



# Creative arts in Recovery

Personal reflections and artwork

Welcome  
to our  
presentation

A huge  
**Thank you**  
to the artists who  
contributed to this  
collection – you are  
our stars!



This project was designed, curated, and edited by Karen Megrnahan in November 2021, with assistance from Dr David Patton and the recpathcurators team it has been added to the Recovery Pathways Workbook to be accessible to everyone.

This collection is now in the public domain and will be available to a wider audience, such as research organisations, conferences, and services, so improved access to creative arts for recovery can be encouraged. You are welcome to share your thoughts in social media please use #CreativeArtsInRecovery.

**Creative Arts in Recovery : Personal reflections and artwork**

# Method

A short questionnaire was created and made available to the existing contact list for the Recovery Workbook project, as an invitation to participate. It was also posted on social media by the project lead.

Participants were required to complete the online form which included giving their consent and further information about the artwork(s) they were submitting for the collection.

In addition, the participants were asked to send photographs of the artwork by email to the recpathcurators email address. The original artworks were not required and remained in the possession of the artists.

The submissions were sent to the curator for a decision on inclusion or exclusion. The curator amalgamated the artworks into a PowerPoint presentation and included the artists voice which was derived from the submission forms.

The completed presentation was forwarded to the recpathcurators team for inclusion in the Recovery Workbook



For more information on the Recovery Workbook project please scan the QR code above.

You will find more QR codes to scan adjacent to some submissions with media included. These do not need the Miro app to play.

# Creative arts in recovery – personal reflections and artwork

A wide variety of creative arts are included: words, visual art, sculptures, mixed media compilations, songs, music, videos, and film.

The artworks presented are stand alone testaments of the contribution engaging in artistic activities has brought to each person's recovery journey.

Contributors include individuals, groups and organisations.

Each submission speaks through the art to the recipient and allows further understanding through the inclusion of the artists voice where given.

We hope this presentation offers inspiration and insight into what can be achieved if you choose to seek self expression through creative arts.

Each Artist submission is presented here in order of submission received.

## Karen Slater Hutchinson

I grew up in an alcoholic home never feeling safe, loved or even worthy. I was the scapegoat of parental abuse and used escapism at a very young age. Lost in fantasy and then substances. Subconsciously replicating the family dysfunction with abusive relationships until I found recovery.

*Today I live free, and I've broke that generational chain of pain.*



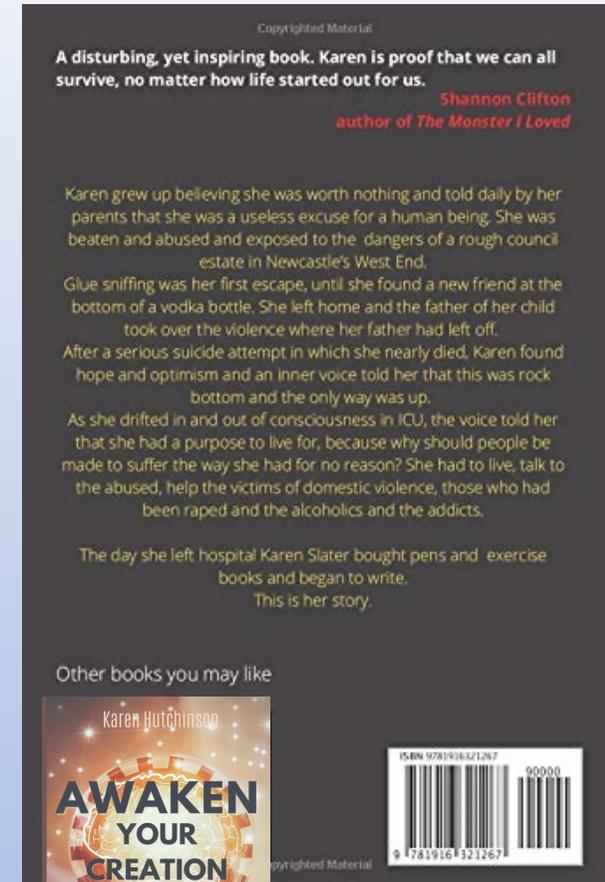
**Karen's book is available to buy online through [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)**

I found writing incredibly cathartic and I had so much to unravel that I just couldn't stop. I'd shown light in my demons so they couldn't torture me anymore.

I hoped that if I could love myself enough through all my shame then possibly others would too.

I left the hospital after almost dying and write like my life depended on it. I saved myself and apparently endless others. Once my story was on paper, I saw myself differently. Instead of berating myself for my weaknesses I realised I was an open incredible strong human being. It changed my life and people still get in touch with me to tell me 'It' also inspired them. Priceless.

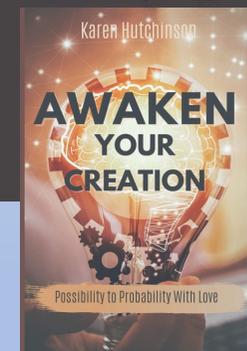
## My Journey through Hell: Finding my true worth



Copyrighted Material  
A disturbing, yet inspiring book. Karen is proof that we can all survive, no matter how life started out for us.  
Shannon Clifton  
author of *The Monster I Loved*

Karen grew up believing she was worth nothing and told daily by her parents that she was a useless excuse for a human being. She was beaten and abused and exposed to the dangers of a rough council estate in Newcastle's West End. Glue sniffing was her first escape, until she found a new friend at the bottom of a vodka bottle. She left home and the father of her child took over the violence where her father had left off. After a serious suicide attempt in which she nearly died, Karen found hope and optimism and an inner voice told her that this was rock bottom and the only way was up. As she drifted in and out of consciousness in ICU, the voice told her that she had a purpose to live for, because why should people be made to suffer the way she had for no reason? She had to live, talk to the abused, help the victims of domestic violence, those who had been raped and the alcoholics and the addicts. The day she left hospital Karen Slater bought pens and exercise books and began to write. This is her story.

Other books you may like



## Scott Alexander Mease

1. Know no fear 2. Leave a light on 3. Whole of the moon 4. Serenity prayer

I'm a 33 year old, grateful, recovered addict and alcoholic. Graffiti art has been a passion of mine for many years, something which I put down in later years of active addiction and then found a love for once again, not long after entering recovery.

*All the artwork entered is available and the canvases I have sold in the past, for example the serenity prayer one in various styles, I was selling for £50, with £10 going to my fellowship as a donation.*



For more information contact  
12stepchatter@gmail.com



The artwork I do is graffiti style wording and acrylic art works they are all inspired by either songs that mean something to my recovery, for example the lighthouse one is based on a song called 'I will leave a light on' about addiction by Tom Walker. 'Know no fear' is from a set of promises in the AA big book and the moon painting with too high too far too soon is from a song called the 'Whole of the Moon'.



## Richard Sparkes

## When MJ met BJ

I was an active addict for about 20 years and since getting sober in 2018 discovered I could paint a bit. I'd love to say that there was something political to the piece but there really isn't. I just thought they were two juxtaposed people who had similar initials.



*The original artwork measures 60 x 50 cm and is for sale directly from the artist, email [Richard@recoverytherapy.com](mailto:Richard@recoverytherapy.com)*

## Marcus Bruce Konoso

Inspired by Recovery walk Perth Scotland 2021



Inspired by my partner Fiona. A poetic interpretation capturing the rhythm of the day. A beacon of words calling for folk to keep strong on their march to freedom.

## Fragmented Cairns too Roses

Cumulative petals on the Tay representing lost souls/  
fingers intertwined journeying with souls found/  
profoundly marching alongside regional banners/  
bearing freedom flags insignias of chains breaking/  
stories of heartache and broken unities problematic  
substance use fractures dulling protectories/ A  
multitude of human momentums whistling song/  
healing the dull ache of residual bondage/ Trains of  
folk intertwined in regional communities / marching  
towards a Cairn of monumental hope and directories.

'Perth Recovery Walk 2021'

Marcus Bruce Konoso

## AKA Mandilee



AKA Mandilee had lost her passion for music during her long battle with addiction but was inspired by her peers in rehab to pick up her guitar again. Her first original song in years, 'Lost n Found', was her tribute to them on her graduation day, celebrating her recovery and theirs. She now advocates recovery, personal development and ongoing evolution by sharing her journey to inspire others through music, creative and performing arts, music videos, interviews, podcasts, song writing, and encouraging others to raise their vibration through the therapeutic value of creative and performing arts themselves.

AKA Mandilee performs at open mic nights, festivals, local radio stations, and UK recovery walks. She released her first ep in June 2020, closely followed by her album Lockdown Lyrics in August 2020. She released her latest single Changing in July 2021, closely followed by the release of her new album Better Days in September 2021. AKA Mandilee also performs as a loop artist and is now writing again and planning new creative ventures to inspire others to heal and evolve physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually!

[www.akamandilee.com](http://www.akamandilee.com)

## Darkness Falls

This song was written during my most recent period of writing, preparing for my next album. I have been intuitively inspired to start writing again following the release of my last album, Better Days, in September 2021. The message of the song is to go with the flow of life as much as possible. We suffer so much more deeply and for longer periods of time when we try to paddle up stream against the tide! I know that I certainly did for many years and still can. What I do know is that I am exactly where I am supposed to be, doing what I am intuitively guided to do in the flow of this spiritual journey.



*AKA Mandilee is the Sole creator of the song.  
The music video is created by Felix  
Helianthus and shared with permission.*

## More from AKA Mandilee



## Addiction to Divine

This song was one of the first songs I wrote which literally tells the story of my life - from homelessness, addiction, haunting thoughts and memories of trauma and mental illness, through to divine intervention, hope, and recovery. This was also created into a music video where I acted the character of my past self in addiction within the very grounds of the homeless shelter I had stayed. It was a surreal experience acting as my former drunk and broken self yet totally humbling. Never give up!

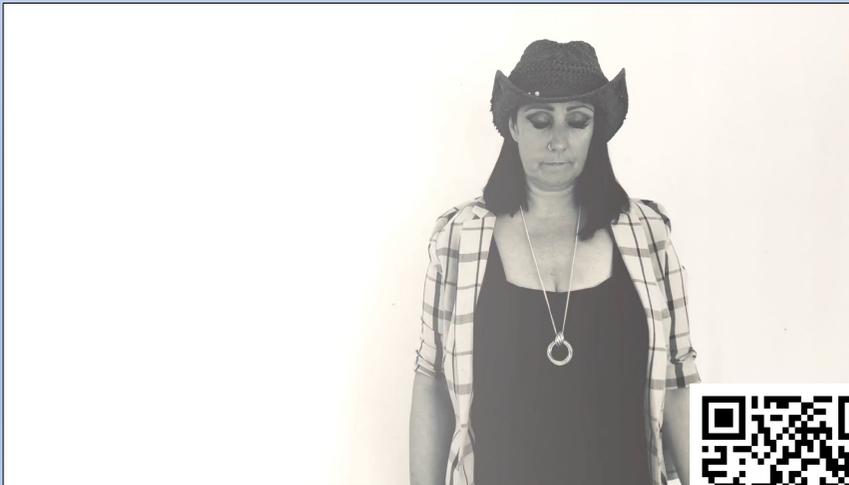


*AKA Mandilee is the Sole creator of the song.  
The music video is created by Felix  
Helianthus and shared with permission.*

## More from AKA Mandilee

This song was written during my most recent period of writing, preparing for my next album. I have been intuitively inspired to start writing again following the release of my last album, *Better Days*, in September 2021. The message of the song is to go with the flow of life as much as possible. We suffer so much more deeply and for longer periods of time when we try to paddle up stream against the tide! I know that I certainly did for many years and still can. What I do know is that I am exactly where I am supposed to be, doing what I am intuitively guided to do in the flow of this spiritual journey.

### Changing



### Flow Down the River



This song was written with a broken heart from a parent to a parent! About the struggles accepting that regardless of how far my journey of recovery has come, it can never take away the pain I unconsciously caused my loved ones through my illness, especially my children. Most important to the children I have been unable to reconcile relationships with, and my much loved grandchildren. I have nothing but love, compassion, and understanding to any parent that has or is suffering from the disease of addiction or mental health issues and I want you to know that you are not alone in this, and you will be ok. One certainty in life is change. We are always changing!

*AKA Mandilee is the Sole creator of the song. The music video is created by Felix Helianthus and shared with permission.*

## More from AKA Mandilee

### Dance in the Rain



Written during lockdown, bizarre and frightening times for each of us. This song passes a message of unity not separation as we were forced to isolate from each other and our loved ones. Our privileges taken and left to our own devices, some terrified of the silence and thoughts in their heads. Many lives were lost both in and out of the recovery world. However, we are all one, and lockdown really brought this home to me personally. Age, gender, race, stature - "we all wash the same when we dance in the rain!"

### Driven by a Higher Power

Written with a sad yet hopeful heart after a break-up that a higher power was driving my life, foot flat to the floor on the gas. My future was unknown yet hopeful, exciting and optimistic! This music video was created during lockdown, and unable to meet for a photoshoot, I collaborated with a drag artist with a history of addiction, Honour Script, who created this lip-sync video.



*AKA Mandilee is the Sole creator of the songs.  
The music video is created by Felix Helianthus  
and shared with permission.*

## More from AKA Mandilee

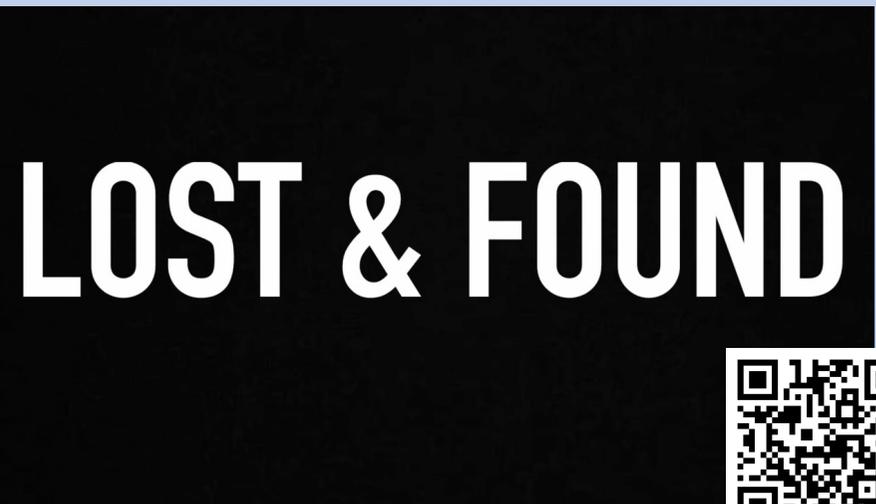


### Lost n Found

The song that became pivotal to this incredible journey of service through music and creative arts, encouraging recovery, self improvement, and actualisation. 'Lost n Found' was written for my peers in rehab and performed with them on my graduation day to encourage them to carry on their journey of recovery and stay strong. It later became the title of my first recovery EP 'Lost n Found' - I guess the title speaks for itself!

### Go Girl

Written many years ago, back when I was playing about song writing as a hobby and passion that I never really followed. I re-wrote this in 2020 as the lyrics have such a profound message of encouragement to myself from my higher self I now believe. They were dark times. Go girl, run and free your soul! To anyone who is in despair - get help, it's out there, and you are not alone. It's a beautiful world out here when you learn to heal and free your soul, I promise!



*AKA Mandilee is the Sole creator of the songs. The music video is created by Felix Helianthus and shared with permission.*

## More from AKA Mandilee

### Mother said



This song gives a message of not giving up no matter what life throws in our paths by ways of lessons. It's a positive song of encouragement. There are no mistakes, we just find another way not to do something and become a step closer to finding the right way. It all makes for a stronger soul!

### Spiritual Ride

Well, I willingly put myself in the spotlight and aired my regrets, doubts, failures, and fears - and one or two folk did not agree with my past or choice to air this information publicly! I totally disagree and that is ok by me. I have fought harder battles in my life, and I am still smiling. This song is a message to those whose perception differs and cannot understand mine or why I am doing what I am doing. I send you love and light!

# SPIRITUAL RIDE



*AKA Mandilee is the Sole creator of the songs. The music video is created by Felix Helianthus and shared with permission.*

## More from AKA Mandilee



## Woop Diddee Doo

Inspired by being turned down to play at a music festival in my hometown with my recovery band - The Broken Biscuits - at that time. They felt that the public would not want "a bunch of addicts" - their words - playing on their stage as it was a family orientated festival. So, I wrote this song and gave it to the band. We performed as a live recording and posted it to all social media platforms. It turned out that the festival organisers views, judgements, and assumptions were incorrect as it was very popular! Woop diddee doo! The music video was released to celebrate a milestone in my recovery, showing photos from my life and how much had changed over that time.



*AKA Mandilee is the Sole creator of the song.  
The music video is created by Felix Helianthus  
and shared with permission.*

## Louise Grant

## Spud (dog), tree, flamingos, boats and lighthouse at lido de jeselo

I am retired and finally as lock down lifts have access to the wider community, U3A, art group, theatre group etc.

I fell apart when I had to have Spud put down. When I started my recovery his (Spud) was the first thing I did. Since then I paint most days which helps with my recovery.



## Helen



My name is Helen, and I am now an Arts Counsellor working with children, and adults who are embracing life without children through infertility and not by choice.

**27 years ago, I came to the rooms through OA.** It was there I found a spark of life, when I made a decision to go to an inner child retreat with Bob Earl. I was introduced to writing, creativity and dance. That little spark created a journey, first of all into exploring arts education, which took me down the path of a degree into textile design and art, and then teaching. Though I lost a little of my soul doing this, it came back when I started painting again and connecting to the creative and intuitive arts. It was a short cut into my subconscious and heart.

Today I love to create, that may be just putting pen onto paper and taking it for a walk. It may be in doing a page in my journal to explore how I am feeling and ask for clarity in something I am not sure about. Resting my big emotions on the page gives me so much serenity and peace in my heart. I am able to see, hear and express myself - without judgement. I have had to learn how to empower myself when that judging part of me takes over. It has been a piece of emotional work that spills over to my daily life.

I say that the arts saved my life, and this is true. Together with fellowship, sponsorship and many kind and loving teachers.

## My Healing Journals - Cosmic Smash Books

I was inspired to start to create this healing journal (Cosmic Smash Book) during a time I felt so much self doubt in my heart. A lot of my past early memories were coming to the surface. It was a painful time and I wanted to work through the negativity and pain. I wanted to create an intention which was empowering, loving and very kind, a place where I could connect to myself.

It was also a time where my partner and I had to put to sleep our precious cat MeMe, who became seriously ill. I was able to process and lay down in paint my emotions and thoughts and listen to guided action for my Higher Power.

Each time I browse through this journal I feel and am reminded of the work and healing that happened at this time. I smile inside my heart when I connect to the pages. They mean an awful lot to me, knowing that I have been able to rest here, let go and move forward in a lot more confidence. I love this process and I love some more than others - the pages in this book.

The messages here have been placed down for me. I have not intended to show this work - but I hope here if people will also be inspired to put pen to paper and trust their own creative journey.



## More from Helen

## Power Within

I created this on retreat in Hawaii. I was continuing to enquire about serenity, power within and clarity about myself and this stage of my life. It meant so much to be there and every time I look at this portrait, I smile quietly within myself. Visualising where I painted it, right by the sea with the wind in my hair. A whale popping up in the distance and women around me, who were all owning their power.

### The message:

**That we all have a light  
within ourselves.**

**We are wild and powerful  
beyond our knowing.**



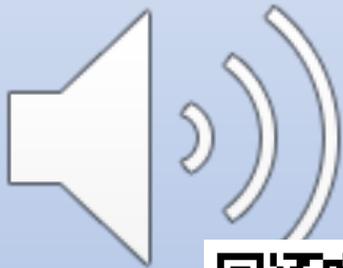
The original painting "Power Within" is 19.5" x 15.5" and available to buy for £550 directly from the the Artist

For more information contact [helens797@gmail.com](mailto:helens797@gmail.com)

## I'm a Roadiamond



Voice interview



Advert for brand promotion and merchandise



*Roadiamond's T shirts are available for £20 to order contact by email to [oldmarket21@icloud.com](mailto:oldmarket21@icloud.com)*

Roadiamond is inspired by reflection on a life so far and a statement of intent for the future. The film is a platform for Roadiamond's brand, the work profiles the music and the clothing. The messages of being off Road and 'Living through the Pressure, I'm a Roadiamond'. In the journey the work was started at an end point - and to mark a start as well.

*Submitted on behalf of Roadiamond by Paul Matthews - Barnardo's Ambitions Initiative, Bristol.*

## The Creators include Angela Joss, Alan Parker, Kevin Morrison and Tim Brown

This song was created as part of a Songwriting course at Station House Media Unit (shmu) which included 6 people with 3 of them in recovery. Angela was very much the lead of this group but sadly passed away shortly after, in October 2021. With permission from her family, we'd like to honour this song to her as she was an extraordinary person. She was passionate about making the world a better place, and through all her endeavours (including volunteering at shmu) she definitely achieved that. Angela used her own recovery journey to support and inspire others and excelled in everything she did.

**Music: Walk the World**



Music allows you to express yourself in ways that you may have not explored before. Group songwriting can bring people together and is a great way to hear others' thoughts and feelings. It can be a cathartic way to help with the recovery process. Expressing yourself and hearing how others express themselves is a lovely way to support each other through recovery. Music is fun too! There is no right or wrong - just a space to be yourself. As a group we were inspired to write about what we're passionate about, things that we feel are important and need to be heard. This was unity, equality and challenging stigma. From there we worked on the lyrics to create the song 'Walk The World'.

Submitted with permission on behalf of the creators by Sarah Igesund, Station House Media Unit

# Comunità San Patrignano

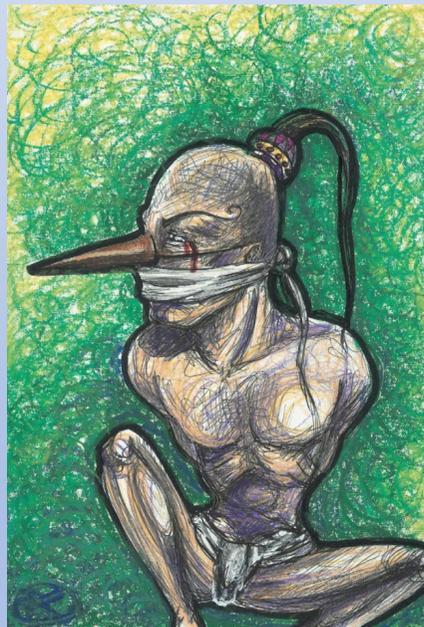


All the submissions on behalf of Comunità San Patrignano have been submitted by Monica Barzanti responsible for International Relations.



For over 40 years, San Patrignano has offered free help to people with addiction problems. As many as 26,000 have been accepted so far and 1200 are those currently in progress. With a recovery rate of 72% among those who complete the course.

A commitment aimed not only at those who have already fallen into the drug tragedy, but also thousands of people so that in the future they do not find themselves with the same problem. For this reason, every year San Patrignano reaches out to 50,000 Italian students with its 'WeFree' prevention project. <https://www.wefree.it/en/blog-english/>



San Patrignano is a community for life that welcomes those suffering from drug addiction and marginalization and helps them to once again find their way, thanks to a rehabilitation programme that is above all, a programme based on love.

It is free, because love is a gift.

It offers a new life for the families of those suffering, who find comfort and support in the reliable and expert guidance the community and its volunteers offer.

It is a commitment towards building a better society, thanks to numerous projects designed to prevent drug abuse. In its search for the common good, San Patrignano is open towards the outside world with specific activities in schools, international study events, special wide-ranging programmes and constantly battles against addiction.

These drawings are made by our people for communication purposes, to express themselves.

## Contact us

**For help or to inquire about admissions**, please write to [help@sanpatrignano.org](mailto:help@sanpatrignano.org)

For other requests or information:

## San Patrignano

Via San Patrignano, 53  
47853 Coriano – Rimini – Italia

Tel +39 0541 362111

Fax +39 0541 756108

[info@sanpatrignano.org](mailto:info@sanpatrignano.org)



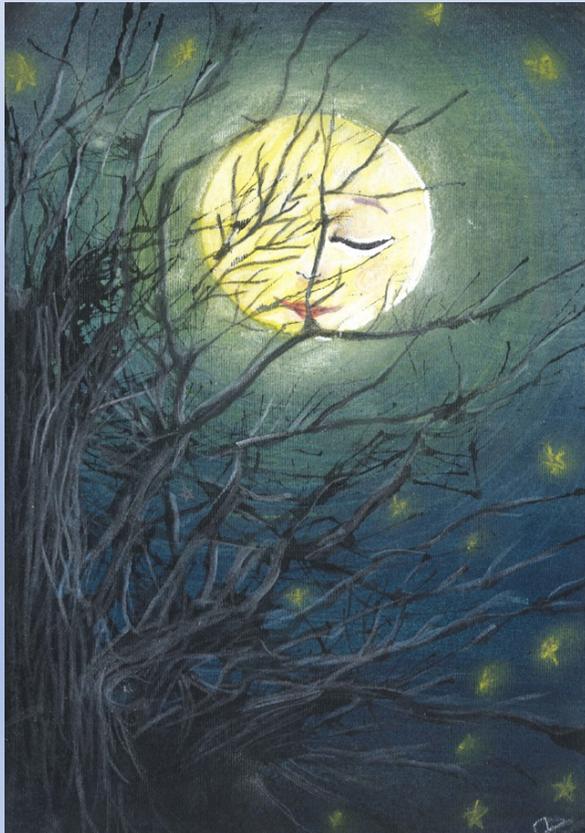
## Website link

<https://www.sanpatrignano.org/en/about-us/>

## Comunità San Patrignano

Some drawings made by our people for communication purposes, to express themselves and at the same time raise awareness on substance use dependence and especially on recovery.

A FREE COMMITMENT



## Comunità San Patrignano

The Compagnia di San Patrignano is an amateur theatre company whose protagonists are young people from the community undergoing rehabilitation, some at an earlier stage, others more advanced. Some of them remain in contact with the company and take part in performances even after they are reintegrated into society.



Monica  
Barzanti  
explains:

A drug centred life is devoid of passion and leaves no room to cultivate talents. This is why, in addition to the more traditional recovery driven activities, recreation and artistic pursuits can also be a valuable tool for self-discovery and growth. Those with an interest can pursue theatre, music and dance, often taking part in workshops with recognized professionals to improve their artistic skills. Something that they will keep with them for a lifetime. Theatre is an integral part of the therapeutic process for many residents. Acting requires self-awareness and is a way to strengthen interpersonal skills.



Francesco Povero is the representation of San Francesco life, of his search of a real and deep meaning in life, and this is similar to the path and search of our people in recovery. This is the message of this performance. We can say that in this performance there are mixed arts, as there is also our choir, the SanPa Singers involved in it.

This is a piece performed by the San Patrignano Company at the Teatro Parenti in Milan: *Così è se vi pare* by Luigi Pirandello. There are interesting interviews about the meaning of theatre for our people, especially at 2.02 minutes where the protagonist explains why theatre helped her in her recovery path.



## Comunità San Patignano

Admission to San Patignano Community and the recovery program is completely free for both residents and for their families.

If you wish to be admitted to the rehabilitation community, you can email [info@sanpatignano.org](mailto:info@sanpatignano.org) for information on how to apply or visit [www.sanpatignano.org](http://www.sanpatignano.org)



## Waste Art to celebrate the 700 anniversary of Dante's death



This artwork was created by the residents of San Patignano community in training within the decoration workshop, together with the staff of the department. The project was made in collaboration with HERA, a multi utility company that is committed to recycling.

The Hera Group's Scart art project set up a collaboration with the San Patrignano Decoration Laboratory for the celebrations of the 700th anniversary of Dante's death. The rehabilitation community in the Rimini area also took part in the creation of three works that will be displayed in the multi-utility's exhibitions to celebrate the Great Poet.

For over twenty years, Scart, the Hera Group's art project, has been developing the pairing of art and waste, masterfully combining design and respect for the environment, art and nature; and it is precisely by giving new life to exhausted material, but capable of relaunching the great message of the circular economy, that Scart has chosen to take part in the celebrations for the 700th anniversary of Dante's death in 2021.



In addition to involving the students of three important Fine Arts Academies (Florence, Ravenna and Carrara), invited to develop a re-enactment of the Comedy through the art of re-use, the initiative has also been opened up for the first time to the San Patrignano rehabilitation community.



These are places where you can breathe in the air of the old trade workshops, and art blends with personal rebirth, nourished by beauty, which in San Patrignano has as an important educational value. At San Patrignano, for example, there are workshops for weaving, leather goods, wallpaper, cabinet-making, wrought iron, and now also 'Waste Art'. Thanks to the Scart project: new and infinite possibilities for experimenting with materials, shapes and colours which, in the spirit of reuse and recovery, seek a way to combine beauty and respect for nature. Starting from the waste produced in the numerous active workshops at San Patrignano, some young people, coordinated by their supervisor and educator Sandro Pieri, created three sculptures of Dante's head (180 cm high and 80 cm wide) inspired by Enrico Pazzi's statue in Piazza Santa Croce in Florence. Oak wood tesserae, glass, gold leaf, newspaper cuttings, rusty screws, scraps of leather and acrylic paints were skilfully reinvented and reused to give lustre and depth to Dante's gaze. The three works, together with those created by the students of the Fine Arts Academies, will be displayed in the exhibitions organised by the Hera Group to celebrate the 700th anniversary of Dante's death in 2021.

**The work of San Patrignano rehabilitation community**

## Comunità San Partignano

If I close my eyes



This film was created by the residents of Comunità San Patrignano with the guidance of their teacher who is a director and video maker.

*Submitted on behalf of Comunità San by Monica Barzanti*



At San Patrignano, we have an audiovisual department where our people can learn to create video. They have professionals to teach them and also attend specific courses. The video I am presenting here was created to represent San Patrignano in two minutes on occasions for conferences and fora. It was created by the group of residents present in that department at that time, and they were in different stages of their recovery path, but they all contributed in different ways. In addition, the protagonist is one of the residents that was part of the San Patrignano Theatre Company. Now he is back home, reintegrated into society and still occasionally collaborates with us. The message to share is a focus on the many emotions and different relationships and activities in which people are involved when they are on their recovery path at San Patrignano. This video helps to let people understand how in depth, important and fundamental it is to connect with your emotions in order to progress in your recovery.

## Comunità San Patrignano

Looking for her

This video, produced by the residents of the Audiovisual Department at San Patrignano, presents one of San Patrignano's creative craft workshops, the weaving laboratory, in a very original way. In particular, it emphasises the value of the interweaving relationships between the girls, using the metaphor of the weft and warp in weaving. These interpersonal relationships woven together in the course of their stay, working together in creating amazing crafted items, create deep bonds that banish loneliness, help them get to know each other and support each other.

This video is used to present the weaving laboratory to potential partners, collaborators and customers.

*Submitted on behalf of Comunità San Patrignano by Monica Barzanti*



“Weaving’s my job.

It’s also my teacher: it teaches me to know myself, what I like and what I don’t like, my limits, it measures my patience and above all, helps me discover a world that is beginning to fascinate me.”

— Alessia

“For me, weaving isn’t only my daily job. Weaving is what has helped me to have faith in myself again, it’s how I’ve learnt to have relationships with people.

It’s how I’ve become freer to be myself.

I love my job, not only because it’s fascinating and creative; I love to see how the threads turn into fabric and see how I can create something beautiful from nothing.

It teaches me patience, dedication and tenacity.”

— Ginevra

# Comunità San Patignano

Actually, this is not a single piece of artwork, but presents our Design Lab, the name that includes all our artistic craft activities and laboratories: weaving, hand-painted wallpaper, leather goods, carpentry, blacksmiths.

The human-scale rhythm of handwork allows you to think, to concentrate on yourself. Only this rhythm, not subjected to pressure, leads to true dialogue and a true search for mutual understanding. San Patignano produces excellence, beauty is pursued, and the beauty that each of the young people on the path carries within themselves is rediscovered.



*The items produced are sold and the revenues are all in favour of the community itself, this contributes to its sustainability.*



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bTPenLp8ZfY&t=25>



# Designa Lab - Crafts

These crafts have been present since the first years of the community, but recently they have been gathered under the name Designa Lab. They all propose artistic craftsmanship as a means to rediscover oneself and the beauty of life.



<https://designlab.sanpatignano.org/it/tessitura>

*Submitted on behalf of Comunità San Patignano by Monica Barzanti*



We have many collaborations with many different designers, architects, fashion brands and so on.

## Comunità San Patignano

Written Word

These Stories were written by the residents to contribute to our prevention activities. Telling or writing down their stories helps our people to see their lives with emotion but at the same time with a certain distance and ability to cope. It means for them to better understand what was behind certain decisions and impulses. It is a kind of self-analysis which, with the help of the editors who always work with them, can become a reflection and re-elaboration of their own experience, capable of triggering important maturational processes.

Some of them were also published in a book.

The stories, included in the book, also participated in the Campiello Award Special Edition for San Patignano <https://www.sanpatignano.org/sabato-il-vincitore-del-campiello-per-san-patignano/>



**Sottovoci. Storie di San Patignano**

ISBN 10: [8891827789](https://www.isbn.it/9788891827789) / ISBN

13: [9788891827784](https://www.isbn.it/9788891827784)

Published by Mondadori Electa, 2019

In addition, when the COVID-19 pandemic severely hit our country, we organized some theatrical readings online of those personal and intimate stories in favor of the students that were obliged to distance learning and couldn't participate in person to our prevention initiatives. The readings were performed by the members of our San Patignano Theater Company.

*Submitted on behalf of Comunità San Patignano by Monica Barzanti*

## Comunità San Patrignano

These stories are written by many of the residents that contributed to the blog, and they are signed with their names. We are authorised to share them. They were translated into English by one of the guys of the Community from an english speaking country.



## Written Word - San, added to my name

For me "San", added to my name would be like being summoned by the emperor of Japan. I do not know for what devilry of fate I am afflicted. However, I was born in Japan, but from Slavic parents. My mother had been offered a job in Japan, they paid her the ticket, once she arrived in Tokyo, her visa lasted only 72 hours, the mob charged her the today equivalent of 30 thousand euros for the documents. My father was sent home; I did not see him for much longer. My mom stayed in a nightclub selling her body for 2 years. As soon as everything was repaid, a blitz closed the place. She was alone with me, newly born. We had to move from city to city to lay low as we were refugees. To make a living she was a photo model, but she was paid in black. When she walked among so many people in the most degraded suburbs, she stood out from the Asian crowd like a glimpse of light in the darkness, perhaps for many that light entered the cracks of their inner prison. Nevertheless, not having enough money, we were not Japanese, so I could not access any public bodies, I was segregated at home. When I reached my 16th birthday, I learned the minimum Japanese that I used when I was sent away from the police from the orchards where I worked ... In a bright neon town, which in the green of the surrounding hills looked like fluorescent ink spilled onto an English lawn, we found a parish. Eventually, thanks to them I managed to go to school. I made an indescribable effort to keep up with the class. I decided to devote every day to study; I slept from 10 in the evening to 1 in the morning, every day, I did so for years. I could not keep up with my studies, I was too far behind, some doctors gave me meds to quell my fits of rage due to my exhaustion and exclusion, nobody spoke to me, and I could not get close to my peers . Some girls approached me continually, every time I spoke with one, she eventually stopped considering me, leaving me a little notes saying that their parents reproached her because I'm not Japanese. Repeating the school years many times, leading an exhaustive life because of the studying. I graduated; they gave me a scholarship. I went to England, from the acquired study method, I was the best on the entire campus. One night some guys invited me to a pub, I got drunk. Not being able to handle my anger, as I was teased by them because I never had a girlfriend, I punched them, they threw me to the ground, as I stood up to move away, I took an umbrella and took away the sight of an eye of one of them. I was jailed, then I was transferred to the Moldavian prison where I received my nationality. I took drugs like crazy, with my father's money, because he was contacted by my mother who had been placed in a refugee centre in Japan, waiting to return to Moldavia. My father knew San Patrignano. I was transferred there, where I worked hard on myself to get to know me, finally being in company that I did not know before the feeling of; I even managed to graduate.

Benedict

## Comunità San Patrignano



It's snowing a lot today. Outside everything is completely white and silent, the snow dampens every sound and makes the landscape around surreal. I like all of this; I like to slowly walk under the snowflakes, the sound of my steps is my only company and I like to take these moments to think.

I'm 40, 45 actually even though I do not want to admit it yet and my life is ... well, it's certainly isn't as I had imagined it.

I had a daughter when 18 and a half, a beautiful dark baby, with a lot of black hair and big brown eyes. Eyes that from the first moment they looked at me, have been vividly held in my mind, not even years later, when those same eyes had become dull, veiled, kidnapped by heroin. But it's a long story. In my heart I know how hard I tried to face this life that was never easy, that every day have put me in front of the hard tests that sometimes I passed, but at what price?

My daughter's father left me when I had her in my womb after a few months. Initially we wanted to have a baby, I do not know how many times we made love so that we could have a child.

## Written Word - Tomorrow will be better

We were both just under twenty, we were drifting but we had many dreams; I had stopped using heroin for a few months, love had saved me, or so I thought. We smoked together just a few joints, so that we could keep that minimum of cheerfulness, of lightheartedness, to support the everyday life we did not like so much.

We were living with illusions, two kids who wanted to live as adults, to play the perfect family without having any capacity at all. We thought that a child would be the perfect glue between us, forever, something created by our love, someone who would never set us apart.

What a fool was I shortly thereafter, events showed me this, reality violently came in front of me, day after day.

He left me as my belly began to glimpse. One day he told me that if I had an abortion he would stay with me, he did not feel like carrying on that dream of ours anymore. It had suddenly become something frightening and tiring to him, but it was not difficult for me to choose, I thought he might have given up again sooner or later, while a son would never.

I think my family hated me and if they didn't, well, they didn't prove otherwise. I had done a new scandal in the neighbourhood: first I was a seventeen-year-old heroin addict, now I was an eighteen-year-old girl-mother.

But this did not affect me too much, I had my baby in the stomach and in the evening, when I locked myself in my room to ward off the screams of my family, I stroked my stomach slowly, around the belly button, hoping to hear something moving, waiting for a kick.

I admit that there were sad days, where I tried to understand why did my boyfriend leave me, I tried to understand the anger of my father and my mother, who saw my baby as an extra mouth to feed, but hell if it was difficult!

Yet I never thought of seeking comfort in heroine at that time, I had that life inside of me that asked to come out to the world and wanted it, I felt it and this also pushed me to move forward. I had a purpose now, something that made me keep my eyes open and that made me walk, something without which I could not move a finger ..

My life has always been as if in function to someone or something; therefore, my daughter grew up, fragile as me, and she too has not been able to defend herself, and from when young she took drugs. Now she is doing well, she has entered a community and when I look at her, I see a strong young woman, I see what I wanted to be, and I am proud of her.

I keep on fighting, as much as I can, I do not give up, I am a tough cookie.

Tomorrow I'm sure will be better, for now I keep on walking, here, in the snow that has not stopped yet, and has continued to fall silently.

## Comunità San Patrignano

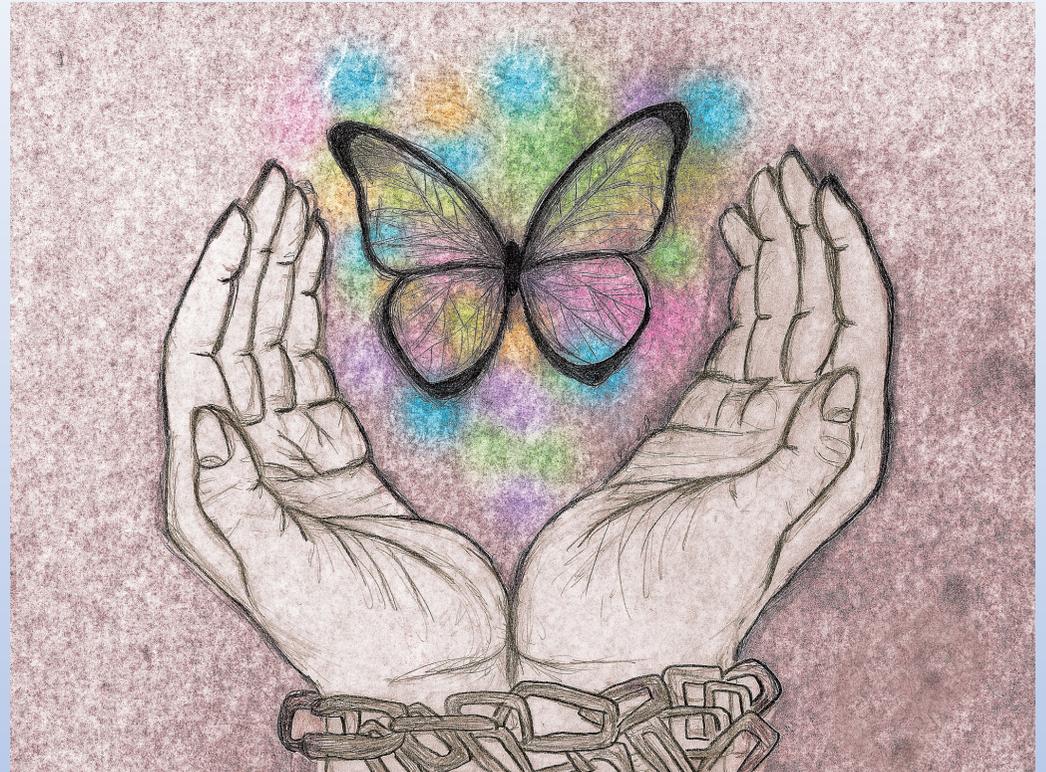
## Written Word - I am important

They arrested me on December 2, 2004. They arrived home at 08.05 with a search warrant. I was in my room with a girl and I was preparing the doses to sell. Then, those loud knocks on the door.

The action scene was about to begin. They couldn't be friends or customers. I knew it was them, but I didn't know that my life, from that moment, would change. I did not open. I ran to the room, took the box of pills and the bag with the 'stuff' and threw everything from the bathroom window that overlooked a blind courtyard. Everything floated in the void. Then the broken door and all those men with the faces of someone doing something dangerous and important at the same time. It was the anti-drug team. They were there just for me. They searched my body first, then the house. And the more they found nothing, the more they gutted everything. Mattresses, sofa and walls. Suddenly, a cry: "The window, the window". Idiot, I hadn't closed it. It was wide open, and it wasn't good, it wasn't smart. It was December and it was cold outside. Very cold. Chaos confused my thoughts, everyone screamed as a man approached the window with a rope in his hand. They drop it from the windowsill and as it descends towards my destiny, an unnatural silence invades the room. All with bated breath waiting for the verdict.

After a minute or a century, a voice comes from below like a distant echo. But loud and clear. 'It's here, it's here. I found it, it's here'. While everything was happening, people kept coming to the house and one by one they were pinned against the wall. Then, they arrested me. And I had a smile on my face. I answered badly, I was cheeky, irreverent and fearless. My best interpretation.

I was proud of myself. I was a great one, a dangerous one, one to follow, to arrest, to block. And now everyone would know. I was a big thing. Visible to the world. Nothing and no one would break me. As I descended the stairs, with my hands behind my back, I looked into the eyes of all those who looked out on the landings, those who, less courageous, peeked through the doors and those gathered on the sidewalk to see what was happening. I met their eyes and I thought: 'Look, look at everyone. Me, I'm an important girl'. I was only 17. After 4 months the process. Destination: restrictive community. Someone passes Lara some photocopies to read. To pass the time that seems so long in there. Inexorable. Lara browses them. On page seven we talk about a place. A big place, full of guys. And on page nine there is a photo of a guy. A little boy smiling. And that smile is beautiful. Carefree, free. Like the smile of someone who feels important. 'If you want to go there you have to wait another month. Or go somewhere else'. Lara waits. She can't explain why but that's just where she wants to go. On that hill from where you can see the sea.





# More from Lee Budworth

# Self Portraits



The original artwork is for sale directly from the artist E: [leethebud@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:leethebud@hotmail.co.uk)

## John Kelman and Stevie Brown

Music: If Anyone Tells You

John and Stevie are both participants of Aberdeen in Recovery and came together to create as a group to write this song and make the music behind it, with a tutor from Station House Media Unit (shmu)



## If Anyone Tells You



'If Anyone Tells You' is a composition about the things in life that can get you down, and how to get you back up. A painfully honest song with a much needed positive outlook. Although the song doesn't feature any vocals, lyrics are provided for you to read through while you listen to the song. The idea is that you read them using your own voice to resonate with your own feelings and experiences. This song stemmed from a discussion between participants where one participant helped to lift the spirits of another by saying 'If anyone tells you they ain't got shit, they're lying'. We then captured this moment by working out the rhythm of the phrase and putting some notes to it. We then added some chords that fitted, created a new section of chord patterns based on this, added some drums we liked, added some harmony, structured the song and added more lyrics.

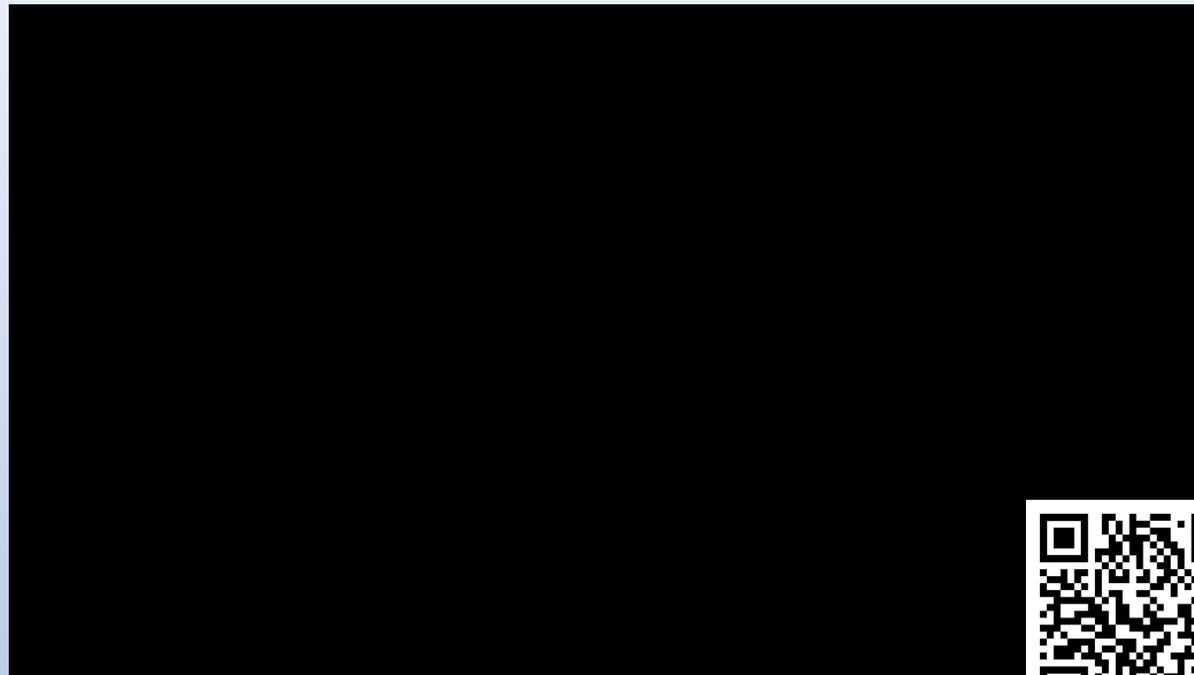
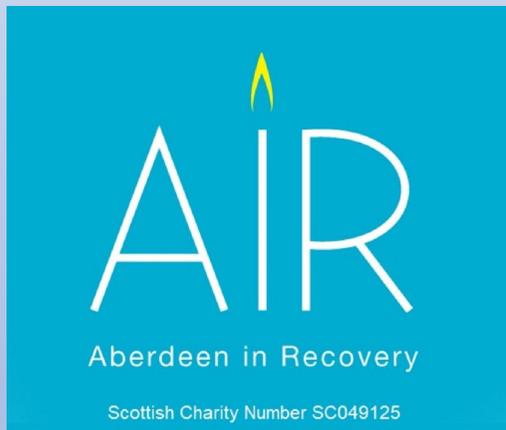
*Submitted on behalf of the creators by Sarah Igesund.*

*This music was created as part of an online music course ran by Station House Media Unit (shmu) and we worked with participants from Aberdeen in Recovery.*

**Dermot Craig, Lindsay Webster, Stevie Brown, John Kelman**

**Film: Finding My Way**

Aberdeen in Recovery (AiR) group is a network of people in the Aberdeen area in Scotland, who are in recovery. Station House Media Unit (shmu) work closely with AiR providing media opportunities.



Finding My Way was created by individuals from Aberdeen in Recovery (AiR) and was inspired by sharing their experience of recovery and the support they have had along the way. Bringing individuals together in a creative space empowered them to explore their creative narrative encouraging self expression allowing them to share their own experiences through film.

*Submitted on behalf of the creators by Sarah Igesund, Station House Media Unit*

# Carl Chamberlain

54, two siblings. Our father was violent and we were in Erin Pizzey's House for Battered Wives when I was 4 after my mum gathered us from school one day.

I have always written, but in my peer group and in the media poetry was for 'poofs', 'swots' or 'public school educated people' so I kept it secret. I now share my poetry so people like me (comprehensive education, no college or uni) would feel that poetry was for them.

I volunteer as a presenter on a local radio station and have done for 6 years. I now host a specialist show on Monday nights called 'The Monday Club' where I play music from people I've met at the open mics I have ran and do run, or the stage I manage at Glastonbury and The Secret Garden Party for Lost Horizon Sauna & Solar Stage or gigs I go to.

I'm attempting to create a show using my poetry, and via a scratch show got 5 days residency at Battersea Arts Centre to develop my show called 'Release The Pressure'.

I believe that creativity is a great release from the pressures of depression and anxiety.

## Phoetry



Tranquility



Depression



# Tineke Alberts

## The Truth has many faces



Acceptance opens doors.  
Acceptance is the key to freedom.

It's about feelings of shame and guilt, transforming them into gratitude and acceptance.



This is my breakthrough in feeling pleasure again without performing, playing outside, making little steps in my 12 steps program, it works if you work it! Also, I realize that this is what I really like, making things with a message, working without word. When I listen to my heart, my hands are moving, and I can make things beyond words. My dream is making art, but first I had to take the path of life, to live my life, to make dreams come true!



*These artworks are not for sale, however Tineke can accept commissions to order. For more information contact Tineke directly on [tinekealberts@live.nl](mailto:tinekealberts@live.nl)*



## Debbie Crouch



Learning how to draw and paint as an adult was a major part of my recovery journey and gave me back my confidence.



## Isolation, Leo Lion, Owlberta, Mushroom and Frog, Hands of Hope

At the beginning of lockdown 2019 I launched various art for wellness groups on Facebook to share my experiences and provide a safe space for people to come together and share their art and crafts. I was delighted and amazed when this quickly grew to over 10,000 members in less than a year.



In December 2020, with a passion and new idea I launched Creative Wellness Journey CIC with a dedicated website to help and support others through "Art for Wellness". Creative wellness aims to share ideas for people looking at how to be well through easy online tutorials and downloadable resources. [creativewellnessjourney.co.uk](http://creativewellnessjourney.co.uk)

This year I am proud to have achieved recognition and accreditation as the first trained Creative Recovery Coach in the UK accredited by Center for Addiction Recovery Training. My vision for the future is to provide a safe online platform for members to learn how to draw and paint, share their creativity, and encourage and support others in a positive community. [recoverycoachcommunity.com](http://recoverycoachcommunity.com)



## Sally Johnson



Art making enables me to process difficult emotions, my work is about containment which is something that often feels unattainable in addiction, it serves as a reminder that there is hope within those difficult times and it helps me to uncover moments of clarity and beauty hidden amidst the chaos.

The pieces are tactile and delicate much like early recovery.



## Beauty and Bile

I'm currently a trainee art psychotherapist at the University of Derby and studied a BA (hons) in Fine Art at Leeds Arts University. My work serves as a communicative tool, with a focus on catharsis and the embodiment of an emotional state or psychological issue. The pieces are from my undergrad where I was exploring addiction, there are themes of containment and fragility in recovery. Another element is the beauty that comes from hardships.

Thank you for  
your visit today

---

Scan to see the  
online version  
of the:

**Recovery  
Workbook**

You will need  
the Miro app to  
view



This presentation is brought to you by Karen Megranahan, Goldsmiths College, University of London, UK, with permission from all the artists included.  
Please let me know your thoughts via Twitter: @karenmegranahan using #CreativeArtsInRecovery



# Creative arts in Recovery

Personal reflections and artwork