

The healing powers of art. Participation in the arts boosts health and self-esteem.

Submitted by: VP Communications

Thursday, 30 October 2008

London, 30th October 2008 - A new Government study has determined that participation in the arts leads to significant improvements in health, boosts self-esteem and reduces feelings of isolation and exclusion. The study, commissioned jointly by the Department of Health and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, follows health secretary Alan Johnson's recent remarks that the therapeutic value of art should not be underestimated.

The findings will be especially resonant for disabled artists Keith Jansz and Trevor Wells. As members of the Association of Mouth and Foot Painting Artists (MFPA), a partnership in which artists with severe disabilities are enabled to support themselves through their work, both men have benefited immeasurably from their involvement with art. This year, they and their fellow artists in the MFPA will be spreading the healing influence of art still further through visits to people recovering from illness in hospitals and the distribution of Christmas cards featuring the work of MFPA artists.

The MFPA's purpose is to develop relationships with artists who having lost the use of their hands through accident or disablement at birth paint with the brush held in their mouths or between their toes. These amazing people have the opportunity to further develop their painting skills and support themselves through the sale of their work, primarily in the form of reproductions as greetings cards, calendars and other artworks.

About Keith Jansz

Keith Jansz was born in London in 1961. When he was ten, Keith won a school art competition, but athletics and football dominated his life. He did not paint again until two months before his accident, as a form of relaxation after running the London Marathon for Barnardo's. Keith broke his neck in a car accident in 1995 which left him paralysed from the chest down. He spent the next seven months in Stoke Mandeville Hospital before going home to adjust to a new way of life. A gift of the MFPA book 'Painters First' inspired him to meet Trevor Wells, who encouraged him to start painting by mouth. Such was his determination. Keith progressed rapidly, and was awarded full membership in 2000. He enjoys painting landscapes, particularly scenes of Venice, colourful still life and figures.

About Trevor Wells

Trevor Wells was born in Portsmouth in 1956. His passion has always been sport, which includes rugby, cricket, football and angling. On leaving school, Trevor started an apprenticeship in carpentry and joinery and started playing for Uxbridge Rugby Club. It was whilst playing for the club at the age of 21 that he broke his neck and became paralysed. After seven months at Stoke Mandeville Hospital, Trevor transferred to a long-stay disabled unit in Hillingdon, Middlesex. It was here that Trevor was introduced to painting (he is totally self-taught and has no formal training) and quickly found that he had a great talent. His pictures of snow scenes and landscapes are of a photographic quality and are very popular throughout the world. In 2000 he participated in the Convention of Delegates in Sydney, where he had the great honour to be elected to the Board of the Association.

About the MFPA

The Mouth and Foot Painting Artists is a commercial association of artists who earn their living by painting with a paint brush held in their mouth or between their toes. All of them have no use of their hands or arms through birth defects, illness or accident. They earn their living by selling reproductions of their work to the general public. Currently there are over 700 artists worldwide in over 70 countries. They were established in Britain in 1956 and there are currently around 47 artists here. For a bit more information here is their GB web site address www.mfpa.co.uk

For further information please contact:

Charo Moreno Pardo
Email: charo@vp-pr.com
Tel: 020 8964 0260