



Autumn Digital Newsletter

2009

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Opening remarks....

Greetings colleagues,

I can't believe that I begin every one of these 'addresses' with 'I can't believe it's time to write for the spring/summer/autumn newsletter', but I do have to say that I can't believe it's this time of year again. The promised barbecue summer has not materialised so far (end of July as I'm writing this), but surely it's too early to pack away the plastic pinny and give up hope altogether.

I have in fact experienced heat this summer, having been to Thailand to visit my son and have a holiday. I now know the meaning of the word tropical and I know I'm not built for it, but temperature aside, I thought Thailand, its landscape, its cuisine and its people were absolutely lovely and well worth the slightly hellish plane journey. (And when I arrived at Bangkok airport there were huge signs everywhere saying 'welcome to the land of smiles' and every single member of airport staff had their doubtless charming smile of welcome covered by a surgical mask.)

Anyway - back in the land of reality, activity continues as always at TVA, with lots of good stuff and occasional glimpses of beauty. I have been meeting with Local Authority colleagues to revisit, rework, and reinvigorate the relationships between us, and my thanks to all of them for their time and support.

One of the projects that TVA has been involved in this quarter has been a creative consultation with pupils and staff of Kilton Thorpe Special School in Brotton on behalf of Creative Partnerships Tees Valley - a very enjoyable project that has provided some of the images throughout this newsletter. During a creative writing consultation session with staff one of them wrote the following haiku -

Igniting the fire

Imagination ALIVE -

Creativity

I offer this as an encouraging meditation for everyone as we embrace September and the new term.



Rowena Sommerville

Director, TVA



Programme Notes



A lot of the projects and activities that I have been involved with are written about elsewhere in the newsletter, but particular highlights for me have been the WorldFest Community Event, and the outreach work supporting the launch of Futurescope at Lingfield Point.

The WorldFest was funded through a combination of Northern Rock Foundation, Grants for the Arts, Middlesbrough Council and Stockton Council; additional sponsorship from Northumbrian Water allowed us to put on the Community Event, and it was a great success. The WorldFest initiative has grown over the four years of its existence and now has some comparatively large scale headline events, but I have to say that my heart has always been in the community development side of it (where it all began) and this event exemplifies that.

There was a lovely relaxed atmosphere, and I should think that around 15 countries of origin or different ethnicities were represented in the room, all happy together. The audience and performers included people from various African countries (Congo, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Togo, Cote d'Ivoire - to my certain knowledge, doubtless plus some more); from Iraq; from Iran; from Egypt; people of Kurdish origin; from China; from France; from eastern Europe; and from the UK, including people from varying British Asian backgrounds and religious traditions.

We supplied a light buffet catered by Nobia's Catering - a small business set up by a Stockton resident formerly from Zimbabwe, and this all adds to the pleasantness.

Many thanks to Northumbrian Water for sponsoring the excellent and worthwhile event - here's looking forward to WorldFest 2010!!

**Programme
Notes**

Programme Notes

A piece of excellent news is that TVA was successful in its application to the Baring Foundation for a specialist Refugee Arts Worker, who will be based at TVA but working across the Tees Valley - many thanks to them. I believe we were one of only seven national awards, so well done us!

The outreach work for Futurescope, for Marchday, the Lingfield Point developers, took place in schools, youth centres and community centres surrounding Lingfield Point, plus a few sessions on site for workers based there. Sessions were delivered by Adrian Moule (visual arts, silk painting, mosaic, mandala), Jo Colley (creative writing) and Vicky Holbrough (3D arts) and went very well, producing some astonishing images as you can see. The theme throughout was roundness, magic mirrors, fairy gardens and so on.

As part of our ongoing work with Lingfield Point and with Marchday, I also had my photo taken with Alan Milburn MP, in front of a large painted wall which said 'Tickle Me' - as part of the public launch of the Lingfield Point arts strategy. This job is demanding but it's certainly not dull.... I congratulate Marchday for sticking to their vision of integrating culture with development, and for advocating for it as making good business sense, even (or especially) in challenging times. Wish there were more like them!



Rowena Sommerville
Director, TVA





Education

SureStart

SureStart Centres in Hartlepool are enjoying the wonderful world of Bidi Iredale over the summer, with Bidi leading children and their parents on journeys; with clothes and to the allotment! There are 6 sessions planned across different SureStart Centres and the take-up has been excellent. Parents commented on how good Bidi was, and they would definitely use some of the games at home with their children, which is a fantastic result.

African Masks

Artist Maurice Dezou led a day of African mask-making workshops for Year 2 pupils at St Benedict's School in Redcar as part of their Creative Week, along with doing a demonstration of African drumming with the whole year group.



Education

SPACE



Working with Gifted and Talented students across the North East, artists Jo Colley, Vicky Holbrough and Serena Partridge have been delivering poetry, clay sculpture and felting sessions with schools in Newcastle, with more planned for the Autumn Term. One of the comments included, when asked which part of the event was the worst and why? "That I can't do it again"

I think that says it all!

Other News

There's been plenty of Arts Award and Artsmark activity at the TVA offices over recent months; with Tim helping more young people to successfully achieve their Arts Awards (see his page for more on this) and me leading my first training session for Arts Award Advisers on 6th July. We're looking forward to delivering an Arts Award event in the region in the Autumn (watch this space) to encourage more people to become Advisers and take young people they work with through the Arts Award. To find out more go to www.artaward.org.uk

The lovely Fiona Henderson from the Forge came to TVA to run training for me and Rowena around Artsmark, and I went off to London to meet with Seema Patel at Artsmark National Office to gain a deeper understanding of the process, which will enable us to run a seminar in the Autumn for schools applying to round 10 in November. Look out for dates coming soon...

Being back in the capital (and owing to the crowds and unpleasant smells on the tube, thankful not to be living there anymore!), I did enjoy a soupcon of culture. Following a visit around the National Portrait Gallery, I ended up rather unexpectedly at the Proms on Sunday night, enjoying Pimms with Holst, Delius and Elgar, courtesy of the BBC National Orchestra of Wales. It was bliss - being by myself and being taken off into another world through the music, not having to think about what anybody else wanted. Sometimes we just need a little shot of that don't we? Anyway, I digress...

Artsmark is celebrating 10 years this year, with almost 10,000 schools successfully achieving an award since its inception. During 2010/2011 they are taking the opportunity to revise and update Artsmark in line with the changes in education and arts and culture within that time, so watch out for your opportunity to feed into the process on www.artsmark.org.uk



Education

And now for something completely different

A few weeks ago, Tim circulated an excellent video clip from www.ted.com of Sir Ken Robinson's speech, Schools Kill Creativity. Here's part of the transcript, but I strongly urge you to take 15 minutes out of your day to see it on the website at www.ted.com/talks/ken_robinson_says_schools_kill_creativity.html - it's well worth it.

“ What these things have in common is that kids will take a chance.
If they don't know, they'll have a go. Am I right?
They're not frightened of being wrong.
Now, I don't mean to say that being wrong is the same thing as being creative.
What we do know is, if you're not prepared to be wrong, you'll never come up
with anything original.
If you're not prepared to be wrong.
And by the time they get to be adults, most kids have lost that capacity.
They have become frightened of being wrong.
And we run our companies like this, by the way.
We stigmatize mistakes.
And we're now running national education systems where mistakes are the
worst thing you can make.
And the result is that we are educating people out of their creative capacities
Picasso once said this: he said that all children are born artists.
The problem is to remain an artist as we grow up.”





Heritage & Environment

Life in project management for TVA is extremely varied and never dull. One week is never the same as the next, and constantly keeps me on my toes. I've started one environmental project for toddlers and their parents, delivered eleven environmental arts workshops in one school in just over a week, concluded two projects working with children and adults with learning difficulties and had conversations on the phone about the aggregates levy fund, wigloos and wet pour rubber! See what I mean?

And most of it seemed to happen in June. Following our successful application to the eaga Community Fund for our rather brilliantly named Eager Beavers project, I had to quickly appoint the artists and make all appropriate arrangements for the project to start at the beginning of June. Working in partnership with SureStart, the aim of the project is to disseminate messages about nature, wildlife and the environment to young children and their families in fun, interactive and creative ways. Katrina Stead and Shirley Wells started workshop sessions at the beginning of June that will run for 12 weeks, delivering performing/ movement and visual arts. After a bit of a slow start with not many participants, the pace has really picked up and lots of kids are turning themselves and their parents into snails or spiders or making their own animal head dress or modroc minibeast.

Heritage & Environment

June also saw me in Park End Primary school in Middlesbrough for 6 days delivering eleven of my National Curriculum Based Environmental Learning Through The Arts workshop sessions. That was an extremely hectic but thoroughly enjoyable 6 days, where I used visual arts and interactive games and discussions to introduce and improve year 6 down to year 2 pupils' understanding and knowledge of a number of environmental subjects, such as the carbon footprints of transport, recycling, habitats and minibeasts and the effects of deforestation on our planet.

As I previously mentioned, two other projects I have been running have also concluded; the IMPACT Drama project working with adults with learning difficulties, and the Creative Partnerships Change School project at Kilton Thorpe School in Brotton.

The six month long IMPACT drama project finished with a fantastic performance by the participants at Whiney Backs Community Centre, and has given them a wonderful foundation in what it is like to be a more professional actor. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Cathie Sprague for all her hard work throughout the project, and similarly thank Michael Edwards for his contributions as well.



Heritage & Environment

As I anticipated in the last newsletter, the Creative Partnerships project at Kilton Thorpe school proved to be very exciting, enjoyable and challenging and the work Rowena and I have carried out there was extremely rewarding and positive, and I think I can say not just us, but for all concerned. The aim of the project was for Rowena and I to undertake creative consultation with predominantly the children, but staff as well, to inform ideas on how they can develop a stimulating environment that encompasses both indoor and outdoor learning. We came up with a raft of recommendations, and the school chose to engage with: bringing in Kev Howard to work with the students to create their own musical instruments to be used in and inform an outdoor music space; a large mural painted on an exterior wall (painted by Adrian Moule); a willow tunnel and igloo/den-like structure; maze paths with ceramic textured inserts; sensory plants with raised flower/ vegetable beds; mosaic butterfly tables and other feeders and bird boxes (with video cameras for a live feed into the classroom) to encourage wildlife into the playground; and a wormery!

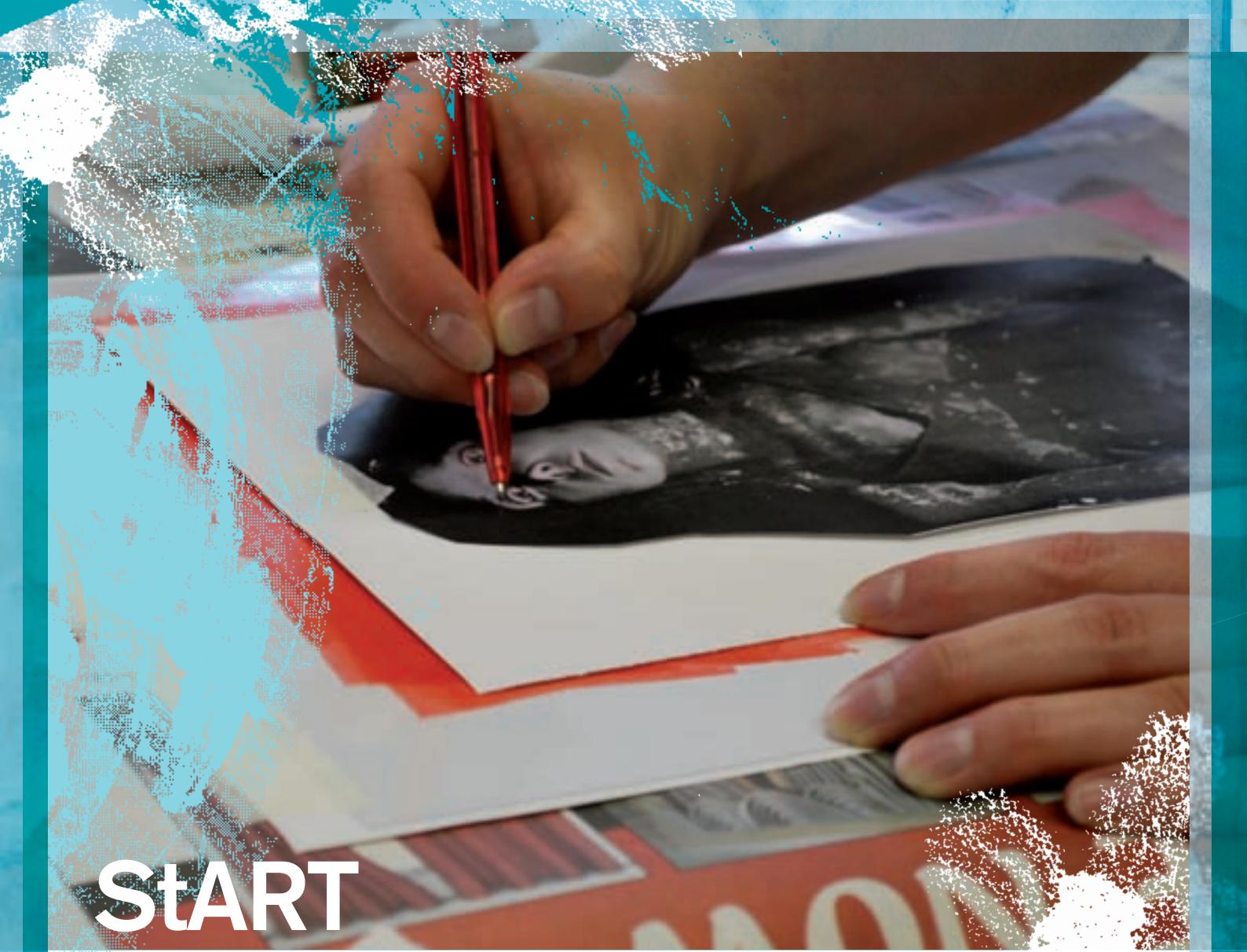
So no sooner are certain projects finishing that new ones appear, and I am now undertaking the development phase of our application to the HLF for Green TV, a heritage education and celebration programme that will raise awareness of and increase public access to key areas of outstanding natural heritage in the Tees Valley.

And who knows what the future may hold? More unlikely sounding funds and more unlikely sounding activities I imagine!



Joe Dunne
Heritage & Environment Officer





StART

The StART Project continues to fizz and buzz with frenzied activity; the first cohort of young people completed the course on 27th March. Five young people were submitted for moderation at the bronze arts award level - all five achieved the award. The moderator was impressed with the young people's work and practitioner's delivery of the course:

So far so fantastic!

StART Results to date:

[Cohort #1 - Five submitted for Bronze Arts Award - Five Bronze Awards achieved](#)

[Cohort #2 - Five submitted for Bronze Arts Award - Five Bronze Awards achieved](#)

No score draws!

I have thoroughly enjoyed working with interesting and entertaining young people in cohort #2. This was a truly eclectic group of individuals that meant there was never a dull moment and although it didn't look like it would work on paper there was a good group dynamic and a positive atmosphere throughout the course.



StART

Part of the project involves working in Tees Valley Arts' office space; this is always a good experience and often raises questions such as;

"What is it that youse actually do?"

This was a genuine question that came from a curious mind, yes this is Tees Valley Arts, yes there are lots of people on the phone, typing away at keypads and rushing to the photocopier but what is all this activity actually achieving?

Well one answer would be that we are working to develop and sustain projects like stART so that young people can come into our offices to ask what we are doing!

More seriously, this question demonstrates how stART helps young people to gain a direct insight into the many layers of the arts & culture from working with local professional artists, visiting cultural venues, to writing about their arts heroes in the offices of a regional arts organisation and speaking about what that means with the people who work there.

All of this success is not going unnoticed.

The stART Project was recently visited during an OFSTED good practice survey, a letter following the visit was very positive.

"The support provided by you and your staff is clearly appreciated by the young people participating in the project. I was particularly impressed with the enthusiasm expressed by the two young people that I met who enjoyed their time on the project and were now intent on participating in education, employment and training."

Tony Noonan

Her Majesty's Inspector
Survey Lead Inspector



StART

We are now into cohort #3 and some original and exciting artwork has been produced already including clay maquettes of Buddy Holly, Marilyn Manson and Jordan! (Could be the beginning of a guest list for an interesting dinner party!)

I hope to continue the momentum with this project and keep the bronze awards rolling in, I'm confident that the results will reflect the enthusiasm of the young people involved in this fast paced and exciting project.

stART is funded by One North East through Visit Tees Valley and works in partnership with Middlesbrough Connexions.



Tim Coyte
Projects Officer





Tees Valley Arts can work with you to plan and set up a programme of creative activities, find a suitable artist, help to frame a budget and secure funding, and then manage the project, both artistically and administratively. If you have an idea you would like to discuss, please contact us:



c/o Tees Valley Arts,
Melrose House, Melrose Street, Middlesbrough TS1 2HZ
T: 01642 264 651 F: 01642 264 955
E: info@teesvalleyarts.org.uk W: www.teesvalleyarts.org.uk

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