



TOTAL IMMERSION

A Disability Arts Project by CEDA



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

Summary

Total Immersion is a two year arts project funded by Arts Council England. The project is CEDA's most ambitious creative project to date. Total Immersion worked with a diverse range of artists in a wide spectrum of art forms, including residencies by internationally renowned professional disabled artists. The project also provided progression for a number of emerging disabled artists. Disabled people living in the region, and visiting, engaged with the project as participants, as audiences in the community and online. Throughout the project we hosted a number of exhibitions, celebration events and workshops for all, culminating in May 2018 as an integral part of AWE (Art Week Exeter).

The entire Total Immersion project was recorded using the latest 360 technology. From fully immersive video and photography we were able to include everyone near and far in the activities delivered as part of the project. We also broadcasted highlights of the project in part via our CEDATV YouTube channel and social media channels.

Key Elements of the Project

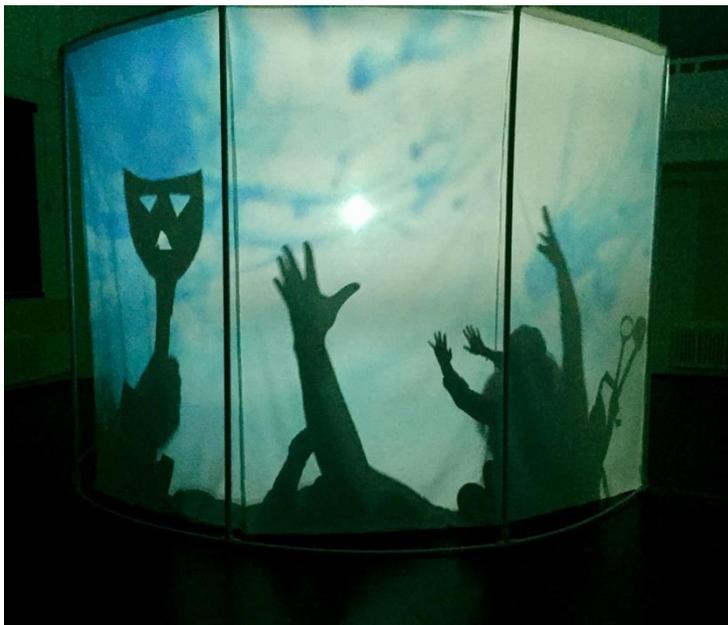
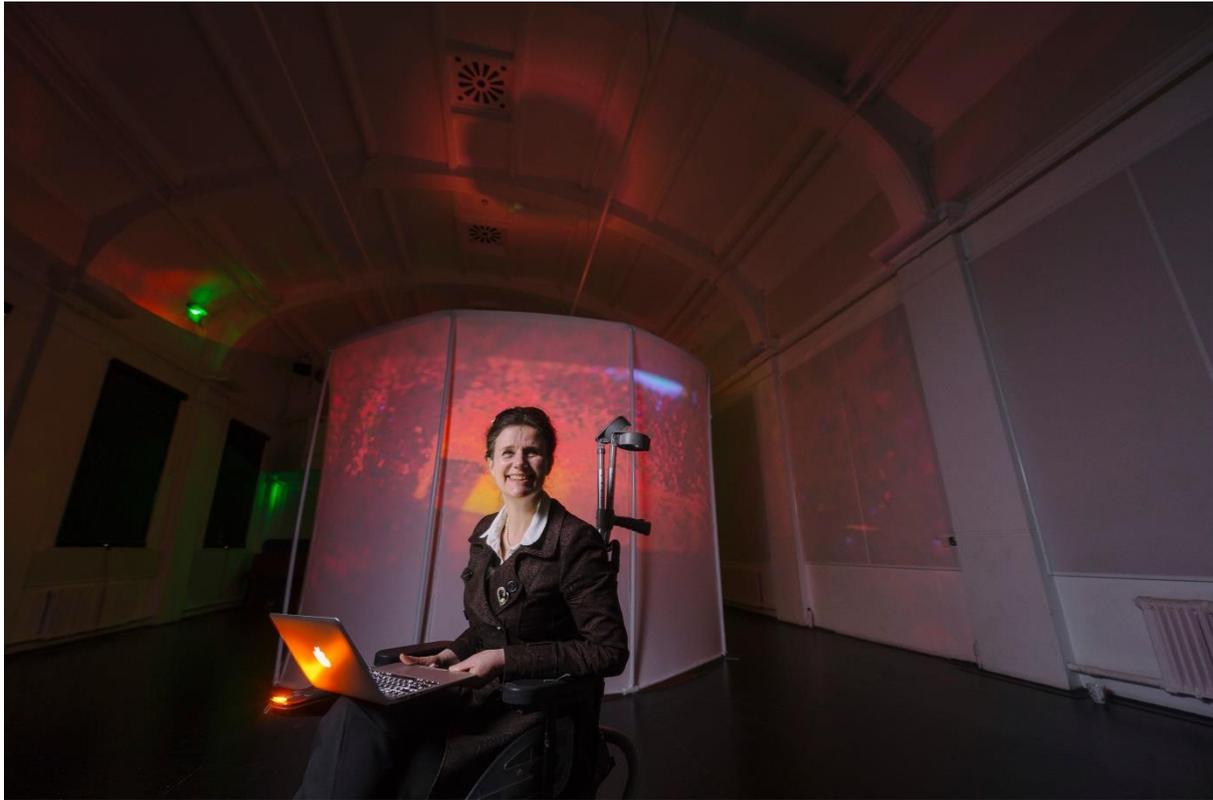
Total Immersion focused on in-depth exploration around three main themes: **Immersion in Space; Immersion in Touch; Immersion in Sound**

These themes translated as virtual reality, music and sound, printing and photography, performance, mosaic, ceramics and sculpture

Immersion in Space

So much of the project has been spent working with local professional and internationally-renowned disabled artists Sue Austin and Mark Ware.

Sue Austin has been spending her recent years as an artist exploring 360 imagery and has used her experience and skills to support CEDA service users to create their own 360 immersive films. Some participants have also used their wheelchairs and LED lights to create sound and images for a virtual disco. These images were then projected onto a pop up dome created by Sue.



Members of the public, CEDA users and other artists involved in the project were invited to experience the disco within the dome or by using virtual reality viewers. A collaboration with Theatre Alibi resulted in our use of a suitable space at their base, Emmanuel Hall in Exeter. During the project Sue was given the opportunity to develop her own practice and work on

enhancing the pop up 360 system she designed to exhibit other pieces of her previous work. Here is a link to view Sue's work with CEDA live:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nZiSn_4Ebzs

Mark Ware has been using his photography skills to work with CEDA's service users to create photographic images of themselves which have been used to create 'reflections of self' banners which were exhibited in the Princesshay Shopping Centre during Exeter Arts Week Festival. Titled

‘Artistic Debris’, these are self-portraits of how the service users view themselves and the images are surrounded by words that they feel best describe them as a person. The images received very positive reactions and the exhibition of them was extended by Princesshay for longer than the initial Art Week.

Mark himself wrote: “My art contribution to Total Immersion has focused on perceptions of self and disability; How we perceive ourselves, how we perceive others, and how others perceive us. The intention from the outset was to create portraits of four Ceda users, all of whom have cerebral palsy, in ways that directly involve them in multisensory experiences during each part of the creative process. I sought portraits that went beyond traditional single-layered external representations.



The context of the exhibition space for this part of the project was a shopping centre. The location greatly influenced the style and content of the work produced. Printed onto banners and hung above a shopping centre walkway, the portraits were displayed amongst a vast array of visual advertising imagery and words. I decided to create designs that, on first glance, appear to be

advertisements too, but on closer inspection reveal themselves as ‘non-commercial’ portraits of four people with disabilities.

All four portraits show wheelchair users. Having used a wheelchair myself for lengthy periods in the past due to my own disability, I am acutely aware of how many people ‘look down’ on wheelchair users. I played on this shared wheelchair user experience by featuring wheelchairs prominently in each banner portrait, showing our group ‘looking down’ on the public from their banners that were hanging above.”

Other Immersion in Space projects



We worked with virtual reality headsets Oculus in workshops at CEDA over the whole two years in order to create an event at Royal Albert Memorial Museum (RAMM) in Exeter during Art Week Exeter

We attracted interest in our use of Virtual Reality from other community and charitable organisations and provided

advice, demonstrations and workshops to 8 different companies all seeking clarity on how/why VR would be used in a creative context.

The 360 images captured by CEDA artists during a special visit to the Royal Albert Memorial Museum will be embedded into the RAMM website by September 2018.



The event comprised of six 1 ½ hour workshops over 3 days:

Day 1- 65 demos of VR and creativity- 120 audience members

Day 2- 83 demos of VR- 115 audience members

Day 3- 60 demos of VR- 180 audience members

During Year One a total of 210 individuals engaged with Virtual Reality in either creating a digital piece of art work or attending a demonstration hosted by CEDA Artists.



Double Elephant Print Workshop worked with us in Princesshay Shopping Centre to create public live wheelchair print making. They write:

‘The total immersion project provided a great opportunity to get to know the CEDA artists and to find more direct and active ways for

them to engage more fully with the making. Having several sessions allowed ideas to develop and for the participating artists to see and understand the potential for image making and to do so on a larger scale. As inevitably we had to work more slowly and communication is slower, single sessions do not allow the same freedom or the same ambitious outcomes.

The public event worked really well despite the early rainfall and we ultimately finished all four boards and several members of the public added their marks, either by wheelchair, bicycle or footprint’. We aim to hang the boards publicly.



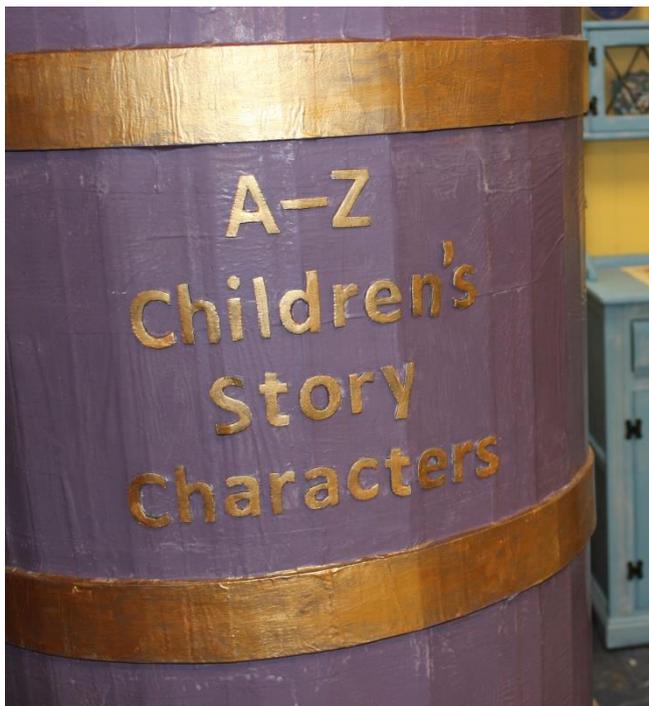
BBC Spotlight covered the event

Encounter Theatre worked with us at Exeter Phoenix to create their performance-based See Me Hear Me workshop, which encourages us all to celebrate who we are – unique human beings living and working alongside each other.

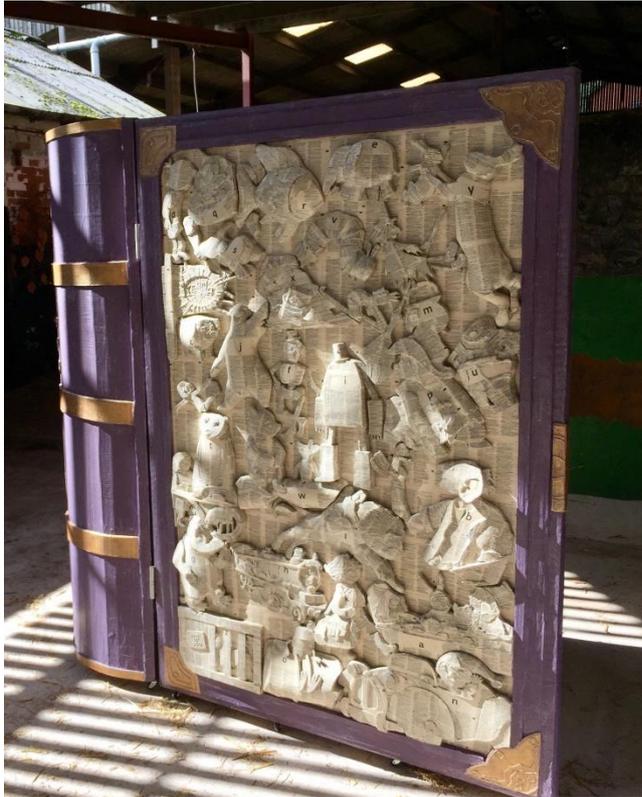


Immersion in Touch

James Lake, an Exeter-based professional disabled artist who has worked with CEDA for several years, created a cardboard sculpture of a children's book, which when placed in a public space – Exeter Central Library for Art Week Exeter – encouraged visitors to explore within the pages and covers of the book. The book was also requested for exhibited at other locations including Exeter University and West Town Farm



James led two oversubscribed workshops for CEDA as part of the Exetreme Imagination Festival in creating cardboard sculptures based on stories.



Exeter Library alone estimated a total of approximately 900 people interacting with the book sculpture over the week long period.

Local storyteller Clive Pig worked with CEDA's Youth services on stories which could be depicted within the book. There are plans for Clive to use the book as an interactive focus for his workshops in schools and community settings in the long term.

Emily Parr has led ceramics workshops over the two year period, focused on the sense of touch during the making process. Keen on progression for participants, she has nurtured the talent of 9 emerging disabled artists and developed her own practice and skills in enabling disabled people to access quality work with clay. A community tea party was held to celebrate the end of year one of the project at Pinhoe park where over 60 visitors enjoyed a special ceramic tea service created by CEDA artists and a Devon cream tea.



Emily has also engaged in co-mentoring with long-term CEDA disabled workshop leader Ros Hammond. (see below)

Ros Hammond works annually with CEDA participants to create an outdoor sculpture for the TRAIL (Teignmouth Recycled Arts in Landscape) exhibition. One entry won the whole competition while several others have been highly commended. Ros re-introduced the concept of upcycling art to a group of emerging CEDA artists and worked with them to bring new life to a 1950's bedroom furniture set, nest of tables and old mahogany dresser. All of these pieces were restored to a high standard and used for art work exhibiting. This proved so popular that at the end of Art Week, local chocolate café Chococo asked to purchase the upcycled dresser as a permanent display location for local art work.

During Art Week Exeter, two whole day accessible community mosaic workshop was held on 23 and 26 May at Devon Disability Collective.



Mary May led workshops in accessible collage making.



Teresa Pardoe joined the project after the popularity of a smaller upcycling artistic project delivered by Ros Hammond. Teresa worked at Dartington on a larger upcycling initiative. Total Immersion was Teresa's first time working with disabled artists. Teresa worked on some personalised canvases to get to know a group at CEDA and then worked on an upcycled door which has been turned into a new height adjustable table for the CEDA art studio. Other pieces were created for exhibition.



Immersion in Sound

This theme proved the most effective way of engaging the disabled children and young people who use CEDA's Youth services, and also of connecting more widely in the community. A community music day held at Exeter Phoenix provided a platform for the many young musicians from CEDA's FUMP (Friday Urban Music Project) group to perform live. With an audience of 110 people, this was a vibrant event.

Daisy Higman is Sound Designer for Plymouth-based Above Bounds Theatre Collective and herself visually impaired. CEDA engaged Daisy to work with CEDA members to create a soundscape inspired by popular music of the last 30 years. The work created 8 original music tracks themed around CEDA for its 30th anniversary exhibition during Art Week Exeter.



CEDA Speakeasy created a series of podcasts including one with westcountry musician and CEDA volunteer Roger Smith

The group have now expanded to host a live two hour radio show each week on the internet radio station Access All Aerials.

An exciting collaboration is being developed with EMG (Exeter Music Group) Symphony Orchestra, who have begun working with us to create 360 ° film from a range of points within the orchestra. This will form a major part of our follow-on project CEDA360 and will enable disabled (and non-disabled) people to experience what it is like to be part of an orchestra, on stage.

Kelly Young, a musician working on the CEDA Rhythms project, provided one to one tuition to disabled musicians to develop their skills

Statistics: Outputs Achieved

Total Immersion engaged:

- ❖ 35 artists
- ❖ 260 participants within workshops delivered by professional artists plus others to practice new skills
- ❖ 45,000 online broadcasts via social media and broadcast website- the BBC Spotlight piece generated a lot of interactions and viewings online
- ❖ 102 exhibition days including a week-long '30 Years of Disability Arts with CEDA' held during Art Week Exeter at Devon Disability Collective
- ❖ 30 new commissions
- ❖ 360+ days of employment for artists
- ❖ 800 workshops delivered

Art Week Exeter Statistics

- **Chococo** Private View Launch event
Chococo chocolate cafe donated the space, time, samples and staff to celebrate the launch of CEDA Total Immersions Art Week Exeter Takeover. There was also a display of ceramics on a CEDA upcycled dresser (which is now permanently on display there)

Opening Night Private Viewing- 45
Estimated visitor numbers Monday-Monday- 250

- **RAMM**
Day 1- 65 demos of VR and creativity- 120 audience members
Day 2- 83 demos of VR- 115 audience members
Day 3- 60 demos of VR- 180 audience members

RAMM TOTAL 623

PRINCESSHAY SHOPPING CENTRE

Estimated views of Banners- 15000

Wheelchair Printing live event- 350

30 years Exhibition Soundscape: 20 participants

Library- Estimated viewing of the book sculpture- 900

AAA (Radio Show) Art week special- 15 audience members

Sue Austin Installation Preview 50

Total Audience during Art Week- 15,253

Outcomes

- ❖ Increased profile of professional disabled artists in the region
- ❖ Increased awareness of the general public of creative work by disabled people
- ❖ More disabled people engaging in arts project
- ❖ Greater satisfaction for participants due to tangible outcomes
- ❖ Progression for emerging artists

Key Learning Points

Successes:

Undoubtedly the greatest success of the project has been to see CEDA Arts ‘takeover’ of Art Week Exeter, bringing the work of disabled artists to the forefront of the event. Combining high profile, quality and new work alongside participatory, community events provided a balanced approach to what was one of the busiest periods CEDA has encountered in terms of arts projects. As soon as it was decided this would be the culmination of the project an extension of two months was granted to accommodate this. From this point on, the project became more driven and focused. We will build on this momentum.

Collaborations and skill sharing between professional and emerging artists also became exciting to watch. Due to having two years to develop meant that emerging disabled artists were able to have one to one mentoring sessions and progression was noticeable.

Lessons Learned:

At times, pinning artists down to a timeframe proved difficult, in part because the majority have their own work and funded projects to develop. As we had identified which key artists we wished to work with prior to the project, and approached them to work with us, it was felt that this created an imbalance of control to certain elements of the project. Should we have advertised the availability of the opportunities openly - regarding both commissions and leading workshops - this may have given us greater control. We will ensure this informs our planning for our new, follow-on project, CEDA360, by producing detailed Briefs and Contracts for commissions and pieces of work and recruiting widely.

Working with digital technology has posed a few problems with sharing and storing large files in different formats. This is a practical problem which we will explore ways around during the CEDA360 project.

Engaging artists to mentor and work one to one with people to develop specific skills can bring a set of problems relating to both impairment and confidence. If one participant drops out of a larger project, it is not noticed too much, but with an individual the potential for failure is greater. That said, often the rewards are far greater, so there is a balance to be struck and measures put in place at the outset of the project for both individuals to be supported.

Marketing and Media

The Total Immersion project attracted good media attention with highlights of the project being documented by BBC Spotlight, ITV Westcountry, BBC Radio Devon, Bay FM Radio Exmouth and through our own social media channels.

Gillian Taylor provided expertise via a workshop for disabled participants in journalism and storytelling.

We gained many new followers and supporters on all social media channels due to the work we were showcasing.



CEDA Celebrates 30 Years of Disability Arts

www.cedaonline.org.uk