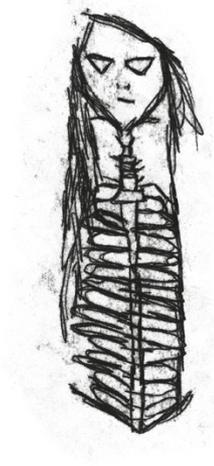




*Monoprint*

A drawing of a girl with  
exposed rib cage,  
created during the  
Mono-printing Workshop  
- Lucy



## CHAOS: A Co-Creation

1. <u>THE JOURNEY</u>	3
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*Haiku from the haiku making workshop we held at Chaos Cafe*

*The story begins  
The lost, the lonely, deprived  
Journey over tea*



*When I was 7 yrs old ...*

Brush pen drawing  
produced for the  
four-panel Comic-strip  
Workshop, recalling  
difficult episodes from  
our life's journey  
- Steve



*When I was 7 yrs old, I fell off a wall.*

# “How did we get here?”

## CHAOS: A Co-Creation

A year-long collaboration between participants of CHAOS group, a provider working with but not exclusively people who experience mental illness, and Masters students in Authorial Illustration from Falmouth University. Together we explored the potential of creativity to unlock those places closed down by life’s negative experiences and mental ill-health.

Could an illustrational mindset, one rooted within authorship, bring out those personal voices, build trust and re-kindle a sense of worth and self-esteem?

---

**JOURNEY** *n.* [plural jour · neys]

**1** Travelled a long distance emotionally from one place to another before discovering CHAOS (Community Helping All Of Society). A passage of time usually taking a rather long time to get help or to realise one needs help; **trip**: a six-day journey across the desert with no food water or company.

**1.1** A distance of days or years, through hard times, dead ends, false starts and desperate times: a personal and emotional journey.

**1.2** A passage or progress from one stage to another, from coping and denial, managing and using emotional crutches before breakdown to breakthrough: the journey to success is a long way off and may feel unobtainable.

*n.* (used without object) [jour · neyed, jour · ney · ing]

**1** To make a journey; travel.



The first time we met we made the butterfly group drawing. See page 69.

## Animal Cut-outs

This activity took place at the second meeting we had together, and was the second collaborative exercise we did, after the large butterfly cut-out. We all divided into pairs, with (then) unfamiliar people - the CHAOS group participants with the student participants. The idea was simplicity itself.

It was to take a sheet of black paper, and in our pairs, to draw onto them the silhouettes of an animal together or individually, as we pleased. The animal could be a real one, or a fantasy creature - the choice was left up to us.

We all found tables of our own, and the CHAOS cafe seemed to become an explosion of stationary - with paper, glue-sticks, scissors and colour pens on every surface. Since the exercise required simple mark-making, it was not too nerve-wracking, and everybody ended up chatting with each other through it. Some people shared stories of animals they had formed powerful bonds with. Midnight Sparkle, one of the CHAOS farm horses was one such example.

The creatures were created quite organically. The process went quickly and most pairs created multiple creatures. We then cut them all out, and mounted them onto brightly coloured posters. These were all laid side-by-side on the ground. The overall effect was striking.

Strangely, these creatures we created seemed to have distinct personalities and attitudes. Some of them looked as if they were mid-sentence, or mid-flight. Others looked as if they were hiding, or standing quite still. Many evoked spontaneous giggles. Some seemed to be incredibly sad. They would go on to feature in another exercise later on. But for that day, it was a significant amount of collaborative art-making.

– Alia

Top right

Burt

Bottom right

Dave

Imaginary creatures with their own biographies made during the Animal Cut-out Workshop  
- Group work

***Dave is a slow and cumbersome creature. He is sad, a roaming beast with no home. He is unsettled and lost, always moving on from place to place. Wherever he goes, he does not fit in, and feels he has no place there. Inside he is angry and volatile. He is a fighter, and could break out into aggression at any time. He lives on a Mars-like desert planet with miles of deserted wilderness.***

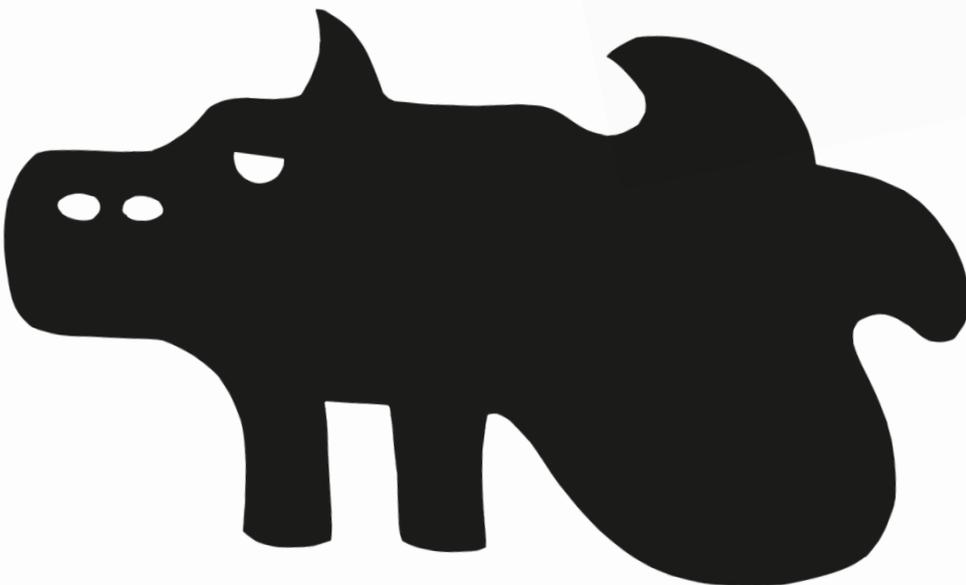
*Burt cannot fly. He's the only one in his family to have wings and is therefore outcast. He lives in a sandy pit, with a circle of stones and shells arranged around it, on the beach. He's generally chirpy, but prone to anxiety and nervousness when asked about his wings.*

*Burt overeats for comfort and his favourite food is strawberries. He's lonely, and is always trying to make friends with the seagulls (but they fly away eventually and can't teach Burt, since he has four wings.)*

*This was an exercise in getting brave! We'd only just met 😊*



*Perhaps Burt is a butterfly?  
Will Burt learn to fly?*



*we went on to make a collaboratin drawing of Dave*



'Create art out of chaos and watch ideas grow to fruition, even if cultivation begins in the shade.'  
- Clare

The masks we made are scattered throughout the book, relating to each stage of the journey.

### Mask-making

The Mask-making workshop was one of the first workshops we did together in an effort to reflect on and draw out two masks; one to represent our strength and one for weakness.

Some started from scratch, others used premade masks. Different materials were used to build, collage, decorate and paint the masks, from plastic, coloured and patterned paper, acrylic paint, pens, and feathers. Some also brought used personal objects (fox bones or brooches). Although we used the same material they did not look it: the masks ranged from brightly coloured birds, chameleons, tigers and scared moths to darker fragmented creatures and powerful and detailed face masks.

Many chose to include both sides of themselves onto one mask, creating a sort of hybrid creature with opposing designs - two sides as part of a whole. Masks are a special thing as they represent the face you put onto the world. When the time came to present our masks that we had created, seeing these faces was a powerful thing.

- Kristine



*Shades of green*

Created as part of the  
Mask-making Workshop  
- Clare

Insert  
Dark Angel

Stencil drawing  
- Group

Left  
Two-piece mask

Created as part of the  
Mask-making Workshop  
- Louie

This felt like the  
first time that we  
actually began to look  
at ourselves rather than  
at ourselves rather than  
using abstract creatures,  
Quite an emotional,  
exposing process.



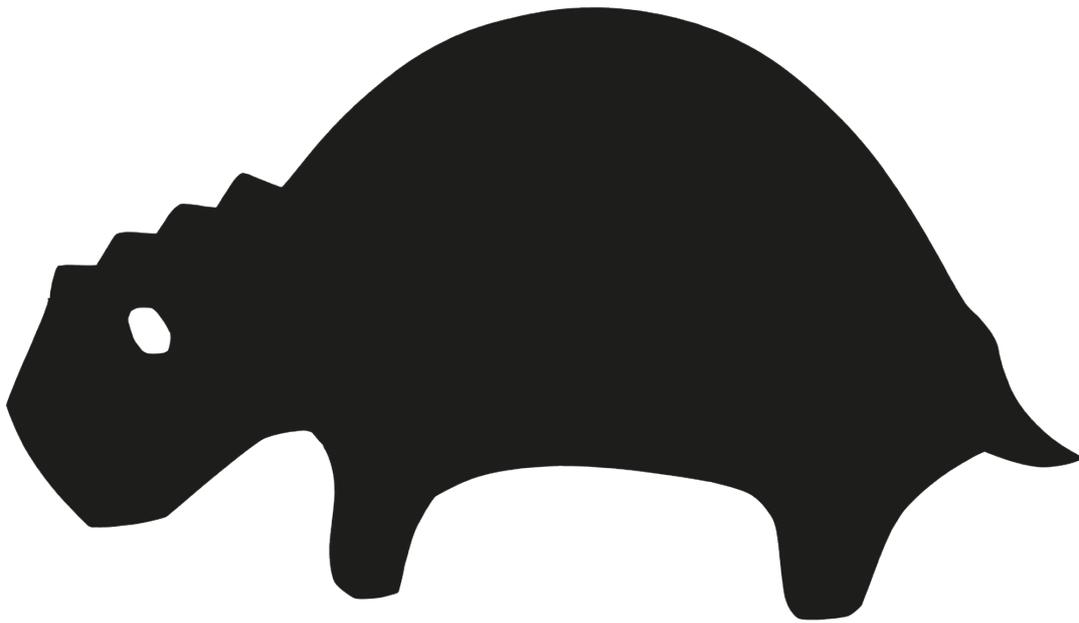
'One side showing a dark side shrouded in an engulfing darkness of depression with strings acting as anxiety which create connections and rap up my free thoughts unable to move and be free. Butterflies link spirit and fragility. The other side is bright and colourful, boastful and proud, decorative, but with an essence of normality with the plainness. Both are fake but a part of me, a piece of my mind'  
- Louie



*Pumbalina*

Imaginary creature with its own biography made during the Animal Cut-out Workshop  
- Group work

*Pumbalina lives in the hot, dry African Savannah, where she likes to sing happy songs (she's a bad singer) to escape from her loneliness. Although surrounded by other noisy beings, because of all the noise they all make, nobody is actually listening to each other. Pumbalina is possibly seeking a handsome Italian creature on stalkbook.*



*When your head goes down*

### Animal Biographies

Once completed, the animal cut-outs were handed over to a new pair of participants, and the group made the decision that each pair would undertake the task of writing a fictional biography for their particular animal. We set about creating a characterful back-story, which included giving our creature a name, describing its key attributes, some family history and background. But, in addition, the descriptions were thoughtfully written to include some of the more challenging times that these creatures had experienced and that they were still carrying the baggage from. When the completed biographies were read out loud to the group, we found that some delightful surprises and really funny elements had slipped in, which contrasted with the challenging aspects described, that paralleled our only-too-familiar difficult and troubling realities.

– Steve

Comic-strips

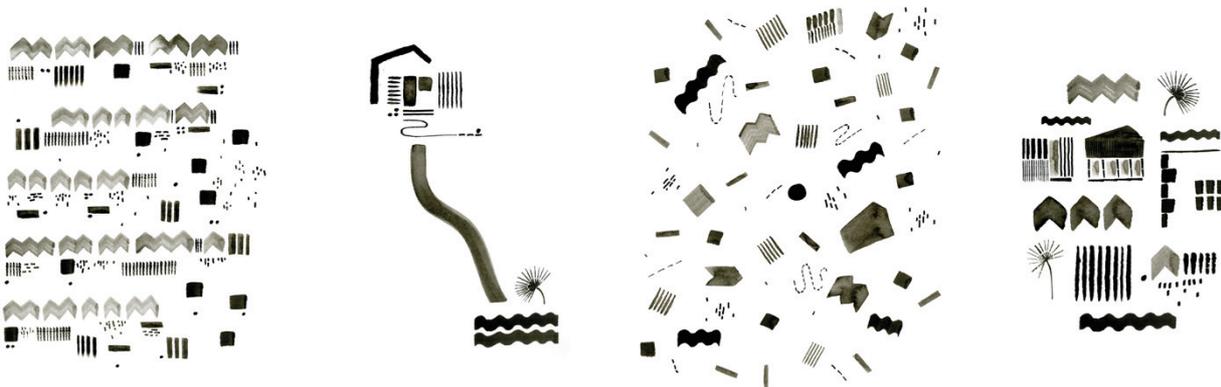
*Uprooted*

Throughout the year we have participated in different workshops that find ways to tell the stories of people’s lives and experiences. Since comics are a well-recognised format for showing a sequence of events it felt like a good way to continue this process. Comics allow for either just a series of visuals or a mixture between images and words, which provided plenty of scope for people to work in whichever way they felt most comfortable.

Indian ink drawing  
produced for the four-panel  
Comic-strip Workshop,  
recalling difficult episodes  
from our life’s journey  
- Anna

The comics represent a specific moment, memory or important event in people’s lives. These mini narratives represent a variety of defining moments from childhood right through to the present day. Sometimes telling the whole story feels a bit overwhelming and an almost impossible task. By focusing on one specific moment it allows for more detail and emotion to be shared about that particular time. Through exploring these four panel comics it gave a focus and made telling these stories more manageable. It ended up producing so many diverse stories to add to the book. It felt like one of the most successful tasks as everyone created something personal to them which used the basic layout of the comic to best fit their style of work.

- Anna



*The 4 Panel comic strip format is accessible and easy to navigate episodes in ones life.*

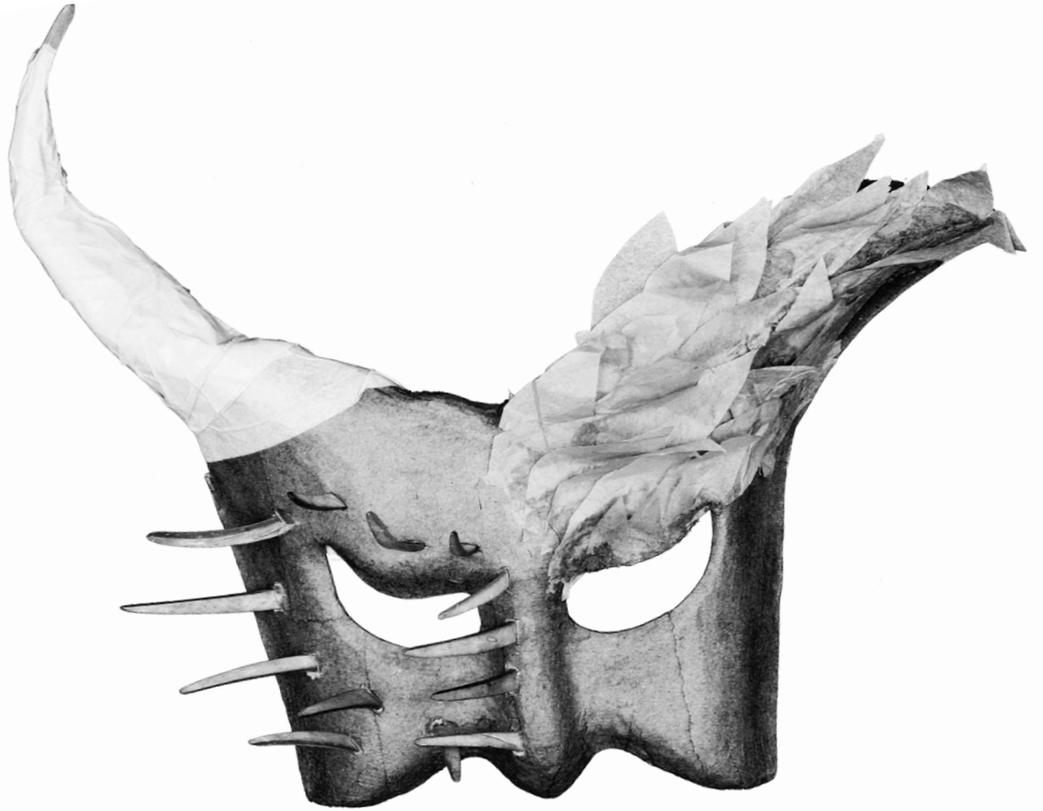


## CHAOS: A Co-Creation

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### *Fox Bone Mask*

Single horned mask with fox bones, created as part of the Mask-making Workshop  
- Jo



### *Behind Cracked Surface ...*

Fractured face created as part of the Mask-making Workshop  
- Kristine



*'Behind a cracked surface is a little bit of hardness, but also light  
You need to crack for things to show.'*  
- Kristine

Conversations with CHAOS participants ...

Sketch from CHAOS cafe

- Alia

How would you describe yourself before you were signed up on the CHAOS provision?

☘ "I was struggling with everyday tasks. I felt disconnected from people and found it difficult to stay in the here and now. My anxiety stopped me doing many things including work."

☘ "Before I found CHAOS I was completely lost, my mental health was suffering badly, I had no job, was sleeping on a friend's sofa and felt I wasn't worthy of anything due to the situation I found myself in."

☘ "Before signing up to CHAOS I was an alcoholic. I was a bit of a mess really, ending up in a residential detox unit and then residential rehab. Life was pretty chaotic and unbearable in the end. I couldn't hold down a job, any kind of relationship and was barely able to keep my house in order."

Poem from the Haiku Workshop

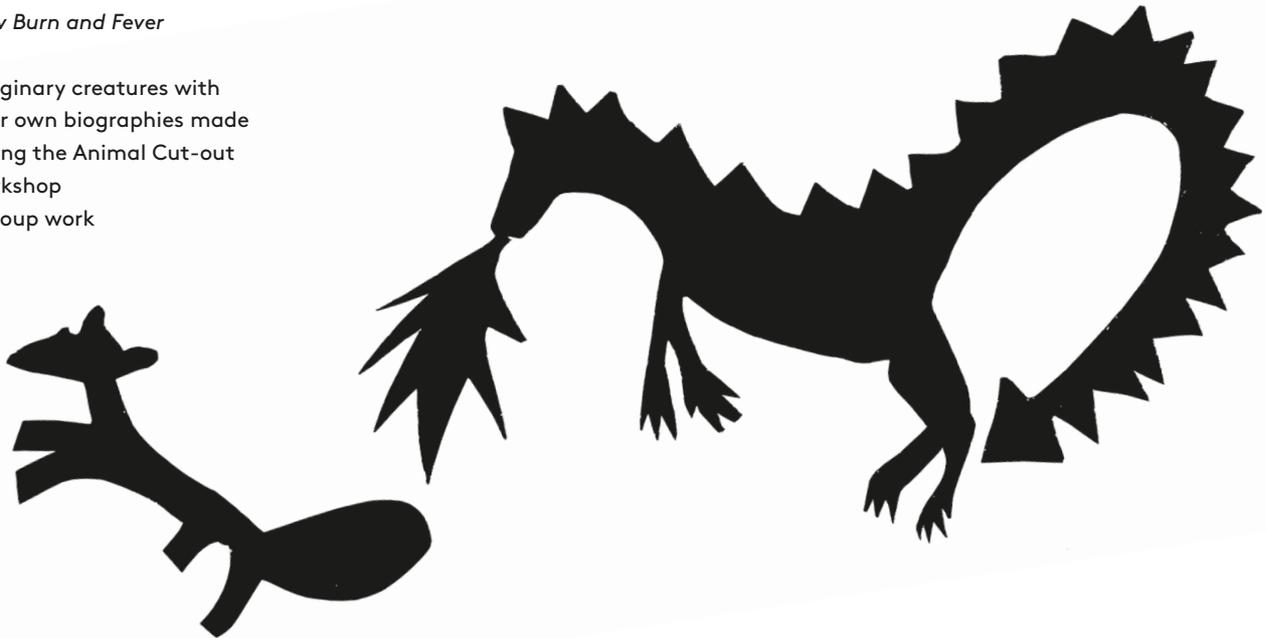


Maybe you know why you're here  
Maybe you don't  
Food and time to think



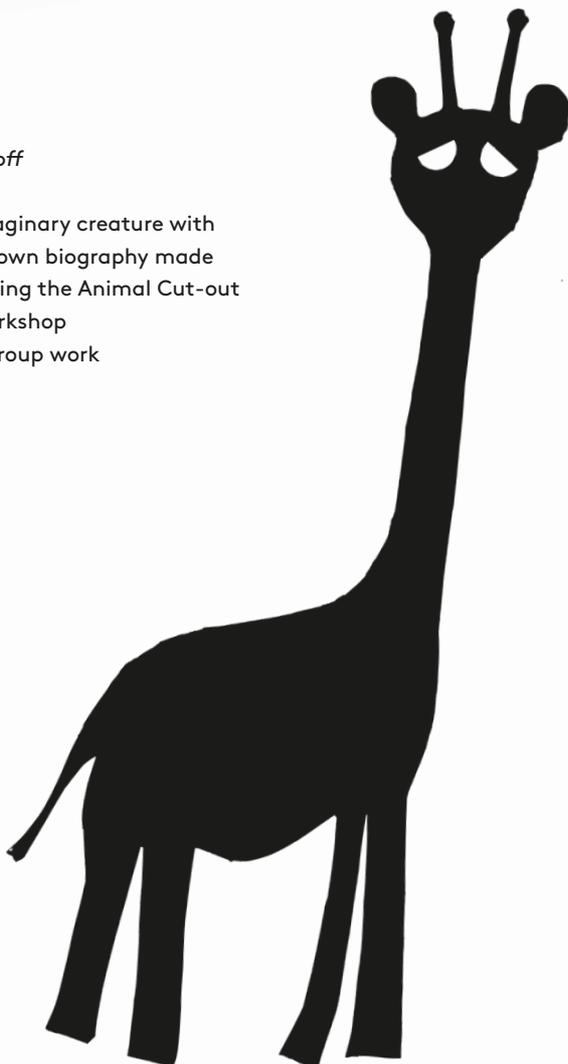
*Slow Burn and Fever*

Imaginary creatures with their own biographies made during the Animal Cut-out Workshop  
- Group work



*Geoff*

Imaginary creature with its own biography made during the Animal Cut-out Workshop  
- Group work



*Slow Burn the Dragon is struggling with his temper. Often when he speaks or shouts fire tends to come out instead. He just doesn't know how to control his fire, and often his fire leads to hurting other animals and everything around them.*

*Fever, the bever-fox, is his best friend. His tail is thick and strong and he helps put out Slow Burn's accidental fires. Fever is very energetic and cannot relax, but he's also very funny and witty. He helped Slow Burn find Creature CHAOS Group (CCG) and regularly checks up on on him.*

*Geoff used to be really happy, carefree, full of the joys of spring. Someone came along and made him very sad and he couldn't hide the glumness in his eyes. He was lost, sad and depressed, so had to go to CHAOS. Midnight Sparkle told him about CHAOS. He was still feeling depressed and had got in with a bad crowd. He's looking for support.*

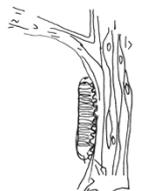
*Meet Midnight Sparkle on page 65 - in the Emergence section!*



*Chaotica is eight-headed and suffers from schizophrenia. She is constantly changing her mind, and gets over-whelmed with the many voices in her head which she is unable to control. These voices represent different creatures in her life. Chaotica has a very small ego; she is needy and indecisive and these things lead her to cheat. She gets caught up in all the conversations and gets confused by all the voices. The wise voice within her gets drowned out.*

#### Chaotica

Imaginary creature with her own biography made during the Animal Cut-out Workshop  
- Group work



CHAOS: A Co-Creation

see pupae section for the end result of this drawing



Defeat

Collaborative drawing  
based on the animal  
cut-out Defeat

Using the morphological matrix as a tool to look into underlying social issues  
– Group

# Community Helping All Of Society



CHAOS group, launched in 2013, grew out of a need in the community for a supportive network for disadvantaged people, who had fallen behind in society. There are many reasons why people struggle to exist in society and experience mental ill-health: a lack of educational support, social deprivation, poverty, disability, ill-health, peer pressure; to name but a few. The sense of worthlessness or lack of dignity in a social setting can create a life situation of reduced choices and feelings of exclusion or being judged. This can perpetuate a cycle of addiction or mental health issues, a sense of loss and disadvantage. Basic needs which are not fully met, such as healthy food, warmth, social inclusion, housing and employment can have a crippling effect on an individual.

Approximately 1 in 4 people in the UK will experience a mental health problem each year.



Other factors such as systemic unemployment, broken homes, absence of a role model, peer pressure, environment and loss of job or bereavement can also trigger traumatic experiences in life, which can become overwhelming and thus begin a need for the chaos outside of us to somehow be controlled within. Drugs help to some degree to bridge the gap, however as time goes on dependence can deepen and everyday experiences and challenges can become more and more complex and intolerable for the individual, at worst this can lead to deep depression or even suicide.

In England, 1 in 6 people report experiencing a common mental health problem, such as anxiety and depression, in any given week.

Not everyone that has experienced social deprivation, exclusion or loss has developed mental health issues or dependency, some of these individuals have gone on to live normal healthy lives and retained a sense of self and community, even using their experiences to help others.

To date, CHAOS, in partnership with PLUS, have supported over 2,300 individuals through the project. Around 380 individuals have been directed into education, around 400 have found employment and over a 100 individuals who were seen as 'economically inactive' now class themselves as actively looking for work.

– Melanie



INDIVIDUALS

FAMILY

DISABILITY

Stress of benefit cuts.  
Restriction of available work  
for disabled individual & carers.  
Frustration, low self-esteem.

Access issues physical/virtual  
Social, medical, mental  
health support systems

Affects whole families  
Understanding/empathy

Lack of opportunities

RHETORIC OF CULTURE YOU ARE

ALIENATION

MARIE DEVELOPED A FEAR OF APPROACHING PEOPLE. BECAUSE SHE LIVED FAR AWAY WITH NO SOCIAL ACTIVITIES IN HER NEIGHBOURHOOD SHE FELT AWAY FROM SOCIETY



Language barriers

FAMILY LIVING FAR AWAY

Displacement  
Finding new support systems

Having to rely on hand outs

POVERTY



Isolation



STRESS!!!



NOTICE OF EVICTION



SYSTEMIC INEQUALITIES



"I CAN'T GET OUT OF THIS HOLE."

WE CAN'T GET OUT OF THIS HOLE"

You can't help where you're born....

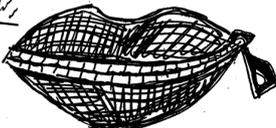
ABUSE

How can we escape where we are and better our lives?

discrimination class, ethnic sexual health

LACK OF EDUCATION

Not knowing how to better ones intentions?



ACCESS DENIED

SUPPORT SERVICES  
FALtering

Cyclical - repetition; through generations

GROWTH OF EXTREME POLITICAL VIEWS



I don't understand how we can help each other. Leave school, get a job to support the family.

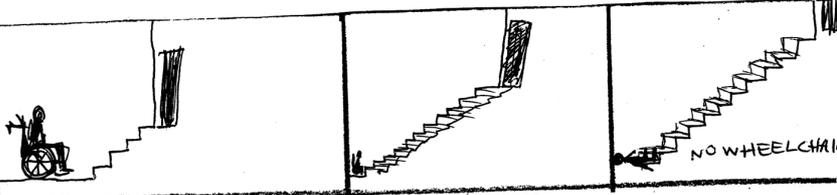
So Why a job? No one has ever why want to study who do are? WHAT

SOCIETY

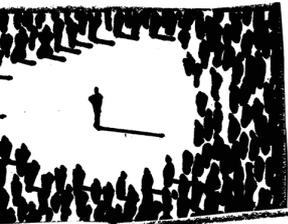
STATE

ECONOMY

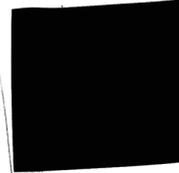
RETORIC OF BLAME  
CULTURE IF  
YOU ARE UNABLE  
TO WORK



SOCIAL STATUS  
SHIFTED. CATEGORISED  
NOT A PART OF  
THE ECONOMY  
ANY MORE



Keep us poor and  
desperate - every person  
for themselves!  
Turn us against one  
another.



by stressing on  
surviving in the  
capitalist system,  
allows no time for  
rest, contemplation,  
solifutness

OUTSIDE OF  
THE ECONOMY

no community spaces to  
meet and interact in person

Lacking in  
funding for  
payment of  
careers

ACCESS  
to



Rich/poor divide.  
Food banks.  
Universal credit.

Less jobs  
available

Voluntary  
Transparency

Disruption  
of  
Skill  
sets



"WE APOLOGISE  
FOR THE LACK  
OF HOUSING."

BREXIT

supporting corporate  
interests over ecological  
and social welfare  
of the citizens

discrimination based on  
sex, ethnic identities, gender,  
sexual orientation, mental  
illth.

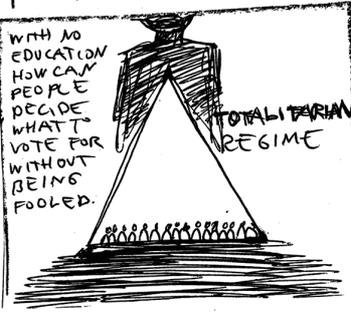
"SORRY,  
YOU DON'T  
QUALIFY"

anti-poor,  
anti-immigration  
policies, increase in  
xenophobic rhetoric,  
rise of the right wing

We have little to  
offer; we are sold off  
by our leaders for their  
short-term power gains.

privitization of  
higher education  
massive debt

"THEY ARE  
STARTING TO  
TURN  
NASTY."



Why do you want  
a job?  
None in this family  
ever worked.  
Why would you want  
to study?  
What do you think you  
are doing?  
WHAT IS THE POINT?



CHAOS is funded by The National Lottery Community Fund and the European Social Fund. We work with those experiencing mental health issues. We are unique in the way that we work holistically with our participants, building confidence, making positive change, increasing skills and making sure people are given the opportunity to get back into employment training or education. CHAOS runs a number of ten-week provisions to which we refer participants:

### **CHAOS Café**

Participants can volunteer with front of house, preparing food, creating menus and have the opportunity to get a Barista training certificate.

### **Iconic Hair**

Participants can volunteer to train in hair and beauty therapies. The ethos of Iconic is: 'if you feel good on the inside, you will feel good on the outside.'

### **CHAOS Creative Radio Station**

Participants can volunteer in our very own online digital CHAOS Radio. They will learn all about running a radio station, social media platforms, podcasts and get to edit and talk live to our wonderful listeners, building confidence and gaining important skills for future employment.

### **CHAOS Farm**

Participants can volunteer to work at CHAOS Farm on the Roseland. There are chickens, sheep, horses and a host of other furry friends. Volunteers may find themselves bringing the horses in from the field, shearing sheep, collecting eggs or even helping to construct a yurt! The farm is rambling and participants are able to find their motivation and feel supported on their journey in this magical place.

Iconic Hair



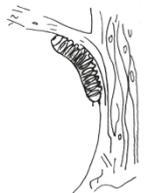
“I didn’t seem to fit in anywhere. I just couldn’t seem to get things right.”

---

*PUPAE*, *n.* [*plural* pu · pae] [pyoo-pee] /'pyupi/ pu · pas

1 Insect in its immature form in the chrysalis between stages of larva and adult.

1.1 Individual non-feeding emotionally, usually immobile due to alcohol, drugs, depression or anxiety, overwhelmed by egoic fears and interpretations of what is real and what is illusion. Transformation stage between having no hope, no one to turn to, retreating to larva stage, to curl up and ‘die’. Giving into the darkness and despair of no hope, pointlessness and emptiness.





*The Shape-shifter creeps about its cave home, clinging to the walls, leaving a slimy trail. It is a transiently formed creature, and cannot stay for long as one thing, in one shape, settled. It has problems keeping hold of its form and is constantly breaking free of its own body.*

*It is trapped in its cave. It would like to go out into the world and is constantly striving for light. But it is burnt by the daylight, so must remain in the dark.*



*The Cyber-bean is pretty jazzy. It is quite a hollow and superficial being emotionally. It lives in a perpetual disco in a virtual world. It travels through electrical current, the wires, and stops at appliances to party. It has no problems as it has no concept of problems. It lives an escapist existence. If it deeply considered itself it may find itself to be quite unhappy, but it is not facing up to this and is living the party life on the wires.*

Left  
Shape-shifter

Right  
Cyber-bean

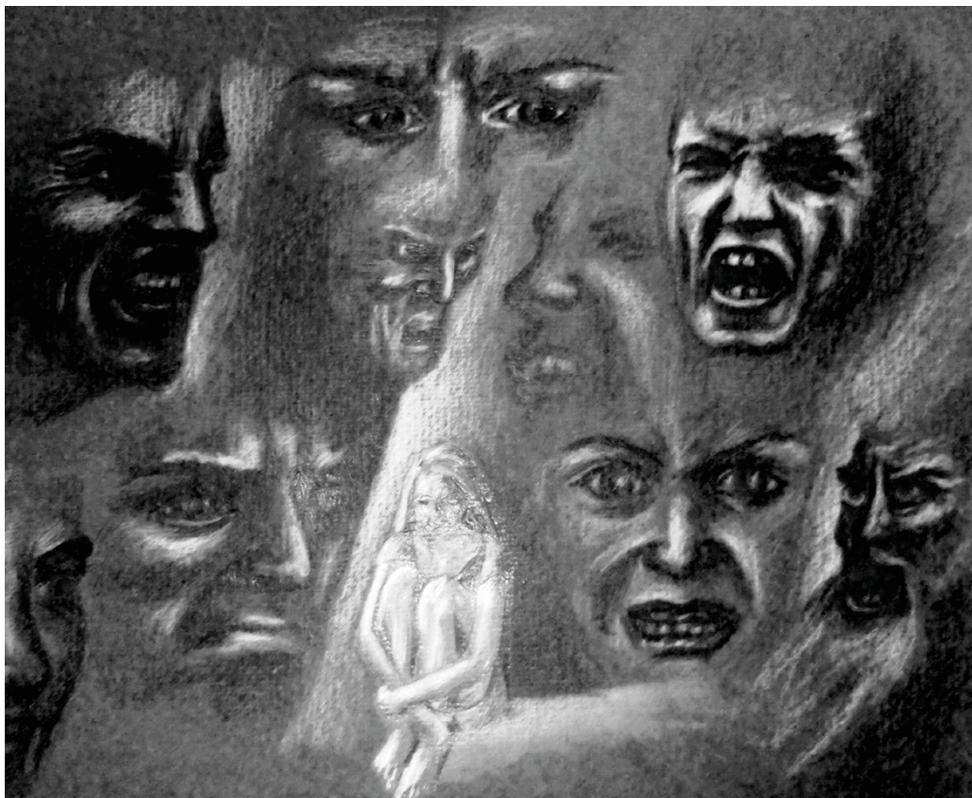
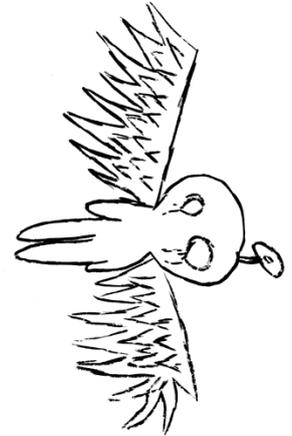
Imaginary creatures with their own biographies made during the Animal Cut-out Workshop  
- Group work

**Personal Stories**

Each of us was encouraged to tell our own personal story in a way that made sense to us. Everyone involved came to the CHAOS Project for different reasons, needing different things. Some of the experiences we had to relate were painful and took us to dark places; when it came to sharing them, first with the group and then with the public as part of the publication, it was important for us to find our own way.

Some of us simply wrote down what had happened to us; some combined words with images. Others made artwork capturing the headspace we occupied at a certain moment, trying to get how we felt down on paper. This process took place over several weeks, and by necessity happened when we had worked together for a while. By this stage we trusted each other a great deal, which made this process possible.

– Julia



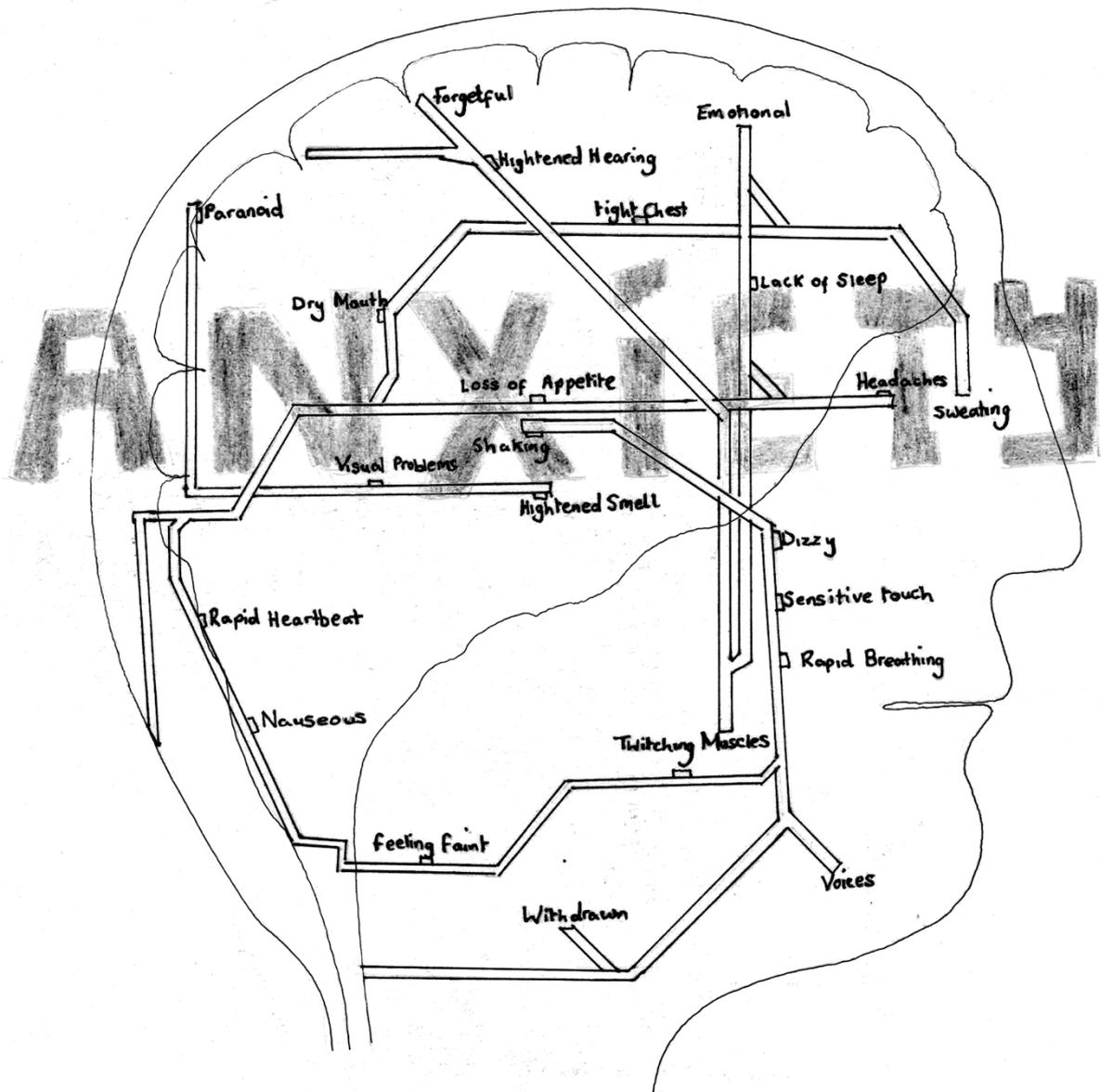
Above  
Dark Angel

- Lucy

Left  
All in My Head

Coloured pencil drawing  
- Julia



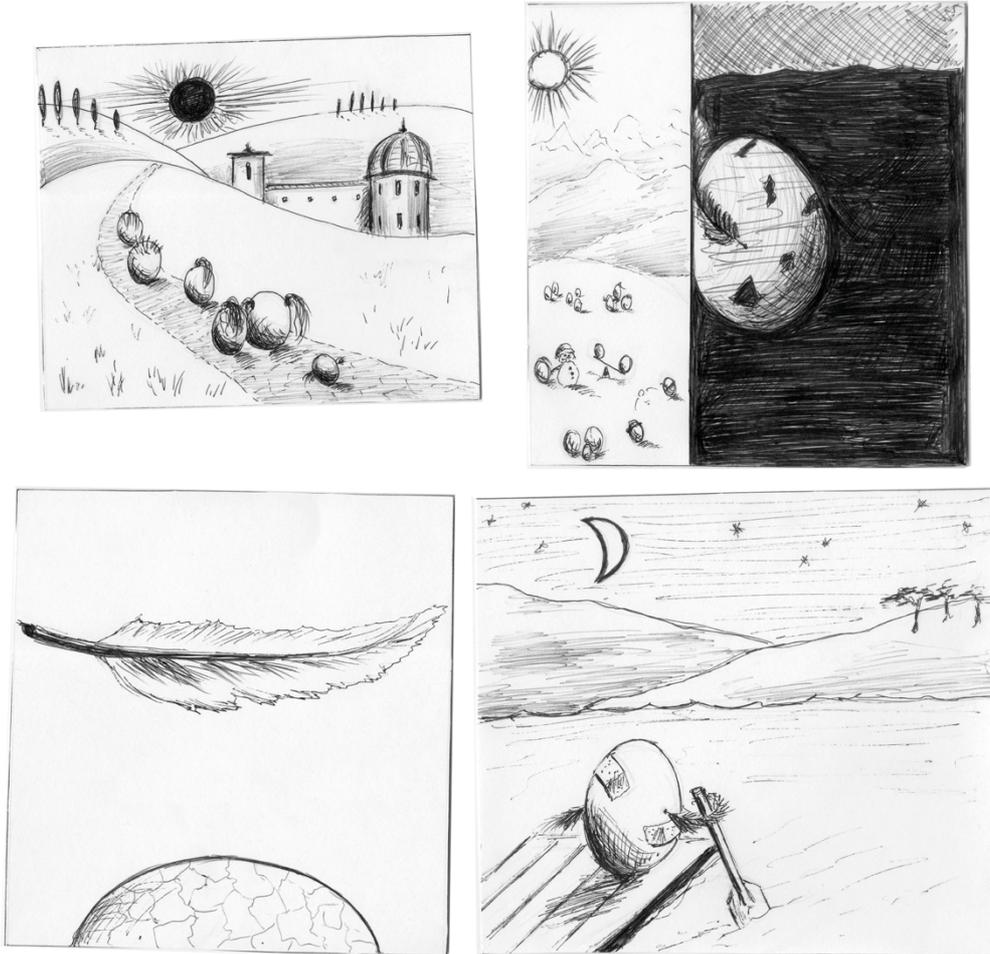


Anxiety Map

- Vanessa

## Bad Egg

Pencil drawing produced for the four-panel Comic-strip Workshop, recalling difficult episodes from our life's journey  
- Julia



*“1. Broken (In) – I got broken, far away from home, by bigger people. They were scared so told me it was my fault and I believed them, and didn't tell anyone.*

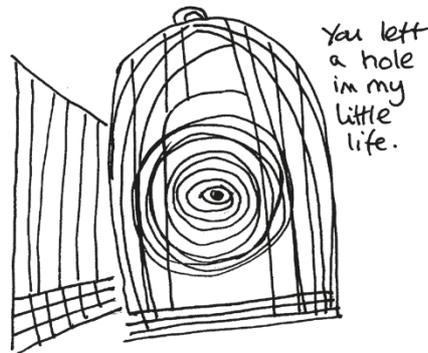
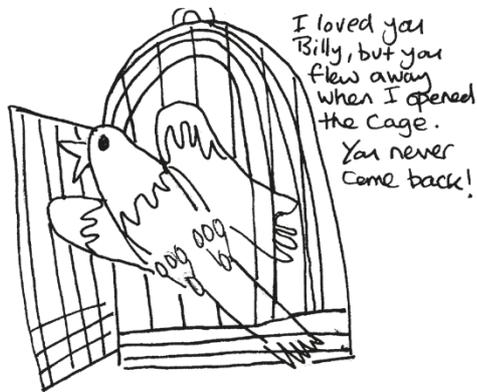
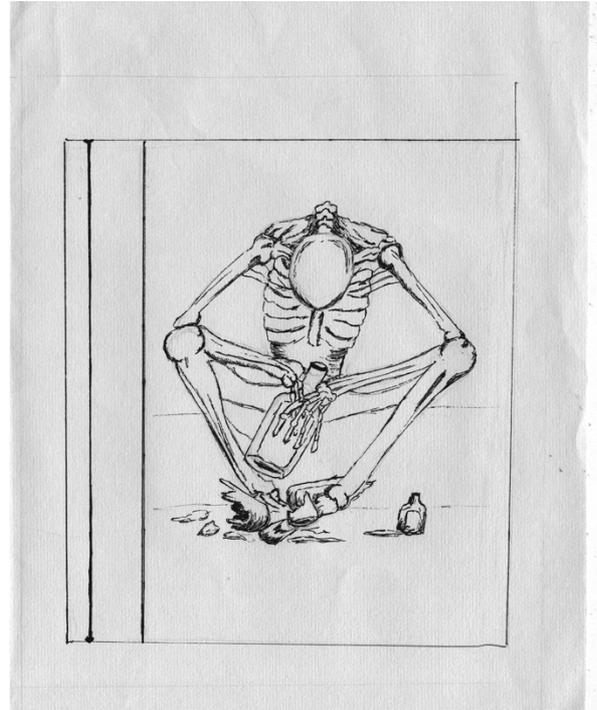
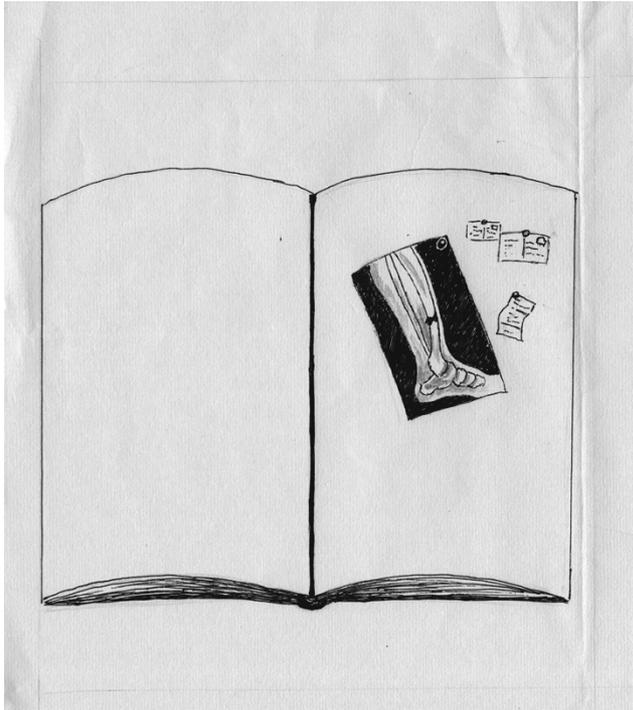
*2. Bad egg – Full of cracks and holes, drowning, and walled up. No place in the happy world for Bad Egg.*

*3. A Gift – I sat in the dark with nothing left, and said ‘Please help me, I can't do this anymore.’ An angel feather floated out of the impossible darkness and landed in my hand.*

*4. Brave New Waters – Sometimes I feel like I'm made up entirely of scar tissue; other times I feel brand new.”*

– Julia





Above  
In The Beginning

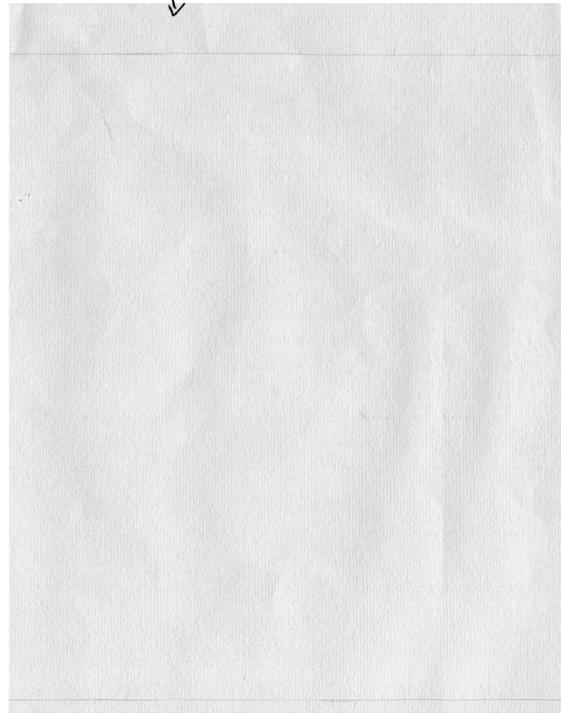
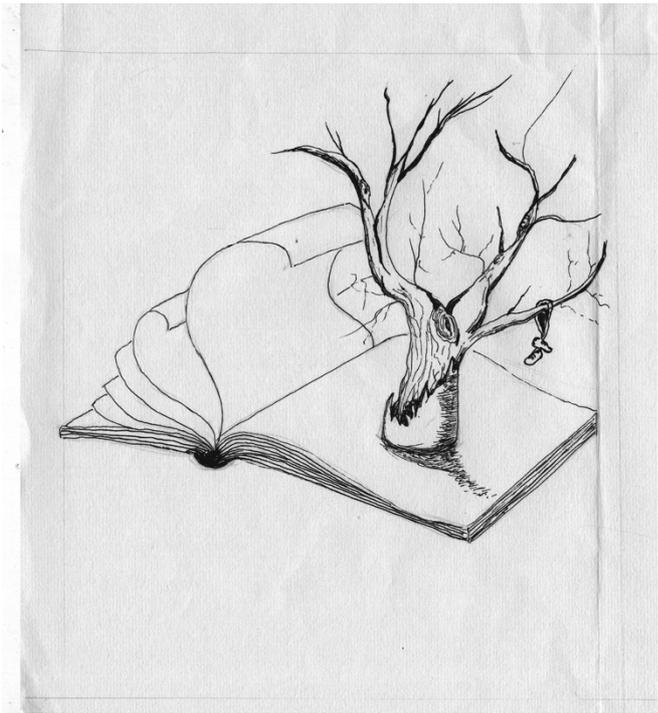
- Aliza

Right  
The Hole

- Melanie

Comics produced for the the four-panel Comic-strip Workshop, recalling difficult episodes from our life's journey

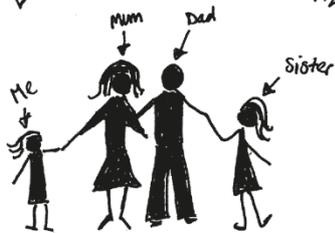
This is left blank because the story is ongoing.



The group began to get a sense of coherence, somewhere around this point, after some initial uncertainty, it felt as though we were all on the same page.

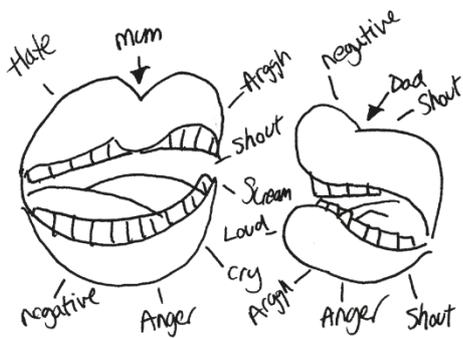


Let play happy families



you escaped too!

I loved you dad but we went and left you. And left a hole in your life... (but I carried it too in my little life!)



Right  
Moonlight

- Aliza

Below  
Moon Mask

Created as part of the  
Mask-making Workshop

- Aliza



### The Midnight Muse/Moose

*I don't sleep well these days, so am often awake in the small hours, reading or dreaming or writing in my head. I leave my dog asleep on the bed and gaze at the stars and moon, as it casts a gun-metal glow on the roof of the barn.*

*I wear many masks, or at least have done in the past. These days they are fewer. Though very much present. I hide in the shadows, beneath the moon, where only its glow tells me who I am and shines a light on a part of me, otherwise unseen.*

*I am in the rustling leaves that litter the floor of the woods after rain. I am in the bark of the tree, gnarled and weather beaten, cracked and torn.*

*I am at home here, half hidden. What lies beneath? I am not sure. I am still clearing away the debris of the past, of seasons outgrown, and after the storms.*

– Aliza



Insert  
Defeat

Stencil Drawing  
- Group

Left  
Moon

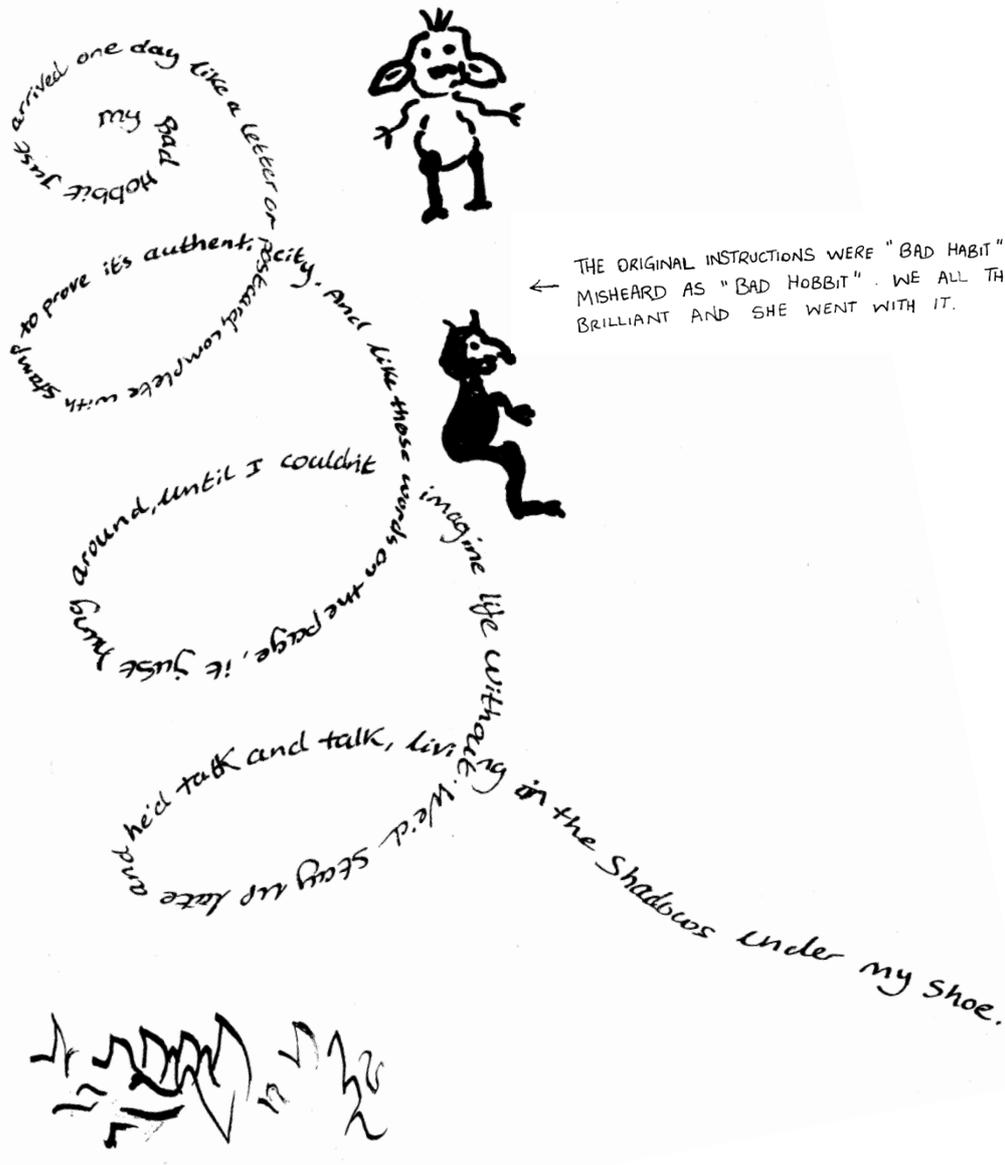
- Aliza



'My Bad Hobbit just arrived one day like a letter or postcard, complete with stamp to prove its authenticity. And like those words on the page, it just hung around, until I couldn't imagine life without it. We'd stay up late and he'd talk and talk, living in the shadows under my shoe.'

- Aliza

Why do I want to keep my BAD HOBBIT?



### My Bad Habit

The participants and students were asked to consider - 'why do I want to keep my bad habit?' Quite a statement and not one they were expecting to be asked. Paper was given out to the group and pens and paints were provided for their creative ideas to take shape. This question encourages the keeping of something that was bad for them. Usually they would be told to stop or get rid of something that was bad for them. This was an exciting way to reverse the idea and encourage ownership of an addiction or destructive behaviour. There was a flurry of chatter and excitement as the group reflected on the question - 'why would I want to keep my bad habit and how would I keep that friendship alive?'

The group was encouraged to be as outrageous with their stories as they wished. Students and participants went off in to small groups grabbing pens and paints on the way. There was a lot of chatter and giggling, a lot like school children doing something they considered naughty or that which would be frowned upon by an authority figure. Encouragement was given for the illustration which could accompany the creative writing - 'Draw a picture like a selfie with your bad habit, perhaps with your arm around it, smiling into the camera!'

The sharing and the self observation from this exercise was brave. Ownership was explored through creative writing and accompanying illustration. Addiction and corrosive bad habits were held up to the light and called out for what they were, once the group had taken the time to befriend them the habit no longer owned them, they owned the habit, to keep or to discard. That afternoon some really expressive pieces of art and written words were explored and discovered, friendships and acceptance was cemented within the group of students and participants that afternoon.

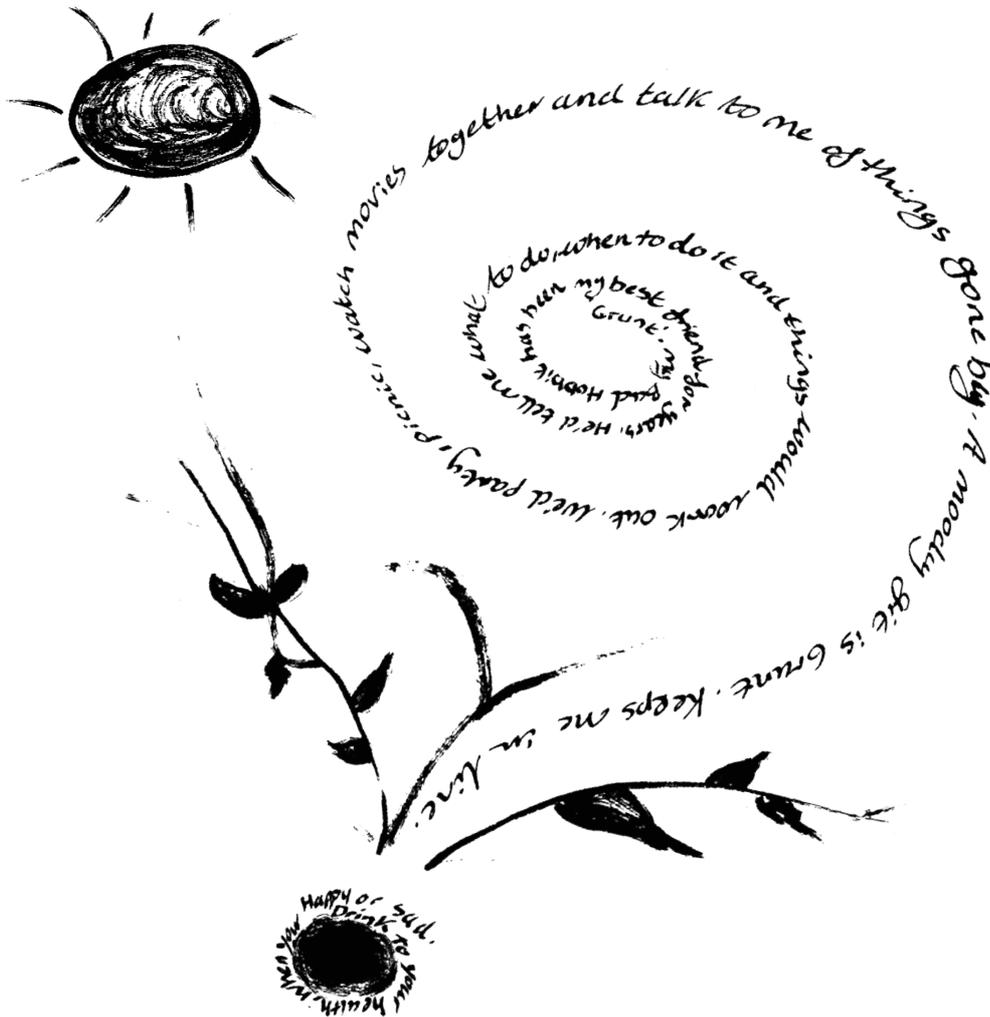
- Melanie

**Bad Hobbit**

- Aliza

'Grunt! My bad hobbit has been my best friend for years. He'd tell me what to do, when to do it and things would work out. We'd party, picnic, watch movies together and he'd talk to me of things gone by. A moody git is Grunt. Keeps me in line. Drink to your health when you're happy or sad.'

- Aliza



*Vulnerable Mask*

- Lucy

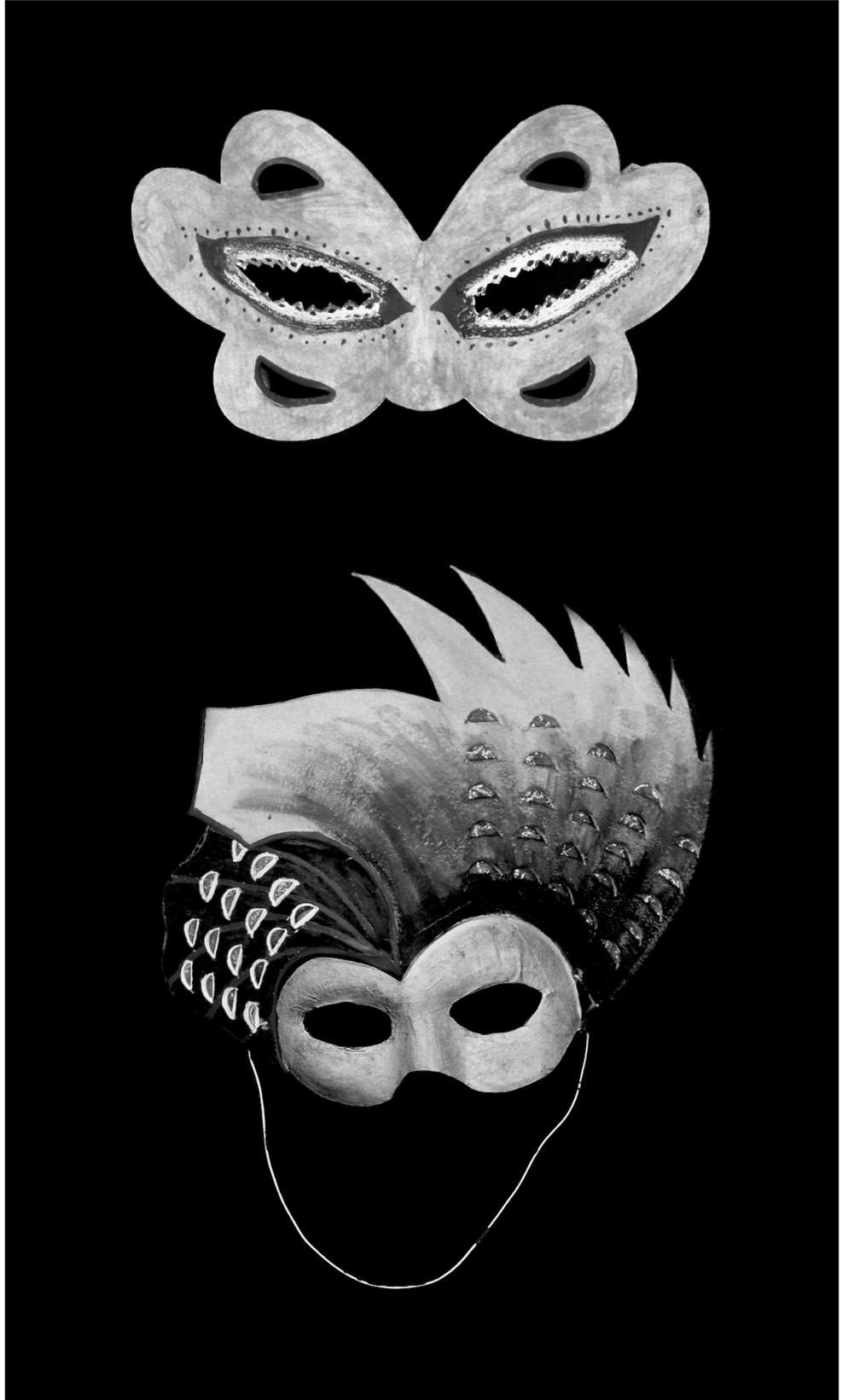
*The Mask Behind the Mask*

- Helene

Created as part of the  
Mask-making Workshop

*'Simpler because it doesn't want to show its real colours,  
the black is a way to  
cover up their emotions as well, the lace is there so no one  
can look into their eyes'  
- Lucy*

*'Fire and anger.  
Beauty and Colour.  
Fragments and pieces once again hold together,  
just enough to keep the mask whole,  
cracking and moving  
but not breaking or falling apart!'  
- Helene*

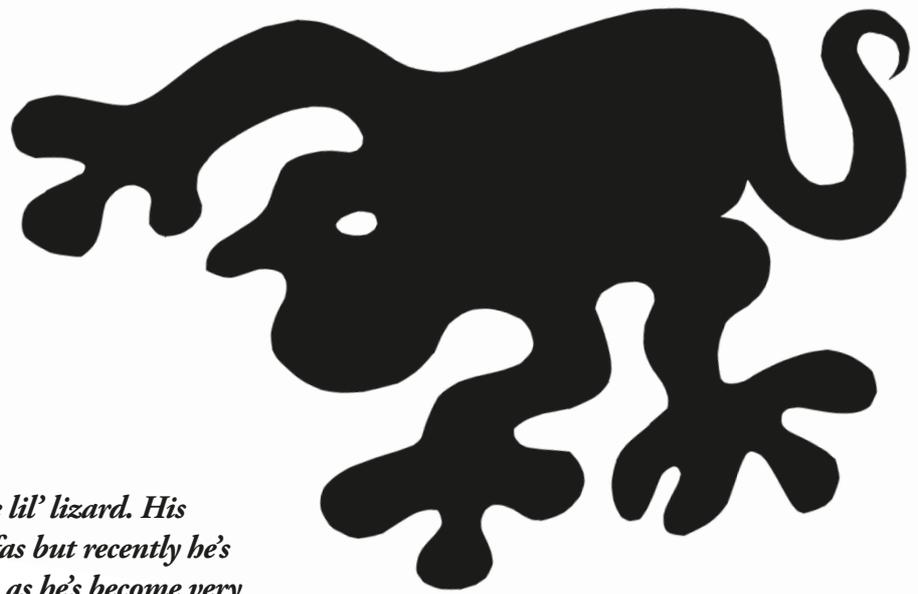


*Frogaletto walks up walls. Lives on a Virginia Creeper in an old part of Italy. Frogaletto is all arms and legs. Others dislike him because of his clumsy hands and feet, so he feels lonely. He suffers from low self-esteem and anxiety and has recently developed a stutter. Frogaletto experiences anger and rejection from others.*

Frogaletto

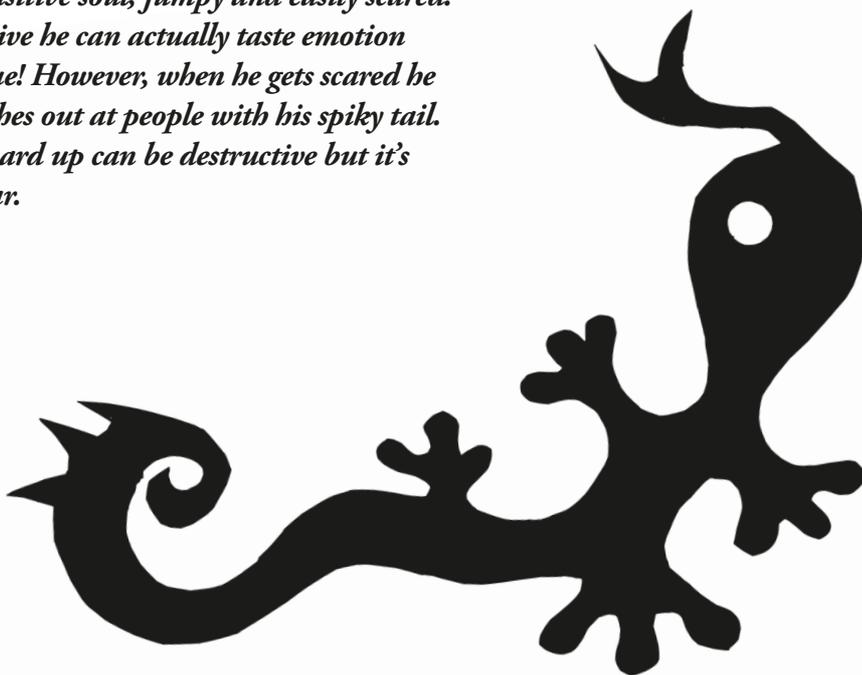
Lucky Lizard

Imaginary creatures with their own biographies made during the Animal Cut-out Workshop - Group work



*Lucky Lizard is a very flexible lil' lizard. His job is to collect coins out of sofas but recently he's been struggling to do his work as he's become very afraid of tight spaces. But he really wants to work to get over his fear.*

*He's a very sensitive soul, jumpy and easily scared. He is so sensitive he can actually taste emotion with his tongue! However, when he gets scared he sometimes lashes out at people with his spiky tail. Having his guard up can be destructive but it's only out of fear.*



My Story

Created during the personal stories workshop

- Steffi

*Is Life real when my eyes are open or more real when they are shut?  
Is the shade more Black inside my heart or red inside my Gut?  
Am I still growing, still trying when I feel that I've decayed?  
My knees are bruised from all the torture and the times when I have prayed.  
Did I die? Was I born? Does my soul hate its keeper?  
I have run out of Darkest Places. I could not Fall any Deeper.  
I'm too scared to keep my eyes Shut,  
There's nothing to dull the pain in my Gut,  
Its my past that has decayed,  
Its my Now on which I've prayed,  
I am MY SOULS brave Keeper,  
My love for ME grows deeper,  
Life is Real. Be Still. Be Me,  
My eyes are open and I am FREE.*

\*

*Be Brave  
Be Free  
Be Kind  
Be HONEST*

\*

*Paper thin Wings*

\*

*I need my wings to be made of Steel*

\*

*My story is:*

*Too real for you  
Too special for you  
Too dark for you  
It is mine and mine ALONE*

\*

*When you are tempted  
to act in the same old way;  
ask yourself if you want  
to be a Prisoner of the Past  
or a Pioneer of the future?*

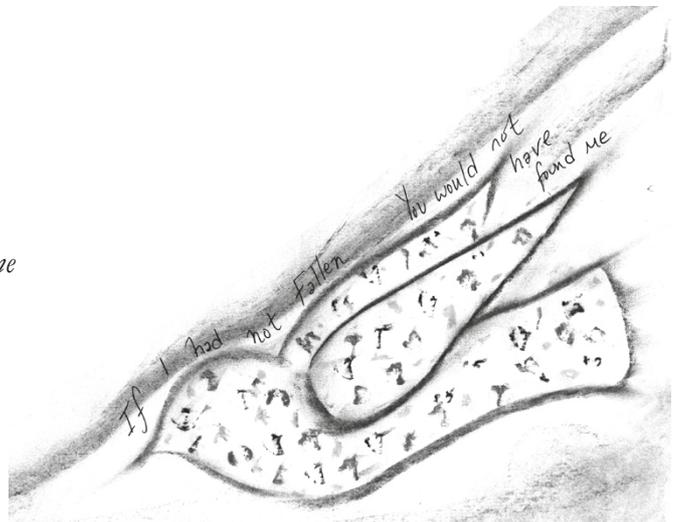
\*

*If I had not Fallen  
You would not have found me*

*If I had fallen you would not  
have found me*

Created during the Personal Stories workshop

- Steffi



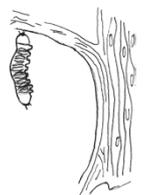


*Midnight Moth*

Experiments from the  
Mono-printing Workshop  
- Kristine

*Angler Fish*

From the Personal  
Symbols Workshop  
- Jo



## Mono-printing

One of the most enjoyable aspects of our work on the project has been trying out new artistic techniques and learning from one another. Each of the MA students and staff specialise in different artistic areas, as do some of the CHAOS participants, so there has been a great sharing of skills as we went along. The mono-printing session took place in the Spring term, around 6 months after the project began. We brought along Perspex plates which we rolled with black ink, and then drew, scratched and stamped our designs into them before laying newsprint over the top and transferring our designs. The results were varied – some things worked brilliantly, some not at all, but as most people were trying it for the first time there was a lovely freedom to

*Woodpecker*

From the Mono-printing  
Workshop  
- Vanessa

experiment. We followed this initial try with an interpretation exercise, we had reached the stage where we needed some specific descriptions and responses to the activities we had observed, so two of the CHAOS participants generously described their experiences with equine therapy at the farm. While they talked, the rest of the group sketched their interpretations onto the printing sheets as a way of illustrating as we went along. This worked beautifully and produced some very striking pieces of work for the book.

- Julia

More examples of mono prints on pages  
54-56





Visiting the different areas of CHAOS really helped us to understand the impact of the work they do.



Horse Sketches

- Hannah

## The CHAOS Journey

**Katy** (Director of the CHAOS Group)

This has been a co-produced, collaborative project between MA Authorial Illustration students from Falmouth University, people with mental ill health engaged with Café CHAOS, and Senior Staff of Falmouth University. Support professionals were present at each session. The project was developed to explore illustration as a visual communication methodology, to enable people with mental ill health - individuals held back from healthy emotional experiences and confident communication - to make visible the invisible, and articulate that which written and spoken words cannot express, through a creative thought process; allowing them a platform to find their own unique voice through trust, play, creativity and relationship building.

The concept of the book and its value is to follow the personal journeys of the group, through the medium of art and written work, creating a back story of the challenges and hurdles which have been overcome with the support of the art project. Using the 'Learn to Lead' model the group were presented



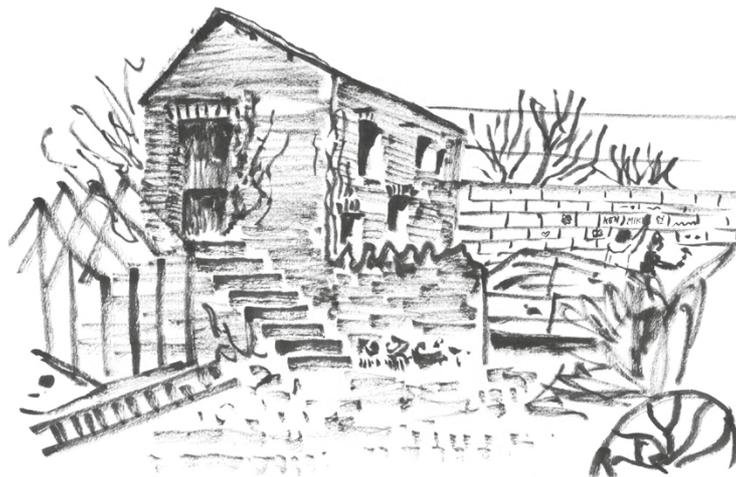
*The Farm*

Sketches from CHAOS Farm  
- Hannah

with suggested topics and decided as a group how they wished each session to run. At the end of each session feedback was given and actions were then drawn from the process to make sure the lessons were co-produced, so no one person was controlling the essence of the session. This in turn created a safe environment for the group to explore and challenge difficult and emotional material, which was then interpreted into stories and artwork.

This book will hopefully serve to present how the collaborative process can be developed by using art and the written word as a medium. This can enhance and improve wellbeing and can be used by other organisations to explore and implement.

The sessions were strategically run at the same time each week and at familiar venues, to create a safe place and get the best out of the group. Some of the participants have suffered mental health issues, long term disability, addiction or situational barriers. The illustrated book will serve to tackle these issues



and shine a light on the causes of disadvantaged individuals rather than the after effects.

The book can hopefully be used as a research piece as well as a guide for other institutes and organisations, to learn from and develop new ways to tackle the main causes of individuals on the fringes of society. Art and being creative is another form of communicating without the pain and emotion of speaking about challenging events directly, but rather individuals can become a character, create an imaginative voice, or create a persona, helping them to explore their own perspectives at a safe distance, making the intolerable tolerable again.



Students and participants were also invited to the CHAOS Farm where they interacted with the horses, sheep and chickens creating some amazing artwork whilst first hand interacting with a live farm. The group also visited



Participants and volunteers leave their mark on the wall at the farm

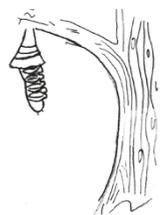


the local beach, battling against the elements to create a giant butterfly, whilst symbolically losing some of the pebbles to the relentless elements. Yet we were satisfied at the end of the session, knowing we had worked as a team and the results were good enough. It reminded us of a journey like the metamorphosis of a butterfly. The stages of change, rather than the end result, had been the point all along, much like friendships, work, social experience and ultimately life!

The personal outcomes for participants have been remarkable, making the seemingly impossible possible with some of the group now going on to formal learning. The illustrative process has enabled both the participants, MA students and the senior lecturers to gain insight into their own mental health. Together the process of participating in the project has enhanced emotional and social resilience. The overall process has helped the group to learn to trust and explore feelings and thoughts in a safe and collaborative environment: overcoming emotional barriers, learning to find the courage to speak in a



A message left on the farm wall



group, sharing creative ideas using new and exciting mediums, working in groups and individually, learning to find a new way of communicating through imagination and storytelling, sharing ideas and listening to others, being non-judgmental nor feeling judged, sharing personal stories and allowing the group to explore this through their own art and interpretation.

The goal was to create a co-produced illustrated book by the end of the year-long project, something to feel proud of, and with the hope that the participants' journey can impact and make a difference to others in the wider world.

The CHAOS Radio Station



The Cafe, taken by a participant of the CHAOS creative provision



“I looked forward to that one day a week. It kept me going. It kept me well. And because of that, I started to grow ...”

---

*EMERGENCE, n.*

1 The act or process of emerging. Like the dawn of a brand new day.

1.1 Evolution. After being signed up with CHAOS a new hope dawns, the appearance of a new direction, motivation: like the butterfly emerging from its cocoon into daylight. The experience of equine therapy, working in the CHAOS café, being encouraged and accepted. The start of a sense that ‘I can begin to value myself’. A significant development in the evolution of revolutionary change through doing, meeting, engaging and trusting.





*Emerging Butterfly*

Made during the Shield  
Workshop  
- Kristine

**The Shield**

The idea of this particular session was to encourage the students to create their very own 'Shield Of Protection', a visual aid using illustration and words to encourage thought around their personal journeys: what in their characters had delivered them to this very moment in their lives?

The students and participants were encouraged to take a large piece of paper each and fold it into four sections. The illustration would be up to them - an embellished shield or something else, perhaps a butterfly or another object that meant something to them, which gave that particular individual strength.

Four profound questions were added to each of the spaces on the shield -

Where have I come from?, Where am I going?, What do I have to offer?, Who or what do I need around me?

The answers began to build up a picture of the individual, the road they'd taken, their choices and their empowerment. Once this was completed students were asked to reflect on their responses and consider their 'superpower' - given where they'd come from and what it'd taken to survive - such as Strength, Adaptability, etc. - whatever it was they wanted to write as their EMBLEM of protection, a defining word or a mission statement. This would be drawn as a motif at the bottom of their illustration, perhaps on a ribbon or on the woosh of wings. The process created some wonderful designs and gave the group a feeling of strength and direction. The group were supportive of one another's drawings which encouraged deeper understanding and more personal stories coming to the fore.

- Melanie

I love the way the mask and the butterfly reflect the delicate patterns of each other.



Empowered

Made during the Mask-making Workshop - Lucy

"She's showing more of her colours rather than hiding them, the deeper the colours go towards the eyes the more to the core they are going. The sequins are like scales, but broken scales as a result of being a failure, which makes her feel bad about herself. She is showing them proudly because she is stronger now and they are part of her."

- Lucy



*Sapphire and Steel*

Made during the  
Mask-making Workshop  
- Melanie



'A story of emotional destruction & struggle. From that small space of hope a rebirth emerges & Sapphire is one again whole.'  
- Melanie

### Conversations with CHAOS participants...

#### Who did you look to blame when things went wrong?

🌿 "I blamed myself for not being strong enough to cope with everyday situations."

🌿 "I blamed myself for getting myself into this situation, but now looking back, and with the right support I know it wasn't my fault and CHAOS has given me the self confidence to realise this and my potential/worth."

🌿 "Mostly I blamed myself whenever anything went wrong. It didn't matter how small a thing it was. It was always my fault - even when it wasn't. My life was just 'wrong'. I felt and thought I actually was fundamentally flawed somehow. I didn't seem to fit in anywhere. I just couldn't seem to get things right."

#### Tell me your story ...

🌿 "I have had people spit at me and throw things at me. The only way I travel to my Mum's is by coach, I won't go by train because I got smashed up by thugs on the train once. I know it's scary and I don't like to talk about it very often. I had 6 broken ribs, I had 2 broken legs and a fractured skull. They kicked me off the train while it was still moving."



Owl Moth

- Hannah

Egg Leaf Mask

- Julia

Made during the  
Mask-making Workshop

*'The owl moth mask is fragile in its materiality of leaf-like feathers and is worn in the hope to blend in to their surroundings, to protect themselves and hide from the dangers of the world. However at the same time the patternation resembles the face of an owl, making them appear strong and so they begin to feel more resilient to face whatever scary thing that may come their way.'*  
- Hannah

*'The mask is built in protective layers from the centre outwards, to protect the delicate fragile cracked eggshell of the centre. The colours get more vibrant, the shapes larger and stronger as the layers unfold. The central core is dark and strong and a cordon of black and white separates the two parts.'*  
- Julia



River

Imaginary character  
with its own biography  
made during the Animal  
Cut-out Workshop  
- Group work



*River is androgynous and constantly at war with themselves. Has a flowy creative, unconventional side, and a hard rational one that keeps trying to reign in the other. Composed of many contradictory parts, not a coherent, whole being. Nomadic, cannot live in one place too long. Keeps moving. Last home: a padded room. It didn't work out. Now they are learning to dance and rejoice in the travelling and the joy in themselves. The cut-out shows them restraining their bad hobbit.*

## Personal Symbol

The aim of this workshop was trying to create something that we felt represented ourselves visually. Symbols felt a good way of doing this. A symbol can take the place of words to represent something in a bold, visual and easily identifiable way. They take all the elements of something and refine them down to its simplest form. Symbols are often universally recognisable as they are a perfect way of characterising the thing they represent. The benefit of creating a symbol is that the simplicity really forces a careful consideration of how best to represent something. Before the symbols were created, we had to work out what parts of our lives and personalities we wanted to share and try to represent. Through experimenting with lots of different shapes it was interesting to see the different ways in which people approached this task. Shapes, elements, nature and animals were just some of the ways that people



### *Unfolding*

Emerging self awareness  
from the Personal Symbol  
Workshop  
- Hannah

chose to represent themselves. Sharing our symbols and reasons for choosing them at the end of the workshop was one of the most interesting parts as there were so many diverse images and descriptions. As this workshop was in the early stages of the whole project it also helped us to get to know each other a little better.

- Anna



A risograph print is a process that uses soy based inks using a machine that looks similar to a photocopier but prints the colours in layers, one layer at a time, much like a screenprint. Your print is unique!

I liked this workshop, it reminded me of drawing like this when I was growing up.

### Exquisite Corpse

It was suggested that making some large-scale exquisite corpse drawings might be a fun way of creating collaborative images, and creating characters that could surprise us. We sat in a circle and each had our own drawing tool and large piece of paper on which we drew in secret a character's head, folding the paper over so that only the shoulders were visible. The paper was then passed to another member of the group who drew a torso, then folded and passed to another who drew down to the knees and then finally passed to someone else to draw down to the feet. The reveals caused much laughter and surprise, each unfolding conjuring up a new beast or eccentric figure. These amalgamations of different imaginations felt symbolic in fusing together individual voices into collective entities, characters that could only be created through collaborative action. Each character was named, and there was much laughter, fun and wild speculations about the eccentricities and idiosyncrasies of each character.

– Hannah



Response from the  
Mono-printing Workshop

- Kristine

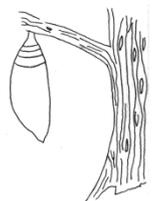


Insert  
Dave

Stencil Drawing  
- Group

Left  
Lucy's Dragon Tattoo

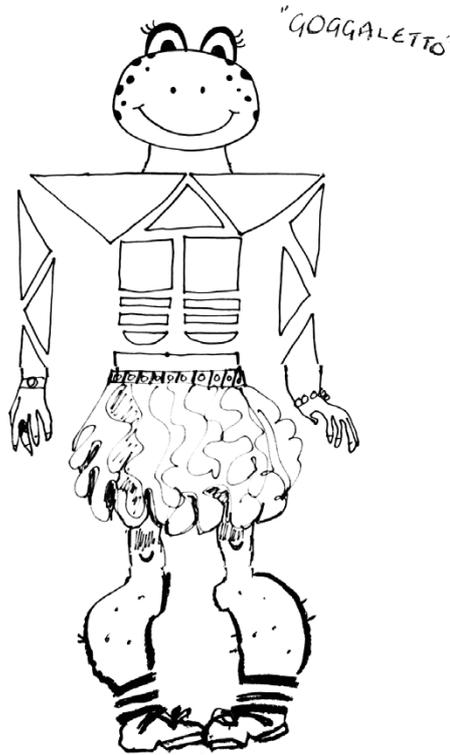
From the Personal Symbol  
Workshop  
- Lucy



CHAOS: A Co-Creation

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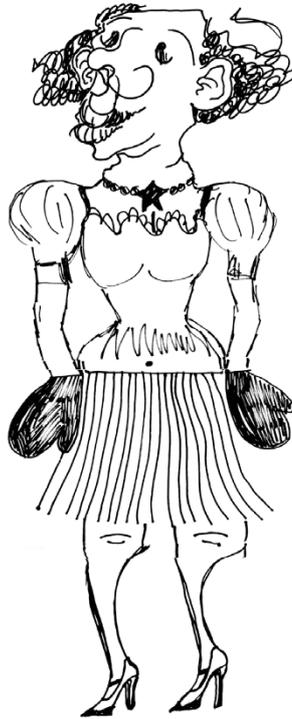
Characters created in the  
Exquisite Corpse Workshop



Pete



Professor Winston



Erica



PAUL H



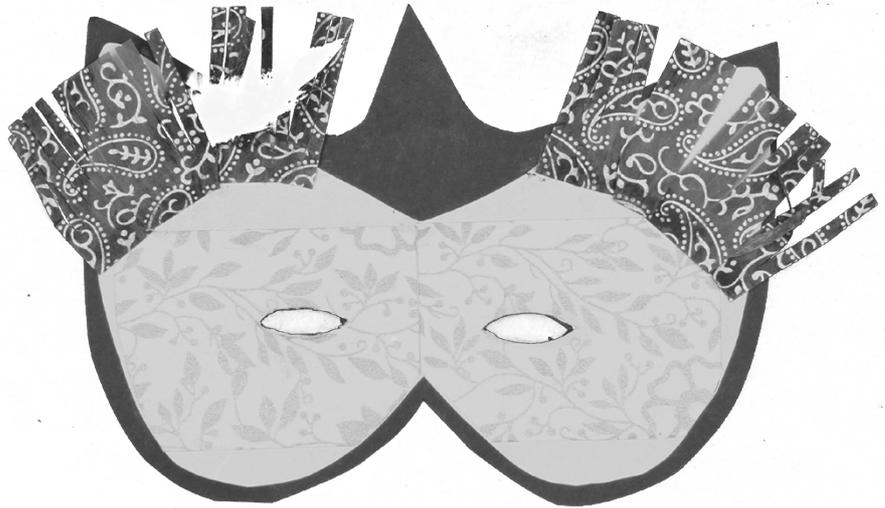
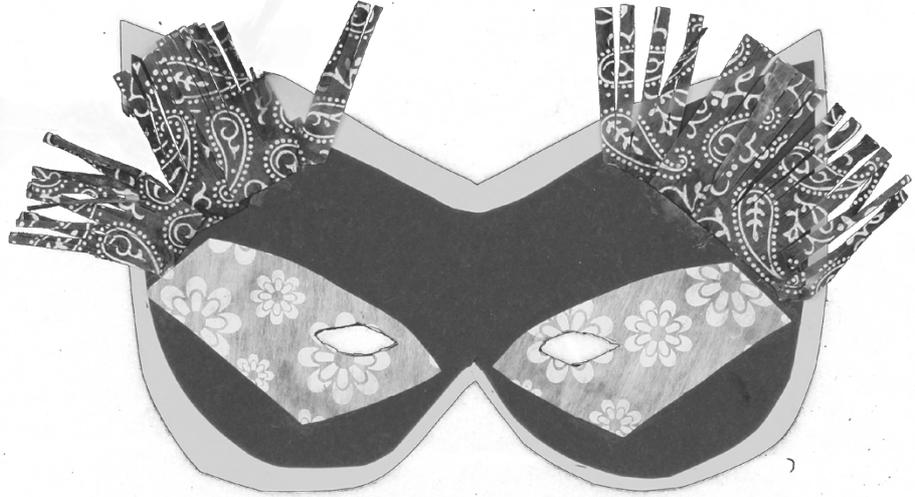
## CHAOS: A Co-Creation

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### Blue and Yellow

Created as part of the  
Mask-making Workshop

- Clare



*'If my pale more vulnerable face is in the foreground, my stronger side is still there in the background. When my stronger side takes centre stage it doesn't mean that my softer side has disappeared.'*  
- Clare

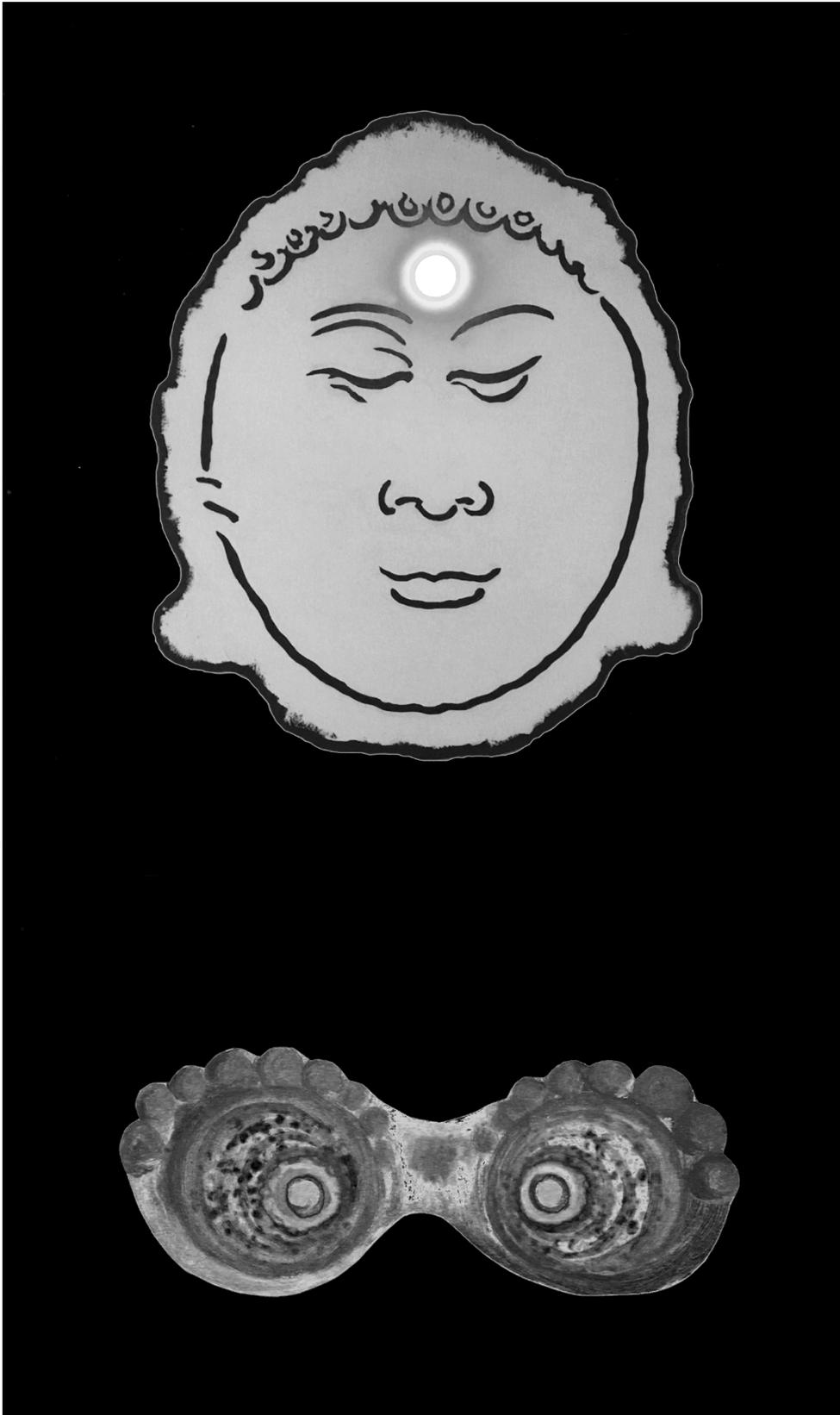


### Chameleon

Created as part of the  
Mask-making Workshop

- Anna

*'The orange chameleon is happy and wants to be involved as part of things. Both are as valid as each other, suiting different times and sides of their personality.'*  
- Anna

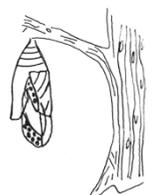


*Inner Illumination Mask*

Created as part of the  
Mask-making Workshop  
- Steve

'Developing inner illumination'  
- Steve

'The green chameleon is when it wants to hide away in the background, feeling over-whelmed or needs some peace.'  
- Anna



# CHAOS: A Co-Creation

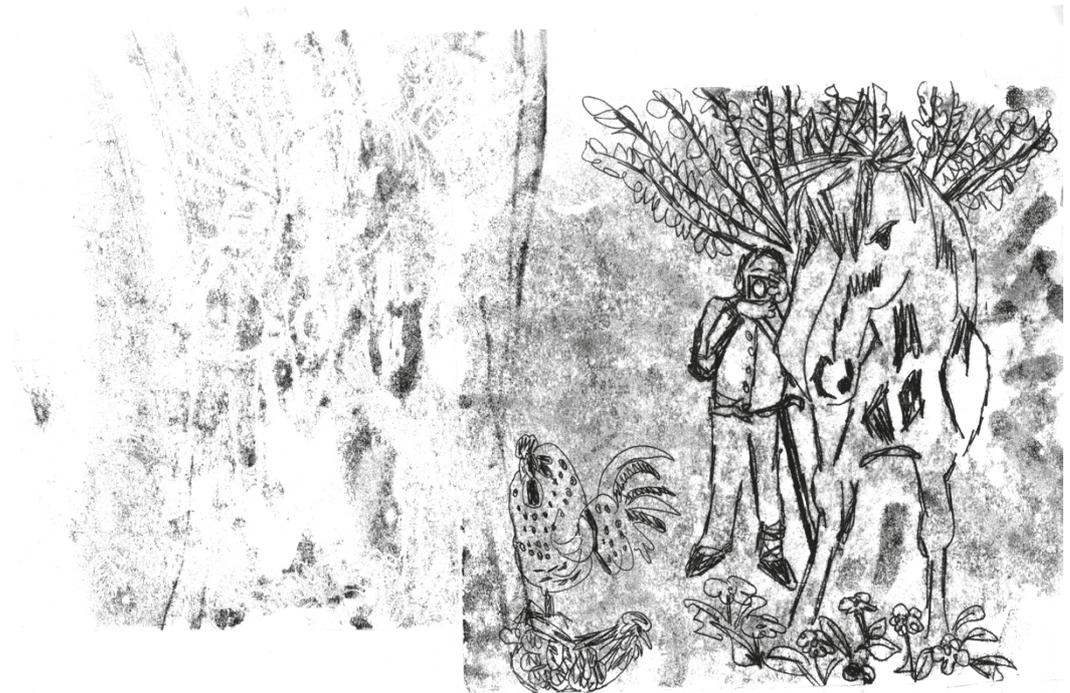
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Responses from the  
Mono-printing Workshop

- Kristine

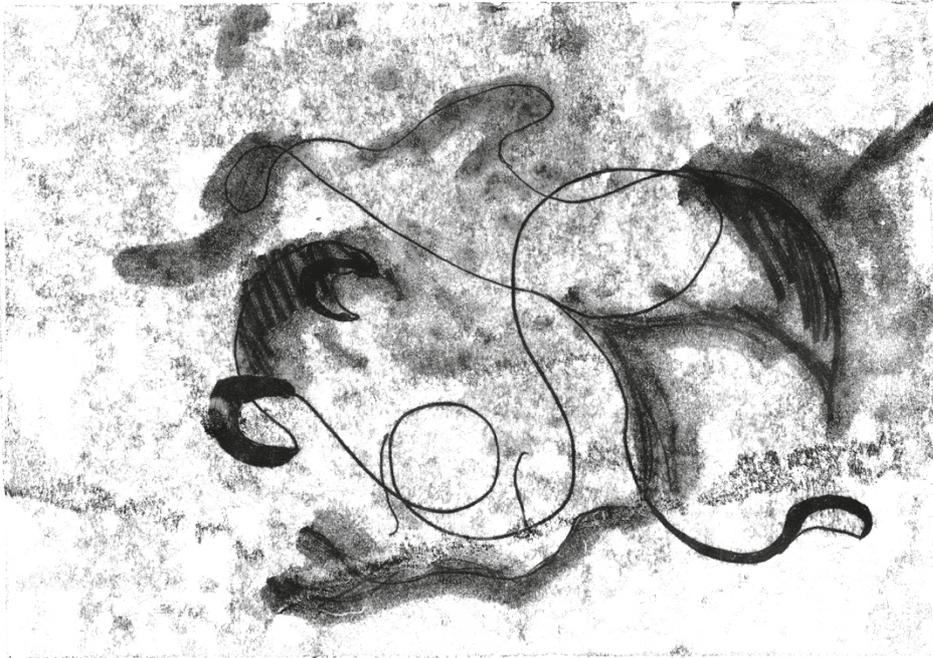


- Melanie



refer back to the pupae section for more about the mono-printing workshop

- Kristine



### Conversations with CHAOS participants ...

#### What provision did you engage with at CHAOS and why?

🌿 “When the CHAOS staff member came to talk to me, she arranged for me to start at the CHAOS farm as soon as I came out of rehab. She helped me to settle into my new home and arranged travel for me to get to the farm. Once a week, I worked with the horses, learning to groom them, care for them etc. and work with a whole range of different people from all walks of life. It really helped me to get over a desperately rough patch and illness being there. Just being around the horses helped to ease my anxiety and panic attacks. Over time, I gained in confidence and self esteem. I looked forward to that one day a week, every week. It kept me going. Kept me well. And because of that, I started to grow.”

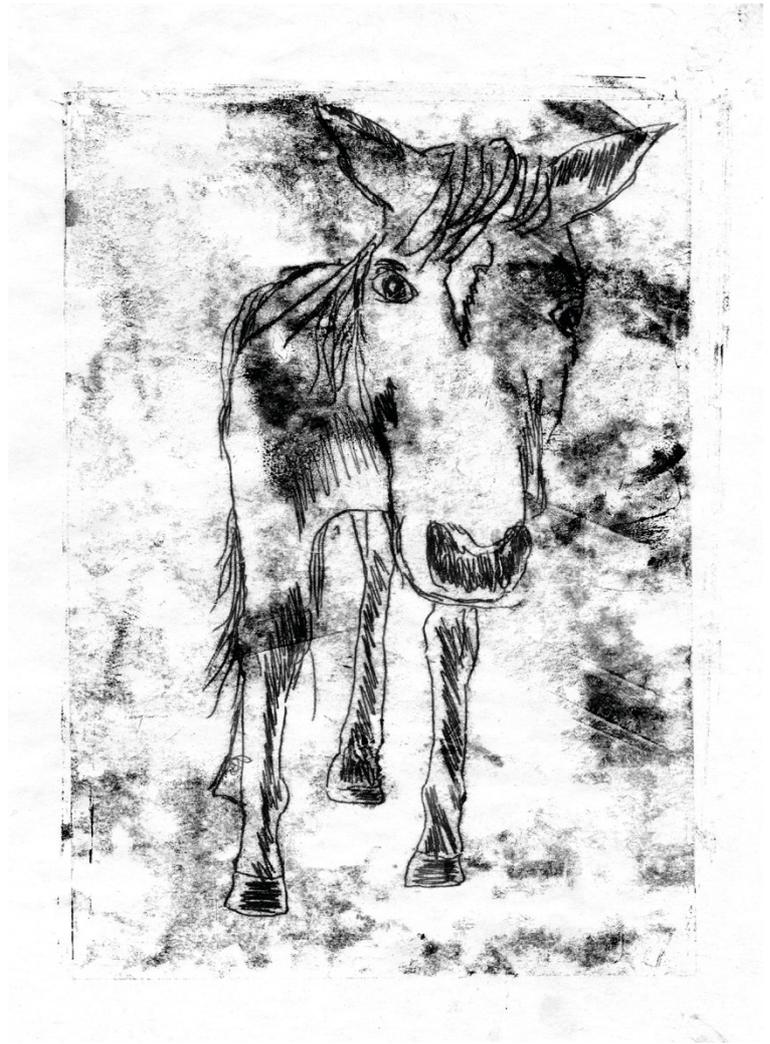
🌿 “Equine Therapy, to understand myself to talk through the difficulties I have. The farm, to build my confidence around horses and other people. Art, to participate in something I love to do in a safe environment where no one judges you.”



CHAOS: A Co-Creation

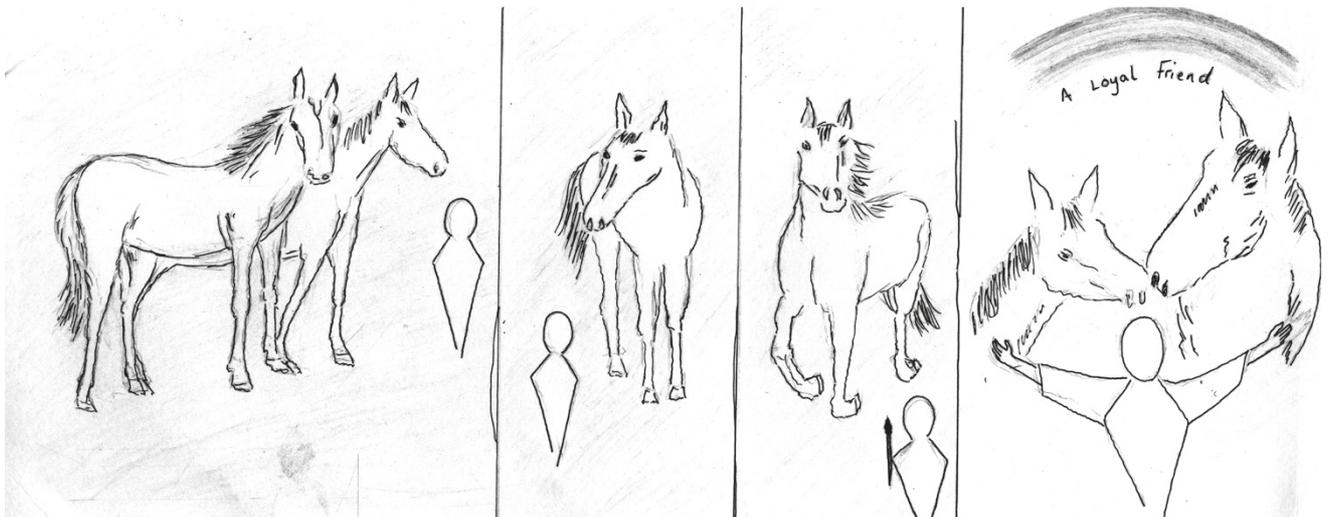
*Happy Tappy*

From the Mono-printing  
Workshop, a happy memory  
of equine therapy  
- Vanessa



*A Loyal Friend*

Produced for the four-panel  
Comic-strip Workshop  
- Vanessa



*Creating our Chaos  
Creatures Backstories*

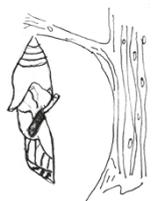


Photos of the Co-Creation  
process

## The Co-Creation Process

At the heart of the project is the concept of shared creative process, a 'thinking-through-making' in which weekly collaborative creative sessions allowed a space for a collective voice to emerge. Adopting The CHAOS Group's non-hierarchical, co-produced approach through actions such as the 'learn to lead' process meant that every step of the process in making this book has been co-created, and through doing so, resulted in a collective empowerment.

– Hannah



## Learn to Lead

The group were introduced to the 'Learn to Lead' concept or 'co-produced' method of working at the very beginning, before we even knew what the book would look like. The idea was to make the whole process as equal as possible. The group was made up of participants, MA students and a tutor, plus two senior staff members of CHAOS. Once we had sat in a circle and were all given a piece of paper and pens, things very much began to feel on an equal footing. The 'Learn to Lead' method is a grounding formula, asking all those that sit before it to throw off any preconceived ideas of role and status and simply ask four or more measured questions to get to the heart of the matter.

One question at a time will be put to the group and answered by putting answers on a sheet of paper. When everyone has done this they are asked to read out their answers, one by one to the rest of the group (there are no right or wrong answers here). This process continues with all the questions being asked and answered. The answers of the group are usually stuck on the wall to think about afterwards or gathered up to make 'actions' from. If anyone strongly disagrees with the rest of the group on an answer then the individual has a chance to give an alternative solution.

This reminded me of a line  
by Rupi Kaur  
"you do not just wake up  
and become the butterfly  
growth is a process"

What has the co-creation  
and collaborative process meant  
to you?

This collaborative project has  
brought together a group  
of people who have been  
able to share the experience

of making and gathering material  
and creating a body of work.

This is a publication to support  
the organisation that brought  
them together in the first place,  
to help others in similar  
situations.

A cyclical,  
repetitive  
process.

Collaborat  
on speci  
together  
We had  
topics  
now a

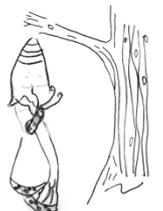
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If the group overrides an individual's alternative answer to a query then this idea can be 'banked' for another time if required. To work in this way enabled the CHAOS book to be shaped in a non-judgmental, collaborative and diverse style. No one individual takes control or decides for the others. Here are a few examples of questions we used and answers created through this process.

– Melanie

...operating, not just on the project but specific bits of work, has brought us over as a group in a very profound way. Had to begin discussing quite challenging issues right from the start, and looking at the work we have produced, it really feels as though we have a clear artistic style and voice coming through. We have achieved all of this together as a team and it means a lot to us. Having to not only talk about the issues we were focusing on, but also interpret them visually in a group, made us delve a lot deeper and focus more.

IT TAKES AWAY THE SPOTLIGHT FROM ME AS AN INDIVIDUAL AND INSTEAD ILLUMINATES WHAT CAN HAPPEN WHEN WE WORK AS A GROUP. LIKEWISE IT TAKES AWAY THE PRESSURE, IT IS ON ALL OUR SHOULDERS TO MAKE THIS HAPPEN, WE HAVE A VISION AND A SHARED GOAL THAT WE SHAPE TOGETHER, IT EMERGES THROUGH CO-CREATION, CO-OPERATION AND FINDING COMMON GROUND.



## Hacky-sack

Hacky-sack began as a warm-up and has become an institution! We all found it important to ease our way into the sessions, particularly at the start of the project when we didn't know each other very well. Some of the issues we were discussing could be difficult and sensitive, so we needed to feel safe and have a sense of trust. One of our Falmouth students with a theatre background suggested we begin by playing hacky-sack, patting a small knitted beanbag between us as we stood in a circle and seeing how long we could collectively keep it in the air. As you can imagine, this led to a lot of laughter, the occasional bit of bad language and a huge sense of camaraderie. Highlights included a rally of 65, some excellent trick shots (rebounding off the light fitting into the bin) and barefoot hacky in the sunshine in Falmouth's Fox Gardens. Lowlights included accidentally hitting our head tutor in the eye, but he's forgiven us. There is even talk of joining a hacky-sack league ...

– Julia

### *Hacky-sack*

The weekly ritual of  
hacky-sack  
- Alia



“That’s what  
CHAOS gave  
me: the chance  
of a life ...”

---

**TAKING FLIGHT** (*flight of the butterfly*), *n., n.*

1 The power of emotional flight. A change in thought pattern. To have embraced CHAOS and its provisions. To have been unemployed and now be engaged with training education or employment. To have discovered one’s true potential through the help, support, belief and kindness shown without prejudice.

1.1 The distance covered or the course taken by a flying object: a 500-mile flight; the flight of the ball. The flight of true self-discovery.

1.2 A number of beings or things flying or passing through the air together: succeeding through group work. A shared experience fundamental to enrich the lives of those who were once disadvantaged.

1.3 To now possess the power and beauty of flight over challenge. To grasp with both hands and not let go of the new world embraced. To strike root or begin to grow, as a plant.

1.4 A visual and mental response to something typically manifested in a state expressing total absorption or wonderment: perhaps a queasy feeling, as from nervousness or excitement, etc.



*Partner drawing*

- Anna & Alia



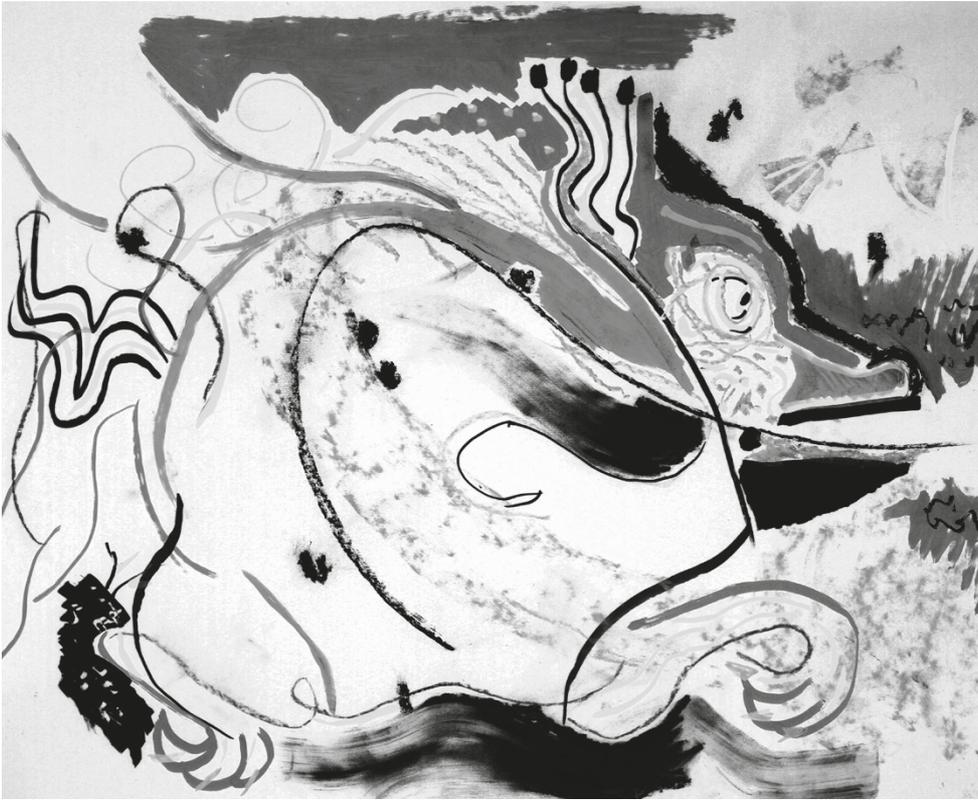
### Partner Drawings

We began the session sitting in a small circle and the group were asked to partner up with someone, preferably who they had not worked with before. Once this had been decided and the group had settled down with their partner, they were given a large piece of A3 paper. Pens, paints and utensils were collected by the group in order to work together. The next instruction was to move into an unoccupied area in the room, on a table or the floor, whatever was comfortable for the pairs. The group were then asked to decide which one of the couple would go ‘first’ and which one would go ‘second’.

Once this was agreed upon the group were simply asked to allow the ‘first’ to make their mark in whichever way they wished and then the ‘second’ to respond, through a corresponding mark on the page. A type of dance or flowing energy began to emerge as the couples took their turns and made their alternate marks.

Something like a secret communication or alchemy emerged from the page. Movement, colour and space jumped from the work. A relationship on paper had been born. A creative conversation between two people. This was a powerful piece of work. Once the pairs had finished we came back as a group and the other members of the group said what they could see in the other couples’ drawings, until we had gone round the whole room. Interesting things were spotted like joy, speed, confusion, darkness and light, and emerging shapes like birds and snakes. This had been a playful and yet deep bonding session for all who had participated in it.

– Melanie



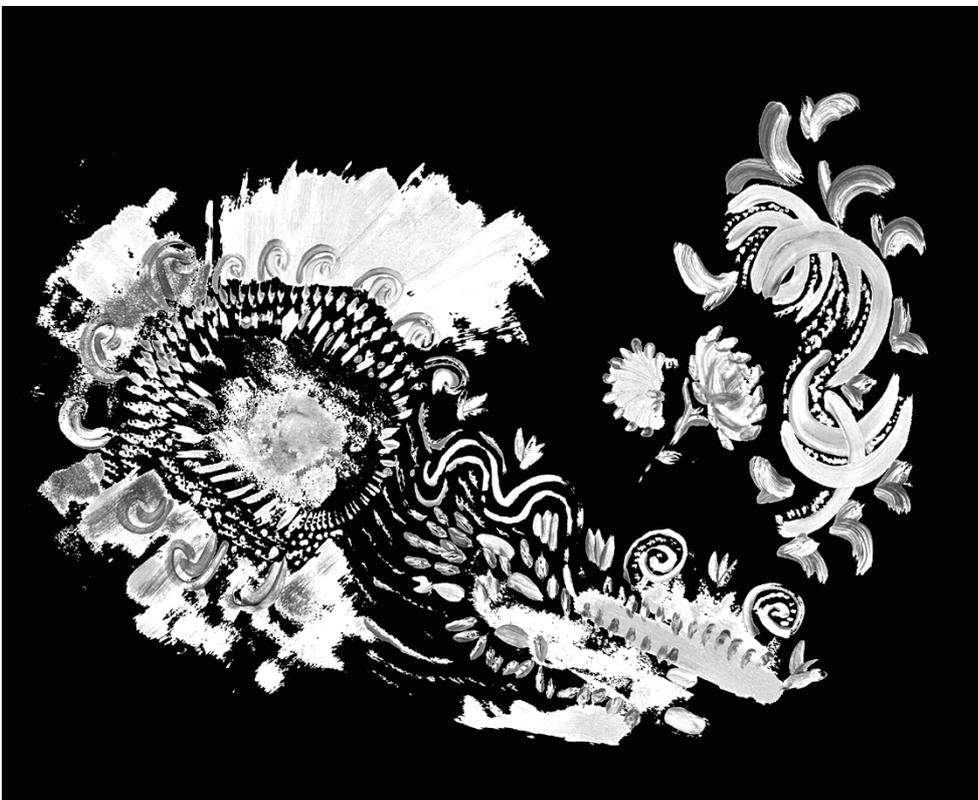
Left  
*Surreal Pig*

- Lucy & Kristine

Below  
*Chinese Dragon*

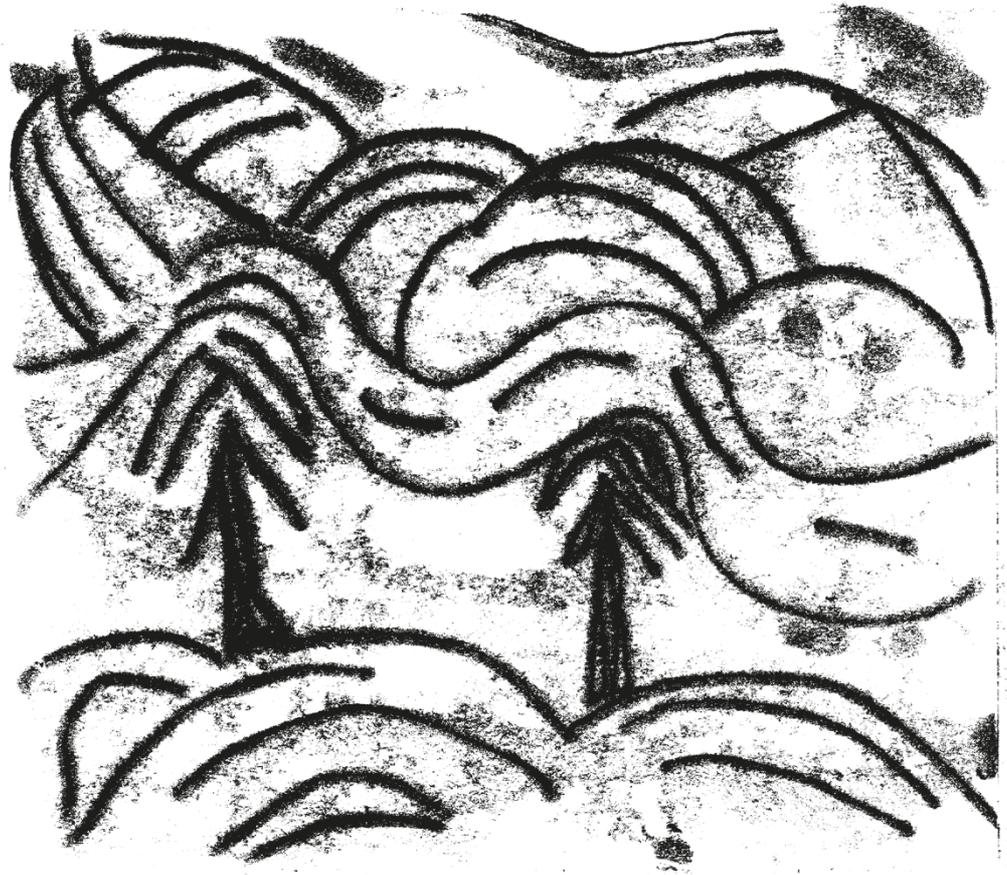
- Melanie & Clare

Created during the Partner  
Drawings Workshop



*The "True Nature" of Trees*

Created during the  
Mono-printing Workshop  
- Melanie



Conversations with CHAOS participants ...

How did CHAOS help to change your perspective on how you were feeling?

🌿 "I realised I am not alone and there are people who care."

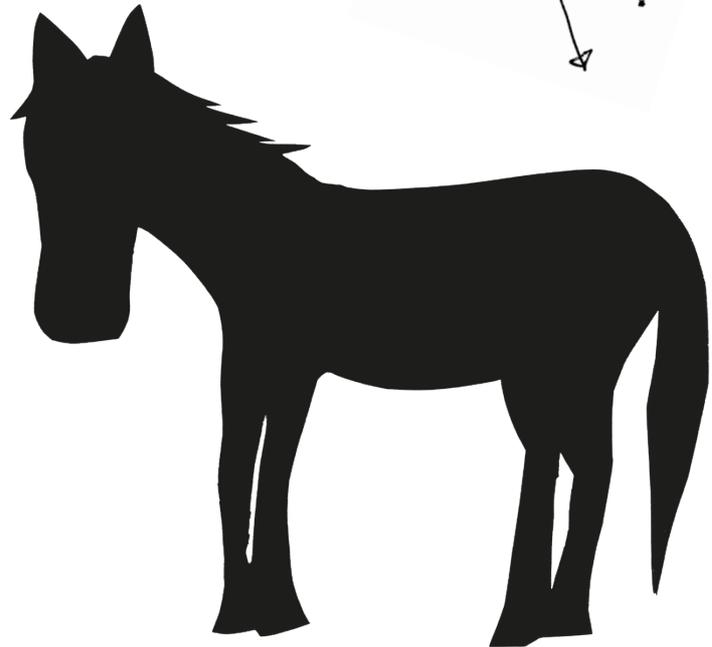
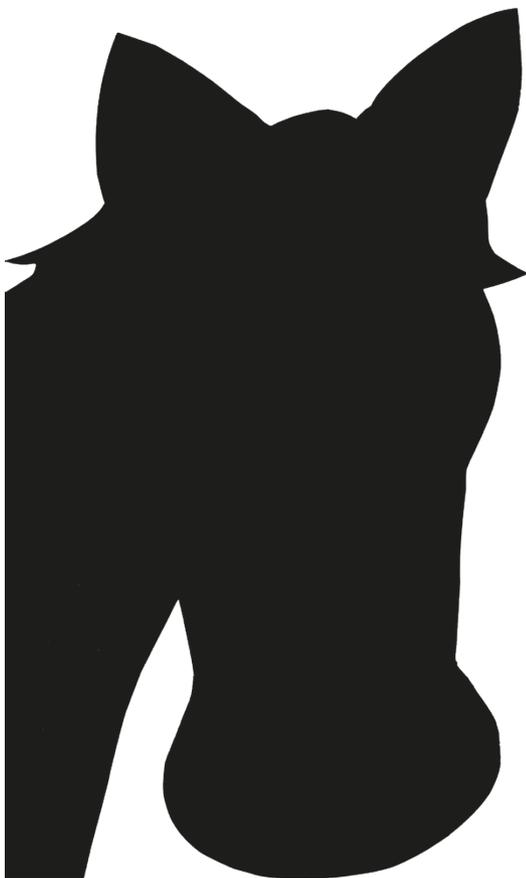
🌲 "CHAOS has given me the self-esteem and confidence I lost by guiding and supporting me throughout my journey and being that safety net I could count on."

🌻 "I felt like life could be ok again, that I could survive it and have a sense of purpose. That's what CHAOS gave me - the chance of a life."

*This is Midnight Sparkle. She has a huge heart and likes helping people. Midnight Sparkle has had a hard life, she's been very poorly, very sad and she lost all her confidence. She had nowhere to live but someone called Andy helped her and gave her shelter. Then she went to the CHAOS Group. Midnight Sparkle made friends, she felt important and supported. She started to learn new skills and remember old ones she'd forgotten. She helped to build shelters for people, learnt how to look after animals and made a pixie den in the woods, where she learnt to build a fire and pick wild mushrooms. She made friends with a reindeer called Rodney. Now Midnight Sparkle feels much better, she is ready to help other people who have been lost like she used to be. Her heart is still huge and there will always be CHAOS to thank for that.*

Midnight Sparkle

Imaginary creature with its own biography made during the Animal Cut-out Workshop  
- Steffi



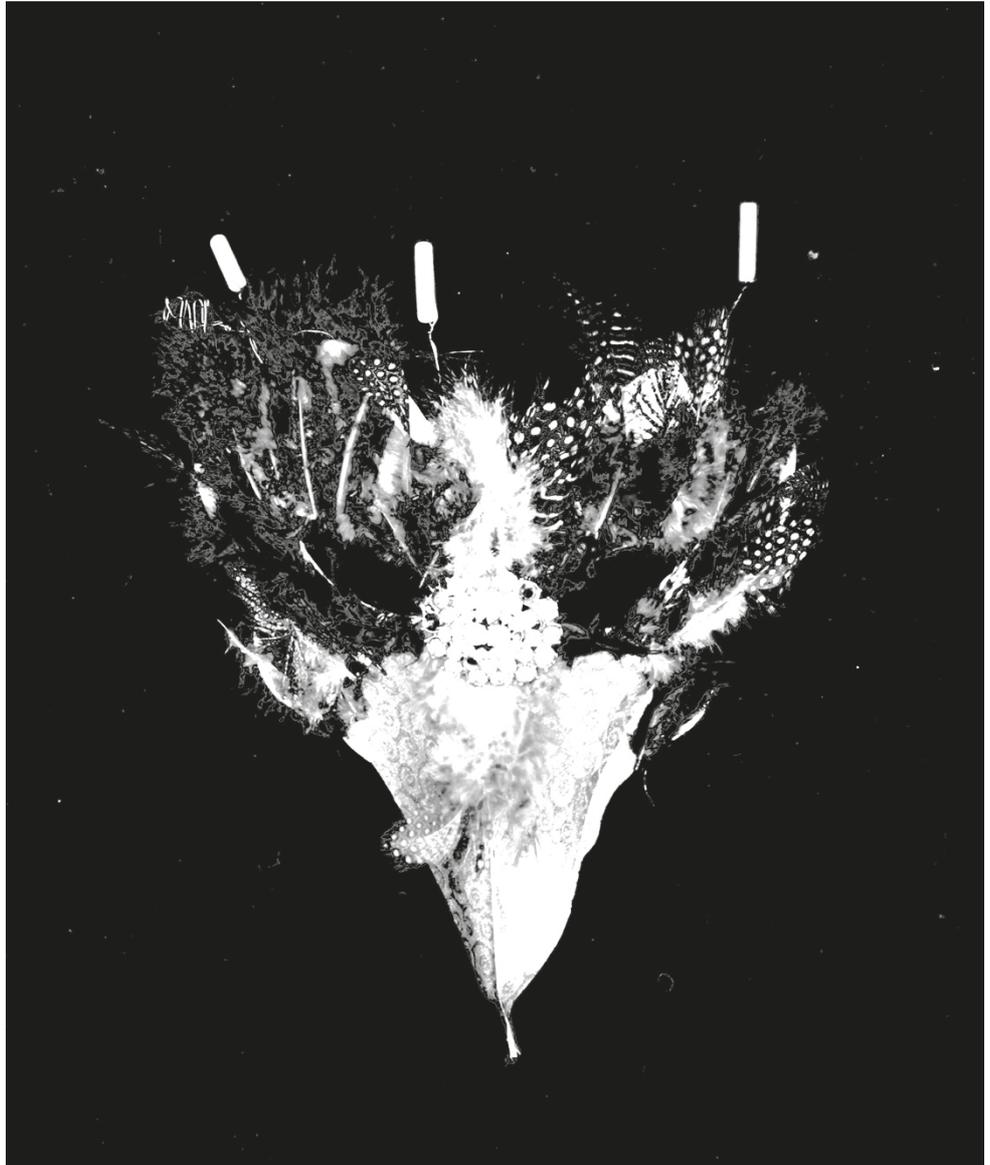
Here she is!  
↓



*Bluebird*

Created as part of the  
Mask-making Workshop  
- Vanessa

*'The bluebird is outgoing and happy living with other birds. She is  
very flamboyant and has no worries'  
- Vanessa*



Can you list a few achievements you have made since being with CHAOS?

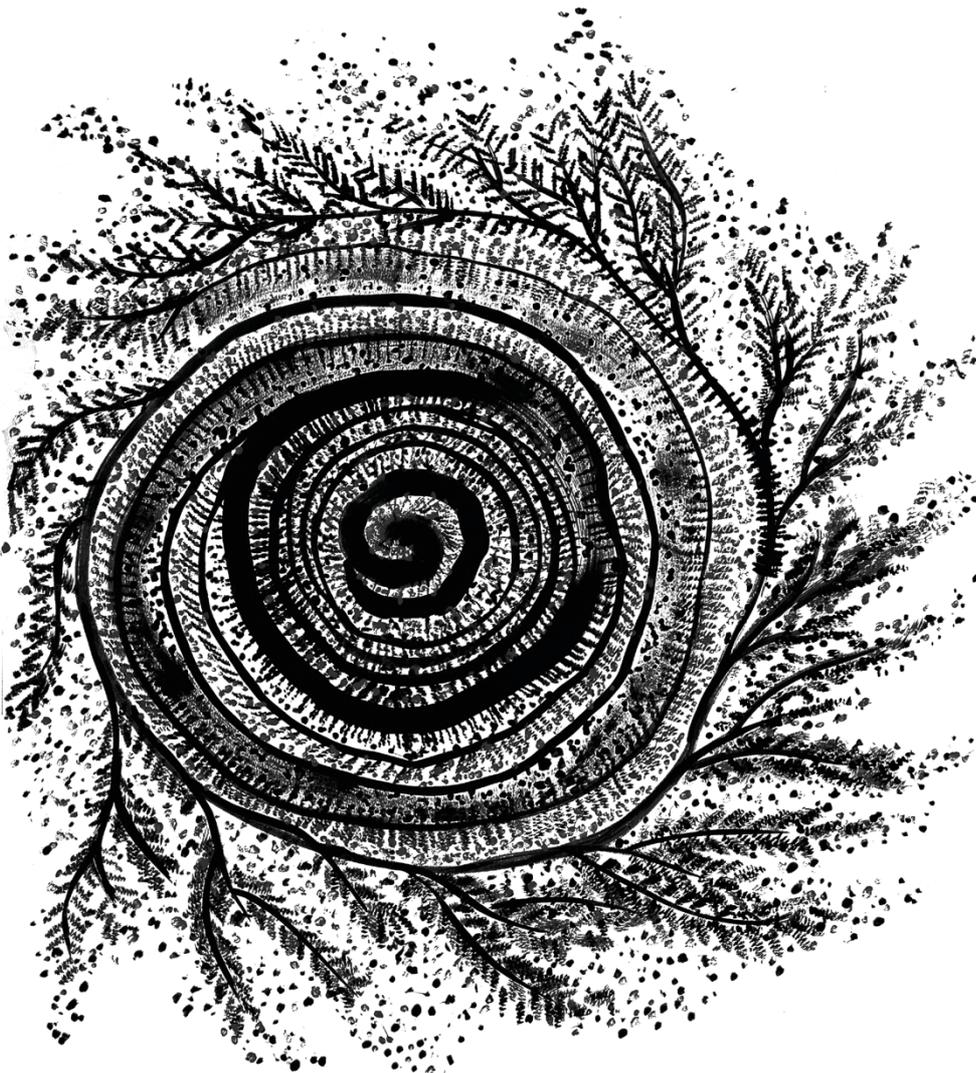
🌿 “Being able to be part of a group and voice my opinions. Helping others by volunteering at the farm.”

🌿 “Getting various jobs/promotions within a few months of being within the company, from BBO support worker, to well-being officer to marketing lead to being a carer to doing business management and more!”

How would you advise your younger self, or anyone who is going through the same thing?

☘ “I would tell them, do what you want with your life. Don’t let anybody put you down – you have the right to live, to go anywhere, to travel on a bus, coach, train, aeroplane. You have a right to tell people that you have a disability and go anywhere in town without being threatened. I learned respect, I learned how to be safe and protect yourself.”

☘ “I would tell them they’re worth it, they’re not what their thoughts tell them. I used to give myself pep talks in the mirror. There’s stuff that went on years ago that I look back on, and think “I was actually fine, it was them.” Living on my own has helped me grow a lot more. I hated myself as a teen, for a long time.”

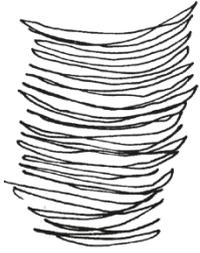


*Clare's spiral*

Created for the Personal  
Symbols Workshop  
- Clare



## Morphological Matrix and Haiku



We returned to the cafe after a long time. It was a beautiful day and the cafe was filled with sunlight. The radio was playing scratchy mellow music, and the warmth and colour of the place seemed to seep into us. There was much laughter over the cakes and coffee. We had decided that we wanted to capture our impressions of the CHAOS cafe together, and decided to use a framework called a “morphological matrix”, that one of the group introduced to us.



We were given copies of a sheet of paper with a simple grid drawn on. The idea was to name each row with an aspect of the cafe that we responded to. Then, to fill each box with a drawing or written description that matched this aspect. The advanced level of this, it was explained, could be to write a different set of aspects (feelings, people, etc.) at the top of each column, and fill each box with drawing or writing that evoked both sets of elements (in the rows and columns). But for this time, we stuck to just rows.

A meditative silence fell over the group, as each person found their own spot in the cafe and began to draw and write our observations. We did this for about 20 minutes, then returned to the larger group. We then passed everybody’s sheets around the group, and read out the different elements and examples. Seeing these all together was fascinating. It became clear that each person’s unique perspective had shaped their morphological matrix, while certain elements of the cafe recurred through various people’s sheets. Some of the elements people had chosen to describe were: people, quotes, feelings, patterns, objects, kitchen, and time.

We discussed how the morphological matrix was an incredibly versatile method of exploration and could be a powerful brainstorming method for various projects. We went on to compose some Haiku, using the references we had gathered. Haiku are a Japanese short-form poetry, typically using a 3-line structure with a 5,7,5 syllable pattern. We left feeling both light and energised.

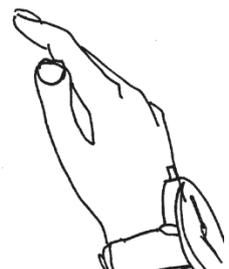
– Alia

This page  
Details from the  
Morphological Matrix  
Workshop

-Group

Insert  
Butterfly

Stencil Drawing  
- Group



Morphological Matrix

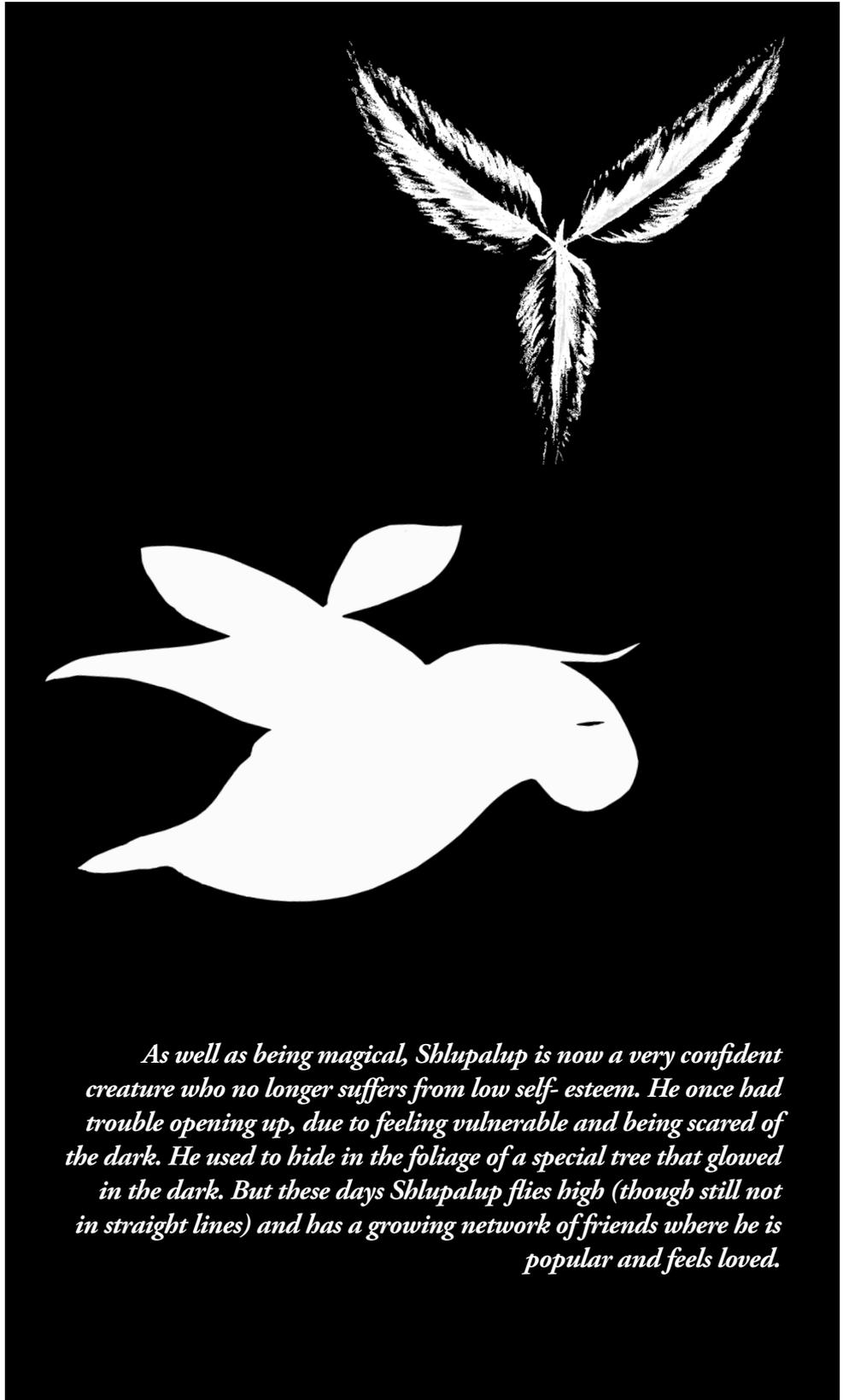
Created during the  
Morphological Matrix  
Workshop  
- Steve

<p>Opening the lid Releasing the flight Each note soars to find its place</p>	<p>The place home my beginning</p>	<p>Hold in a cage until a magic moment strikes Released from the hands of time.</p>	
	<p>This is this is this is the</p>		<p>The snow falls and each flake becomes a butterfly</p>
<p>Piano</p>	<p>Person</p>	<p>Grand- father Clock</p>	<p>Lamp</p>



*Taking Flight*

Created during the Personal  
Symbols Workshop  
- Julia



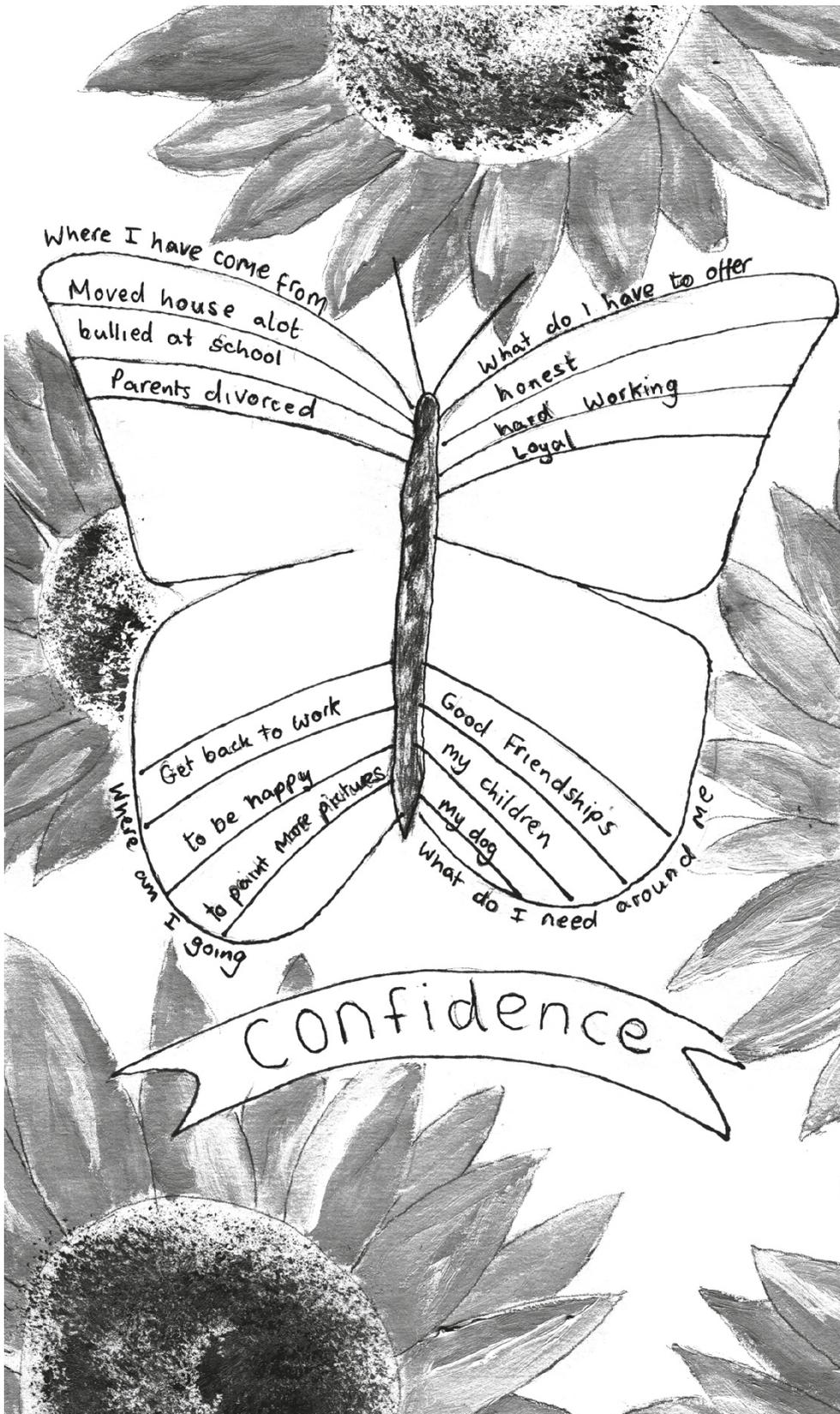
*Shlupalup*

Imaginary creature with  
its own biography made  
during the Animal Cut-out  
Workshop  
- Group work

*As well as being magical, Shlupalup is now a very confident creature who no longer suffers from low self-esteem. He once had trouble opening up, due to feeling vulnerable and being scared of the dark. He used to hide in the foliage of a special tree that glowed in the dark. But these days Shlupalup flies high (though still not in straight lines) and has a growing network of friends where he is popular and feels loved.*

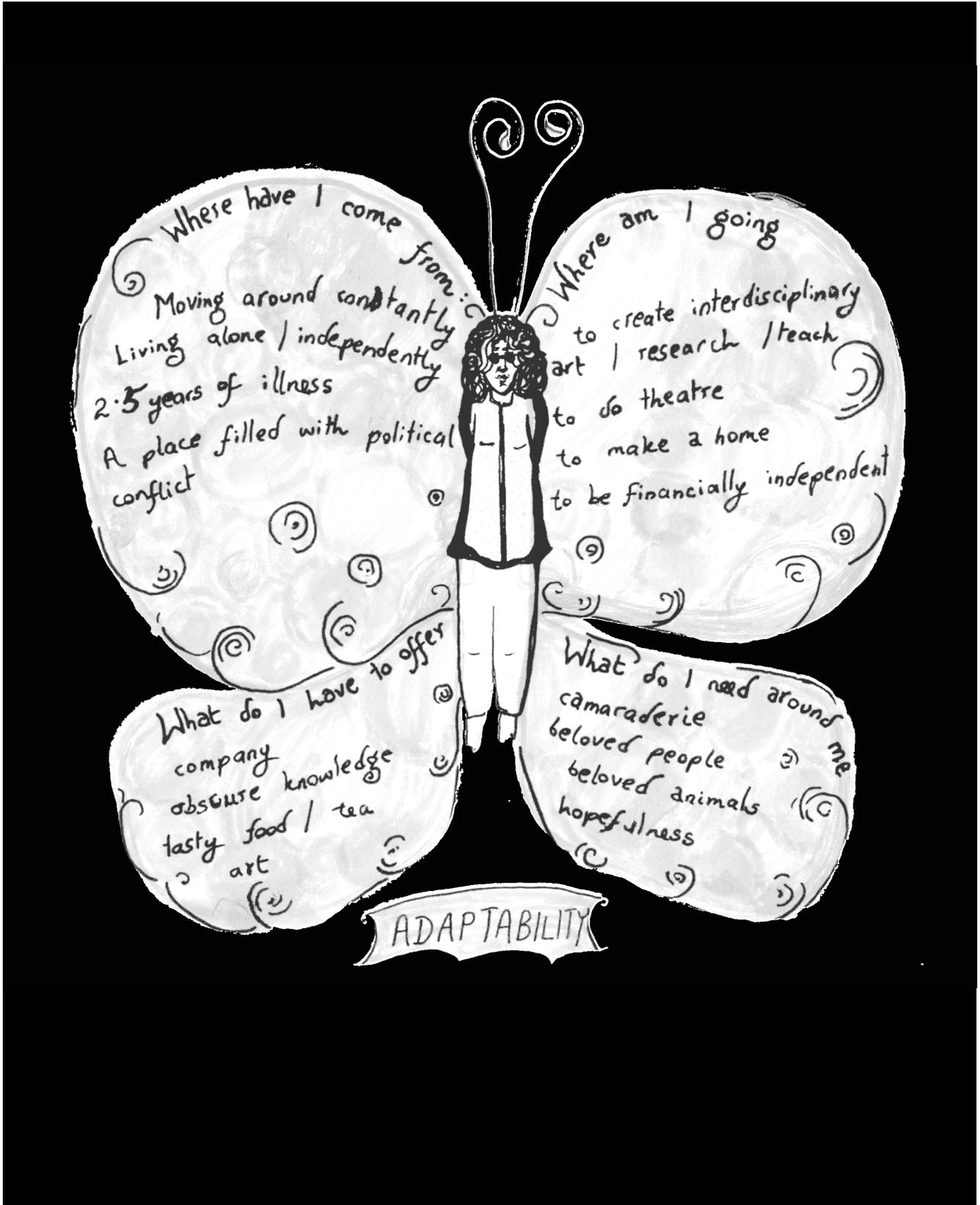
Sunflowers

Created during the Shield Workshop  
- Vanessa



I chose confidence as a strength.  
I would like to have this







Opposite page  
Butterfly with Dark Glasses

Created during the Shield  
Workshop  
- Alia

Left  
The Present Moment

Created during the Shield  
Workshop  
- Melanie

At last a moment to reflect on my journey,  
and take time to be fully present  
not worrying about the past or  
future troubles.





The group wear their masks

*Although not everyone was present, they were represented by their powerful and vulnerable masks.*



Left  
The group wear their masks

Below  
Phoenix

Created during the Personal Symbols Workshop - Melanie

*'A story of emotional destruction and struggle. Being at the bottom. The tiny dot of gold in a room of black. From that small speck of hope a rebirth emerges. The Phoenix is once again whole. Held back by poor parents and a depressing environment. Where there were no role models, only fear and greed. How damaging a deprived background can be – but an aspiration, a small spark of hope, a tiny glimmer of gold and the Phoenix can once again shine bright in all its beautiful glory!' – Melanie*





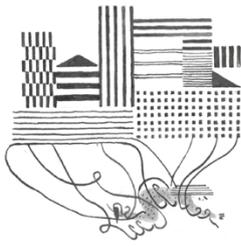
### *Butterfly Beach*

A collaborative artwork  
created on Pendower beach,  
Roseland Peninsula

### **Butterfly Beach**

At one point, during the Spring, the group had an idea to make a more ambitious large piece of work, and so, thinking about the largest canvas we could access, we decided to spend one of our Wednesday afternoon creative sessions drawing on a beach. We travelled to Pendower beach on the Roseland in mid-May, where we found we had the whole beach to ourselves and were able to pick a prime spot to make the large artwork. It was decided that the CHAOS Group logo of the butterfly would be the best image to create and so we set about drawing in the sand with a broom-handle, and with small spades and sticks. We quickly found that the best way to make the drawing stand out was to draw by building lines of large pebbles. This worked rather beautifully but as we worked the tide started coming in rather quickly however, and a lovely spontaneous challenge became the reinforcing and continual re-drawing of the butterfly (which seemed a like symbol of hope), against the insistent erasing by the waves. We held out pretty well as you can see from the view taken from the clifftop.

– Steve



## Spreading our Wings

Referring back to the question we posed at the beginning of this book: Could an illustrational mind-set – one rooted within authorship – bring out those personal voices, build trust and rekindle a sense of worth and self-esteem? Over the course of the project we have seen participants who, at the beginning, were filled with trepidation at the thought of speaking in front of everyone, transform into open, playful and joyful members of the group.

The content of this book is a testimony to the efficacy of the use of the creative process in authoring personal stories and building a sense of self-worth and trust. We aim to take this research forward, both in the sphere of Illustration Research, initially delivering a paper at the forthcoming annual International Illustration Research Conference. CHAOS Group aims to continue to champion the effectiveness of co-creation and personal storytelling in mental health care, providing a platform for these voices to be heard, and continuing to throw light on the underlying problems of social deprivation that cause these mental health issues.

“When asked about who they are, people will often reply with a story or anecdote, which they have cultivated as a way of making sense of themselves, fleshing out the content of their concept of self through the construction of narrative.” (Escales and Bettamn, 2003).

To conclude, the deep structure of the story we each construct about ourselves, ‘our life story’ is, according to social theorist Jerome Bruner, not only a case of life creating our story, but of our story creating our life; the deep structure of each life story informing our present actions and shaping our future (Bruner, J. 2004). What has emerged, from our weekly creative workshops, is not just the stories themselves, but a growing awareness for each individual of the underlying structures they choose to construct their stories; awareness being the first step towards positive change.

Above

*Life as Narrative –  
Constructing one’s reality  
through narrative*

“There seems indeed to be some sense in which narrative, rather than referring to ‘reality’ may in fact create or constitute it, as when ‘fiction’ creates a ‘world’ of its own: empowering each individual to author their own life story.”

Life as Narrative, BRUNER,  
JEROME , 1987  
- Hannah



# The Group Reflects ...



How do you feel your contribution to the book has impacted on the group? And to a wider audience?

“It’s difficult to separate myself from the sense of a collective in order to answer this question, but a contribution I can think of is having been present – for myself and my co-participants – wholly present, for all the different aspects and stages of this process, to the best of my abilities.”

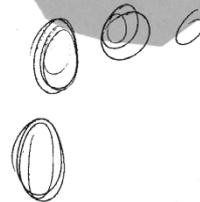
I don't know about my contribution specifically, but it feels as though as a group, we have developed a bond, a high level of trust and a surprisingly coherent visual language.

I have tried to share openly about difficult things and appreciate the fact that everyone has done the same, making the work we have produced much more powerful. For a wider audience, I hope people going through similar things will find a spark of recognition, which is often the first step in getting better.

“I’ve tried to approach the book with openness and honesty which has been difficult at times. I hope I’ve shown how you can still create work which has meaning, but just within the space I felt comfortable with.”



I hope my contribution of admiring support has increased the group's pride in the beauty and powerful emotional force of their work. As someone who has only recently become involved in the project, I can speak for a wider public in claiming that the book addresses issues of mental health in creative ways that can resonate with a more universal audience.



Hopefully my contribution to the book has been of equal part in the CO-CREATION process, in which each participants voice has brought their own unique flame to add to the fire and readers will be able to feel the warmth from this.

## How does art and creative writing help to communicate mental health issues?



“It allows me a dream language and spaces for reflection when things become overwhelming – a way to release fears or sadness by putting it into symbols and letting it sit, now separate from me.”

“It draws something out of the artist, like a universal language, connecting each and everyone of us. It’s like a language of the heart and soul. Whether it’s raw, unrefined and gritty, or a beautiful piece of art, there is a barrier that creativity crosses, to touch and speak to us all.”

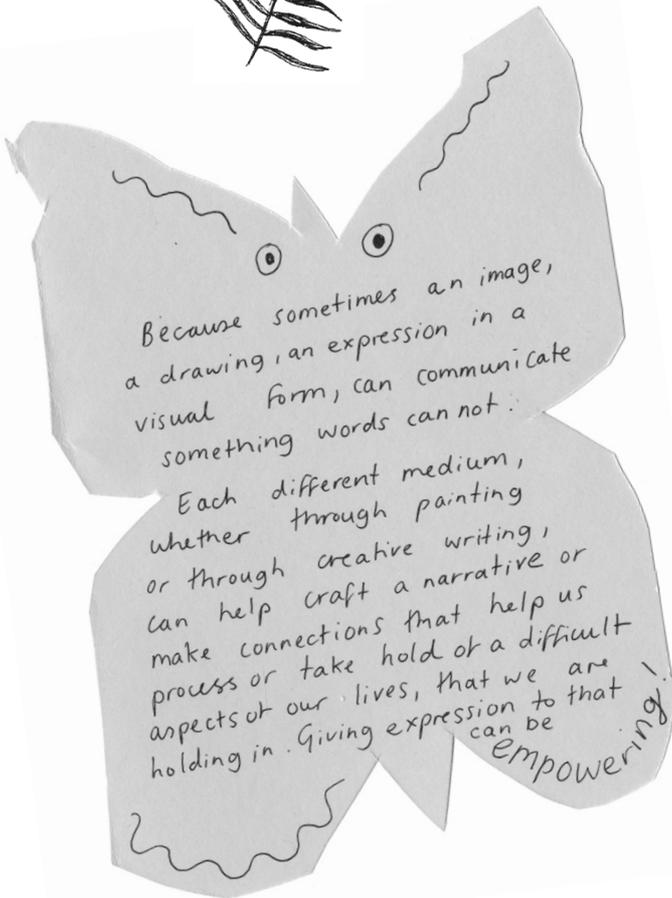
“Artwork needs no words. It is a visual and common language. Expressed in any way through colour and emotions. Creative writing aides a space which is safe and playful yet can address difficult emotions. It can address without judgement - yet get across stories and experiences.”

“Mental health isn’t simple. From the inside it can be horribly confusing and very intertwined with feelings. Translating this to outsiders (professional / friends) in clinical prose isn’t always possible and loses a lot of meaning. Choosing colours, shapes, textures, creative words, can help explain where we are at, for ourselves and others and maybe how to move forward.”



Flipbook drawings

- Vanessa





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