

NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY BRINGS CREATIVE ARTS WORKSHOPS TO YOUNG PEOPLE IN CHELSEA AND WESTMINSTER HOSPITAL

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The National Portrait Gallery has partnered with Chelsea and Westminster Hospital NHS Foundation Trust and CW+, the official charity of the Trust, to expand its long-standing arts provision in children's hospitals in London. Chelsea and Westminster has become the fifth hospital to participate in the Gallery's Hospital Programme, which supports health,

wellbeing and happiness through arts in health programming inspired by portraits and stories from the Gallery's Collection. The Hospital Programme already runs at four London children's hospitals: Evelina London, Great Ormond Street Hospital, Newham University Hospital and The Royal London Hospital. The extension of the programme to include Chelsea and Westminster Hospital has made been possible by renewed support from Delancey and their new Earls Court based business, The Earls Court Development Company, which will enable the Gallery to continue working with all five hospitals until 2024. Over 20,000 young people and their families have benefitted from the Gallery's Hospital Programme since it began in 2002.

The Gallery usually takes artists into each hospital to deliver 60 workshops a year to children of all ages, and their siblings and parents. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and associated visiting restrictions, live workshops have been impossible since March 2020. In response to these ongoing challenges, the Gallery has worked closely with play therapists and specialists, nursing staff and hospital teachers to develop remote alternatives as a way of reaching isolated patients, moving face-to-face sessions onto digital platforms and developing free creative digital resources.

To mark Mental Health Awareness week, from the 10 – 16 May, and the new partnership with Chelsea and Westminster Hospital, the Gallery has created a new series of films for children and young people at Chelsea and Westminster Hospital at a time where face-to-face teaching is still not possible.

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The films, created with the Gallery's artist educators, encourage patients to take five minutes to relax and focus on a mindful drawing activity. The five artist-led activities are inspired by five sitters from the National Portrait Gallery Collection – Beatrix Potter, Satish Kumar, Richard Long, Barbara Ward and Vivienne Westwood – all champions of conservationism and environmentalism, which is the project theme for 2021, and nature is the theme for this year's Mental Health Awareness Week. CW+ and Chelsea and Westminster Hospital have been at the forefront of the global arts in health movement for over a quarter of a century combining visual and performing arts with live music and dance alongside their art collection, made up of over 1,800 artworks, many of which are bespoke commissions.

While social distancing measures are in place, their award-winning arts in health programme operates digitally to safely deliver an engaging, inclusive, active and connected programme for patients and the broader community, called Virtual Connections. The new films will be available on Virtual Connections via bedside monitors and via CW+ for use on personal devices on-site and in the community to help support the physical, mental, and emotional recovery of patients in hospital and at home. The films will also be available to young people and their families at the other four partner hospitals and on the National Portrait Gallery's website.