No stone unturned as Lewisham history projects receive funding

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The two projects, 'Every Picture Tells A Story' and 'Little Boxes of Memories', will look at the fascinating photographic archive of the area by photographer Chris Schwarz, and collect and record the personal memories of some of the boroughs eldest citizens.

The grants will add to nearly £20.8million of funding HLF has given to projects across Lewisham.

Every Picture Tells A Story, led by Art of Regeneration (AOR) Ltd, will explore, catalogue, digitise and create exhibitions and live pop-up events based on the 1970's photographic archives by Chris Schwarz. Schwarz died in 2007 and bequeathed his collection to AOR. The collection is not fully understood at present, and the valuable negatives are currently at risk from poor storage.

The project will involve training volunteers in research, oral history, cataloguing, and digitising skills, with support from London Metropolitan Archives, Lewisham College and Lewisham Local History Archive. 14 planned secondary school workshops will also support history curriculum studies through the project.

Around 6,800 images generated by Chris Schwartz will be put online, 90% of which are in black and white. Much of this work reflects the programme of creative and cultural development of the Albany Centre in Deptford and key events in Deptford's history.

The archive forms a multi-faceted record, including life on the new housing estates - Pepys, Milton Court, Idonia Street; the development of children's play; the Queens Silver Jubilee, including the Royal Parade and street parties; Millwall Football Club, the scrap industry; rag 'n bone men; campaigning for racial equality; community festivals and more.

On the funding, Jenny Harris from Art of Regeneration, said: "So many people have been asking about Chris' photographs for years, so this is a wonderful opportunity to revisit the 1970's, the people and events recorded and to examine another era and to see what it teaches us today."

Schwarz's photographic work has been published in *The Independent*, *Guardian*, *Time Out* and in books, including *Down and Out in Paris and London*. He has also exhibited in London and overseas.

Little Boxes of memories, led by Entelechy Arts, is a scheme that will uncover and document the childhood experiences of socially isolated 80 to 100 year old south east Londoners. Their tales and anecdotes will be used to create a series of interactive exhibitions of 'little boxes' reflecting their historical experiences, which will tour venues across London.

Already piloted by a small group of older people who created 'little boxes' capturing their experiences from the Second World War, the project is supported by the Museum of London, London Borough of Lewisham and Lewisham hospital.

The scheme provides participation opportunities not only for volunteers, but for socially excluded groups, often without opportunities to learn about their heritage, such as learning and/or physically disabled members of the community.

The project is timetabled to run for nearly a year beginning February 2012.

David Slater from Entelechy Arts explained the importance of scheme for local residents: “We are really excited by the opportunity to share the life experiences of some of our boroughs oldest and most isolated citizens. The involvement of young people who have profound and multiple disabilities will add a new and exciting dimension to the project making it truly open and accessible.”

Commenting on the projects, Sue Bowers, Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund London, added: “These are two important projects for the borough’s heritage. These captured moments, pictorial and verbal, would otherwise soon be lost for good. They provide another unique angle into Lewisham’s great history – and provide a platform for many local volunteers from different backgrounds to learn and play a part in preserving their communities’ rich history.”

Note to editors

HLF has awarded Entelechy Arts and Art of Regeneration Ltd £50,000 and £49,600 respectively.

Entelechy Arts has been making great art for 21 years and continues to develop and manage programmes of work that promote cultural and social cohesion. Entelechy is particularly skilled in creating work that builds bridges between groups of people and individuals who lead parallel and unconnected lives, often in the same neighborhoods. This includes older people from diverse communities, young people, people with learning disabilities and people from different cultural and social backgrounds.

Entelechy develops sustained creative programmes working with individuals and groups over long periods of their lives, often through periods of transition and change. The work places people’s current and lifelong experiences, gifts and needs at the heart of the practice creating art works that build shared meaning and community.

Art of Regeneration: This ongoing creative and cultural regeneration programme was started in 2000 by Jenny Harris, Director of Education at the National Theatre, London (and originally Executive Director of the Albany theatre and community centre in Deptford), and Chrissie Tiller, facilitator, arts consultant and cultural strategist.

Further information

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