

<marking the transition>



Bedminster Family Practice, Bristol UK - Arts in Healthcare
A series of site - specific artworks for a newly built Health Centre

Project overview:

In 2002, due to the surgery premises at Dean Lane being inadequate for such a large practice, the GP partners decided to buy part of the St Peters Court development in Bedminster (PG Enterprises Ltd) and build a new surgery premises. Although there was little opportunity to influence the exterior design of the building, as it was part of a larger development, the partners were keen to provide an uplifting, inspiring interior that would have benefits for both patients and staff.

The incorporation of artworks into the new surgery environment was led by practice partner Dr Gillian Rice, who has long-term interest in the enhancement of healthcare through the arts. Advice was sought from arts consultant, Lesley Greene, to develop an arts strategy and seek potential funding. Following successful applications to ACE South West, Arts & Business, the Irene Wellington Educational trust, the Quartet Community Foundation and generous financial input from the GP partners themselves, the project was able to move ahead.

This unique model of Arts in Healthcare Design, was driven by the vision & commitment of the GP partners. Once the budget (£37,000) was in place, the management of the arts production was undertaken directly by the artists: Annie Lovejoy & Mac Dunlop in close liaison with the partners: Dr Gillian Rice & Dr Ian Garbutt, & practice manager Helen Deverson. By taking on the arts management as a team, almost 100% of the budget (over half of which, was provided by the GP partners) was available to be spent directly on production of the commissioned art.

In addition to the arts budget, the GP Partners financed site preparation for the works and commissioned the artists to design the exterior signage.

An essential aspect to the brief was to work closely with the surgery community, patients and staff whilst also making a visual connection with the neighbouring library housed in the same building development. This was achieved through image / text for glazing on both buildings that referenced cultural diversity through the use of different languages.

The initial research period at Dean Lane, involved creating visual & poetic responses to the surgery inspired by informal dialogue, observation and interaction. Concept designs resulted which were developed further toward production in tandem with patient participation.

Seven new commissions were created for the glazed entrance foyer, atrium space, waiting area and upstairs meeting room. All of the works were designed to be cohesive in relation to each other and the architectural aspects of the building. The close liaising of the GP partner / artists team influenced the overall functional interior design: materials / colours etc resulting in a holistic, uplifting and relaxed environment.

The Bedminster Family Practice opened on November 28th 2005.

Staff/patient responses to the work (Dr Gillian Rice)

We are starting to feel a little more settled in the building after the first few days. There has been a universally positive reaction to your work, with gasps of admiration at the aquarium and atrium lighting feature. Several patients have commented how much more relaxing the waiting area is - just what we hoped it would achieve. Dec 2005

When staff first saw the completed surgery with the commissioned art work installed, the most common responses were "It's stunning" and "It's beautiful". Staff feel the arts give a consistent atmosphere and appearance throughout the building, which is uplifting yet relaxing for patients. A number of the GPs have remarked how much more relaxed they themselves, feel in the new building, and that they personally find the commissioned artwork

mood enhancing. Patients have been uniformly positive, they talk of it helping to create a peaceful, relaxing atmosphere in the main waiting area, which is much appreciated because they are often feeling anxious while they wait to discuss their health problem with a doctor or nurse.

Further dissemination / evaluation:

2005 – 2006 Research project:

'Enhancing a primary care environment: effects on patients and staff'

In 2005 Dr Gillian Rice proposed a research project to investigate whether the enhanced design of the new surgery (largely as a result of incorporating the arts into the environment) can produce benefits for patients and staff eg

- 1) reducing patient stress levels
- 2) improving patient satisfaction
- 3) reducing patient aggression towards staff
- 4) reducing staff stress levels
- 5) improving staff job satisfaction

NHS Estates has awarded £51,000 to carry out this study. Dr Rice is acting as lead investigator, a research assistant has been in post since June 2005. The project is due to be completed in December 2006. The intention is to publish and disseminate the findings of this research study in a peer reviewed journal.

InSites Design: Annie Lovejoy / Mac Dunlop

Annie Lovejoy and Mac Dunlop are Bristol based artists who have a practical and academic background in context-led work. They pro-actively encourage dialogue and teamwork in the development of public art projects, and are primarily interested in 'art' being an everyday experience which is uplifting and responsive to the site or situation within which it is located

They have worked collaboratively with the GP partnership on this project; and have been responsible for managing the arts production eg.arts planning issues, site scheduling, supplier / contractual liasons etc

The work produced is an aesthetic interplay of materials and technologies, a synthesis of media and content for the enhancement of this particular public space. It is an exploration that takes advantage of reflection & light changes pertinent to the design of the building.

Utilising layered translucency, imagery and responsive technologies, the artworks are inspired by relational qualities pertinent to the location; its' physical aspects, functionality and most importantly... the aspirations and experiences of staff and patients.



Credits:

Bedminster Family Practice

GP Partners:
Dr Gillian Rice,
Dr Ian Garbutt,
Dr David Peel

Practice Manager: Helen Deverson
Friends of Dean Lane (patients participation group)
Dean Lane / Bedminster Family Practice staff & patients

Poetry Group participants:

Jayne Kerridge,
Barry James,
Jan Cave,
Margaret Oram,
Denise Smith,
Mark Winston,
Sister Thecla,
Helen Sheppard,
Juliet Henderson.

Specialist skills / commissioned works:

Mark Newbold: AV artist / electronics engineer
Alan Russell – Zed photography <http://www.zedphoto.com>
Sue Nixon – Glass artist <http://www.susannixon.com>
Alyson Hallett – Writer / Poet <http://www.thestonelibrary.com>

Production / suppliers:

Fusion Glass Design <http://www.fusionglass.co.uk>
Artworks Ltd <http://www.artworks-solutions.com>
Barlite <http://www.barlite.co.uk>
Aquatak Ltd <http://www.aquatak.co.uk>
Kings Plastics Ltd <http://www.kingsplastics.co.uk>

Funders:

GP Partners
Arts Council England (South West)
Arts & Business,
Irene Wellington Educational trust,
Quartet Community Foundation