

START

“Great things
are done by
a series of
small things
brought
together.”

VINCENT VAN GOGH



TAYSIDE HEALTHCARE ARTS TRUST

Introduction...

In this Artists handbook we will explore the different techniques used to engage with participants during creative engagement sessions at Perth Royal Infirmary Stroke Unit.

The ST/ART programme is run by Tayside Healthcare Arts Trust in association with NHS Tayside.

Artist Alison Price worked in the unit supported by Activity Coordinator Willow.

This 8 week programme was a combination of one to one and group sessions which gave the opportunity for Alison to support individuals with thier own specific projects and to provide patients with a social group helping them get to know each other and build peer support through working together. The group have been great fun and incredibly supportive of each other

The small things that we do each week all add up to make a difference to each participant.

Ceramics



**"What am I
going to do with
this?"** 

That was the initial reaction of one of our group! and to be honest is what many people say when they first come to an art session.

For a lot of patients the art class is a new experience, but are curious enough to come along to try it. That's all it needs to make a start

We began with a cold, damp lump of clay. Clay is wonderfully tactile, each touch makes an impression and can alter the shape. Holding the clay in your hand and moving it around starts to suggest what it might become. Ideas begin to form and take shape.

Some of our participants are working with one hand and some are using both hands, some have a strong grip and others manage a light touch. We work with each individual to find the best way for them.

Pinch Pots



Pinch pots are traditionally made by holding a ball of clay in one hand and using the other hand to push into the clay and pinching the clay to make a bowl shape....the aim is to get an even thickness all round to make a balanced shape.

Its tricky if you are only using one hand!
But one of the skills that the participants get to practice a lot in the art sessions is how to adapt and learn to work with their abilities. Some find that their weaker hand can support the clay, others used their leg or a board as a support...so inventive!

Slab Building



Rolling out clay like pastry forms a slab which can then be shaped or moulded or decorated.

A piece of lace creates a beautiful pattern on the surface.

Drawing and stamping into the clay make a tree come to life

Another slab of clay was rolled into a cylinder. A base, handle....and a tail were added to make a mug that looks like a cat!

The next stage is to fire the pieces in a kiln ready to decorate



Glazing




The bird was made by joining two pinch pots together then adding the head and tail

Planning the decoration using drawing and playing with colour to help visualise how the piece will look.





A steady hand is needed for the decoration. Over the weeks these artists have become stronger and learned simple tips like taking deep breaths to help with control. A cup of tea helps too!

Its not until the pieces have had their final firing in the kiln that the colours will emerge.  Fingers crossed for the final firing

Personal projects

First marks can be daunting so we find ways to begin that feel manageable.

Using a stencil helps create an image either by using it to create a rubbing like in the leaf pattern, or by drawing around a cut out petal shape to form the flower.

Painting with ink and water colour to add colour.



This made a beautiful hand written Birthday Card.

Drawing and painting can help patients regain writing skills that may have been affected by their stroke



Two artists using the same materials, look how different they are. Both wonderfully individual

One follows the rhythms of a landscape full of colour.

The other is a journey through memories and emotions that arise while painting.



Even sitting at a bedside we can play around with materials and find creativity. With some clay wrapped in a rubber glove, this patient moulded it in her hand then saw a shape emerge..add a button and voila! A Fish!!

Drawing practice

Drawing from a photograph is a great way to copy shapes and colour. This pastel drawing has been built up with layers to produce rich colours



Progressing to drawing from real life brings a whole set of new challenges, and using the non dominant hand needs a lot of concentration. A fantastic result

Working over a number of weeks has shown how progress can be made from learning to work with a non dominant hand to being fully in control of that hand.

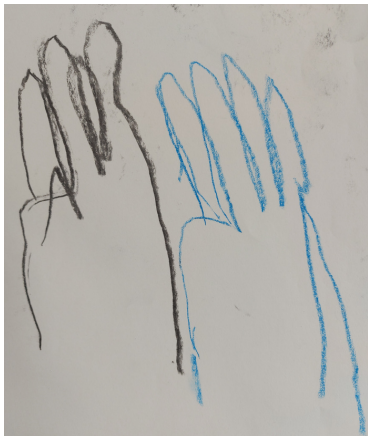
These techniques use lots of small steps;

- Using fine motor skills to pick up tools.
- Moving the tools round in your hand to get the contact you want.
- Varying the pressure to make different marks
- Noticing rhythms of movement and connecting the movement to the mark.

Lots of little adjustments go into coordinating the hand and eye and brain to produce a drawing or to build a pot.

The end result may be a beautiful piece of work, and time spent making art can be relaxing but all the little steps on the way help in so many other ways too.

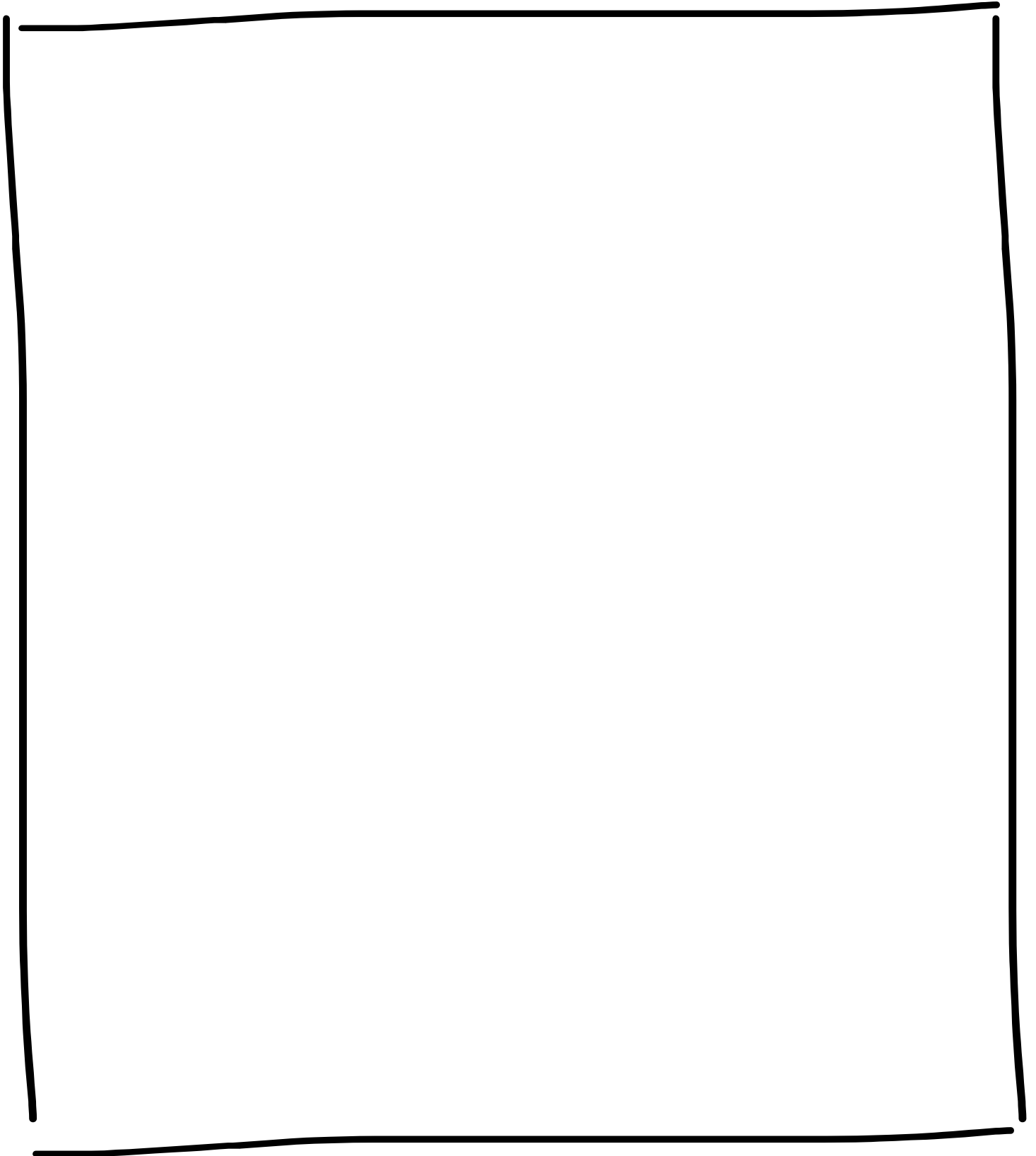
Previous participants have told us that handwriting, coordination and observation can all improve, bringing back confidence, communication and independence.



Blind Contour Drawing Challenge

Draw your own hand using your non dominant hand.....

while not looking at the page!





Some inspiration for you....

Artwork created by inpatients of Perth Royal Infirmary Stroke Unit Jan - Mar 2023

ST/ART programme delivered by Tayside Healthcare Arts Trust
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