

**Art in Residence
Year Two Report – 2019**

**Ben Uri Gallery and Nightingale House
Research by University of West London**



Arts and Health

Art in Residence

Year 2 – Discussing Art

Findings and review of evidence

Report prepared by Professor Victoria Tischler & Toby Williamson

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Contents

Acknowledgements

Executive Summary

1. Introduction

2. Research Aims and Methodology

2.1 Research Aims

2.2 Methodology

2.3 Analysis

3. Findings

3.1 Art discussion- Resident Feedback

3.2 Observations

3.3 Staff Feedback

4. Conclusions

5. Appendices

Appendix 1 Interview questions

Appendix 2 – Adapted Arts Observation Scale (ArtsObs)

References

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Executive Summary

- A structured art discussion was sustained for 16 weeks that nine residents with dementia participated in. On average, 50-90% of participants attended each session throughout the programme.
- Art making sessions involving 1:1 staff resident ratio for people with severe dementia were sustained for 16 weeks, initially with five residents, however two withdrew.
- People with dementia had focused, meaningful group discussions about art.
- Participation in art making activities took different forms, including observing and conversing.
- Art discussions had positive effects on people's wellbeing over and above generic benefits of socialising e.g. via meaningful, intellectual stimulation.
- Typical group dynamics (positive and negative e.g. group cohesion, cliques) affected the discussion groups.
- There is evidence that the creative sessions are being sustained beyond Ben Uri's Involvement.
- Ensuring full and regular attendance continued to prove problematic: other appointments, ill health and lack of staff availability were the main obstacles to attendance.

1. Introduction

Four hundred thousand people live in care homes in the UK, the majority are living with dementia. Given that there is no cure for dementia and limited pharmacological treatments, there is an increased emphasis on the development of effective psychosocial interventions. These include creative activities, an area that is attracting growing research interest as evidenced by two significant reports;

- APPG (All Party Parliamentary Group) for Arts, Health and Wellbeing, *Creative Health*, 2017
- WHO (World Health Organisation), *What is the evidence on the role of the arts in improving health and well-being?* 2019

This report details the findings from the second year of a planned three-year arts engagement programme, Art in Residence (AiR). The programme is a collaboration between Ben Uri Arts and Dementia Institute (BUAD - part of Ben Uri gallery and museum) and Nightingale House care home.

Building on promising findings from year 1 AiR, the second phase of the programme took place in 2019 and focussed on structured art discussion sessions and practical art making activities. In terms of participants, opportunities were sought to work with residents with more severe dementia. There was also an increased emphasis on sustaining the project by actively engaging Nightingale staff in the programme. The research therefore aimed to investigate and evaluate the use of visual arts to improve the wellbeing of people living with dementia in a care home by;

- 1) engaging residents in structured group discussions using artwork from Ben Uri's collection
- 2) testing art making activities with care home residents with advanced dementia
- 3) engaging staff in development and delivery of AiR to promote sustainability and replicability of the programme at Nightingale House once the intervention from Ben Uri has concluded.

Sessions ran for 16-weeks with a morning art discussion group in the communal library area, and in the afternoon a small art making group of three residents with more advanced dementia and three staff supporting 1:1, followed by a small art discussion group of two residents and two staff - both on a dementia unit, all inspired by year 1 project findings. Activities were led by BUAD's programme manager, supported by Nightingale activities and care unit staff. The programme also focussed on mentoring and supporting Nightingale staff involved with the groups to facilitate creative groups independently after BUAD completed project delivery.

Each discussion group lasted approximately one hour, focusing on a different artwork from the Ben Uri collection each week. Three participants had attended the BUAD programme in year 1. Their inclusion enabled the research to explore whether they remembered the programme from the previous year and if it had any longer term impact on their wellbeing. The art making group involved three residents with more severe dementia, each supported 1:1 by either the BUAD programme manager, a member of activities staff, or a member of care staff. During these sessions, residents were introduced to a range of different art making techniques (e.g. printing, working with clay, and using textiles) and supported to use these techniques to make their own pieces of art, with an emphasis on accessibility and sensory exploration.

2. Research Aims and Methodology

2.1 Research Aims

The research aimed to address two questions.

- What is the impact on the wellbeing of residents with dementia living in a care home participating in a 16-week programme of facilitated art discussion and 1:1 art making groups?
- How far are these groups sustainable and replicable in Nightingale House care home?

In order to understand factors relevant to implementation of the programme, the expectations, challenges and concerns of participants about the project were also explored.

2.2 Research Methodology

A mixed method approach was used in the research, primarily using qualitative methods. It comprised three main elements:

1. Semi-structured interviews with key participants
2. Observational data from the sessions involving residents and post-session debriefs with staff and volunteers
3. Recording attendance of residents, staff and volunteers to each group

Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were undertaken with key participants in the project. This included residents, and staff involved in planning and facilitating the sessions. Most were interviewed at the beginning of the 16-week programme and after the programme had finished. Interview questions are contained in Appendix 1.

All interview participants were required to give their written consent. Mental capacity to consent to being interviewed for residents with dementia was assessed by the researcher and only those who had capacity to consent were interviewed. Contemporaneous notes were taken during each interview and then digitally recorded for the purpose of transcription.

Completed interviews were as follows:

- Pre programme interviews with 4 residents who participated in the programme. Post programme interviews with 3 of those residents.
- One interview with a relative of a resident.
- Pre and post programme interviews with 4 staff from Nightingale and Ben Uri who were involved in overseeing or facilitating the sessions.

Observations, debriefs and staff feedback

A researcher (TW) sat in and observed 20 sessions. Consent to being observed was obtained directly from residents with the capacity to give it, or from a 'consultee' (relative or member of staff not involved in the project) for residents unable to give informed consent). Data was recorded on an adapted version of the Arts Observation Scale (ArtsObs), a tool for evaluating arts activities in

healthcare settings (see Appendix 2). Information recorded on the scale included attendance, the observed level of engagement / distraction with the art activity for each resident and their observed mood during the session. Additional notes were taken regarding group interactions, comments made by residents - in particular anything related to features of the Ben Uri artworks used, and any significant events that took place during the sessions.

A researcher also sat in and took notes on the debriefs involving staff and volunteers that took place after each session.

2.3 Analysis

A thematic analysis (TA) was used, based upon the approach described by Braun & Clarke (2006, 2013). This involves the researcher immersing themselves in the research data (in this case, interview transcripts and observation notes), through reading and re-reading text and then using a system of coding of phrases and observations in order to generate themes. TA emphasises the importance of the researcher being reflective and explicit in the choices s/he makes when analysing and interpreting the data. In this case an inductive, experiential and realist approach was taken. This involved a 'bottom up' approach to analysing the data through an explicit attempt to find meaning in what people say and describe (e.g. in interviews), rather than approaching the data with a particular theory or set of concepts. This approach has the benefit of 'giving voice' to what participants said but still involves some interpretation of the data, and generating themes which the researcher has created from the data. As far as possible this process was built around an analysis and interpretation of the data in the context of the impact of the programmes' interventions on residents' wellbeing, and the sustainability and replicability of the interventions. A limitation of this approach is that there may be other themes that the data could generate but the researcher has made choices (relating to research aims) which do not focus on these.

In addition to the TA approach, elements of constant comparison (a systematic way of coding and reading data from a number of different sources) was used. Recorded data from the ArtsObs scale concerning attendance, residents' observed engagement with the art activities, and mood, was analysed systematically to identify changes across the course of all the sessions and during the sessions.

3. Findings

3.1 Art Discussion - Resident Feedback

A number of themes were identified from the interview data. These are presented below supported by illustrative quotes;

Sessions stimulated an interest in art

Several participants noted that the sessions created or re-ignited an interest in art. For example:

Right, so until I came into contact with this, I didn't particularly have an interest in art

I had dropped into taking an interest in pictures [lost an interest in looking at pictures] and found it again

it was a wonderful group [although it got smaller] – made by the beautiful paintings

For some, recall wasn't clear however they noticed the way they felt whilst taking part or the impact of group discussion on others:

I enjoyed watching them

I don't think I recall any of the discussion. I think they were letting me talk. In the end I quite enjoyed it.

I'm not sure if anything was discussed they just er, they just made it known that they had noticed various things. Shall I tell you what was noticed by other members?

One couldn't recall anything about artwork yet when reminded of a work presented stated:

I didn't like that one

Respite

The group provided an opportunity for some participants to get out of their rooms or away from their unit and this was appreciated. For example:

A good excuse to get away from what I might have been doing. Positive.

I just wanted to get out of my room

Well in the first place it was exiting the 3rd floor and coming down here was the best one

Building social connections

The tensions between group members were mentioned by some, as well as limitations in trying to build a sense of community over a relatively short space of time:

I seriously disliked one of the participants, and that's been going on so long that I might as well say [their] name but this also seems pointless. There's nothing I can do about [them] and I'm not going to murder anyone in this room or any other place, I don't think I could murder [them]. I just don't like [them].

The group didn't cohere

I don't think you develop a community in such a short space of time.

No. I think it would be a very good thing if the art discussion group did represent a community but I believe it does not.

One talked positively about the interactions however:

the people I was talking to I didn't know them before but I like very much. They were very nice...I enjoyed being with them

Anyway, I saw them for the first time. Yes, got to know them

Positive recall

Some elements of the programme, like hanging the closing exhibition were recalled. As one said:

especially memories of stuck on the wall in the, what's that place where we sit and er...[prompt] café. I didn't do it but I sat and directed them [hanging the pictures]. Superb pictures.

It was clear that the sessions had left an impression on participants even if they couldn't recall details. For example:

I was there, I remembered you were there, it was fascinating. They are all interesting.

I liked all of them [the pictures]. Some were beautiful, some grotesque, but nearly all of them were outstanding

Improvements

A number of limitations were identified. One participant was concerned about the lack of diversity in the group:

they are all white. I would like [some diversity].

One indicated that her expectations not met. She said:

I seemed to have wanted things that were not directly in the group

I think you could make it a little more useful.

Several mentioned art making in comparison to art discussion. One said:

I feel doing this art thing isn't as useful as it should be, as it could be [compared to art making in previous year]

I think we could do a little more painting.

The same person however went on to say:

I would rather talk. We talked about painting, we talked about those two women that were in the painting

One referred to the numbers of people attending decreasing over the weeks of the programme:

They all started off more or less enthusiastic but their enthusiasm waned

As the days went by less people came

3.2 Observational data

This is presented separately for each participant, identified by letter and attendance at the morning (discussion) or afternoon (art-making and discussion) groups. Behaviour, cognition and other factors are listed and quotes given with reference to specific artworks included in group discussions.

A (morning discussion) – attended all 16 sessions observed (but left sometimes for appointments)

- Liked the learning and observing/hearing about factual details in the pictures. Related detail to their knowledge of where/what the picture showed and a sense of history (A used to teach history and languages).
- Very engaged (when awake), responding to questions and initiating questions/conversation.
- Perceived mood was usually calm, attentive but sometimes arrived more contented and this appeared to diminish during the session.
- Happiest when the group was very small and he could get most attention.
- No significant recall of other participants. Expressed the view that the group didn't gel and diminished in size [group varied in attendance but did not diminish significantly].
- Was able to recall previous artworks in sessions and with visual prompts in interviews.
- Sometimes verbal friction between A and two other participants – meant A became more cautious about speaking and appeared to enjoy it less e.g.
 - A – “Anything my colleague says is important”;
 - L – “I’m not [A’s] colleague”;
 - A – “You make that so clear”;
 - L – “That annoys me”
 or
 - L – “I have no idea where this walk way is going [shown on picture];
 - A – “If it’s going. Am I allowed to speak now?”;
 - L – “No, you are not allowed”
- Dozed off frequently.
- Quotes:
 - “[The artist] wouldn’t have been an artist without bouts of depression” (Frankfurter)
 - “I like this figure very much. I don’t like the darkness in the second figure. There’s not much light” (Frankfurter)
 - “When a person can’t remember what a work of art looked like it isn’t because the work is bad, it’s because we haven’t got much memory” [Kowalska]
 - “I don’t really like sad, dramatic pictures. I go for the beauty of the picture, beauty of the person, an idea that never occurred to me” [Kowalska]
 - “It’s the Dolorosa. She’s hanging her head like the Dolorosa. And it’s a lovely picture” [Dodo]
 - “it’s a wonderful piece just coming out from under a shower. I’m perfectly satisfied with this” [Dodo]
 - “What’s the next one we are going to study? These are very interesting” (Dodo)
 - “Does he do all his work in a tinted style?” [Gertler]
 - “A certain amount of prosperity. A kettle on the table; almost middle class. Important thing is the date; the old world going out and the new world coming in” [Gertler]
 - “It’s got movement. A lot of movement” (Winsten)
 - “Looking asleep with wide awake eyes” (Melamed Adams)
 - “That’s the one I’ve seen before. It’s superb because it doesn’t mince words. It’s got a chair going to heaven. It still looks like someone’s flying a plane” (Chagall)
 - “I was exposed to him in an earlier part of my life. I didn’t like him then or now...this is the best one so far” (Chagall)
 - “The colours are very nice every time we change a picture” (Wube)
 - “It looks like someone is about to be tortured” (Wube)

- “Four dark fingers coming out of a teapot” (Wube)
- “[Arnold Wesker] is well known to me but I didn’t know he was such an ugly brute” (Aldbrook)
- “I would rather other people talked about their favourites” (final review session)

L (morning discussion) – attended 15 out of the 16 sessions observed

- According to L, AiR was mainly a means of getting off the unit; the means to an end rather than the end itself.
- Explicit about her dislike for another participant, the sessions not really meeting her expectations, and the group not gelling.
- But her mood was consistently cheerful and upbeat in the sessions – she clearly enjoyed being there and expressed a lot of praise for Emma.
- Recalled pictures from previous weeks during the sessions and at interview.
- Could be quite irreverent but also quite sensitive to issue of gender politics in the picture and the group.
- Quite often reminisced about her childhood – in particular her artistic father.
- Very engaged – responding to questions and initiating questions/conversation
- Quotes:
 - “They are friends. They met before, they are complaining about the same things” (Frankfurter)
 - “Colours to make up for the crappy wrapping paper it is painted on” (Frankfurter)
 - “Here we’ve got two babies who are maybe wondering what the hell is going on...mother holding on to these two pathetic babies...not long of this world” (Frankfurter)
 - [on artists not signing their work] “That will enrage me and all the archivists in the world” (Frankfurter)
 - “Why didn’t she burn that painting?” (Kolowska)
 - “That’s the problem with the background, it’s fearfully cheerful” (Kolowska)
 - “Entirely too childlike...there’s a great deal to unpick, if you wanted to unpick” (Kolowska)
 - “I do think it’s beautiful” (Delissa Joseph)
 - “She was posing for the artist, and how could she not if she was the artist” (Delissa Joseph)
 - “I’m a very good painter and you’ve done your best to ignore me” {about the artist} (Delissa Joseph)
 - “This turned out to be much better than I thought it would be” (Delissa Joseph)
 - “It looks like she’s already dead. Like someone could have stood her up for the picture” (Dodo)
 - “It looks like that unfortunate hairstyle that something or someone has defecated on her head” (Dodo)
 - “[He] has a contract with a paint company” (Auerbach)
 - “I think Auerbach was a friend of my fathers” “I want to retract what I said earlier” He didn’t know my father...they would never have been friends” (Auerbach)
 - A self-portrait that looks more like a death’s head...this is not a happy man” (Auerbach)

- “It’s very dark. There are two people and one of them is seriously pissed off” (Gertler)
- “No-one’s yelling. There’s no room in that painting for shouting. If she could, she wouldn’t link her arms with that stupid fucker” (Gertler)
- “They are not actual human beings. They are archetypes of certain human beings” (Gertler)
- “I keep on being drawn back to something you are not talking about; the hanging behind the couple” (Gertler)
- “The hat doesn’t add to this. If you had that hat stuck on you head, wouldn’t you be sad?” (Melamed-Adams)
- “I’m tired of being here [Nightingale]. I don’t want to be here. {But} not this [the session] or you [Emma]” (Melamed-Adams)
- Ah, you’ve come back to that picture!” [remembered from previous year] (Dvir)
- “I would like to stop you and ask you a question. Are you sure that figure you are referring to as a man, is a man? I think it was a miserable woman” (Hekmi)
- “The drawings are indicative of what she was going to paint. However, there are a lot of howevers” (Hekmi)
- “Upside down apples....Why does he have to show these people upside down? It’s the upside-down effect” (Chagall)
- “We can sit here and can make simplistic remarks; red and green for Christmas” (Marks)
- “A totally handicapped child dropping feet as they go down stairs” (Marks)
- “It’s delightful. It’s funny” (Wube)
- “A clown. A celebration...It just takes me back to carnival” (Wube)

D (morning discussion) – attended 12 of the 16 sessions observed

- In interview said she enjoyed the sessions but also said the sessions could have been more “useful”. Was unable to elaborate on what this meant (but she had attended the art making group in year 1 so it may be referring to her previous year’s experience).
- Tended to be a quieter member of the group which she acknowledged at interview. Difficulty in finding words and constructing sentences may have also inhibited her. However, at times she initiated conversations and made unprompted links e.g. with Jewish culture (Chagall) and a recent trip to a Christian Dior exhibition at the V&A (relevant to Aldbrook).
- In the majority of the sessions she attended her mood appeared consistently calm yet without obvious signs of enjoyment. There were however some sessions where she appeared more contented in a positive way. This was more obvious towards the end of the programme although two of the four sessions she missed were in the last 4 weeks of the programme.
- D mainly appeared engaged with the group and the discussion, some or most of the time.
- Quotes:
 - “They seem to be tired. Their images are resignation. They are just talking about day to day stuff” (Frankfurter)
 - “Just average people, day to day, just working life, nothing more exciting than that” (Frankfurter)
 - “I don’t really like it. T doesn’t have any energy” (Dodo)
 - “A shower of light” (Dodo)

- “It’s a bit of a mess...and in due course, put it all together and made it look nice” (Auerbach)
- “They don’t look like they are enjoying themselves or need to be together” (Gertler)
- “They are reaching the end” (Gertler)
- “I think they are rushing into this picture and saying ‘this is what I want to keep’” (Melamed-Adams)
- “The colour is a little bit difficult to understand...light and buoyant” (Hekmi)
- “It’s a dog and a cat. It’s quite interesting. I’m trying to work out what’s left” (Chagall)
- “It’s a nice face. They are all working with the same thing, colour on paper” (Aldbrook- Arnold Wesker)
- “A very unflattering canvas. She looks like a school teacher, it’s obviously pastels” (Aldbrook– Rosemary)

P (morning discussion) – attended 11 sessions

- P had only recently moved into Nightingale and was very anxious initially. P expressed a constant desire to leave Nightingale and required a 1:1 staff escort during the session to reassure her and supervise her.
- P left the first session she attended before it started and left some sessions early due to feeling anxious, distracted or falling asleep due to sleepless nights.
- However, she became more relaxed as individual sessions and the programme went on and appeared well engaged with the discussion when she was in the sessions and awake (though at times had to seek reassurance from her escort).
- On several occasions she arrived anxious and distracted but her perceived mood improved during the course of the session and she became calm.
 - “A slightly quizzical look on her face” (Delisa Joseph)
 - [About the person in the picture] “Don’t ask me to do things I can’t do. My hands are occupied” (Delisa Joseph)
 - “She’s just getting to the end of an ice lolly. Perhaps trying to blow out the candles” (Delisa Joseph)
 - “I think she’s playing with fire. I’ve got the fingers to prove it” (Delisa Joseph)
 - “It’s a message. What’s on the left is trying to unload to what’s on the right” (Auerbach)
 - “A little tug towing as fast as it could” (Auerbach)
 - “Despite the strength of the yellow gold, the blue wins” (Auerbach)
 - “Combining movement and colour” (Auerbach)
 - “The figure fits in very nice to the space” (Dodo)
 - “It’s fine as long as you don’t try to analyse it” (Dodo)
 - [of the artist] “She looks quite content with herself and what’s going on in the world” (Dodo)
 - “No, I don’t buy that one. Look at the long fingers he’s got” (Gertler)
 - “They’ve both had a pre-look at the sermon and are feeling fed up” (Gertler)
 - [The Rabbitzin] “is thinking, ‘I’ve made all thee nice goodies and I’ve got nothing for myself” (Gertler)
 - “Am I asking the right questions?” (Gertler)

- “I think I would have said purpose rather than movement...because they all seem to be doing things” (Winsten)
- “There are a lot of blokes trying to make sure they haven’t killed the bloke in the middle” (Dvir)
- “Well it’s obviously in process. A process of three committed people” (Chagall)
- “It seems to be asking questions that I don’t have a clue how to answer them” (Marks)
- “Quite a lot of unanswered questions. Christmas top left, an apple sauce sort of thing” (Marks)
- “I thought it rather strange. It didn’t tell me much. It didn’t offer me much” (Wube)

H (morning discussion) – attended 4 sessions (group clashed with other activities H had)

- Always appeared cheerful and very engaged with the discussion. Made unprompted comments.
 - “I liked it because it’s a new style” (Ury)
 - “It shows total difference in character” (Ury)
 - “You can make up your own theory of what’s happening...I like the ladies. If they were calling a cab it would make sense” (Ury)
 - “It’s very interesting because we look at pictures and don’t go through the ritual that we’ve gone through...I am fascinated by it, not having known anything about it before” (Ury)
 - “I like it. I was particularly caught by the strokes in the picture, relative to the title” (Melamed-Adams)
 - “A complete wrapping of the picture – an enclosure” (Melamed-Adams)
 - “Does the time this was painted have any affect? It was painted just before the war which could have a huge effect on anyone’s life” (Hekmi)

J (morning discussion) – attended 3 sessions. Died during the course of the programme

- Usually appeared quite cheerful and animated but also expressed irritation at times with the group/discussion. Her engagement tended to diminish towards the end of the session and she expressed impatience about wanting it to finish.
 - “Very topical. Brilliant” (Frankfurter)
 - “They are reluctant to use their legs. Use your legs. I could hit them over the head with their hats” (Ury)
 - “You have some very interesting pictures here. I like it because it’s a bit different. That’s always good these days where everything is the same” (Ury)
 - “Are you going to do anymore? Is it the end? I’ve got to go soon. Hurry up! Hurry up!” (Ury)

M (morning discussion) – attended two sessions

- Quite engaged and cheerful in the sessions she attended.
- Tended to sleep in late so was repeatedly not ready to be brought down, despite several reminders to staff of the session timings.
 - “Do you want me to be soft and gentle or tell you what I think. I don’t want to be rude but not my cup of tea” (Kolowska)

- “I’ve seen this picture before. A very Marlene Dietrich look” (Dodo)

Group Conversations

A number of conversations took place between participants in the group, these occurred spontaneously. These were mostly positive or neutral in tone, but not always. Topics included:

- Ury painting – whether or not the women portrayed were prostitutes (A and D)
- Cigarettes (A and P)
- Amount of paint used by Auerbach (L and D)
- Why certain people liked some names more than others (L and D: “A bit early in the morning for [discussing] that”)
- Dogs (L and D)

Other factors observed included:

- Needing time to reflect before giving one’s views about a picture (H and L)
- Exchanging friendly greetings (A and D) or refreshments (D and H)
- Checking another participant was ok (A and P)
- Talking about another participant, negatively, when not in the room (L and D)

A (afternoon discussion) – attended 9 out of the 10 sessions observed

- Very engaged but needed reassurance from the activity coordinator assisting him, Rose.
- Close attention to detail in the picture; dates and history (especially Jewish history and culture). Also made other cultural links e.g. Clare Winsten and the Vorticists.
- Could be tired or irritated before the sessions but always became very engaged and his interest grew during the sessions and over the course of the programme.
- Interacted very well with S, spoke in different languages with her and listened to what she said. Mutual respect.
- Liked the company of Rose, Emma and S.
 - “Very nice, professional” (Delissa Joseph)
 - “To me, it’s like the Wailing wall” (Delissa Joseph)
 - “Maybe they are defending, that’s why it’s called Attack. It’s very impressive” (Winsten)
 - “It’s not easy. What I’m trying to figure out...it’s water colour, It’s ben Uri, it’s circa 1940, there’s a lot of activity” (Winsten)
 - “In the old days, many stetls were burnt” (Dvir)
 - “Look at the date. It’s a troublesome time in Europe. That in my mind is a very important thing because it’s the war years” (Hekimi)
 - “An imitation of Chagall. An influence” (Hekimi)
 - “Thank you very much for your research and analysis. We really appreciate it” (Hekimi)
 - “His soul is with his wife. You pick up the right nuances” (Chagall)
 - “Jesus on the cross” (Chagall)
 - “Thank you very much for giving us insight. That’s the best knowledge” (Chagall)
 - “You can see it’s a work of art...You can see it is a Russian influence. And that pot is like a Chinese pot” (Marks)

- “You are a teacher. You are beautiful” [S – “We are all beautiful our own way”]
“That’s diplomatic” (Marks)
- “Thank you very much for your lecture. It’s very enlightening”.
- “A kaleidoscope. And then you dissect” (Wube)
- “I prefer the picture [to the video] because it is visual. You can observe more”
(Wube)
- “Thank you very much for taking time to show us” (Wube)
- “It’s nice. It’s life! Inviting face. It creates interest” (Aldbrook)
- “I don’t like it... It’s not life. It’s artificial, abstract” (Aldbrook’s fashion pictures)

S (afternoon discussion) – attended 8 out of the 10 sessions observed

- Very positive about how much she enjoyed the sessions but confused in her recall of pictures.
- Always engaged, chatty, positive in the sessions.
- Benefit of talking about art appeared to be more related to the social aspects of the group (recalled A and Emma and liked being with them), than the cultural or cognitive stimulation.
- Possible personal connection with what she saw in the paintings in geographical location (Middle East) and interest in fashion.
- Interacted very well with A, spoke in different languages with him and listened to what he said.
 - “If I was to paint something like this, I would throw it in the dustbin” (Solomon)
 - “It’s very multi, multi art. There’s so much of it” (Winsten)
 - “I want to know more. Why are they all running around?” (Winsten)
 - “She really looks like Siria, who became wife of the Shah of Iran” (Melamed- Adams)
 - “This is quite a sad picture. Not one to make you happy” (Melamed- Adams)
 - “Is it still like that in Israel? Are they still fighting?” [A – “Yes, they are fighting for their lives”] (Dvir)
 - “They are very serious about everything” [A – “They have to be”] (Dvir)
 - “There is no violence here. There is only goodness” (Dvir)
 - “In those days the Nazis were really nasty” (Marks)
 - “Whoever is doing this must have a lot of imagination” (Hekimi)
 - “This looks like a cat but it isn’t. This looks like a cross but it isn’t. It looks like a woman” (Chagall)
 - “Have you got the authentic picture? That’s quite something” (Chagall)
 - “I like abstract. It’s like me, abstract. I don’t know where I’m going” (Marks)
 - “She is more interested in clothes than personalities” (Aldbrook)

3.3 Staff Feedback

Themes identified are presented below along with quotes from staff who participated in AiR.

Grown-up space

The use of art and the intellectual conversations that were stimulated as well as meaningful expression and discussion were identified as key to the success of AiR to engage residents effectively. For example:

a grown-up space for them to discuss something so that during that time there are not really any boundaries. When I say boundaries, I mean it's like no limits, they can say what they like, what they feel, and there's no judgement. It's a very free area. It's contained, but it's also contained for their benefit.

it's really analytical

It wasn't contrived and it was authentic. There were no highbrow people there that were giving their own interpretation and putting words into anyone's mouth. Everyone expressed themselves quite uniquely and I liked that

she may go off on a tangent about something totally different but what that space gave those residents was an opportunity to speak and to be around people that were listening, so whatever they were saying was very relevant to them. And I think the environment respected that

it's a grown up thing, I'm learning, they are actually teaching me, they are teaching me, because I wasn't grown up very cultured, I come from a working class background, the only thing that my Mum and Dad read was the Sun, Mill and Boons

The ambience that the art discussion created was seen as an antidote to perceived 'chaos' elsewhere in the home.

it's different, it's not hectic, it's you know, gives you time to think, it's a group that encourages you to think,

Inclusiveness and Sharing

The AiR activities were seen to make art accessible and in so doing, it became a valuable resource, one that stimulated meaningful discussion and engagement and that helped elicit relevant information about residents. For example:

the arts are available to everybody, and it's subjective and that's really important, it's open to everybody

you get to know more about the residents, about their past, or their knowledge.

The element of sharing knowledge was seen as valuable and important:

Everyone benefits from sharing their knowledge, ideas and perception of others.

it's a sharing process and you can all share, that's important. And exchange. And it's the sharing of the thoughts, and speaking those thoughts that's interesting

It was noted that the activities elicited sometimes-surprising abilities and knowledge about residents as well as positive social interaction. For example:

he says he doesn't know a lot about art but he knows enough to talk about it, and the way he was describing the pictures, he even spotted the cat which nobody else spotted

I can see that residents really like the contact with other persons they really find it interesting, they really engage with us.

it's about time, to engage in the activities. They don't respond straight away. They need some introduction to the activities, so it's good to actually speak to them first about how they are feeling, how they are doing, to introduce and have a chat with them before the activities take place, as a way of warming up

It was observed by one member of staff that the project had helped residents remember the social and intellectual connections made by attending the sessions:

they do remember was the book that I showed the, 'ah yes, that print', they knew the art, they knew the art, and they associated me with that group when they saw me.

It was suggested that residents did not want the project to finish:

They were fairly emphatic about not wanting it to finish. 'We must keep... Ben Uri'

'We must not lose this connection, this has been very good, it's intellectual, it makes you enthusiastic'.

'We are just getting to know you, why are you going? Why can't you stay and we'll just carry on doing this'.

Impact on Cognition and Behaviour

Important benefits were witnessed related to residents' mood and behaviour, and how the sessions provided positive, meaningful, intellectual stimulation. Examples included:

I've seen with residents their mood changes a lot because with dementia, it can make people feel agitated or like they are on a boat and seasick, they are all over the place, but this brings it all into focus. It allows people to focus on something. It's amazing how something like that can tap back into that person's personality and their cognitive awareness. It's a great tool.

it's the same equivalent as a child who may be regarded as a bit disruptive, its maybe because they're bored, and not stimulated, it's not that they are not intelligent, it's a great way of getting them away from certain types of behaviour.

their mood is much better, they are much more cheerful going into lunch, they are not grumpy

[she] is amazing, she lets her feelings out

If the resident enjoys it then I'm happy for that

residents are getting more interested in what they are doing

[she] would often be in a bit of a grumpy mood because it's still quite early in the morning when the group starts, but by the end of the session [she] was in a bit of a better mood. Her mood was raised, she may not have been elated, it was raised

I have seen a difference in [L]. She's much more happier. Normally she wouldn't be smiling, watching the TV, so yes, I have seen a difference in her.

The power of art to evoke analytical thinking, demanding higher order cognitive processing was commented upon:

it got them thinking, it extracted things from them, that possibly, you know, like thoughts, and the language, it made them a bit more analytical, rather than just stuck in the mould of where they are living and their environment, it took them out of their environment and gave them something else to think about.

it's [Ben Uri artwork] such a good tool to provoke a conversation and a thought

it gave them a platform to think about something, and some of their comments were quite profound.

it's always good to find different ways of tapping into someone's memory.

I think the aim is to try and encourage some more cognitive awareness, and a little bit of joy, and different ways of social interaction

if and when it happens, a piece of art evokes something that repeatedly upsets them though if it's a behavioural association for the group, if there is something in that, that upset them then they am talk about that a lot then that becomes something that has to be looked at but only when it happens. But people are allowed to get upset, they are allowed to cry, it's a human emotion, I don't agree with all this suppressing, conforming, I like the idea of people being able to express themselves They are no right and wrong ways, it's their expression, it's their freedom.

In one case a participant recalled artwork from the session in Year 1 of AiR:

talking about the art work but she is interested in that as well. An example of that was her referencing another art work, I thought that was quite a significant moment, that she recalled it, I'm not testing whether she remembered it but the fact she wanted to tell me about it is the level, that's quite a significant thing. [the art work?] It was Natan Dvir, Homesh Evacuation which we looked at the year before. She was interested in knowing where the sessions were going next. 'Will we be looking at that one again?'

In another case, a resident recalled artwork from one of the group sessions at a later date, demonstrating prolonged wellbeing:

[A] was present when we were installing the exhibition in the café area. He really enjoyed that day, he enjoyed the fact that he had some experience with the art works, he remembered the art works, 'oh yes, I enjoyed that one, I remember that one' and different characteristics that he was particularly drawn to, and he was telling the other staff about. And that's kind of prolonged wellbeing, in the moment of those art works that were making him feel good then

There was some discussion about the ability of art making improving the abilities of those who had advanced dementia. This was not however definitive as one said:

They maybe improved residents' skills somehow. We don't know yet how they did improve

It was noted that dexterity improved for one resident following the sessions:

after the activities it helps residents to eat and drink because the manual skills are developing during the activities may be used in handling the cup or handling the cutlery, to eat and drink.

Person Centredness

Many comments indicated that AiR promoted person-centred practice; that is delivering care that promotes choice, independence, dignity, respect and partnership. For example:

the whole structure of the groups is very person-orientated and that's really, really important. It's almost like when you are painting a wall, you are not just going to paint it, you are going to prepare it, so part of people coming into the group is that they are prepared and a nice drink, they are given that time, that space to be seated in a certain way, so they feel comfortable and everyone feels inclusive.

it's about them forgetting, taking off the label of dementia

It's not what you know, it's what you feel [about the art], it's how it makes you feel. And I want to keep that sentiment, about how the residents feel.

Also, for me, kind of spiritual when the residents experience something with me once, when I sit with the residents, again we have this connection again. A good experience is building new, a good experience in the past is building something good for the future

I like this level of interaction, a completely basic, human interaction, not using any complicated means to connect, just touch, eye contact, just talk, exchange some thoughts, that's probably the best, the most for these residents

each expression is received in a very respectful, mindful way, so it doesn't matter how much capacity [someone] has got

The point is there is no hard and right and fast way for them, it's not an exam, it's not a test, it's not a quiz, it's their interpretation in their eyes, their own vision, and their own way, and that's what makes it a unique group.

The cathartic power of art was commented upon:

it's a trigger, pictures can be triggers, it can trigger memories, it can trigger a reaction that may not necessarily assist with a happy one but never the less with us, if we are angry we need to vent somehow, so maybe these triggers are ways in which they vent, and that venting is good, it's good

Sustainability

In terms of longer term sustainability of the project the comments were positive and enthusiastic indicating that the programme had met its aim of building this into delivery:

I could facilitate it definitely, as long as I have the knowledge and background sufficient enough for me to put it out there, but I don't need to be an expert, the residents will tell me what their interpretation. There is no right or wrong way. I can tell the facts about the painting, the time it was made, a little about the painter, the artist, but they will do all the work. It's giving them that space to do that.

I would like to be able to, through the arts, and use it as a tool to get people to become more tolerant of others

I'm confident to do it... as long as I know background to the artist, relevant points, I think the residents do the work for you, just knowing the triggers, and that's what the key is in developing a group like this or leading a group like this, it's just knowing the trigger questions that will help people to think, and talk, and create a conversation.

I do it already [art activities] so I feel I can do it. Yes, I can do [both] as long as I know about the painting

Comments suggested that lessons had been learnt e.g. about interpersonal issues experienced in the art discussion group:

when I do start to run my group I'm going to be aware of personality clashes, and also environment is really important. The environment is conducive, it's respected. It gives people that space.

One staff member discussed their motivation to run a creative group in future:

I plan on creating a new art group. It won't necessarily be Ben Uri artists, but it will be anything, I will pick up a book and find out about an artist and their prints, and, you know discuss that, within the group. You can pretty much do it with anything really.

In fact there was evidence that the staff had already begun to run creative groups after AiR finished. For example:

I've just got to tell you that I ran my first art cart session today rather than sit here and chat I'll get the art trolley over and we'll make something together, and then she's opening her hands out and she's doing all these other things. And it's a fixed time together. That's how I think those things would work best, is impromptu and responsive to that person.

This was facilitated by the legacy left by AiR:

there's a cart full of art materials and some sessions printed out for discussions, hand-outs for everyone to have in a session and info for Angie to use... Nightingale has the hanging system now in their café.

One stated that the time commitment was a possible barrier to the project's sustainability:

the 2 hours is a bit much for me because I've got other things

Challenges

Despite the positive findings, some challenges were experienced. Logistics were an issue, for example;

getting people down [from their rooms]

Group dynamics in the morning discuss sessions were also challenging at times:

There was a little bit of dynamics within the group regards to personality clashes. That was a little bit painful at times

It was also noted that engagement could be variable:

residents were engaging in these activities, sometimes more, sometimes less, at one session residents were contributing more, one session they were contributing a bit less or were not interested.

some residents have an attitude we can't really change, something we can't do anything about it. What kind of personality a person carries. Some people are not willing to co-operate, some people don't want to do things

Sometimes medical issues became a barrier to participation, for example:

Someone withdrawing due to medical problem: The medical reason was the main reason why she wasn't with us because she couldn't stay in her wheelchair longer

Feedback about the sessions on the dementia units included the fact that sometimes there was very little feedback from participants and you had to accept that. For example:

The only awkward moments are when everything's quiet and I'm thinking what am I going to do next but other than that, everything's fine.

It can be a bit awkward when it goes quiet and the residents are not responding, it can be a little bit awkward but other than that I think the sessions are going really well

Other comments indicated the importance of changes in mood and micro interactions such as eye contact and smiling when working with people with later stage dementia. These are illustrated below:

[there is a] sense of improved wellbeing in V because her mood would change. So she would turn up saying 'I'm scared, help me, save me', these things are quite extreme, she was obviously worried, and then by the end of the session she wouldn't feel like that. She would be saying 'that's nice' she would be smiling, very occasionally we would get a lovely little laugh from her.

I think she did enjoy being with us because she was always alert and she doesn't go off to sleep or ask to be taken away, or anything like that, unless you read into her words 'go home' might mean that, repeated phrases. But there were times when she was enjoying it, you get a kiss on the hand, or she would say 'I love you' sometimes as well, repeating things that Daniel was saying to V, that engagement I would say is a marker of her increased wellbeing, as with my first answer, you just can't use the same criteria as you would for people with an earlier stage of dementia, it's small learning about what that would look like I think.

it's hard, I think planning for that sort of group because it does need to be one to one and it does need to be in the moment, so in terms of facilitating you always feel like you get into the fact that someone is uncomfortable, someone is tired, someone is in pain, someone is distressed, someone's better in the mornings

4. Conclusions

Year 2 of the AiR programme sought to build on the findings from the first year that found promising and novel results when using structured art discussion stimulated by the Ben Uri collection. It also aimed to explore use of different formats and delivery i.e. working with people with later stage dementia. Sustainability of the programme was also a key aim, to ensure that the project left a

legacy and that care home staff could carry on with creative activities once Ben Uri withdrew from the home.

The findings indicate that the aims of the project were met. Wellbeing of residents was enhanced, particularly in terms of cognitive stimulation and enhanced mood. Staff engaged well with the project and one member of the activities staff has been using learning from AiR, offering a mixed discussion / practical session independently. Attendance was a challenge, largely due to logistical issues such as moving people between their room and communal ground floor spaces, illness and other appointments. Participant numbers were small, however these were sustained throughout. There were some interpersonal issues amongst the art discussion group but these can be expected in any group intervention.

There is evidence that use of the AiR model is having a positive and sustained impact on residents in a care home setting. Staff in the home are learning from the programme and are making adaptations to their practice, indicating a small but important culture change within the setting.

Future programmes should look to replicate the approach, refining the discussion model, working intensively with staff to ensure good attendance from residents and to adopt the model as part of their routine care and engagement provision, thus building in sustainability.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Questions for residents

1. What is your interest in art?
2. Do you have any memories of the art discussion sessions? If so, what are they?
 - a. Are you able to tell me about any of the pictures you have discussed?
 - b. do you remember anything about the other people in the group?
3. Are you able to participate as much as you want in the discussions? If not, why not?
4. What do you feel during the sessions, and after?
 - a. Have you enjoyed the sessions?
5. Do you get what you want from going to the sessions?
6. Have people at the group got to know you? Do you recall other people in the group or Emma, the facilitator?
 - a. Do you feel a sense of community in the group?
 - b. What do you think of the facilitation and other people in the group? [Do you remember Emma?
7. Could the sessions be improved in any way?
8. Any other comments?

Questions for staff

1. How do you think the sessions went?
2. What was the impact on residents' wellbeing from participating? How far has this been sustained?
3. How did you find facilitating the sessions?
4. Do you feel confident to facilitate similar groups and activities in the future on your own?
5. Did the sessions achieve other things? If so, what were they?
6. What were the challenges and what could have been improved?

7. Any other comments?

Appendix 2

Adapted Arts Observation Scale (ArtsObs)

Sheet 1 – 0-15 minutes

	[name]	[name]	[name]
Engagement (e.g. while engaged, sustains attention; responds to verbal prompting or cueing; engaged in activity related conversation)			
Disengagement (e.g. sleeping, nodding off, staring into space)			
Interest (e.g. initiates activity related conversation; shows interest in the topic (verbal contributions); shows interest in others (eye contact, smiling))			
Expressed mood (e.g. facial expression, verbal tone and content, body language) A - Angry; B - Irritated; C - Sad; D - Calm; E -Contented; F - Happy; G -Excited			
Other observations/significant events			

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