

This New Ground



ANNUAL REPORT

2022/23



www.thisnewground.com
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WHO ARE WE?

This New Ground is an ambitious initiative with hubs in Hammersmith & Fulham and the City of Portsmouth. We seek to elevate the artistic voices and talents of people with learning disabilities.

WHAT WE DO

We offer opportunities for people to lead, make and participate in the arts. We deliver high-quality co-created creative opportunities for people to make and share art as widely as possible.

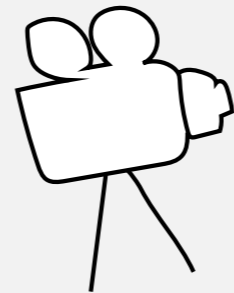
THE DIFFERENCE WE MAKE...

We support people to gain new skills and experience, grow aspirations, work with new people and move onto new opportunities.



**WE ARE THIS NEW GROUND COLLECTIVE.
WE ARE HUMAN BEINGS,
A COLLECTION OF ARTISTS AND CREATIVE PEOPLE.
WE'RE A TEAM, WHO COME TOGETHER
TO LEARN AND HAVE FUN.**

**WE HAVE HIDDEN TALENTS.
WE MAKE ART ABOUT THE UPS AND DOWNS.
THE DIFFICULT STUFF AND THE STUFF THAT GIVES HOPE.
WE'RE HERE. WE CELEBRATE.
WE ARE OURSELVES.**



OUR STORY SO FAR...

We began in 2015 in Hammersmith & Fulham as a choir - a response to gaps in provision for adults with learning disabilities. We quickly grew into a thriving creative hub, with local learning disabled voices at its heart.

Over the last 8 years 250 people have participated in our activities. Our artists have taken part in 20 performances reaching 8300 people. Past partners include Associate Community Company at Bush Theatre; research partner at LAMDA; Associate Artist of the Hammersmith & Fulham Arts Fest and Joy Festival.

Facing the exclusion and isolation of the pandemic, This New Ground grew in ambition, developing creative inclusivity and resilience, widening opportunities for learning disabled adults to create and participate in their communities.

Today, This New Ground has extended its reach and impact by establishing a second hub in the City of Portsmouth. We're offering new opportunities for under-provisioned adults with learning disabilities to engage with excellent cultural experiences, creative activities and place-based community projects.

For This New Ground, this is an opportunity to touch more lives and to put learning disabled artists at the heart of our work, shaping everything we do.



KEY STATS 2022/23

- 65 people with learning disabilities participated in our creative activities.
- We supported 36 artists with learning disabilities develop their skills, creative independence and audience reach,
- We have held 4 large scale exhibitions of art work by artists with learning disabilities as part of mainstream festivals and spaces - Riverside Studios, We Shine Festival, Aspex & Gunwharf Quays.
- Our artwork reached over 5000 people.
- Our inclusive arts committee gave presentations to 7 local art organisations in Portsmouth.
- 5 artists with learning disabilities participated in creative facilitation training, subsequently securing paid work roles.
- We developed our Easy Read design programme, giving paid work to 2 co-design and proof reading advisors with learning disabilities.

OUR TEAM



**NATHALIE RUSSELL CLARKE
FOUNDER AND CO-DIRECTOR**

Nathalie is a neurodivergent practitioner, who has extensive experience working with neurodiverse participants.

Nathalie is a theatre-maker, arts facilitator and arts-based researcher. She graduated from LAMDA in 2011 with BA(hons) in Acting and went on to work professionally as an actress. She has a MA with distinction in Inclusive Arts Practice from the University of Brighton. Nathalie founded This New Ground in 2015.

**LUCY GROENEWOUD
CO-DIRECTOR**

Lucy is an artist, designer and facilitator.

She has a BA(hons) in Graphic Design from Central Saint Martins and a MA with distinction in Inclusive Arts Practice from the University of Brighton. Organisations Lucy has worked with as an inclusive art facilitator include; Rocket Artists, Culture Shift, Recovery Partners, Grace Eyre, Speak Out, Mencap, YMCA, Fabrica Gallery, First Base, JustLife, Articulate, and The Hummingbird Project. Lucy began working with This New Ground in 2017 and became Co-Director in 2021.



**LABAKE ANISERE
MUSIC DIRECTOR**

Labake is a neurodivergent singer, actor and artist.

She has been a member of This New Ground since 2018. Labake was instrumental in developing our new singing group in 2023 and leads the group as musical director. She is passionate about opportunities and inclusion for people with learning disabilities in Hammersmith & Fulham. She volunteers weekly on reception at Creighton Centre. Labake is also a member of The Gate community centre in the borough, where she co-hosts Gate Custard, an online radio programme.

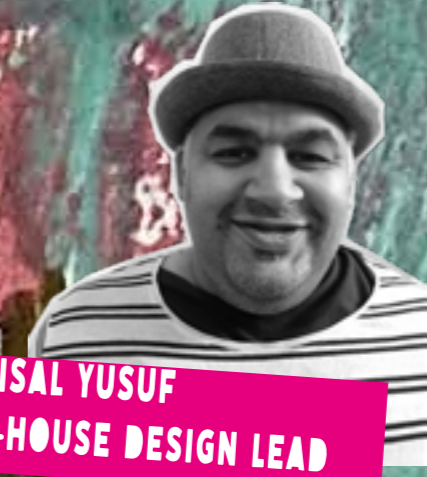


**ORLANDO RICHARDSON
DESIGN CONSULTANT**

Orlando is a London based autistic neurodivergent artist, illustrator and designer.

Orlando's main specialist areas are in drawing, printing, collaging and digital artwork. He is currently developing his practice skills in the Fine Art and Printing industry, having recently completed his MA in Illustration from University of Portsmouth, following on from a BA and Foundation Degree in Graphic/Communication Design at Northbrook College in Sussex.

Orlando is now developing his career as a printmaker, portraitist and illustrator, while working independently. He is currently working on building his skills in various printing techniques while building up a body of work as a commercial artist.



**FAISAL YUSUF
IN-HOUSE DESIGN LEAD**

Faisal is a neurodivergent designer, illustrator and artist.

He has been a member of This New Ground since the organisation first started in 2015. He is also a member of Blue Sky Actors the resident theatre company at Stratford Circus Art Centre for actors with learning disabilities. For 2 years Faisal was chairman of Safety Net: People First, which is a self advocacy group, supporting people to have their voices heard. Faisal has experience campaigning in Hammersmith & Fulham for people with learning disabilities. He is a representative on the partnership board where he meets commissioners and councillors, working to improve services for people in his borough with learning disabilities.



DEVELOPING CO-LEADERSHIP

This New Ground is working towards transitioning from cultural participation to 'cultural ownership', redistributing artistic leadership among communities.

In Portsmouth we are developing our Inclusive Arts Committee, comprised of 12 neurodivergent adults who have taken part in our programmes. We are nurturing their leadership skills to guide our organisation into the future.

In London we develop projects with our neurodivergent collective, who form our steering group.



**THIS NEW GROUND CHRISTMAS
CONCERT AT BUSH THEATRE LONDON**



WHAT WE DID 2022/23

HIGH VIS

We shared our **High Vis sculpture** – co-created with artist Jason Wilsher - Mills at innovative and prestigious arts space Riverside Studios as part of Joy Festival 2022.

“HAVING OUR SCULPTURE AT RIVERSIDE STUDIOS MEANT WE COULD SHARE OUR TALENTS WITH MANY PEOPLE. WE WANT PEOPLE TO SEE HOW IMPORTANT DISABLED PEOPLE ARE IN HAMMERSMITH AND FULHAM AND HOW MUCH WE CAN BRING TO THE COMMUNITY. SHOWING OUR WORK AT RIVERSIDE MEANT LOTS OF PEOPLE SAW OUR WORK. I FELT LIKE A PROFESSIONAL ARTIST WITH OUR SCULPTURE ON SHOW.”

- Faisal TNG Artist

LOCKED IN

We held the premiere of our co-created film **Locked In - Our Lockdown Story** at Riverside Studios with a Q & A led by This New Ground participants. The film was a result of our oral history project exploring the impact of the pandemic on people with learning disabilities.

Locked in was accepted as an official entry to national and international film festivals including the Bristol Radical Film Festival and the 8th Hungarian Disability Film Festival.

“THE RIVERSIDE TEAM WERE HUGEY PROUD TO SHOWCASE THIS NEW GROUND COLLECTIVE’S CREATIVE AND INNOVATIVE SHORT FILM, LOCKED IN (OUR LOCKDOWN STORY) + Q&A. PROGRAMMED INTO SCREEN 1, OUR LARGER CINEMA. THE FILM SCREENED AS PART OF OUR MONTHLY SERIES – SCREEN SPOTLIGHT WHICH CHAMPIONS UNDER-REPRESENTED VOICES IN FILM. THE POST-SHOW DISCUSSION GAVE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE CREATIVES INVOLVED TO HAVE A UNIQUE PLATFORM TO DISCUSS THEIR EXPERIENCES OF THE PANDEMIC WHICH WERE NOT DISCUSSED ENOUGH IN THE MAINSTREAM.”

- Olivia Neilson, Development and Community Manager Riverside Studios

WE RISE

We Rise was This New Ground’s flagship project in Portsmouth - an opportunity for TNG to launch a new hub and establish roots in the city.

22 Local learning-disabled artists joined forces with acclaimed digital artist, Jason Wilsher-Mills to co-create **We Rise Sculpture**. It’s an expression of vibrancy, pride visibility from leaning disabled artists.

We collaborated with leading arts organisations in Portsmouth, including Aspex Gallery, Victorious Festival and Portsmouth Creates. We Rise sculpture was exhibited as part of We Shine Festival 2022 and at Gunwharf Quays in March 2023.

“Be Kind” an animation created during the project by artist Caroline was short-listed for this years Artworks Together exhibition and featured in their online gallery.

[Here’s the link to animations created by our artists.](#)



INCLUSIVE ARTS COMMITTEE

Over a 12 week leadership development programme we created Portsmouth’s first ever inclusive arts committee

13 committee members developed models of leadership. They created films to share ideas of shaping an inclusive cultural landscape in the city shaping an inclusive landscape in Portsmouth City.

The committee shared their learnings and films with local arts organisations, including Portsmouth Creates, Victorious Festival, Aspex Gallery, Crying Out Loud and Portsmouth City Council.

[You can view our films here.](#)

“BEING PART OF THE INCLUSIVE ARTS COMMITTEE HAS BROUGHT OUT MY CONFIDENCE. ITS PUT OUT THE ARTWORK OF PEOPLE LIKE US WITH A LEARNING DISABILITY TO FOR PEOPLE TO SEE. IT’S NICE TO SHOW THEM THAT THIS IS US AND THIS IS WHAT WE CAN DO AND THIS IS WHAT WE WOULD THEM TO UNDERSTAND WHAT WE HAVE BEEN DEALT WITH IN OUR LIVES.”

Emma - Inclusive Arts Committee member

“A LOT OF PEOPLE BOUGHT IN TO OUR PRESENTATION AND HOPEFULLY WE’LL BE ABLE TO GET OUR POINTS ACROSS AND SOME BIG THINGS WILL CHANGE IN THE CITY.”

Cam - Inclusive Arts Committee member

COMMON GROUND

We set up Common Ground - a weekly peer led choir and art sessions based at Creighton Centre in Hammersmith for 20 artists with learning disabilities. The choir supports members to develop their facilitation and leadership skills, developing confidence and employable skills.

“I LOVE BEING A CHOIR DIRECTOR. I FEEL CONFIDENT LEADING THE WARM UP EXERCISES AND PROUD THAT I AM LEADING THE GROUP TO SING. I CAN’T WAIT FOR OUR SHOW AT BUSH THEATRE IN DECEMBER.”

Labake - TNG member and music director



YOUNG PEOPLES SUMMER WORKSHOPS

5 Members of our Inclusive Arts Committee co-delivered digital workshops to 7 young people from Portsmouth Down Syndrome Association over 2 days at D- Day Museum Portsmouth. The young people were able to gain their Discover Arts Award.

EASY READ DESIGN SERVICES

We set up our Easy Read Design consultancy, up-skilling 2 artists with a learning disability as paid co-designers and proof readers. Clients include Jerwood Arts, Riverside Studios and Toucan Diversity.



THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS

The Arts Council, The National Lottery, The National Lottery Heritage Fund, City Bridge Trust, The Daisy Fund, Portsmouth City Council, Hammersmith and Fulham Council, The Daisy Trust, Hammersmith United Charities, Local Giving, Hornchurch Fund.

Portrait illustrations: Faisal, Emma, Tara, Richie, Kelly, Labake

Illustrations: Faisal Esther, Tara

Design: www.lucygroenewoud.com