



## THE SLAUGHTERHOUSE CLUB

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Even when what is being created is a representation of the artist's own anguish, the fact that their energy is being directed away from themselves into the creation of something outside of themselves is a very positive act.

**DUCKIE**



CALOUSTE  
GULBENKIAN  
FOUNDATION

**ThamesReach**  
**POWE**

Over the past year Duckie have been working on our Gulbenkian funded arts project with homeless alcoholic men and women living in our local hostels.

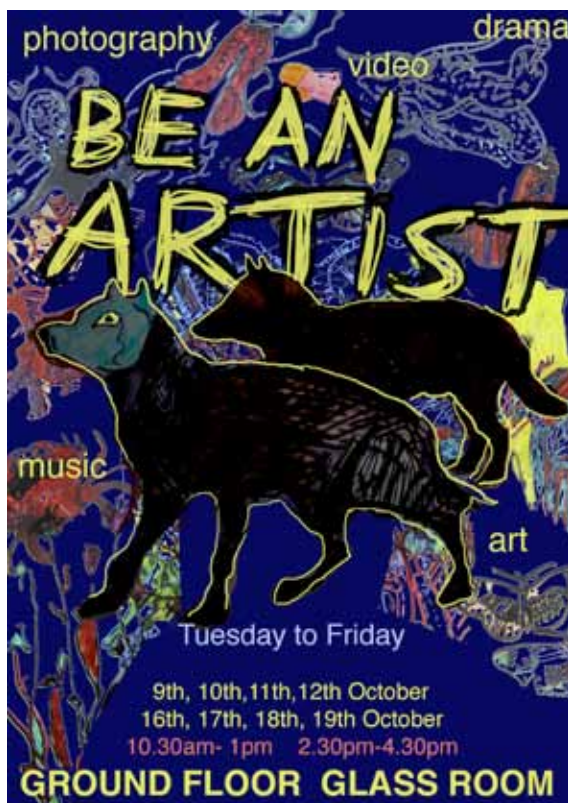
We have staged the residencies in two Thames Reach hostels - Graham House in Vauxhall and Robertson Street in Battersea.

From June 2012 to August 2013, the Duckie team of 5 artist facilitators have spent 20 days full time in Graham House and 10 days in Robertson Street. In this time we have worked with about 45 participants, made some wonderful relationships, and generated lots of film, performance, photography, drawing and visual material.

We were initially trepidatious about working with people that often seem frightening in the street. But we were made to feel very welcome, by the residents and by the Thames Reach staff.

We were located in a central location in each hostel and ran an open door, drop-in group where participants could come and go as they pleased.

The participants were treated as artists. We encouraged them to express themselves as artists in their own right as this is what we do and what we believe in. We put up a poster on the front door inviting people to 'Be An Artist'.



This process was to discover whether it was possible to work creatively with long-term entrenched alcoholics. It was to explore whether creative relationships were possible with this client group and to test which artistic holding forms and ways of working may be the most productive with this vulnerable group.



Form wise, our starting point was portraits. The residents made drawings, photographs, video films and sound recordings portraying themselves in these formats. We conducted a couple of dozen filmed interviews with participants talking about their lives, their history, their thoughts and feelings.

We often used the desirable reward of having their photographic portrait done 'professionally' as an incentive to entice hostel residents into the room to become participants. We made portraits with dozens of residents. Often these photos were projected life size onto paper and the participant would trace their own image mapping an image of themselves as a starting point.



We would scan the internet and picture books to piece together images that had resonance for each participant. They would use these images as starting points to create artworks and animations.

Scores of drawings were made; this was a safe practice for shy participants. Some drawings were filmed and made into stop frame animations as an accessible way into the creative process.

The artworks and projections were displayed in the room and around the hostel. A common theme that emerged was a sense of disconnection from family or friends and a longing to remake contact. We suggested a purpose to the artwork might be to create something that could be sent to a loved one or that could function as a memento of a lost loved one.

We set up a video performance booth with a green screen for people to record performances – songs, poems, puppet shows and animations.

Participants took us on guided tours of personal spaces - their room at the hostel, a garden or the local area - using webcams fixed to the end of a stick, they made short films. The room was very social and lively.



Because of the temperament of the participants, we decided not to attempt to make group work and each of the participants only created solo personal artworks. We tailored the work to the individual participants so that there were usually several different strands of practice working in the space simultaneously.

Although virtually all were entrenched alcoholics and daily drinkers from the morning onwards, the majority of the participants were relatively sober during the workshops. When residents were on a bender they tended to not attend the drop in.

The Duckie facilitators really enjoyed the making and deepening of relationships with the participants over these periods. The sense of achievement experienced by the participants at seeing the result of their creations was empowering.

After engaging in a successfully creative act, participants would express their relief in being able to do something productive, to ward off their usual feelings of boredom, inertia and inability to get out of bed.

Our job was also to show each participant that what they were making was potentially exciting and will them to see it afresh. The more time and energy participants put into a piece of work, the more they will get out of it, and the more potential there is to build something extraordinary.



The process was to explore the link between making artwork and genuinely connecting with yourself for individuals who remain very disconnected from their feelings.

Content wise, Duckie's work is interested in temptation, addiction, desperation and the heartbeat of the underbelly of the city. Duckie is based in Vauxhall - the same manor



as the hostels. As a post-multicultural, post-queer arts company, we believe in working locally with the diverse groups around us and helping our disparate city to pull together in a new unity and solidarity. We are all in this life together.



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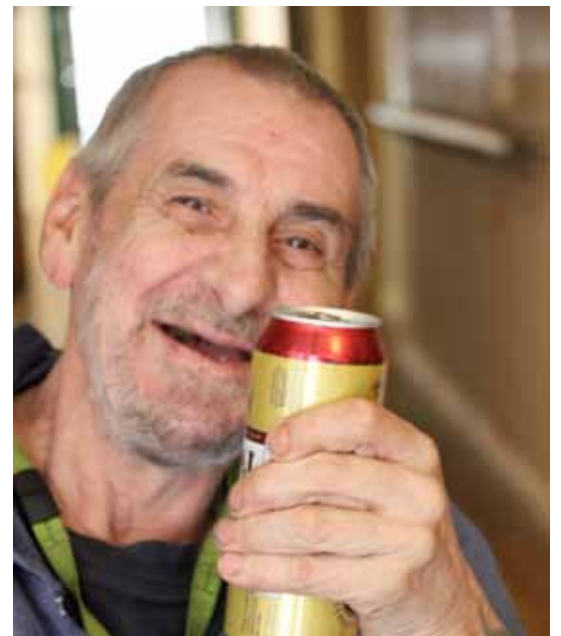
The unexpected happens whenever you make art. You can never recreate what is in your head, but it is in the gap between your intention and the physical result that your humanity is revealed. Our role as facilitators is to enable the participants to see and believe in their own humanity.

This process was conducted by Mark Whitelaw, Robin Whitmore, Tim Brunsden, Jonny Hey and Simon Casson. We held planning and debrief sessions at the beginning and end of each day.

Tragically seven participants that we first met at the start of this process in June 2012 have since died. They are Simon, Paul, Roy, Mark, Dawn, Chris and George.

Simon Casson, Producer  
September 2013

[duckie.co.uk](http://duckie.co.uk)



## VIDEOS

The following is a selection of some of videos that were made with the participants during this time:

Mark 1 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=INr6DO7b4lg>

Mark 2 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CQksInqMnsw>

Mark 3 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aOHO3DAvo8M>

Joe <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6DbHnbiGgc0>

Bill 1 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZOinSpmZQ2s>

Moppy <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xxgR9yBphz8&list=UUK39fw50HEBjQtPvHCCW5w>

Short Clips <https://vimeo.com/56713556>  
password grahamhouse

Jerry <https://vimeo.com/72305269>  
password duckie

George <https://vimeo.com/62685936>  
password duckie

Stuart <https://vimeo.com/62924162>  
password duckie

Don <https://vimeo.com/62899136>  
password duckie

Janice <https://vimeo.com/62776197>  
password duckie

Dee <https://vimeo.com/62683363>  
password duckie

Janice <https://vimeo.com/62661099>  
password duckie

Brian <https://vimeo.com/62508077>  
password duckie

Donna <https://vimeo.com/62506896>  
password duckie

Mashuk <https://vimeo.com/62505908>  
password duckie

John <https://vimeo.com/73900418>  
password duckie

Kevin <https://vimeo.com/62494460>  
password duckie

Rose <https://vimeo.com/62493361>  
password duckie

Francesco <https://vimeo.com/62294668>  
password duckie

Pramjet <https://vimeo.com/62178210>  
password duckie

Stuart <https://vimeo.com/62167365>  
password duckie

Feedback <https://vimeo.com/51897114>  
password graham

Kevin <https://vimeo.com/51874778>  
password graham

Bill 2 <https://vimeo.com/51830521>  
password graham

Amy <https://vimeo.com/51717486>  
password graham

Patrick <https://vimeo.com/51671525>  
password graham

James <https://vimeo.com/51290039>  
password graham

Bill 3 <https://vimeo.com/51274981>  
password graham

Rosie <http://vimeo.com/51207484>  
password graham

Andrew <https://vimeo.com/50792678>  
password graham

