

Overview

The gallery's approach to engagement has inclusivity at its heart. Through collaboration, co-production and partnership working we reach deeply into our communities.

We work together, creating opportunities to engage in culture, connect with nature, overcome isolation and experience mindfulness activities.

We place importance on making time for the people in our communities, listening to their stories. We are constantly learning. We are sensitive, responsive and optimistic.

We create programmes and projects that increase the visibility of people who are marginalised, enabling them to find their voice, helping them to feel valued and celebrating their life experiences.

EDUCATIONAL



Background

In our programme with schools, colleges, nurseries, specialist schools and home educated children we embed the principle that the gallery belongs to everyone and invite pupils to return with families and friends.

Individuals are encouraged to join in with other gallery activities and programmes such as Kind to the Mind, Youth Assembly and to support our presence at the 2024 Eisteddfod yr Urdd in Maldwyn

We have a focus on Welsh language and culture and inclusivity.





Engagement

Oriel Davies works in partnership with Powys Together delivering a programme of workshops for all year 6 pupils in Newtown called *Raising Aspirations*. The programme is funded by Powys County Council, for many this is their first visit to a gallery and their first experience of Oriel Davies.

Engagement

We focus activities on the gallery's rich exhibition programme. Groups book onto guided tours and activities, led by artists and gallery. This approach enables groups to choose activities that work best for them.

The gallery builds and develops relationships with groups in a time and cost-effective way, maximising the opportunities for children and young people to engage with historic and contemporary work from Wales and beyond.



A woman with dark curly hair, wearing a patterned top, is smiling and pointing at a whiteboard. The whiteboard has handwritten text and drawings. In the background, a woman with blonde hair is seated and looking at the whiteboard. To the right, a young boy in a high-visibility vest is seated at a desk, looking towards the whiteboard. The scene appears to be a workshop or educational session.

National Gallery Masterpiece Tour 2021 -2023

Outcomes

- Over 20 nurseries, schools, colleges engaged with three masterpieces and related contemporary art including a special school, a pupil referral unit, an SEN college course and home-schooled group.
- Participants worked with one artist from an ethnic minority background, two Welsh speaking artists and a neuro divergent artist. They worked directly with artworks and a handling collection



National Gallery Masterpiece Tour 2021 -2023

Outcomes

- Participants explored landscape, sense of place and family; magical transformation and storytelling; Welsh legend, visual impairment and mindful visualisation.
- Participants worked online from their classrooms when lockdown restrictions were still in place using art materials delivered by the gallery.
- The gallery opened to groups ahead of normal opening hours to allow for an undisturbed environment and to support those who are sensory sensitive (lowered lighting).

Quotes

"At the art gallery I really enjoyed seeing Tobias and the Angel painting. I loved the cave because it was warm and cosy in there, it felt very safe. I like that we had the gallery to ourselves, I also liked to see what it was like to see what it was like to be visually impaired with the goggles on. I had the babycino with cheddar and onion crisps and it was really yummy to eat. I liked to walk to the gallery, the staff are very helpful."

Shannon

"Powys Together regularly collaborates with the gallery and the team are always on hand with advice, guidance and support when we are planning activities. The gallery totally supports our Raising Aspirations schools programme which encourages Year 6 pupils from our local primary schools to engage in art, history and cultural projects. Together we are widening children's experiences as they think about their futures and the world of work. The gallery actively and genuinely encourages children to have a go and to recognise their talents through experiential learning." Donna Jenkins, Powys Together

Arts for Health: WORKSHOPS FOR WELLNESS

Outside at Oriel Davies





Background

Oriel Davies works in partnership with Open Newtown, Cultivate Newtown and Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust, delivering workshops with a deep connection to nature – community gardening, creative writing, drawing, spoon carving, charcoal making, basketry and ceramics.

We are building connections with creative practitioners and supporting careers, providing opportunities for them to expand their experience, develop processes and experiment with the natural materials found on site

Through mindful activities participants are learning new skills and creative approaches, weaving them into everyday life. They are making time for relaxation and reflection and building relationships with nature.

Engagement

Participants found out about the project online, at the gallery desk, posters and from leaflets distributed to community centres and local shops.

Organisations including PAVO's Community Connectors and Befriending Services and Mid and North Powys Mind promoted activities to their service users.

- Participants committed to workshops every week for six weeks. Workshops took place in Parc Dolerw just across the River Severn from the gallery.
- Staff and artists created calm inspiring spaces for the workshops within a copse of trees, with an open fire and kelly kettle.
- This new working space is one of several outdoor areas that the gallery has extended into, with the intention of making the gallery experience more visible and inclusive.



Outcomes



- Since engagement began in March 2022 70 adults have taken part in six-week courses in drawing, painting, creative writing, basketry, charcoal making and spoon carving.
- able-bodied and differently abled adults take part, supported by volunteer enablers
- people with mental health issues including anxiety and depression take part, some referred by mental health organisations.

- 98% of survey participants agreed they felt more positive and happier about themselves, as a result of taking part in workshops.
- 86% said they cared more about their community and the local environment.

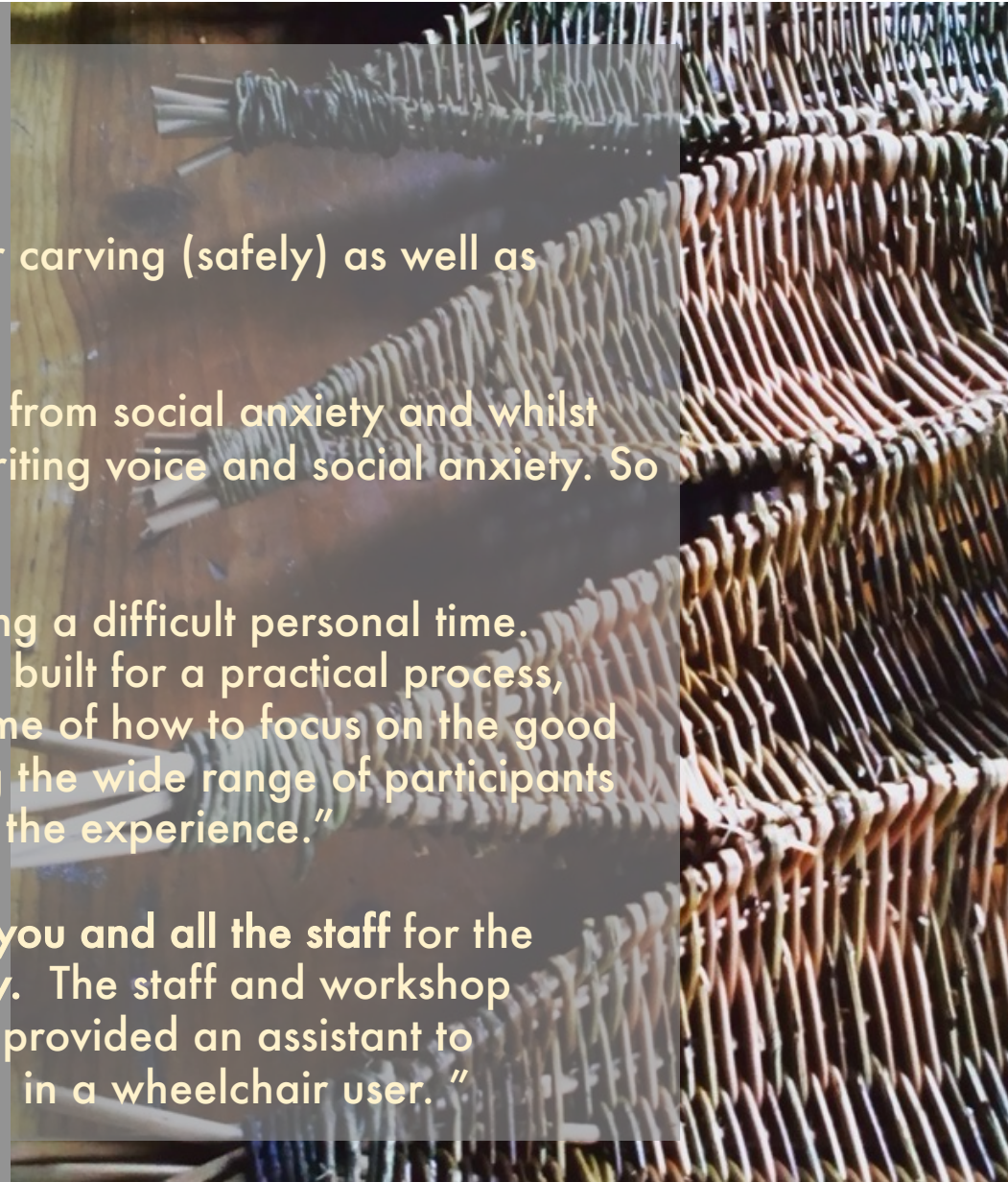
Quotes

"I've learnt how to handle and operate tools for carving (safely) as well as learning creative and mindful processes.'

"This has been such a fantastic 6 weeks. I suffer from social anxiety and whilst attending the course I have made steps in my writing voice and social anxiety. So thanks!!"

"The workshops started just as I was encountering a difficult personal time. Graham's approach, and the mindful context he built for a practical process, really helped stabilise my thoughts and remind me of how to focus on the good at hand. I have also very much enjoyed meeting the wide range of participants and seeing how each of them has responded to the experience."

"I wanted to write to you and send a big thank you and all the staff for the WORK-SHOPS I attended at Oriel Davis Gallery. The staff and workshop leaders really made it inclusive for me and they provided an assistant to help. It's so much harder to be included, being in a wheelchair user. "



**Community
Engagement:**

AUTUMN SHARE

Outside at Oriel Davies



Background

During 2022 Oriel Davies worked in partnership with Open Newtown to hold a series of Open Events which explored the seasons, the environment, sustainable living and community cohesion.

The *Spring Fair* (April 2022), *Summer Fayre* (July 2022) and *Autumn Share* (October 2022) highlighted some of the organisations, artists and community groups located in and around Newtown, introduced people to new ideas, skills and knowledge and offered free participatory workshops for people of all ages.

Events provided opportunities to connect people to the local environment, to improve wellbeing, social interaction and community cohesion.

Whilst there is a pre-existing awareness for the natural world in Newtown, the events built upon this further by combining scientific, biodynamic and artistic knowledge and ways of thinking. The interconnection of these various approaches on the day looked to bring inspiration and new perspectives.



Engagement

The *Autumn Share* centered around the harvest, the sharing of knowledge, skills and produce, and the change in the natural light as the nights draw in. The day ran from 12noon until dusk and featured local organisations; artists selling their work and running workshops; live music; food stalls; a shared meal; lantern procession and fire show.

Cultivate Newtown focused on the pressing of several varieties of eating apples from and around Newtown, giving an insight into the journey of the apple from land to juice, to leftover pulp from the juicing process which would then be used by a local cider company.

Local herbalist Natalie Morris led a natural remedies workshop, introducing people to the benefits of berries and plants that could be foraged in the local landscape. Together, they made an elderberry oxymel for colds and coughs to take home ready for the Winter season

Artist Billy Ireland shared the process of making charcoal, inviting people to collect natural materials from the local environment to create charcoal for drawing. Through this activity, she was able to speak to people of all ages about carbon and climate change in an accessible way.

Outcomes

The *Autumn Share* created a space for community groups to share their stories, cultures, skills and knowledge. In the run up to the event, Creative Stuff Newtown worked with Men's Shed Newtown to organise the creation of a fire sculpture that could be built during the day of the event and lit in the evening.

A Syrian meal was shared in the evening, cooked by local Syrian families. Seba and Rahma prepared various Syrian dishes, puddings and coffee. The women brought their family and friends along and shared their music and dancing, giving visibility to the local refugee community.

- over 1,500 people attended three outdoor seasonal events
- 30 local organisations and artisan businesses were supported, promoting their causes and selling work
- 99% of survey participants said events help create a stronger sense of community for the town
- 83% said the Autumn Share event made them want to get more involved in helping to care for the local environment
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Quotes

"Thank you very much for the great event yesterday. I learned a lot of interesting stuff, especially talking to artist Billie Ireland about charcoal. Also herbal remedies, trying various apples, learning about fruit trees, wonderful Syrian meal, alpacas, people - it all was great."

"The Autumn share was great. I loved the principle of sharing knowledge, produce and skills. I especially enjoyed making an elderberry oxymel and learning about herbal remedies. I look forward to the next one"

"I've spent hours here with my children. I am disabled and my family are mixed race. It is often difficult to find activities to take part in. This event feels really inclusive and we feel very much part of the community today."



Volunteering Oriol Davies Volunteering 2021 - 2023



The National Gallery Masterpiece Tour prompted a major volunteer drive to accommodate the requirement for invigilation during the tours.

A freelance Volunteer Co-ordinator assisted in generating the required policies and documentation required to begin recruitment, Supported by PAVO (Powys Association of Voluntary Organisations).

They contacted local schools, colleges, universities and groups to create links and get the message out to the local communities, groups and beyond.



Important to our ethos is to inspire and create opportunities for our local communities, to access, support and inform. To have an active role within the gallery and contribute towards the Oriel Davies Experience.



Volunteering Roles

- Invigilation, workshop support and event support.
- **Invigilation:** working within exhibitions to support visitor engagement for an exhibition and market current workshops and events.
- **Workshop Support:** supporting an artist/practitioner within workshops and or supporting participants.
- **Event support:** supporting gallery events, customer facing and practical preparations, exhibitions, gallery events, fairs, stalls, talks, running a bar etc.



Training

We offer an initial induction training and shadowing support for all volunteers.

All roles are accessible.

Volunteers are given opportunities to help support initial exhibition set-up and have time within new exhibitions before they open to the public.

Volunteers have an active roles within exhibitions and are supported to contribute to the generation and maintenance of resources.

Further training opportunities are regularly shared with volunteers



Training

Recent courses including

Visual Impairment Training Day
Delivered by Susan Davies from the
Council's Sensory Impairment Unit and Liz
Duncan (Deafblind UK regional trainer)

British Heart Foundation – CPR Awareness –
How you can help - Online Training

In House Welsh language training is in
development.



Current Volunteers

Our volunteers have a keen interest in the arts and the exciting program of exhibitions, workshops and events that the gallery offers. They also really enjoy the visitor engagement aspect and being part of the Oriel Davies team...which they very much are! Younger volunteers fluctuate as they move on to university, while older volunteers generally enjoy the social aspect of volunteering.

All volunteers have a sense of pride for the gallery that is evident when they volunteer with us and very humbling when I know they offer us their time for free.



Quotes

In the few months I have been there, it feels that the Gallery has gone from strength to strength offering events linked to the National Gallery loans and a wider variety of exciting free events. But however busy, I have seen the continued importance given to offering a warm and friendly welcome to all visitors and I look forward to volunteering in the months to come."

Volunteer

The guide who chatted to us was brilliant at making the National Gallery masterpiece come to life and explained it in such an interesting and accessible way - I would easily have walked past it but left feeling like I really got to connect in a deeper way with the painting and its story

Visitor



The connections made during the initial volunteer drive have provided a platform for regular recruitment.

We recruit on our website, social media, posters, emailing (colleges and ODG Mailing list), and face to face on the front desk and during events. We also visit local colleges to talk and engage with students.

We have a higher turnover in young student volunteers as they move on to university or work.



Visitor Feedback

Gallery staff super friendly and helped bring it alive for the kids, dressing up in Saskia's costume etc

The extremely helpful coordinator on duty was excellent

Helpful and informative person on duty by the picture

The welcoming, knowledgeable staff

We were first in and had the undivided attention of the volunteer expert, who was clearly enthusiastic and well informed

How pleasant the staff members were and all the information and knowledge they have given me upon my arrival.

Inspired

Volunteers all bring their own levels of knowledge and skills to the role and we do endeavour to offer them opportunities relevant to them and support and enhance their skills where we can.

This is something we discuss at induction, what can we offer the volunteers and what do they wish to gain from volunteering with us. The door is always open for discussions and focused support learning or experience.

The extra support we have from our volunteers is pivotal to ensuring the smooth running of events and contributes an enhancing visitor engagement and experience.

