



Community Arts: Guernsey Arts Commission

What are the positive benefits of Community Arts?

With the misconception of cultural elitism many people can be left feeling that the arts aren't for them. To address this, the Guernsey Arts Commission aims to create a cultural democracy and encourage involvement and participation in the arts at grass roots level.

Community Arts, led by Andrew Smith the Community Arts Development Officer, attempts to bridge the void between grass roots and established arts organisations and venues. Community art thrives on the contact between artists and local organisations, groups and societies. Artists may work closely with local groups of people representing a wide cross-section of society; community art is for everyone - all ages, cultures and economic classes.

By creating a community arts programme the Guernsey Arts Commission aims to develop a vital link between public, private, voluntary and community sectors. This programme will harbour a relationship of trust between communities and the Arts Commission to help develop future projects. This network of projects should link the many community organisations, agencies and States' departments creating a coherent approach to community art.

Community arts can be used to provide a platform to raise the awareness of social issues within the island thus bringing about change with the aim of fostering a sense of pride within the community. It can provoke debate and create a dialogue between community groups. The arts can bring people together.

GAC Priorities for 2009-2011

For the next two years the Guernsey Arts Commission has chosen five priorities that will underpin its work and that of its sub-committees. The first three, as seen below, are embedded in the aims and objectives of Community Arts, which is why the GAC has made the commitment to develop a long-term and sustainable Community Arts programme in Guernsey.

- **Accessibility:** to increase opportunities to attend, participate and be involved in the arts.
- **Audience Engagement:** to develop understanding of the arts through hands-on creating
- **Art in Public Places:** to take the arts out of the established venues and into the community

Community Arts are about **accessibility**, developing self-respect for individuals and for communities, **new ways of expression** and being **comfortable with the arts**.

Community Arts Development Officer

Andy Smith: Andrew.Smith@cultureleisure.gov.gg / 749262

Community Arts is a new venture on the island, and has been made possible by the appointment, under a three year contract, of a Community Arts Development Officer in October 2008, sponsored by the Lloyds TSB Foundation. By implementing dedicated long-term schemes, projects and opportunities for involvement within the arts, the positive impact of the arts upon communities will be established. The principle targets will be disaffected and disadvantaged youngsters between the ages of 11-19 years, people with disabilities, those serving prison sentences, the aged, and community and women's groups.

Key objectives for 2009:

- To establish a coherent long-term community arts programme that embraces all aspects of the arts whilst fitting in with the Arts Commissions plan for cultural development, with a view to embedding culture throughout all aspects of the community.
- To increase involvement within the arts, particularly amongst those people that feel excluded.

Long-term objectives:

- To promote the potential for using the arts to improve quality of life, health, personal development, while working in partnerships with other organisations to promote the impact on education, lifelong learning, crime reduction and community development.
- To encourage high quality arts activity in non-arts spaces.
- To create a cultural democracy from a grass roots level.
- To establish Guernsey as a contemporary society that celebrates its community involvement within the arts.
- To create a vital link between public, private, voluntary and community sectors.
- To identify areas where the arts can play a significant role in delivering the States of Guernsey objectives across a wide range of issues including education and community development.

Projects so far....

Include a photographic portrait project working with the Grand Bouet Estate and a video documentary project giving the youth of Guernsey a platform to voice their views on Guernsey.

Andy Smith is based with the Arts Development team, in the Guernsey Information Centre, North Esplanade, St Peter Port. Should you wish to discuss with him anything detailed in this sheet or any of the Community Arts projects then please do contact him.

The Arts educate, **provoke**, make people **think** and widen people's **interest in life**.

Guernsey Arts Commission Guernsey Information Centre, North Esplanade, St Peter Port, Guernsey GY1 2LQ

W: www.arts.gg E: info@artsdevelopment.gg T: 01481 739747

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