



# UnLocking



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breathecreative

*With funding and support from*



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Cover art:

Out of the Comfort Zone by Bonnford (front)  
Beyond Lockdown by Jemima (rear)

Photography by Emma Jones

Designed by Kate @ Black Cat Design

UnLocking is a National Lottery funded project by Breathe Creative working in partnership with Ty Canna Mental Health Outreach Service in Cardiff.

Participants met weekly in online sessions facilitated by Katja Stiller over a period of six months from July 2021 to January 2022. Using different art forms we explored and expressed our emotions during these strange times of COVID-19; we looked at how it feels to come out of Lockdown, out of our comfort zone, and how we could unlock ourselves and our creative potential.

One group worked with animator Jane Hubbard and composer Jacob Meadowcroft to create the animation 'Beyond the Lines'. Much of the artwork behind the animation is captured in this booklet and also in the exhibition 'UnLocked' which was launched online on January 7th 2022. The young people's group worked with composer Tic Ashfield to record their creative writing and produce a soundscape and spoken word piece called 'Through the Sands of Time'.

Artwork and words created by: Rhiannon, Sarah, Jacob, Bonnford, Jennifer, Debbie, Loraine, Jemima, Nick, Magdalena, Rain, Helen, Amy, Lianne, Aaron, Judith, Jet, Leandro, Shardine, Val.

Supported by: Imogen Fallon, Millie Tucker, Callum Langley, Vishal Gaikwad, Ty Canna Outreach Service.

## The Value of Someone Listening

Just being there,  
I don't have to rush  
I can think,  
but when I think  
will anything be there?  
Or is my mind wiped clean by decades of not  
being properly heard?  
Being misunderstood or even laughed at  
or bullied every time I said something.  
My silence was complete.  
I didn't want to be heard anymore,  
at least that's what I told myself.  
I had nothing worthwhile or interesting to say.  
But now someone listens, shows I matter,  
someone listening shows my thoughts and  
feelings matter.  
Being allowed to say what I feel and think,  
and not being criticised for it  
but accepted as I am,  
and allowed to form my own thoughts and  
opinions and getting to the heart of what I  
mean.  
By making mistakes along the way,  
with someone present and interested,  
and showing I exist.

**Sarah**



*Beneath the Storm by Sarah*





*Clouds by Jacob*

## **Blue**

I need to get my feet on  
solid ground,  
I'm feeling stuck but the  
clock turns round.  
When I'm blue it's like  
time freezes,  
But others get on with  
their bits and pieces.  
I'm in jelly, they're in the  
water.  
My life is messy, theirs is  
in order.

Unlike the clock, I've got  
my hands,  
Like the chair, I've got  
my legs.  
So why don't I get out of  
bed?  
Why do I struggle with  
thoughts instead?

**Jacob**



*Dualism by Jacob*

## **Inner Critic**

You meet someone, then they leave an impression,  
You've got the real person and a new one that's  
entered your head and when...  
people leave imprints, ideas, and confessions, they can  
last longer than the time you spend with them.  
The inner critic is a collection of moments, life-defining  
components that give you blessings and omens.  
It can fill you with composure or leave you penned into  
social atonement.

It leaves you ready, wary, or Frozen when you come  
face to face with your own one. Separate fact from  
fiction when you're making your decisions, let your  
inner critic be wise like the advice from a friend's  
tongue, or negative thoughts will reverberate through  
you like a bang on a bent drum.  
Collector of wisdom or self-sabotaged system,  
What voice prepares you for the World's coldest  
missions?

**Jacob**



*The Moon and the Sun By Jacob*

## **Unlocking**

Unlocking my potential with my paintbrush and my pencil,  
When you're trapped and feeling dreadful you can  
break out and feel yourself will...  
power and determination can help us break free from  
negative thinking,  
Being creative and feeling grateful can make the world  
a better place still.  
So many obstacles I want to stomp with force until  
they stop my thoughts  
I'll keep unlocking doors,  
or should I shut them? Am I solving problems or  
unlocking lost ones?  
Feelings brought to the surface like a lost dolphin, how  
do I find a key that's in my subconscious?  
I'm there but not there like when you start to lose  
focus,  
just keep on going, keep on growing and you'll know  
when you're lost in the moment that you've hit your  
flow state - your problems are solved when you own  
them.

**Jacob**

## **The Beaten Path**

What happens if you stray from the beaten path?  
What lies beyond that which holds you back?  
As you move away from the popular track  
You might feel afraid and want to change tack  
Don't be scared of being different, be glad.  
Just be unique and create your own map.

**Jacob**

## Listening

When you listen to someone, they feel valued.  
Perhaps no one has given them the time of day before,  
Never made them feel precious, needed and wanted.  
When you listen to someone,  
It gives them the chance to tell you how they feel today  
Amongst the rush and the turmoil they might be  
experiencing.  
Maybe they cry when you listen to them,  
It's a release of all the pressure that's built up before.  
Maybe you can't tell them what to do,  
But maybe they can untangle their mess just by  
speaking it out.  
Everyone deserves someone to listen to them - they are  
worth it.  
Maybe it'll make sense of their lives.  
Maybe you've listened just in time.

### Jennifer



*Outside the Line by Bonnford*

## After the Storm

There is a gathering pressure  
Heavy breathing  
And then the thunder  
Lightning  
The sky cracks  
And the atmosphere is shattered  
Noxious black sky  
Poisoned clouds  
And the wind is a feral cat  
Raking the landscape,  
Tearing;  
Things fall  
They break  
Fear and loss  
Haunt the bleeding ruins  
Surrounded by wounded soldiers;  
Naked trees with veins exposed  
Helpless Hopeless  
And then  
We drown in the torrential rain...

Though  
We may be beaten,  
The air has been cleared  
Though we may have lost,  
There is room for the new  
And though we may be  
Cold  
Drenched  
Weakened  
The Earth has been quenched  
And plants will grow once more.

### Jemima



*Unlocking by Bonnford*

## **Magic Carpet Ride (side by side)**

“Hey, you look sad...” A wet pink nose nudges me and a small voice pipes up, “It’s no good for you, hiding under the duvet. This Pandemic thing, it’s not good. You’ve become anti-social. You lie to yourself that it’s ok, that you’re happier alone. Take it from me, you’re not. You’re just scared to engage with others. Allow me into your world. Let me help you.”

“Come on, let’s go. Sit here on the carpet. It’s magic. We can fly anywhere. Life’s about exploring. Besides, I’m tired of Cardiff, of my small world. There must be more to see. I want to visit Ancient Egypt, see the Pyramids and the Sphinx. I saw pictures on the Moving Box (TV). That Big Cat thing outside looks awesome, or should I say “Pawsome”? I hear they used to worship cats there, Bastet, that’s it’s name. I always knew cats were Gods.”

“Come on, let’s go. Please. It’s warm there. You like warmth. I’m tired here, staring at four walls all day and besides it’s raining. I believe they’ve got Camels there. I’ve never seen a Camel. I saw a picture of that Camel Fair you visited in India. They look weird - kinda cool. I want to see for myself.”

“Please, let’s go. Our carpet is magic. It’s safe, I’ll protect you. I may be small, but I’m smart. I’ll let you hold my fluffy paw. It’ll be ok. Get dressed. I’ll fetch a snack and my Dreamies. We’ll climb aboard and ... GO!!!”

**Loraine**

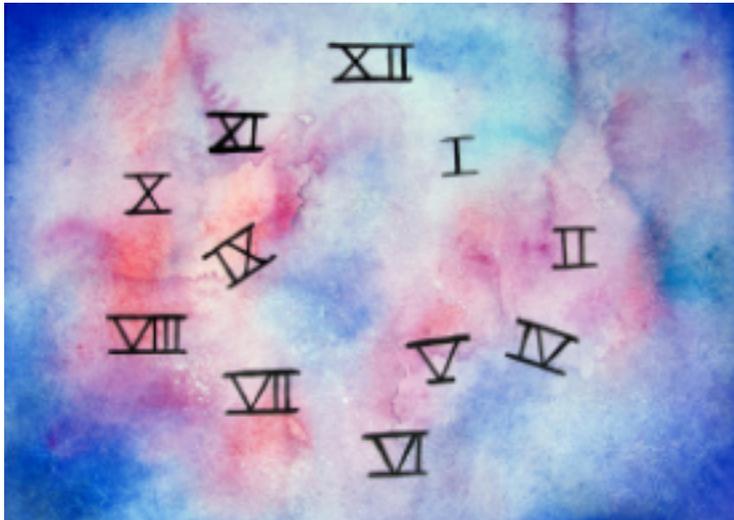


***Magic Carpet by Loraine***

## Time

There is never enough;  
Time  
It slips through my fingers  
In an hourglass  
The never-ending flow of sand  
Blown from Egypt  
To the moon  
Boulders and cliffs  
Whittled down again and again  
To dissolve into the ether.

**Jemima**



## I have a Dream

A party  
Let's celebrate  
Labels are just paper slips  
Not bludgeons to beat each other  
Forget the tags;  
Just wear party hats.

We can all unite  
In a slice of cake  
The Frosting  
The Flavour  
The Flour  
May vary;  
But it remains  
That it IS cake  
And everyone can enjoy that.

**Jemima**



## Comfort Zone

I am tranquil. No worries.  
The mind is quiet.  
My comfort zone;  
A den, a burrow.  
No eyes to see me.  
No knives in my vulnerabilities.  
A happy prison;  
Beyond the respite  
This place becomes a bird cage  
Baited with shiny mirrors and tinkling bells.  
I am limiting myself into a stasis  
Of Mind and Spirit.  
Man cannot live on bread alone;  
I starve myself unknowingly within this cage.  
I need to fly.  
Nourish the deeper self  
On sunshine and tempests.  
There is great fear;  
Fear of being blown away.  
Worn down. Ravaged.  
Not catching the current  
Under my wings.  
But familiar hands can catch me.  
The faces from memory  
Are branches  
To grasp in unbearable storms.  
Welcome buffers;  
They do not stop the winds of change  
But give us the strength  
To weather the turbulence.

## Jemima



change

broken

bubbles up

minutes

fall

struggling

far away

hollow

voice

always and always

green meadows

pretend;

shiver

merrily

thinking of nothing

prized

wild lone

soot and dirt

trees,

holding up

expecting

heat and drought

strange fancy.



## **Beyond the Stars**

Beyond the stars are spaces like universes and galaxies, enormous areas where we will never get to travel but will always know they are there.

These places could be inhabited by forces we will never see or experience and although we cannot prove what is happening out there, we know anything is possible.

**Nick**



*Kaleidoscope by Jemima*



## Unlocking a New Perspective

2020 changed the world in a way in which no one saw coming.

A change that stopped everyone in their tracks.

Our world had become busy, chaotic and challenging.

So many of us were struggling and not being heard, not being understood, we were trapped but the busy world carried on.

Suddenly it stopped, people had to change, the busy world we had become trapped in was no more.

Everyone started to realise what they thought was important no longer was.

Instead people started to realise it was the basics that helped us survive.

The world started to unlock from being trapped within a busy and chaotic world.

Those who were never appreciated started to have the value they deserved.

A world where celebrities and big companies were no longer needed.

Family became more important, people were being listened to.

Suddenly people started to care.

They remembered what and who were important.

The forgotten hugs became the desired, the older generation were no longer ignored and started to become protected.

The world has created a new style of life.

Like a caterpillar changing into a butterfly.

As we unlock from the restrictions from the pandemic life is still there but we will view it from a different perspective.

When the caterpillar unlocks from its cocoon into a beautiful butterfly it sees the world in a different way.

Life is still there but is viewed from a different angle.

**Rhiannon**



## **Outside the Lines, Beyond the lines**

My life feels like I am trapped in my mind, I am surrounded by solid lines. Behind these lines I feel safe, protected from the world around me, a place that is my comfort zone. Beyond the lines are all the places I want to see and all the things I want to achieve. The lines are my barriers, the things stopping me. I want to go beyond the lines but I am scared. Breaking down these barriers will give me freedom, places I can go to feel happy.

My fears paralyse me, keep me trapped, but I want to go beyond the lines. I want to step outside of my comfort zone, to feel free like a butterfly as it unlocks from its cocoon, gliding through the air in the glistening sun. I want to go to these places beyond the lines, the places I can only dream of. Places where there are memories to be made, places where I can be wild and free.

**Rhiannon**

## Heart Beat

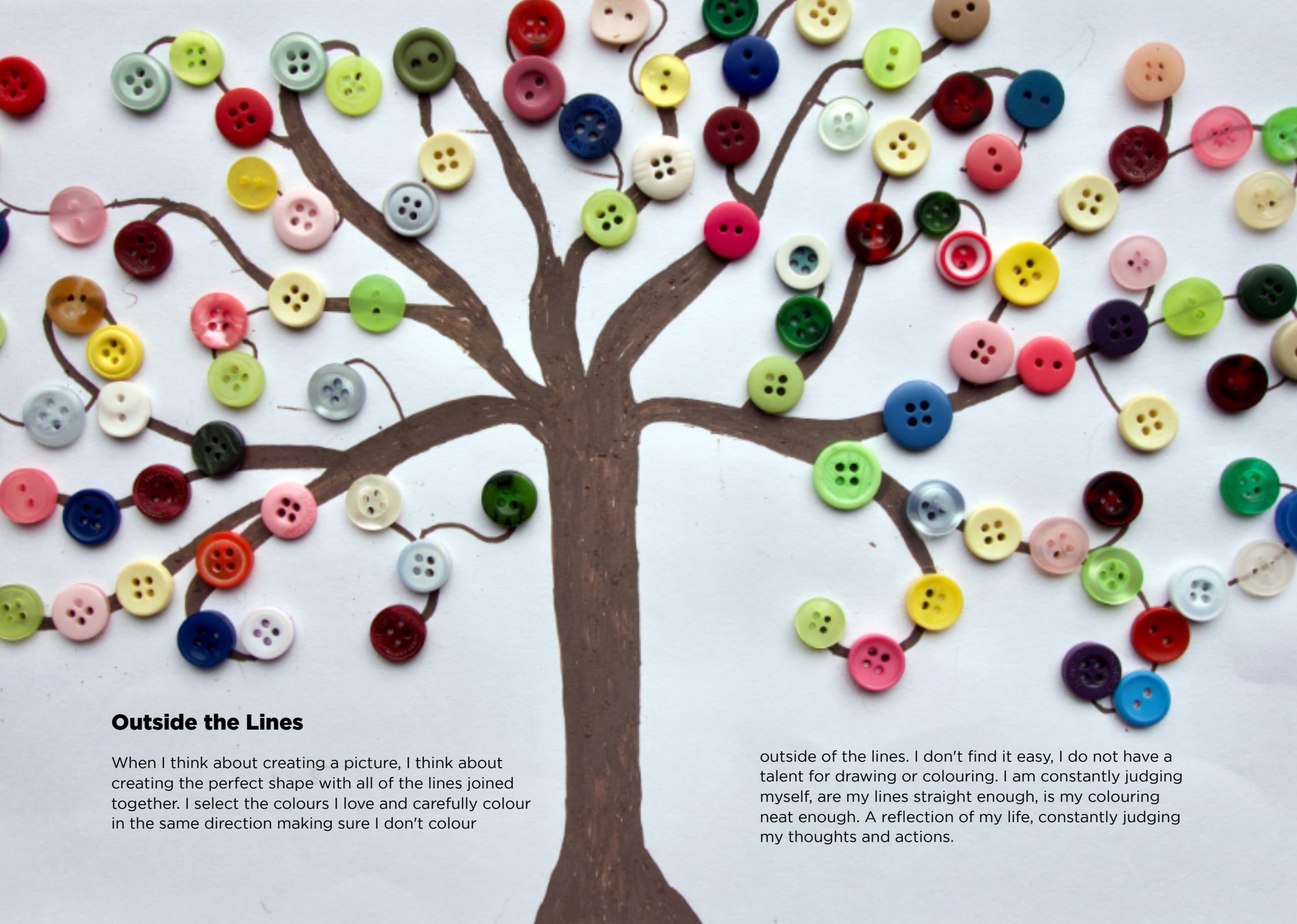
Can you hear it?  
My heart beat  
Thump, thump,  
Getting faster, I'm anxious,  
Pacing the room, it speeds up  
Breathe, slowly, in and out, in and out,  
Calm,  
It slows,  
Eat something  
Sleep  
You awake,  
Heart beat regular again  
A new day  
A blank slate  
Memories of the night before  
Fade,  
Happy again  
Freedom and peace  
As if it never happened  
Hard to explain  
The heartbeat knows.

**Jennifer**

## Cracks

You know the cracks are the best part.  
They tell a story.  
No one's perfect.  
And sharing your imperfections brings freedom.  
Because they let people come close to you.  
You don't portray a standard that's impossible to reach.  
It's about being happy with who you are  
And what you are.  
No pretence.  
Liberty to go fly.

**Jennifer**



## Outside the Lines

When I think about creating a picture, I think about creating the perfect shape with all of the lines joined together. I select the colours I love and carefully colour in the same direction making sure I don't colour

outside of the lines. I don't find it easy, I do not have a talent for drawing or colouring. I am constantly judging myself, are my lines straight enough, is my colouring neat enough. A reflection of my life, constantly judging my thoughts and actions.

If I colour outside of the lines, I stop and rub it out. I can't do this with my life, I don't have a rubber to erase my mistakes. I wish I had one to erase my memories.

As I progress with my picture, I realise I am making mistake after mistake. I am colouring outside of the lines. I have made too many mistakes, I take my picture and rip it up. I can't do this with my life, I can't rip it up, instead I judge, the constant criticisms and the screaming mind.

I have judged myself, I have given up, I couldn't cope with the constant criticisms of my drawing and colouring in. But who was criticising my drawing and colouring in, it was me, I did it, I was the judge.

I realise there is no one else there, no one to say it wasn't good enough. I was judging myself, I was identifying my faults. I don't need to do this, I need to accept that it is okay to colour outside of the lines. I need to remember every mistake is a memory to learn from.

**Rhiannon**



*Behind the Mask By Jemima*



## **Unlocking**

We all have the key,  
let's not be afraid to  
use it,  
release, believe,  
unlock your mind,  
let fear fly,  
release the pain,  
believe in yourself  
and let go,  
let go of what was  
and create your new  
journey  
through creativity,  
passion and  
imagination  
'The world slowed down  
for me to catch up'

**Helen**



## **Freedom**

Feels like running  
through the dark in  
boots  
to the other side that  
calls me  
green, lush, fresh and  
calm.

Bright rays, golden  
fields, glistening skies,  
keep running, keep  
running,  
for there all is calm  
and my fragile soul  
will be free.

**Helen**

## Unlocking

How long have you been chained up?  
Longing for someone to set you free?  
To break the chains that have held you back for so long?  
Now's the time, at last  
You can be you  
Someone's unlocking a process  
Picking at the lock  
Slowly, gently  
Too painful to be a quick process  
You've been stuck in your emotions  
Sometimes it's easier to stay locked up  
Being free can be scary  
It means making choices without being controlled  
Taking charge, stepping out  
Once you're free  
You can fly  
A new beginning  
Grab it!

**Jennifer**



*by Jennifer*

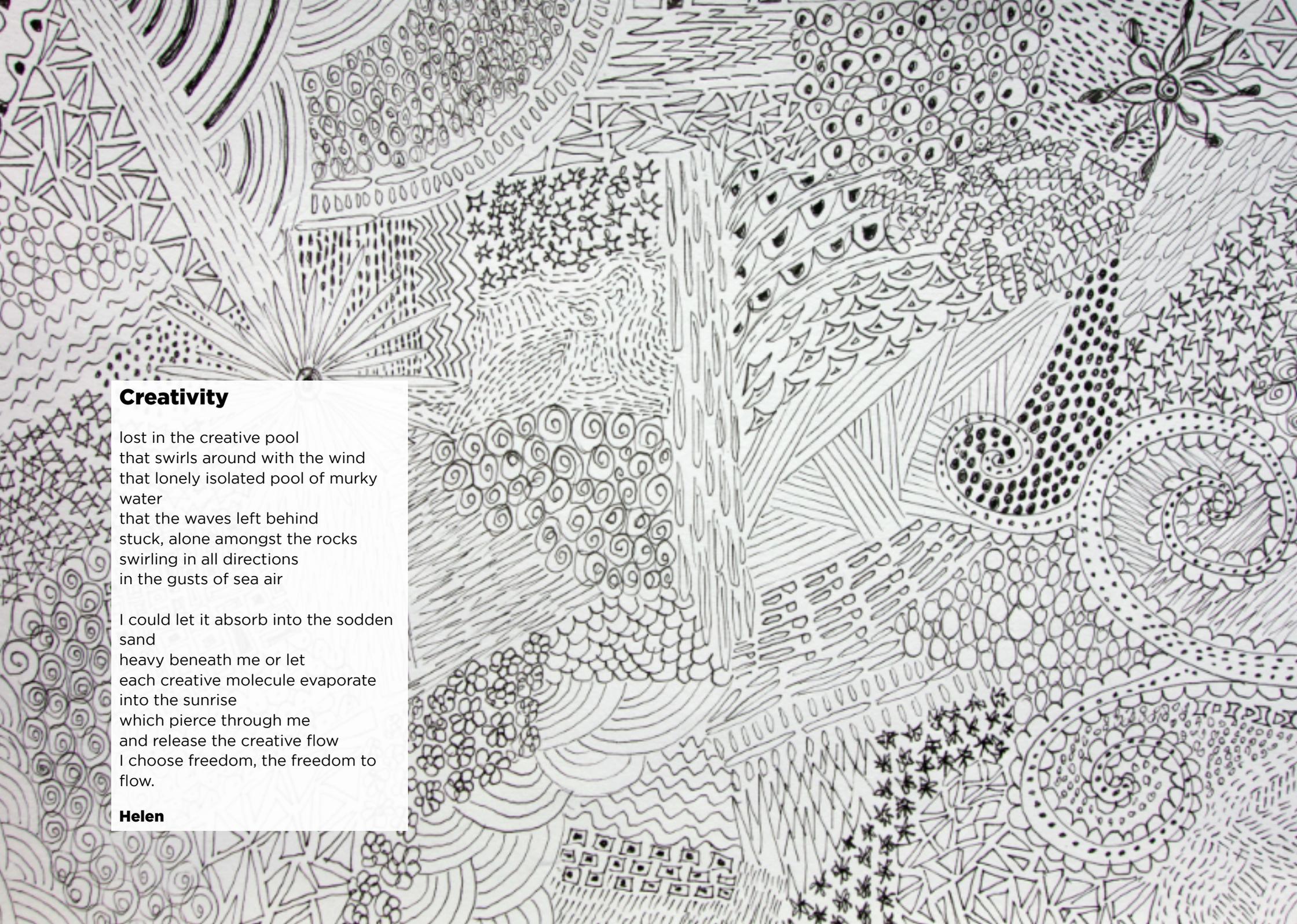


*Egypt by Magdalena*

## **Creativity**

thoughts trail down the paintbrush  
disappearing under myriads of colours  
no need for words or worries  
the outside world crumbles away  
I fall into the canvas  
into a state of flow.

## **Imogen**



## Creativity

lost in the creative pool  
that swirls around with the wind  
that lonely isolated pool of murky  
water  
that the waves left behind  
stuck, alone amongst the rocks  
swirling in all directions  
in the gusts of sea air

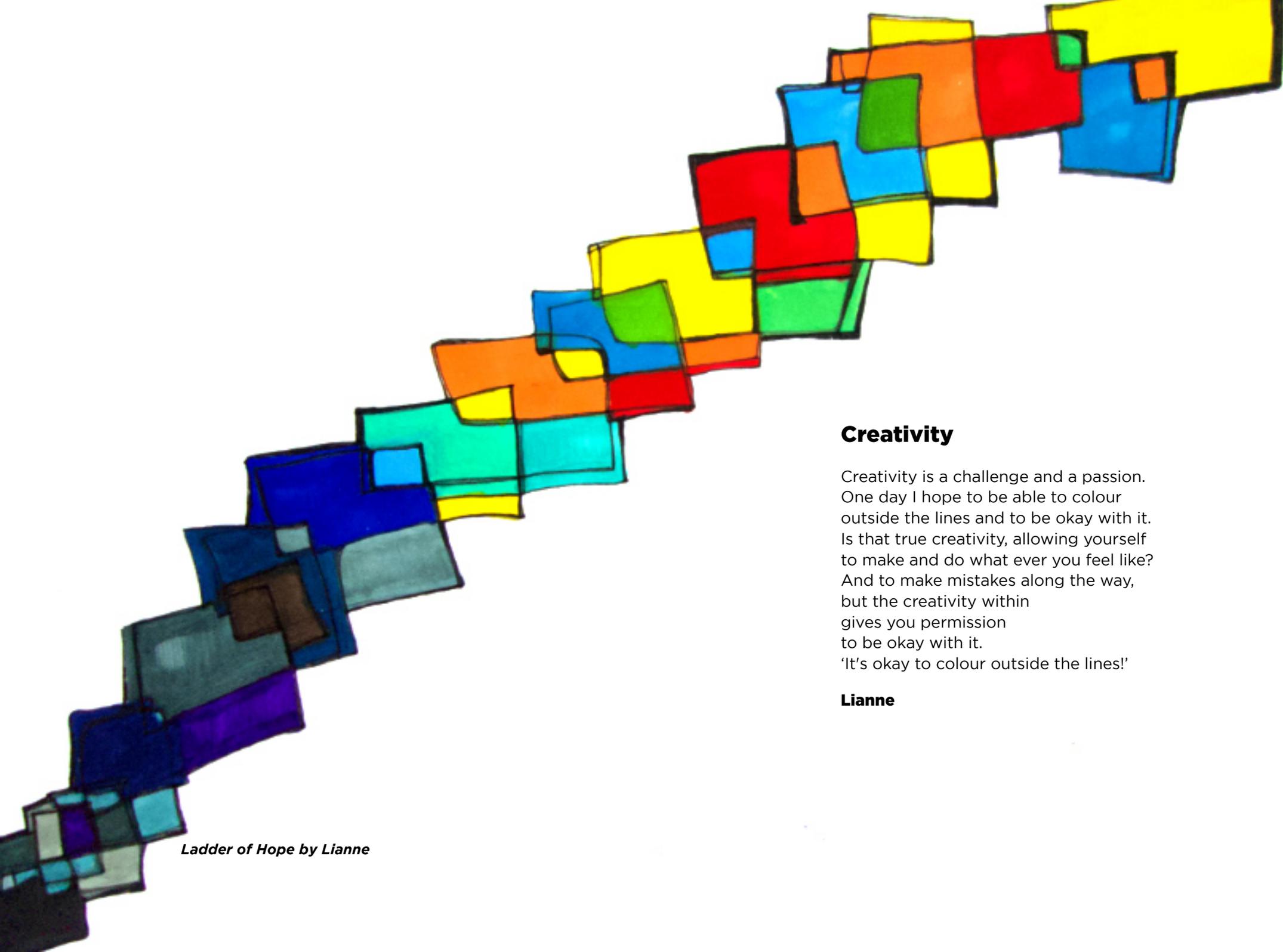
I could let it absorb into the sodden  
sand  
heavy beneath me or let  
each creative molecule evaporate  
into the sunrise  
which pierce through me  
and release the creative flow  
I choose freedom, the freedom to  
flow.

**Helen**

### **Precious Moment**

The moment my mind stilled  
The moment my face lit up again  
The moment I could look at the sea and let it calm me  
The moment I could look outside my own mind and cherish  
the love of others  
The moment I enjoyed a long Americano  
The moment Jesus said 'peace'.

**Jennifer**



*Ladder of Hope by Lianne*

## **Creativity**

Creativity is a challenge and a passion. One day I hope to be able to colour outside the lines and to be okay with it. Is that true creativity, allowing yourself to make and do what ever you feel like? And to make mistakes along the way, but the creativity within gives you permission to be okay with it. 'It's okay to colour outside the lines!'

**Lianne**



## Participants' feedback:

"Working on this project has inspired me and given me the confidence to become more creative."



"I was surprised by how atmospheric the final recording was."



"This is a place where I can express myself freely, it has allowed me to enter the beautiful chaos of creativity without judgements."



"Being guided in honing my expressive skills with professionals in the creative field has been invaluable and a journey I won't forget."



"This project has given me consistent human connection."



"I've found the courage to unlock the door to my imagination and to allow my inner self the freedom to breathe and create."



"I've been doing this a long time. From here to there I feel totally different. I've learnt that people are interested in what I've got to say and create."



"I've learnt that being expressive is personal to me and there's no limits if I stop judging myself!"

"I've learnt a steam of consciousness way of

expressing my inner feeling."

"I learnt that creativity is very therapeutic. "

"It's empowered me to move beyond my comfort zone, to connect with others and embrace new experiences."

"It has taught me to strike out and unleash my inner creativity, to express my inner love and rage."

"It's impacted me positively, by being able to listen less to my inner critic, to allow confidence to bloom over shyness."

"The project enabled me to develop my creative side and express myself in ways I'd never have thought about."

"It has given me a safe space to express and share emotions and creativity."

## Facilitator Feedback:

"Despite it being online, this project connected people across different communities, ages and backgrounds; it has given us a positive and meaningful focus in this difficult time." (Katja Stiller, project facilitator, Breathe Creative)

"It felt blissful to see people connecting through art and creativity." (Vishal Gaikwad, Ty Canna Outreach Service)



"Saying I can't is not the first option any more!"



"It makes me feel creative and connected to people."



## About Breathe Creative

We feel that there needs to be a wider recognition of the impact and benefits that the arts and creativity can bring to mental and physical wellbeing. We offer a strengths-based, person-centred approach, with the focus on wellness.

We facilitate Creativity for Wellbeing projects, sessions and training in Music and Voice, Visual Arts and Crafts, Dance, Drama, Creative Writing, Photography, Film and Animation. The aims of the sessions are to provide a meaningful focus, to increase self confidence, to build self esteem, to increase self awareness, encourage expression, develop interpersonal skills, increase activity, create social networks, to increase resilience and to improve wellbeing.

We prioritise working with people with low self confidence and self esteem, with people living with mental health issues, experiencing anxiety or depression, with people who are lonely, isolated or marginalised, with people who are experiencing loss, change, poverty, and other difficult experiences in their lives.

We also offer creative collaborative approaches for Community Development, working with groups, organisations and communities to create opportunities for positive change.

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