



## **OUR JOURNEY**

One year ago, we set out on a journey without really knowing where we would end up. However, we knew with certainty that our core members creative energy would lead us toward improving Exeter's Arts and Culture scene. In this experimental, risky and uncharted territory, we were proved right at every turn. Here we present a brief overview of our activities over the past 18 months that have delivered us to a clear vision of how we want to develop our work and how we can raise the profile of our core members as valuable contributors to Arts and Culture across the city.

## **THE 'PELICAN APPROACH'**

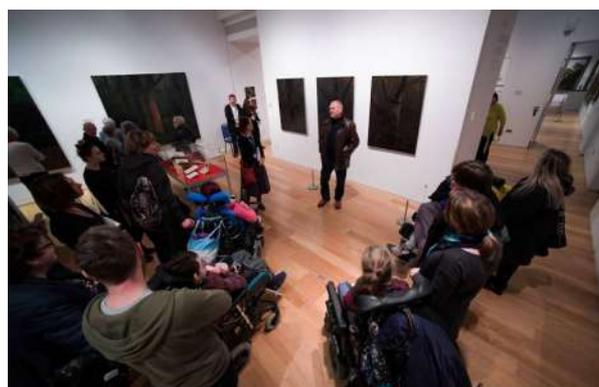
At The Pelican Project we have adopted a 'sensory approach' using materials, environments, soundscapes or ideas designed to entice young disabled people and their parents/carers into stimulating creative play that engages the senses and offers capacity for open-ended discovery. Why do we work with the senses? From birth babies learn about their environment through their senses. They find out what things are and how they work by seeing, touching and listening to them. The arts are what Harvard Professor Elliot Eisner has described as a "supermarket for the senses". As such they are an ideal tool for people with a young developmental age to explore the world in playful sensory engagement. 'Sensory Learners' at all stages of development can relish sensory experience as a rich resource for learning and creativity and so the senses are an ideal focus for an integrated group.

As such, we feel that our approach, experience and the relationships we have forged, place The Pelican Project in the optimum position to deliver 'Club Pelicana' event to fruition.

# OUR EVENTS

## *RAMM (Royal Albert Memorial Museum)*

- 'Behind the scenes' multi-sensory tours of the Roman and Egyptian collections.
- Facilitation of access to 'Night at The Museum' and 'Time Travellers Ball'.
- Private tour and Q & A of George Shaw's 'My Back to Nature' exhibition delivered by the artist (Some of the group were later invited to the opening of the exhibition where they were personally mentioned by the artist).
- Delivery of 'Take Over Day' with shadow puppet and drumming workshops, encouraging members of the public, particularly those with a learning disabilities, to get involved in activities at RAMM.
- Core members took part in RAMM's carnival of the animals.
- RAMM Bingo, a project that brings together organisations working in the learning disabled community designed to make engagement with the museum more meaningful.

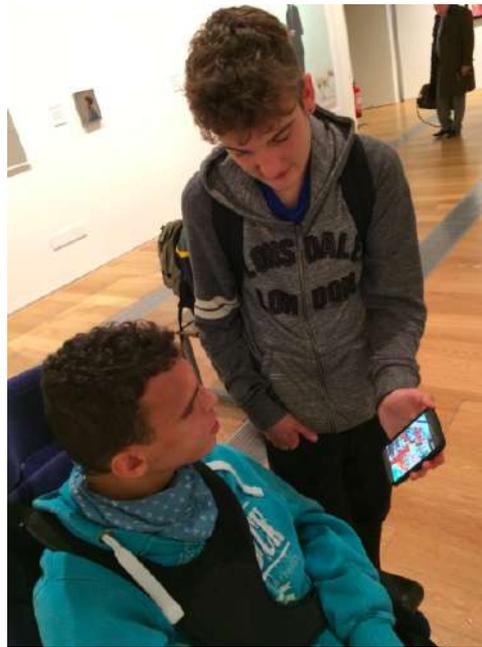




- Exeter University's Welcome Centre opening event, 'Living Libraries', through which one of our core members took the role of a 'living book', telling part of her life story to members of the public.
- Research project in collaboration with The Welcome Centre surrounding the impact of engagement with cultural spaces on the well-being of marginalised groups. This took place in the Computer Aided design workshop (FabLab) located in the library. This project led us to a link with Sanchos ethical clothing boutique who displayed some of our core members work.

## *Exeter College Health & Social Care*

- Termly input from Pelican Project Core Members to Exeter College Health & Social Care group. This has included themes such as 'communication strategies' and 'The Mental Capacity Act'.
- Exeter College students have joined many of our activities in the role of 'social enabling'. This has provided them with direct experience of working with the learning disabled community, particularly in facilitating access to Arts activities.
- 'TopLine' music project: Mirroring the process used in the professional music industry our core members collaborate with a team of Exeter College HE Music students to create their own track.



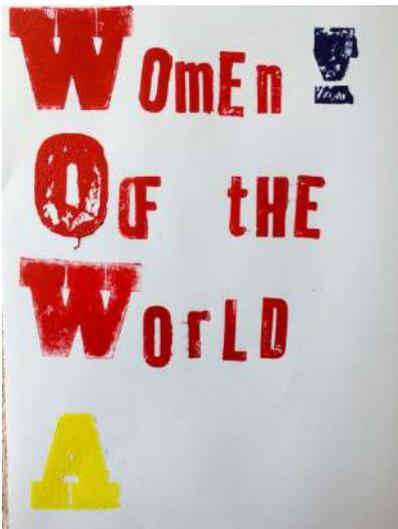
## *Organic Arts at West Town Farm*

Seasonal workshops facilitated by Organic Arts have provided our core members with opportunities to create Art in a natural environment.



## *Women of the World*

One of our core members and one of our carers were on a panel that discussed disabled women's voices in grassroots activism.



## *BBC Spotlight*

BBC Spotlight did a feature on the project on a very special occasion when one of our core members delivered a lesson on The Mental Capacity Act to the Exeter College Health & Social Care group. The feature also included one of our multi-arts workshops.

<https://www.facebook.com/bbcspotlight/videos/pelican-project/171498662915624/>

### *Multi-Arts Workshops*

'Multi-arts' workshops involving collaborations with Arts groups including Shine Music Devon, Exeter Street Band, Just4Funk (break dancing crew), Double Elephant Print Company and other individual artists.



### *Theatre, Gigs & Shows...*

Our initial research and activities with our core members included trips to theatre productions and gigs at various venues (Exeter Phoenix, Barnfield Theatre, Corn Exchange, Northcote Theatre). Particular highlights included Kid Carpet's 'Noisy Holiday' (Ed Patrick of Kid Carpet has confirmed involvement with our project), and Exeter Music Groups RAMM anniversary performance at Exeter Cathedral.



## *FreeFall+*

We co-created FreeFall+ group with Exeter Phoenix. The group is an accessible adult art group that involves work across the visual arts. The group has an existing enterprising element (our first products went on Sale before Christmas) and this will be developed in collaboration with Corkscrew (see partners). The groups primary ethos is promoting our core members as artists and maintaining the highest expectations of the work they can produce. In the coming weeks the group will lead a 'creative Hub' session from Exeter Phoenix, placing them at the centre of Exeter's creative network.



## *Pelican Drama*

Pelican Drama is the second of our our weekly groups. Developed from an initial pilot project with theatre company 'Four of Swords', the sessions aim to develop self-esteem and theatre based skills for core members and carers alike.



# STRATEGIC AIMS

## *Excellence*

Our project will aim to place our core members, their carers and families at the centre of high quality experiences across the Arts. Our core members access care packages that recognise the need for direct care (for example, catering for health and behavioural needs) required to exist, but often lack the financial and human resources to extend this existence to meaningful, lived experience of The Arts. Our activities will aim to recognise the ability of our core members to contribute to the development and delivery of artistic activities within the learning disabled and wider community. We have therefore confirmed and will continue to seek further collaborative opportunities with established artists and practitioners. Our partners will recognise the potential in our core members to improve the quality of their own work and maintain the highest expectations of the learning disabled community.

## *For Everyone*

Having left education provisions, our core members are faced with the prospect of a dramatic reduction in support and opportunity. We aim to ensure that this potentially marginalised group and the wealth of experience, skills and passion that they possess, are placed at the centre of cultural activity. As well as their engagement with our project enabling our core members to develop and learn as they embrace adulthood, the value of their creative abilities will be felt by the wider community.

The immediate support network around our core members is of equal importance to us and of equal value to the community of Exeter. The reality of supporting individuals with additional needs makes this group vulnerable to social isolation themselves and an identity constituted solely by disability. We have discovered that for most, The Arts are 'not for them' and our project will aim to change this perception.

We work closely with the Exeter College Health & Social Care Level 1 students. As 'low achievers' in the context of their college, this group have a multitude of mental health and socio-economic challenges. Our project will not only provide experience of working with young people with additional needs in creative contexts, but also experiences of cultural spaces that most of the group have not accessed, despite living in Exeter their whole lives.

## *Resilience and Sustainability*

We believe that our core members have a cultural and economic value that they can contribute to their community. In collaboration with Corkscrew, an Exeter based business development and training organisation, our project would aim to provide a platform for our core members to present and sell their work as artists 'in their own right'. Similarly, we will look to build on our relationship with Sanchos, an Exeter based ethical clothing boutique, where our core members products have been displayed previously. Much of our project will focus on the delivery of an accessible 'club-night' event that we intend to become a regular event providing an alternative revenue stream for our organisation. The event would mark an invitation from the learning disabled community to the wider community, to experience a way of coming together through the arts that reflects the diversity of the city and how art forms can be 'pushed' when created by a learning disabled group.

### *Diversity and Skills*

Our core members present the broadest range of learning and physical disability, from profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD or Sensory Learners) to high functioning ASD. All our activities will continue to be accessible on a variety of levels to young people of all abilities. Reflecting the diversity of our core members, the aims of our project in terms of learning will range from developing specific artistic skills as well as increasing social engagement through the arts.

### *Children and Young People*

Our project will centre on our core members who are 16-30 years old. They will be supported throughout activities by their mainstream peers from Exeter College's Health and Social Care group, (ranging in age between 16-19). Each of these groups will access arts activities that will facilitate each party to learn from the other and for skills across the arts to be developed in collaboration. The inclusive ethos of this cross-ability peer development is central to the project.