

"ART AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY CAN BE VITAL IN REBUILDING THAT LOST CONFIDENCE, AND CAN BE THE FIRST STEP IN LEAVING HOMELESSNESS BEHIND FOR GOOD."



Art in Crisis

rebuilding broken lives



MANY OF THE ARTISTS WHO EXHIBIT IN THE RCS GALLERY ARE PROFESSIONALS. OTHERS ARE AMATEURS. SOME ARE SCULPTORS, SOME PAINTERS, SOME PHOTOGRAPHERS. WE FEATURE A REMARKABLY DIVERSE RANGE OF ART FROM ALL ACROSS THE COMMONWEALTH. BUT IN MAY OF THIS YEAR, A TRULY UNIQUE COLLABORATION IS TAKING PLACE.

We will be exhibiting the art of homeless people involved in Crisis Skylight. An inspirational learning and activity centre for homeless and vulnerably housed people, Crisis Skylight offers practical and creative workshops including art, music and drama.

The centre, an initiative of Crisis – the national charity for single homeless people – also offers vocational workshops in bike maintenance and carpentry, accredited learning opportunities in literacy, numeracy, and IT, as well as tailored employment programmes. These are the kind of courses one might expect such a charity to provide. But how does art help homeless people? "Tackling homelessness is about much more than just putting a roof over someone's head," a Crisis spokesperson explained. "Homelessness is an isolating experience that can have severe effects on people's self confidence and skills. Art and creative activity can be vital in rebuilding that lost confidence, and can be the first step in leaving homelessness behind for good."

Dedicated to ending homelessness through campaigning for change and the delivery of innovative education, employment, housing and well-being services, Crisis helps people to transform their lives...



Grace

GRACE WAS ONE OF TEN CHILDREN LIVING IN A VIOLENT HOME. WITH DYSLEXIA AND A DISJOINTED HOME LIFE, SHE LEFT SCHOOL WITH JUST ONE GCSE. At seventeen, her family disintegrated completely. Grace found herself homeless, sleeping on friends' floors and living in a succession of hostels and refuges. Despite this, she was determined to better her education. She faced just one problem. If Grace returned to full-time education, she would lose her benefits and be forced to leave her hostel – a barrier to learning

faced by many homeless people. Unable to take the risk, Grace went to Crisis Skylight to study part-time within their Learning Zone. Before long, she had graduated with certificates in basic Maths and English. With new found confidence and qualifications, Grace is continuing her path into higher education.

The people who pass through the doors of Crisis Skylight also remind us that homelessness does not only affect people with little education, a troubled home-life or an addiction to drugs...



Alex

ALEX WAS WELL EDUCATED AND PROFESSIONALLY SUCCESSFUL, BUT IN THE ECONOMIC DOWNTURN, HE WAS MADE REDUNDANT FROM HIS JOB IN THE CITY. Before long, he found himself mired in debt and behind with his rent. He spent six months sleeping on friends' floors,

before he resorted to sleeping on the streets. Eventually, he found a place in a hostel. After coming to Crisis Skylight, Alex set himself on the road to recovery and out of homelessness. He is now employed in the Learning Zone as an IT tutor, using his time and skills to help other homeless people.

Currently operating in London and Newcastle, Crisis Skylight is recognised as a model of good practice by the Department of Communities and Local Government. Its results from the last year alone are impressive: 293 people achieved accredited qualifications, 213 people entered further education and employment, 57 people secured paid employment. Crisis now has ambitious plans to expand to Oxford and Birmingham.

Christine Cunnold, RCS Cultural Affairs Officer, expressed her delight at the opportunity to collaborate with Crisis Skylight. "I think it's really important for us, not only as an organisation, but as individuals, to work with charities like Crisis. On an average day walking around

central London, I'm stopped by at least three people fund-raising for charities and I feel it often makes us forget that charity work is not only about giving or handing out money. Charities like Crisis, help people to get back on their feet, either through qualifications or by expressing their experiences in art, music or drama. I think this idea is also at the core of the RCS – helping people to achieve their potential and opening their eyes to the world around them in whatever way we can."

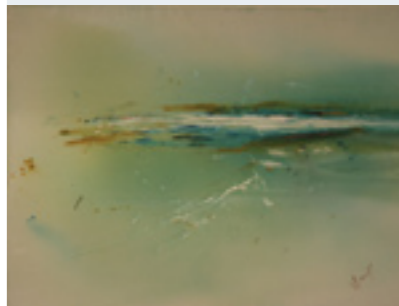
'The Art Crisis: art by London's homeless population' will run from 18 May to 19 June.

A private view will be held on Wednesday 20 May at 6.30pm.

UPCOMING EXHIBITIONS

Mozambique Mundo
Dream's journey and a fascinating destination
19 June – 31 July
Private View: Thursday 25 June, 7pm

This exhibition sees the RCS working with the Mozambique High Commission to bring some of the country's most exciting and innovative art to London. Upcoming young painters, photographers and sculptors will exhibit alongside some of Mozambique's most famous artists in what promises to be a stunning collaboration. Their work seeks to communicate the wonder of Mozambique – its lifestyle, its wildlife, its communities – to the rest of the world.



Members' lounge art (above)

Christine Cunnold, RCS Cultural Affairs Officer, says: "Whilst wandering through Greenwich market one Sunday afternoon I came across some art that I knew would be perfect for the Members' Lounge. Charles Borrell is the artist whose work is currently hanging for a period of six months. Inspired by 'the essence of change; the mood of the sea and its relationship with the sky', his paintings explore time, space and serenity. So why not take a moment to have a closer look at the art next time you are in..."

All paintings in the Members' Lounge are for sale.