisoned when times are tough, but rather that artistic expression is part of what it is to be human – universally – and part of what can bring us all, from whatever background or nationality, together.



Maurice Dezou
Refugee Arts Worker and Filmmaker





Youth & Community

Joe has moved on to pastures new – Middlesbrough Environment City (MEC) - leaving an empty desk and some projects for me to manage. We will miss Joe's humour, his commitment and drive that have been so beneficial to TVA over the last five years.

What is great is that we will still be working with Joe as he is now Project Manager One Planet Middlesbrough with MEC and TVA are a delivery partner in this initiative. I'm really pleased to be able to continue working with Joe and look forward to writing about projects that we will be developing together. Journeys is well underway. For those who have not read my previous article, Journeys is an exciting project working with Middlesbrough-based playwright Ishy Din who is the current writer in residence at the Manchester Royal Exchange, and who is developing a movie idea with "Bend it like Beckham", director Gurinda Chadha.

Young people have been attending workshops with Ishy and drama workers Clara Shield and Scott Young; these workshops will lead to the creation of a short, youth-based drama piece. The workshops are going well and a great deal of creative material is being developed, then shaped and crafted under Ishy's pen. Scott and Clara feel that this particular group of young people (which includes drama students from Middlesbrough College) are all strong performers and have a lot to contribute to the project. Watch this space!



Tim Coyte

Projects Officer: Youth & Community



The image on the left and front cover is a photo I took of stART participants visiting the Yorkshire Sculpture Park a few years ago. The photo has recently been featured on the new publicity postcards for the national Arts Award Supporter scheme.

Simon Says...

Here's my latest look at TVA from bygone days

5 Years ago (Spring 2008):

It was a welcome to new staff members as both Jane Gray and Joe Dunne had recently started their new roles as Education Officer and Heritage and Environment Officer respectively. Joe has recently moved onto pastures new at Middlesbrough Environment City and we wish him every success in his role as Communities Living Sustainably Project Manager.

January saw the start of the third cohort of the Tees Valley graduate arts management training scheme, delivered in partnership between Tees Valley Arts, Darlington Council, Hartlepool Council, Middlesbrough Council, Redcar and Cleveland Council and Stockton Council arts teams; supported by Arts Council England and the European Social Fund through the Cultural Sector Development Initiative. Over the next 12 months, Helen McBride, Michael Edwards, Nichola McIntosh and Suzanne Hutton would be taking placements in the Arts departments of the Local Authorities across the Tees Valley, gaining experience of managing arts projects of all shapes and sizes. The project was co-ordinated by Caroline Pearce.

10 years ago (Spring 2003):

I rejoined the organisation in March 2003, after a 2 year gap, to cover Andrea Williams' maternity leave following the birth of her son Dominic.

Four Hartlepool schools had been taking part in a project working on dance with Robyn Simpson, drama with Bidi Iredale, music with Ian Nesbitt and animation with Chris Kent. All the work culminated in a performance event, Sargasso, on board HMS Trincomalee on Thursday 13th February. 130 children performed six dance and six drama works, each ten times, during the course of the evening to ten roving audience groups over two hours. Original music was commissioned for the event on didgeridoo and cello.

15 years ago (Spring 1998):

January had seen the very last Teesside Arts Award presentation as the Teesside Development Corporation ceased to exist at the end of March 1998. Cleveland Arts had administered the Award scheme on behalf of the TDC and over £500,000 had been given to arts projects in Teesside since the Awards started in 1990.

Bob Beagrie had been appointed as Buzzwords Development Worker and Geoff Broadway had been appointed as Teesside University Digital Artist in Residence to be based at the Virtual reality Centre.

20 years ago (Spring 1993):

Mark Robinson and John Cairns had been appointed to the new roles of Literature Development Worker and Public Arts Officer: Middlesbrough City Challenge.

Peat Oberon, blacksmith at Preston Park had teamed up with Ulrike Scriba, from the Black Forest, Germany to design new seating next to the River Tees at Riverside Park, Middlesbrough.

A new women's cabaret and performance event was taking place in Hartlepool following performance workshops in Stockton and Hartlepool. A mural was unveiled in the car park entrance to the Cleveland Health Centre which had involved users from Lothian Road Day Centre and Webb House with women with mental health difficulties and with Asian girls groups from South Bank. The project was facilitated by artist Christine Horsley.



Simon Says...

25 years ago (Spring 1988)

An exhibition of photographs by Jayesh Patel and watercolours by Michael Hill was held at Middlesbrough Art Gallery in February and March 1988 comparing the life of Asians in Britain and Asia. The exhibition opening included a performance of creative Indian dancing by Bisakha Sarkar. Indian cellist Anup Biswas gave a concert at Saltburn Community Theatre on 4th March.

30 years ago (Spring 1983)

Whilst I was at Nunthorpe school preparing (badly) for my GCE's and CSE's, Cleveland Arts was in its first year of operation. It had co-promoted a Royal Shakespeare Company Fringe production of "Billy Bishop Goes to War" at the Georgian Theatre, Stockton and plans were advanced for a community project by Horse and Bamboo in rural communities.

Back to the present day, it is with sadness to report that Maureen Taylor has passed away in January 2013 at the age of 90. Maureen had served on our Board of Directors as a representative of Cleveland County Council from 1989 until the Council was abolished in 1996 and she was a great advocate for the arts on Teesside.

**Simon Smith
Communications Officer**





TVA can work with you to plan a programme of creative activities, work up a budget, write funding applications, find suitable artists, and then manage the project both artistically and administratively. If you have an idea that you would like to discuss, please contact us:



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