

# OBLIQUE ARTS ANNUAL REPORT



2019-2020

## CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT

This year we have been able to deliver many exciting projects including our Mixed Bag Theatre, exhibitions in Barnwell with teenagers from Abbey ward. We were pleased to deliver the arts for the Cambridge Folk Festival again this year and to build a new sculpture, provide large scale paintings around the main stage and create intimate areas for the public to enjoy. We have partnered with Cambridge Sustainable Food with 'Veg Head' to raise awareness of recycling food waste. Members of the public were invited to draw and paint our flamboyant still life veg installation. During the summer closure of Mill Road we provided summer workshops with arty hats and masks to accompany the music and dancing in the street. Our engagement with the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) community reached a high for us as we partnered with Tate Modern and 198 Gallery to deliver the Exhibition 'Dale Farm – the Eviction'. A huge number of visitors were able to interact with the show and visit the archive. We continue to offer an advocacy helpline for GRTs

and ran workshops at the Midsummer Fair. At sites along the A14 we have been running 'On the Road' art and heritage drop-in sessions with families at Blackwell. Lots of exciting stories have emerged and we hope to collate these into a publication. Brandon Country Park was the venue for the Kaleidoscopic Garden, a 'Tales and Trails' commission. Our three metre kaleidoscope was a gem in the forest and families could also make small kaleidoscopes to take home. With partners 20Twenty Productions, we worked with teenagers in East Cambridgeshire. The Youth Advisory Board (YAB) project allows us to look at key issues affecting teens and to plan some exciting responses around arts, ecology and mental health. The Women of Strength exhibitions for older women facing isolation were held at Artworks and Kettle's Yard. Once again we planted over 400 trees to address the climate crisis and protect our local environment – with lots of fun at Fen End Farm!

— Beverley Carpenter

## FINANCE REPORT

Our biggest project this year, *Dale Farm – the Eviction*, was funded by the Arts Council who have consistently supported our work.

We built new partnerships with 20Twenty Productions and Cambridgeshire County Council to consult with 1,000 teenagers in East Cambridgeshire and develop workshop programmes. The County will provide a further £20,000 for the teenagers (YAB) to commission and deliver the exciting outcomes they have envisioned.

Commissions from Wild in Art have allowed us to direct the community cows' artwork for 'Cows about Cambridge'.

More commissions have been gained this year and we have secured support from NSC for coordination for a year or more and generous funding from TFN.

Financial support was attained for the whole of the year for Mixed Bag.

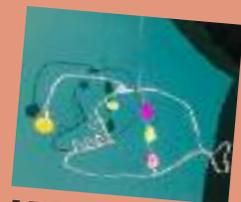
We also received continued funding to spread the message from Stop Loan Sharks through work in Abbey ward in Cambridge.

For the art commission from ADEC Market Place, we created our Kaleidoscopic Garden in the forest at Brandon.

And the Cambridge County Council A14 fund has enabled us to work with GRT communities, beginning with the Blackwell Traveller site in Kings Hedges.

We end the 2019–2020 tax year in a strong financial position providing us with some longer term stability.





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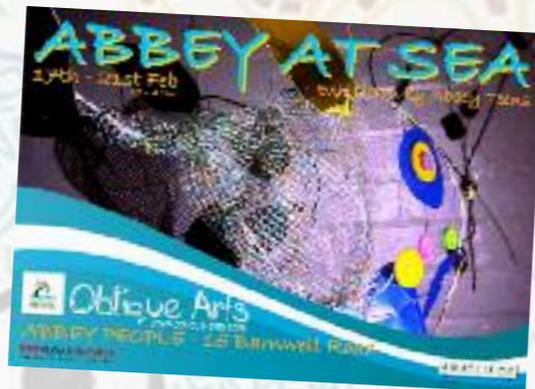


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## ABBEY AT SEA – A FISHY TALE OF THE TIDES AND PLASTIC POLLUTION

Oblique Arts' exhibition of art by teenagers 'Abbey at Sea' was the result of two series of workshops supported by Cambridge City Council and Stop Loan Sharks. The Abbey ward has a high proportion of families who experience economic disadvantage. The workshops offered an engaging way for teenagers to express themselves and learn creatively, whilst working on the theme of the sea, fish and the pollution problems of plastic waste. We were able to build connections between different mediums to bring awareness of our

interaction with each other and the planet. They produced an inventive exhibition hosted by Abbey People in their new shop unit at Barnwell. The work reached out to the community of Cambridge CB5 and everyone enjoyed getting involved in art workshops and activities in the gallery. Art is of course good for the mind, soul and wellbeing. It opens the whole universe letting us travel in the worlds of history, geography, science and more. The teenagers discovered that this was a great way to bring people from their local community together.



Participants	164
Audience:	150
Online	1,500



## COWS ABOUT CAMBRIDGE

Working with the internationally acclaimed 'Wild in Art' team we have produced two life-sized 'community cows' with different community groups. Working with older people facing isolation and teenagers suffering economic deprivation, we were able to produce these amazing creatures that will form part of a high profile trail around the city! Additionally a 'trash art' Mini Moo was created by Abbey Teens in a series of workshops with Penny Sobr and Beverley Carpenter. We used recycled CD's, plastic bottles and toys! We had conversations about climate change as we cut & glued. Slogans such as 'My Generation Will Save the Planet' emerged as SOS messages in the bottles. Affected by lockdown and continuing restrictions, you will have to wait to see this special Trashy Moo in the Grafton Centre Art Installation when the 'Cows About Cambridge' Art Trail opens later this year.



Participants	150
Online	2,000



@wildinart @CowsaboutCambs  
#CowsaboutCambridge & #wildinart  
@ace\_national

## THE KALEIDOSCOPIC GARDEN

Oblique Arts showed our 'Kaleidoscopic Garden' at the Tales and Trails Festival at Brandon County Park on the 21st September. In our quest to offer new ways to see the world, and change perception, we also made a strong link with nature. Set among the trees, families were able to view the forest and park. Our concept was intended to reconnect people with nature in times of climate crisis. Our fantastical flowers set the scene and families could also make their own mini-kaleidoscope with fun recycled materials. The day was warm and sunny and beautifully located allowing for maximum visitors. Three other commissions in the woodland formed a trail that could be explored. We were commissioned by Market Place.

<b>Participants</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>Audience</b>	<b>450</b>
<b>Online</b>	<b>500</b>



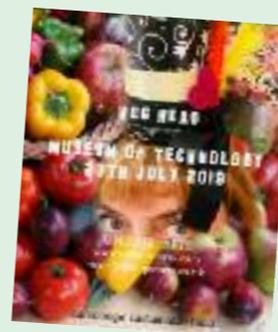
## VEG HEAD

In support of Veg Cities, promoting the growing and consumption of local vegetables, we offered 'Veg Head' at the Veg Fest at the Museum of Technology on the 20th July, working with Cambridge Sustainable Food. A huge installation of vegetables as a 'still life' offered the focal point for families and an opportunity to draw and paint. The event was very popular and local growers were able to showcase their produce.

[www.cambridgesustainablefood.org](http://www.cambridgesustainablefood.org)  
[www.vegcities.org](http://www.vegcities.org)



<b>Participants</b>	<b>505</b>
<b>Audience</b>	<b>200</b>





## MIXED BAG THEATRE GROUP

2020 - a fresh year, a fresh decade, a fresh focus and a fresh exploration of wellbeing.

Mixed Bag Theatre turned their attention to 'wellness' this year; the ideas and actions that can support us to be happy and healthy of mind, body and spirit. Following training in the gym, theatre, dance, art and many more activities, Mixed Bag participants developed a wonderful show for the public on Sat 29th February. A special combination of dance and physical theatre choreography, artwork, live and recorded music, singing, soundscapes and surprises made for a rare performance on a rare leap year day!

The team of creators drew inspiration from breath-work, meditation, nature, yoga, chill-out music, tai chi, collaborative doodling, a group trip to the gym, martial arts and self defence, chanting, mantras, Indian dance, sign language and much more.

The 'sold out' audience stepped into the Covent Garden Theatre sanctuary in order to: tap into their inner calm, learn something new, be touched by beauty and excited by innovation. Oh, and they laughed their socks off!



<b>Participants</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Audience</b>	<b>150</b>
<b>Online</b>	<b>1,500</b>
<b>Newspaper</b>	<b>4,500</b>
<b>Online news</b>	<b>10,000</b>



## A WOODLAND FOR THE FUTURE

Once again we planted around 450 trees. In times of climate crisis this is a priority for us. The mixed native trees including oaks, crab apple, blackthorn, hazel and willow, were provided by the Woodland Trust. Here we are planting in December at Fen End Farm on a chilly day!

Residents planted with us. It was a lot of fun and we were also able to take a look at the trees we have planted in previous years. The trees will be beneficial for the environment, the varied fenland wildlife habitat and also as a resource for us later. The farm is open for community activities and produces organic fruit.



**Participants 12**



## CAMBRIDGE FOLK FESTIVAL

Once again we have delivered the arts for this amazing festival, working with Cambridge City Council as Cambridge welcomed 14,000 folk music enthusiasts to Cherry Hinton Park. Curated this year by Nick Mulvey (seen below in the Bass Bar) we were delighted that he gave Oblique Arts enthusiastic endorsement on the main stage. We developed new work this year including our large kaleidoscope, creative seating 'hang-outs' and large main stage

paintings with an eco message. Our team of artists and volunteers produced some inspiring art and we provided workshops throughout the festival for families to get involved in. Many of their creations were seen around the site during the weekend. Of course the music was wonderful again and our back stage décor enabled a relaxed and creative atmosphere for the musicians.



Participants	450
Audience	14,000
Online	40,000



## YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD (YAB) – EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE

YABs are bodies of young people and adult professionals who come together to make positive change for young people and the communities where they live. Cambridgeshire County Council are currently delivering the scheme in Fenland and East Cambridgeshire. Oblique Arts has been commissioned to consult with 1000 young people to discover the concerns of teenagers in the East Cambs area. As a result we have delivered a series of creative workshops and identified key issues around bullying, mental health and the environment. We are now working creatively with two groups of young people in Ely and Soham. Their plans to find answers to the

problems will be supported with a £20,000 grant from the County Council. Our exploratory workshops examined: 'Who am I?' 'What do I reveal and hide?' 'Who might I become?' through mask-making, and 'drawing' portraits using the continuous line in wire. Currently, exciting ideas have emerged around the building of an eco-space at Ely College, which will also be a 'chill-out' space and be surrounded by growing plots and sculptural objects. In Soham, young people are working to address bullying in the village college and beyond through various interventions and ideas. We were partnered by 20Twenty Productions.



Participants 560



## WALL OF LOVE AT STRAWBERRY FAIR

Once again the fabulous Strawberry Fair delighted audiences of around 15,000. The fair has operated since 1974 and this year's theme of 'Love' was perfect in the sunshine. Our 'Wall of Love' was produced by Jamie and Beverley and invited fun interaction with framed live portraits. The Strawberry Fair arts area was a great place for families. We are always pleased to work with the committee who deliver one of the last free festivals in the country with such panache!



Participants 380  
Audience 9,000



## DALE FARM – THE EVICTION AT TATE MODERN

This was our highest profile event of the year and brought together many years of work in the form of a highly interactive project and an extensive archive presentation area. The exhibition was curated by Phien O'Reachtigan and Beverley Carpenter with our partner, Lucy Davies of 198 Arts and Learning, using the unique combination of experience by Phien, a Traveller, and Beverley, an activist. Both were at Dale Farm during the historic struggle. Their work enabled many exhibits to be seen that had not been seen before in public. The Dale Farm eviction in 2011 saw 86 families evicted from their own land. The 10-year struggle prior to this brought together many Travellers and activists from the UK and Europe. The audiences at Tate Modern were huge. We embodied the Tate Exchange values in presenting work that required contributions from a range of artists, performers and activists. This was a challenging project demonstrated through an overall vision that required co-operation and risk-taking on the part of exhibitors, dancers, performers and volunteers. New works

were developed and art taken from Dale farm was re-presented. Volunteers dressed as activists engaged audiences, encouraging them to explore scaffolding barricades, try lock on devices and more. The round table discussions and tours of the archive room brought together activities for people to participate in. A media round table discussion for example included reporters, Jason Parkinson and Jess Hurd. The conversation enabled understanding of the challenge made to freelance reporters (and the entire free press) when legal action was taken in a landmark case brought by the police in an attempt to bring all footage of the Dale Farm eviction into government hands. The Grattan Puxon archive room was also carefully laid out. New donations were received during the show and the archive has now been housed at the Bishopsgate Institute in London for the nation. We are very grateful to the many musicians, dancers, young Travellers and artists who took part in the project and we continue to work with many of them.



Participants	4,800
Audience	7,000
Online	9,000



“The society of eviction that we live in produces precarity for all of us. As climate crisis and neoliberal agendas escalate insecurity, attacks on nomadic peoples are at the forefront of this pattern. We stand alongside each other in solidarity because we have a vision of a society that is humane and in harmony with the natural world. The knowledge that Travellers have is invaluable to all of us”. — B Carpenter

## GRT MIDSUMMER FAIR AND ADVOCACY FOR TRAVELLERS

The Midsummer Fair (or Cambridge Fair) was on a glorious sunny day. This year it was run by the Showmen's Guild and everyone enjoyed the stalls, fairground and convivial atmosphere. Special attractions like the 'Wall of Death' were back in the city for the first time in 30 years. We took our Art Van again and this time had mask and fascinator making for families. Some old friends from the Traveller community were also back in Cambridge and it was lovely for us to catch up! Our participation here is part of our Advocacy Project, offering support and follow up to help with a range of issues: homelessness, planning, finance, benefits, discrimination, human rights and literacy.

**Participants 50**  
**Audience 8,000**



## ON THE ROAD (THE A14)

The following dialogue was recorded as we were making paper flowers:

*"Travellers won't change. Personally I don't want to change. I was always on the road. I came here and settled down and it changed a lot of things. The law changed. After the Section 61, they could move you the same day or in 24 hours. You are used to moving but when you have to move every 24 hours it isn't much good. You used to be weeks in one place. You rarely see trailers about now. The government have finally stopped Travellers shifting about. It make you wonder what else they will manage to do. Its an attack on the culture. What people see on the tele, thats what they believe. If you want to show children a little bit of your culture you don't have to take them far, just out onto the fens. My parents used to eat pheasants. When the meal for your family depends upon it you have to. On moonlit nights the pheasants used to roost in the trees. My family would shoot them in the dark with a sling shot. You can keep them for up to a couple of weeks in the winter. My mum used to tell me about her mum. They would go out door to door with lace and paper flowers to sell. They would swop for coins or bread or sugar. It was all about surviving. I loved travelling. There was a lot of freedom in it. There was never a miserable time. When you had done your thing you had a fire, meals and family. Now there is plenty of time to be miserable, to be on your own. Its all the young kids know now. When you've come off the road and to this life its a big change. The people here would do anything to help each other, they are a good bunch but I go up the lane on my own and light a fire to feel content".*

This project offers workshops at two sites that are on the A14: Blackwell and Fen Road. The project allows Traveller families to creatively engage in discussion around changes that are happening around them. This is particularly focused on communities affected by the A14 road-building program. Travellers bring objects and photographs, make traditional crafts and learn new crafts. We offer a social space that encourages story-telling and personal histories that can be shared with younger Travellers and the wider settled community.



**Participants 30**

## CHILDREN'S ROMA DAY, PETERBOROUGH

Work with Compas in Peterborough has continued. Workshops with young Roma looked at the local environment for 'Children's Roma Day'. Films made with students of the Queen Katharine Academy were shown at an exhibition in Peterborough City Centre in September and Compas opened it's new premises, Compas , which is a hub that offers an advice centre, food bank, café and education. We are delighted the Petr Torak has become a Trustee of Oblique Arts.

**Participants 40**  
**Audience 100**



## WISBECH WORKSHOPS

**Participants** 40  
**Audience** 100

Meadowgate Academy in Wisbech hosted a series of workshops for their students. Education at the Academy is for young people with a wide range of learning difficulties. There is a strong arts focus. We provided a term of graffiti classes with Jason Cool and a term of installation art with Beverley Carpenter. The students learned new skills and had a lot of fun. The project was supported by Cambridge County Council, and outcomes were shown to families and friends.



## MILL ROAD SUMMER

The closure of Mill Road during the summer, as a result of the railway and bridge work, allowed for arts, music and outdoor cafes. We provided workshops for families who made decorative hats and masks. Some paraded their creations in the street or danced as bands played. Pop-up cafes and DJ sets made a pleasant change to the usual traffic and congestion – a glimpse of what may be possible in the future!



**Participants** 40  
**Audience** 100  
**Online** 250



## WOMEN OF STRENGTH

The women who take part in this project have gone from strength to strength with another amazing series of workshops and exhibitions at Cambridge Artworks and Kettle's Yard. Inspired by various artists who made their best work in later life, the exhibitions included sculpture, printmaking, painting and installation. Press coverage was very supportive. According to Age UK chronic loneliness affects 1.2 million older people in the UK. The idea was to engage women who face isolation. These women are often seen as frail, some have failing eyesight or mobility problems, but they are strong in temperament and highly creative.

We received a good response from our local press in the 20th November article, 'Women tear down stereotypes and tackle loneliness with new exhibition'.

<https://www.cambridge-news.co.uk/whats-on/whats-on-news/women-of-strength-oblique-arts-17282933>



*"I'm on my own so its nice to meet new people. I lost my husband last year. It was exciting and surprising to see so many people coming to look at the art. We got lots of compliments, even from people we didn't know."*



Participants	25
Audience	450
Online	400

Newspaper	8,000
Online news	10,000
Online	2,500

## SEXUAL ABUSE AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Anglia Ruskin University provided the venue for two projections onto their building on East Road with films made by Oblique Arts and the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Partnership during the busy rush hour of 4th February. An average of two women are murdered each week and over a million women in the UK were victims of domestic violence in 2018 – it is the single most quoted reason for becoming homeless by Shelter.

The event made the ITV news and reached our biggest audience yet. A week of awareness #ITSNOTOK! was a national event supported by Cambridge City Council and made possible by Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Partnership.

We strongly believe that the issue should be higher profile so were pleased to be part of this action to highlight domestic abuse.



*“The projection provided by Oblique Arts helped to create an important focal point for the event, highlighting harmful myths and stereotypes about sexual violence and assault. Having the projections in such a public space also helped to break the silence that so often surrounds the subject. — Norah Al-Ani, Director of Cambridge Rape Crisis Centre*

## PROJECTS

### YEARLY TOTALS

Participant total	6,891
Audience total	40,600
Online total	55,153
Newspaper	12,500
Online Newspapers	20,000
Online TV	4.5m

Oblique Arts is an artist led organisation. We enable communities to work with us to explore their creative potential through high quality arts projects. We provide unique creative workshops, projects and multimedia installations for the public, individuals and groups to inspire and educate.

**Contact details:** mail@obliquearts.co.uk  
For more information about Oblique Arts, please visit our website [www.oblique-arts.com](http://www.oblique-arts.com)  
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Facebook: obliquearts  
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Youtube: Oblique Arts Videos

Oblique Arts is a registered charity based in Cambridge, UK Charity no. 1142653

DESIGN: Jannie Brightman

## FUNDERS



## SUPPORTING ORGANISATIONS



2019-  
2020



Charity no. 1142653

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