

the open west

press release

March 2011

The Hesters Way Project

Each year **the open west** runs an education / community programme alongside the main exhibition of 40+ international contemporary artists. This year's project has been supported and funded by Arts Council South West and Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museum.

Two artists, **Jessie Brennan** and **Alan Goulbourne**, have been selected to make work with and for the community of Hesters Way, Cheltenham. The results of these collaborative projects will be on public display from 8th to 22nd March.

Jessie Brennan invited local people to take part in a residential-wide drawing activity* that explored ideas about building trust and communication through the act of looking. The process of drawing she used resulted in deeply concentrated moments of looking between participants which opened up a space for exchange, exploring boundaries of cohesion and confrontation, connection and separation, the private and the public.

"Over 100 people took part in the project and I am thrilled with the conversations generated between participants through the blind drawing experience. In the video I attempt to show the intense and intimate exchange between two people as they draw each other's portrait without looking at their paper"

Jessie's video ***Blind Trust*** can be seen at the following places (please call each venue for access/opening hours):

Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museum	01242 237431
Hesters Way Children's Centre	01242 222490
Hesters Way Resource Centre	01242 521319
Hesters Way Library	01242 514969
Oasis Youth Centre	01242 515469
Rowanfield Exchange	01242 514157
Springbank Resource Centre	01242 539088
St Aidan's Church	01242 528567

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Alan Goulbourne's sculpture stands 7.5' in the round made of roughly 2,000 blocks of wood, generically cut and shaped to abstractly represent a mass of individual marks moving harmoniously as a single entity. The structure is inspired by a bait ball formation, which occurs when a shoal of fish becomes threatened by predators, predominantly dolphins, who herd sardines into this spherical shape making it easier to disperse and single out prey. Alan's work has been inspired by swarm intelligence and the role that it plays continuously and subtly throughout all organisms.

"I aim for the sculpture to highlight the need and dynamics of community and its importance in terms of security and strength, but at the same time I wish to bring attention to the squeezing of communities in Hesters Way by corporate predators and businesses that have and will further continue to isolate and decimate the local communities fuelling a vicious cycle of neglect"

Alan's sculpture **Bait Ball** is installed near Coronation Square. A further work, **Mosaic Thumbprint** can be seen at Oasis Youth Centre.

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the open west would like to thank all participating groups, with particular mention to Andy Hayes and Celia Wear at the Hesters Way Partnership and Sarah Penny at Oasis Youth Centre for their huge help in organising this project

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* the following groups took part in Jessie's drawing project : Springbank Craft Club; Springbank Art Class; Hesters Way Children's Centre; Oasis Youth Centre and individuals at Coronation Square's Friday Market – thanks to all involved



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