We’re devoting this PrisonerActionNet Spotlight to exploring how and why to encourage prisoners to take up or keep up an interest in the visual arts. Examples of visual arts projects are listed below, along with the topic for this month’s forum discussion, a request for your project examples, and more.

PRISONERS’ IDENTITY

The visual arts can greatly benefit prisoners and offenders. As well as developing creative skills, artistic programmes can help prisoners to reflect on and express their emotions and past experiences. Some take the opportunity to explore their crime and its impact on others.

In addition visual arts can help offenders foster a sense of discipline about creating something. Artists need to be in charge of their feelings and have an awareness of what other people are interested in, especially if they are producing work for public display... (more)

FORUM DISCUSSION

On the forum this month we’ll be discussing: What are the difficulties in displaying prisoners’ art and how can they be overcome?

Please share your thoughts on the PrisonerActionNet FORUM by clicking here

EXAMPLE OF THE MONTH

PhotoVoice’s Shutter Release project
PhotoVoice delivered eight full-day workshops with a group of prisoners approaching release. The course consisted of technical photography skills, visual literacy and storytelling through images, and group discussion of issues involved in preparing for, and dealing successfully with release from prison. The prisoners were given ROTL (day release) to take part in this project over the two weeks of workshops. Read more about the project on PrisonerActionNet.
### MEMBER OF THE MONTH

**Lucy Blackmore**, Open Learning Tutor, HMP La Moye

HMP La Moye received a commendation for best single initiative at The Good Prison Award for the Identity project. The Identity project encourages prisoners to take up creative and educational activities, to follow courses, and to present their work to the public annually at the Inside Out exhibitions in local art galleries. ([more](#))

### FROM LUCY’S PRISONERACTIONNET PROFILE:

**What inspires you?** ‘Seeing the prisoners achieve something they haven't managed before.’

**What’s the most important thing you've learnt?** 'That each person’s level of achievement is their own. When I worked in schools there was a focus on getting grades A-C rather than seeing that a D could be a huge achievement for an individual. At the prison I have learnt that I can focus on one-to-one achievements...' ([more](#))

### MORE VISUAL ARTS PROJECTS WORKING IN PRISONS

**HMP Parc's Art of Living project**

This is a programme of six 3-hour sessions using artistic activity to motivate prisoners of 18 years and over to improve their self-awareness and so more readily engage with other interventions promoting desistance from offending and encouraging fulfilling lives. The visual approach of this programme makes it accessible to people with limited basic skills, or with high levels of resistance to other interventions. It focuses on the person’s strengths rather than their failings and offences... ([more](#))

**HMP/YOI Doncaster’s Arts and Media Department**

The aim of the Arts and Media Department at HMP/YOI Doncaster is to improve prisoners’ confidence and self-esteem, provide skills that increase employability, strengthen ties between prisoners and their families, and explore issues that may be contributing to a prisoner’s offending behaviour... ([more](#))

**HMP Pentonville’s Freedom of Art/Release project**

The Freedom of Art/Release project aims to provide purposeful activity to some of the most vulnerable prisoners suffering from mental health problems by offering a range of activities to promote self-awareness, build confidence, address offending behaviour, alleviate stress and anxiety, and enable prisoners to tap into creative abilities in a nurturing and non-threatening environment... ([more](#))

---


Use #prisonersart to participate in this month's discussion

**FOLLOW @PRISONERNET**

**NEWS**

Invitation to the opening of Art in Crisis – The Exhibition
A showcase of painting, sculpture, printmaking and photography by people
Visit PrisonerActionNet for more visual arts projects for prisoners and ex-offenders.

YOUR EXAMPLE

Do you know of or are you involved in a visual arts project working in a prison or with ex-offenders such as those listed above? Please let us know:

- What did the project aim to achieve?
- What activities did the project involve?
- What would you say the project has achieved?
- Has the project been assessed or evaluated?
- Are there any other aspects of the project you would like to tell us about?

Please reply to this email or email amyd@lemosandcrane.co.uk

Theatre Nemo has explored HMP Barlinnie’s history and will present their findings through visual art and storytelling on 13 and 20 July.

SURVEY

Would you spend 5-8 minutes to be a part of an important research project The Mark Leonard Trust and The Monument Trust have commissioned on ‘The Art and Science of Project Engagement’?