

TO THE SUN MOON AND STARS

Portraits of Recovery and artist Lois Blackburn



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Photo opposite, Ann creating Eye Amulet

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Mark Prest

Director of [Portraits of Recovery](#) said:

'To the Sun, Moon & Stars' embodies our commitment to fostering creativity and community within the journey of recovery.

Substance use affects many of us and has long been stigmatized. It is through community experiences, such as this workshop series, and the telling of stories, at this public exhibition, that we can help change that.'

Artist [Lois Blackburn](#) commented:

'Through creativity people in Recovery have shared stories of loneliness and love, hopelessness to happiness.

They have turned their nightmares, hopes and dreams into artworks. People in Recovery have so much to teach us all.'

INTRODUCTION

Mark Prest, Director of Portraits of Recovery

[Portraits of Recovery](#) was borne out of Oldham in 2010 through a pilot project of the same name. Led by artist David Hancock, a series of artist led self-portraiture workshops supported people in recovery to better understand self, by painting their own likeness. A highly successful exhibition of participant portraits was held at Gallery Oldham. As they say the rest is history.

When Oldham Substance Misuse Team and [Action Together](#) approached [PORe](#) about this commission, we were delighted. Our collective ambition for Oldham residents was to develop an arts project acknowledging recovery from substance use as a journey and to highlight recovery as a realistic aspiration.

I first came across and became an admirer of artist [Lois Blackburn](#), through her collaboration with poet [Philip Davenport](#) (2007 – 2021) via their arts organisation [arthur+martha](#). Projects celebrated diverse voices, unheard histories, told with stitch and poetry, calligraphy, and song. Work was exhibited at iconic venues – the Houses of Parliament, the Royal Museums Greenwich, Manchester Cathedral, Brighton Dome, Piccadilly Railway Station

Lois and I had long discussed working together and the opportunity now presented itself with *To the Sun, Moon & Stars*. Lois with artist support from Kaye Williamson (participant from our 2010 pilot) delivered a series of art-based workshops, inviting people from Oldham's recovery community to create their own art. Investigating individual journeys of recovery they used the ancient tradition of amulets and talismans as inspiration.

Each workshop focused on themes like - the eye, heart, and words of wisdom. Using a variety of material-based processes, metal, fabric, stitch, and wire, people created a range of artworks that symbolically speak of their lived experience.

Creating as a form of collective activism has generated new conversations on all things recovery including framing recovery as a realistic, visible, and attainable lifestyle option for Oldham's community of people in recovery.

The project worked with 30 participants with 80 artworks being made. Each in their own diminutive scale speaking to our need for intimacy and desire for authentic connection, free from substance and self-harming behaviours



WORKSHOPS

Our home for the 'To the Sun, Moon and Stars' workshops was [Gallery Oldham](#). The group of people I worked with was a community in Recovery or 'RECOVERISTS', which brings together recovery and activism. In each of the sessions we focused on a different type of Amulet. (If you are interested in finding out more about the history and uses of Amulets, I highly recommend Sheila Paine's book, 'Amulets, a World of Secrete Powers, Charms and Magic.' (Thames & Hudson)

We used simple stitch, embossing on metal, and wrapping techniques using metals, fabric, found objects and wire to create small, handheld artworks. Participants made each theme and technique their own, relating the themes to their own life experience, hopes and dreams.

I encouraged people to use their own skills and was on hand to demonstrate new techniques and ideas. I gently guided the group and encouraged them to learn from each other, perhaps most importantly through play. This was a chance to relax, share experiences, differently see ourselves, explore creativity, meet, and gain support from a network of new people.

There was never any pressure to discuss substance use, or recovery, but whilst our hands and brains were busy making art, people relaxed, and conversations flowed.

The artworks that people created were, in the main, completed within those two-hour sessions. A couple of people took work away to finish at home. Many of the artworks show raw emotion; they are pieces straight from the heart, they speak of hard-won recovery, of friendships, curiosity, and hope.

In each of the sessions, I came away inspired, having learnt so much; not just from the wonderful art that is being created, but by the thought provoking and at times heart wrenchingly honest conversations triggered by the amulet theme. As a society, 'Recoverists' have so much to teach us all.

Lois Blackburn



AMULETS

The earliest examples of Amulets are from prehistoric times, and can be still found across cultures, religions, and belief systems.

They are often small, portable handheld objects made of many materials: precious stones, metals, teeth and claws of animals, bones, plants, clay, and metal. They are used to protect against evil spirits, bring good luck and offer a sense of power and status.

I was drawn to Amulets, as symbols of protection, their symbolism felt particularly appropriate when working with people in Recovery. But that sense of needing to be protected, or healed, is a universal theme too. How many of us feel like we need an extra layer of armour to support us at times in our lives?

As I researched the topic it became ever richer, with further colour and more depth.

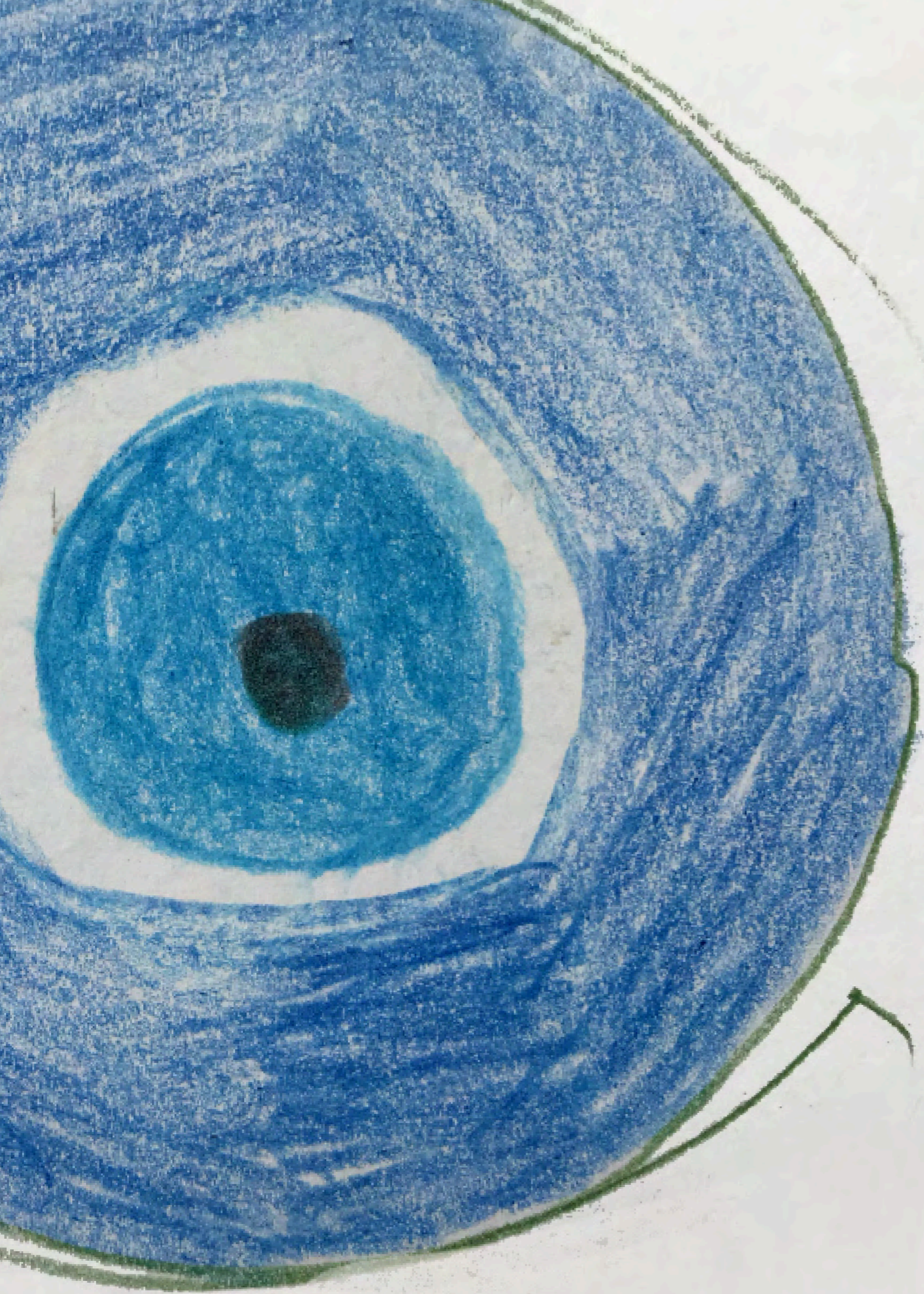
Each workshop covered a different theme, investigating the background to a wide range of different sub-categories of amulets; ones that might be familiar to us such as, the Eye of Horus in ancient Egypt, or the Hamsa Hand in the Middle East, or Roman Fertility Symbols.

Slowing down, using our hands using metals, fabric, stitch, found objects and wire participants created small, handheld artworks, that were deeply personal to the maker.

[Lois Blackburn](#)



Angela. Found object, wire, silk saree thread



LOOKING
YOU IN
THE EYE

EVIL EYE

Talisman to protect against the Evil Eye date back about 5000 years.

Circular blue glass Nazar amulets, stare back at the evil eye in the Mediterranean and beyond. In Italy, the hand gesture the sign of the horns is used to shield against the evil eye. The Egyptian Eye of Horus is also a symbol of protection, good health, and luck.

Eye amulets often mirror the malevolent glare of the evil eye. Many believe the strongest form of protection is to confront like with like, causing the evil eye to flee in horror, or linger in self-admiration.

For some of our group, images of eyes had other meanings:

'You could see the alcoholism in my eyes- blood shot, twitching, sometimes the whites even turned yellow.'

Another participant talked about the 'Green Eyed Monster', about how people's personalities change when they are drinking and using.

And joys were shared too:

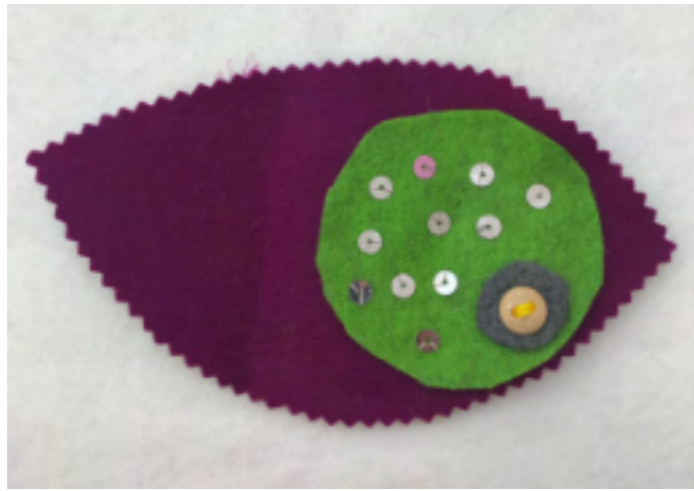
'The biggest thing in your eyes, is the sparkle that comes back in recovery.'

Using simple drawing and embroidery techniques, participants made their own representation of a protective eye. It started as a seemingly simple visual, but quickly became rich with meaning. What do you see?



Jill. 'Green Eye'. Wool felt, cotton thread, hand stitch.

ANGELA



LOIS



ANN



MARK



JILL



KAYE



'No eye contact, dead eyed, no confidence, those are the things you see in early recovery. It's lovely to see that changing in recovery. **Eventually seeing someone looking people in the eye, that's the best thing.'**

BOUND

Can objects hold memories, symbolism, meaning?

A pebble collected from the beach, a strand of hair, a broken piece of a jewellery. I'm fascinated by how we imbue objects with meaning and memory.

I invited participants to bring in small items that had significance to them, these we wrapped in wire, creating small amulets, to be worn, held, or positioned in safe places.

'I've struggled with grieving, there have been some sad happenings related to my recovery - this has helped me open-up. I know now how I can connect to other griefs using objects.' Kaye

One participant shared:

'There's a saying in Recovery, "the bounds that tie us together". We see, reflect, and mirror each other, and that's what we were doing today. Tying, talking, and sharing experiences.'



ANDY



ANGELA



KAYE

"The thimble were me mums. When we were little she would sew buttons on random fabric. It's very rare I speak about my mum. It's helped me remembering the good things about her."



KAYE

"I'm really pleased with how the tags turned out today. I didn't think I'd be able to do anything with them. They keep the memory alive of the dogs. I'd wear it out and about."



LINDA

"Creating Mandala's I'm calm and excited when I'm doing it. I'm practicing patience and how I approach things in life. I can use in it in those negative times."



LOIS



LOIS



A large, red, fuzzy letter 'U' is positioned on the left side of the image. It has several small, purple, sequined decorations along its vertical edges. The background is a plain, light-colored surface.

THE ONES THAT

MAKE IT ARE

THE LUCKY

ONES

LUCK

What symbols of luck can you think of? Perhaps a lucky number, or a four-leaf clover, a shamrock, horseshoe, wishbone, white heather, a rabbit's foot?

I was interested to hear what people in recovery thought about luck:

'Luck doesn't play into your recovery; it's about being open to new things.'

'I don't want to say recovery is luck. It's hard work. But the ones who make it are the lucky ones. You get to press re-set and have another go.'

'Lucky objects equal hope. Having them encourages me to do things, it's a comfort. Luck and recovery? I believe in luck and fate, but you've got to put the work into it yourself. You've got to work at recovery.'

'I've been taught that luck doesn't exist. To believe in luck is like blasphemy. It's our choices in life that are important. You make your own luck, it's our choices. If I put in the hard work, and listen to my heart...'

We talked about lucky numbers:

'Look after number 1, always think of number 1. I heard that a lot when I was growing up. Then in treatment I was told, "love yourself, put your recovery first". But how do I put myself before my children?

It took a while to get my head around that whilst I was ill. I was using the children as a distraction. I wasn't a good mum because I couldn't function under the influence. I couldn't look after my children in treatment. It's taken a long, long time. Self-care stays in your hula hoop.'

'The 12 Steps. People can get stuck on a different level; it can become a stigma, a number can become a stumbling block. You're given coins by the month to celebrate staying sober one day at a time. The coins can really help to keep you sober.'

Steps 1, 2, 3, you've got to have a strong foundation. Step 1 is a biggie, "I'm powerless over alcohol." Step 2, finding a greater power... The first two years your quite vulnerable, but you could be 20 years sober, and a relapse is round the corner.'



Liv. 'Tree of Life'. Embossed metal sheet

ANDY

'Upside down and back to front. Mirror writing. I started vaping, and have collected at least 100 vapes, I'm going to build a sculpture with them.'



ANGELA

The Shamrock reminded me of my mum. We used to go every year to Ireland for the 6-week holiday. My Grandma lived on a farm- farm life, the best childhood memories.'



ANYA



CLAIRE



KAYE

'My mum was all about good luck and I think that elephants are associated with luck. I didn't realise how much these objects meant till I brought them in here.'



LIV



SUSAN



TRACEY



ALICIA

'The Shamrock, I've got Irish in my family, and my birthday is on St Patrick's Day.'



AMER

The sewing today has brought back memories. My mum, she's done a lot for me, she used to say, "come and sew, come and sew", but I said, it's just for girls. She'd be proud today.'



ANNA

'My gran gave me a four leaf clover when I was doing my GCSE's, I give it to my children now. My gran also gave me a purse with a butterfly on. My gran is lucky, she's 101 next month!'

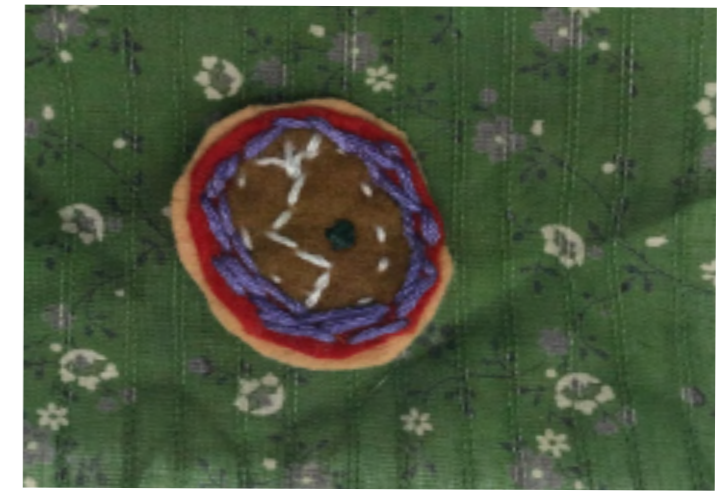


ANON



KRZYSZTOF

'In Poland, eggs are popular for good luck, especially new life. Luck has no meaning for me in my recovery, things happen because they happen.'



PAUL



SUSAN

'My daughter gave me an Evil Eye. I believe in all that stuff- luck, faith, karma. I've got crystals, I'd go out of my way to not cross a black cat. But you make your own luck in recovery.'



VICKY



HAND

Images of hands can be found across cultures and history. The Hamsa, the Hand of Fatima, are symbolic hands representing protection in Islamic and Jewish cultures, the fingers can pierce the evil eye. In Italy you may find hand doorknockers protecting the house. In Japan, images of hands keep away robbers.

On gravestones fingers pointing up indicate the departed has gone to heaven, and beckons grieving loved ones to look up. A finger pointing down represents the hand of God, reaching out to bring the deceased to heaven. A handshake on a gravestone signified a token of peace, loyalty, trust, and friendship.

In our workshops, conversation turned to how hands are used for social connection, as a tool for recovery, sensuality, passion, prayer, protection, stress, signalling, a stop sign, of boundaries. We also reflected on how they can be destructive, violent tools. We

talked of communicating with our hands, of healing, of rituals in recovery, of feeling, touching, loving. Of holding hands.

'We hold hands at the end of a meeting. The hand is a symbol of protection. You need to protect the recovery, particularly early on.'

'Helping hand, sensory hand, making art with my hands calms me down.'



DOMENIC

'Social connection, hands as a tool for recovery, sensuality, passion. My hands are holding hands.'



KAYE

'Fellowships, the AA, it's all about Unity, reaching out. It's also a sign for stop, a boundary. Unity, protection, sobriety. The hand picking up the phone, rather than the drink.'



MILLIE



KATE



WORDS

Many amulets from history are engraved and inscribed with magic texts. What words of wisdom have you been given, or have learnt? Which words of wisdom would you like to pass on?

We thought about the power of words, thinking about spells, poems and mantras that are important to us:

'There's a saying in recovery: 'We only keep what we have by giving it away.'

'I chose just breath, as it links to anxiety. So just breathe- it helps you to be in the moment. Breathing is an exercise to help calm the soul, or hurt feelings etc. To collect thoughts into clarity.'

'I picked I am proud of you, because it's nice to give to yourself, and to others that affirmation when feeling low and to help recognise all that's been achieved.'

'If in doubt, refer to your childhood. If I'm confused or mixed up and anxious when taking a challenge on, I'd refer to my childhood, when I had no money worries, going out, kicking a ball. Some of my most happy days were when I didn't have two brass buttons to rub together, but I was very resourceful. Some of my most unhappy times where when I had money- I was spending it on substance misuse.'

'It's all growth. I've been through a lot of downs in my life, lots of ups in my life, I try to take lessons in the down times. I see it all as growth. The tree sheds it's leaves for new growth, letting go of the old for the new. Words can give hope, strength, you can hear other people's insights.'

'BeYou, (photo opposite) it's chaos as well, everything in one- it's just me. If only the system would let us be ourselves.'



Anya. 'Be You' Embossed metal

ALECIA



'I was always negative, and positivity is the way forwards.'

ANDY



'Some of my most happy days were when I didn't have two brass buttons to rub together'

ANNA



'Depression is the past and anxiety the future. Things that I'm seeing.'

ANON



ELLIS



'A lot of what we do is about living in the present. This is important to me because it's the past that I want to change.'

JON



'I've been to the doctors this morning and it's giving me hope.'

KAREN



KAREN



KAYE



KAZ



'It's my last chance saloon, I am determined to do it this time.'

KRZYSZTOF



LIV



OLIVA



'Before recovery, I didn't have inner peace.'

STEVE

'Reflect on everything that's happened in your life, and either keep it the same or change things for the better. Learn from your experiences.'

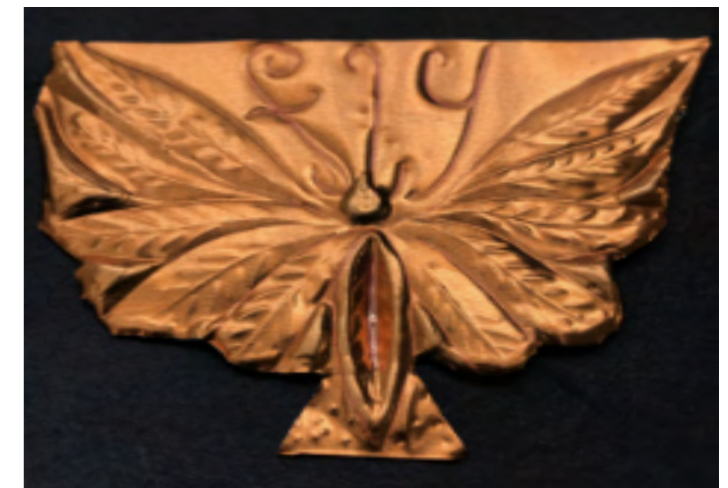


TEGAN



VICKY

'Hope is my middle name. I used to curse it when I was young, but I love it now.'



FERTILITY



Anya. 'Woman' Embroidered felt, thread, stuffing, cowrie shells.

What symbols represent fertility? We looked at imagery from around the world and found rich inspiration. Tiny white Cowrie shells from the Indian Ocean, epitomize the potency of sex. Carved wooden penises from Africa, or pagan Celtic symbols with Sheela-na-gig sculptures in stone, holding open vaginas. And many Roman phallus effigies and amulets. The ancient Romans believed the phallus was the embodiment of a masculine generative power and gave protection and good fortune.

For people in Recovery, this subject was perhaps the most sensitive, complex, potentially triggering subject in the project, including issues of addiction such as foetal alcohol syndrome, which can cause brain damage and growth problems.

As ever, how deep the conversation delved was led by participants. Much of the conversation was joyful, examining how we can illustrate the subject in flowers.

'Today's session got quite deep, quite quick. Fertility can be a sensitive subject. Flowers are very fertile. I chose the flower as it does represent fertility, growth, seeds. The flower blooms and reproduces. The flower was not upsetting or unsettling, but beautiful growth, a celebration.'

ANYA

'I love the shape of a women- hips and boobs, just like a figure 8. I was always shapely as a kid, I was woman shaped and thought I was fat, I see now I wasn't.'



DEREK

'To come out of alcohol and into sobriety, you need clear water to grow. (the blue cup forming the background to the piece) The rose is for the female heart and love.'



KAYE

'The flower blooms and reproduces. The flower was not upsetting or unsettling, but beautiful growth, a celebration.'



SPIRITUALITY

'Sometimes things can bring on a good cleanse and you didn't know you need it, using a power greater than you.'

Have you ever had a St Christopher, or a representation of the Virgin Mary? The idea of confronting evil forces with saints, deities, angels, and celestial beings is both pagan and Christian.

Christianity took the image of the cross from Pagan artefacts. A symbol of crossroads, protection, a sacred symbol, a depiction of conflicting forces.

'I was brought up Catholic, up to a certain age I had religious views. But being in addiction has taught me everything is God, nature around us.'

'The higher power concept is central to AA, ([Alcoholics Anonymous](#)) NA ([Narcotics Anonymous](#))

or CA ([Cocaine Anonymous](#)) fellowships, a belief in a power great than us, for example Mother Nature.'

'A spiritual thing...I've always been looking for answers. The spoken language of the universe, nature does that. It reminds us of our purpose, why we're here.'



Jodi. 'Lotus Flower'. Embroidered fabric, thread and beads.

ANN

'The butterfly, it's transformation, beauty, freedom. You're on your own in a cocoon in that first step to recovery. Then freedom: from caterpillar to the butterfly.'



ANON



ANYA

'I used to be religious, in Poland. Now, it's spiritual. I used to pray a lot. But it suppressed me. Everything was a sin. Guilt and shame, especially on women.'



BRIAN

'A flower. I started with a sun, but it looked more like a flower, so I went with it. The church is the one I go to.'



CLAIRE

'An Egyptian cat, I thought immediately of it when I thought of spirituality.'



JODI

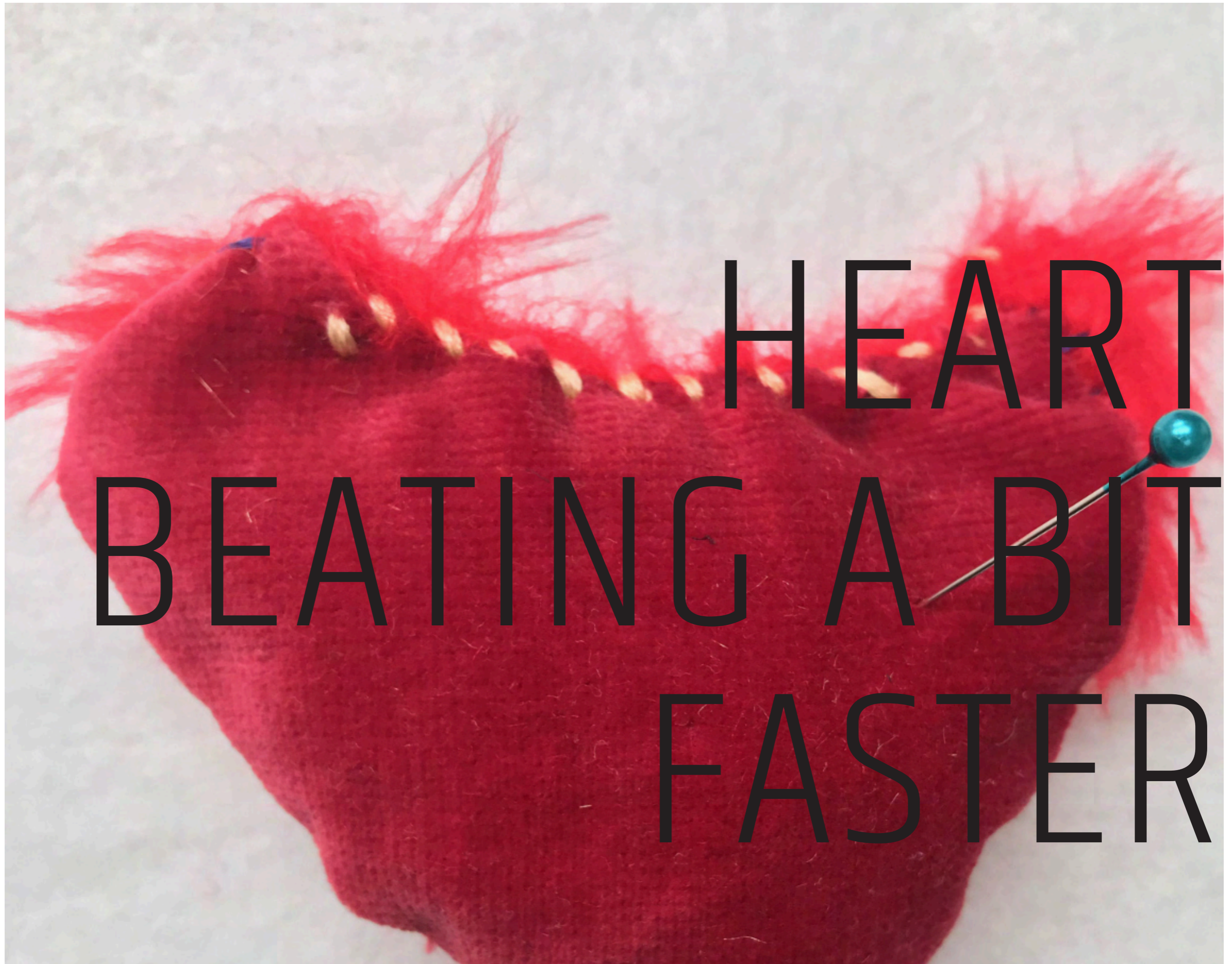
'The Lotus flower: It comes from the dirt, into this beautiful flower. That's how I view us all- we just go through different dirt.'



ROB

'The cross was the first thing you think of when you think of religion. The eye represents the evil eye, the cross repels evil, so it's a double whammy.'





HEART
BEATING A BIT
FASTER

HEART

What's the first thing that comes to mind when you think of a heart? Valentine Day, a broken heart, a heart attack, love?

The Ancient Egyptians created beautiful heart amulets in glass, agate, carnelian, jasper. They believed the heart was the source of intelligence, feelings, and actions. Heart amulets were believed to protect the wearer's heart from both physical and spiritual harm both in life and after death.

It's one of the first sounds we hear, our mother's heartbeat in the womb. The security of putting your head on your mother's chest and hearing that regular beat.

I asked the group if they could describe the physical impact alcohol and drugs can have on the heart:

'When you are in the early stages of recovery, you feel very broken, you want to be fixed. You are very vulnerable. Love addiction, have you heard of it?'

'Class A drugs, your heart is beating really fast, or irregular heartbeats, or respiratory depression, when it slows right down- your dead or alive.'

'Alcohol can give that really warm feeling, you can drink to forget. It can make your heart beat a bit faster. There is a time when you enjoy it, but a time when you hit rock bottom as well.'

Whilst holding Tabatha's heart talisman in her hand, Kaye noted: **'It feels like something you want to protect.'**

If you created a heart talisman, what would it protect your heart from? Would you give it away, or do you need it?

KAYE

'My piece, a heart is wrapped like a gift. It's a hard thing to connect with your heart, but once you have, you're grateful. My heart is wrapped as a present, it comes from the heart.'



LOIS

'I've made my heart with an opening at the top, so you can add a message: A love note? A message of hope? A memory?'



MARY

'I do like sewing, and I like pincushions! It represents feelings of love.'



TABATHA

'My heart was inspired by the Ancient Egyptians, they used to weigh the heart- a heart as light as a feather.'



COLOUR

What do you think of when reading the word BLUE?

Is it the sky and sea? For some it symbolizes the full moon with all its life giving potency and association with the feminine. It has cooling, almost therapeutic powers.

Red has been used to ward off witches, it's also a symbol of blood, of life and sacrifice, as well as a potent force against demons.

White and black are associated with body parts, fluids, and excreta.

Colours also can mark occasions, a ruby wedding, or for someone in recovery:

'In [N.A.](#) you get a white chip on your first meeting, surrendering to the program, a new start. An orange chip after 30 days, green after 60 days, red after 90, blue at 6 months, and a glow in the dark chip at 12 months. The goal is to get the next one.'

'Purple is the colour of recovery. A regal colour. I can go for yellow if I'm happy, browns if I'm feeling more reserved. 'Don't be coming to my funeral in black. Black is miserable. White, there's nothing to it- peace, like the dove, and the international colour of surrender- a white feather.'

'The Evil Eye represents alcohol, the evil of it. It's to ward it off the demon drink. If you're an addict, it brings out the worse in you, and it's so readily available.

The triangle inside the eye, is there to give you time to reflect. You turn at the top of a triangle; it makes you think about not just going round and round like a circle. I'm at the top of that triangle at the moment- originally, I was on the biggest circle.' Mary



Mary. 'Evil Eye', Embroidered fabric, threads, beads.

KAYE

'As Bill sees it,' it's a book written by a founder of the [A.A.](#) At the end of every meeting, a bit of the Red Book is read by someone who is in recovery.



It helped me enormously, reading it out. I were shaking as I was reading it, my head down, but it helped with my confidence.'



DREW

'It's comforting to touch, with layers that represent my personality. It took a life of its own whilst I was making it. I used the colours I wear.



My confidence is back in my recovery, this work is instinctive more than anything. The yellow thread represents the path I was taking, and it veered off in a more positive way.'



VOLUNTEER

A transcript of a conversation with Lois Blackburn and Kaye, a volunteer artist support for the project 'To the Sun, Moon and Stars,' April 2024.

It'd be 15 years ago now, Mark Prest came to visit the treatment centre, he asked if a few of us wanted to get involved in the project, [Portraits of Recovery](#).

At that time, I was really poorly, not knowing what direction to go in, and not knowing what my future held for me. I was just keeping everything in the day.

It was a time of reflection. Meeting other people in recovery, talking, making new friends. And about the consistency of having something to do, look forward to, and getting praise for your work. And knowing that it was going to go in an art gallery too, an exhibition, it made you feel part of something.

And Mark even said to me, I think you should go to college to study for an art foundation course, and I did.

I wanted something else to focus on other than my children, and I did it. I got I got a distinction. I got an award.

Lois: And how did you get involved volunteering on 'To the Sun, Moon and Stars'?

Mark asked me. I thought it would help with my recovery, connecting with other people. And I'd learn from you, Lois. I've learned something from every session.

Mark approached me at the right time, I was going through a dark time, and I'd started isolating in my own recovery, I'd gone within myself again, so I needed to be around other people.

You made me feel comfortable, at home. You treated me like an equal, and that's how I like to treat people. And getting involved with the art, like everybody else, I felt the same, as yourself, the only difference is I did have an alcohol dependency.

You get to a point in your recovery where you want to be useful. You've felt useless in your addiction, so to become useful to others, it's a privilege. And to be trusted as a volunteer, that's so important- because at one time I wasn't to be trusted- very early on in my recovery. Getting well, with that, to become a responsible person.

The participants who took part in it, I think they loved it, they really got into the sessions.

I enjoyed every session. Even on the occasion when it was just 2 people there. Because like in recovery, they say when you go to a meeting, and there's just one person there. It's still a meeting. You still could be saving your own life or somebody else's.

I think I'm quite a shy person, especially looking at the person I used to be. A lot changed. So, these sessions, could have changed people. Meeting up with other people is a massive thing to do.

I liked the ones where you brought the objects in, and we spoke about them. They were made into something special, like an amulet, something personal to you, you've got connection to it. Like that little love heart my daughter gave to me, I've had it for a long, long time. It's something that connects me to her, and our relationship.

I felt some people really come out of themselves in them sessions. Especially T. She was so quiet, and then towards the end of the session she was beginning to chatter. It's all about trust, you're opening-up to people.

People thought deep, and they went into it deep- which people in recovery do- overthink everything.

And so, it is a good thing to put it into artwork. You get growth from it.

At some point in somebody's life, there's something tricky, you've got to get past that. What's going on for you? It needs to be spoken about, because these things can make you pick up a drink again.

Every session had something valuable about it, it's been amazing. I've loved volunteering. I got given quite a responsible role. And it was nice to be part of something artistic again, it's been so long. We had some laughs as well. Oh, yes.

Lois: What's next for you?

I do feel that I could do more of my own personal artwork. It's just finding that time at the moment I do bits at home. And you've inspired me. I've got a shed full of rubbish, I'm going to convert that into some sort of artistic area.

[Volunteering] It's like sponsorship, like in recovery. They say, when you sponsor someone, it helps the sponsor, the person as well as each other.

LOIS BLACKBURN

Since 2007, Derbyshire based artist/maker Lois Blackburn, has worked in the field of arts and health. Her projects, often using textiles and stitch, explore and tell the stories of difficult, taboo and embarrassing subjects in meaningful ways.

She collaborates with the general public, marginalised groups, health professionals, charities, museums, academics.

Lois creates art that shares stories, supporting the artist, participant and audience to: relax, laugh, cry, find a little solace. It rejoices in peoples strength, shares ways to overcome adversity, frames experiences in new ways- to understand, share and celebrate.

Her artwork has been exhibited all widely. Venues include: The Infirmary Museum, The Imperial War Museum North, Glasgow Women's Library, National Army Museum, Gallery Oldham, Festival of Quilts, the numerous healthcare venues.

Find out more at <https://loisblackburnartist.uk>

Instagram: www.instagram.com/artistloisb/

Facebook www.facebook.com/ladyloisartist/

X [@loisblackburn15](https://twitter.com/loisblackburn15)



PORTRAITS OF RECOVERY

Portraits of Recovery (PORe) is a pioneering visual arts charity based in Greater Manchester, inspiring and supporting people affected by and in recovery from substance use.

Director Mark Prest's, own lived experience led him to found PORe in 2011 to give voice to an often-marginalised community.

The UK's only contemporary visual arts organisation working within this field, PORe collaborates with leading contemporary artists, people and communities in recovery to share the human face of the recovery experience - breaking down barriers and promoting inclusion.

PORe believes that addiction is a health, social and cultural issue.

<https://www.portraitsofrecovery.org.uk>

[Facebook](#)

[Instagram](#)

X [@P_0_Re](#)



(Opposite) Liv, 'It's all growth'. Embossed metal sheet

WHERE TO GET SUPPORT

Turning Point Oldham and Rochdale offer a medically assisted recovery programme with support to help deal with addiction issues and access to detoxification and rehabilitation programmes. They also offer support for getting back into employment with their IPS employment support team.

<https://www.turning-point.co.uk/services/Rochdale-oldham>

Alcoholics Anonymous & Narcotics Anonymous are worldwide Fellowships (which address most forms of substance use and behavioural addictions) represent a remarkable, free resource that is available to everyone at every stage of recovery from addiction.

<https://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk>

<https://meetings.ukna.org>



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