

Art Panel members Kelly Seaman and Gillian Talbot in conversation with artist Emma Hurrell

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

It's really nice because it helps people when they look at it. I like where it is positioned at the entrance of the building. I also like the fact that people have different views and feelings when they look at it.

How did you hear about the art project?

Kelly told me about the art project at the youth council. She showed some artworks at the meeting and talked about submitting art to the panel. I really enjoyed being part of the art panel.

What appealed to you about the art project?

I liked that it was different types of art such as photography, painting and poetry etc. A lot of people think that art is just painting so it was nice that photography was there as well. I thought it was also good that people my age and older people would read it and be inspired. I met quite a lot of people on the panel and we got to talk about different mediums.



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

Having work accepted by the art panel gave me confidence because I realised I am good at it. It really raised my confidence when it was accepted by the panel and made me feel very happy. I particularly liked the art panel meetings because these enabled me to see other people's paintings, drawings, photography and poetry. I really liked the poems.

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

It has continued, and the girl in the picture is my internet friend; we only see each other twice a year, but when we do, we make art together and take lots of photographs. I like to take photos down by the sea because I find it really calming. My friend thought we should stand one way but I said we should stand and face the sea.

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?

It was very important to me because everyone has different experiences and their art shows this. I particularly liked the diversity of art and cultures and it is so much better to have a mixed group of people young and old, because they see things differently.

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

I found them really helpful because it gave me a focus at the beginning. I did a mind map of ideas for each theme and it helped me choose which one I wanted to do. I identified with memory and journey the most, these were my favourite themes.

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

It's really nice to read about everyone's experiences and stories and see their art from their view. I think it helps a lot of people who come here to look at the artworks when they are waiting for their appointments.

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

There is a benefit in only having one person to contact because it makes it easier, but it may cause difficulties if they are on leave. Ideally it would be best if there was more than one person. A benefit is that with one person there is one set of rules and processes but a new person coming in might bring new ideas.

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

Yes I would like to, because I really like looking at other people's art and making my own. I miss the art panel meetings since they stopped, because I found them therapeutic.