

Cupid and the Curious Moaning of Kenfig Burrows

Glynn Vivian Art Gallery, Swansea

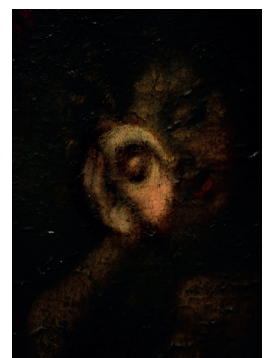
27.9.19 – 18.3.20



installation of Cupid and the Curious Moaning of Kenfig Burrows, 2019

Cupid and the Curious Moaning of Kenfig Burrows was an art exhibition that featured a partially restored oil painting, Cupid (c.1650) installed alongside a series of photographic works by artist Sophy Rickett.

Originally attributed to C17th artist Mario di Fiori (1603-1673), the painting had not been exhibited publicly for decades, due to the layer of coal dust and dirt that had accumulated on its surface while it was stored in a boiler house.





An important element of the exhibition was a family engagement activity, developed by Sophy Rickett in consultation with the public engagement team at the gallery. The main aims of the activity were:

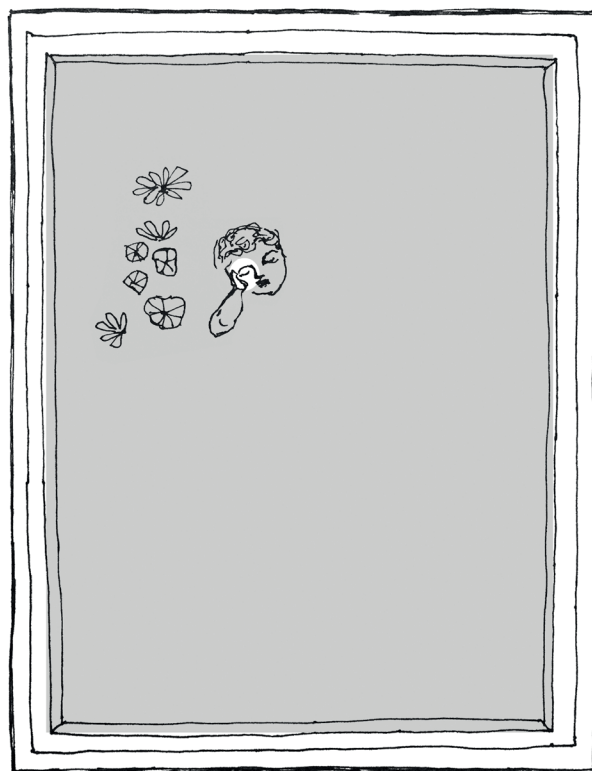
- ✿ To provide a self-guided resource that would help families visiting with young people and children to engage with the ideas and concepts explored by the artist in the exhibition
- ✿ To bring the work of the conservationist more into the public eye
- ✿ To provide a resource for families to work on in the gallery – as well as in their own home or school environments
- ✿ To draw attention the gallery and its collection as a resource open and accessible to the local community.

White Wall Yellow Door designed a simple drawing activity, that asked children to imagine what might be hidden behind the layer of dirt that the conservationist had partially removed.

The activity was printed in b/w as an A6 postcard, and an A4 sheet – and was available for families to take, free of charge, from the gallery reception.

Children and adults alike responded enthusiastically to the challenge – both at home and at an organised event at the gallery before lockdown in January. Once lockdown started, the guide was made available as a download, and people were invited to post their Cupids on social media. They were also used to mail to family and friends – thus increasing awareness of the project even further.

To publicise the event, we also invited established artists to create their own interpretations – these were posted on social media and blog posts when the activity was launched in Jan 2020.



Design for Cupid family activity



Family workshops were held and to increase engagement, a childrens' activity was devised which invited participants to think about the dirt on the surface as a subject in itself, and a Family Workshop took place in the Gallery.

Curious about Cupid?

The installation in Gallery 7 features a beautiful oil painting that pictures a sleeping cupid, surrounded by bunches of flowers.



It was painted around 375 years ago by an artist called Mario di Fiori - an Italian artist whose name means 'Mario of the Flowers'



For many years, the painting was hidden away in storage, near a coal powered boiler, and over the years, poor cupid became hidden by a thick layer of coal dust and dirt from the fire.

Jenny* is the name of our conservation expert, and it is her job to clean and repair damaged paintings like this one, so they can be put back in the galleries for people to look at and enjoy.

It is unusual for a painting to be put on public display when it is only partly cleaned - but seeing it like this, gives visitors the chance to see the difference that cleaning can make to a painting.

Some areas of the painting are so completely hidden by the layer of dirt that Jenny doesn't know what she will uncover when she finally cleans the rest of the painting!

What might she uncover?

Is Cupid completely surrounded by flowers, or are there other details hidden behind the dirt?

What can you imagine?

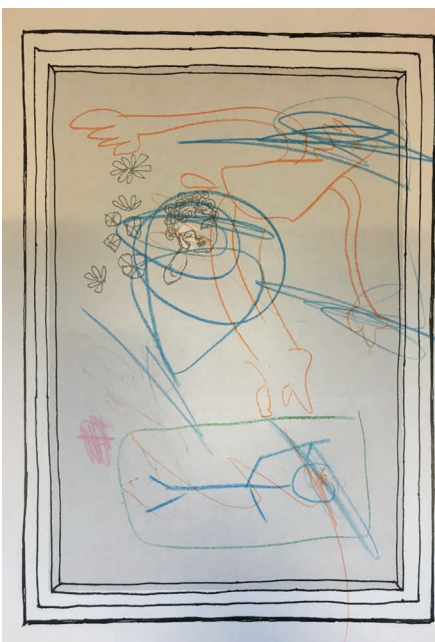
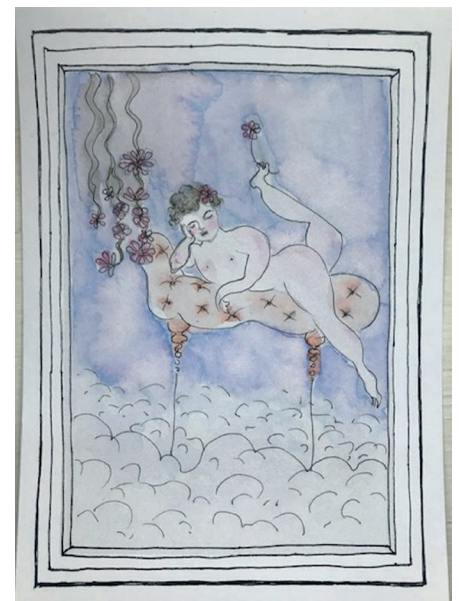
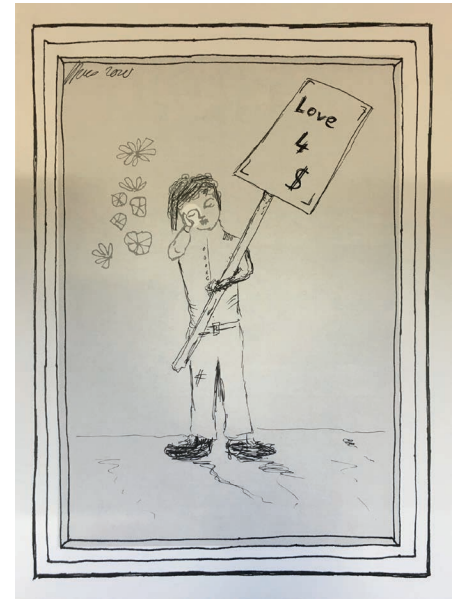
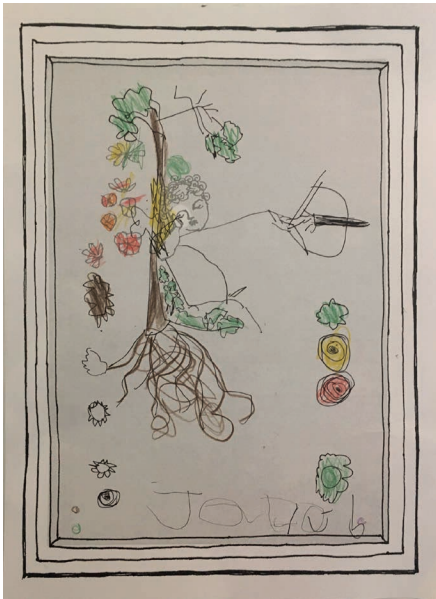
*JENNY IS HEBREW FOR GRACIOUS

Put some of your ideas in this shaded area. Then, use the frame on the other side to create more...



DRAW, WRITE, SPEAK OR THINK
what you'd like Jenny to uncover!

Mario of the Flowers was inspired by flowers - maybe your name will inspire what you draw



families + kids were invited to create
their own responses