

Press release 25th April 2012

Art to tell the stories of life: Oxfordshire's oldest residents show off their creative talents

One of Witney's oldest residents has worked with local artist Jennifer Newman to create a piece of 3D art collage celebrating her journey through life as a centrepiece for an exhibition in Witney opening next week. 'Caring About Art' will showcase the art and craft of the cared-for elderly, as part of a county-wide initiative to celebrate the talent of this often forgotten section of Oxfordshire's population.

The Witney resident, who wishes to remain anonymous, is 91, has lived in Witney for nearly 50 years and is now registered blind. Exploring her past she has created a work of art around a life-sized silhouette, based on memories and momentos including a prized knife to symbolize family meals, images of her childhood, the threads of her hobbies tying these memories together as if piecing together a jigsaw puzzle.

Presented as a drawer, the work will be displayed alongside life drawings, ceramics and sculpture by an ex-nun in her nineties inspired by Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth as well as work by artists Mary Knowland and Jennifer Knowland from the Oxfordshire Carers Forum 2012 showing how it feels to be a carer. Many artists continue to paint and draw or create, whether knitting or ceramics, well into their nineties and beyond, and some of their work will be also be shown at the offices of Day and Nightcare Assistance (Danacare) as part of Oxfordshire Artweeks.

John Maloney, MD of Danacare says 'There's a wealth of creative talent amongst the older generation, many of whom have fascinating stories to tell and are doing it in interesting ways. We're encouraging the people we care for to enjoy the visual arts and giving, not just our own clients, but all of Oxfordshire's cared-for elderly an opportunity to show their local community what they're producing. Oxfordshire County Council have backed the initiative, and we're looking forward to opening our offices as a venue for Artweeks in May.'

In addition Oxfordshire County Council's Health and Wellbeing Centres (Day Centres) in Abingdon, Bicester, Banbury, Didcot, Oxford, Wallingford and Wantage are opening their doors to the public for the first time during Artweeks." Our residents have been working really hard since January on their projects and are very excited about people coming to see their work", Kerry Coleman, Manager, Wallingford.

Submissions to the exhibition have been invited from the residents of care homes and those in domiciliary care from across the county. To encourage all care providers to go that extra mile, there is an award from Danacare for an individual artist or maker, and also to their care provider to help buy equipment or other provisions for the residents.

The exhibition will run during the 'North Oxon' week of Oxfordshire Artweeks 2012 Saturday 5th – Sunday 13th May For more information on Artweeks www.artweeks.org

Photo opportunity: Tuesday 1st May, 12noon Day and Nightcare Assistance, 46 Market Square, Witney OX28 6AL

(although the Witney resident doesn't wish to be identified, she'd be happy to be seen from the back viewing the newly created piece of art.)

Please call John Maloney of Danacare on 07801 600199 or Fiona also Danacare, on 01993 708905.

Additional notes

Oxfordshire Artweeks www.artweeks.org

Artweeks is Oxfordshire's largest visual arts festival, a three-week celebration in May each year of the county's artistic and creative talent., and the UK's oldest and biggest Open Studios event.

Almost 1000 artists open the doors to their homes and studios and welcome the public to see their creations and watch them work. In 2010 over 107,000 people visited nearly 500 venues across the county.

All exhibitions are free

Oxfordshire Artweeks 2012 will run from Saturday 5th – 27th May 2012 and is organised into three geographical areas

North Oxfordshire Exhibitions: Saturday 5th - Sunday 13th May

City Exhibitions: Saturday 12th - Sunday 20th May

South Oxfordshire Exhibitions: Saturday 19th - Sunday 27th May

The *Oxfordshire Visual Arts Festival (Artweeks)* is a non profit-making company, limited by guarantee and owned by its members. Everyone is welcome to take part and there is no selection process for artists wishing to participate.

Further press information & photographs from Esther Browning 01865 821090 or 07776 196967 esther@artweeks.org

Day and Nightcare Assistance <http://www.danacare.co.uk/>

Day and Nightcare Assistance has been established across Oxfordshire for over twenty years and is at the forefront of independent care companies with head offices in Witney, priding themselves on a high standard of quality of care and the flexible provision of additional activities according to an individual needs to maintain a high quality of life for their and disabled and elderly clients. For more information contact John Maloney on 01993 708905

For more information on artist Jennifer Newman see

<http://www.jennifer-newman.com> email info@jennifer-newman.com
or call 01993 881830