



Royal Aberdeen Children's Hospital
Arts Project

Royal Aberc



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Foreword: Jackie Bremner

The Royal Aberdeen Children's Hospital has always striven to provide the best clinical care possible, responding to and contributing to advances in medicine. Attitudes towards patient care have also evolved with a greater emphasis being placed on the hospital environment as a powerful factor in contributing to patient wellbeing and reducing stress levels. It is also recognised that parents and siblings play a vital role in the care and recovery of sick children and therefore the 'treatment' of the family as a whole is a priority.

A visit to a number of key children's hospitals in the USA in 1995 convinced the Children's Hospital management team that integrated art in hospitals had a significant part to play in helping to achieve two of the key objectives in planning the new hospital:

- * the creation of a dedicated children's facility which is distinct and welcoming;
- * a child and family centred environment that acknowledges patients and their families.

A specific Arts Project Group was set up to devise and oversee an ambitious public art programme. It is fair to say that the enthusiasm and dedication of all the group members was magnificent and resulted in a very successful project.

On behalf of NHS Grampian, I would like to extend our grateful thanks to PACE's Juliet Dean and Vicky Fraser. PACE was recruited and appointed in 2002 to advise and assist the project team to develop an arts strategy, prepare funding bids and to recruit artists. Following successful applications, the Scottish Arts Council (SAC) agreed a grant of £300,000, the biggest ever SAC award given to a health organisation.

PACE managed the artists through design development, production and installation of artworks, working with enthusiasm and professionalism over three years to help us realise all of our objectives. We could not have achieved the successful completion of the project without them.

We now have an excellent hospital facility. The experience of being in or attending hospital is now a less stressful experience for children and their families. This artistically stimulating environment not only provides a welcome distraction, it also makes creative public art very accessible to the people of the region and beyond. Everything we sought has been achieved. During the open days prior to the hospital opening, a child even offered to sustain an injury in order to be admitted, exceeding our objectives! Thank you to everyone (the Arts Project Group, the artists, staff at RACH, the Young Advisers, the design team and contractors) who helped to make this possible.

Jackie Bremner, Chairwoman, RACH Arts Project Group 2000–2005

Grampian Hospitals Art Trust: Malcolm McCoig

Grampian Hospitals Art Trust (GHAT) has been in existence for 19 years, and is, quite rightly, nationally recognised for having on display the largest collection of contemporary art of any NHS region in Scotland, with over 4000 pieces by, at the last count, 476 artists in 45 healthcare venues throughout the Grampian Region. Impressive statistics by any standards, and now with the inclusion of the major works specially commissioned for the new Royal Aberdeen Children's Hospital, the collection has moved on to even greater status, both in quality and ambition.

When the surgeon, Norman Matheson, initiated the original concept, his master stroke was to involve a group of highly respected artists and designers who had a breadth of approach with different skills and interests, who were able to advise on the quality and diversification of art, either purchased or commissioned for GHAT. They were also involved in the selecting of exhibitions for the Aberdeen Royal Infirmary gallery (another GHAT initiative) choosing and presenting work for all the many venues, advising, preparing and proposing projects and providing vital and practical support to GHAT's Trustees, Board of Management, different committees and staff. The voluntary services of the Art Advisers are at the very core of the success of GHAT.

NHS Grampian is now well accustomed to having 'art' on display, so there was never any doubt that GHAT would play an important part in any artistic proposals for the new RACH. But this was different from any other previous situation in the scale, complexity and costs involved. The only way was to work as part of a team – The RACH Arts Project Group.





'Art by Committee' is notoriously difficult and there is always the danger that bland and safe solutions might be the outcome. But this group had very clear and focused objectives and over the four years stuck to the long and seemingly endless task. Of course they disagreed on lots of things, but the debates were always healthy, minds were changed and tough decisions made. The hard work of all concerned is now a reality in the marvellous and varied collection of unique pieces created specifically for RACH.

GHAT's involvement in RACH does not end with these recent installations. There are always more pieces to go in and the care and maintenance of the art is on going. GHAT's mission statement of 'using art for the benefit of patients, staff and visitors in Grampian healthcare spaces' has been magnificently fulfilled in this delightful new building.

Malcolm McCoig was Chairman of GHAT from 1999–2004

Representing GHAT on The RACH Arts Project Group were Malcolm McCoig, artist Syd Burnett, and Jane Kidd, GHAT's administrator.



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PACE: Public Art Commissions & Exhibitions: Juliet Dean

Over the centuries, art has played a role, albeit intermittent, in the healing environment. Early examples include statues of gods in healing temples in Ancient Greece, to paintings in 15th century Italian hospitals by artists such as Piero della Francesca and Lorenzo Lotto. The majority of these works were of a religious nature; reflecting the public's faith in the healing power of religion through the medium of art.

In 18th century Britain, the Foundling Hospital boasted works by Hogarth and many of his friends who donated work to the hospital. Hogarth's involvement and enthusiasm extended to designing the coat of arms and even ideas for the children's uniforms.

Victorian Britain saw an expansive era of hospital building and the rise of the institution. Artists and craftspeople were engaged to design flooring, metalwork and stone carvings for example, with an emphasis on integrating architecture with art and design to create an over-riding sense of order.

In the 20th century, these hospitals began to expand at the seams, and new additions and extensions were added. Architecturally, the strong message of order and institution began to be broken up as buildings were altered and extended. Along with these changes, came the rise of individualism. Staff began to customise and personalise the spaces they inhabited either with paintings donated by benefactors or small purchases from endowment funds.

The movement for commissioning site specific art in hospital and healthcare environments, much of which was driven by dedicated and enthusiastic individuals in isolated cases, has now grown significantly. The setting up of a National Network for Arts in Health in 2000 plays an important networking and advocacy role for the arts in health movement. Today, the majority of hospitals in the UK have some level of arts activity, with many of the larger hospitals developing arts programmes on a strategic level. NHS Grampian has a dedicated arts organisation, GHAT, which plays an invaluable role in siting art in the Grampian healthcare setting as well as organising exhibitions and events.

Although evidence based research for the healing powers of art has still to go a long way, there is much anecdotal evidence to show that visual arts can reduce patient stress, length of hospital stay and also improve staff morale. Ongoing research at Chelsea and Westminster Hospital Arts has shown that their arts programme has strong beneficial effects on the patients and staff.

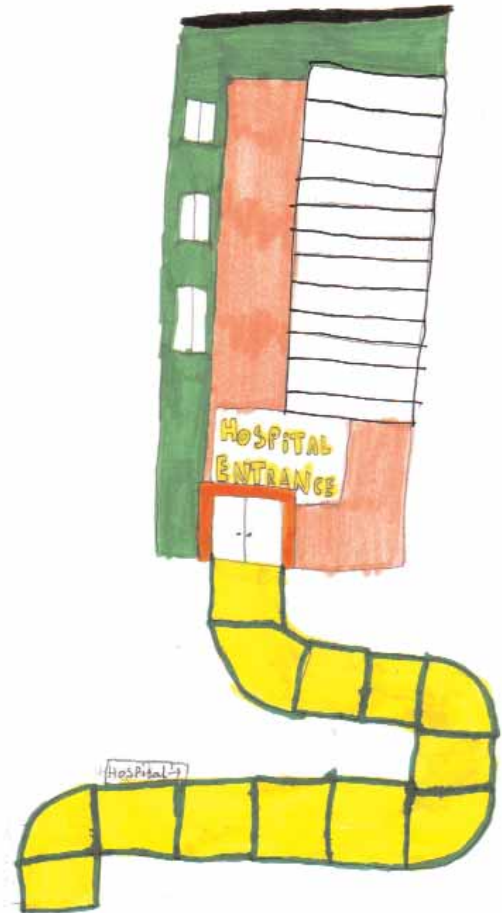
The government also recognises the importance of culture on our nation's wellbeing and improvement in health. Jack McConnell's 2003 St Andrews Day speech emphasised the importance of cultural activity to nurture and foster well being. 'A healthier Scotland must be holistic, it must be about the health of the body, and the health of the mind too.'

With the announcement of a new state of the art children's hospital for Grampian, it was always the intention of the Trust to holistically commission artwork for the new building. After initial discussion with the Scottish Arts Council arts lottery, the Arts Group recruited PACE to help develop the arts strategy, fundraise, source artists and project manage the commissions.

One of the first tasks was to research into art in hospitals in the UK, particularly in the children's sector. We saw many excellent individual examples of commissioned work which were imaginative, thoughtful and humanising.

In all too many cases, however, the children's hospital environments we visited focused overwhelmingly on the younger age group – the under fives. It must not be forgotten that children's hospitals treat the full spectrum of childhood from 0–16 years. What may be relevant for a toddler will not necessarily appeal to a teenager. Feedback from patients and their families revealed that it is not only children we need to cater for, but the parents and siblings who need to be comforted and reassured.

There is also a tendency when making work for children's hospitals to focus on the literal and representational, e.g. daisy floor patterns, jungle murals and images of Disney characters which date all too quickly. Through working with children on arts education projects, we have come to learn that children have a higher visual literacy than adults give them credit for and can appreciate and enjoy a wide range of art (including challenging and conceptual art).



In certain cases, there seemed to be a lack of overall artistic direction. Whilst elements worked well individually, at times, there was a clash of styles and overcrowding of artworks which led to a feeling of restlessness and congestion.

Different approaches work for different places. For the RACH project, we concluded that a curated approach to commissioning works would be the preferred route. Artists were selected for their ability to think 'out of the box', to extend their practice and also work well as a group. Rather than selecting the tried and tested artists in the public art field, we sought to give opportunities to a wide range of artists. We aimed to avoid fashionable imagery in favour of work that would not date, with the intention of making work which is appropriate to children of all ages as well as their parents and families.

The artists have been encouraged to extend their practice, working in different media and scale. Lucy Richards, a graphic designer accustomed to working in print, has produced fluid and playful graphic designs for walls, columns and floors as well as colourful, bold signage; Michael Brennand-Wood, in a move away from his traditional medium of textiles, has created a kinetic work using sand and found objects exploring the passage of time; and Lucy Casson, renowned for her small scale recycled works in metal, has created life size plaster creatures for the hospital roof.

Our challenge was to make a significant impact within a limited budget across a building of considerable size: 17,000m² over

five floors. Given the tight construction programme, we had a short window of opportunity to integrate work into the building contract. After the main commissions were completed, and the building up and running, we reviewed the arts strategy and commissioned a further set of artists to make work. Although not integrated into the construction process, the work is nevertheless in tune with the building and complementary to the other artworks. The environmental graphics by Lucy Richards and the lenticular portraits by Andy McGregor, which animate the circulation routes on four floors of the hospital, go against the premise that early artistic intervention is the only route to follow.

This is an exciting time to be involved in curating art in hospitals – because of greater interest, understanding and enthusiasm, there is more scope to push the boundaries of public art and to try out new approaches and methods.

With the completion of these commissions, the project does not come to a halt. This first phase is intended as a catalyst for ongoing arts development work in the hospital which will include artist residencies, exhibitions of children's work, new commissions and events.

PACE is delighted to have had the opportunity to extend its practice through working on this project. Thanks to NHS Grampian, in particular Jackie Bremner who had the vision, tenacity and diplomacy to steer the project through to completion.

Juliet Dean is Director of PACE







Exercises in Exploration: **Kirstie Skinner**

The art at Royal Aberdeen Children's Hospital

Public art is required to do many things. It is often looked to as a means of humanising an unloved space: areas in need of regeneration, newly built housing estates, corporate developments – all invite artistic interventions, although some approaches work better than others. Public art is expected to have a broad, if not mass, appeal. Unlike gallery art, which can afford to be provocative or challenging, public art needs to be enjoyed and appreciated by its audience if it is to fulfil its function as a humanising force. Yet people have such particular aesthetic tastes and personal views that catering for such a broad constituency must seem a daunting task to artists. How does one deal with a whole community of people without addressing them from 'on high' and littering their spaces with something they do not want or understand?

Increasingly, public art commissions have avoided the figurative forms of old traditional civic statuary. As a culture we have consciously moved away from literally and figuratively elevated heroic figures on plinths representing 'official' histories, and towards more abstract forms that invite multiple, more personal, interpretations. Public works by Rachel Whiteread for instance, show that a gallery practice derived from conceptualism and minimalism can be extended to public situations to great effect. Whiteread's ambiguous monuments and outside projects tend to galvanise productive debate (about social responsibility,

collective history, etc.); while her simple inversions of domestic space evoke intimate personal experience – a common thread for all of us – and inspire delight as well as serious reflection.

Overall, today's public art strategies favour, rather than stifle, playfulness and creativity. The best public art responds to its locality, and channels the emotional concerns of its constituency of users /viewers – it also encourages individual and imaginative interactions with one's environment. Finding yourself in a hospital is disconcerting, whether you are a patient, family member or visitor. Despite the best efforts of staff and carers, being ill and undergoing treatment can be demoralising and dehumanising. Malfunctioning bodies refuse to be taken for granted, and distressed minds dwell on difficult thoughts. What role can art play in these circumstances? The dread and boredom of waiting for treatment might be mitigated with engaging, even thought provoking material on the walls. It seems particularly important in the case of young patients that they are offered distractions not necessarily in the form of escapism, but rather in ways that help them to engage with what is happening to them and to others around them. This was the brief to artists involved in the RACH project. They were also asked to think beyond the usual forms of hospital art, and indeed beyond their usual practice, in order to come up with genuinely fresh propositions.

The resulting work, sited throughout the hospital by 15 different artists and designers, is lively, engaging, witty and poignant by



turns. Each intervention succeeds on its own terms, but also contributes to an overarching invitation to navigate and reflect upon our personal and shared experience. Since the 1960s artists have been interested in investigating and anatomising the ordinary, and it is appropriate to see these themes recurring here. Conceptual artists in particular took to mapping ordinary journeys, devising arbitrary classification systems, observing their bodies performing mundane tasks. Although their methods were pseudo-scientific – they habitually used grids, text, photographic evidence and so on – the intended effect was humorous and entertaining as well as thought provoking and philosophically serious. The work at RACH can be read in the same way.

A colourful grid of squares on the reception and waiting room walls is continually added to – each square symbolises a donation made to the ARCHIE Foundation (the hospital's fundraising charity). With every new area of wall colonised, the constellation of connections expands further. Visitors search the

grid to locate themselves and people they know, or else they gaze across all the individuals, groups and remembered relatives that constitute this particular community. The world outside the hospital is also imported in the form of Jane Watt's light boxes, *Postcard Journeys*. Recollections of the artist's 1200-mile journey to visit staff and patients' favourite places in the north east of Scotland are now encapsulated in pairings of text and image, and revisited in the reader's imagination. The illuminated postcards dot the corridors like little beacons – a potentially comforting sight on one's shorter, but markedly less carefree, journey around the hospital. In a situation when the preoccupations of a 'normal' life have been suspended, it is reassuring to see art that brackets and replays memories, conversations, and life experiences. Touches such as Lucy Richards' cartoon thought bubble drawn above a baby changing table, raise a smile and cause us to consider another's consciousness for a moment, or reflect on our own psychological development.



Hospitals are designed according to the way medicine classifies and categorises the body's mechanics and operations. The network of specialist departments are linked by corridors – arteries that encourage people to circulate, rather than settle. Thus the functional environment of a hospital circumscribes the body in particular ways. The art at RACH acknowledges and mitigates this by stimulating and involving the body directly. Many works use lenticular processes that are activated by movement – a physical engagement that makes travelling around the building more fun. This conjunction between body function, hospital function and art function is especially apt in Speech Therapy, where Lucy Richards' colourful text lenticulars alternate between SHE SELLS and SEA SHELLS; or SEVENTY SEVEN and BENEVOLENT ELEPHANTS. In Physical Therapy, the rhythmic, sing-song instructions HOP / SKIP, PUSH / PULL and HEADS SHOULDERS / KNEES AND TOES appear in front of physiotherapy equipment. Along the corridors of Mental Health, Outpatients and elsewhere photographs of children come momentarily to life as you pass, like the enchanted portraits of Hogwarts School. Andy McGregor's lenticular portraits of local primary school pupils switch between straight faces and pained, cheeky, or surprised expressions. In Radiography, Nick Veasey's beautiful x-rayed shells miraculously reveal their structure, and crammed school bags their contents.

Further text-based works appear as vinyl lettering. Throughout RACH, genuinely amazing facts about our biology adorn corners, columns, waiting rooms and loos. Although they don't move, Lucy Richards' *Fun Facts* are nevertheless optically witty, with

shifts in colours and text size that create the vivid impression of a spoken emphasis. The 'voice' that we hear is one that appeals to adults and children alike – friendly, enthusiastic, expressive and knowledgeable. This benevolent voice uses everyday objects and familiar measurements of time and space as metaphors to explore the foreign terrain that lies inside us. Some facts take the form of observations, cleverly sited – the one opposite appears wrapped around the corner of a bay crammed with prams.

Some are so lyrical they read like concrete poetry. This reverie is located in Surgery:

**You will spend on average 20 years of your life
asleep and dream for 1,000 days**

Indeed, popular and personal forms of classification surface everywhere in the hospital. The deeply satisfying activity of making up your own collections and classes of things perhaps helps to mitigate the impersonality of the medical handbook and scientific classification.

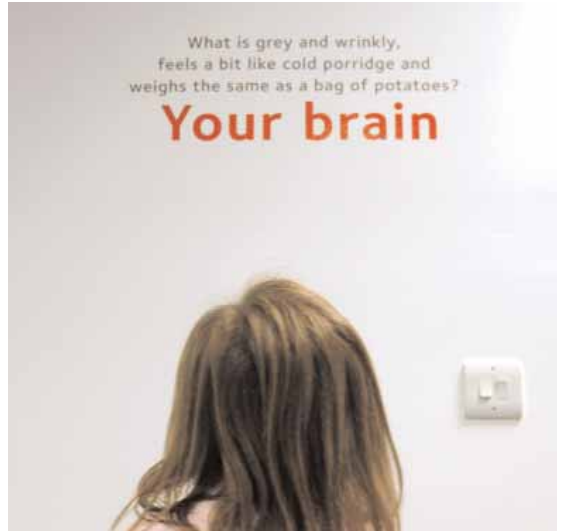
Michael Brennan-Wood celebrates the joy of collecting and cataloguing in his appealing wall piece *Shakin' All Over*. A twist on the (usually orderly) tradition of specimen collecting, his eight brightly coloured boxes contain hundreds of found images sorted into categories that are associated with the north east: shells, birds, maps and so on. Each tiny image stands out on a wire and the boxes are spring mounted, so they shoogles excitedly when examined closely by the curious.

In a lifetime an average person will walk the equivalent of **5 times round the world**



What is grey and wrinkly,
feels a bit like cold porridge and
weighs the same as a bag of potatoes?

Your brain



Julia Griffiths-Jones is another artist whose work delights in more popular forms of classification. Her wire relief *Healing Apron* is festooned with herbs, flowers and symbols. The species were taken from Culpepper's Herbal and evoke old wives' remedies, particularly for children's afflictions. Mistletoe for convulsions, saffron for measles, goat's beard for liver and chest disorders – the old remedies and starched apron shape conjure up a nostalgic image of hands-on healing and brow mopping.

This aura of simple compassion reappears in Jane Watt's *Button Wall*, outside the chapel, which shimmers with 58,500 pearly buttons applied by hand.

They stand for marked time, domestic tasks; maybe they memorialise the baby clothes that have been outgrown. The desire to touch the soft curved wall is as irresistible as the impulse to hold someone's hand or stroke their face. In different ways, the relief herbals, wall-mounted classification boxes and shimmering buttons are all poised between two and three dimensions. It is as if the artists want to reach out beyond the classical picture frame and encompass the viewer, or at least occupy the same space. This too is an artistic strategy that dates back to the late 1950s and early 1960s.

Minimal artists in particular became suspicious of pictorial illusions and acted on their desire to occupy 'real space' instead. They began to place groups of abstract cubes and modular constructions directly on the floor of the gallery. This blank-looking work was puzzling for most adult gallery goers who did not know how to approach it. Yet it was implicitly understood by young

children, who set about exploring the collections of blocks, mirrors and tiles by means of circumnavigating, skipping along or over works, and playing peekaboo. Minimalist artists wanted us to go back to basics: to question our perceptual habits and to wonder more at our relationship with the world and its objects.

It is highly appropriate then, and in line with the aims of the partners at RACH, that much of the sculpture and furniture design here should draw on minimalist precedents. Allan Watson's 'family' of *Sculptured Seating* consists of wooden blocks of rounded and straight forms combined in different ways. Their distinctive shapes and etched decoration give each piece a personality, which makes it more difficult for people (regardless of age) to walk past them without trying them out. Elsewhere Matthew Hilton's modular blue and red seats have employed the serial and permutational principles of minimalism to great practical effect – three shapes of chair give hospital staff the scope to assemble them in snakes and huddles (as well as the more conventional rows), thus varying the layout and atmosphere of waiting rooms at will.

Meanwhile, Ally Wallace's *Space Place* is strategically situated outside the hospital, signalling the way for anyone approaching the main entrance or A&E. The 75 coloured poles create a cluster, a constellation that you can wander through. The poles all stand at different heights so they become almost animated when you walk past at speed. From a distance, they look like a graphic display of sound waves. Up close, they feel like a grove of trees or giant pencils. *Space Place*, like its name, is endlessly suggestive. Its imaginative form and vibrant colours also serve



to reassure the approaching visitor that the hospital inside is ready and waiting to deal with children's emotional as well as physical needs.

Consistent with the values of pop, minimal and conceptual art that still dominate the contemporary art world, all the artists at RACH have recognised the power of the (extra)ordinary to fascinate and entertain us. They have deployed it here for compassionate ends. Crucially, all these works operate on the different levels necessary to appeal to different ages and abilities – they demand to be touched, gazed at, counted, read out loud, physically and mentally explored.

It is a considerable achievement that the RACH collection not only succeeds functionally and artistically, and contributes in invaluable ways to this impressive new hospital facility; it also now stands as an exemplary and innovative model for hospital art in the future.

Kirstie Skinner is a researcher, writer and lecturer in contemporary art







The Process: Timeline

1997 Two day fact finding conference with Young Advisers Group and staff workshops

1998 RACH Arts Project Group set up

2001 Appointment of PACE

Development of arts strategy

Key aims and objectives:

- * create a welcoming, child and family focused environment;
- * carefully curate the work of artists into the hospital environment;
- * foster collaboration with the design team;
- * commission high quality, innovative and resolutely contemporary work;
- * commission work which is stimulating and relevant but does not upset or disturb;
- * engage children and young people of all ages (0–16) as well as adults (including staff);
- * engage the hospital and local community through a programme of education, advocacy and interpretation;
- * create a role model for hospital arts practice.

Given the scale of the hospital (17,000 m² over five floors), a finite budget and programme, the following areas were prioritised:

- * the most public areas, e.g. entrances, main circulation routes, main waiting areas;
- * areas difficult to access once the building is in operation, e.g. courtyards;
- * areas with opportunities for integrated artworks, e.g. flooring, wall outside chapel.



2001/2 Successful awards from the three major funders Scottish Arts Council National Lottery, The ARCHIE Foundation and Aberdeen City Council.

2002 Artists sourced and appointed
After advertising through arts journals, arts organisations and also through direct invitation, approximately 150 applications from artists and designers were submitted. A shortlist of 25 was drawn up and from this ten artists were selected, with a further five selected in 2003.

2002 Artists' design development
Artists encountered considerable challenges which included designing 5m high sculptures to fit through a set of double doors; and finding the most efficient way of applying 58,500 buttons to a curved wall.

2003/4 Production and installation of artworks
The skills of many different people were drawn upon to realise the works, including model makers, upholsterers, sign writers, button makers, plasterers, lighting designers, furniture makers, galvanisers, casters, welders, and scientific molecular model makers.

June 2004 Launch of Arts Project

2005 – ongoing

A continuous programme of projects and commissions will be developed with a view to siting work in the less public areas, i.e. treatment rooms, wards, theatres and staff areas.





The Artists

Exterior

Syd Burnett, Ally Wallace, Allan Watson

Concourse

Ally Wallace, Allan Watson

Courtyards

Jim Buckley, Lucy Casson, Dalziel + Scullion

Main Circulation Areas

Michael Brennand-Wood, Andy McGregor,
Lucy Richards, Jane Watt

Main Waiting Areas

Matthew Hilton

A&E Waiting Area

Michael Brennand-Wood

Clinical Lift Lobbies

Julia Griffiths-Jones, Georgia Russell

Syd Burnett

Formerly Head of Fine Art at Gray's School of Art, Aberdeen, Syd has carried out many commissions and has work in a number of public collections. He has played an active role in GHAT since 1995.

Water Feature

Many of the children and staff consulted were keen to commission a water feature. The Arts Group invited Syd to design an interactive water sculpture at the front entrance.

Made from stainless steel and aluminium, it rises to a height of 4.5 metres from a stepped granite base set into the paving. A central mast supports three concentric spirals which slowly rotate round a fountain ring of water jets.

Powered by water, the sculpture has one left-handed and two right-handed spirals. As they turn they appear to be winding upwards and downwards forming constantly changing patterns.

Spirals have fascinated people since earliest times. The shape of our galaxy and the structure of DNA are both spirals. They occur widely in nature from sunflowers to sea shells and have a particular appeal for children.

Floodlights at the base of the sculpture illuminate it at night. The water feature was funded by Talisman Energy (UK) Limited.



I wanted to create a water feature which, first of all, would appeal to children in and attending the hospital, engage their curiosity and be fun to look at. But it's also there to be enjoyed by hospital staff and by visiting relatives who may find it a gentle and calming distraction at a time of anxiety. At night, from a distance, the sculpture appears to be twinkling as the floodlights are reflected by the turning spirals and the sparkling arcs of water.



Ally Wallace

Based in Glasgow, Ally's work often combines light, movement, sound and video. This is one of his first permanent public art commissions.

Space Place

Ally was invited to look at the external space outside the hospital and specifically to signify that the Children's Hospital is distinct from the rest of the campus. He was also asked to explore ways of marking the route from the main entrance around to the A&E entrance (which is open 24 hours a day).

Ally's response was to create *Space Place* – a collection of brightly coloured poles. Set into rubber playtop, *Space Place* encourages you to interact with it. By day the vibrant colours are clearly visible from a distance and are a strong magnet for children to interact with. By night the tiny pinpoints of fibre optic lights set into 40 of the poles give the impression of a constellation of multi-coloured stars and act as a marker for visitors and patients to A&E. Ranging in height from 1.8 to 3 metres, there are 75 aluminium poles in total.

To emphasise coherence between the artworks, designer Lucy Richards has used some of the *Space Place* colours in the main entrance signage.



I like it as a piece of art and it also seems to appeal to hospital users. I've heard people calling it 'the coloured pencils'. Weird how people attach these meanings.

I'm sure that if I'd titled it 'Coloured Pencils' people would have said that it looked nothing like coloured pencils but just a bunch of coloured poles.

As far as I'm concerned it's just a thing on its own, it's not supposed to represent anything else. I like the way that it sits beside the building. It fits visually with the surrounding architecture and streetscape.



Ally Wallace

Coloured Windows

Originally developed as a temporary piece for the arts launch, it proved so popular with patients and staff that it has been made into a permanent work. Light streaming in from the south facing window casts strong reflections onto the floor of the concourse. Children enjoy jumping in and out of the colours and seeing the world outside through different tints.

On making the temporary piece:

Maybe it was good that I was restricted by not being allowed to use ladders to reach the upper levels. It meant that I was forced to just use the bottom row of windows, which I wouldn't have thought of doing otherwise. But that's the best thing about the piece, the fact that they're all on the bottom row and that I did it quickly without fussing too much over the colours.

The whole experience has given me the confidence to work on other public art projects.

The idea has since been extended throughout the hospital with certain selected windows carefully coloured.





Allan Watson

Allan is Course Leader in Sculpture at Gray's School of Art, Aberdeen, as well as a practising artist with numerous exhibitions in the UK and abroad.

Sculptural Seating

As a departure from his purely sculptural works, Allan was invited to make sculptural objects with a function. His brief was to make work which people could interact with, climb and sit on. Allan has successfully achieved this balance between 'sculpture' and 'function' by making a family of wooden objects; human in scale, the design of each piece hovers between 'sophistication' and 'playfulness' making them appeal to all age groups.

Fabricated from architectural plywood and weighing between 150–300 kilos each, the objects are sited on the grassy bank approaching the hospital and inside in the main concourse, making a visual link between the exterior and interior of the hospital.

A resource pack for Aberdeen schools has been produced documenting the different stages involved in commissioning the sculptural seating from the initial brief, development of drawings and models, to fabrication and installation of the pieces.

As the concourse is the first impression for the majority of people entering the hospital, I was keen to create something that was visually friendly and welcoming to all visitors, whilst simultaneously enticing the younger children to interact and play.





Dalziel + Scullion

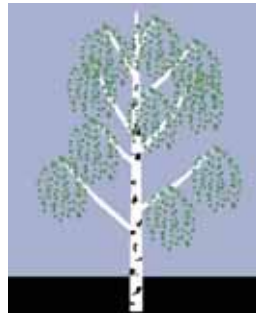
Matthew Dalziel and Louise Scullion began collaborating in 1993. They work in a range of media including video, photography, sculpture and sound that has been widely exhibited, including the Venice Biennale, the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art and Yorkshire Sculpture Park. They were recipients of a Creative Scotland Award in 2005.

The Ontological Garden

For the courtyard, the artists have created a 'garden' of stylised trees – a rowan, a Scots pine and two silver birches. These trees are commonly found growing throughout Scotland, and are iconic of the rich botanical climate that surrounds us.

The 'trees' are influenced in design both by traditional illustrations in children's fiction as well as the imaginative world of computer graphics. The artists draw on many different resources and processes to create the trees, including scientific molecular models for the red berries of the rowan.

The persistent wind has played a part in creating the characterful silhouettes we are all familiar with along coastlines and on the sheer walls of valleys. Here worlds are created which, when entered into, can seem magical. The mighty splendour of the ancient Scots pine, the intimate hollows created amongst a glade of birches and the eerie silence of woods carpeted with moss. It is to this imaginative world that the Ontological Garden refers; to this and to the mini 'kingdoms' that as children we all create when left to play in gardens, parks or woodlands.





Jim Buckley

Originally from Cork in Ireland, Jim now lives and works in Scotland. He is Reader in Fine Art at Gray's School of Art, Aberdeen, and has undertaken sculpture commissions in many countries including Japan, France, Korea, Ireland and the UK.

Slinky Tower

This sculpture has been specially designed for the deep well of the courtyard which is overlooked by wards, waiting areas, parent rooms and treatment rooms over five floors. The challenge for the artist was to make a work which was of interest from all viewpoints during the day and at night.

Jim took his inspiration from the wire Slinky toy and created a dramatic 12 metre high spiral sculpture. Made from stainless steel, the sculpture rises up through the centre of the space. Wrapped around the outside of the spiral are coloured fiberoptic lights. By day, the work stands as a strong feature within the space. By night, the stainless steel seems to disappear as the slowly changing fiberoptic lights in green, yellow, blue, purple and pink wind their way up the spiral – like a colourful line drawing in space.

Installation of *Slinky Tower* was a spectacle in itself as the 1.5 tonne sculpture was levered over the new five storey building and into one of the courtyards by a 100 tonne crane.



Because it's a children's hospital, I approached the project from a slightly different starting point from usual – I looked at children's toys which is when I came up with the idea of using the Slinky – it's a toy that appeals across generations too.





Lucy Casson

Based in London, Lucy is well known for making humorous quirky sculptures mainly from recycled tin and found objects. She is inspired by observations of people and animals around her; fascinated by the gestures of people, their moods and actions.

Feast

For the courtyard roof, Lucy has made a 'little world' of humorous creatures with animal forms and human characteristics. These five intriguing figures look as though they are part of a story, gathering together for a feast or picnic. Imagine a scene interrupted – the characters mid-conversation offering and reaching for the food.

Designed to be viewed from the overlooking wards and treatment rooms, the sculptures range in height from 30cm to 1 metre and are made from coloured plaster.

As part of the Arts Project's education programme, Lucy carried out practical workshops in making tin sculptures with primary and secondary school children in February and November 2004.

My first thoughts when I saw the site and the wards were of a midnight feast; memories of sleepovers with friends as a child and feasting in the night. I like the idea that the figures are unaware of being watched as they feast. The figures enjoy the site where no-one can reach them; it's their roof.





Michael Brennand-Wood

Michael is internationally renowned as one of the most innovative and inspiring artists working in textiles. He has invented new and imaginative ways of integrating textiles with other media.

Mr Sandman

This work was made specifically for the A&E waiting area. Inspired by the idea of waiting and the passing of time, Michael has made a series of revolving and static circular chambers which remind us of an hourglass or egg timer. Set into the wall, the chambers contain curious, quirky, recognisable objects. As the chambers slowly revolve, the sand flows over the objects, covering and uncovering them in unexpected and random sequences. The use of sand (some collected from Aberdeen beach) also makes connections to Aberdeen's closeness to the sea.

Intended to be fun, meditative and calming for children and adults, the work is commenting on the positive aspect of waiting, while the circles denote a passage of time – they are silent, restful and intriguing.

I had the idea to use sand as a symbolic material from the start. I was pleased that the play specialists reacted positively to this idea. I liked the thought of an hour glass or timer that measured time; my own experience of A&E departments was one of waiting, I have tried to make that time productive, not negative.





Michael Brennand-Wood

Shakin' All Over

This work is based around the idea of collecting; each of the eight boxes contains a different collection of images, giving the sense of a strange museum. Appealing to people's fascination in collecting objects, the idea behind the work was to engage the public on a personal level. The collections reference the habitat of the north east of Scotland and include images of shells, fish, birds and fragments of maps.

Colour plays an important role; each collection of images is set within a vibrant and 'noisy' coloured background and housed within a bright pillar box red metal frame. Movement is important too; children are encouraged to 'shoogle' the boxes (which are attached to the wall via a spring mechanism). The images are attached to finely sprung wires which vibrate with movement, creating an optical and aural experience.

The work is an alternative and personal response to the systems and classification which are omnipresent in hospitals.

This commission rekindled my interest in using collage and found materials in the construction of my works.

The freedom to source unusual and curious materials resulted in unexpected juxtapositions.

Good commissions should in my estimation provide a form of continuous education, new opportunities to extend practice and develop thinking, perhaps utilising new technologies.

Commissions are initially a puzzle, how best to relate to the concerns of the client and originate new ideas. Personally that's what remains with me once the work is installed; new ideas, an extension of thinking that will inevitably flow into future artworks.





Jane Watt

Jane is originally from Edinburgh and now lives and works in London. Other public art commissions include *Star Gazing* – a constellation of stars (made of fibreoptics) above each dental chair in the ceilings of the Edinburgh Dental Institute.

Button Wall

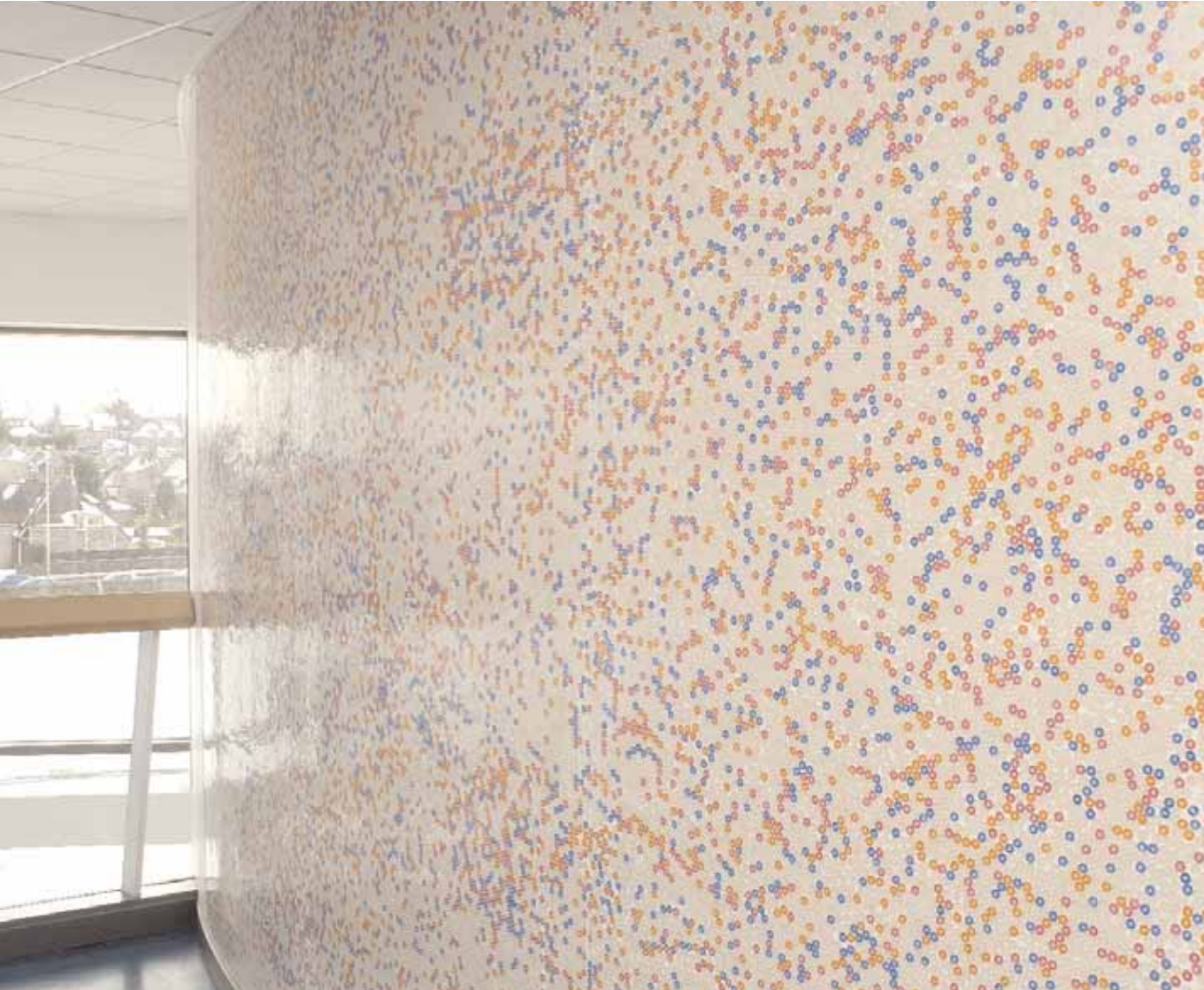
An incredible 58,500 pearlescent buttons in pink, blue, orange and three shades of grey were used to create this four metre long wall – each one individually stuck on by hand then grouted and polished up to make the buttons shine.

Button Wall has been specifically designed for the curved wall outside the chapel. The changing light from the large south facing window makes the wall sparkle as the viewer moves past it.

I enjoy taking a familiar everyday object and giving it a very different use. Inspired by the granite buildings in Aberdeen, the mass of buttons can be seen as a playful version of a sparkling granite wall. The repetition of coloured circles also echoes cell patterns found in the body. The texture can seem like the scales or skin of an animal.



An incredible 58,500 pearly buttons applied by hand . . . it will take you nearly a day to count them





Lucy Richards

Lucy trained in Graphic Design at Edinburgh College of Art. Since setting up her own design practice in Edinburgh, Lucy has won numerous national awards and was runner up in 2004 Scottish Design of the Year Awards.

Environmental graphics

Lucy was invited to look at the hospital interior: wall colours, floor finishes, columns. Given the expansive size of the hospital, she was asked to explore ways of connecting up the different spaces. She came up with a number of different solutions:

- * flooring patterns at key points throughout the hospital, abstract shapes in colours and patterns inlaid into vinyl;
- * fun facts and graphics on corridor walls, in baby changing areas, above phone booths and in WCs containing amusing and interesting facts about the different parts of our bodies;
- * colourful columns containing facts about the body such as blood groups, percentages of broken bones, minerals in the body.

Many of Lucy's designs focused on visual and mental stimulation.

Lucy was asked to explore not only the main public spaces but also the quieter 'unsung' spaces such as along skirting boards, corners of rooms, walls in WCs and phone booths. The hospital staff and the Young Advisors Group were involved in sourcing and selecting the information.

Part of the brief was to create designs that help educate the viewer, which is where the 'fun facts' came into play. A hospital environment can be a frightening and intimidating place, so the facts were designed to enlighten children and their parents in a fun and informative way.



...ape 1,000 of your hairs

...ough to lift **a newborn elephant**

Lucy Richards

Signage

Lucy has designed colourful signs for the entrances to the hospital, the stairs, the main departments and wards.

Acknowledgement Walls

Lucy designed the coloured squares acknowledgements system: each donor, however big or small their contribution, will find their name on the colourful squares located along the main 'hospital street' on the ground floor. The smallest donation was 25p and largest was £222,000!

Touch Screen

Located in the Family Information Centre, an interactive touch screen features every donor to The ARCHIE Foundation Appeal. You can type in your name and you will be directed to your tile on the hospital ground floor.

I was determined that my designs would appeal not only to children, but also staff and visitors to the hospital, inviting all age groups to engage and interact with them. Art in hospitals can be so predictable, so I wanted to create something that would continue to make an impression, and even raise a smile.







Lucy Richards

Lenticulars

In Therapy and Outpatients, Lucy produced a series of lenticulars with tongue twisters such as **red lorry yellow lorry**, and interactive words such as **hop skip**.

In Radiology and A&E departments, Lucy worked with photographer Nick Veasey, to create two-way lenticular photographs of objects revealing their x-ray image.

Nick Veasey is a photographer and film-maker who works with x-ray and scientific equipment to create unusual imagery that captures the hidden inner lives of everyday objects.

Panoramas

Robin Wilson is a panographer. He turns photographs into panoramas through a computer process called 'stitching'. For the hospital, he has created panoramas of local scenes for three of the parent sitting rooms to create a sense of place.

The sensitive areas were a real challenge to us, but I did not want to let this influence the quality or impact of the art. My landscapes were a simple but effective way to create that other worldly feeling, so parents are distracted, if only for a moment, from the stresses of their situation.



Andy McGregor

Andy is an award winning designer, photographer and film-maker.

Lenticular Faces

We learnt in the consultation process that children enjoy and respond well to seeing photographs of other children. Andy photographed local children from Mile End Primary School to make two-way lenticular portraits. Each portrait depicts the child wearing a straight face which is then contrasted by an image of the child pulling a face or expressing emotions triggered by cues such as 'bang' and 'ouch'.

In a very simple yet effective way, the lenticulars invite interaction. As one passes along the corridor, the faces merge from one expression to another.

Thirty portraits can be found sited throughout the hospital including Child and Family Mental Health Services, Outpatients, Day Case Unit and Paediatric Assessment.

I have always wanted to make a series of lenticular images; they convey the magic of animation in such a basic way; two combined frames, a double take, a sort of condensed blink. I remember the joy of finding little cartoon lenticulars at the bottom of cereal packets when I was a kid; there was something in adapting that format that made sense here. It was a very simple idea brought to life by the enthusiasm, wit and elasticity of this group of children.





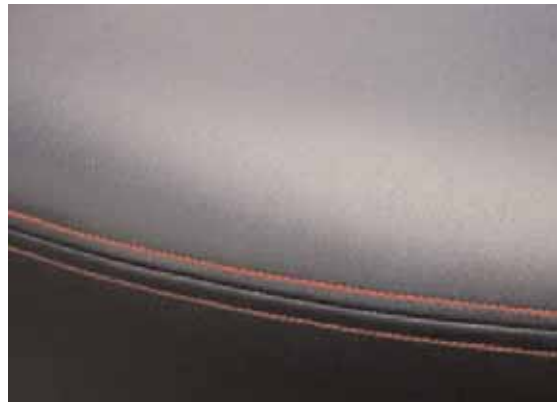
Matthew Hilton

Matthew Hilton is one of the UK's leading furniture designers. Formerly Head of Furniture Design for Habitat, he runs his own studio designing and producing furniture.

Waiting Area Seating

Matthew was invited to design a special range of seating for the five main waiting areas: Outpatients, Therapy, Mental Health, A&E and Radiology. In discussions with hospital staff and patients, there was a desire to dispense with waiting chairs set in lines and grids in favour of a less institutional form of seating. Made up of three different but complementary shapes, each unit can stand alone, or be arranged in a variety of ways: along the edges of spaces, as a central island or a 'snake' of many seats. After much discussion, the initial range of colours was reduced to a striking navy and red with contrasting stitching. Each seat is large enough for a child and adult to sit together, or for two children to sit side by side on one unit.

I wanted to create a fluid seating area that would invite patients and visitors to interact socially and feel relaxed without being overtly child like. Working to a tough design brief was challenging and focused my design on the creation of one type of building block that could just as easily be applied to an intimate area as well as on open plan space.





Georgia Russell

Using found material such as books, old maps and song sheets, Georgia makes intricate and exquisite paper constructions. Originally from Elgin, with a Masters degree from the RCA, she is now based in Paris.

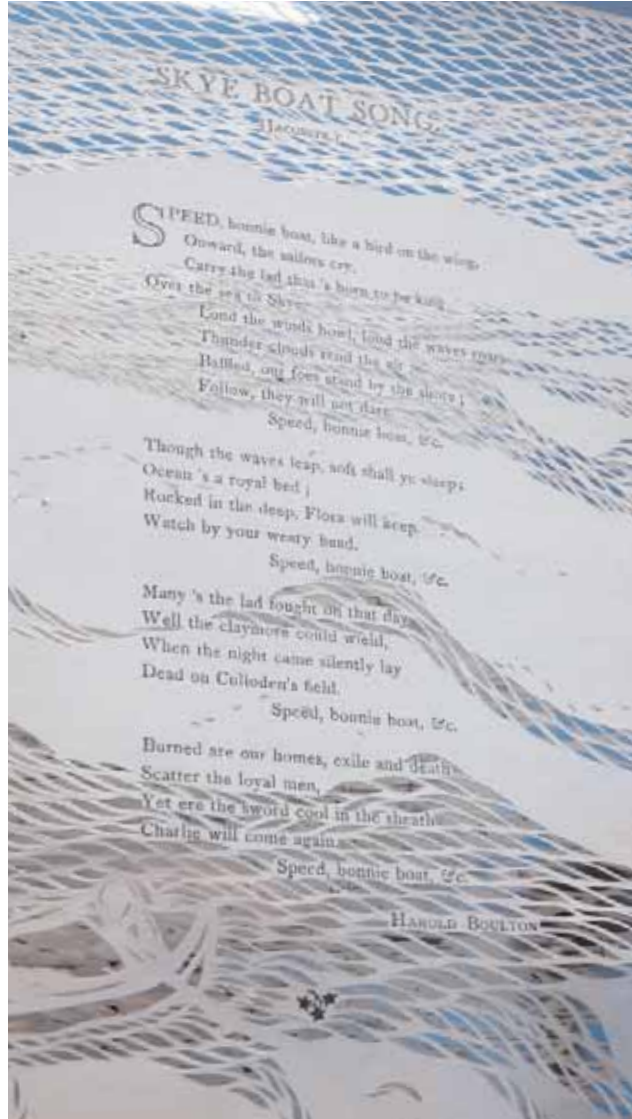
Paper Constructions

Georgia has made three paper constructions based on traditional Scottish children's cradle songs: *Rest My Ain Bairnie*, *O Can Ye Sew Cushions* and the *Skye Boat Song*. The original musical

scores are deconstructed, delicately incised and suspended in layers within a perspex box. A good way of exposing old and almost forgotten Scottish nursery rhymes in a contemporary context, the work appeals to people of all ages.

I wanted the pieces of art to be something the kids could look at with their parents or nurses, and read or sing together. It made me very pleased to know there was a group of nurses gathered round them singing the Skye Boat Song one day when my aunt went to visit.





Julia Griffiths-Jones

Julia's work is concerned with the translation of textile techniques such as stitching, quilting, patchwork and embroidery into a wire and metal form thus changing its original nature and function but retaining the meaning and decoration. Julia is based in Wales and has exhibited widely in the UK and Europe.

Healing Apron

Painted mild steel wire and aluminium, 146 x 61cm

<i>Goat's beard</i>	for liver and chest disorders
<i>Moneywort</i>	for healing wounds
<i>Lime Tree</i>	for epilepsy
<i>Mistletoe</i>	for convulsions
<i>Adder's Tongue</i>	to prevent bleeding
<i>Saffron</i>	for measles
<i>Fenugreek</i>	for sore throat and mouth infections
<i>Common Knapweed</i>	to prevent bleeding at the nose or mouth
<i>Comfrey</i>	for tonsillitis
<i>Lentils</i>	for the bowel
<i>Pellitory of Spain</i>	for easing pain and preventing coughs

Looking at nurse's uniforms, I loved the simple shape of the apron worn in the 20s and 30s, and I wanted crisp and angular shapes to work with. I deconstructed it, filled it with flowers, hearts, a bird and a child with open arms. I have used Culpeper's Herbal for information on herbs, and have chosen the ones which particularly refer to illnesses suffered by children.



Thank You Dress

Painted mild steel wire and stitched aluminium, 81 x 61cm

The wire structure is made from a combination of drawings made by local school children (as part of the Young Adviser's Group). One child stated that you need flowers, chocolates, juice and a get well card to help you feel better.

This piece is inspired by children's drawings and is intended as a child's 'thank you' to a nurse or doctor. I looked at samplers, the first embroideries children used to make, and decided to juxtapose neat and ordered imagery to celebrate children of the past with the drawings children of today make. The drawings on the bodice have been made by my five year old daughter and her friend, which I stitched onto the aluminium sheet.



Education and interpretation

Education projects were run during the course of the project with a view to engaging the interest and views of young people, staff and general public. Projects relating specifically to some of the arts commissions were also set up to introduce children to the ideas and processes behind some of the work. It is intended that education projects are devised on an ongoing basis with patients and school children.

Young Advisers Group

The Young Advisers Group, made up of pupil representatives from seven schools in Aberdeen and the shires, was set up in 1997. Starting off with a two day conference where over 60 children took part, the group contributed invaluable advice and ideas towards the arts brief. A massive range of ideas emerged, from glass walkways and rainbow fountains to themed wards, bespoke nurses' uniforms and sculptural seating. Many of these ideas informed the arts strategy and artists' briefs. At various stages throughout the project, members of the group were consulted to gauge their views.

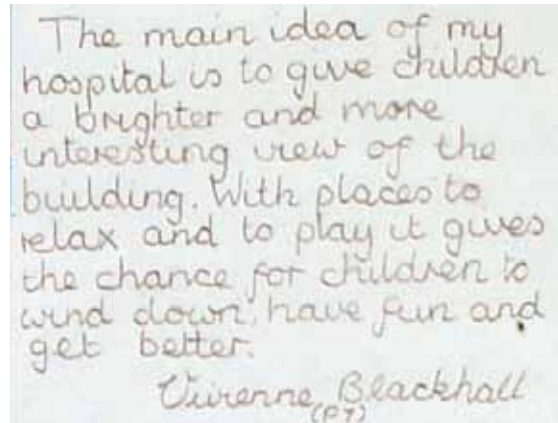
Sculptural Seating resource pack for secondary schools

Developed in collaboration with Aberdeen City Council Education department, a resource pack documenting the step by step processes behind Allan Watson's sculptural seating commission offers an invaluable insight into the commissioning process for pupils and staff.



Sculpture workshops run by Lucy Casson

Lucy brought to light the processes and techniques behind her renowned sculptures made from recycled materials through a series of three day workshops with pupils from feeder primary and secondary schools in the city. The pupils created an imaginative range of pieces from tin cans and biscuit tins and the resulting work was exhibited at the Children's Hospital.





Miniature Garden project

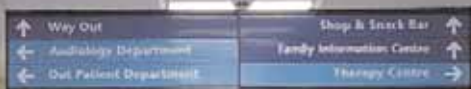
In response to the Ontological Garden (the garden of imaginary trees created by Dalziel + Scullion for the hospital courtyard), a miniature garden project was set up, run by Jean Moncrieff. Eight Aberdeen primary schools took part in the project which involved visits to the hospital to view the sculptures, drawing workshops, followed by the creation of miniature imaginary gardens using found objects. A great deal of imagination went into the gardens, which were made up of materials as varied as lentils, driftwood, wire wool, beads, to edible items such as rice crackers, hamster mix and, in one case, mini sausages painted silver! The project culminated in an exhibition at the Children's Hospital and Summerhill Education Centre, Aberdeen.

Postcard Journey workshops

Leading on from Jane Watt's *Postcard Journey* project, pupils from two selected schools – one by the coast and in the city and one in a rural location near the mountains – corresponded with each other using the format of the postcard. Writing, drawing and painting workshops were held in both schools, co-ordinated by David Atherton with Gill Clunas. Pupils created their own cards, using the standard postcard template. The uniformity of size contrasted dramatically with the colourful and imaginative assortment of images. Each pupil in the respective classes used the opportunity of the project to tell the pupils in the partner school something about their life or/and locale.

Workshops were also held with some of the patients at the hospital resulting in a three way exchange of cards and thoughts across Aberdeenshire using the standard postal service. The cards were then exhibited in the Children's Hospital.





FIRE EXIT





Facts About The Hospital

The Royal Aberdeen Children's Hospital (RACH)

The new hospital caters for around 75,000 patient attendances each year. RACH provides a comprehensive range of children's services for children (0–16 years) including acute medical and surgical facilities, ambulatory care services, mental health services, community child health services, dental services, research and teaching facilities. The service is provided for Grampian, the Northern Isles, and some patients in Tayside and Highland regions.

The building is on five levels and covers 17,000 m². There are 685 rooms including three operating theatres, three radiology rooms, 77 medical and surgical in-patient beds, eight high dependency beds, 15 day beds, a therapy centre, a mental health service suite, an out patient suite, an A&E department, 22 parents' bedrooms, a sanctuary and a café.

Programme. Preparatory work for the project began on site in autumn 2001. The building was completed in November 2003 and brought into service in January 2004.

Funding. The total building cost is £24.6 million; the budget for the arts programme was £643,000 ex vat: £273,000 from the ARCHIE Foundation; £300,000 from the SAC arts lottery; and £70,000 from Aberdeen City Council.



The RACH Arts Group was set up in 1998 with the intention of engaging artists meaningfully in the project. The Group was made up of RACH staff, GHAT, PACE, ARCHIE and the architect.

Grampian Hospitals Arts Trust (GHAT) was established in 1986 with the aim of providing works of art for the benefit of patients, staff and visitors within NHS Grampian healthcare facilities. There are currently 4000 original works of art in 45 locations from Stonehaven to Elgin.

PACE is a public art consultancy dedicated to bringing together artists, architects and designers to work on innovative public art schemes. Previous projects include Edinburgh Dental Institute, DanceBase in Edinburgh, and the Community School of Auchterarder. PACE is currently curating artworks for a new wing of Great Ormond Street Hospital in London.

Mackie Ramsay Taylor is an Aberdeen based architectural practice with a history of designing high profile buildings for the healthcare sector, including Royal Cornhill Hospital, Aberdeen, and Dr Gray's Hospital, Elgin.

The ARCHIE Foundation was established in June 2000 as a registered charity with its own identity but closely associated with NHS Grampian. Its main function was to raise £3 million towards 'making the difference' in the new Children's Hospital in Aberdeen. In 2004 the appeal ended having raised over £5 million.



Acknowledgements

RACH Arts Group

Heather Beattie, Senior Hospital Play Specialist; Syd Burnett, Art Advisor, GHAT; Juliet Dean, Director, PACE; Jane Kidd, Art Administrator, GHAT; Terry Mackie, Physical Planning Director, RACH; Malcolm McCoig, Chairman, GHAT; Pat Moir, Clinical Nurse Manager, A&E, RACH; Sharon O'Loan, Appeal Director, the ARCHIE Foundation; Jackie Simpson (Bremner), New RACH Project Development Manager (Chair); Mike Tastard, Principal Architect, Mackie Ramsay Taylor; Gail Thomson, Service Manager, RACH.

Arts Project managers

PACE

Architects

Mackie Ramsay Taylor

Artists

Michael Brennand-Wood, Jim Buckley, Syd Burnett, Lucy Casson, Dalziel + Scullion, Julia Griffiths-Jones, Matthew Hilton, Andy McGregor, Lucy Richards, Georgia Russell, Nick Veasey, Ally Wallace, Allan Watson, Jane Watt, Robin Wilson.

Education projects

Co-ordinated by PACE; education resource pack produced by Jim Scott with Allan Watson; sculpture workshops run by Lucy Casson; Miniature Garden project run by Jean Moncreiff; Postcard Journey workshops run by David Atherton.

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Publication design

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Jackie Bremner, Juliet Dean, Malcolm McCoig, Kirstie Skinner

Publication

Compiled and edited by PACE

The project was generously funded by



THE ARCHIE FOUNDATION



Winner of the 2005 Saltire Society Art and Craft in Architecture Award

*As Chairman of the hugely successful **ARCHIE Foundation** fund-raising appeal, I am delighted that we were one of the main supporters of the Arts Project in the new hospital. Of the £5.1m total raised, £273,000 was allocated specifically to the Arts Project. I am very impressed with the outcome and feel that we now have an interesting and visually stimulating hospital the north east of Scotland can be proud of and other hospital and public art projects can use for inspiration.*

Moir Lockhead



***The Scottish Arts Council** welcomes projects which provide new opportunities for people to engage with artists and their work, particularly outwith traditional gallery settings. The art project at the Royal Aberdeen Children's Hospital is a good example where children, parents and hospital staff have worked with a range of contemporary artists and designers from across the UK in a creative process, to develop an inspiring hospital environment. The benefits of this dialogue between artists and users of the hospital is reflected in the high quality artworks throughout the building.*

