



PROJECT EVALUATION REPORT



Community Living Room A 'Places Called Home' project



Like U
Friendly community



Between January and June 2022, Crave Arts delivered 'Community Living Room' as part of The National Lottery Community Fund's Places Called Home initiative, funded by The National Lottery Community Fund and IKEA.

The aim of the fund was:

- to build on the relationships created during the COVID-19 pandemic to increase community activity and the number of people taking part.
- to encourage people to work together, creating opportunities for communities to live in a sustainable and healthy way.
- to raise awareness amongst the public of the importance of connected households, neighbourhoods and resilient communities.
- to develop a new idea, activity or way to come together that has emerged in response to the pandemic.
- to revive or redesign community and common spaces to encourage shared community activities.

The project in numbers:

- 6 creative writing and visual arts workshops held with 2 different community groups - Joy Group at Worcester Community Trust and Like U
- 8 committed participants who produced poetry and visual art which fed into the public exhibition
- 3 artists engaged (2 creative writing facilitators and 1 visual artist)
- 61 people attended and engaged with the Community Living Room exhibition - there for 1 day
- 15 miniature houses with poetry and art created during the exhibition day
- 44 social media posts shared about the project to Crave Arts' 563 followers on Facebook and Twitter, with plenty of shares and retweets
- 1 mayoral visit!

THE ARTISTS

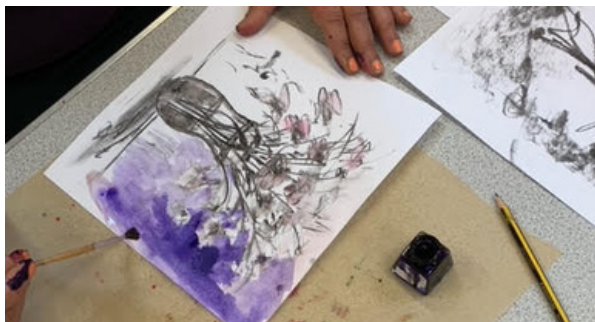
We worked with three artists on the project:

Holly Winter-Hughes is an experienced poet, writer and facilitator who loves to use writing to connect people and for therapeutic purposes. She supported the Joy group to find their voice through the written word.

Bohdan Piasecki is a poet from Poland, based in Birmingham whose life revolves around poems. He writes, teaches and produces projects and is especially interested in writing which happens across languages. He worked with the Like U group at their Eastern European Centre.

Nicola Winstanley has worked in community art for 13 years, working across the UK on large scale public art projects, social art and co-creation projects. She worked with the two groups using visual arts and she created the Community Living Room installation from their work





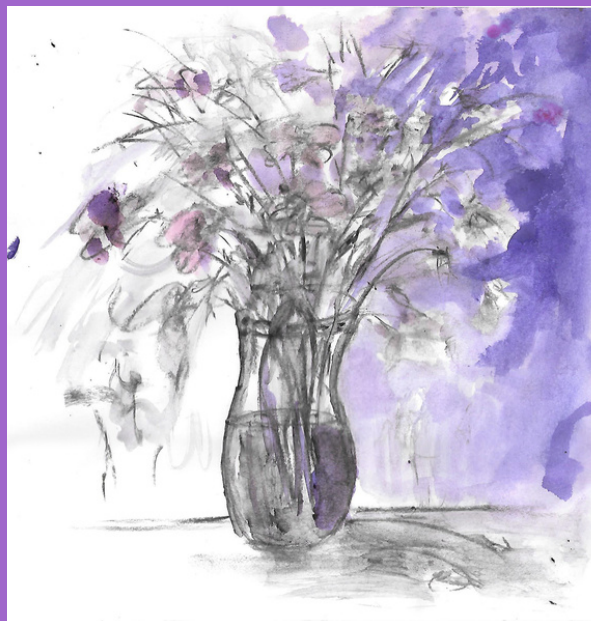
CREATIVE WORKSHOPS

Creative workshops were held with:

- the women's Joy Group, a support group for women who meet at Worcester Community Trust. Our artists were Holly Winter-Hughes and Nicola Winstanley. 4 participants attended.

- Eastern Europeans volunteers who run the LikeU Peace Centre in Lowesmoor. Our artists were Bohdan Piasecki and Nicola Winstanley. 4 participants attended.

The groups were asked to think about what Home meant to them. Writing prompts and visual arts techniques were used to bring this to life



Family. Landed. evening. date outside.
 Home inside. My favorite chair & place.
 Talking. Home-cook dining. Cate making.
 Soled eating. Breakfast before school.
 TV watching. Looking for the voice for
 my dog. Wash. Gummy on Sunday.
 Hotel Noodle. After drinking. Mini pizza
 making. Kids painting. Biography looking.
 Waiting for the parcels. To getting back
 home from work. Memo. Telenor.
 Heave. Urquyo. Made by class.
 I love it. Not very funhome ☺

and I will always return home.

It used to be a bad place
 dark and empty inside,
 Full of people and faces
 but the smiles was all lies

Holes were punched in walls
 the interior physically broken,
 But the broken feelings inside,
 that was never spoken.

Now its a ring of protection,
 Its not amazing, far from perfection,
 but this is home.

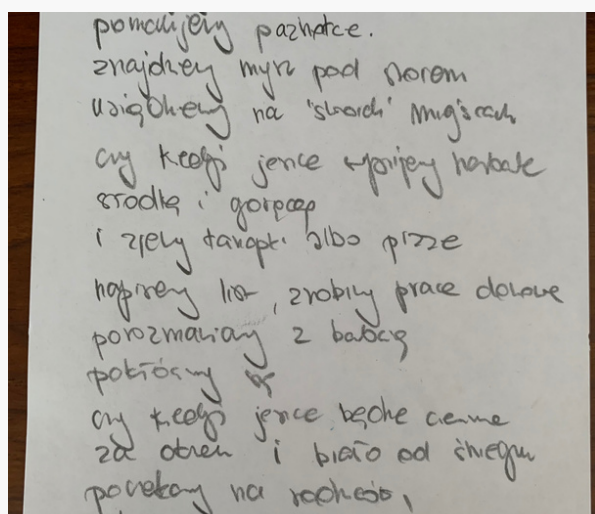
These walls that surround me
 they watch, as I be, Who I want to be.
 Cozy blankets and cups of tea.
 This is home.



THEMES OF THE ARTWORK

At Worcester Community Trust, we worked with Debbie, Louise, Margaret and Nash, three of whom attend The JOY Group. JOY is a women only community project which provides support to enable women who have experienced trauma to gain a variety of skills, enhance their confidence and empower them to make their own informed decisions. Some of the women have lived through domestic abuse and so this was quite a strong theme of the work produced by this group.

At LikeU's European Community Centre, we worked with Gosia, Pawel, Stella and Leszek. LikeU Worcester is a registered charity that helps people to reach out, connect and overcome differences. Based at Westbury Street, Lowesmoor, LikeU has a community café, open to all, and hosts many different activities. It also runs a migrant support centre. Memories about growing up in Eastern Europe and family homes were explored by this group.



OUTCOMES FROM CREATIVE WORKSHOPS

Some comments from participants in our two groups...

'We all came from the same place, despite our nationalities'

'I enjoyed writing about home, it made me realise how far I have come'

'I learned that others have been through similar things as me. It felt very powerful talking about our experiences'

'Enjoyed being creative and meeting others'

'It's helped me to find myself'

'Nice to know others' perspectives of what home means for them'

'Home can be wherever you want it to be, you are in control.'

'If you have chance to participate in similar project - just do it!'



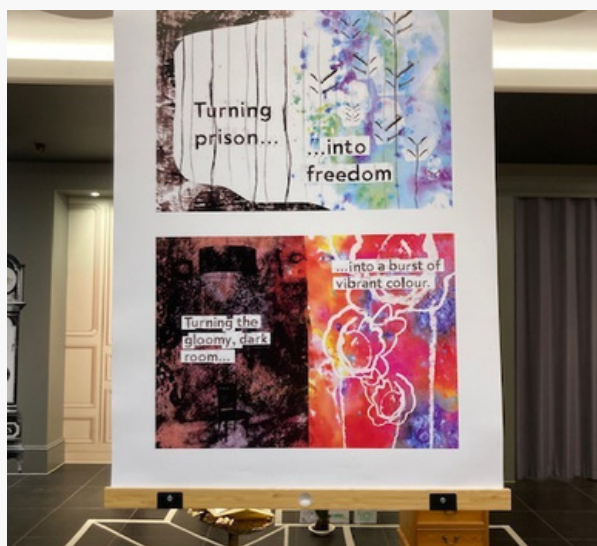
COMMUNITY LIVING ROOM INSTALLATION

On 9th June, after much work by visual artist Nicola Winstanley, we opened the Community Living Room in an empty shop in Worcester City Centre. The event was well publicised through Crave Arts, many shares and retweets, a radio interview on BBC Hereford and Worcester radio and a Press article in Worcester News.

Nicola designed a living room space with sofas, rugs, lampshades and posters, all created from the poetry and visual arts of the two groups.

A street layout with map helped people around the space and craft activities enabled them to make their own mini houses with poetry and visual art to add to our street mapped out on the floor.

Poetry readings were held by our two poets and two participants who read out their work.





VISITORS

We were delighted to be visited by 61 people who all engaged with the exhibition and felt moved by the contents. Visitors included participants from the two groups, Perryfields Pupil Referral Unit, a group of NHS mental health support workers, local Councillors, the Mayor of Worcester, and many members of the public and families with young children, including a lady from Ukraine who stayed to take part in the art activities with her daughter.



VISITOR FEEDBACK

Visitors to the exhibition provided the following feedback:

'I am so very moved by this incredibly powerful installation. Nicola and Crave Arts have created an inviting, startling interpretation of these brave women's words'

'A wonderful display of inner feelings and heart-felt messages through arts/craft/the written word. It's such a powerful medium'

'The project is a fabulous way of raising awareness and there should be more funding available for projects such as this'

'A really powerful project. If you missed it you missed something special, if you caught it then you know that the pieces touched a nerve and shook you to the core. Not something just to snap for your Instagram account but something to reflect, ponder and be inspired by. Well done to all!'





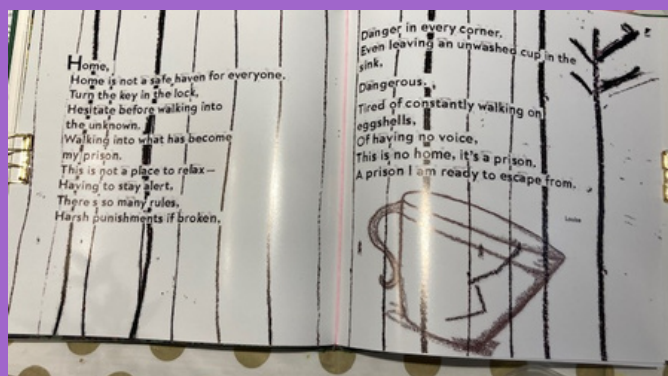
LEGACY

Items from the exhibition were taken to the Joy Group and to Like U for displaying in their community centres and to feel proud of their work.

One of the women involved in the Joy Group now feels inspired to start her own writing and art group to help other women express themselves through art.

As a company, we would like to develop the notion of a living room further and are currently in discussion with Worcester Community Trust about how we might do this together, and seek further funding.

Thanks to Worcester Community Trust and Like U for working with us on this project, to Crowngate Shopping Centre for use of the empty shop and to St Richard's Hospice for loan of the furniture. Thanks to TNL Community Fund and IKEA for the funding.




Make Yourself at Home
in Worcester's
**Community
Living Room**

For one day only, Crave Arts are turning an empty
shop in The Crowngate Centre into a Community
Living Room

Come along, walk round our
neighbourhood, sit on our sofa,
and enjoy art and poetry inspired
by thoughts of Home

Create your own artworks
and poetry

It's FREE!
Everyone welcome

Thursday 9th June 10-4pm
Poetry reading from 1pm
Former Oasis shop, Chapel Walk, Crowngate Centre

Crave Arts is a not for profit company led by Steve Wilson and Debbie Birch, with over 40 years combined experience between them of working in the arts and heritage sector. We deliver participatory arts and heritage projects and we provide specialist support to organisations wanting to use arts and heritage in their work.

For more information, follow us on Facebook: @CravingArts and Twitter: @ArtsCrave