



Art Room Retrospective 2023



Royal Hospital for Neuro-disability

Registered Charity Number 205907

The RHN Art Room at a glance



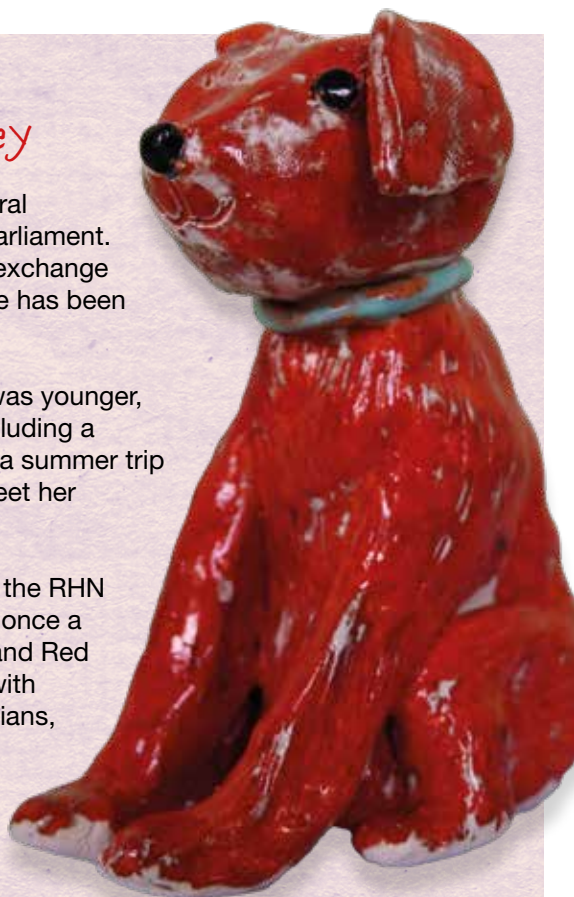
- 260 sessions for rehabilitation patients
-
- 520 leisure sessions completed
-
- 6 group projects completed
-
- 4 art room volunteers
-
- 1,000 sheets of paper used
-
- 25 litres of paint used
-
- 150kgs of clay used

Red Dog by Shirley

Shirley was born and grew up in Central London, not far from the Houses of Parliament. She enjoyed a career as a telephone exchange operator, but for the last few years she has been living on Wellesley Ward at the RHN.

A passionate animal lover when she was younger, Shirley owned several exotic pets, including a crocodile and an alligator, and during a summer trip to London Zoo this year she got to meet her favourite animals, the meerkats.

Red Dog is her most recent project in the RHN Art Room. Shirley visits the Art Room once a week, primarily for leisure purposes, and Red Dog took just over a month to make with assistance from the Art Room technicians, who modified the tools she needs to make them easier to hold.



"I've never done any pottery before but it sounded interesting and it's given me a lot of satisfaction."

For someone with no previous experience, Shirley has proven to be a talented model maker. Her previous projects in clay include a tree, pumpkins, a grey wolf, and an Easter basket. She's also hand painted tote bags and is involved in a group project with other residents of Wellesley Ward to create a patchwork wall hanging.

Now that Red Dog is finished Shirley plans to make a basket for him, then it will be on to her next animal model; a Friesian cow.





Another Starry Night

By Antonia.

Antonia is in her early thirties and has been a resident at the RHN for four years. She has a condition called CNS Neuro-Inflammatory Syndrome. This is a condition that effects the brain and spinal cord, and as a result Antonia needs round-the-clock care on Hunter Ward, part of our specialist nursing home.

Upbeat and outgoing, Antonia enjoys being able to take part in all of the social and recreational opportunities the hospital community has to offer, including visiting the Art Room. It was earlier this year, whilst looking for inspiration in one of the Art Room's many reference books, that she first saw a photographic reproduction of Vincent Van Gogh's famous masterpiece, *Starry Night*, and decided immediately to set herself the challenge of creating her own version, right down to Van Gogh's signature painting style.

With support from the Occupational Therapy Art Technicians, Antonia spent one day a week over the spring and summer of 2023 working on her tribute to Van Gogh, using acrylic paints on canvas. Her piece was finally completed in mid-August. It now hangs in pride of place in The View, the family relaxation space overlooking the hospital gardens.





According to Krystyna, the Art Technician who supported Antonia throughout her project,

"Starting with a blank canvas, with the aim of re-producing Van Gogh's technique, was a little overwhelming, but Antonia rose to the challenge.

We broke the painting down in to its component parts, focussing on the sky first, before tackling the village and the foreground. That way Antonia wasn't distracted or demotivated by the painting as a whole.

We added foam grips to her paint brushes to give her better control over the paint, and a shoulder support helped with reaching the top parts of the canvas.

It took about six months to complete the project, and Antonia's skill and ability to paint certainly improved over that time, but most of all, tackling such a technical project with great success has given her a huge boost in confidence and self-esteem."

Antonia is now looking for her next art challenge, so we're sure we'll see many more examples of her work on display in the future.

Tree of Life

by Simon



Simon is a Project Manager for a specialist construction company, and is at the RHN to recover from a stroke. Speaking to him, it becomes immediately obvious that he deeply misses his family and home back in Kent.

Supporting patients through the emotional impact of illness and recovery is an important part of the work of the RHN Art Room, and so, in discussions with the Art Technicians and the RHN Psychology Team, Simon decided to make his family the focus of his art project. His Tree Of Life, constructed from chicken wire and papier-mâché, symbolises his family, their roots, experiences and values, and Simon's hopes for their future. He plans to paint and decorate the tree and have it completed before he returns home.

Frog on A Lily Pad

by William



William has been a patient on Drapers ward since June, when he was admitted for a programme of rehabilitation following a brain injury. As part of his recovery, William has physiotherapy sessions in the hospital gym and in the computer room, where he works on improving his mobility and strength. He attends the Art Room every Thursday afternoon as part of the Drapers Ward group. His Frog On A Lily Pad was the result of a challenge, set by the Art Room technicians, to draw an animal of his choice. William says he hasn't done any drawing since he was much younger, but he obviously has a talent for it, and he finds it helps him cope with his condition.

"When you're drawing you don't have to think about any of life's complications."

Group Projects

Group projects involve small groups of patients collaborating to produce a single piece of work. Groups may be ward based, or come from across the hospital, giving patients more social opportunities as well as an enjoyable way to meet their rehabilitation goals.

Here's a few of the group projects undertaken in 2023.

The Five Senses

A collaboration between patients and staff on Glyn Ward. This artwork was inspired by the patients, and how they express their emotions individually. It was completed by the patients with support from the staff. The five senses represent the ways in which individual patients gain their sensory experiences of the world and interact with it. The art shows how they communicate their feelings, thoughts and experiences in a creative, non-verbal manner.



The Mosaic

All the clay pieces included in this mosaic were made by patients attending group sessions in the Art Room. They were later brought together as a single installation by volunteers and art room staff, who placed the pieces on a background of mosaic tiles. This collaborative piece embodies the beauty and power of collective working.

Stained Glass

Making stained glass style images from coloured paper is a popular project in the Art Room, having been inspired by the hospital's restoration of its 19th century stained glass windows in 2020. This year patients from Devonshire Ward produced stained glass style images with a floral theme.





Art at the RHN is entirely funded by donations.

The art room service provides one-to-one and group sessions for patients and residents across our Brain Injury Service, specialist services and specialist nursing home. Our Occupational Therapy Art Technicians help patients to improve their co-ordination, upper limb strength, cognition and fine motor skills, as well as improving their emotional well-being and self-confidence.



The RHN Art Room has been open since 2012, and is a purpose built space with enhanced facilities, designed to support the complex needs of our patients. We raise over £50,000 a year to run the art room, keeping it stocked with a wide range of art materials and maintaining the equipment, including the hospital's own pottery kiln.

If you would like to support the art room with a donation, please scan the QR code, or visit www.rhn.org.uk/support-us/donate

