



# Flourish

*A national programme to promote artwork by young people with a diverse history of care*

Flourish started as a one-off exhibition, responding to feedback from care-leavers in Newham, East London. The exhibition includes artwork made by children and young people up to 25 years old from throughout the UK. Since 2007, this has been at The Foundling Museum in Bloomsbury. We have shown the work of over 280 individual artists and groups since 2006.

Flourish shows the creative output of those who are cared-for by someone other than their parent – including those looked-after, adopted, fostered, with special educational needs, youth offenders, with another family member caring for them and care leavers. Artists are invited, amongst other things, to help select and install exhibitions, be interviewed for publications and write for the catalogue as well as contributing to qualifications through Arts Award.

For those who have taken part over the last five years, there have been tangible long-term benefits. Some of the artists have gone on to university or to college. Some have gone out into the world of work with increased confidence and self-esteem. One had a solo exhibition – at the age of 17. Many have sold their work.

NikouNazaripour, a Flourish artist said: 'Making stuff makes me happy – it has the power to make me question my choices, learn new skills, meet new people and have great conversations. The challenge is to enjoy every process, even when things go wrong! Exhibiting in the Flourish show was an experience I shall never forget. It sends out a positive message that there are a lot of very talented and expressive young people in care.'

All exhibiting artists are invited to the private view of their exhibition and this is often the first time they have been into a gallery. For many it is the first time they have been to London and they visit other galleries and cultural venues while they are here. It promotes arts practice as a viable career and a source of adaptable skills. Work is selected in a professional manner and a full-colour catalogue is produced.

Flourish works with a unique and often misunderstood and certainly misrepresented group of young people.

The work is interesting, challenging and inspiring for the audience because it represents a voice that is rarely heard or recognised. ■

Beatty Hallas, Curator

The 2012 selection of artworks will be shown at The Foundling Museum, Bloomsbury in 2013. For more about Flourish, visit [www.flourish-art.org](http://www.flourish-art.org)