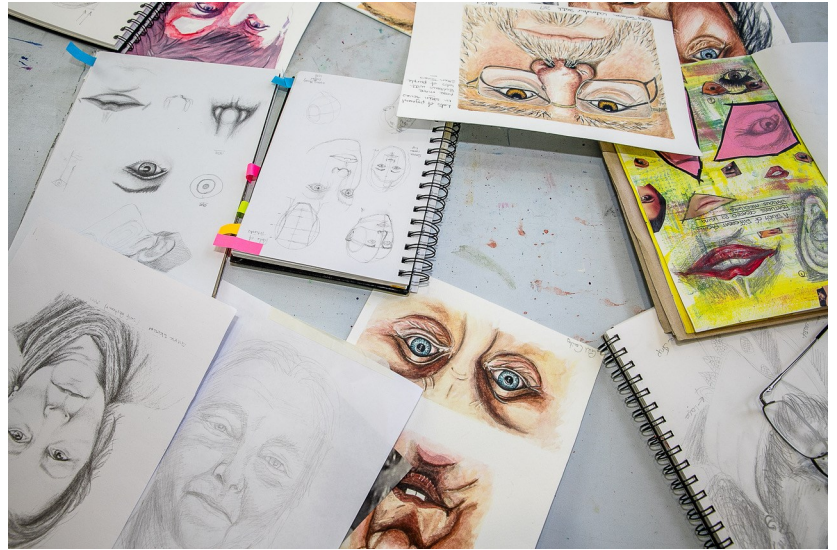


CG0003 Practising Portraits

The covid pandemic lockdowns forced many arts organizations to adopt new ways of allowing people to learn, practise and access art. One such organization was Kirkby Gallery in Knowsley, Liverpool, which has a long tradition of delivering in person art courses.

In early 2021 Tina Ball submitted an application on behalf of the Friends of Kirkby Gallery and Prescott Museum for funding to support the delivery of an online portrait painting course led by artist, Gillian Cowley.



"Practising Portraits will be an online 10-week artist-led introductory course in portraiture. Using portraits from Knowsley Council's Art Collection as a starting point, children and adults alike will develop observational and practical skills to give them the confidence to produce their own portrait of someone inspirational to them."



The course used works of arts from the gallery's collection and was delivered in partnership with the Kirkby Collaborative Network of Schools.

Some 340 children and adults signed up for the course, with school teachers enrolling to use the sessions as a teaching tool. One of

the strengths of the online approach was that subscribers could watch the sessions as often as they liked.

Feedback on the course was positive:

"The way Gill talked to camera and made the whole process of tackling painting a portrait, which I've never done before, made it feel like she was talking to me as well as it being something I could do at my own pace".





“A lovely course which felt like a chat more than anything – no pressure, not complicated to follow and I always knew what to expect. Great weekly instructions as to what I needed and also, a list of explanations of any key terms I didn’t know”.

For some participants, the sessions were almost therapeutic:

“Admittedly, I just wanted to watch an artist at work, so didn’t really do my own portrait, I just wanted to see it done”.

There has been a big up-take in young artists signing up to the Little BIG Art Club (Kirkby Gallery’s Saturday mornings art club) and all local primary and secondary schools

have now signed up as Friends, which allows access to **Love Art Loan Art** – an art loan scheme for schools where the gallery lends contemporary works of art to inspire school pupils and introduce them to art.

Practising Portraits built on the increased interest in pursuing arts and crafts activities during the lockdowns, a trend exemplified by the television series, Grayson Perry’s Art Club on Channel 4, with its celebrity guests such as Great British Bake Off presenter, Noel Fielding, and comedians, Jim Moir (aka Vic Reeves) and Joe Lycett.

Foundation support: £1,150

