



ArtCore

# UNTOLD stories.



Supported alongside funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**



**The Baring  
Foundation**







“

*Came on a small boat from Calais  
no life jacket  
but had a small tyre around waist  
was towed by police in a bigger  
boat to England*

”

- ASSAM





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## PROJECT OVERVIEW - ARTCORE

At Artcore, we believe in the transformative power of creativity to connect people, break down barriers, and inspire change. Through our Untold Stories project, we've worked closely with recent immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and members of Derby's Bosnian and South Asian communities, offering arts activities that provide a platform for sharing experiences through creativity. We have worked in partnership with The Derby Bosnia Herzegovina Community Association (DBHCA) and The Sahahra Centre.

With our guiding statement, "Together we stand," we aim to foster community cohesion, build confidence, and improve wellbeing through the arts. Our workshops, held at Artcore, Bosnia-Herzegovina Centre, and The Sahahra Centre, have created a welcoming environment for participants to explore new skills, express themselves, and connect with others.

Art is a universal language, one that allows people to communicate emotions, experiences, and ideas beyond words. Through our workshops, we've seen how creativity bridges language barriers and cultural differences, offering participants a meaningful way to share their journeys. From paintings to collage, weaving, sewing, and spoken word, every artistic expression tells a story.





The most rewarding aspect of this project has been witnessing personal transformations. Many participants, who initially hesitated or had never engaged with art before, grew in confidence each week. They became more open, inquisitive, and inspired, forming friendships, sharing their stories, and embracing creativity as a tool for healing and connection.

Through Untold Stories, we've worked with 11 different artists who have all brought a unique and engaging approach to the workshops. We have also supported over 500 individuals across Artcore, the Bosnia & Herzegovina Centre, and the The Sahahra Centre. Thank you to the Baring Foundation for supporting this project.



**Phoebe Shaw**  
*Community Programme Producer*  
ARTCORE



## **PROJECT PARTNER - DBHCA**

In collaboration with Artcore and Sahahra, the Untold Stories project embarked on a journey that officially launched in February 2023, at the Bosnia & Herzegovina Centre. This project aimed to create a safe space for individuals to express their unique stories through art. With support from the Baring Foundation, the project focused on engaging recent immigrants - refugees, asylum seekers, and members of Derby's Bosnian and South Asian communities. Over two years, the Bosnian Centre hosted a number of art sessions, bringing together diverse participants to create, heal, and connect. DBHCA played a key role in supporting service users - many from Afghanistan, Sudan, Eritrea, Syria, Ethiopia, Iran, and Iraq - who often suppress their struggles to protect loved ones left behind. These sessions provided a sanctuary where they could set aside their burdens for a few hours each week. Many do not easily share their experiences, trauma, and fears, but art allowed them to express emotions and experiences they could not put into words.





Week after week, trust grew among participants and artist facilitators like Chris Wright, Kathryn Borg, Neil Rowley, and Jon Legge. Although initially reserved, many gradually opened up, sometimes through words but more often through their artwork. These sessions became a universal language that transcended cultural and language barriers, with men, women, and children using painting, paper crafts, and photography to tell stories of resilience, pain, hope, and survival. Stories surfaced naturally, allowing participants to communicate when they're ready, with art serving as therapy and self-exploration. The project reinforced the importance of safe spaces where service users can rebuild trust and find connections. Through collaboration with Artcore and Sahahra, DBHCA witnessed the profound impact of creativity on healing and empowerment. For us at the DBHCA, the Untold Stories project was not just about art - it was also about restoring hope and affirming the resilience of the human spirit.



**Aleksandra Wakefield**  
*Project and Outreach coordinator*  
DERBY BOSNIAN AND HERZEGOVINA  
COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION  
(DBHCA)

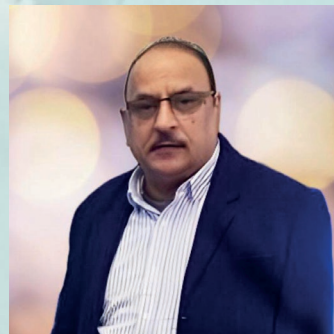


## PROJECT PARTNER - SAHAHRA

Sahahra began in the mid-1990s and is based in Arboretum Park. We are dedicated to supporting elderly members of the South Asian community in Derby.

Sahahra exists to help provide older people and their families with the quality of life they deserve. We do this by offering a welcoming space, social opportunities, activities, food, and friendship.

It has been a pleasure to be a partner in the Untold Stories project, supported by the Baring Foundation. Over the past two years, we have hosted creative art workshops at the Sahahra Centre for our service users. It has been wonderful to witness the Artcore artists build meaningful connections with participants, as well as to see our community engage in creative activities and storytelling, sharing their journeys of migration to the UK.



**Jangir Khan**  
*Manager*  
SAHAHRA

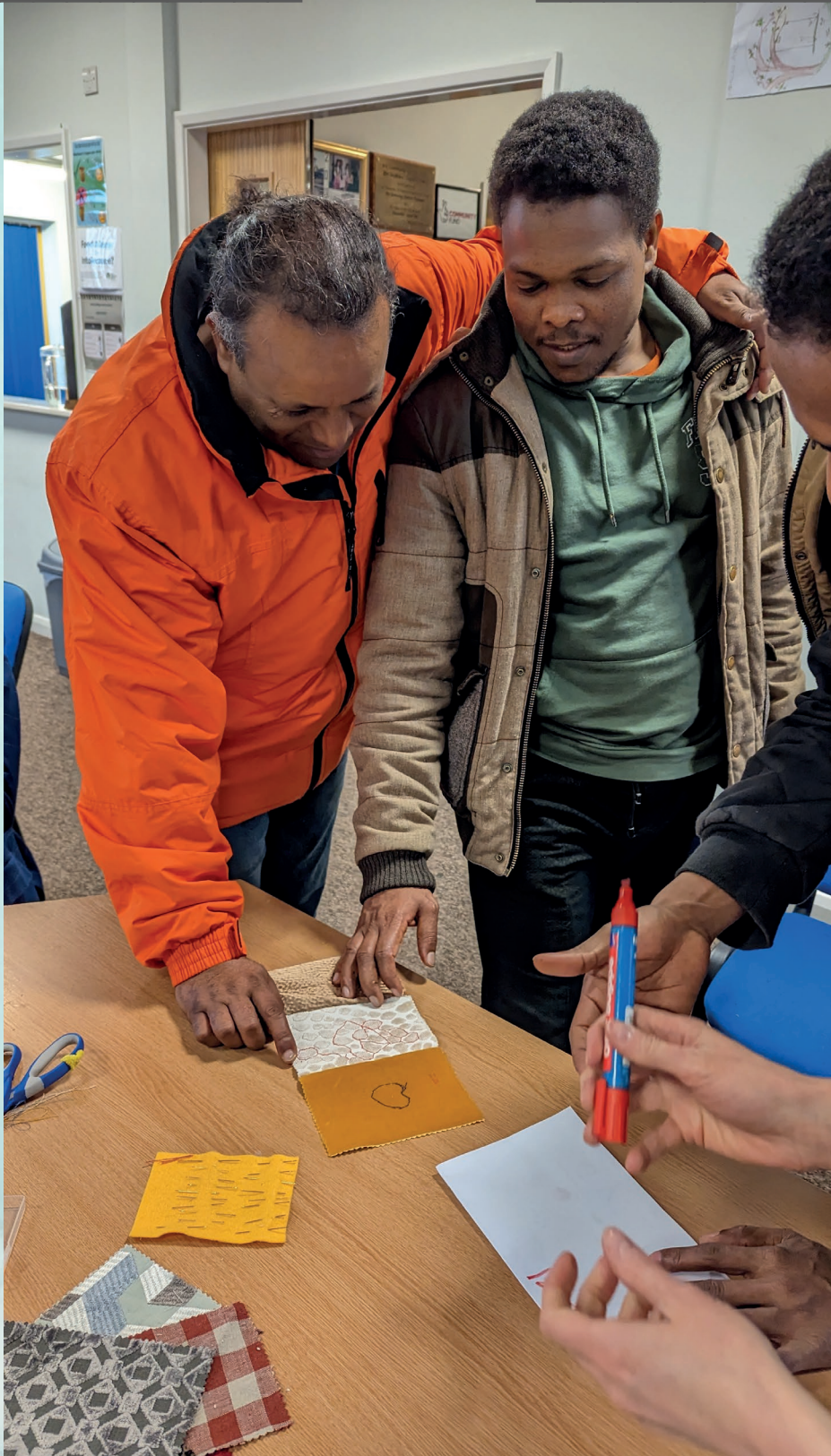
















# MEET the artists







## KATHRYN BORG

"I have extremely enjoyed and found it very rewarding being an artist for the Untold Stories project since it's commencement and using visual art as form of communication. This was key for the participants to be able to share their stories, the majority of whom English was not their first language. I was able to connect with different communities and visit centres including the Bosnia-Herzegovina, Sahakra Centres and Artcore, to listen and use art and words to collect their personal journeys, emotions and stories.

At the Sahakra Centre we used a variety of art materials to help the participants create a personal journey book about their immigration, their life and how they felt. We created clay tiles, paintings, drawings and also looked at different cultures' art. They weaved, created drawn Islamic tiles and created printed patterns to name but a few.





At the Bosnia-Herzegovina centre we mostly interacted with asylum seekers. We collected their stories by talking with the participants, drawing out their stories, their journey, their emotions, some of which were very upsetting to hear. We also looked at other art forms such as origami, created self-portraits and looked at British culture and customs such as Bonfire night and Halloween.

At Artcore the participants created personal journey books, they drew designs that depicted elements of their story, then used sewing and applique to visually recreate these.

Having the opportunity to interact with people coming from different countries, backgrounds, communities has been a privilege and this project has enabled the participants to have a voice through art."





## CHIKE UZOKA

"The workshop artworks vividly tell their own story of 'Untold Stories', capturing the essence of creativity and expression. I thoroughly enjoyed the workshop delivery and the engagement of its participants, whose enthusiasm and artistic contributions brought the experience to life. This dynamic and inspiring atmosphere fostered a space for endless creativity, resulting in remarkable artistic outcomes. I am delighted and honoured to be part of this creative journey."



## CAROLINE AINSWORTH



"It was an absolute privilege to meet this group of individuals and spend time listening to the many 'Untold Stories' that they each had. What came across the most was the love they held in their hearts for the places that they came from and where they are now. Their willingness to share a snippet of their individual cultures with me made the session full of colour, chat, warmth and had a real sense of belonging to a wider community where we could all make art together and recognise home for what it is. The tea and biscuits were good too!"





## JANE DEARDEN

"The Untold Stories project promoted some very personal work which was both inspiring and touching. We made work about a significant person, influence or event in our lives. Everyone responded so well to this, each having their very own take on the theme. We had lots of sharing of stories, chat and appreciation of each other's work."



## JON LEGGE



"It was great to meet and chat with all the participants who came from all over Africa, the Middle East and Europe. Despite the upheavals and uncertainty in their lives they were happy and enthusiastic and enjoyed making portrait photographs—some coming back with their children too!"



## NEIL ROWLEY

"Untold Stories' was a transformative art project held at the Bosnia & Herzegovina Centre in Derby, dedicated to amplifying the voices of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. As an artist, I was warmly welcomed into a vibrant community filled with passionate individuals who were eager to share their experiences. Through the use of memories and meaningful objects, we collaboratively created paintings and drawings that beautifully illustrated their unique stories, fostering connection and understanding within the community."



## NICKI DENNETT

"For the 'Untold Stories' workshops that I delivered the participants created their personal stories, memories or things that made them happy, into a small zine booklet. The zines were then photocopied to enable sharing and exchanging stories within the group."

The experience was positive for myself and the group. They enjoyed using a multitude of mediums such as cutting and collaging images from magazines adding things like coloured papers and washi tape. Some participants had a go at some mono-printing. A lovely friendly group and always a pleasure to deliver workshops to them."







## CHRIS WRIGHT

"Untold Stories' are part of everyone's lives, but here, at the Bosnia-Herzegovina Centre, the stories were especially poignant. We folded origami where a common language is not needed, made books discovering some amazing drawing talent and we flew paper aeroplanes, each with the 'pilots' own designs. The time together and the things we created came from the heart and translations were not needed.'

## CHRIS LEWIS-JONES

"The emphasis during the 'Untold Stories' workshops was on exploring notions of cultural identity and aspiration. The artworks were preceded by conversations and informed by the students' evolving cultural and educational aspirations. The paper flags grew out of an exploration of the journeys students had taken in order to be where they were, in Derby, using collage. The collages were made with coloured poster paper, and we did a lot of work on the symbolism of colour. We discussed the idea that flags can enhance a sense of pride, which is a positive, but can also be a cause for division and even hatred, which is a negative. I was impressed by the extent to which the students were able and willing to discuss issues that were actually quite challenging."





## ISMAIL KHOKON

"Leading workshops with participants from diverse backgrounds and listening to their authentic stories through art and creative discussions was an extraordinary experience for me. Our outdoor art and photography tour in the park was both healing and inspiring."

Together, we not only created artwork but also built meaningful human connections, where trust and the joy of life were clearly visible. The participants were highly engaged, producing thought-provoking art that you wouldn't find anywhere else."



## DANI BELLO

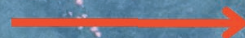
"It was a privilege to facilitate the 'Untold Stories' workshops, guiding participants through weeks of artistic and therapeutic exploration. Together, we delved into personal histories, cultural backgrounds, and identities, creating a space for self-expression and celebration. Through art, participants gave shape to their stories, transforming emotions into clay, weaving personal narratives into fabric tapestries, and painting portraits that reflected both their childhood selves and who they are today. This journey was a powerful reminder of the stories that often go unheard. It was an honour to witness and support each person as they brought their experiences to life through creativity."







# PROJECT workshops



















***Workshops at Sahahra***









## ***Workshops at Artcore***









## ***Workshops at DBHCA***



















# EXHIBIT artists.





TING





# ARMSTRONG OKE AGOREYO

Armstrong Oke Agoreyo, a renowned artist from Delta State, Nigeria, is celebrated for his extraordinary paper collages that transform everyday scraps into vivid masterpieces. Armstrong studied Fine Art at the University of Benin and later pursued his Masters at the University of Derby in the United Kingdom in 2023. His artworks celebrate African heritage, identity, and resilience, masterfully bridging the past and present through intricate storytelling.

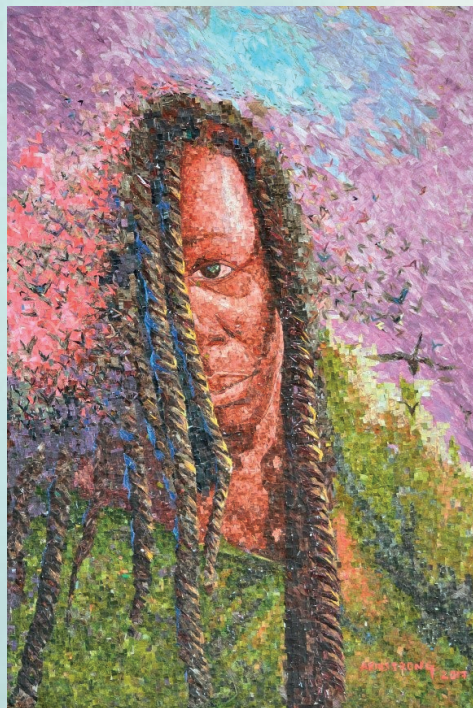
His early experiences endowed him with a profound sense of narrative and tradition, which he channels into his works. During his studies in Fine Arts at the University of Benin, Armstrong honed his passion for paper collage as his unique style involved meticulously layering fragments from various printed materials to create intricate, colourful compositions that explore themes of cultural memory and social justice. In 2014, he was awarded the Art is Everywhere prize for the best Waste to Art in the visual art category (LIMCAF) and also the 2024 recipient of the Banks Mill Award by the University of Derby in 2024.

Armstrong's journey as an artist has been marked by series of exhibitions and collaborations that have garnered international recognition. From showcasing his works in Cipriarte Venezia Gallery in Venice, Italy, to the Arteom Gallery in Poland and the Art Expo Basel in Switzerland, his art has reached diverse audiences, crossing cultural and geographical boundaries. These exhibitions have provided a platform to amplify the urgent message of environmental stewardship and the transformative potential of art.





Beyond aesthetics, his works offer profound cultural narratives and social commentary. He reclaims discarded materials to craft compelling stories that resonate globally. As a mentor, he inspires emerging artists to explore their identities through art, ensuring his influence extends to future generations. Armstrong Agoreyo's rise from Nigeria to global recognition exemplifies his exceptional talent and visionary approach as his masterful artworks celebrate African heritage and provoke meaningful dialogue, cementing his legacy in the contemporary art world.













# CHIKE UZOKA

As a male native of Atani in Anambra state of Nigeria, I studied Fine and Applied Arts at the Institute of Management and Technology, in Enugu state, obtaining the Ordinary National Diploma (O.N.D.) and the Higher National Diploma (H.N.D.) in Sculpture.

I have mastered painting with various painting methods and materials, such as acrylic, oils, water colours, pastels, pencils and chalks, and also create art works using a wide variety of mediums, including wood, stone, fibre glass casting, plaster of Paris, clay, and metal, including scrap metals.

My metal works range from small sized sculptural pieces, up to very large pieces, used in building works, such as gates, railings and parameter fencing.

I have developed a strong desire to use recycled waste materials, to convert them into beautiful pieces of art, therefore impacting positively on the environment where I find myself. This I intend to pass on to all that I will be privileged to mentor in the society where I live.

Whilst working on recycling methods, I have developed a particular papier mache technique, in making sculptures look like metal and bronze pieces.

As a practicing artist, I find Artcore studio a welcoming, friendly and relaxed environment, which allows for deep thought, and promotes an endearing creative atmosphere. It also provides a platform for artists to brainstorm in an inspirational bubble, and form a creative bond, which creates new opportunities for future collaborations.













# NAZDAR AHMED

Nazdar Ahmed is a passionate artist based in Derby, originally from Iraq. Having spent much of her early life in Iran due to conflict, she grew up speaking Kurdish Sorani and Persian (Farsi) and completed her primary and secondary education there.

With 16 years of experience as a teacher in Iraq, Nazdar specialised in History, Painting, and occasionally English. Now, as she settles into life in the UK, she has turned her focus to painting, exploring techniques in oil and acrylic with a realistic style. Inspired by the beauty of nature, her work often features flowers, landscapes, and the natural world.

Currently living in Derby with her partner, who works with DRAC, Nazdar continues to develop her artistic practice, using painting not only as a form of expression but also as a way to connect with her new community.



















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