

The Jubilee Arts Archive 1974-94

In 2014-15, artists from Laundry worked with Sandwell Archives to preserve and share the materials from Jubilee Arts, which had been deposited in 2002. In the spirit of the original arts group, we returned to the original locations across the borough, worked with groups in Tipton, Lion Farm, Langley, Smethwick and West Bromwich, offering curatorial and discussion workshops to explore the substantial materials.



This activity resulted in ten public events with bespoke related exhibitions. For example, we presented work at the 2014 May Day event with Sandwell Trades Council, even recreating a silkscreen poster from the same event in 1982, with the original artist present and undertaking a self-portrait workshop. We also did a traditional shadow puppet show. We worked with Tipton Local History Society to create workshops targeted at primary school children, offering an opportunity for them to explore archive and heritage material. The ancient technology represented by a Kodak Carousel 35 mm slide projections proved a big attraction. We joined with events at Rounds Green Library, with a little help from a ukelele band, made film and photo presentations in other libraries; we organised exploratory walks along the High Street of West Bromwich with Archives staff, based on old photographs from the collections images, with children and parents from Hall Green Primary.

The final exhibition was installed for two months in the exhibition space and Art Café on the ground floor of Central Sixth, in the centre of West Bromwich. Richard Franks designed the exhibition, utilising 1970s style graphics and typefaces.

This work was supported with funding from Heritage Lottery, Arts Council England, Community Development Foundation, and Local Area Budget from Sandwell Council.

Beverley Harvey co-ordinated the 2014-15 project. With great experience in community engagement projects, she had recently delivered a two year participation project aimed at nurturing and training volunteers with Women of Wolverhampton and Low Hill and the Scotlands Neighbourhood Partnership, Local Regeneration Partnership. She has undertaken several oral history projects with the Black and Asian communities in the West Midlands, and is an accredited assessor within the creative/cultural industries and an experienced trainer in the voluntary sector.

Artist interpretation and exploration

Brendan Jackson worked with a reminiscence group at Lion Farm, with additional sessions at Oakham Church.

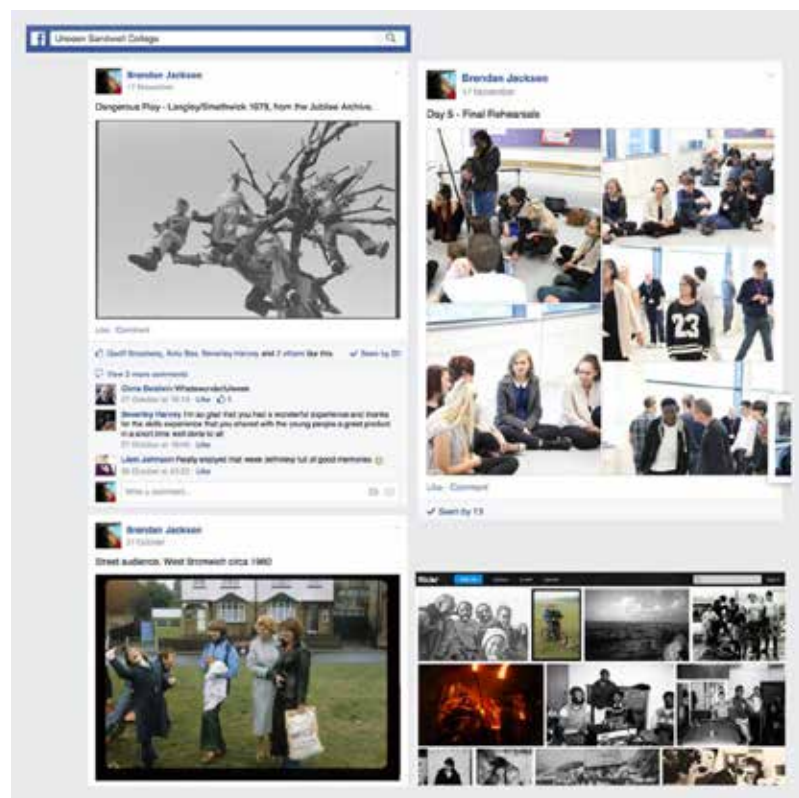
Together they created a pop up an oral history exhibition at Rounds Green Library for Black Country Day and a follow up exhibition and publication. Substantial materials were also gathered for additional use at pop up events in libraries. A souvenir newspaper was produced which documented and shared their process.

Material was also selected for showing at the Lighthouse Media Centre in Wolverhampton as part of the 'Black Country Echoes in Pictures' exhibition – photographs presented as a series of projections on walls. This show in Wolverhampton attracted an audience of 9,000 viewers over three months, benefiting from the overall publicity of the Festival.



Chris Baldwin worked with staff and new performing arts students at Sandwell College, in September and October 2014, to share his practice as a Theatre Director of site-specific work across Europe and his expertise as a Visiting Professor at Rose Bruford. Together they worked on a series of interpretations in response to archive photographs – and created a piece of guerilla street theatre on the High Street.

“When I was looking through the archive it seems so clear that one of the strong initiating impulses was just to encourage kids to start playing again, to celebrate the child. Now when you look back it seems so evident because so much theatre and drama in schools, in education and in training, is based on the concept of play. It’s been integrated into the way we think about education pedagogy and modern ways of problem solving. But back then it was just a hunch, the intuition that kids need to reconnect with the importance of play. So this became the theme of this work with Sandwell College, not to emphasise the curriculum or the importance of drama but to play with these young people and out of this start a dialogue about what interests us and see how we could extend that notion of play into a wider audience in the street.”
- Chris Baldwin



Geoff Broadway worked with groups at Tipton Library and Heritage Centre. In association with volunteers from Tipton Local History Society, two events were held for primary school groups to explore the archive materials. Geoff created a new moving image piece using archive materials, contemporary footage and reflections from local people. The piece was installed as an integral part of 'Portraits of Tipton – from the Jubilee Arts Archive', which was on show throughout September and October 2014 and promoted as part of the Black Country Echoes Festival.



Additional installations and slide shows were presented as part of Tipton Canal Festival. The exhibition was re-installed at Glebefields library for a further month. Glebefields reported an increase in visitors during the show – over 1,200. At Tipton, staff recorded 405 visitors to one pop-up event we held there, and an increase of over 700 visitors during the installation.



The film was re-edited and shown again a special film night in April 2015 at Central Library, West Bromwich.



Ania Bas worked in Langley with sessions with Friends of Rounds Green Library and an art class at Langley Lodge from September to end of November. She organised a series of walks with original participants to record thoughts and reflections. She took the theme of 'Dangerous Play' and offered a series of activities offering a chance to discuss issues surrounding participation, engagement, collaboration and play. She used original policy documents and interviews to produce a small exhibition and publication, which looks at these topics. This was launched at Lion Farm Xmas Fayre at the beginning of December, 2014.

"Working with the archive opened up a lot of timely questions for me. I had a chance to look into strategies of engaging with communities, where work and play with children was a key element of starting conversation and building trust with people. The documents found in the archive combined with visuals of the projects from early years of Jubilee Arts as well as with photographs from personal archives built a wholesome image of long-term engagement so different to the expectations these days of rapid results and instant changes.

I came across 'workers reports', testimonies from Jubilee Arts employees talking about their achievements, failures and hopes, It's been interesting to see that the question of work-life balance, ever growing administration tasks, inadequate pay, fundraising struggles, the remaining fraction of time dedicated to actual making and involvement were part of the life of practitioners in the seventies. The vocabulary have changed, the support for the arts diminished but the position of the artists remained precarious."

- Ania Bas

Dangerous Play Publication Launch

At Rounds Green Library

Friday, December 5th 10.30 am - 11.30am

A new publication constructed by artist Ania Bas, using documents and photographs from the Jubilee Arts Archive 1974-94, as well as a series of drawings and text from the members of the Art Club in Langley Lodge and The Library Reminiscence Group.

Come along for your free copy of the publication and join us for tea and cake.

Free event open to all. No need to book.
Rounds Green Library, Martley Road, Oldbury B69 1DZ



'Hide & Seek' by Margaret Everson







Dangerous Play Walk around Langley

Thursday, September 25th 11 am - 1pm

Meet in front of Rounds Green Library at 11am
Martley Road, Oldbury B69 1DZ
The walk will finish near Langley Green Train Station
The walk is an hour long.

You are invited to join for a walk with Steve Trow, one of the founders of Jubilee Arts. We will walk streets of Langley and map children's playgrounds of 70's where the work of Jubilee Arts started. Come to walk and talk about play, community, arts and good old 1970s!

Free event open to all with free lunch after the walk.



No need to book, just show up on the day.
For more info please call: 077 3160 9864







Helen Sweeting worked with a group of adults interested in photography – who had previously undertaken evening classes at Sandwell College. They met on Saturdays at the archives in Smethwick and spent many hours pouring over the negatives, slides and hand-printed photographs. There were detailed scrapbooks of articles and correspondence that were fascinating and full of anecdotes, which helped them contextualise the photographs. In response to the archive materials they created an installation at the library and archive. They were drawn towards certain photographs and themes in the work, of protest or play; these either triggered their own memories and personal interests or inspired them to go out to find these places and take contemporary photographs in response to the original materials. The exhibition ran for a month and included open sessions, with special tours of the archive led by the archivists.

“These photographs have an ‘age’ to them, a time-bound quality, tied up in the bold, vibrant colours of the slides themselves. They remind me of my early childhood; they seem very familiar, although I didn’t grow up in Sandwell, they trigger fond memories of play. One photograph features a girl of about seven years old and I recognise her outfit as one I had that was almost identical. I’m not sure if it is the style of the clothing that transports me back to this time, or if my own memories have been shaped by the photographs and slides that my parents took at the time. These have the same colour quality as the archive transparencies, which contemporary digital photographs just don’t have. Nostalgia and memory certainly play a huge part in the interpretation of an archive. Social documentary photographs conserve appearances; express feelings of the time and trigger memories in the viewer. This rich heritage is one that can be mined by generations to come for inspiration.”

- Helen Sweeting





Clockwise from top left: guided walk with local schoolchildren; West Bromwich town hall; events at Tipton Librray; exhibition opening at Rounds Green Librray; May Day, West Bromwich; Tibbington Tenants event; talk at Central Library, West Bromwich.



Final exhibition at Arts Cafe, Central Sixth, West Bromwich, April-May 2015.