

**Art Panel members Gillian Talbot and Katie Tyssen in conversation with artist Ciaran Kiely**

**How do you feel seeing your art on the wall of a Trust building and what does this mean to you?**

I am happy. It is really exciting and means people can look at my work. It makes me feel good about myself.

**How did you hear about the art project?**

Through my art therapist Rachele. She received the information from a friend. We had been looking for an outlet for my work – for somewhere to exhibit my work such as a gallery or exhibition.

**What appealed to you about the art project?**

It has given me an opportunity to show my artwork and for others to see how I express my feelings through art. It has made people realise what I can do. It felt like I was joining a team of artists.

**How has making this displayed art, and having it accepted by the art panel, contributed to your wellbeing and recovery journey?**

It has given me independence and confidence. My feelings are being witnessed and this may help others.

**Has your art-making continued/increased since having work accepted by the Art Panel? If so how?**

Yes my art making is a continuous journey. Through my art therapy sessions I am able to express my feelings and I learn a lot from my art work. I can talk about it afterwards which helps me manage my feelings. I'm doing a lot more art, and being more experimental by using different mediums such as clay, watercolour and soon a canvas and acrylic paint. Recently my brother bought me a blank canvas for Christmas to create a piece of art for his new flat. I'm doing more art on my own such as colouring pictures in mindfulness books. Art has enabled me to work on my own.

**How important to you was it that the Art Panel was made up of a mixture of people with different experiences of mental health: service users, carers, young people, mental health professionals, representatives University of Hertfordshire?**

The diverse panel means that people from all walks of life are witnessing my art work and feelings, and that is important to me. They are seeing my art.

**How helpful did you find the themes: Hope, Resilience, Empowerment, Choice, Memory, Unspoken, Stillness, Journey?**

A couple of the themes really spoke to me and helped me to channel my art and my feelings. They were Unspoken and Journey. I talked through these at my art therapy and I created the art. Through art I can express things in ways other than speech, if I don't have the words.



**How do you feel seeing the other people's art displayed here?**

It is interesting to see what other artists have done and the media they have used. It's also interesting to see the different ways of interpretation. It is a lovely and light building which shows off the art work well.

**What do you think are the benefits and disadvantages in having one consistent person throughout the art project?**

It's been useful to deal with one person. Someone can see your journey develop and you can build your relationship with them. I don't like change so it is helpful to deal with one person. I really like email so it is a good way for me to communicate. I can't think of any disadvantages.

**Would you like to take part in any future creative projects with us?**

Yes I definitely would as this has really helped me on my journey, given me a voice and something to work on. It has been an outlet for me and given me a purpose and focus. I always wanted people to see what I can do, and now they can.

**Is there anything else, not already covered, about the art displays you want to talk about?**

Yes, I would like to make a video of me working on my artwork, to show how I work. Perhaps a time lapse video. This art project has inspired me to go further and look at art courses, perhaps an evening course in print making or a foundation course.