

tva spring newsletter 2016



spring is here

Welcome to the TVA Spring newsletter!

I'm going to begin with a poem by the master of reduction, Matsuo Basho:

First day of spring –
I keep thinking about
The end of autumn

I'm not a total devotee of Zen compacted verse – sometimes I think that the reader has to do just too much work (without all the accoutrements of brush stroke and/or tone of voice which all apparently added to the power of the Master's work) – but I do like the implication of the circularity of time in this, plus the recognition of the fact that as you age, that circularity of time doesn't always move forwards.....

Anyway – here at TVA we are, of course, resolutely facing forwards, whilst also building on and celebrating our considerable past.

In 2016 we are embracing change and are intending a bit of a public rebrand – we will produce some short promotional films and information leaflets about our work, all of which will be reflected in a refresh of the website, all to be encapsulated in our new strapline – 'TVA, the art of changing lives'. We also hope to make some of our very considerable past more accessible on the website – we've been lucky with some excellent volunteers and interns, who are helping with the hard slog of storing, filing and making searchable all sorts of articles and project data from our (over thirty year) history – really an unrivalled contribution to the cultural life of Teesside.

We currently have a post-graduate intern from Teesside University (Vicky) who has an astonishing appetite for hard work, and who works her way through everything Peter throws at her; apparently effortlessly (she's with us for three months and we'll miss her when she goes). Additionally, through the Creative Employment Programme scheme, we have been able to offer our volunteer Zoe (Graduate in Graphic Communications,



from Cleveland College of Art and Design) a 26-week post, helping us design our promotional materials, and assisting TVA-affiliate Maurice Dezou with the production of the films, which will include a short film about our work with refugees, of which we are very proud. This will be Zoe's first professional arts job, so we're glad to be helping her on her way.

Elsewhere we continue to build for the future, placing TVA within key partnerships and potential developments, such as Building Better Opportunities (for people furthest from the workplace), Headstart (promoting good mental health for young people in Middlesbrough) and Festival of Thrift (celebrating sustainable living), while continuing to work positively with key partners such as Teesside University, Cleveland College of Art and Design, MIMA, River Tees Rediscovered and the Canals and River Trust.

On that last, watery note, I recently got together for a chat with local playwright Ishy Din (currently creating a new play about Asian soldiers in the first world war for the Curve Theatre in Leicester), and while we were chatting about Tees Valley, combined authority, combined identity and City of Culture 2025 intentions and all that, Ishy told me that 'Punjab' means five rivers – and we had a mutual moment of inspiration! How can the five authorities/ towns/ populations etc come together to celebrate their unity and yet maintain and celebrate their individual identities? Answer – it is said that 'you can't step into the same river twice' (Heraclitus, apparently, but perhaps you knew that?), so you certainly can't step into the same river five times, it nevertheless remains the same river – in our case the River Tees. So, each of the five authorities/ localities has its own individual identity and history, which can be thought about in relation to the River Tees (proximity, upstream, downstream, tributary etc) but they all flow together along the River Tees, and the whole area is defined and named by the river – a river runs through it.....

Anyway, Ishy and I think this could be a great hook for exploring our sub-regional identity, the whole Teesside/ Tees Valley 'thing', and for theming activity towards the intended City of Culture bid. We're calling it 'Five Rivers', and activity will start on a small scale with TVA theming its River Tees Rediscovered projects under the Five Rivers banner, but we envisage greater things in the future, with linked outdoor theatre extravaganzas snaking along the river from mouth to tributary on five successive nights, telling all five versions of the history of the river and human settlement - no need to think small at this point!

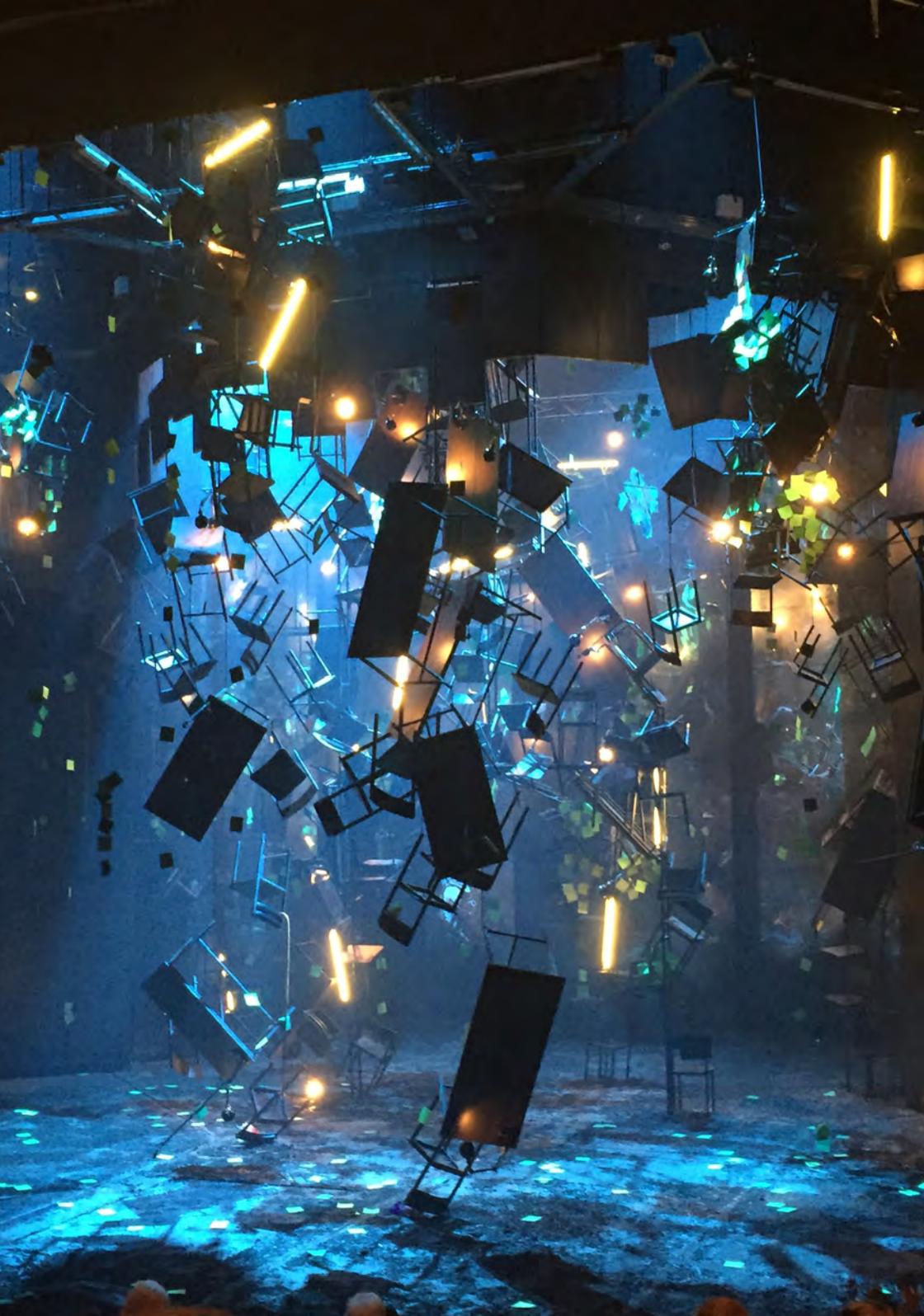
Lastly I'm going to recommend an event which TVA has no part in at all – just because I think it sounds great, and a great event for Teesside. Check out the T Junction International Poetry Festival, 14 – 17th April (www.tjunctionfestival.co.uk) which features local, regional and national poetry heroes, including the great Tony Harrison.

Best wishes and enjoy the Spring!



Rowena Sommerville
Director, TVA

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rowena Sommerville". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first name and last name clearly legible.



projects

Well, Spring is upon us, although these grey skies tell a different story...

So far 2016 has been an eventful year! We had a successful Arts Award Training earlier in January, where we had a mix of teachers and freelance artists training to be **Arts Award** Advisers at Discover and Explore level. I also delivered a training at the lovely Richmond Station, what a treat!

We continue to grow our work as the Arts Partner to **River Tees Rediscovered**, encouraging the people of the Tees Valley to engage with their heritage and re-connect with the River Tees. One particular strand of RTR this year is working with **Pathways School** in Grangetown on a project called **Making Waves**. Pathways School is a special school for 65 pupils aged between 5 and 16 who are experiencing behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. We have commissioned two musicians and a writer to work with a group of six young people at Pathways to produce a new piece of music. These students will learn how to sample, mix and perform their own tunes which will be showcased at a celebration event in the Summer! We are pleased to welcome musicians **Matthew Jones** and **Mark Owens** and writer **Matt Abbott** to this project. It is always thrilling to get new artists on board. Welcome all, we can't wait to see what you and the school create!

Another strand of RTR this year will be working with artist **Emily Hesse** in collaboration with **mima**. Emily will be working with a group of asylum seekers in Middlesbrough to create a series of objects associated with the sharing of food and drink, out of our very own River Tees clay! The result of which will be a collection of performative ceremonies using the items made. People will be encouraged to share, discuss and develop a social, communal space.

Spring 2016 sees the final sessions of our first cohort for **Music Mix 3**. On Thursday 24th March, we will be inviting friends and family of our young people to come along to a special sharing of the work so far. This will be in the **TP café** on the ground floor of TVA Towers, Royal Middlehaven House, and will be an opportunity for the group to perform their achievements. Members of cohort I have had two visits to a music studio in Sheffield to record their own music! I can't wait to hear their progress. Watch this space for an exciting cameo performance also...

Whilst down in London, I went to see our patron Mark Benton in *As You Like It* at the National Theatre. (See pic!) It was a fab show with a beautifully crafted set and it was great to see Mark in action.

In other news, I am thrilled to announce that I am now also working for **Streetwise Opera** as Regional Co-Ordinator for Middlesbrough. Streetwise Opera uses music to help people who have experienced homelessness make positive changes to their lives. It is great to be part of such a fantastic nationwide team and I am really looking forward to the new challenges it brings. Keep a look out for upcoming performances!



A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'R' and 'C' followed by a horizontal line.

Ree Collins
Projects Officer, TVA

Celebrating

One Planet Middlesbrough



for more pictures and details please see: www.teesvalleyarts.org.uk





Save
Energy

Reduce
Reuse
Recycle
Repeat

emma



speaks...

Thorntree Roses participant Emma Watson tells us about her involvement in the group and how she's enjoying the sessions:

OK, so early this year I was asked to join a group, run in my local school called 'Thorntree Roses' and today I've been asked to write a blog about it!... so here goes!...

When I went to first ever taster sessions it was with the lovely ladies from the Bobbin Shed and although I enjoyed the morning I went home thinking I wouldn't go back, simply because they were all older women who had experience in the activities we were doing and they all seemed to know each other pretty well from outside.

Looking back I'm glad I persevered and fought through my anxiety because I realised I would miss this crazy bunch if I never saw them any more!

Being pregnant when I joined Thorntree Roses and just coming out of work it was a great way for me to get out the house and have some me time as well as doing something I enjoyed. The women were really supportive, it was like sitting with a room full of aunties!!

After having Rosie I was worried incase I was no longer able to attend the group but once I walked into the room with her it was made obvious she was just as much part of the group as I was!

Anyways, more about the group. We get to meet some of the most fascinating and creative people I have ever known, we get to play with glue and go for random trips to the Transporter Bridge (just because!)

A lot of people looking in from the outside wouldn't totally understand what Thorntree Roses are about but we are a bunch of woman from all backgrounds and all ages that have managed to find something in common and enjoy getting together having a cuppa and a giggle while letting our creativity flow, and actually surprising to us all end up making some pretty great stuff.

Every week we embark on something different and at 9:30 am we all say the same thing "WE CAN'T DO THAT" but come 11:30 am we all sit proud of ourselves and big each other up on how well each one has done.

The wonderful people that give us their time to teach us their crafts are really amazing, and they always have fascinating stories to tell or great tips on how to get the best out of what activity your doing whether it be textile, glass making, photography or creative writing! I think photography has been one of my favourite subjects (so far) although I could not compose a top 5 list because every session has been as brilliant and the one before!

I would recommend anyone to come and become a rosebud and blossom in confidence and learn new skills that you can use for the rest of your life. I was surprised at what I could do.

Thank you Miki from Tees Valley Arts for bringing this to our area and introducing me to some wonderful people who I will never forget. x

Emma Watson
Volunteer, Thorntree Roses



backstage

Hello, from the new creative intern at TVA named Zoe...

I have recently become a creative intern at TVA for the next six months which is exciting. I started out with volunteering at TVA on a weekly basis to gain further experience and skills within the local arts industry. Coming across TVA and the positive work that they do to improve the lives of those across the Tees Valley area is one of the main factors which attracted me to being involved with the organisation - it also helps that they are a friendly and welcoming bunch!

Whilst attending TVA, I was approached by the team with news that a potential opportunity had arisen to become a full time creative intern for the next six months which I thought was a no brainer to pursue to gain a foot on the creative ladder, and in terms of the ebbs and flows of life, further highlighted to me that you can never really know what unexpected opportunities could blossom round the corner!

Moving onto the more creative side of things, I am a recent graduate from studying Graphic Communication at Cleveland College of Art and Design. My main interests in the field are branding, advertising, motion graphics, marketing and social media. I love creating and engaging with design that has the ability to showcase meaning and connects to the target audience via emotional engagement.

My time at TVA so far I have done numerous tasks involving promotional materials such as the Newsletter, Annual Reports, Wordpress, Social Media, Archiving and have also had the opportunity to shadow on project sessions such as Thorntree roses at MIMA. All of these experiences have been beneficial as it has enabled me to gain further valuable understanding into how arts organisations work. In the months to come I will be working on promotional materials for TVA - involving a rebrand (something to look out for!) and assisting with production of films which is definitely something that I am looking forward to being a part of!

Zoe Bishop
Creative Intern, TVA



Photograph credits:

Ree Collins; Transporter Bridge, Front cover

Keve Howard; Kareem at Teesside University, Black History Month, Page 2

Ree Collins; 'As You Like It' at the National Theatre, Page 4

Mark Jobe; One Planet Middlesbrough, Steph McGovern at MacMillian Academy Page 6

Ree Collins; One Planet Middlesbrough, artist Bub Bacon, Page 7

Miki Rogers; Thorntree Roses Group at MIMA, Page 8





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