LIFE EMBRACED

An art exhibition at Royal Academy Schools, Burlington Gardens

15–18 July 2014
The Royal Academy Schools in partnership with Marie Curie Cancer Care presents an exhibition that gives a rare glimpse into the role of art for those living and working with serious illness. The paintings and drawings on display are all by those involved with Marie Curie: both patients, including works produced in art therapy sessions, and nurses, carers and volunteers, one of whom is herself a student at the Royal Academy Schools. By showing this very personal artwork, the collaboration hopes to engage the viewers in a conversation about the vitality of art as exploration, self-expression and transformation at these challenging moments in our lives, and the value of art therapy.

Contributors are from Bradford and Hampstead hospices, two of Marie Curie’s nine hospices and from the charity’s nursing service.
David Allyson – Bradford
"The morning of art which I attend continues to be a source of enjoyment, therapy and banter between the patients. Hopefully our artwork is getting better as well. A morning painting at the hospice makes you breathe more easily. So, thanks to the Bradford Marie Curie Day Therapy Team."

Joyce Bates – Bradford
"At the hospice there's a feeling of calm and kindness around me, I so enjoy the company."

Debbie Bartle – Bradford
"I like painting because it keeps me motivated. I like talking to people who share the same interest."

Mary Buta – Bradford
"I never thought I'd never do it but Steve shows you little bits at a time and I seem to be doing very well. I've surprised myself really. Very relaxing."
Margaret Clow – Bradford
"Painting gives me a sense of satisfaction and relaxation."

Jack Dennison – Bradford
"I love coming to the art group, I really enjoy the comradeship with other patients and all the staff."

Trisha Enes – Hampstead
Trisha Enes graduated as a mature student with a degree in applied art from Middlesex University in 2007. She has taken part in a number of exhibitions including 100% Design and Grand Designs.

Her work is all about light and she works with any material that interacts with it. She designs and makes a unique range of decorative lighting as well as art pieces that simply interact with the light of the room.

She has worked as a nurse for Marie Curie for more than 10 years and is currently the Practice Educator at the Hampstead hospice, which she does part-time while pursuing her art and design. Her art, which is all about light, life and creativity, helps her find a healthy balance following a 20-year nursing career working in hospice and end of life care. See more of her work at trishaenes.co.uk
**Sarah Ezekiel – Hampstead**

Sarah was diagnosed with Motor Neurone Disease in April 2000, aged 34. She is severely disabled and unable to use her hands. In February 2012 she started to create her work using a Tobii Eyegaze computer and Revelation Natural Art software. Eyegaze technology tracks eye movement using an infrared bar.

Sarah has exhibited all over the UK and also in Qatar. She has donated all of the proceeds from her sales to fund the purchase of Tobii Eyegaze technology for people with her illness. There is limited government funding and a long waiting period for this essential equipment.

Sarah is the Secretary of the NW London branch of the MND Association and a board member of the charity, Movement for Hope. She is divorced and lives in London with her teenage daughter and son.

You can read more about Sarah and contact her at sarahezekiel.com and purchase her work from eyegazeartists.com.

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**Jane Hardaker – Bradford**

“I’m really enjoying painting. When I paint, it takes me away from everything – I forget about my normal life. Art takes me away from my problems, it cheers me up so much.”

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Willie Hathaway – Bradford

“It is relaxing and a good way of learning a new skill and also a good way of making new friends. Very therapeutic and excellent care.”

Franky Henley – Nursing Service

“I have worked in palliative care for 13 years, both in a hospice setting and in the community. For the past seven years I have been a Marie Curie Senior Health care Assistant caring for people in their homes overnight. I am passionate about my work and feel it is my vocation.

“'Art from the Heart' is my project inspired by the incredible people I have come into contact with. Each piece in the collection is a unique symbol of the people I have cared for – what I express has been 'revealed' to me during my meditation practice. The paintings represent a period of time spent with these individuals and the relationship which we have built together.

“This art pays tribute to the deep connections that have grown between me and the people to whom I give care – two human beings, communicating in a profound yet ordinary way. Both giving and receiving. An act of love. I feel so grateful to those that I meet and to be able to do this work that is so important to me. This humble artwork is an offering of my gratitude.”
Marcia Mishcon – Hampstead

"In 2009, I was invited to be an art therapy volunteer at the Marie Curie Hospice, Hampstead to assist with open studio sessions, providing quiet time to engage in art followed by group discussion. The benefits come from shared relationships in a safe and supportive space. I now have responsibility for special projects, such as '365 Days of Caring' and the interactive Star project at the annual Lights to Remember event.

"I studied art at John Cass, Liverpool and The Slade and completed a foundation course in Art Psychotherapy at Goldsmiths. I have taught art at secondary level and was Artist in Residence at Highgate School for three years.

"This house/home/hospital/hospice I am exhibiting is about my emotionally challenging but rewarding journey. The house is a metaphor representing a microcosm of my hospice experience from a therapeutic and subjective perspective. Its four rooms represent the art therapy 'safe' room allowing anger, denial, bargaining, depression and acceptance to take place; a 'transformative' room dedicated to a young patient; a 'waiting' room and the 'embracing life' room. Amongst the mixed media is shattered glass, reflective mirror, human hair, domestic detritus and chocolate."

Parkash Kaur – Bradford

"I enjoy learning to paint and the company of other members of the group."
Aimee Parrott – RA Schools/ Hampstead

"By layering and repeating colour and form I aim to create a sense of off-kilter rhythm where solid and amorphous substances collide. These translucent layers chart a non-linear movement through time and space. The translation of semi-recalled sensory memories achieved through varying touch, tone and pace encourage an engagement with the work that unfolds gradually and calls to mind the way with which the exterior world impresses itself upon us - not simply as a series of static solid objects but as shifting perceptual fragments."

Aimee has worked alongside one of the patients at the Marie Curie Hospice, Hampstead for a year now and has been able to use her skills as a Royal Academy student to help create wood cut images. Aimee is a dedicated volunteer at Hampstead and thoroughly enjoys her experience.

Sylvia Hodges – Bradford

"I am really enjoying the experience of learning how to paint and the company of mixing with other people when I cannot get out much."
Jim Powell – Bradford

“It never entered my mind to paint before I came to the hospice. I find painting pleasurable: it is peaceful and relaxing. I’m glad I joined the group.”

Thomas Read – Hampstead

“These three paintings represent a cross section of the works I have done with Michéle Wood, during the past three years of individual art therapy sessions at the Marie Curie Hospice, Hampstead. I believe they show a freedom of expression, full of colour with a hint of spirituality. I have been suffering from a neurological condition known as progressive supra-nuclear palsy, which leaves me without voice and wheelchair bound. My eyesight is also affected. I have a Parkinsonian tremor which makes artistic work difficult.

“Nevertheless, with Michèle’s patience and understanding, I find my art therapy sessions an enormous help in realising my deep understanding of art.

“I have been interested in art since childhood, and did a diploma in art history when I retired, but never would I have imagined myself being capable of creating works of art. It has become a means of communicating the vitality of my inner life, which I cannot do in any other way now.

“It is as if I have left the depths of despair and climbed to a brighter, sunnier plateau.”
Felicity studied jewellery design and manufacture at Hornsey college of Art 1964 – 1968. She has exhibited throughout the UK, mainland Europe, USA and Asia. Since 1978, she has attended the Camden Art Centre and the HGS Institute studying sculpture.

Felicity supplies her works to several well-known locations within the UK. Her work is based on the human form and illustrates expressions of emotion. Currently her style evokes movement of the body.

Felicity is married to Russell Reuben, and has two grown-up sons and six grandchildren. Russell was diagnosed 11 years ago with primary progressive multiple sclerosis and attends the Marie Curie Hospice, Hampstead every Friday.

"From the moment we walk in the door the atmosphere exudes total confidence and commitment to caring for all of those attending. We both appreciate the quality of the staff and feel comfortable in the knowledge that they are doing the very best for both of us.

The day centre volunteers are totally dedicated so we both look forward to visiting. It is the highlight of our week."

Peter Sawaryn – Bradford

"I enjoy everyone’s company, doing art helps me relax and I don’t feel pain when I’m painting. It’s the best day of the week coming to the hospice."

Felicity Reuben – Hampstead
Kirpal Singh – Bradford
“I haven’t done any painting since I was at school and I am pleased to have the opportunity to take it up again. I actually find drawing and painting very relaxing, mentally and physically; it has helped me regain my confidence and independence.”

Dawne Solomons – Hampstead
Dawne loved to draw and to paint, and in her 50s she decided to commit to this love by embarking on a BA in fine art at Middlesex University. She was in her element here, discovering new perspectives and possibilities, playing and exploring fearlessly. She spent a summer in New York soaking up the galleries and loving the pulse and the heat of the city. In her final year Dawne was diagnosed with ovarian cancer. Thus began a five-year journey into the world of medicine, traditional and alternative. She successfully finished her BA with an incredibly powerful installation. At this point she began art therapy with Michéle Wood. Once more she found a place that suited her in which she would discover the transforming and holding possibilities of therapy. She worked on a book of her experiences which she published with Marie Curie. Often drawing on dreams, the book is evocative and moving.

The piece shown here is one of many she worked on in her sessions with Michèle.

Dawne Solomons (1946 - 2008)
David Thompson – Hampstead

David studied an art foundation in 1971, then moved into working as a screen painter before becoming a grounds man. David has always had a passion for art and, when he retired due to ill health, he returned to art school where he graduated in Fine Arts and Theory.

David uses a wide range of materials in his artwork. His material uses are dependent on feelings and are not pre-conceived images. David’s materials can range from traditional techniques of painting and wood cut to conceptual materials such as cigarette ash.

David is glad of the opportunity to exhibit his work to promote the benefits of art therapy that greatly quickened his psychological health. David’s images are created as a way of processing his illness, cancer of larynx, that he states is caused by heavy smoking.

David is always drawing. He has worked with Aimee Parrott and had the opportunity of creating one of his pieces for exhibition at the Royal Academy Schools print room.

Michèle Wood, Senior Art Therapist – Hampstead

“I have been working at Hampstead since 2002 providing art therapy to patients, family members and carers. I offer individual sessions and groups, and I am a member of the hospice's Patient and Family Support team.”
Julia Wise – Hampstead

"My sister, Susan, had cholangiocarcinoma and was very keen to help me deal with my grief as her death approached. Art had always played a very significant part in her life, so she encouraged me to join the carers’ group at the Marie Curie Hospice, Hampstead Hospice. There I met Michèle Wood and my life took a totally unexpected turn.

"Sue was an inveterate collector of seeds of all types. As a child I remember her collecting them on our camping holidays and potting them when we got home. She had seedlings growing everywhere. She usually knew where she’d picked up the seeds but rarely knew what they were, so she’d watch them with fascination as they grew. In adulthood, her homes were always full of plants she’d grown from seed. I remember the most fragrant mimosa tree growing in her bath.

"When I went through her belongings after her death, I found seed pods everywhere. I picked one up on my way to carers’ group one day and this is the result. We both loved “Summertime”, regularly singing it together and always trying to harmonise, while both vying to sing the highest notes. "Summertime" was played at Sue’s funeral.

"To see more of my work (inspired by, and in support of, the Marie Curie Hospice) please visit dfpportraits.co.uk."

Steve Davis, Art Tutor – Bradford

"The Marie Curie Hospice, Bradford is a great place to work with superb colleagues and inspirational patients."
Una Larter – Hampstead

"I am nearly 82. I have been attending the Marie Curie Hospice, Hampstead for about four years. Although my lung disease has progressed steadily, this has been, surprisingly, a happy and productive period for me. Much is owed to the steady support of the medical staff and the calm, pleasant surroundings of building and gardens: but overall I think it has been the opportunity to paint freely, like a young child, in the company of others, that has helped me most.

"Facing a table stocked with paint, paper, brushes – I feel like a wild and hungry animal grabbing its prey. I leap in desperately and don’t stop painting till I am aching and exhausted. I want to paint 24 hours a day – if only my body would allow it.

“The process usually starts with a colour that insists on itself, with broad swirling gestures suggesting storms, earthquakes, volcanoes. Monsters with fierce teeth hunt grumpy fishes in deep murky seas. Gradually the feelings change – a cave may appear, the tempo slows down, flowers, birds, people arrive. Often a tune or poem will be playing in my head, giving me a clue as to what in my life, past or present, has been causing the turbulence, and may now be resolved, accepted, forgiven. The chance to share these things with others is perhaps the most healing and satisfying part of art therapy for me.”
About the Royal Academy Schools
The Royal Academy Schools, run by artists for artists, is a leading centre for postgraduate study of Fine Art. The schools place the studio-based practice of art at the core of its activities, providing student artists the opportunity to develop their ideas and to extend and deepen their practice. Places on this independent programme are free of charge, the costs of the RA Schools being supported by individual patrons, trusts and foundations, corporate supporters and the Royal Academy of Arts.

About Marie Curie Cancer Care
Marie Curie Hospices are for people with serious illnesses and their families. Whether someone comes in to stay or visits regularly, we give them the excellent care they expect – and the best quality of life they could wish for.

  Fundraising plays a large part within Marie Curie Cancer Care and we would not be as successful without it.

  To make a donation or more more information please visit: mariecurie.org.uk

About art therapy
Art therapy is a way of using art materials in the presence of a trained art therapist to express thoughts, feelings or experiences. It allows a person to communicate issues that may feel confusing or contradictory and thereby helps them to gain a clear understanding of themselves or their situation.

  Art therapy is not only for those who have skills in art making – being good at art is not a prerequisite to engaging in art therapy.

  For more information on art therapy please visit the British Association of Art Therapists at: baat.org
Thanks to:
The contributors for generously sharing their work and enabling this exhibition to happen.

Katie Gettins, Special Events Intern, who coordinated everything involved in the Life Embraced Exhibition.

Ken Rowe and Jeremy Gavron, Life Embraced Exhibition volunteers.

Steve Davis, Art Tutor and Jean Gordon, Hospice Manager Marie Curie Hospice, Bradford.

Sarah Denney and the Marie Curie Design Team.

The Charitable Partnership team:
- Kate Cotton, Special Projects Leader
- Eliza Bonham-Carter, Curator, Royal Academy Schools
- Michèle Wood, Senior Art Therapist, Marie Curie Hospice, Hampstead

Marie Curie Cancer Care gives people with all terminal illnesses the choice to die at home. Our nurses provide them and their families with free hands-on care and emotional support, in their own homes, right until the end.

mariecurie.org.uk
Charity reg no. 207994 (England & Wales), SC038731 (Scotland)