



activity report

2018/19



Director's Introduction

This year our Discovery Groups and Development Teams created some superb projects which received great audiences in Leeds, and national recognition for their quality and ambition. You can find out more about what they have been doing in the following pages.

We spent much of the year with the 30th birthday celebration in mind, thinking about the past and making plans for the future. We worked intensively with PilotLight, a London-based charity, to help us develop and understand our aims better. At the same time we appointed Trustees who brought a new drive to our future planning. This led to a new definition of what we do: **Pyramid invests in people with learning disabilities through the discovery, development and disruption of the arts.**

Discovery means doing what we have always done so well. We reach people with learning disabilities, who may have had little or no experience of the arts, and let them know the opportunities available to them. We support them to try out the full range of art forms, discover their talents, and share their work with a wide public.

Development means giving our artists the support structure that they need to develop their creative and professional practice to its fullest potential.

Disruption is a new strand to our work – or at least we are saying it out loud for the first time! We will use our art, lobbying, training, protest and constructive criticism to disrupt the social and institutional barriers which get in the way of people with learning disabilities getting involved in the arts.

We also announced our ambition to raise enough money to start building a new headquarters for Pyramid by 2023. This will be an exciting contemporary arts centre run by and for people with learning disabilities, and will be unique in the UK, making Leeds famous for, and proud of, its artists with learning disabilities.

James Hill, Director

The YoYos created a site specific installation for Light Night, situated in Leeds Central Library. The group created hundreds of intricate, 3D sculptures for the installation and visitors were encouraged to make their own on the night to be added to the piece.

They then then jumped head first into a very free and relaxed **Exploring Creativity** project which gave members the time and space to explore different materials, themes and ways of working.



The final project for the year was to work with artist Tim Curtis on an ambitious project which saw the group designing, creating and then physically riding their art work around Millennium Square as part of the Tour de Yorkshire 2019 celebratory programme. Using flocks of sheep as inspiration, the group made willow sculptures which were mounted on to adapted bicycles.



Next Step Pyramid

Next Step Pyramid visited The Tetley to see the 'Material Environments' exhibition and responded by developing three strands of work in clay, photography, and painting. The work was very well received and The Tetley have kept it on permanent display.



They then took trips to the Discovery Centre and City Museum as part of a project about Leeds and created a giant 3D map of the city. A photo collage of the work was made into a postcard which is now on sale in the City Museum.

The final project for the year focused on the environment. The group used reclaimed single-use plastics to produce a large-scale ocean scene, highlighting the problems of plastic pollution. The finished piece was exhibited at Kirkgate Market on 'Fridays for Future'.



Ribblehead

Ribblehead's work from the previous term, 'I Am An Artist', resulted in a great series of photographic portraits, which were exhibited at the BEYOND Festival.

The group explored space and sound by working in response to a live art performance at the Corn Exchange by Napoleon IV and followed this with a *Pyramid View On...* visual art project in response to the 'Your Consequences Have Actions' exhibition at The Tetley. Work was exhibited at a special evening opening at the gallery.



Working in collaboration with Leeds Little Libraries, the group developed and designed personalised stencils to decorate a Little Library. The project encouraged members to think about different ways of communicating; experimenting with braille and sign language, as well as sharing stories about their local communities. The project will be finished next year.



The Eden Group spent a term working at Leeds Art Gallery, studying the work of sculptor Henry Moore. The group produced their own clay sculptures and held a pop-up exhibition of their work at the gallery.

They then worked with storyteller Matthew Bellwood and dancer Rachel Dean on devising a telling of the story 'The Little Girl and the Winter Whirlwind', and designing and making puppets with which to perform the piece. They performed the show at Seven Arts in December.

The final project of the year was to produce brand new merchandise to celebrate Pyramid's 30th birthday. Items will be on sale from October 2019.



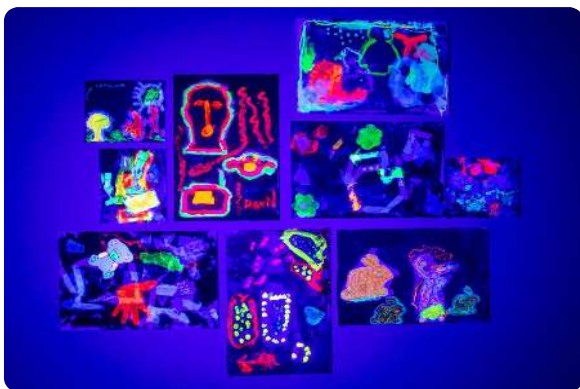
Legends

The first project for the year was 'Living Lines'. The group explored shapes and patterns in nature, interpreted through various techniques and styles. They also researched Henri Matisse, in particular his cut outs, to see how individual work can be combined to make large group pieces. The finished work was gifted to local GP surgeries for display.

Legends explored paper-making in a variety of ways. Using recycled paper, the group tried adding dyes, seeds, leaves and threads. The theme 'a walk in the park' emerged and the handmade

paper was turned into a beautiful array of creatures that might live there. The group then designed, painted and built a diorama of the park in which to place the birds, butterflies, squirrels and friends. The finished pieces were exhibited at the Swarthmore Centre café.

The final project of the year was a collaboration with Leeds Lieder Festival. The group performed live at Leeds College of Music and exhibited work they had made using UV reactive paints.



High Rise Music

The High Rise Music Group devise original stories and songs which are performed to a live audience at the end of each project.

This year, the group produced two musicals, 'Will We Get Home for Christmas?', a fantastical festive adventure, and 'Earth's Heartbeat', which focussed on environmental issues and the climate crisis.

Both shows were performed at the Seven Arts Centre in Chapel Allerton.



High Rise Movement

The High Rise Movement Group completed three projects over the year.

The first theme was 'circus' and members devised a signed performance and held a pop-up circus event at Bramley Community Centre.

In September, the group looked at the work of Roald Dahl, focussing on a different Dahl story each week, using props, costumes and sensory exploration to tell each tale.

The final project for the year was 'seasons' and the group again shared their work in an end-of-term performance.



Development Teams

We were proud to be working with 13 artists with learning disabilities in our Development Team model. Much of the work produced was exhibited at the BEYOND Festival in 2018. Other highlights included D3WS offering print workshops and supporting us to promote Pyramid at events; D2SH's work 'Travellers Inn' being to the permanent collection at the Leeds Central Library zine library and the publication of D1LH's graphic novel, 'The Adventure of Square'.



Development Teams



Aspire

Our Aspire sessions take place at the Bramley, Potternewton and Rothwell Fulfilling Lives Centres. The groups work in a rotation with artists specialising in visual art, music and movement.

This year, members explored the solar system, walked with dinosaurs, made costumes and held a fashion show, danced to bhangra, devised a new story based on The Nutcracker, learned about film soundtracks and composed music, and made paper lanterns and artworks inspired by the natural world.



Singing Group and Ultimate Thunder

The Singing Group and Ultimate Thunder met fortnightly throughout the year.

We delivered two special workshops over one weekend with renowned Argentinian musician Anla Courtis, culminating in a live public performance at Wharf Chambers.

Ultimate Thunder also headlined a great night of live music in July for the closing party for BEYOND: Learning Disability and the Arts in Leeds Festival 2018.





Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

arts@leeds



And huge thanks to our regular donors: Alex Cundy, Alex Lehany, Ben Hardy, Carla and Richard Cadiz-Aravena, Claire Taylor, Dominic Lehany, Jane Ginsborg, Lucy White, Patricia Braime, Ros Lehany and Thomas Chalk.

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

0113 234 6040

info@pyramid.org.uk