



# LEABROOKS WITTER



April 1st 2021

The Artists' Forum at Leabrooks Arts Complex. Keeping in Touch

It's April 1<sup>st</sup>, April Fools' Day and a time which for centuries has been dedicated to the exploitation and celebration of absurdity - and never have we needed respite from the seriousness of life more. But, hopefully, we are moving from the absurd and incredible to the plausible and possible with a growing sense of hope.

Non-essential shops will be allowed to open on the 12<sup>th</sup> April, 2021 so that we, along with our colleagues in other Galleries, will be opening our doors – safely – to customers and artists, looking forward to renewed engagement and the opportunities and pleasures that making, sharing and purchasing art provides. We, at Leabrooks Arts Complex, are privileged to present new exhibitions of wonderful art work, some of which is shown in the image to the left – but there is so much more, created by some very talented artists. The garden, with the cherry trees, magnolia and camellia shrubs in full bloom is a perfect backdrop and the Japanese Garden is open for teas and coffees in the open air. It will be good to see everyone once again as the weather improve; together we can develop a new confidence in the future.



Nick Tyldesley, writer, lecturer and cultural adviser, offers some thought provoking ideas in his article below.

### Can the Pandemic Inspire Artists to be More Creative?

Paradoxically, Covid may help artists to try new approaches and subjects. Here are some suggestions for taking a positive attitude to the current lockdown.

We might start perhaps by customising our zoom backgrounds? As viewed down a microscope the corona virus offers kaleidoscopic design to work on- either to demonise the virus or make it seem more "friendly". Graphic artists can always focus on poster work in praise of the NHS or health/safety topics.

Looking out of a studio windows gives a framework for using the outside, ordinary world as inspiration. But we can extend this to wider fantasies about travel to dreamed of exotic destinations or visioning a post-covid world.

More personally the universal themes of families and isolation can be explored idiosyncratically. If we have been keeping a reflective journal about our feelings, then a visual version could be produced – in cartoon form?

Some provoking questions can be raised for discussion via zoom [natch!]: Are artists better at coping with the effects of lockdown since they are used to working individually and internalising their thoughts? Are they skilled at looking at the ordinary and putting an extra-ordinary interpretation on it? Everybody has their own pandemic experiences so will we take a positive or negative slant? How effective is art in combating mental health issues? But we might want time and space to think about all that has happened over the last year before committing brush to canvas? For professional artists who need to earn a living, does on-line selling compensate for the lack of public exhibitions?

Big question: What did **YOU** do in the Great Pandemic?

If you would like to write an article for The Witter, (250 words), please email it to: [carol@leabrooksartscomplex.com](mailto:carol@leabrooksartscomplex.com). Thank you.



### The Phoenix Project

In setting up the Phoenix Project we're hoping to encourage a positive perspective on the experience that we've all had during the last year. As Nick Tyldesley suggests in his article: it has been, and continues to be, a challenging period but it has also created unprecedented opportunity. It's the chance to create a special kind of art.

The Phoenix symbolises regeneration and a refusal to be crushed and destroyed, a perfect representation of our shared spirit and artistic ambitions. So, if you'd like to participate in the Project that pays homage to this fabulous bird you can produce any artwork suggested by the concept: it doesn't have to be a painting of a bird, it could be a scene, a portrait, an abstract providing it is a positive, hopeful image. Please submit it via the above email before mid-June 2021. (We've had some *fabulous* entries so far so why don't you join the group?)

