The
Earls Court Development Company

Adam Hennessey
Portraits
2023

photo by Harry Pseftoudis
For three months this summer I took part in an Artist in Residence programme run by The Earl's Court Development Company in partnership with the National Portrait Gallery. I was tasked with capturing the local community in some way. I chose to draw portraits of people in profile using coloured pencils. Twenty-six people came up the steep stairs to the studio in the Community Hub and sat very patiently as I drew them. I drew them all from observation, often taking photographs so I could finish any complex patterns on the clothes or fix any mistakes. Usually, I spend a lot of time by myself painting pictures in my studio so to have the chance to meet new people and share stories was very heart warming. Thank you so much to the all the sitters who took part and the team at the community hub who made me feel so welcomed.
I am a mother, an employment coach and a nurse, amongst my numerous other hats. I was born in Sierra Leone, a sun kissed peninsula on the west coast of Africa. For the first sixteen years of my life, I lived by the sea in Freetown until we moved to London with my family. Just after my 18th birthday, I boarded the train at London Paddington, off to university in the coastal city of Canterbury, where I lived for almost four years, before returning back to London. At the age of twenty-two, fresh faced and full of zest, I pitched my home in West London to be close to work and amenities. This time I was no longer by the seaside, but lived only a stone’s throw from the banks on the river Thames with the opportunity to stroll along the river bank to relax, escape the hustle and bustle of London, unwind and rejuvenate, but to also embrace the diverse local culture.
I enjoy, walking, travelling, singing, creating new things (writing poetry, sewing, craft, art etc); learning new skills (I play the ukulele and recorder, not very well yet), dancing, bringing concepts into life and making new friends. In three words, I am creative, fun and tenacious! So, if you ever have a budding concept, that you'll like to bring to life, then Ada is your ‘go to’ person.
My name is Alba Frederick. I was born in Hammersmith & Fulham and have lived here for most of my life. I currently enjoy a blend of working at the Community Hub as part of The Earl’s Court Development Company team, as well as making art, poetry and podcasting, and have recently started an MA in creative writing and wellbeing. I rent a space in Empress Studios where I get to make a mess and spread my creative wings. I love spending time there. A little-known fact about me is that I was born very prematurely, and spent the first month of life in an incubator. I feel lucky to be alive. One of my favourite things to do is swimming outdoors, whether that’s in London lidos or in the sea.
I had a very different childhood to most, born in Jamaica, growing up on a quiet sugar estate. The biggest shock of moving to London was the cold weather! London though was an exciting place to be in the 1970s. I moved to the borough in the 1980s where I met my wife and both of our daughters were born here. I have fond memories of walking our dog in the park, along the Thames, cycling around Fulham's streets and our daughters playing in Normand Park. There was plenty of nightlife in Fulham and Earl's Court, especially live music. I am now retired, and play tennis, table tennis, and read. I still enjoy cycling along the Thames path, and exploring Wormwood Scrubs. I support QPR.
My name is Carolina Blanco. I’ve been fortunate enough to call myself a local resident of Kensington & Chelsea for the last eight years. Following residence in New York and Milan working in fashion, I then came to London and have not looked back since. I reside in Notting Hill thanks to my lovely landlord who is also my best friend and work near Sloane Square. My bicycle commute reminds me of Mary Poppins and I enjoy all the wonderful seasons and weather changes throughout the year in Hyde Park. The Kensington & Chelsea community is filled with endless activities which I have dipped in and out of over the last eight years. For instance, taking live drawing classes in a small cottage on Chepstow Road by an incredible Artist, volunteering with adventurous children at the Rugby Portobello Trust at their aftercare program, taking a swim in the Lido and playing tennis at the local public courts. I hope to continue my journey through this very giving borough and hope in exchange to be able to give back all the riches I’ve been rewarded.
My niece Alba works at the Community Hub. I am visiting from Australia.
I was born at the Queen Charlotte and Chelsea Hospital in West London where I live, attend school and have grown up. It's a safe and fun place to live and meet up with my friends. I play the piano, sing, bake and draw. I enjoy helping other children, playing sports like basketball, netball and my newly acquired skill of rowing.
One day, I'd like to be a movie director…and have my first film featured at the Earl's Court International Film Festival.
Hello there, I’m Dee. I was born in Hammersmith hospital and my childhood home is in Fulham which is where my parents still live now. In my younger years I worked in the fashion industry and later on as a beauty sales consultant. During this time, I was fortunate enough to experience London fashion week and Paris Bourse de Commerce which was a really thrilling part of my work history.
After I had my daughter, I changed my career to fit in with having a small child and I ended up working in a primary school as a finance administrator. My school role came to an end after contracting a life changing viral infection. This left me with lasting neurological implications but I found my life-long love of art and creativity to be a huge part of my rehabilitation. My dream is to pursue my creative career again. I am hopeful that opportunities will arise through attending the amazing classes at the ECDC hub.
My name is Firdaus Adebola. I'm a student whose family have come from Nigeria. Even though I wasn't born in Hammersmith and Fulham it's the area I've always felt most connected to. I moved around different boroughs in London but I've never felt as home anywhere else as I do here. My hopes for the future are to go into medical research or a career in healthcare. But something that's really important to me is giving back to my community in any way I can. For example, I would love to set up my own food bank or youth club in a few years where other young people can feel that same sense of community that I've felt whilst living here.
Hi, I'm Kaya. I've lived in Fulham with my mum all my life; My grandparents also live within the borough. My earliest memories involve going to Forest School with my nursery and being so excited to immerse myself in nature and identify new plants and wildlife. I also have fond memories of family gatherings at my mum's childhood home, filled with love, music and the sweet aroma of my grandma's cooking. With two extremely creative parents inspiring me every day, I later developed a passion for art and creativity. I expressed this through dance for fourteen years and then studied fine art and design at GCSE. Although I no longer study art, I still attempt to draw or paint every day for fun as I find it very therapeutic and grounding. I studied Economics, Geography and Psychology at A-level and although these are not conventionally artistic subjects, I still found myself being able to think creatively and be innovative with the way I approached my studies. My favourite place to go is the riverside because I feel connected to the natural environment and tend to have amiable encounters with local residents. So far on my gap year, I've travelled to Central America and I currently work locally in Parsons Green; Both of which have allowed me to develop many important life skills. I have recently been blessed with an extremely exciting position in finance. This will lead me a bit further into the city but I'll always know Fulham as home.
Kenzy

Work experience for the hub.
I grew up in Fulham and I always remember going to the playgroup in Normand Park as a child and my parents taking us swimming in Fulham pools and to play Tennis just opposite. As I grew up, changes were made, and we deeply missed those places, which were a huge part of our childhood memories. I now have a child of my own and hoped to find a safe place near our home where he would also make some great memories but it wasn't the same, until we discovered the Earl's Court Community Hub. The kid's activities are great and it's a safe, peaceful environment with amazing staff. The adult activities are just as great; I've done the gardening, massage, acupuncture and art classes, where I learnt a lot and enjoyed thoroughly. Each lesson was different, interesting, exciting and therapeutic, and the Artists are simply the best! The Hub has become one of my favourite places to be; a second home.
I was born in Hammersmith Hospital on 2nd April 1951. My parents George and Doris Heading were from Hammersmith. We lived in Tabor Road which was ideal as there was only one car in the road so it was a wonderful playground. I went to Brackenbury Road Primary school and then to Hammersmith County Comprehensive which was very close to the BBC television centre. As you can imagine they were often filming in the area and we would try very hard to be on the television. I was in the Brownies and flew up to the Girl Guides. Every year we would go camping to Wantage. The bell tents, sleeping bags and rucksacks were loaded into the back and we would all sit on these in an open back lorry. So much for health and safety but we loved it and sang the whole way there. I worked for a local newsagent first as a paper girl and then behind the counter as my Saturday job. At the age of eighteen I left London to live in Worcester.
My name is Araminta but most people call me Minty. I'm a long time Londoner and have been facilitating a Woman's Drama group here in the borough with Outside Edge Theatre Company. We have been running them at the Study Society in Barons Court, a place I remember for many years previously being the Royal Ballet School. It feels very full circle as I was a professional ballet dancer for fourteen years before moving into acting and theatre. It's such a wonderful space and I feel lucky to be able to bring something into the incredibly space that this community has created. My plan is to continue to facilitate safe spaces where everyone can experience the joy that movement and theatre making can offer, especially to those in recovery.
Molly

My name is Molly, and I came to work in London for an internship with Kensington and Chelsea Art week I got through my university. My favourite (and one of my earliest) memories since arriving is seeing Lucy Oats fantastic mural outside Earl's Court station - which I was lucky enough to help out with! I grew up in Bristol, but my dad has roots in west London so I've always been keen to visit. I've just finished my final year at university studying zoology and I am now looking to pursue a career in either documentary making, environmental consultancy or event management (I can't decide!). I love learning new hobbies so I've tried all sorts from pottery to crochet and even basket weaving!
My name is Nilay. I am a retired trauma therapist and I have lived in Fulham for over forty years. I found a new passion for art during the covid pandemic. The Fulham Good Neighbours group helped me to get started and encouraged me to continue my journey. I am grateful to the Earl’s Court Community Hub for their art classes and I enjoyed working with Adam Hennessey over the last three months. I have continued to expand my interest in art by sketching sculptures in parks and attending drawing classes at the V&A with the Open Age art group. I have also discovered new techniques in watercolour paints in online classes run by Gianna via the Dedham Library in Boston, USA. I plan to continue learning and exploring Art within my current and on-going classes.
My name is Nyah Boston-Shears. Home for me lies outside of London, in Bournemouth. When my portrait was taken, I was a student at the University of Exeter and found myself exploring the borough through interning with Kensington & Chelsea Art Week. The timing of this opportunity was almost perfect as I was desperate to have some time away from Exeter and working in London gave me the chance to re-establish my relationship with the city. London had been somewhere I associated closely with a particular person who I am no longer in contact with. Here I was able to prove to myself that London was still somewhere I both wanted to be and belonged. Despite only working in the borough for just over a week, I found myself quickly learning tube routes, recognising roads, and knowing the best spots to grab a coffee. I was able to not only navigate the city without that person by my side, but had the confidence to take myself to gigs and exhibitions. I was immensely proud of myself and Adam’s portrait captures that moment in time. Having now graduated and living back in Bournemouth, I find myself in this liminal space wondering what is next. Perhaps, my relationship with London will evolve once more but for now I am very grateful for my time in Kensington & Chelsea this summer, thank you.
Prisha

Enjoying the community participation in art and creativity.
My name is Moremi Apata-Omisore. I work across GP practices in Hammersmith and Fulham after a stint working in Barnet. I grew up on White City estate, Shepherd’s Bush and always wanted to work in the borough again, having done this before. I have fond memories of conkers, swimming at Hammersmith Park, which we called BBC Park at the time, the original Janet Adegoke leisure centre, frogs, ducks, honeysuckle and running around the estate playing knock down ginger! We were active kids and I'll be forever grateful that activity was not a chore but a part of the built environment.
I've lived in West Kensington for fourteen years, but my association with the area goes back to my childhood. My mum was born in Chelsea in the 1950s and her mum, my Nana, lived on the Fulham Road near Parsons Green when I was a boy. Some of my favourite memories as a little boy were spending time with her in her flat being fed toad-in-the-hole and apple pie. She would often take me to Bishops Park to feed the ducks. Her flat was above an off-licence called Bottoms Up and she would tease me that I needed to be careful when walking past the off licence as the people inside might instruct me to put my bottom up. I had no idea what she meant, but it was terrifying! I later went to school in the borough at The London Oratory School between West Brompton and Fulham Broadway and then, after university, worked there for twenty years.

I met my future husband in a bar in Earl's Court and, after a few years, we ended up buying a flat together in West Kensington. I love running and my favourite route is to head to the river at Hammersmith and down the Thames Path to Putney through Bishops Park. I often find myself drifting back to my childhood as I pass the duck pond in Bishops Park remembering the halcyon childhood days. I have many happy memories from the local area and couldn't imagine living anywhere else.
My name is Shirley Wiggins. I've been a local resident in W14 since the age of six when my father moved us from Brockley to Sinclair Road. I'm now sixty-seven and still live locally. I went to school at nearby St. Marks until 1974 when I left for the USA and a time living in the Caribbean. I came back to W14 because of the strong sense of community! after numerous jobs and two careers. They say all the world's a stage, and it was for me, particularly the bandstand in Bishops Park. I am now living a childhood dream of doing films and commercials to top up the pension. I try to live a life characterised by calmness and a sense of peace. However, I am passionate about many things, and my plan is to grow old disgracefully like an OG!
Born and bred here in Fulham, an area I have lots of love and respect for. My maternal grandparents came and settled here from the Caribbean. So, Fulham holds our family history here too. Proud of the fact our borough of Hammersmith and Fulham has three football clubs the only borough in the whole world to have this!
My name is Tahira, everyone calls me Tina for short. I was born in Pakistan then moved to England with my family when I was eleven. I went to school and college here where I studied an A level in Art and Childcare level 3. I then went to live in Germany and I can speak four languages; Urdu, Punjabi, English and German. I came back to Fulham twenty-seven years ago and I love the area. I work at the Earl’s Court Community Hub, where I run a ‘Tiny-Tots’ group and I am the instructor for the ‘Chair Exercise’ class every Wednesday where there is a lovely group of ladies.
My name is Tricia O'Leary. I've been a local resident in Kensington & Chelsea since early childhood. A Londoner, spawned of Irish parents who were publicans. Which hopefully explains how I came to be born in one... We moved to The Lancaster Arms pub near Latimer Road W11, when I was five. For my sister Sally and I, being brought up in a pub in those days was like landing in a surrealist's dream - a cross between serious theatre and a pantomime. They say all the world's a stage, and it was. Such characters, and strong sense of community! We later moved to a pub on the Fulham Road by Chelsea Football Club, called The Black Bull. These days, after a busy career in TV production (starting out at BBC Television Centre), I live a much more zen life. I am passionate about the Arts and yoga. The plan is to keep doing headstands into my nineties.
Zakiya

Internship with Kensington & Chelsea art week co-ordinating a poetry circle.
I go to the art class and gardening club at the Community Hub. My favourite thing is the parties!