

## Editor's note

It's still very cold, and although spring is only around the corner it seems like months away. So how do you while away the cold months until summertime? By taking part in the wealth of artistic, dramatic and creative offerings in Slough. This month, there are many opportunities to take advantage of - workshops,

performances and exhibitions abound and all right on your doorstep. For this and more, read on.

If you have any suggestions, opportunities, performances or news you would like to see in the magazine, then please, send them to: [artsinfo.slough@talktalk.net](mailto:artsinfo.slough@talktalk.net).



## News

### Community makes a more welcoming West Wing

The West Wing is celebrating a successful first year as a community arts centre, providing a space for local groups and artists to run workshops, exhibitions and showcase their work.

In the last 12 months the venue has succeeded in reversing its fortunes by encouraging the public into the space and generating local support.

After the venue's professional programme failed to entice audiences in, the West Wing was placed under the new management of the Creative Academy and the space returned to its original brief of supporting the local community to deliver their own events.

With this new ethos, a flexible approach and a more affordable pricing structure, the venue has more than doubled its weekly footfall.

It has also become home to seven home grown creative industries companies including a film production company and a photographer.

Regular arts events include Two Left Feet's inclusive dance classes and Slough Cooperative Film Society's showings of independent film.

The venue has also enabled local artists to hold their own workshops such as Ayesha Gamiet's Islamic art courses and has become a popular exhibition space for visual artists.

In 2008, the council carried out consultation to discuss with local people their hopes and fears for the future of the West Wing and to develop an approach to running the space for the next few years.

Now the council is responding to this public consultation to safeguard the future of the venue by seeking an external partner to run the West Wing for an initial period, and will be tendering for a partner in March - details of this will be posted on our website [www.artsinslough.org.uk](http://www.artsinslough.org.uk).

The future plans are then to give arts facilities a new home in the Learning Curve building which will be built as part of the Heart of Slough regeneration project.

# \*e-artsinfo

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## \*e-artsinfo

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### Tell us your news!

What's happening in your area?  
Send in your articles, news stories  
and pictures to  
artsinfo@slough.gov.uk.

Front page photos: The West Wing  
auditorium, Creative Academy's  
Foundation Dance degree,  
Slough Arts Society in the West  
Wing exhibition space.

## \*e-artsinfo February 2010

\*e-artsinfo is a monthly e-  
bulletin that aims to raise the  
profile of the arts, artists and  
creative industries in Slough.

To receive a copy regularly,  
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or email [artsinfo.slough@talktalk.net](mailto:artsinfo.slough@talktalk.net)

Articles and pictures for  
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**Slough**  
Borough Council

## News from the community

### Slough Young Film Makers Win Award

The British Film Institute has awarded 'Time Out From Work', a film made by a group of young film makers from Slough, the Best Film Award at the Future Film Festival at the BFI Southbank.

The film, written, filmed and edited by the group, is a sci-fi comedy about a boy who discovers a remote control that can transport him to weird and exciting worlds.

It was made as part of the Resource Productions Video Workshops, which gives young people the opportunity to learn the skills required to make their own films.

The cast and crew were extremely proud to collect their awards for best newcomers at the ceremony. Ashley Culler, production manager on the film said: "I really enjoyed working with Resource Productions and would like to work with them again."

Resource Productions, which was set up by local film producer Dom Oliver in 1999 provides free film workshops to young people, and has had films selected and screened at a variety of film festivals across the country.

For more information please visit [www.resource-productions.co.uk](http://www.resource-productions.co.uk)

## News from the Creative Industries

### Islamic Art returns to the West Wing

Ayesha Gamiet is returning to the West Wing with more courses on Islamic Art. From the 24 February to the 17 March 2010 she will be running two courses: A beginners' course in manuscript illumination on Wednesday mornings, and an introduction to Islamic geometric design and colour harmony in the evenings.

The manuscript illumination course focuses on the geometric and floral designs that have been used to adorn illuminated pages for centuries by Muslim artists using gold, ink and brightly coloured paints to beautify Islamic manuscripts. Students will also be introduced to the historical and stylistic context of this exquisite craft.

In the introduction to Islamic geometric design and colour harmony, students will be taught how to construct Islamic geometric patterns using the simple tools. The course will also

explore colour harmony in geometry and nature. By the end of the course, each student will have produced a completed coloured geometric pattern.

Ayesha is a freelance artist working across the UK on private commissions, design work and teaching. Ayesha was also a participant on the 2009 Community Arts Training Scheme run by the Community Arts team at Slough Borough Council.

For more information please visit: [www.ayeshagamiet.com](http://www.ayeshagamiet.com) or email: [islamic.art.slough@googlemail.com](mailto:islamic.art.slough@googlemail.com)



### Lottery grant celebrates the joy of henna

Cultural Fusion, a Slough based community group, has been awarded an Arts Council England grant of £9,500 towards their Joy of Henna project, an innovative new scheme to help preserve the art of henna.

Joy of Henna looks at the rituals, customs and traditions of henna art used extensively amongst the South Asian and Somali communities in Slough and aims to teach them to the younger generation to ensure the traditions are kept alive at a time when successive generations are moving away from them.

The project will use hands-on workshops to engage with the rich heritage of South Asian culture. The workshops, led by Culture Fusion's highly experienced and inspirational core artists, will consist of a display of henna art, explanations of the methodology and instruction in how to create designs.

Also included will be a visual display on DVD to help workshop participants build on their skills, and The Joy of Henna booklet; a short journey through the history and culture of henna, giving information about the henna plant and its many uses and properties, as well as providing beautiful designs to recreate.

In addition to this, Cultural Fusion have put together the Learning Box, a tool designed to be used in schools to teach the ancient art of henna, which is not only fun to design and create but also helps in the development of a wide range of technical skills. The Learning Box contains all the materials required and allows learning on a range of subjects including History, Geography, Art and Design and Cultural Awareness.

*For further information on henna workshops or to hire the Learning Box, please contact Cultural Fusion on 07944 341 563.*

### Introduction to Active Citizenship

Thursday 4 March

10am-3.30pm

Venue: Baylis House

This one day course is being run by WEA and will introduce the key ideas of active citizenship. It is designed for community activists who are interested in becoming trainers, as well as those with teaching experience.

The course is part of a national project that aims to build active citizenship skills and knowledge alongside the development of flexible teaching and learning methods and approaches.

The course is free and lunch is provided. Funding is available to support with travel and childcare.

*To book a place on the course please contact Chris Sanders on 07984 659121 or email [csanders@wea.org.uk](mailto:csanders@wea.org.uk).*

### Introduction to Adobe Photoshop

Monday 29 March

6.30-9.30pm

Creative Academy will be running an Introduction to Photoshop as part of their Creativity Rocks series of courses to support creative industries companies in Slough.

Places are extremely limited. To find out more or to book your place, email [creativityrocks@live.co.uk](mailto:creativityrocks@live.co.uk)

The Creativity Rocks seminars have been funded by Progress South Central and Creative Academy and are delivered by Future Culture on behalf of Creative Academy with support from Slough Borough Council's Community Arts Team.



Simon Richardson

### It's Madness at SWMTC

Slough Windsor and Maidenhead Theatre Company are looking for singers, dancers and actors for their newest production, the local premier of the Olivier award winning musical *Our House*, based on the hits from the band Madness.

The show, written by Tim Firth, is an energetic production telling the story of Joe Casey who on his 16th birthday has the chance to make the right or wrong choice and in doing so affects the rest of his life and loves!

The group are looking for cast members of all ages, starting from age 15 upwards.

Auditions are on Sunday 28 February at 9.30pm at 536 Ipswich

Road, Slough Trading Estate, SL1 4EQ  
Show week runs from 20-24 July at Norden Farm, rehearsal nights are Mondays and Wednesdays.

SWMTTC was first formed back in 1953, first meeting at the Orchard School, now better known as the West Wing. 57 years later they are still attracting performers from all across Berkshire and West London.

The group have recently moved into a new venue, donated by SEGRO and are looking for donations of furniture and if possible a fridge for their new home.

*For more information please visit [www.swmtc.co.uk](http://www.swmtc.co.uk) or call Viv on 07985 263012.*

### Slough Young Musicians' Festival - March 2010

Co-ordinated by Slough Music Service, this is a month of celebrating youth music in Slough culminating in a wide mix of performances and events in the week of the 22 March.

If you are planning or know of any music events or activities for or involving young people under 25 taking place in Slough during March, please complete the online form at [www.sloughmusicservice.co.uk/festival](http://www.sloughmusicservice.co.uk/festival) or email [festival@sloughmusicservice.co.uk](mailto:festival@sloughmusicservice.co.uk).

### Sing Up Spring Up!

**Tuesday 16 March 2010  
7pm-9pm, West Wing Arts Centre, Main Auditorium**

Free entrance; please book your place in advance.

Sing up Spring up is an informal sharing event for community singing groups and choirs in Windsor and Slough, especially those where young people (12-25 years old) have a leading role. (Adult singing groups are welcome too).

This is a chance for local singing ensembles to sing for each other, network, learn new warm up exercises and sing a song as a big choir with internationally award winning a cappella ensemble Voices 8.

Lighting and sound will be provided and the event will be recorded for participants.

*For more information visit [www.creativejunction.org.uk](http://www.creativejunction.org.uk).*

### Resource Productions Steering Group

Resource Productions Steering Group is running weekly workshops for 13 to 19 year olds where they can plan films and have their say on the future of film in Slough. It is an opportunity to make new friends, plan projects and discuss favourite films and any media that they find inspiring. Film-maker Michael Holmes said: "We have had an amazing turn out and there are still more places available. The group allows young people to increase their creative knowledge

and experience by taking part in the workshops and getting to work with industry professionals."

The group recently secured funding from SYOF to buy new equipment and hire specialist artists to mentor young people in Slough.

*Resource Productions runs every Thursday evening from 4 to 6pm at The West Wing. To take part, or for more information please contact [info@resource-productions.co.uk](mailto:info@resource-productions.co.uk) or call 01753 553374.*

### Berkshire Sings 2010! The Sing Up CPD Conference

**Tuesday 23 March 2010.  
The Spirit Conference Centre,  
Farnham Road, Slough.  
9am-4pm**

March 23 is a day for teachers and other school staff and singing leaders. It will feature members of the prestigious vocal a cappella group 'Mouthful', and is a chance

to develop your own singing and teaching repertoire. Suitable for any level of confidence and skill.

*For further information or a booking form, please contact Philippa Berry at [mail@philippaberryarts.com](mailto:mail@philippaberryarts.com), or apply online at [www.sloughmusicservice.co.uk/events](http://www.sloughmusicservice.co.uk/events).*

### The CATS journey

This year's Community Arts Training Scheme has definitely gone with a bang. We had a fantastic group of participants which made for an exciting four days, full of ideas, passion and creativity. This is the 16th time we have run the course in Slough so rather than us telling you how powerful the impact of the course is, we thought we'd ask one of the 350 people who has attended CATS over the years to share their CATS journey. Here Daljeet Jutla who attended CATS in 2008 tells her story.

"In December 2007 I attended a conference for social entrepreneurs in Mumbai, I felt a real connection with the work that NGOs are doing in India, and was inspired to work with children both in India and the UK, using the arts to bring them together.

When I returned to the UK I discovered community arts, and found out about the CATS course. This seemed very timely and the course looked fantastic, so I eagerly booked my place. I soon found CATS was exactly what I needed. The course gave me the direction I was looking for. It was well planned out, and allowed me to gain an understanding of the various aspects of planning and executing an arts project. Christine Wilkinson was brilliant as the course leader and I found her to be very inspiring. Within two days, I had completed a project outline as this was the first time I had had an opportunity to structure my ideas. I discussed the exchange project idea I had in mind with the CATS training group and the community arts team, and the feedback and advice I received gave me the confidence to pursue my ideas further. The CATS course gave me a platform to share and discuss them, and although I was a newcomer to the

field I felt I was being supported and listened to.

Over the following year I worked with the community arts team to develop the project. I went to them with a mass of information and ideas and they helped shape them. Together we developed an online arts exchange project involving 10-15 schoolchildren from the UK and India. The exchange was to take place via Skype, and would involve the children sharing drama workshop ideas and working together to develop them, culminating in both sets of children watching each others final performances online.

Unfortunately the project never materialised, but working on it with community arts and the knowledge I had gained through CATS opened other doors for me. I approached Creative Junction with the idea, and although they were not able to help with it, they did offer me work to build up my portfolio of experience. I worked as a Project Administrator on the Newlands Enquiry Programme in

2009, focusing on sharing creative writing and photography between children in Newlands School in Maidenhead and the Aarti Homes Orphanage in India.

CATS also inspired me to improve my skills and so I took more courses to develop myself, and more recently I decided to combine my previous work experience in business development and marketing with my passion for the arts and joined Bigfoot Arts Education, becoming a licensed provider for Berkshire.

Bigfoot has been operating successfully for 10 years, and provides programmes supporting literacy, PSHE and extended services through drama. I am fortunate to be representing this dynamic and exciting organisation, and I am looking forward to working with schools throughout Berkshire.

CATS gave me a fantastic grounding for a career in arts education, and long may it continue to teach and inspire people like me."



Daljeet Jutla