

**THE
JANUARY
CHALLENGE**
64 Million *artists!*
**10TH
ANNIVERSARY**
2023



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**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



THE CHAMPIONS PACK 2023

— 03

Welcome!

— 05

The journey so far

— 07

About this year

09 – 25

The Challenges

**WHAT'S IN
THE PACK...**



WELCOME!

Welcome to The January Challenge Pack, 2023! We're so pleased that you're here. The January Challenge is 31 days of fun, quick, free and accessible creative challenges - one for each day of the month of January.

The January Challenge is designed to help you kickstart your year, try new things, explore your creativity and connect with people across the UK - and the world! We also know that 85% of people that took part in 2022 said that it had a positive impact on their wellbeing, (you can read more about that in the 2022 Impact Report [here](#).)

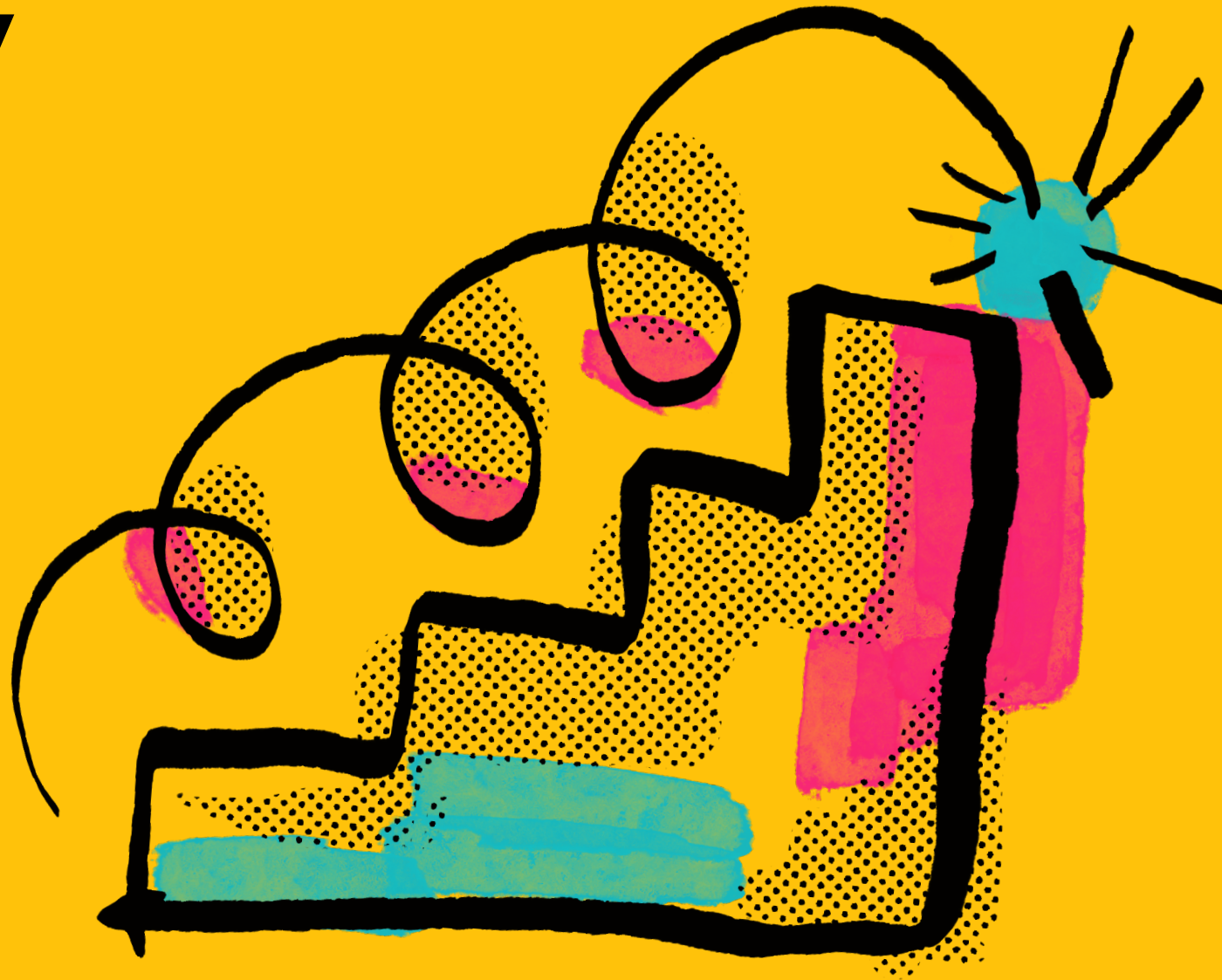
People take part in The January Challenge in all sorts of ways. Some people sign up to receive a daily Challenge email, or follow along on social media. They might take part on their own, with family or friends, or by sharing with our online community. This is The Champions Pack, which contains all of the challenges ahead of time. Champions (like you!) can use this Pack in different workplace settings - like schools, hospitals, libraries, care homes and prisons - to engage with the people and communities around them. This means that the challenges happen in team meetings, WhatsApp groups, lessons, creative breaks and pop-up galleries around the country!

USING YOUR PACK

How could you get creative with your teams, groups and colleagues? What are the systems you have in place for sharing - or what are the things you could do, to get them set up? Perhaps you'll distribute the challenges up on your on intranet or email, make posters, create sharing groups, adapt challenges...

Check back at 64millionartists.com for regular updates and tips on how you could make the most of your pack.

THE JOURNEY SO FAR...



10 YEARS OF THE JANUARY CHALLENGE

The January Challenge has grown exponentially, quickly evolving into a major national campaign that maintains a loyal audience and attracts thousands more each year.

It all started when Jo Hunter, CEO and co-founder of [64 Million Artists](#), invited her Facebook friends to join her in a daily creative challenge - an idea inspired by her own attempt to rekindle her creativity and boost her wellbeing. A couple of hundred people joined in and spent January doing, thinking and sharing together. Now, 10 years later - over 50,000 people take part across the UK and the world. That number is growing by the day (we're on track for 64 Million...!)

The January Challenge explores the relationship between creativity and wellbeing. It seeks to offer informal opportunities for creativity as a tool for self-care and community connection. It promotes an inclusive culture of sharing, and fosters a positive relationship with the vulnerability of trying new things, exploring new skills; and sometimes 'failing' in the process. 2023 is the 10 year anniversary of The January Challenge - it's a big birthday, and everyone's invited!

A NOTE FROM 64 MILLION ARTISTS

We are passionate about creativity because of its unique ability to put us back in touch with a part of ourselves, often long buried, that allows us to express who we really are, and connect with the world around us in a different way. We think helping others to do this has the possibility to have a profound effect on the world - and we know that the only way to work is together. If you would like to work together with 64 Million Artists, and explore what creativity means in your life or community, you can get in touch at hello@64millionartists.com.

**ABOUT
THIS
YEAR...**



CO-CREATION AND COLLABORATION

All of the challenges have been designed by individuals and community groups across the UK. They are a celebration of different ideas and types of creativity, and a reflection of how different people think about and use their creativity.

64 Million Artists have been working with group leaders to organise and deliver 'Challenge Co-Creation' workshops, in which paid community participants have worked together to design the Challenges you'll find in this pack.

You'll also find some challenges from writers, artists, performers, makers, poets and activists. It's a varied and exciting mix! A panel of brilliant people, who celebrate creativity in all sorts of different spaces, helped us to whittle down a huge list of challenges to the final 31.

You can learn more about the individuals, groups and panel involved at 64millionartists.com.

64 ON TOUR

A massive thank you to leaders and participants at: Arts and Homelessness International, Rotherham United CST, Artes Mundi, the Welsh Arts and Health Wellbeing Network, Learning for the Fourth Age, the Chit Chat group in Leicester, the Men's group at The Long Table in Stroud, the Friendship and Bereavement Cafe in Tendring, InCommon, Koestler Arts, CALM and Cumbria Libraries.

We have enjoyed working with young people, elderly people, and everybody in between to co-create this years programme!



THE CHALLENGES

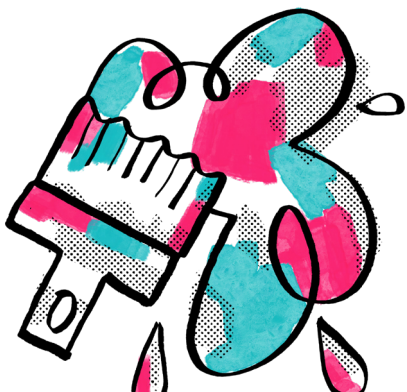
1. A little bit of Me

From members of the Associates leadership programme at Arts & Homelessness International (AHI)

The Associates Programme is the first cultural leadership programme for creatives who are or have been homeless in history. Meet the associates [here](#).

Think of an object that you own, or wear, that has some kind of a story attached to it. Imagine your object on display in an exhibition. Tell the story of your object, as if it was written on the plaque next to the display.

What would you say?



2. Draw without fear

From [Emma Major](#)

"Hi. I'm Emma. I'm a blind wheelchair user, joyful participant of The January Challenge for many years and now happy to call myself an artist and poet.

Having had a lots of negative feedback about my art at school, I never even thought about being creative. When I lost almost all my eye sight 8 years ago I had to get used to a new way of living, one of the things I decided to try was art. I know that sounds like the most crazy idea, but I slowly made my way to abstract painting and digital art. Technology gives me huge magnification which helps me see the world and create art; but my lack of sight itself is my biggest creative gift - it removes my ability to doubt myself. That removal of doubt is the focus of my challenge to you."

Find a piece of paper, the larger the better; and a pen, pencil or anything that will make a mark. Hold the pencil and put it somewhere on the paper. Now close your eyes.

Draw without thinking about what you're drawing. Perhaps you'll be inspired by something you hear, or by your own thoughts, or by the texture of the paper. When you feel ready put down your pencil and open your eyes. Try not to judge your art. Just look at it as you would a young child's drawing - What can you see? How do you feel? What story does it tell?

If you have time you can add colour or texture, or draw some more details on it. Whatever you do, enjoy yourself and try not to worry about the result. I create because I love to create. Do you feel brave enough to share your art with a family member, friend or colleague?

3. First Impressions

From Alaw Owen, WAHWN

The [Wales Arts Health and Well-being Network](#) (WAHWN) is a rapidly expanding network of colleagues delivering arts and health work in Wales. This challenge came from a Welsh Language 'breakout room' on zoom.

Create an imprint of your hand or foot, in or with natural materials. Leave behind a trace of yourself, or take it inside.

4. In Common

From InCommon

"At [InCommon](#), we bring generations together. We connect groups of young people with their older neighbours in retirement homes to learn and build friendships together. Expect the chance to empathise with other people who you may not have met otherwise. Expect to feel reminded that you're never alone."

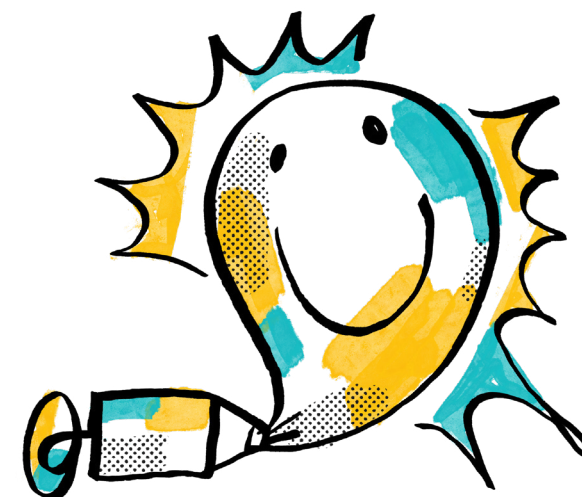
Find out something you've got 'In Common' with somebody older or younger than you. You might work with a friend, or family member, colleague, or perhaps you don't know them yet. Perhaps you speak online, on the phone, in a shop or a cafe. Perhaps the person you have in mind is a character in a book or film who you have connected with in some way. They might be older or younger than you by decades, years, months, weeks, hours or minutes....

5. Hello

From Cumbria Libraries

[Cumbria Libraries](#) staff invited local community group leaders, and representatives to a Challenge Co-Creation workshop.

Add a face to an everyday object. Imagine the background story of the character you have created.





6. Glorious

From members of the Associates leadership programme at Arts & Homelessness International (AHI)

The Associates Programme is the first cultural leadership programme for creatives who are or have been homeless in history. Meet the associates [here](#).

Choose an object around you - any object, from a coffee cup to a pen. Perhaps it is your object from yesterday! Take two minutes to glorify that object. Write or speak your 'ode' to that object, like it's the greatest and best thing that you have ever known.

7. Found it First

From young people at [Rotherham United CST](#)

"Our Youth & Inclusion department works with the diverse and vibrant communities of Rotherham with the overall goal to make Rotherham a more inclusive, cohesive and safer society. We love the idea of bringing a variety of young people from different backgrounds and communities together. What an amazing opportunity."

Spend a few minutes collecting 'found things' around you. You might find leaves, books, laundry, recycling or the washing up. What do your found things remind you of, or make you think about? Create an image using the objects as your art materials!

8. Pick me Up

From the [Friendship and Bereavement Cafe, Harwich](#)

Friendship cafes are weekly groups for anyone who feels isolated, wants to make new friends or has experienced bereavement. There are fun activities and guest speakers at every session and outings are planned throughout the year. It's a great place to meet others for a cuppa and a chat! Find out more [here](#).

"My daughter dyes my hair when I get the hump. I dye hers when she gets the hump. It's a pick me up."

What's your 'pick me up'? Can you find a way to enjoy it today?

9. Twist

From members of the ChitChat group, Leicester

The ChitChat group is a growing group of South Asian heritage women in Leicester, who gather on zoom, WhatsApp and in person to be creative, exercise, learn and ChitChat!

Find or recall a classic recipe, or family favourite, and re-write it with your own unique twist. Your twist might be delicious, nutritious or humorous!

10. Odd Poetry

From [Chrissie Okorie](#)

Chrissie Okorie is a writer, producer and performer. She is a part of the Maokwo Arts Organisation. Chrissie is passionate about empowering marginalised communities in the city of Coventry. She is currently working on a poetry pamphlet and a play.

Select an 'odd' item around you. Write a ten line poem about the object, that describes the item and how it impacts your senses. Your lines can be short, long, rhyming or non-rhyming. Give it a go, and see what happens!



11. Sign Names

From [Jonny Cotsen](#)

"I am an artist, performer and story teller. I am also a creative access consultant too. I love brilliant and important conversations and I do this a lot within my creative work. I am deaf and a lot of my work is around visual storytelling. I am inspired by every day conversations and how that can be retold in a visual narrative which is why I decided this would be a good challenge to do!"

My challenge is called 'Sign names'. Deaf culture is rich and varied and often you will notice that sign names are used within the Deaf community. Sign Names are unique and personal and it is a way to identify someone without finger spelling out their name using British Sign Language (BSL). These sign names can often reflect the person's character or their appearance or their personality.

It has to be unique to yourself. Maybe a memory that is very personal to you or something that you do.

To do our sign names, we just use our fingers, hand, arms and only within the space from the top of our heads to our shoulders.

Your sign name could be about your appearance, your name that might be unusual or something you are very passionate about like a hobby or a sporting activity. For example, if your name is Natasha you may want to imagine that your sign name is a moustache (which sounds like Natasha) or if your name is Peter Bell then perhaps your sign name could gesture yourself ringing a bell or if you love playing the piano, then imagine that you are playing the piano which could be your sign name. Help each other out if you are unsure.

If you know someone who is deaf, ask them for advice. If you are deaf - share your name with us.

Remember, it is important you cannot officially give your self a sign name until you meet someone from the deaf community and it is agreed by that person that will be your unique sign name! So, next time you meet a deaf person, ask them if they would like to learn your sign name. Once you officially have your sign name ...think of it as a 'rite of passage' showing your inclusion and being an ally to the Deaf community.



12. Imperfect Creations

From Cumbria Libraries

[Cumbria Libraries](#) staff invited local community group leaders, and representatives to a Challenge Co-Creation workshop.

Use a spillage, stain, tear or something 'imperfect' to inspire your creativity. You could write a haiku about the stain on the floor, add a smiling face to a coffee ring stain, or use a tear to inspire some embroidery. If you can't find anything - splash a small amount of cold tea onto some scrap paper. Let it dry and let the shapes inspire a doodle.

13. Colourful Voices

From the Held Space group at [Artes Mundi](#)

This challenge is from the 'Held Space' group. Held Space is a monthly group for Black Artists & non-black Artists' of Colour, held by Artes Mundi.

'Colour in your singing.'

What colours do you associate with different notes, sounds, feelings and emotions? Sing, hum or listen to a tune and colour in as you go.

14. I can sing a rainbow

From the 'Men's Table' - a Men's group, part of [The Long Table](#) in Stroud

"The Long Table sets out to find delicious answers to food issues. As a team, we put food at the centre of the community. We want to make sure that everyone has access to great food and people to eat it with, that's the basics. People with barriers to employment can gain meaningful work, learn invaluable skills, and locally grown food can be celebrated."

...Whilst colourful singing is on your mind! Write down a list of songs that connect in some way to the theme of 'colour'. Perhaps you take the time to listen to the song, read the lyrics, sing your heart out - or add your colourful songs to the [64 Million Artists Spotify playlist](#).

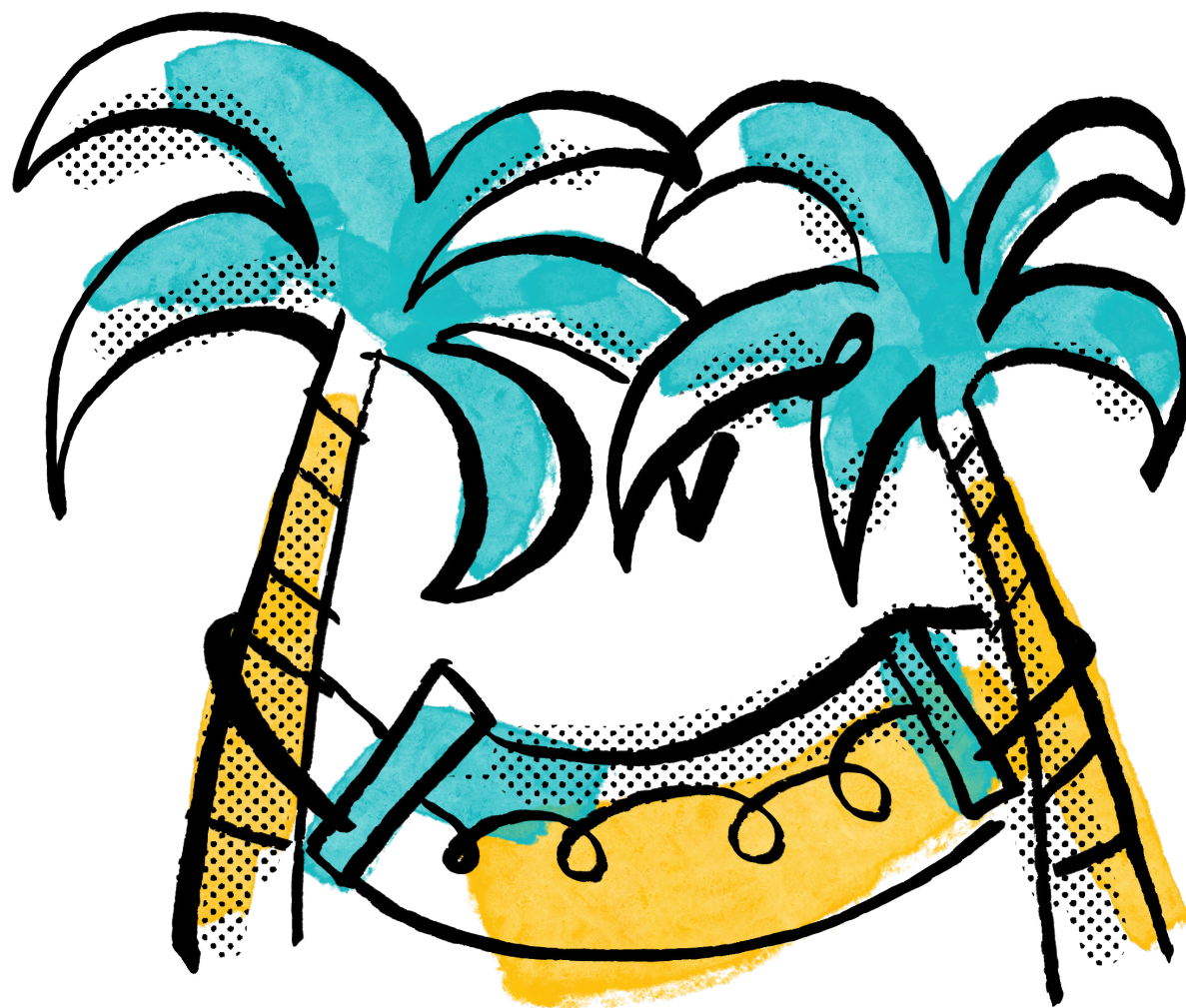


15. Creative Rest

From Cumbria Libraries

[Cumbria Libraries](#) staff invited local community group leaders, and representatives to a Challenge Co-Creation workshop.

Take the time - whether it's 5 minutes or longer - to chill out today! Close your eyes, watch your favourite movie, build a blanket fort, read a book, listen to your favourite podcast...however you find it, find a small way to relax....



16. Tell me something about Family

From Lemn Sissay

[Lemn Sissay](#) is a poet, writer and broadcaster. He is the author of 'My Name is Why' - a memoir about a childhood in care, self-expression and Britishness, and in doing so explores the institutional care system, race, family and the meaning of home.

This challenge is inspired by '[Tell me something about Family](#)' as part of the Brighton Festival 2021.

"Whether it's day or night, dark or light, come in.

Throughout my life I've watched families, it's like I've been watching windows from the outside, from a distance, because I've lived my life without a family.

Don't worry, I'm okay, but it's true - and I saw how many people looked closer to their family throughout the pandemic, for better, and for worse. I have always wanted to know about family from the inside.

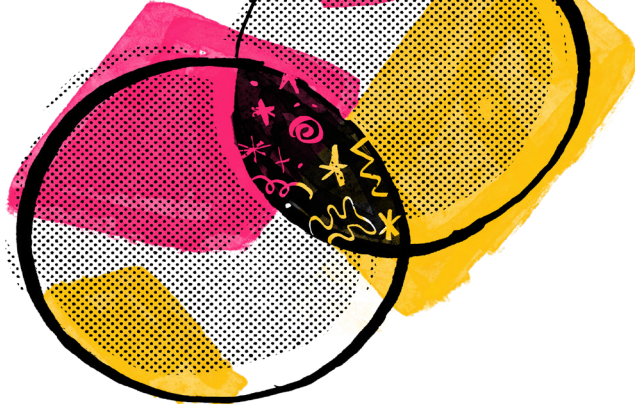
So I'm creating one from the inside, that connects us from across the globe. And it all starts with you - and your light. I want your answer to one heartfelt question - that you might tell me something about family. You can do it anonymously if you like, but your spark will shine and we will illuminate the planet with stories, phrases and sayings about family.

It doesn't have to be positive, doesn't have to be negative. Don't worry if your mind goes blank.....mine does!

Tell me something, anything - memories, things you've learned, the smells, the feels, the touch, the sound of home. It could be written in the form of a letter, you could write one line, or ten pages! The more specific the better. And when you've done. Share, if you like.

In January, check 64millionartists.com for a place to share your 'something' with Lemn. Or, keep it for you.





17. 4 inch collage

From the 'Men's Table' - a Men's group, part of ['The Long Table'](#) in Stroud

"The Long Table sets out to find delicious answers to food issues. As a team, we put food at the centre of the community. We want to make sure that everyone has access to great food and people to eat it with, that's the basics. People with barriers to employment can gain meaningful work, learn invaluable skills, and locally grown food can be celebrated."

Create a 4 inch (roughly!) square of paper. Layer scraps of material or different types of paper to create a collage. Fix your collage in place or keep it movable by simply layering the materials. If you have more time, choose materials that remind you, in some way, of your culture or traditions.

18. Geiriau newydd

From [Ceri Philips](#), WAHWN

[The Wales Arts Health and Well-being Network](#) (WAHWN) is a rapidly expanding network of colleagues delivering arts and health work in Wales. This challenge came from a Welsh Language 'breakout room' on zoom.

Geiriau newydd - new words. Choose a word that is meaningful to you. Write it down in your 'mother tongue' - your first language. Now, learn how to say that word in a totally new language. You could use Google, books or conversation to learn how to say or sign that word. Combine the two words to create one new word. Share your new word, and we'll create the 64 Million Artists dictionary of new words!

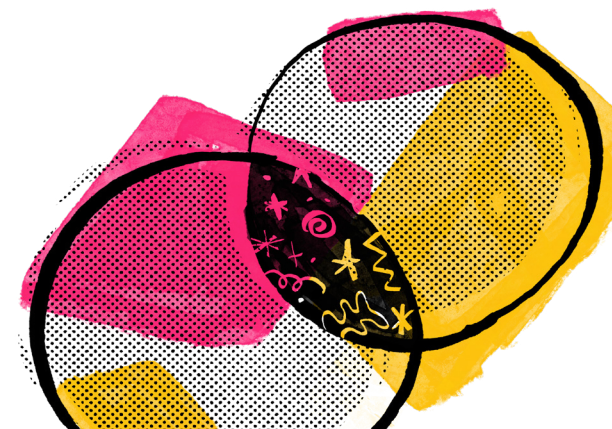
19. (re)imagine

From the Held Space group at [Artes Mundi](#)

This challenge is from the 'Held Space' group. Held Space is a monthly group for Black Artists & non-Black Artists' of Colour, held by Artes Mundi.

"We often think I wish things could be different, this challenge is showing you that in small ways things can be different depending on how you look at them, even if they are familiar to you."

Reimagine, rename or repurpose something around you, that is familiar, or that brings you joy.



20. Pranayama

From members of the ChitChat group, Leicester

The ChitChat group is a growing group of South Asian heritage women in Leicester, who gather on zoom, WhatsApp and in person to be creative, exercise, learn and ChitChat!

"Practice the simple breathing technique 'pranayama'. Pranayama is breathing consciously and paying attention to the breath, which is something we can take for granted as it automatically happens. There are many types of pranayama - you could simply sit and focus on your breath, in and out, for a few moments. Or, you could try alternate nostril breathing.

"Notice how you feel. In my experience, your mind will be calmer and more centred."

Sit in a quiet space where you will not be disturbed.

Try to relax your face so there is no tension in the face muscles.

Using your right or left hand try the alternate nostril breathing (the technique below is for using your right hand):

Close your right nostril with your thumb and breathe in deeply through the left nostril.

Close the left nostril with your ring finger and slowly breath out from the right nostril.

Breathe in deeply through the right nostril.

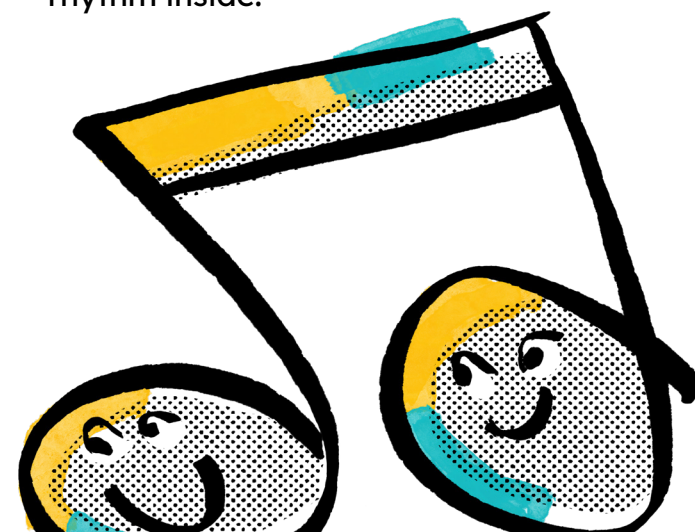
Repeat steps 8 more times, so you've done 9 rounds in total.

21. Dance, Dance, Dance, everywhere!

From members of the Associates leadership programme at Arts & Homelessness International (AHI)

The Associates Programme is the first cultural leadership programme for creatives who are or have been homeless in history. Meet the associates [here](#).

"Dance, dance, dance everywhere..." Create a continuous beat and repeat the sound. Keep it going and "Find the rhythm inside!"



22. High Five

From members of the ChitChat group, Leicester

The ChitChat group is a growing group of South Asian heritage women in Leicester, who gather on zoom, WhatsApp and in person to be creative, exercise, learn and ChitChat!

Draw around your hand, or draw the shape of a hand. Take a couple of moments to reflect on your day, or the world around you right now. Within your hand shape, write down or doodle, three things that please you..

23. Capture the day

From the 'Men's Table' - a Men's group, part of ['The Long Table'](#) in Stroud

"The Long Table sets out to find delicious answers to food issues. As a team, we put food at the centre of the community. We want to make sure that everyone has access to great food and people to eat it with, that's the basics. People with barriers to employment can gain meaningful work, learn invaluable skills"

Choose something that you see or experience most days. Capture that thing at different points throughout your day - in a photograph, doodle, describing word or simply by noticing it. If you would like to - capture that thing every day for the rest of the week, or the rest of January.



24. Playing with 'Paint'

From Sean Donohar

"Hi I am Sean an ex-prisoner, who now runs an art room at [Makingitout](#). We are a charity that shares 64 million artists belief of the benefits of being creative. This begins with the individual but can be further reaching."

"This is a short exercise to help you have some fun with colour. It might even get you over the 'I can't paint' hurdle. It has a connection to the splodge and press together technique that I remember doing as a small child, probably the only art I remember until I became an artist in my thirties.

You'll need some card or paper (I use a bit of cardboard box), and something fluid that leaves a mark (you can be creative with what you use as your 'paint'.)

You'll also need something to spread the paint, like a palette knife, stiff card, a ruler or your fingers!

A very general idea of a loose composition is useful, I went for a landscape. Start applying the paint thickly not worrying about any fine details. I find it easier to work from top to bottom.

Next is manipulating the paint - the torn edge of scrap paper is useful to press and drag on the paint. Make more marks if it needs finessing. I also use this when I have paint left over and I am always saving scraps of paper or card. Sometimes I use what I have created for a greetings card. The activity is about having fun and moving colour about. The artists I mentor began with this technique and are now off in all sorts of creative directions. Best of luck, Sean.



25. CALM

From the Campaign Against Living Miserably ([CALM](#))

"I'm Luis and I've looked after our artistic communities at CALM for a few years. We believe that we can help and support much of the UK through the things they love doing."

"We'd love to challenge you to brighten up someone's day. Can you think of someone whose day you can make a little better? Think of something they'd like to see, hear or experience. With that we also want you to let them know [CALM's resources](#) are there for them and anyone in their lives too.

Tell a mate something that you think about them. Don't wait to say something nice about them. Create something and tell them."

26. A stitch in time

From the 'Men's Table' - a Men's group, part of ['The Long Table'](#) in Stroud

Mend something that is broken. Perhaps you've been meaning to mend an object you own - and this is the time to fix it with selotape or a stitch. Perhaps you take the time to plan a bigger fix, or perhaps you reflect on how you can help mend something else that has been on your mind.



27. The fabric of my childhood

From [Karen Arthur](#)

"Karen is a woman with a powerful message to send. A former teacher, she's a fashion creative, private sewing tutor, stylist, model, content creator and speaker who has been honing her craft for over 40 years. More recently, she has focussed on creating beautiful clothing for women who appreciate hand crafted care and slow fashion. Whilst creating bespoke pieces, Karen has been cultivating her voice and is on a mission to share with women of all ages on the highs, lows, pressures and gains of life after 50."

Recall a childhood memory of clothes, and share it's story in words or poetry. Perhaps you'll choose what to wear today, inspired by your memory.

28. Out of my hands

From members at WAHWN

[The Wales Arts Health and Well-being Network](#) (WAHWN) is a rapidly expanding network of colleagues delivering arts and health work in Wales.

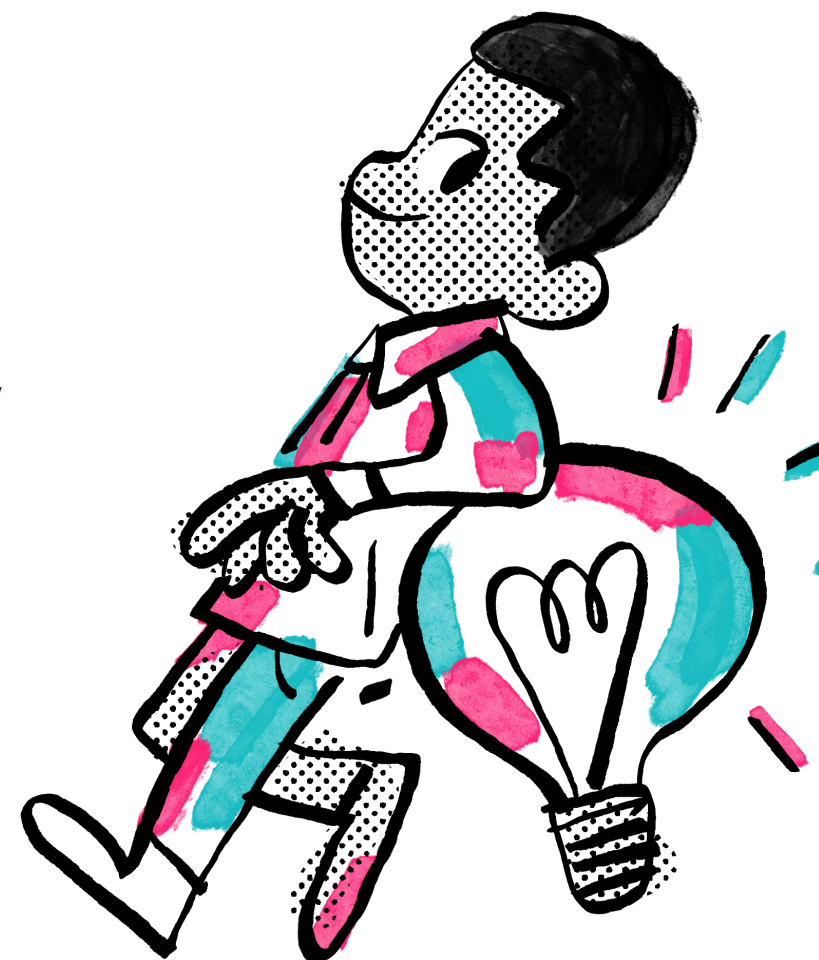
Sketch or doodle a portrait of someone (or something) with your non dominant hand.

29. You've got skills

From members of the ChitChat group, Leicester

The ChitChat group is a growing group of South Asian heritage women in Leicester, who gather on zoom, WhatsApp and in person to be creative, exercise, learn and ChitChat!

Teach somebody a skill that you have. Whether you're teaching somebody how to make the perfect cup of tea, how to play a chord on a guitar, cut a clipping from a plant or how to wrap a present. Offer your lesson in person, online or on paper.



30. To the Future

From [Liv Little](#) and [Suhaiyla Hippolyte](#)

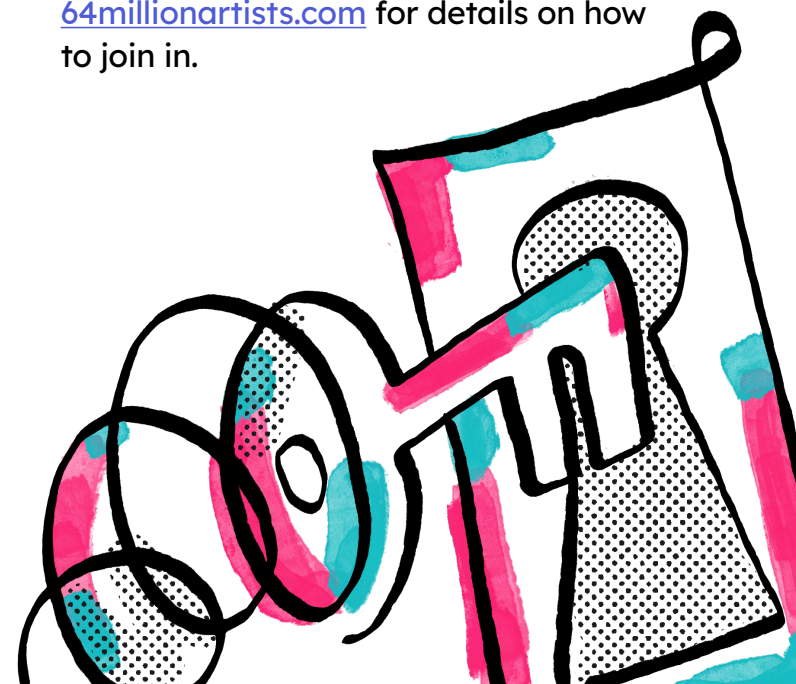
Liv is a writer of Jamaican and Guyanese descent via South London. She's the founder and former CEO of the award-winning publication gal-dem. Liv tells stories with heart about the people and places that matter to her. Suhaiyla is a spiritual wellness practitioner creating safe spaces for discussion.

Read or [listen to](#) the following meditation, guided by Suhaiyla.

"Allow your body to get into a comfortable position that feels natural for you. Gently close your eyes and place your hands softly on your stomach. Notice how your stomach naturally expands and fills with air as you breathe. We're not forcing or pushing our breath - we're just allowing and noticing. Pay attention to how your breath feels as it moves through your body. If you are experiencing any tightness of tension in any parts of the body, breathe into them and release that tension through the breath. On your next inhale, you're going to take the deepest breath you've taken all year - wide mouth - exhale. And when you're ready, gently open your eyes."

Now, pick up something to write with. Spend a few minutes 'writing to the future' - pen a letter to the future you, noting something that you're grateful to have experienced this month. Keep your letter safe, email it to yourself, give it to a friend to give back to you, or hide it away.

Liv and Suhaiyla will be hosting a live, online meditation and writing workshop on Monday 30th January. Check back at 64millionartists.com for details on how to join in.



31. I would love to

From young people at [Rotherham United CST](#)

"Our Youth & Inclusion department works with the diverse and vibrant communities of Rotherham with the overall goal to make Rotherham a more inclusive, cohesive and safer society. We love the idea of bringing a variety of young people from different backgrounds and communities together. What an amazing opportunity."

Tell somebody about something that you would really love to do.

It might be a small thing, big thing (or even something in the middle.)

**THANKS
FOR
READING!**



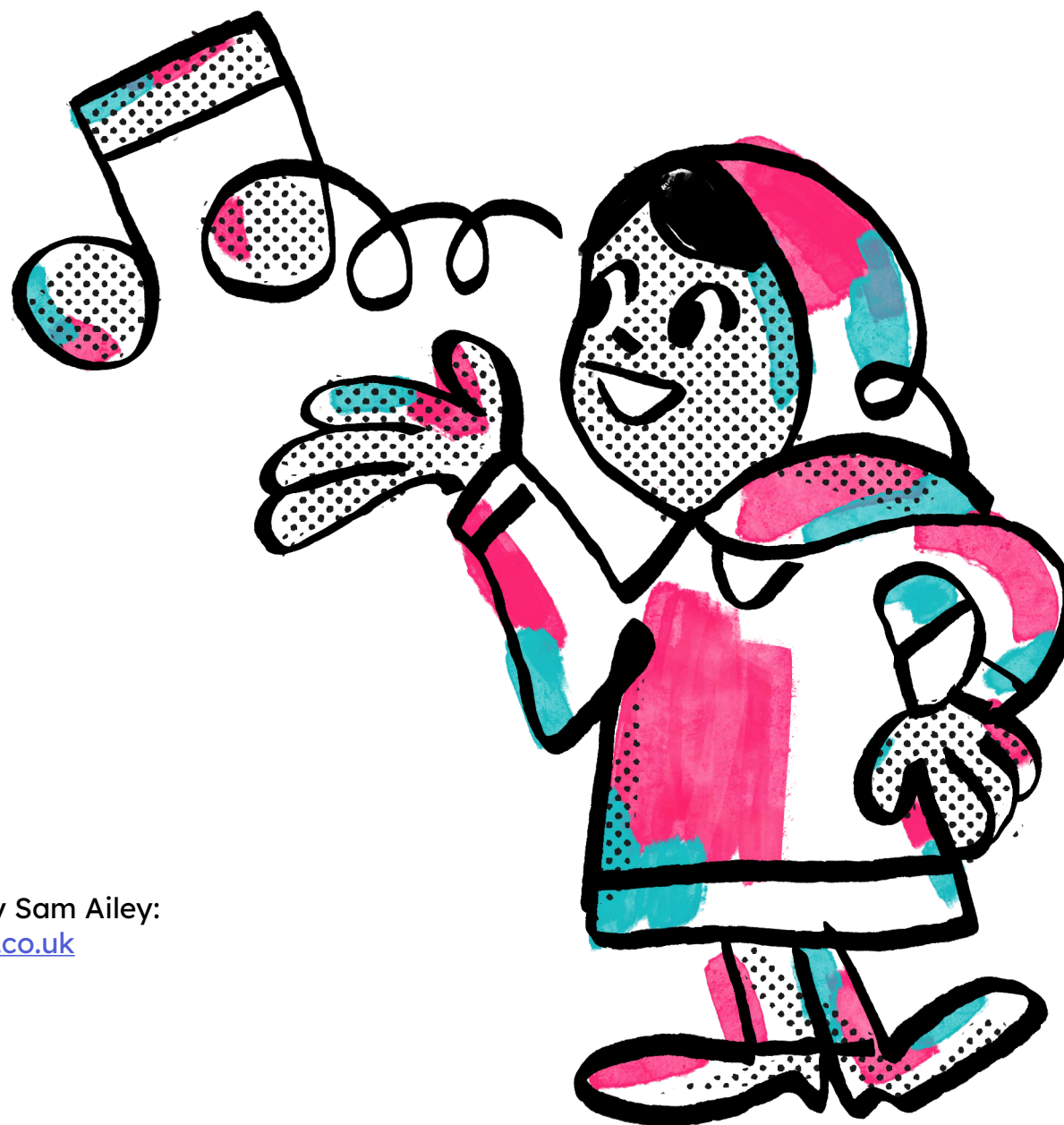
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**Hamilton
-Brown**

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