



Newsletter

MAY 2020



It is now almost two months since we started working from home and our project teams and artists began to put their heads together to come up with new ways of working during the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Today we are launching our At Home Together programme. We reflect on the first month of The After Party and share the plans for our new Arts & Ages project The View From Here.

AT HOME TOGETHER

Since mid-March, within the huge changes brought by Covid-19, we have been working with our partners and participants, to find new ways to meet, to make and to party, at a distance. Our name for this new programme is *At Home Together*.

We began to deliver this programme in April and currently plan to run it to Sept 2020. We are offering interesting, creative activities, which encourage interaction between people, and grow intergenerational understanding, while relieving social isolation and loneliness.

Our artists, who work in many different art forms, are creating and facilitating activities for people living individually, in families or in group care settings, where some staff support may be available. The programmes we have launched so far are:

The After Party: with Cocktails in Care Homes parties no longer possible, volunteers and residents at 9 care homes and extra-care schemes are being offered artist led activities with ways to interact: exchanging letters, artworks curated newsletters and online and phone meet-ups. Four artists are working on the project, each taking a month apiece to create activities on a loose theme. (see below for more information on how this has been running in April)

The View From Here: with our Arts & Ages participants, seven artists will create online and offline activities with schools, care settings and housing providers designed to maintain intergenerational relationships adapted to the current circumstances, but keeping in mind the original aims of each project (see below - launching this week).

Generation Rebellion, our annual women's project involving school students and older women living at home. This stage of the project will now be based around the creation of Zines on Climate Emergency. The two lead artists will facilitate activities both on/off line, via post and phone. The zines will bring together visuals and text and provide the basis for a later substantial project, now scheduled for the Autumn onwards.

Quality Street With the planned summer street party no longer able to take place, our Waltham Forest Community Steering group are commissioning an artist to create a remote, intergenerational festival experience.



Research & Development, Learning and Sharing the Learning

We have already learnt much from working on this new programme and we continue to pilot and experiment and fine tune what we offer and how we offer it. We are also in contact with many different organisations across the different areas we work in, including a partnership with NAPA (The National Activity Providers Association) to share what we have learnt and to learn from others.

Get Involved

We invite you to take part in the activities we are creating for our regular participants. These are being shared online through our social media, newsletters.

#BinAgeism

We have always seen our work as a form of activism against ageism (some readers will remember our #BinAgeism project) the current crisis creates even greater challenges. Through our communications plan we will continue to speak out against ageism, to amplify the voices of those locked in behind the walls of care homes (both residents and staff), and to work in alliance with others to create positive change.

Support for our Regular Participants

Our project teams have taken on new work as part of Magic Me's response to the crisis and we are providing support to our regular participants through stay in touch phone calls - where necessary we are signposting to other agencies eg Food Banks, Advice Lines according to individual needs.

So far At Home Together has been funded using confirmed project income, reworked with funders' consent. We are now fundraising urgently to help us continue with these vital projects for as long as is necessary.

We launch this project just as the 'Stay Home' message changes in England, but we believe that the At Home Together title will continue to be relevant for some time to come: many of our core 70+ participant group will choose to remain at home, or live in care homes, rarely going out, until such time as a medical solution to the virus is found. The project title serves to remind us that many people will remain in social isolation.

IN FULL SWING



This picture is of one of the residents of a care home in Dalston, she's made friends with volunteers from the Cocktails In Care Homes project who used to come regularly to parties at the home where she lives. Through the After Party she is able to send a message to those volunteers with one of our first The After Party activities from Mia Harris - sending a postcard to someone you miss.

You can find all the activities on our After Party web page at <https://magicme.co.uk/project/theafterparty/>

We also held our first 'Cocktail Hour' with fun party games involving drawing ourselves upside down and going on a virtual treasure hunt finding everyday objects around the house from clues given by Mia. The party-goers all played with the third of Mia's activities 'creating a colour scene' and in the video below you can see us dancing with some of our colourful objects!

THE VIEW FROM HERE

Arts & Ages is Magic Me's ambitious three-year programme, nurturing partnerships between primary schools and groups of older people in Tower Hamlets through the arts. By January 2020, Magic Me were working with 8 Arts & Ages partners, delivering weekly sessions bringing together younger and older people to create artworks that reflect what they have to say, and challenge perceptions of who they are, becoming active citizens in their communities. See our Arts & Ages page for full project details.



The View from Here is our response to the changing situations around the COVID-19 pandemic, and is a new format for Arts & Ages over the coming months. We aim to continue building long lasting relationships between schools and older people's venues, even if we are unable to meet in person. We will maintain existing Arts & Ages relationships and help connect communities during this uncertain time. The View from Here aims to ease social isolation for all ages through creative intergenerational exchange.

The picture in this section shows one of the last face to face sessions before lockdown. It is from the partnership between Duncan Court and Lansbury Lawrence Primary School.

GENERATION REBELLION ZINE

Generation Rebellion is an exploration of being an activist. As we enter the 2020s the Earth seems to be shouting at us about climate change, but how can we really make a difference? What could we do together as a group of intergenerational women that would get our voices heard? The project explores using art, writing, voice and drama to find out how to be a rebel, in quiet and noisy ways.



Throughout February and March 2020, a core group of students from Mulberry School for girls and older women from the local community met regularly to pool their skills, knowledge and questions on the climate emergency. Led by artists Sue Mayo and Elsa James they worked in small groups to create four collages capturing their sentiments on the current state of the environment; hopeful, angry, hopeless and activism. This initial stage of the project ended with a public workshop at Toynbee Hall Wellbeing Centre, where the group invited other women to contribute their ideas to the conversation. The core group were about to begin the next stage of Generation Rebellion building upon their ideas to produce a film and live performance. Due to the changing situations around COVID-19 this part of the project has been postponed until later this year.

What next? Generation Rebellion Zine

Magic Me has always been a pioneer, constantly innovating and adapting to change. We are using the Coronavirus emergency to learn even more about how we can connect people together and what we need to do to include everyone in a community. With this in mind, we have found a way for the groups to work remotely until we are able to meet again.

Our aim for the next few months is to create a Generation Rebellion Zine. The artists have put together a series of creative activities to be completed at home. We are sending these creative packs to the students and older women both digitally and via post, ensuring maximum accessibility. We will then collate the artworks into a zine (a DIY, hand-made mini-magazine).

Generation Rebellion Zine is funded by Foundation for Future London and Arts Council England

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Thanks to the generosity of many supporters Susan Langford, our Director and Founder reached her target to raise £1000 by undertaking the 2.6 Challenge. She was helped on her way by Ali Danesh to undertake to run 2.6 x 2.6 miles. The challenge was set up in lieu of the London Marathon and at 3pm on Sunday 26 April, Susan 'ran' past 26 landmarks on the London Marathon route (all within current government guidelines). After the run Susan published a quiz, on the Magic Me website, see if you can identify the 26 landmarks or why not host your own online quiz, have some fun and ask your friends to donate.

We would also like to say thank you to Play Dead London who asked the audience for their online inter-galactic murder mystery to donate to us in lieu of paying for a ticket. Thanks to their generosity over £200 was raised for Magic Me.

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