Paintings in Hospitals Brings Art to Better Libraries

Friday 22 April, 2022

Paintings in Hospitals and charitable social enterprise Better announce Art Meets Book, a collaborative project bringing art exhibitions and workshops to communities in London and the West Midlands via local libraries. The project is supported using public funding by the National Lottery through Arts Council England.

Launching in April 2022, the Art Meets Book project will offer community groups based at Eltham and Woolwich Libraries, London, and Gornal and Dudley Libraries, West Midlands, the opportunity to learn about art and to co-curate a public exhibition of artworks from the Paintings in Hospitals collection, while taking part in a series of facilitated art workshops.

By bringing art into the heart of these communities, the Art Meets Book project is designed to improve the health and wellbeing of local people adversely affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. Art Meets Book aims to increase equity of access to art and to use art therapeutically to maximise wellbeing, provide new experiences, and stimulate open discussions.

Research has shown that accessing the arts and utilising our creativity can improve our general health and wellbeing, as well as improve the health of our communities and society.[1] Over the past two years, Covid-19 has shown us all the real value of connection with creativity, with culture, and with other people. For many, the arts have been a lifeline through the lockdowns. The Art Meets Book project will provide an entry to the arts to those who have yet to explore their benefits while providing deeper engagement for those who have.

Diana Edmonds, National Libraries Director for Better said:

> “Libraries are at the heart of every local community and our staff have seen first-hand the impact that the pandemic has had on social isolation and feelings of loneliness amongst people from across the social spectrum.
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> “This innovative new project provides the ideal opportunity for individuals and groups to re-engage with their friends and neighbours in a creative and positive environment. For many, it will be an opportunity to learn about and explore new cultural avenues and enhance their knowledge and understanding of art in all its forms.”

Sandra Bruce-Gordon FRSA, Director & Chief Executive for Paintings in Hospitals, said:

> “We are delighted to receive support for Art Meets Book through an Arts Council National Lottery Project Grant. Over the next year, our project will provide art displays and creative activities for those visiting Better libraries in London and the West Midlands. Participants will work with our team to explore art and the Paintings in Hospitals collection before curating public exhibitions for the benefit of their communities.
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> “Art and creativity are proven to help us stay well and to lead happy, fulfilling lives. After the isolation brought about by the pandemic, we feel that art is the perfect way to reconnect with each other. We would like to give huge thanks to Arts Council England and National Lottery players who have made this project possible.”

1. https://www.paintingsinhospitals.org.uk/Pages/Category/key-studies

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