



Annual Report

**1st August 2024
31st July 2025**

Dear Friends and Supporters,

This year has been filled with challenges and opportunities, including a move to our new home in Kentish Town and exhibiting our artwork at Cop29 in Azerbaijan. We are excited to share all that we have achieved as a community over this year, addressing mental health and social issues associated with trauma, isolation, poverty, and violence based on race, religion, sexuality, gender, and political conflicts.

Since 2014, New Art Studio has consistently provided a safe space and opportunities for collective dreaming, expression, solidarity and validation among our studio members, breaking down prejudices and stereotypes while fostering creativity and wellness.

We are proud to share a story by Amir, published in Foundation Voice produced by Arsenal FC, which highlights the transformative power of our community. Amir's journey is a testament to the hope and healing that our art therapy project can bring, with its creative approaches and practices. We thank Amir for sharing his story, and all of you for your ongoing support in our mission.



Click here to read Amir's story

<https://www.arsenal.com/community/stories/new-art-studio>



Big Changes - Highlighting Our New Home and Expanding Our Services

Following careful planning (and much searching!), in January 2025, we relocated to our new premises at the Kentish Town Community Centre in Camden. The move has significantly enhanced the services we can offer. The staff at KTCC have been incredibly welcoming and supportive in accommodating our transition. We now have a watertight and clean environment and a spacious room to make art which includes an outside garden area that members can enjoy through the seasons.

Following last year's successful pilot, we are now open two days a week; we run the original therapeutic art support group on Wednesdays, facilitated by two art psychotherapists, a volunteer and an art therapy student. On Fridays we run a peer-led support group directed by studio members with support from an art psychotherapist. This provides a follow-on service for members who want to develop new skills. We are proud that the New Art Studio, through a collaborative process with its studio members, has co-designed a programme that supports people's needs and addresses mental health and social challenges through personal contributions, as well as the collective exchange of experiences, skills and knowledge. We are very grateful to our funders for their support in this endeavour.

NAS helped me with my depression and anxiety. I made friends in the group, and support from the art therapists over the years has been vital. Art became my food and drink, and without it, I would not be able to survive.

For me, the most important thing is when we reflect together on what we did during the day. I enjoy listening to people's different opinions, perspectives, and showing each other's art.

Participation in Projects and Community Partnerships 2024-25



November '24

We were thrilled to showcase the Refugia exhibition at COP29 in Baku, proudly representing the UK Pavilion and Offices!

For the past three years, New Art Studio has collaborated with the Zoological Society of London on the Refugia project, earning two awards along the way. Our co-created workshops blend NAS's various art techniques with ZSL's insights and research on conservation, such as urban wildlife, forests, water, etc., exchanging valuable knowledge, experiences and skills between both communities.

This has been a great opportunity for me to learn about different groups who appreciate my skills and abilities.



December '24

This year, we focused on the theme of *creating change*, exploring the work of environmental artists and discussing science-backed solutions for biodiversity and climate issues, inspired by the COP29 meeting. Heartfelt thanks to Lucy Brown and Bethan Laughlin from the ZSL for their hard work and this inspiring workshop.

I love this place and experiences, seeing animals and talking about the planet, using art materials and painting on a subject with others.



December '24 to January '25

Despite the challenges presented by relocating, we managed to participate in the Connect 24 exhibition at the Art of Isolation Gallery. Thanks to curator and artist Rod Kitson <https://rodkitson.com/> for welcoming us into his artist community and for promoting our campaign, “Art To Me Is ...”, a fundraising activity to help us cover some of the relocation costs. We raised £2,590 through contacting our supporters and encouraging them to articulate why art is important to them. The results ranged from very humorous to profound and thought-provoking. We deeply appreciate everyone’s support and enthusiasm for the work we do.

It helped me connect with other artists outside of the studio and learn from them.

It feels like home when surrounded by good, creative people.



February '25

Our expanded service allowed us to open our second day in February. This provides a space where studio members have the opportunity to take the lead in our community practice. It offers ongoing support, honouring lived experiences and stages of healing, while facilitating social integration and skills development. The transition from a long-term art therapy support group to a peer-led group that fosters empowerment, autonomy and leadership is a significant milestone in our member’s journey and in our studio practice.

I’m learning how to communicate more effectively, develop my skills, improve my patience, build trust, and support others.

In solidarity with our shared sadness, the group has become a place where we can talk and paint together.

I dream of having a future job where I deliver art sessions.

The group helps me stay positive and express my sadness and hope through art making.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to Louise Holstein and Maggie Warren from Mike's Table, a Social Enterprise, for their generous support and invitation to their events throughout the year. These events support our studio members in building social confidence and a sense of belonging through shared experiences with others. Since July, our studio members have been able to access LSE Legal Clinic services, thanks to Mike's Table. This has been a great opportunity to expand New Art Studio's network of resources and support our members!



I hope to have another chance to go. I felt so welcomed and appreciated. It was also good for me to practise speaking English with others.

Mike's Table - <https://www.mikes-table.org/>

Refugee Week



June '25

This year, we invited the public to the Studio Open Day for the first time. Our friendly artists hosted workshops for people from the local community where they could paint, draw or enjoy a cup of tea. The theme this year was *Community as a Superpower*, which served as a great reminder of what we can achieve together. This event, filled with creativity and the warmth of human connection, left a lasting positive impact on all of us and has inspired us to do it again!

It was amazing to have people come to our new studio and see my and others' art - they loved it. This was the first time I showed my artwork. It made me feel proud.

We attended a screening at the Maritime Museum, where one of our artists' works have been included in the museum's private collection. Being part of this event was profoundly moving, as we witnessed how other artists used their creativity to give voice to their experiences in their longing for connection and understanding.

It was a rollercoaster of emotions watching stories about people like me and what I lived through. It was very inspiring, and I hope to share my story one day.



We set up a market stall at the Exchange Community in North Paddington alongside other creatives. This has been an opportunity for some of our artists to show and sell their work and to engage with New Art Studio's efforts to promote our charity events, aimed at raising awareness about the challenges faced by refugees, promoting the importance of community and creativity, and highlighting the skills and talents that refugees and asylum seekers bring to our country.

It was a great thing to do as a community, and I was more confident in helping others, setting up a stall and talking to the public.



July and August '25

Studio members from the Peer-Led Day Group were invited to deliver a creative workshop in collaboration with ZSL scientists to engage other communities in their educational programme. This is something that NAS and ZSL have been planning to do for some time, and we were thrilled when an opportunity presented itself this summer. This is a significant step towards creating both volunteer and paid opportunities for our members to facilitate and share their skills and talents with others, serving as artists and community leaders. One of the workshops engaged the Adult Walking Group, exploring the theme of Frogs. The other workshop was for Families and Children, exploring the theme of animals and protection using the ZSL's scientific research and NAS's creative techniques to engage both groups with workshop themes.

Teaching others using an artistic vocabulary that I usually don't use has been an empowering experience for me. Everyone was engaged, and I look forward to planning our next workshop.

The group workshop was a great success. This was my first experience teaching, and it gave me valuable insights to make future ones even more inspiring.

A Studio Member's Journey

Elma's trauma is deeply reflected in her artwork, where she obsessively paints portraits of "free women" as a way to explore the devastating loss and grief she feels for the life she cannot have in her home country. As a single mother who suffers from depression and PTSD, Elma finds it challenging to trust others and build relationships.

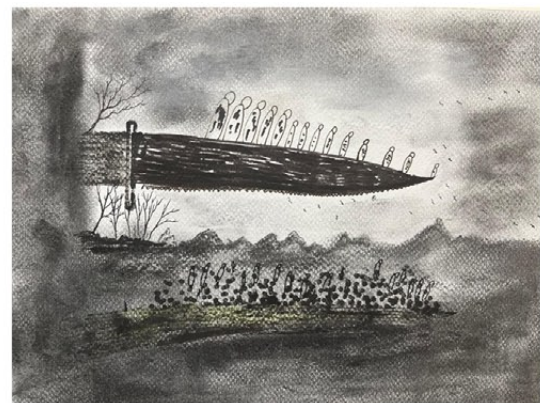
With encouragement from the art therapist, Elma took on the role of peer leader and began facilitating the peer-led group. Initially, she struggled to understand how her new role could positively impact the group and doubted her worthiness for the position.

Initially, she would handle all the tasks alone, feeling uncomfortable delegating responsibilities to others or asking for help. With support and guidance from the art therapist, Elma gradually developed an understanding that sharing responsibilities with her peers allowed others to contribute to the group, delivering sessions and providing valuable input, which contributed to its success. This includes tasks such as opening and closing the studio on time, budgeting resources for travel and food, preparing refreshments, organising art materials, and scheduling dates for others to practice teaching skills, etc.

Some peers would arrive at the sessions feeling stressed, and Elma would welcome them, listen calmly, and gently encourage them to use art-making to help soothe and express themselves. With each session, Elma's engagement with her peers and sense of shared responsibility grew, creating a relaxing, friendly and positive environment. Elma's new role allowed her to trust herself more, share her skills with others, and also helped her learn new ones, making her feel more capable. During this period, Elma completed her GCSEs and teaching assistant training, volunteered at ZSL, and is in a "getting back to work" program outside of the studio.

"This group has made me feel stronger in building relationships with others. I have learnt how to communicate better and listen to others. It has helped me develop a positive attitude about myself, increased my motivation, and improved my social skills."

Artworks by Members





In community-based art therapy, we look both outward and inward. We engage in a collective dream where our hopes, histories, current realities and new pathways for the future come to life.

When people are engaged in a community, we don't just create art together – we are connecting to the larger whole to honour shared experiences. This practice allows us to see, feel and participate in the world around us, dissolving the paralysing power of fear and despair that can keep us isolated and separate.

Your support and efforts have been instrumental in helping us deliver this work and make the world a better place. We couldn't have done it without you. Once again, thank you on behalf of all of us from New Art Studio.



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New Art Studio is a registered charity No. 1192463

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