



Centre: Towner Gallery

Arts Award Good Practice Centre 2015-16

Context

Towner is an award-winning contemporary art gallery & museum in Eastbourne. They present major art exhibitions and displays from a collection of over 4000 art works spanning contemporary and more classical pieces.

Arts Award is embedded into several of their programmes such as Pathways, a programme offering vocational training to young people aged 14 to 16 at risk of exclusion from mainstream education.

Approach

Many of the young people participating in Arts Award through Pathways have emotional, social and behavioural barriers to learning. Towner provides an environment in which young people can explore their own personal development through creative expression, and accredits this with Bronze and Silver Arts Award. Young people gain insight into the operational side of the gallery, progression in the arts and cultural sector and work experience opportunities, all significant elements of Arts Award.

As part of Pathways, Towner supported young people to run their own temporary studios within the gallery, including a pop-up temporary tattoo studio. The theme for this particular project directly stemmed from the interests of the young people on the programme, leading to an engaging body of work.

Bronze and Silver are also delivered as part of Generate, Towner's youth arts and film team that meet fortnightly during term time to make, share and critique art. Generate has been established for four years, and this year a number of young people who have gained Bronze will be progressing to Silver. Generate is a great environment for young people to develop a sense of personal belonging and for building important transferable skills including confidence and teamwork.

Towner supports progression through Arts Award levels and offer opportunities for young people to develop skills in the gallery setting. One of their Generate group members with individual learning needs has been supported over the past year to achieve her Bronze Arts Award. She is now volunteering weekly for Towner and is pursuing her Silver Award with support from the Learning Team who are working closely with her to find opportunities that fit her interests and develop her skills and confidence.

Towner host annual joint moderations which have built links with other Arts Award centres, and work with fellow Arts Award Supporter organisations to widen young people's experience of being an audience member for Bronze Part B.

Impact

Many young people who have completed Arts Awards through attending Towner's projects have used the qualification to support successful applications to college courses. One such young person is Maia.

Maia completed Bronze and Silver on Pathways, overcoming anxiety to lead workshops with other young people. According to Maia's adviser, 'She told me quite openly that she wasn't very good at art and only did it because she didn't want to build a bike (another vocational pathway that was on offer to her at her college).'

Despite this, Maia often eagerly came up with creative and out-of-the-box ideas about how to develop a project. For example, when asked to re-imagine a local landmark for a sculptural project she came up with both a giant ball-pool and cake sculpture for Eastbourne's Wish Tower landmark. Maia then went on to challenge herself to create something on a much larger scale. She combined graffiti art, tattoo design and created a series of canvasses which collaged together to create an impressive backdrop for a pop up tattoo studio at the gallery. Following on from this Maia was also commissioned to run a temporary tattoo workshop at the gallery as a paid practitioner.

Maia has decided to start an apprenticeship working in an early years setting and feels that the creative skills she has built through Arts Award can help her to plan and deliver activities with young people.

Comments

'I became an Arts Award adviser so I could support young people to explore arts and culture in a way that is meaningful to them and empower new ways of expressing ideas about the world. A hugely rewarding part of my role is being able to witness the moment when a young person confidently shares their skills and work with others at the end of the project.'

Esther Springett, Arts Award adviser

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