

'A Good Age'

Exhibition celebrating creativity and wellbeing in later life

Devon Guild of Craftsmen, Riverside Mill, Bovey Tracey, Devon TQ13 9AF

21 September - 3 November 2019 www.crafts.org.uk

A new exhibition of mixed media craft made in workshops for older people is to be shown alongside commissioned work by five artists born before 1948, on the themes of age, change and creativity.

As part of the Arts Council England funded project *Celebrating Age* and in response to Age UK's call for more focus on creative opportunities for older people, Devon Guild of Craftsmen has worked with Libraries Unlimited to run a series of creative workshops and an exhibition focussed on reaching a 'good age'.

Age UK's research highlighted that engaging with arts and culture gives people in later life more meaningful interaction with the wider world and is the most effective way to improve wellbeing. Their evidence showed that leading a life that involves more social and creative activity is an essential part of remaining active and positive in one's 'golden' years.

"Creative and cultural participation is important to older people: we need to promote it, enable older people to access it, and increase the opportunities to take part." Creative and Cultural Activities and Wellbeing in Later Life

So the main aim behind Celebrating Age is to provide more creative opportunities for our growing ageing population - with the help of local libraries, and arts and crafts venues such as the Guild.



And in Autumn 2018, Devon Guild and Libraries Unlimited hosted artist-led workshops based in library buildings of Crediton, Tiverton, Cullompton, Honiton and Exeter. With local groups whose participants' ages ranged from just under 65 years to those in their nineties, sessions ran for over 18 weeks. Tutors of willow weaving, papier mache, photography and collage, worked with these older people to create work based on ideas of age and wellbeing, as well as the theme of change within one's lifetime.

The workshop participants' feedback was incredibly positive: They enjoyed being part of a friendly creative group, confidence grew and new skills learned. There was a sense of achievement, pride and well-being from creating something they didn't know they were capable of. When asked what the biggest impact of the project has been, one participant said: 'Learning to "see" and re-joining the human race!'

Another stated: 'I had felt a lack of self-esteem until I started attending the workshops. I feel more confident in myself now. One is never too old to try something new!!'

The finished work will be exhibited in the libraries during August and the project will culminate in a final exhibition in the Jubilee Gallery at Devon Guild of Craftsmen this September.



Alongside these artworks, Devon Guild commissioned five professional artists, born before 1948, to make new contemporary craft responding to the same theme, 'age and change in my lifetime'. The commissioned pieces are by Dave King (sculpture), Elizabeth Turrell (enamel), Hugh Ribbans (print), Ian Gregory (ceramics), and Keith Gretton (textiles).

The overall premise for the project was to engage and support older people and enable them to have easier access to creative and cultural experiences. Devon Guild aims to encourage further investment in existing older artists, as well as inspire others to take up making - regardless of age!

Exhibition is free and open daily, 10am-5.30pm



Additional information:

More event info: www.crafts.org.uk/exhibitions Exhibition open daily 10am – 5.30pm, free entry.

Image credit: Keith Gretton (textiles), Workshop participant working with willow, Hugh Ribbans (print).

Notes for Editors/Press Contact:

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