

2015/16

Pyramid of Arts is a group of around 220 people, with and without learning disabilities (LD), who work together to explore and develop their creativity, and to make great art for a wide public.

Pyramid is bigger today than it has ever been. With the advent of our High Rise project we now have more sessions and members than ever before.

Our artistic output included the usual mix of creative chaos and artistic anarchy, cannibalistic shoes and giant tortoise lanterns. High profile events included exhibitions at Leeds Art Gallery as part of the British Art Show 8; The Tetley and the Town Hall. A painting by member Matthew Watson was selected for exhibition

in Kilkenny.

Our established funders, Aspire CBS and Leeds City Council, stay faithful to Pyramid and continue to engage in our work.

Long-term contracts and ongoing income from membership fees mean that we are reasonably secure for the next two years. But like any arts or third sector organisation, our future beyond that is uncertain and central government austerity continues to undermine our good work. We must ensure that existing funders continue to

support us, and look for other long-term funding. We also need to explore new partnerships and efficiencies in the many overlaps between ourselves and other cultural and social care agencies.

As Leeds develops ambitious plans for the future, including the 2023 European City of Culture bid, so Pyramid must play a part in ensuring anyone with a learning disability has the right information about the cultural opportunities available to them, and the support

they need to get involved. In line with Pyramid's core values and the Arts Council's Creative Case for Diversity, we must always look to ways in which our members with LD can contribute more to, or lead on, the charity's decision making and planning. We must also explore ways in which the work of artists with LD can be exhibited with the respect it deserves and be given a higher profile, allowing for greater integration of our members into the arts scene and wider society.

There is always much more to do.

As always, Pyramid is about colour and chaos, laughter and creativity, mutual support, learning, self-confidence and pride. This year there has been more of that than ever before and we continue to be very proud of all that we achieve together.

James Hill



Office Team

James Hill (Director)
Mindy Goose (High Rise Project Coordinator, started April 2015)
Sarah Kennedy (Operations Coordinator)
Sukhvinder K Sond (Groups Coordinator)



Our Trustees

Alex Croft (resigned January 2016)
Andrew Marshall
Clare Enston
Felix Odeh (Treasurer)
Gloria Lindh
Liam Hirst
Ros Lehany
Thomas Chalk (Chair)



Funders

Arts Council England
Aspire CBS
Big Lottery Fund
Children in Need
Grundtvig (EU Lifelong Learning Programme)
Humber Learning Consortium
Leeds City Council – Adult Social Care Joint Commissioning
Leeds City Council – Arts Development Team
Leeds City Council – Leeds Inspired
Leeds City Council – Breeze Arts Festival



Donors

Many thanks to our regular donors Dr Jane Ginsborg, Richard and Carla Cadiz-Aravena, Patricia Braime, Thomas Chalk and Irene Hill. Members and staff raised money through sponsored events throughout the year. Thanks to Mister Arkwright's Tool Emporium, Boar Lane for their ongoing and very useful 'trade' discount.

We received a donation from the legacy of our founder and Director Julia Piggott, for which we will always be grateful both to Julia and to her family – Bob, Carol and Emma.



Woodsong, performance at Leeds Town Hall

YoYos

The YoYos is a group for young people aged 8+

This year each of our groups contributed to *Woollies*, a project in memory of our founder, Julia Piggott. The group made small woollen sculptures of people and hot air balloons for them to travel in. The finished work was exhibited for one week in June at Albion Mills (Bradford Festival, Architectural Jewels) and the Big Hand Day in August.

The YoYos partnered with pianist Jonathan Fisher and singer Philip Smith to create *Woodsong* with the Leeds Lieder Festival. The group developed a story and produced props, costumes and actions around two Lieder songs, and performed to an audience of 50 in the Crypt of the Town Hall in April.

The group ran a project in response to an accessible performance of *The Tortoise and the Hare* by Northern Ballet. Leanne from Northern Ballet led sessions, experimenting in moving in different ways: tip-toeing; balancing; crawling and running like a bird, a tortoise and a hare! The YoYos really enjoyed moving and expressing themselves in this way.





Heroes at Leeds Town Hall

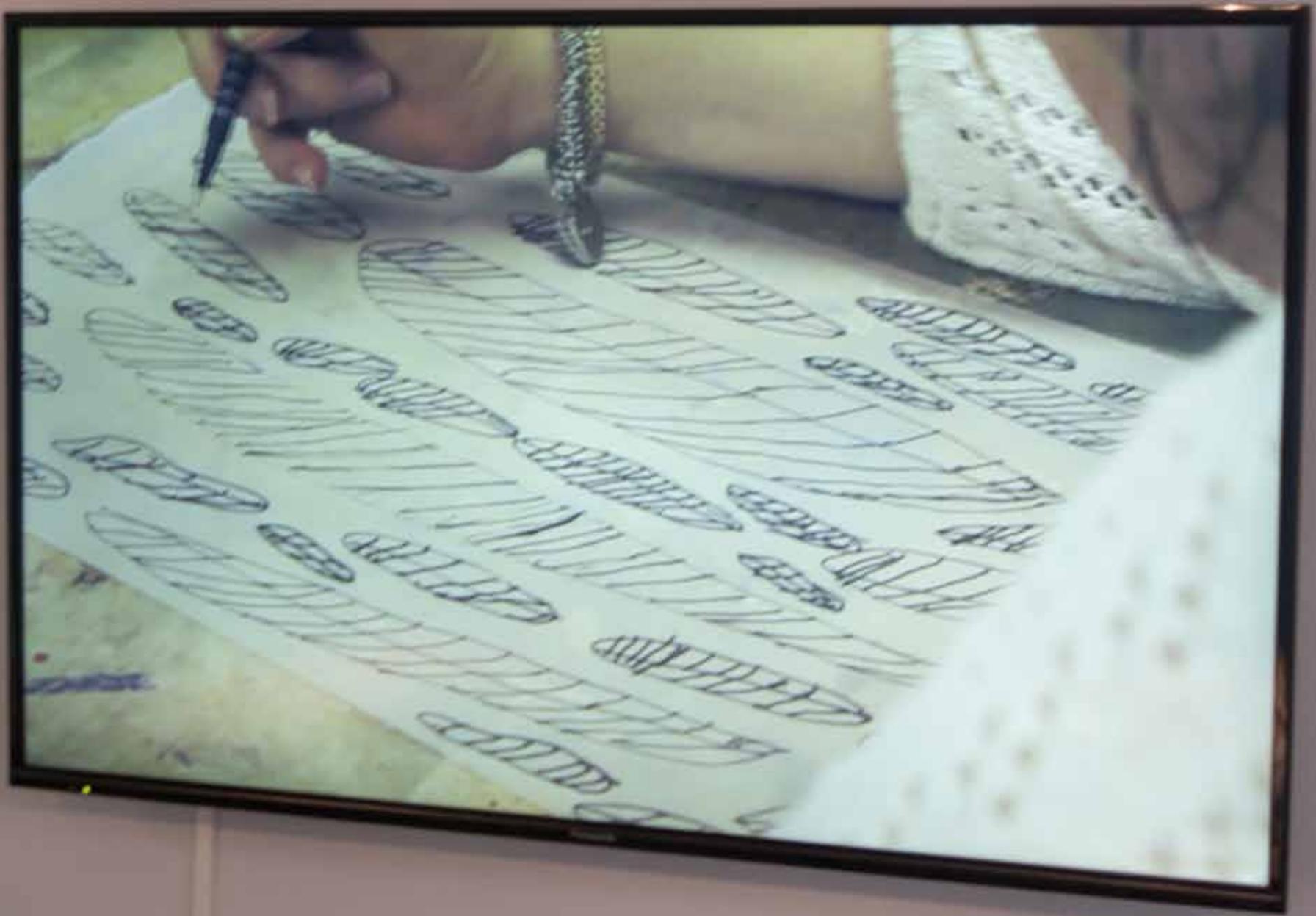
Next Step Pyramid

Next Step Pyramid is for young people aged 18 to 25.

For the *Woollies* project, the group began by making individual figures and then built a lit-up Woolly World which was displayed at the Big Hand Day event in August.

In Autumn 2015, Next Step Pyramid were asked to produce a piece of work for Holocaust Memorial Day, for which the theme was 'Don't Stand By'. This led the group to think about their personal heroes and they created an exhibition of mixed media photography pieces, *Heroes*. Each group member produced one piece in the set, which was exhibited in Leeds Town Hall for three months.





Ribblehead

The **Ribblehead Group** is for adults.

This year the group created *Drawing in Time*, an exhibition in response to the Tetley's *Painting in Time*. The group experimented with a variety of techniques, from animation to painting and sowing seeds onto fabric. There was a great buzz throughout the project as they thought up creative responses to the Tetley's exhibition. The final work was exhibited at the Tetley and was very warmly received.

In the Autumn the group were asked to make a new sign for the entrance to Pyramid of Arts. After experimenting with different mediums and materials, the group used mosaic tiles and letters created from their own body shapes. In addition, they used photography and graphic design to make a banner for the gate. The sign is in the team photo on page 3.



Drawing in Time at The Tetley



Eden

The **Eden Group** is for adults.

For the *Woollies* project the group experimented with felt making, withy structures, and sewing to create their Woollies. Sessions were held at Kirkstall Abbey's Learning Studio and the group took beautiful photos of the Woollies in the grounds.

The group were invited to respond to the British Art Show 8 which was at Leeds City Art Gallery. The group wanted to each make an individual statement about BAS8 so they decided to each customise a pair of their own shoes in response to a piece of work in the show.

The group revisited the gallery with their work, where it was displayed for one night, and developed an interaction between the exhibition and their disembodied empty footwear, recorded through photographs.



The Eden Group backstage at Leeds Art Gallery



Elders

The **Elders Group** is for older adults.

The **Elders** based their *Woollies* project on the idea of forest spirits carrying messages. They used a variety of clay and plaster techniques to create small and large figures which were hung from trees on Big Hand Day.

They then worked on a film, *A Legendary Trip Out*. This project used projections, light and sound to explore personal stories and memories. The subject which triggered the most stories was trips out, although the group also explored memories of school days, birthdays and celebrations. They also spent time recalling traditional stories and legends.

The group used shadow making, projection and story building techniques to create a series of stills which were collated to make the film. The group recorded sound bites, singing, and percussive sounds to accompany the film. You can watch the finished piece on our website!



Figures created for the *Woollies* project



High Rise and Aspire

High Rise is our newest project, funded by the National Lottery through the Big Lottery Fund. The programme provides creative opportunities for people with profound and multiple learning disabilities or communication needs resulting from sensory differences and autism. Feedback shows that our sessions increase positive social engagement, improve confidence and decrease stress. Members feel more independent, learn new skills and make friends.

We run weekly sessions in the three **Aspire** CBS Fulfilling Lives Centres – Bramley, Ramshead Wood and Rothwell – and attendees of the centres try out different art form each term; Movement, Music and Visual Arts. This year has seen them performing in sea inspired movement sessions; creating origami sculptures from paper the group had made themselves and exploring the world through popular music from different countries.





High Rise Visual Arts

In our **High Rise Visual Art** group, the participants work on large scale projects, aiming to improve their communication, decision making skills, and creative ability.

The group produced work for Shoddy, an exhibition of disability art in Leeds. The **Visual Arts** group took the meaning of shoddy as recycled textiles and created a large piece, with each individual members' marks. Through weaving plastic bags together, stitching and mark-making, a new piece of fabric was constructed. The group visited Armley Mills Industrial Museum, where they looked at ways fabric has been woven throughout history, had a go at carding wool and at fashioning their own weaves. These were incorporated into the final piece.





High Rise Movement

Our **High Rise Movement** group explore movement and spatial awareness, undertaking activities to extend both their fine and gross motor skills; improve decision making, and increase confidence.

This year they explored India, through the aroma of fragrant spices, the taste of different teas, massage and meditation, combining this together with movement and sound. The group had a visit from Avtar Singh Manku who taught them how to play the dhol drums. The group really enjoyed the rhythms and created their own movements in the space.

They next worked on the theme of musicals, which proved very popular with the participants, dressing up and performing to the songs. A short film was made for the BEYOND Festival 2016.







The Dark Light by D4, Andrew Towse and Anne-Marie Atkinson



High Rise Music

The **High Rise Music** group explores sound and performance. The members engage in sound making, encouraging confidence; communication and improving fine motor skills.

The group explored world music, visiting a different country every week. They went to Leeds Discovery Centre to look at world instruments, watching videos of them being played in their original location, listening to them being brought to life and creating their own musical jam. They also explored the large store. The group loved the visual mix of eclectic exhibits, and one of our visually impaired members was allowed to touch some exhibits, he was especially enamoured with the elephant skull.

In Spring the group explored the theme of musicals, and created their own, *The Golden Football*, which was performed at the end of term to a large crowd at the Carriageworks Theatre.



Chris has a bubble machine at home after enjoying



High Rise Sensory

High Rise Sensory is our multi-sensory experiential group. It uses imaginative, sensory stimuli and simple structured activities and games to explore ways of unlocking communication through touch, sound, vision and movement. This group moves at a slow pace, allowing the members to become settled and confident in their surroundings.

This group also produced work for Shoddy (see page 17). The brief for the exhibition looked at challenging any assumptions that the work and the artists are inferior, second-rate or badly made. Using textiles, the group opted to document the sessions and how attending the **Sensory** group affects their life in a positive way, and how something that is often taken for granted can have a huge impact on a person with profound and complex disabilities.

They are continuing to experiment and produce work exploring light.



Sensory Gazebo

Detail of piece shown at Shoddy exhibition



High Rise Creative Wellbeing

Parkside Lodge is an NHS locked unit for people with learning disabilities whose complex health needs are such that they cannot be met in a community setting.

High Rise Creative Wellbeing visits weekly. The sessions enable individuals to set their own level of involvement in terms of art form, activity and time, and also allow for individual activity to contribute to a single collective project if they wish. The single collective project is ongoing, allowing people to drop in and out of sessions according to what they are comfortable with.

For many patients, a spell in Parkside Lodge is a time of crisis and discontinuity in their lives. We hope that through our **Creative Wellbeing** sessions we can bring some relief, and also serve to maintain a patient's interest in creativity, which may be extended beyond their discharge from the unit.





Development Teams

Our Development Teams are pairs of members working together to further a particular creative interest. Each team is made up of a professional artist and a member with learning disabilities who support each other to develop their work. The D-Teams also support other groups in the realisation of their projects, as well as completing commissions for external clients.

D1

Liam and James work together every Friday on fund-raising and business development. Liam has helped to write many of our successful funding bids and contributed to our Strategic Plan. He has also raised money by delivering presentations. He was successful in winning £1,700 for the charity by presenting at a Leeds Soup event. He's our first member to apply for an Arts Council grant in his own right. He created his *Pilgrimage City* lantern for that project, and is now

making plans for his second bid.

D2

Anna and Caz work together with 'creative explorations' every Friday afternoon, testing and trying out a range of different activities which include tactile art, sound, and music.

D3

William and Sven work together primarily in carpentry and joinery, often making things which are

needed by other groups to complete their projects. They completed *The Story Engine* for the Next Step Pyramid Group and have made signs, light boxes and trestle tables, amongst other things, for our other groups. They're responsible for maintaining and ordering Pyramid's workshop space in Unit 9.

D4

Anne-Marie and Andrew work together in photography and design. They create artwork of their own, including three

light-boxes for the Shoddy exhibition in Leeds, as well as documenting the work of the other Pyramid groups. They created the cover of this annual report and took the team photo on page 3. They also do design for external clients, creating the flier for the Shoddy exhibition, a brochure about Learning Disability Week and a book celebrating the marriage of Andrew's brother. They are planning to apply for an Arts Council grant to support a project of their own.



Singing Group

The Singing Group meet fortnightly on Saturdays to make a lot of noise! Led by musician James Heselwood the group sing rock & roll (Roll Over Beethoven), country (Folsom Prison Blues), soul (Freedom), and rock (Jumpin' Jack Flash), amongst other things... We sing, shout (twist and shout), howl like hound dogs, blow lonesome whistles and provide

a rhythm section by booming down drainpipes.

The group is free to attend. No talent or previous experience is necessary and friends and family are welcome. It's a great way to get a first taste of Pyramid of Arts. Just give us a call in advance if you would like to attend.





Aspire CBS staff take part in 'Creative Approaches to Everyday Living'

Training

At Pyramid we do our best to share what we have learnt over the last 27 years, with new members and with the wider world.

All our staff are encouraged to complete our **Foundation** and **Explorations** training, which explore the social history of disability, and good practice when working with, and running arts groups with, people with learning disabilities. The training combines theory and thinking with a lot of Big Makes, improvisation and arts skills. All Pyramid workers take the training but it is also open to anyone interested in this area of work.

Core Worker Training is the final stage of our internal training and makes sure that our Core Workers can run groups safely and effectively, and fully understand the 'Pyramid Way'.

We also deliver external training. **Creative Approaches to Everyday Living** is designed for care professionals who are not artists, but would like to use arts activities in their working environments. We teach quick and

easy ways to do this, with cheap and recycled materials. Currently the training is supported by the Big Lottery Fund and is therefore free.

We deliver bespoke training packages to external organisations based around good practice when working with people with learning disabilities. This year we delivered training to Wakefield Museums and Galleries, and to Engine Room Theatre in Goole.

If you want to know more about our training package, call us on 0113 2346040.





I Want To Know

In April Alicia, Colleen, Ella, James, Nigel, Ray, Sarah, Scott, Stephen and Sukhvinder travelled to Ireland to visit KCAT arts collective in Kilkenny, on the final leg of our Grundtvig funded *I Want To Know* project. The project saw us visiting three organisations similar to Pyramid across Europe, as well as those organisations coming to visit us in Leeds.

Light Night Lantern Parade

For Light Night this year the Council's Arts Development Team commissioned us to create and run a lantern parade in the city centre. The workshops were open to all, although of course many of our members also attended. It was a chance for our members to work alongside family, friends, members of the public, and the Vidya Sagar Cultural Group from Carr Manor Primary School. On the night we were joined by a dhol drummer and a jazz saxophonist, and 450 people took part in the parade.



Light Night Lantern Parade

Adam Bainbridge / Adam Bates / Adam Hopkins / Alex Douro / Alice Clayden / Andrea Clisby / Andrew Devine / Andrew Greenwood / Andrew McClukie / Andrew / Angela Braham / Angela Mentel / Anna Smailes / Annabel Park / Anna-Marie Garbutt / Avtar Singh Manku / Barrie Nelson / Ben Brook / Beverly Remington / Brenda Bagshaw / Brianna / Caroline Gilbert / Carolyn Stiff / Cassy Oliphant / Ceadaoin McGill / Chris Morrill / Christopher Colleen Ward / Conor Van Der Wert / Craig Trigwell / Daniel Fox / Daniella Bastow / Darren T / Dawn Carey-Jones / Dayel Robinson / Debra Hughes / Denise Scott / Diane Cornish / Don / Elise Berdah / Ella Schofield / Ellie Jones / Emma Marriott / Fiona Harrison / Fiona Simc / Hannah Nelson / Husefa Hussain / Iain Wilson / Ian Fawcett / Ian Stephens / Iman Meghra / Jamie Morris / Janice Hatherly / Jason Florey / Jean Purcell / Jean-Paul Girardier / Jenny Ba / John Bilham / John Densley / John Hawkins / Jonathan Turner / Judith Kennedy / Julie S / Kevin Sharkey / Khaniz Din / Kieran Sutcliffe / Kimberley Otter / Krystal Unwin / Laura F / Lily Lavorato / Linda Korenika / Linda Morris / Lisa Cromack / Liz Brightwell-Peters / Louis / Mark Abbott / Mark Nicholson / Martin Wilkinson / Martina Assandri / Matthew Bellwood / Mick Craggs / Mims Williams / Molly Bradshaw / Naomi Hughes / Natalie Kyrkos / Nathaniel / Patricia Ndhlovu / Patsy Wollitter / Paul Ashton / Paul Cutler / Paul Farnhill / Paul Hu / Pippa Woodhams / Rachel Dean / Rachel Schreiber / Rebecca Bowes / Rebecca Walker / Sammy Ford / Sammy Holden / Sandy Holden / Sarah Loy / Sarah Wilman / Scott Ande / Stephen Fulton / Stephen Harvey / Stephen Johnson / Stephen Sharp / Stephen Wat / Tom Dransfield / Toni Beardsall / Vakas Mamood /

Alicia Rywczuk / Alison Andrews / Alissa Lad / Alistair Morgan / Amelia Lojewski /
Reynolds / Andrew Spindley / Andrew Towse / Andrew Wonnacott / Andrew Woolley
Anne-Marie Atkinson / Annie Nelson / Anthony Benson / Anthony Cox / Anthony Jima /
An Richardson / Bryan Tweddle / Bryony Rosier / Bushra Tellisi / Carl McCarron / Carl Robshaw
Catherine Taylor / Claire Foster / Claire Rookes / Clare Parrish / Clare Roberts / Clementina Pun /
Clyde Dymally / David Cunningham / David Harris / David Rushworth / David Vilyarni / David Wragg
Dhruv Ghataora / Donna Connolly / Donna Lematy / Edgar Horacio / Edward Mortimer /
Eileen / Fran Horner / Georgie McCredie / Graham Peel / Gurdev Mann / Halema Khatun /
Hannah / Izzi Stockton / Jackie Gordon / Jackie Simpson / James Coleman / James Heselwood /
James Bailey / Jenny Harris / Jenny Laskowsky / Jill Stoves / Joanne Hemmingway / Jody Fitzgerald
John Shackleton / Karen Hood / Karen Nicholson / Kate Woodfield / Kelly Shine / Kevin Barlow
Kevin Pullen / Laura-May Harrison / Lesley Sidwell / Lewis Robinson / Liam Hirst / Liam Nicholls /
Liam Leary / Louise Watson / Lucy Johnson / Lucy Robinson / Maggie Rush / Margaret Groves
Mark / Matthew Watson / Maureen Duffy / Megan Connell / Melanie Maddison / Michael Rhodes /
Michael Jackson / Nicola Lines / Nigel Hutton / Oyidiya Ndukwe / Pamela Broadbent / Parveen Ayub
Paul Hutchinson / Penny Lewis / Pete Hudspith / Peter Marshall / Philip Bennett / Pippa Cohen
Pippa / Ria Lake / Robert Middleton / Robin Lumb / Russell Hunter / Ruth Hesling / Ryan Barr /
Ryan / Seb Munday / Sonia Kitchen / Sophie Deakin / Sophie Sheerin / Stephen Francis
Stephen / Stuart Hick / Stuart Illingworth / Susan Johnson / Sven McLean / Tom Bailey
Tom Verity Wong / Wendy Robinson / William Stapleton

Income

Funds brought forward	£14,128.00
Donations	£18,468.00
Grants	£190,811.00
Other Income (inc membership)	£30,499.00
Bank Interest	£65.00
Total Income	£253,971.00

Expenditure

Wages	£173,155.00
Project Work (excl staff)	£34,195.00
Marketing	£2,942.00
Rent and Rates	£17,599.00
Office Admin	£10,142.00
IT (database development)	£7,583.00
Audit & Legal Fees	£2,273.00
Depreciation	£333.00
Insurance	£1,156.00
Total Expenditure	£249,378.00

This information is extracted from the full audited accounts for the period April 2015 to March 2016.

For full accounts and Trustees' Report please contact:
finance@pyramid-of-arts.org.uk

Bankers:

Co-operative Bank plc
PO Box 101, 1 Balloon Street,
Manchester M60 4EP

Barclays
PO Box 424, Coventry CV2 2BR

Brokers:

AON, Insurance House, 125/129
Vaughan Way, Leicester LE1 4SB

Auditors:

Thomas Coombs, 29 Clarendon
Road, Leeds LS2 9PG





This year saw the sad passing of three of our long-standing members: Stephen Waterhouse; Andrew Spindley and Lesley Sidwell.



All three had been members of Pyramid for many years and indeed Andrew was one of the original attendees of the Arts Club at Meanwood Park Hospital.



They contributed to many projects down the years and their creative contribution, friendship and laughter will be very much missed.

Pyramid of Arts, Unit 68B, Barkston House,
Croydon Street, Leeds LS11 9RT

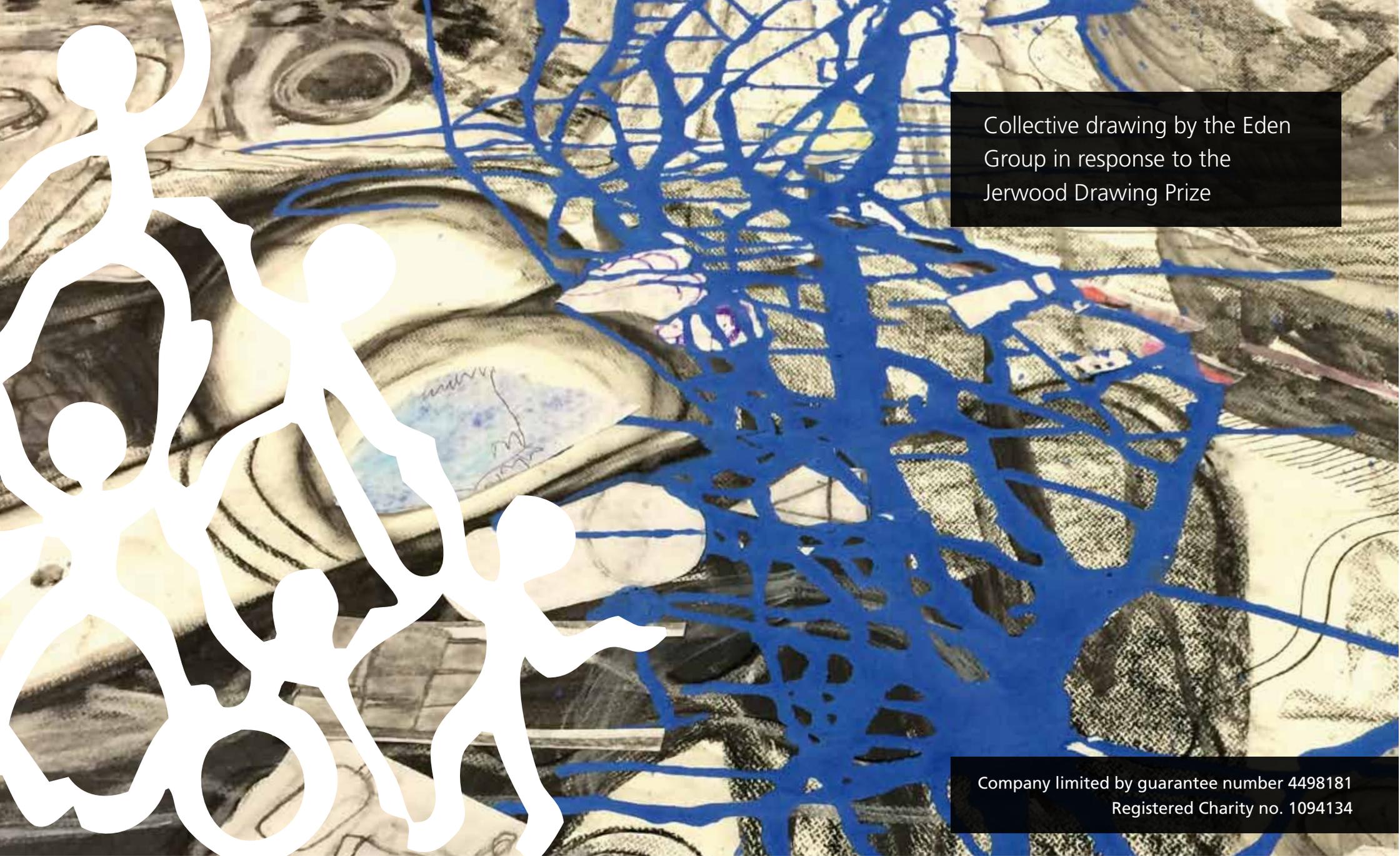
tel: 0113 234 6040

email: info@pyramid-of-arts.org.uk

website: www.pyramid-of-arts.org.uk

contact





Collective drawing by the Eden Group in response to the Jerwood Drawing Prize

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