

ANNUAL REPORT

2020

Draw On

Art Therapy and Education



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Our Story

The seeds of Draw On were sewn back in 2016 when Art Therapists Emily Hollingsbee and Katie Miller met as volunteers in the former unofficial refugee camp known as the 'Jungle' in Calais. Alongside a team of nurses, social workers and youth practitioners both art therapists facilitated weekly creative activities with a focus on wellbeing with separated children and young people living in the camp.

In 2017 Emily and Katie became co art therapists once again working for an art therapy NGO in Ritsona refugee camp in Greece, facilitating art therapy groups for men, women and children living in the camp.

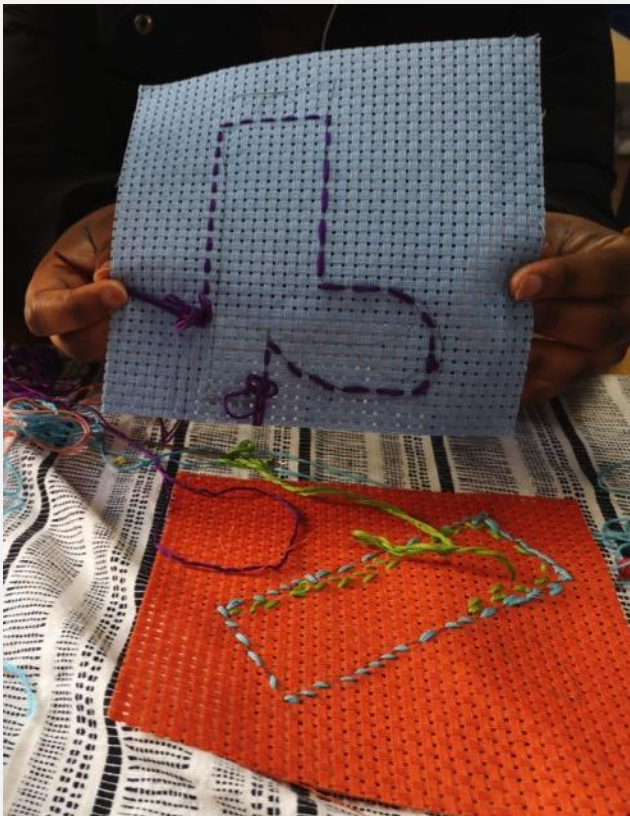
In both Calais and Greece, Emily and Katie witnessed the incredible power that art making within a group setting can have on people's emotional wellbeing.

They returned to the UK with determination to create art therapy spaces people that have been forced to leave their homes due to war, persecution, socio-economic factors and claim asylum here in the UK.

Draw On was founded in June 2019 and in the same year was granted the Mayor of London's Culture Seeds fund. This funding went towards the first Draw On project, 'Community Threads' and was in partnership with Hackney Migrant Centre (HMC). The project provided an art therapy group for refugees, migrants and those seeking asylum in the UK.

What we do

*Your art therapy
groups helped my
'mind feel free
and relaxed'*



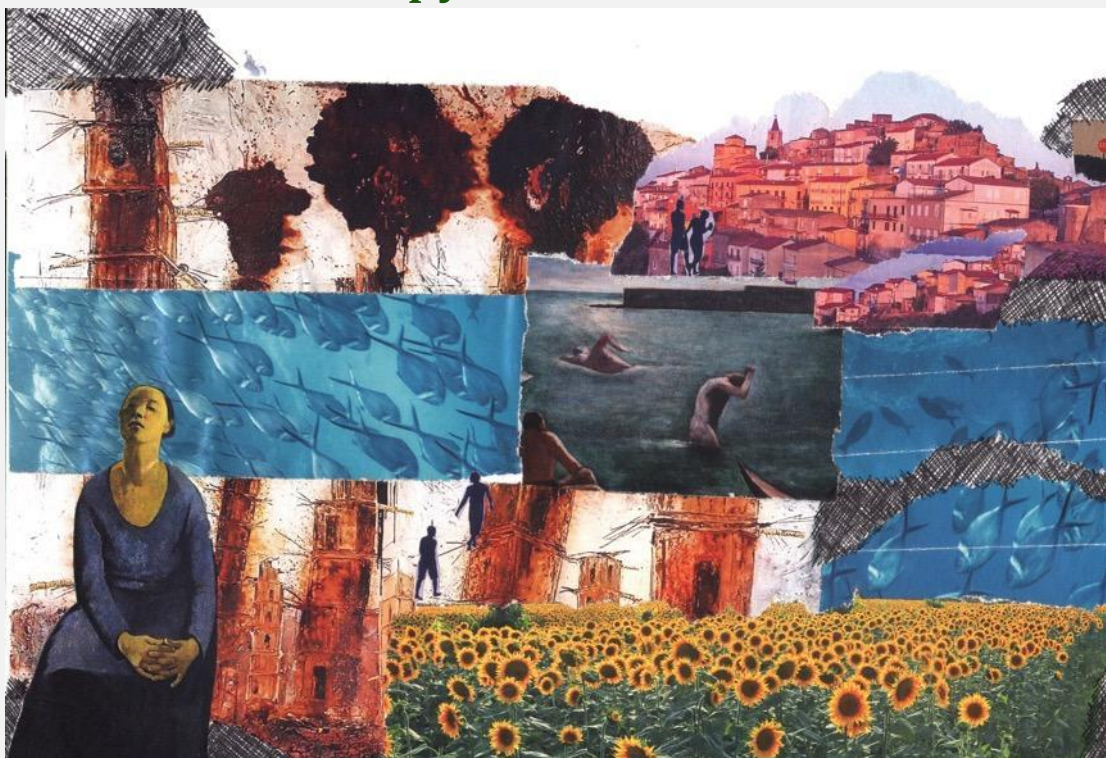
Draw On is a not for profit organisation that uses art therapy with adults and children who have been displaced due to war, persecution or socio-economic factors.

With over 10 years experience of working with those who have been displaced Emily and Katie have witnessed how art therapy has the ability to awaken creativity, encourage the feeling of being connected to others, promote self-esteem and support people in making sense of their thoughts, feelings and experiences.

Our approach is focused on being inclusive this means that we work to create a culturally sensitive, safe space that meets the needs of the participants by addressing social, emotional and psychological factors.

We recognise the importance of sharing our experiences and skills to support others in their work. Draw On therefore facilitates workshops that demonstrate the power of art making and it's ability to highlight and reinforce resilience. These workshops have been delivered in universities and benefit those with an interest in using art with people who have experienced trauma. Draw On has also developed and carried out creative, psychoeducational self-care and wellbeing workshops to volunteers and staff working in refugee camps. These groups provide a space for reflection, discussion and connection with others to address areas such as burn out and compassion fatigue.

About Art Therapy



Art therapy is both a talking and non-verbal form of psychotherapy that uses art making as its primary mode of communication. It is facilitated by trained art therapists, which can provide the opportunity to communicate past and present experiences through the art making processes and images. It offers a safe, consistent and confidential space to become absorbed in art making, to imagine, play and connect with self and others.

Art making can encourage discovery, agency and provide respite from difficult circumstances and negative thoughts. Research has shown that art making with a trained art therapist can promote feelings of self worth and bolster resilience.

We believe that group art therapy offers people a supportive environment where commonality can be experienced, reducing feelings of loneliness, isolation and depression. Draw On's art therapy groups aim to encourage community, connection and solidarity through the art making and being alongside others. It is within these groups that the voice of those who have survived persecution, oppression and alienation is heard, witnessed and valued.

The Team

We are Katie Miller and Emily Hollingsbee, HCPC accredited and DBS registered Art Psychotherapists.

Emily Hollingsbee



Emily is an artist, poet, author, clinical supervisor and HCPC registered art psychotherapist.

Emily's own art making led her into the art therapy profession. Over the years of her career she has developed her therapy into a trauma informed practice that encompasses breath work, play and story telling.

Emily's experience in facilitating art therapy groups led to a keen interest in how groups can offer psychological support. Emily worked for 18 months in a refugee camp in Greece where she was lead art therapist developing and facilitating art therapy groups for men, women, young people and children. It was during this work that she came to understand the value of a supportive group and community. In Greece Emily co-developed self-care workshops to deliver to volunteers and workers in the refugee camp, these workshops informed Emily's training in Psychoeducation, working with trauma, and her clinical supervision approach. After returning to the UK Emily contributed to the IJAT publication

with a research paper exploring a mural she had co-facilitated during her time in the Greek refugee camp.

Emily has delivered workshops and held a guest lecturer position at a leading London University. She continues to research and share her work within her writing and teaching to encourage others to explore the use of art making when supporting others.

Katie Miller



Katie is an Artist, Arts Educator and HCPC registered Art Psychotherapist who has directed her art making towards collaborative projects and participatory art making. Katie has worked as an art therapist and community artist with vulnerable adults and young people in London, Brighton, Ecuador, Greece and France.

In her final year of training as an art psychotherapist, Katie spent her time between London and Northern France facilitating art workshops for separated children and young people in the refugee camp formally known as the 'Jungle'. It was through this experience that her practice moved to working predominately with refugee communities and those seeking asylum.

Her work with those who have fled war and persecution in their home countries and on their journeys to safety has led her research and learning to understanding the impact of trauma on the brain, body, emotions and behavior in children, adolescents and adults. Although psychologically informed, the art is at the heart of her practice, Katie is fascinated by the potential of art making and art materials to transcend the confines of language, draw on peoples autonomy and resilience and encourage healing and growth. Her personal and professional experience has shown her that through art, people can escape isolation and find connection with others and their experience of the world.



*"Alone we can do so
little; together we can
do so much"*

Helen Keller

Partnership

Draw On works in partnership with existing organisations to ensure a safe and resourceful service that shares professional experience and expertise.

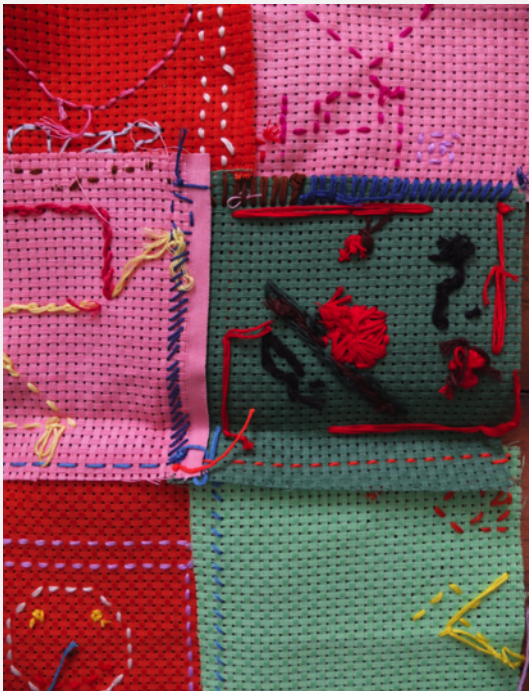
In 2019 Draw On received a grant from the Mayor of London's Culture Seeds and partnered with Hackney Migrant Centre. With this funding we created our first project 'Community Threads' which provided a creative art therapy group for refugee, migrants and those seeking asylum in the UK.

Hackney Migrant Centre (HMC) run a valuable housing, immigration and welfare advice service for refugees, asylum seekers and migrants in London. Many of the people seeking advice at HMC are not permitted to work or claim benefits, which can leave families and individuals homeless and destitute. When people arrive at the day center they are often feeling isolated, stressed and anxious. Draw's On's partnership with HMC was created in order to help alleviate these difficult feelings by encouraging participation in a communal sewing and embroidery group.

Hackney Migrant Centre (HMC) runs a weekly drop-in advice service with the help of volunteers and professional advisers. You can find more information on their website www.hackneymigrantcentre.org.uk.

Community Threads 'really improves the atmosphere to be less like a waiting area and something communal. It fills the waiting time with something enjoyable; Visitors were able to enjoy time in reflection and concentration; Calmer "brighter" feel to the space'

HMC staff member





Community Threads



Community Threads was an eight-week pilot project where Draw On held a creative table inviting visitors at Hackney Migrant Centre's to join together in sewing and embroidery. Over the eight-week project, 80 men, women and children created an array of images onto Binka squares.

During the project people told us that before they joined the creative table they felt *'very anxious and very scared of what the future holds'* and that after art making they felt *'a little relaxed and happy'* and that *'it is 'good, it's kind of enjoying and stress relief'*.

During the groups many people commented on the therapeutic nature of sewing and the benefits of being absorbed in the art making and therefore distracted from the difficult situations they were facing.



At the end of the project the individual art pieces were sewn together to create a collective quilt, which then went on display in the foyer of Dalston CLR James Library from January - February 2020.

The exhibit was visited by participants and visitors to the library and provided an opportunity for people to view the encouraging messages, thoughts of loved ones, memories and wishes for the future.

*'Beautiful! Lots of
life side by side
held together by
different stitches.
Time, care,
attempts and
intentions'*

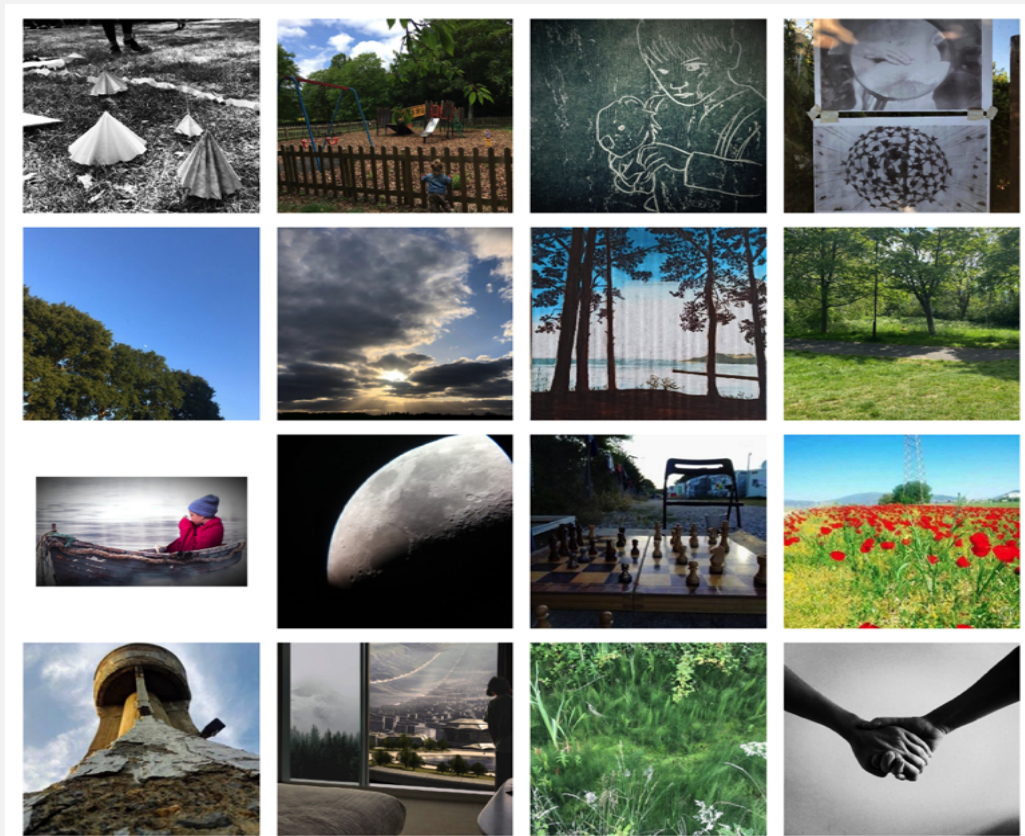


Imagine

Refugee Week 2020 took place across the UK between 15th and 21st June. Due to Covid-19 all action was held within online platforms however it was within this era of Covid-19 that the call to imagine felt more important than ever.

Draw On participated in refugee week 2020 by inviting our supporters, followers, past and present participants to take part in a collaborative online artwork by submitting a photograph in response to the word 'Imagine'. These photographs were then shared onto our online platforms for others to engage with and be inspired by.

We wanted to encourage a creative conversation that reached across borders and united us at a time when divisions and isolation were most felt.



'Maybe you'll imagine a future where we've found new ways to care for our planet, transcend borders or protect human life.'

Looking forward

2020 has been a challenging year for everyone. At Draw On we have taken a pause in order to evaluate and create a new way of working under the current Covid-19 restrictions.

We have been developing our work in a way that sessions can now be facilitated on online platforms, providing another accessible way for people to come together and engage in art making.

We have a 4-point plan for the year:

1. Discussions and planning with past partner organisations and exploring new potential collaborations to think together about ways we can continue our important work to support the mental health and wellbeing of those who need it.
2. Expand across the online platforms and pilot further projects facilitating safe creative online art therapy groups.
3. Further develop psychoeducational creative workshops to share our experience and expertise with those who work with people who have been displaced, people who have survived trauma and people who are experiencing homelessness.
4. Further develop creative reflective spaces for staff and volunteers to learn self-care techniques and well-being approaches.

We are excited about the next stages for Draw On and despite the challenges of 2020 we cannot wait to see what 2021 brings!

FINANCIALS

We are committed to sharing our impact and outcomes with you including our financial information. 100% of our donations and grants go directly towards our projects.

Total Support Income in 2019-2020: £3685.19

Just Giving: £135.19

Mayor of London's Culture Seeds: £3,550.00

Total Expenditure in 2020: £3685.19



THANK YOU!

We would like to take this opportunity say a huge THANK YOU to all that have supported our work so far, whether that be through donations, engagement and encouragement, thank you for your words and actions that have furthered and inspired our work!



Contact Us!

<https://www.drawon.org/>

E: drawonproject@gmail.com F: DrawOnProject I: @drawon.project

To make a one off donation or to set up regular giving please go to our just giving page at:

<https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/drawon>