



Patient lift light boxes  
Millennium Nights by Robin Blackledge  
Image: Jamie Woodley

**Artists:**

Robin Blackledge, Innocent Fine Art, Stuart Low

**Funders:**

Above and Beyond

**Collaborators:**

O'Leary Goss Architects



Detail of stairwell glazing  
Bristol Harbour by Stuart Low  
Image: Geraint Davies



Location, Location, Location  
by Robin Blackledge  
Image: Jamie Woodley

After 40 years of constant use and treating some 6,500 patients a year, Bristol's Haematology & Oncology Centre (BHOC) was in need of a refresh. Willis Newson was commissioned to devise and deliver a public art strategy for the refurbishment. This was an exciting and timely opportunity to make a real difference to the experience of patients. Creating artworks for such projects can be challenging, demanding a close working relationship with contractors and with staff and patients who work in and rely upon the existing building. The resulting works include vinyl designs on glass doors, glazing panels, bespoke furniture, large wall graphics and individual paintings and artworks. They are all inspired by the theme of 'a sense of place' and most reference familiar locations and local landmarks in and around Bristol. They have been placed in reception areas, clinics and consultation rooms and in lifts, lift lobbies and stairwells and play a vital role in supporting the patient journey throughout the building. This refurbishment work was made possible thanks to the success of a £1.6m appeal by Above & Beyond, the local charity which raises funds for all Bristol's central hospitals.

***"I used to bring patients outside for a change of scenery - now they've got a change of scenery on every floor."***

Tom Johnson, former BHOC hospital porter

#### Background

The Bristol Haematology & Oncology Centre is a specialist centre for non-surgical treatments for cancer and is run by the University Hospitals Bristol NHS Foundation Trust (UHB). It provides Radiotherapy and Haematology services to patients throughout Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire. It opened in 1971 and by 2009 many areas were badly in need of refurbishment. The refurbishment included an arts programme developed and delivered by Willis Newson and funded entirely through the CaRE (Chemotherapy and Radiotherapy Environments) Appeal by Above & Beyond. The aim was to create a modern, welcoming and nurturing environment for patients, visitors and staff.

#### Scope

Willis Newson was asked by UHB to develop an overall vision for the arts as part of the capital redevelopment process and to commission and deliver a series of individual projects resulting in permanent artworks and interventions for the building. In doing this we involved staff and patients and ensured the involvement and consultation of all key stakeholders within the Trust and funding bodies. We developed a public art strategy, and project managed the commissioning of artists and the creation and installation of the artworks.

#### Process

Following our appointment in February 2009, we audited the site to gain an understanding of how it worked in its existing state. Meetings with the design team generated initial suggestions for where and how arts interventions might be appropriate and these suggestions were then used to focus consultation sessions with staff and patient groups and research involving key members of Trust staff. Findings from these and consultation with the design team informed development of the strategy, helping to define which areas should be the focus for the arts programme and what approaches would be appropriate. An Arts Group was formed, including representatives from the Trust, Above & Beyond and patients and staff. This group was influential in managing and ensuring a coherent vision for the project.



Detail of Mugshots  
by Robin Blackledge  
Image: Jamie Woodley



Patient lift light boxes  
Millennium Nights by Robin Blackledge  
Image: Jamie Woodley



Detail of stairwell glazing  
by Stuart Low  
Image: Geraint Davies



#### Strategy



Paintings curated by Innocent Fine Art  
in clinical rooms  
Image: Jamie Woodley

The arts programme was intended to enhance the experience of patients, visitors and staff in the building, to support and enhance individual patient journeys and to encourage good health generally. We aimed to deliver artworks which would be uplifting and appropriate and created specifically for the site and locations within it. The programme was rooted in and inspired by the local environment.

Our consultation findings showed that those who used the building wanted artworks that would distract, calm and cheer and would welcome natural images that referenced the local area. Patients needed to find their way around more easily and to be treated in and to wait in areas that felt less clinical and more homely. Many visitors and patients return to the Centre again and again and so the artworks need to stand up well to repeat viewing. Our work focused on three main areas:

- The main reception and other waiting spaces were enhanced through artist-designed bespoke furniture, surface treatments to doors and focal point artworks
- Main routes within the Centre including lift lobbies, lifts and stairwells where visitors and patients needed help with navigating around the building. Graphics featuring images from locations in and around Bristol on each floor reference the wayfinding colour scheme and feature large floor level numbers.
- Treatment areas such as Outpatients and clinic rooms now feature works from local artists featuring pictures of popular locations in and around Bristol



Vinyl artworks in lift lobbies  
Magic Numbers  
by Robin Blackledge  
Image: Jamie Woodley

#### Conclusions

This project demonstrates quite how much can be achieved within the limitations of an existing environment. The use of a single integral theme for all the interventions successfully contributes a sense of identity for the building, running through both public-facing spaces and patient environments. The programme also benefited from input from patient consultation, positive and meaningful engagement that had a real influence on the artworks.



Stairwell glazing  
Bristol Harbour by Stuart Low  
Image: Geraint Davies

***“At Above & Beyond we are proud to have been able to contribute £1.6m funding to transforming many areas of the BHOC [...]. When patients, their families and friends want to say thank you for the care they receive at the hospitals, they come to us. I believe it speaks volumes that over 1,000 former patients were involved in supporting and fundraising for our appeal to transform the environment of care at BHOC. They did it not just because they wanted to say thank you, but because they knew how important the environment was to them when they were ill.”***

Sarah Talbot-Williams, Chief Executive, Above & Beyond.



Main reception area featuring  
Mugshots by Robin Blackledge  
Image: Jamie Woodley



Talking Tables by Robin Blackledge  
Image: Jamie Woodley



Detail of Quilt, 51°27'N 2°35'W  
by Robin Blackledge and  
Rhiann Pressley  
Image: Jamie Woodley

**Commission:**

Main Reception

**Artworks:**

Location, Location, Location, Mugshots, Talking Tables, 51°27'N 2°35'W

**Artist:**

Robin Blackledge, Rhiann Pressley

**First impressions count and the main reception of the Bristol Haematology & Oncology Centre now sets the tone for the remainder of the building.**

Robin Blackledge was appointed to create a welcoming and uplifting environment in this important area. He has done this through a series of pieces inspired by the local environment. His vinyl graphics on the revolving door reflect a bird's eye view of Bristol. Bespoke table tops include stories and memories from patients and staff with designs based on Bristol map references. Mugshots – images from around Bristol transferred onto coffee mugs - is designed to trigger people's happy memories of people, places and events. With Rhiann Pressley, Robin also created a quilt giving an abstract perspective on the city and featuring textile panels sourced from city centre charity shops.

***"This entrance, to me, it would make me feel full of confidence coming in here now [...]. I've had nothing but excellent treatment, but this makes you feel now straightaway that you're in the right place to get the help you need."***

Mr Young of Nailsea, former BHOC patient





Stairwell Glazing by Stuart Low  
Image: Geraint Davies



Vinyl artworks on lift lobby walls  
Magic Numbers by Robin Blackledge  
Image: Jamie Woodley



Patient lift and lift lobby, showing  
Millennium Nights and Magic Numbers  
by Robin Blackledge  
Image: Jamie Woodley

**Commission:**

Wayfinding

**Artworks:**

Magic Numbers, Stairwell glazing, Millennium Lights patient lift light-boxes, Shipshape and Bristol Fashion

**Artist:**

Robin Blackledge, Stuart Low

**Consultation with staff and patients suggested that navigation around the building could be a problem.**

Robin Blackledge has created vinyl artworks for walls within the lift lobbies. These wayfinding graphics, derived from contour maps of the Bristol region now help to orient the visitor. They feature well-defined colours for each floor and large floor level numbers and complement the interior design colour palettes. Robin also installed light boxes in the ceiling of the patient lifts. Stuart Low, a Bristol-based architectural stained glass artist, produced five bright and colourful glass works for the windows within the main stairwell. These again, help to suggest a sense of place, each referring to separate, familiar landscapes including a peaceful flower garden, beaches, forests and Bristol Harbour. Ship Shape and Bristol Fashion, another laminated wall vinyl in the stairwell by Robin Blackledge, is inspired by Bristol's rich seafaring heritage. Patients are encouraged to improve their fitness using the stairs and these works support this activity, bringing interest and colour into a formerly drab area.





Clinic room painting  
curated by Innocent Fine Art  
Image: Jamie Woodley

#### Commission:

Clinical treatment areas

#### Artworks:

Blossom Walk vinyls, Clinic room artworks

#### Artists:

Robin Blackledge, Innocent Fine Art



shire and in 1945 became the only culinary appli  
ceive an award of Garden Merit for its blossom  
e greenish yellow flushed orange-brown fruits.  
ent baking apple which cooks to a well-flavoured  
w purple which needs little cooking. Good

Blossom Walk Vinyls  
by Robin Blackledge  
Image: Jamie Woodley



Blossom Walk Vinyls  
by Robin Blackledge  
Image: Jamie Woodley

**Patients undergoing treatment have expressed a need for art that helps them escape into the world outside the room.**

Carole Innocent's curated collection of paintings and photographs has helped to create a less clinical and more homely atmosphere in key clinical treatment areas. Carole consulted with patients and staff to compile a list of popular locations in and around Bristol and selected local artists to portray them. Subjects include the Downs in Bristol, the Avon Gorge, Westbury White Horse and Clevedon Pier. In addition, Lyn Golden's large canvasses from her time in Barbados add a splash of exotic colour to the quiet room, reception area and corridors of the Haematology Ward. Robin Blackledge's Blossom Walk vinyls feature photographs of blossom and spring flower growth, all taken in and around the Bristol area.

***"Because you come here when you've got cancer, all the artwork everywhere does make a huge difference. You've got something to look at when you're in Outpatients - it helps to relax you."***

Pat and Alan Sage of Stockwood. Alan is a former BHOC patient.



Detail from Colour Walk vinyls  
by Robin Blackledge  
Image: Robin Blackledge



Detail from Rope Dock  
part of the Colour Walk vinyls series  
by Robin Blackledge  
Image: Robin Blackledge

**Commission:**

Radiotherapy

**Artworks:**

Colour Walk vinyls

**Artist:**

Robin Blackledge

**Both colour and weather can have a powerful effect upon our moods and emotions.**

Robin Blackledge's series of Colour Walk photographs were all taken in and around Bristol. His subjects range from natural woodlands to graffiti-covered urban walls, but all feature an uplifting richness of light and colour. These works are now displayed on the walls of the Radiotherapy unit.

***"Wonderful atmosphere for the patients, lovely colours."***

Feedback from member of the public, from the Open Day held in March 2011.



Detail from Colston Blue  
part of the Colour Walk vinyl Series  
by Robin Blackledge  
Image: Robin Blackledge