

spud

# ANNUAL REPORT 2023



spudWORKS, Sway, Hampshire, SO41 6BA

[www.spud.org.uk](http://www.spud.org.uk)  
Charity No. 1160358

# ABOUT US



SPUD is an arts and education charity (established in 2015) that creates opportunities for people to engage with art, architecture, design and the environment. World renowned for our award-winning projects including the Exbury Egg, Observatory and Handlebar Cafe.

Our creative hub in Sway, New Forest provides gallery, workshop, desk rental and studio spaces amongst beautifully landscaped gardens. A vibrant and varied programme of community activities, events and exhibitions runs throughout the year.

# YEAR IN REVIEW

## Foreword by Chair of Trustees

I am very pleased to introduce the 2023 Annual Report for a year that has seen new projects and partnerships reaching more people and the further development of spudWORKS through the energy, collaboration and creativity of the artists, creatives, young people and wider community. This is against the setting of financially challenging times for the arts, culture and charity sectors. My thanks to the staff, Trustees, the SPUD creative community, spudYOUTH and volunteers for meeting the challenges and working to make SPUD more resilient and creative. Thanks also to our funders, sponsors, partners, and tenants for their continuing support and enabling new projects to develop.

Highlights from the year include 'Thinking Small Reaching Further', The Living Room, LGBTQIA+ Together Workshops, and the New Forest Artist in Residence programme in partnership with the New Forest National Park.

The Living Room building completed in 2023 provides a new space for work with people living with dementia, their families and carers, and for work with young people dealing with mental health issues, and neurodivergent children and their families.

The gallery exhibition programme has supported local artists, showcased projects, artist residencies and experimental work such as Not only the Lonely, Scrambled Nature, Hampshire Open Studios, spudCOLLECTIVE, and the spudOPEN.

'Motopia', part of the 'Thinking Small Reaching Further' programme funded by Arts Council England, was a collaboration with the National Motor Museum, Beaulieu, with workshops and exhibitions at SPUD and the Museum.

SpudWORKS continues to provide workspace and studios for a thriving community artists and small businesses. The Graduate Launch Pad funded in partnership with Arts University Bournemouth supports four creative industry graduates each year. Providing workspace, mentoring, some structured professional support and tailored advice.

Looking ahead SPUD will focus on further developing creative, community and wider partnerships, being part of Sway's local community, and continuing work on financial and organisational sustainability.

Victoria Pirie  
Chair of Trustees

# Introduction by the Director

2023 has been a very strong and incredibly exciting year for SPUD for which I'd like to express my thanks to the team, volunteers and Trustees for all their hard work in helping make this happen. We have been building on the foundations set out over the past few years and consolidating much of the good work that has taken place. The Arts Council funded 'Thinking Small Reaching Further' programme has been instrumental in this growth and the many small interventions are now generating new work, partnerships and opportunities for all the community at spudWORKS.

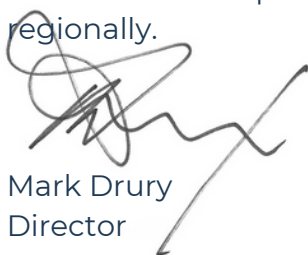
Financially this continues to be a very challenging period for the arts sector and charities generally, however SPUD has positioned itself carefully to remain resilient through a combination of earned income streams and collaborative partnerships. We acknowledge that we are stronger together than alone.

Strategically the ability to structure a more planned out programme has enabled us lead on community engagement, rather than to simply respond to opportunities. SPUD sees itself very much as a proud regional and local arts charity and gallery that strives to support its local artists.

Community at the spudWORKS campus continues to be a key focus with a real 'sense of ownership' of the space by both artist, tenants, workshop leaders and of course participants. The space has an apparent energy that continues to drive and develop ever more exciting and diverse opportunities.

Part of SPUD's unique selling point has been the innovative small builds that it has created such as the Exbury Egg and the Observatory and we have been delighted to realise the new Living Room space this year. The conversion of a disused water tower at spudWORKS into a stunning new space for health and well-being creative workshops has transformed the campus. It also opens up opportunities to work with newer and more sensitive audiences in a dedicated space, with interactive lighting and 180 degree projection and surround sound.

2023 has seen SPUD collaborate with more partners and stakeholders than at anytime in the past 11 years - partners such as the National Park Authority who are fully invested in our programme and share our values for the arts across the region. These relationships help us to influence and shape the arts agenda locally and regionally.



Mark Drury  
Director

# MEET THE TEAM



MARK DRURY  
DIRECTOR



TOM SOFIKITIS  
OPERATIONS MANAGER



TOM HALL  
ARTISTS AND CURATION  
CO-ORDINATOR (FREELANCE)



SUNA IMRE  
COMMUNITY OUTREACH  
(FREELANCE)

KIRSTIE JENKINS - BOOKKEEPING

JAN WILLIS - ACCOUNTANT

## TRUSTEES

VICTORIA PIRIE (CHAIR)

ALISON WARD (TREASURER)

PAUL CLEGG

COLLETTE RAINE

MADDISON COLLYMORE

CHANNA VITHANA

MIA DELVE

MATTHEW LAWSON

INIGO ORMEROD

# OBJECTS & MISSION



## Objects

To advance the education of the public in general, in particular by conceiving and delivering collaborative projects that develop skills and provide improved understanding of place, the arts, design, architecture and the environment and their inter-connection.

## Purpose

Enabling the well-being of communities through collaboration in arts, architecture and education.

# STRUCTURE & GOVERNANCE

Trustees' work is guided by the 2022-2024 Strategy setting out the purpose, aims and difference SPUD is seeking to make.

During the year we were pleased to welcome to the Board a new Trustee who was previously the spudYOUTH Ambassador and 2 Trustees were re-appointed. Key governance matters included development of Trustee role descriptions and induction framework, ongoing work around SPUD's Safeguarding policy, procedures, guidance and training, and work on finances to support decision making and sustainability.

Collectively the Trustees bring a range of skills and knowledge from supporting the development of creative practice, creative education, working with young people and communities, partnership development, finance, business and organisation management.

# FINANCIAL REVIEW

2023 continued to be a financially challenging period for the arts sector and charities generally, however SPUD has positioned itself carefully to remain resilient through a combination of earned income streams and collaborative partnerships. SPUD was able to end the year in a positive position financially with a net increase in total funds of £42,000.

The key financial highlights are noted in the table and commentary below with further detail on income, expenditure and the Charity's balance sheet provided in the Accounts.

	2023	2022
	£'000	£'000
<b>Total Income</b>	279	168
Unrestricted Income	90	113
Restricted Income	189	55
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	238	163
<b>Total Reserves/Funds</b>	796	754
Unrestricted	50	66
Restricted	476	412
Endowment	270	276



## FINANCIAL REVIEW CONTINUED

Key grants within Restricted Income this year came from the Arts Council of England for the 'Thinking Small Reaching Further' programme and the New Forest National Park Authority funding our Artists Residency series. A significant capital project, Living Room, also took place during 2023 receiving £67k in grants and donations. This enabled an award winning building to be created at spudWORKS converting a disused water tower in to a new space for health and well-being creative workshops.

The main components within Unrestricted Income were from the successful renting of creative spaces at spudWORKS (£44k) and from our tenants in the HandleBar Café (£25k), our investment property in Winchester.

### Reserves Policy and end of year position

The trustees' policy is that the balance of reserves held by SPUD should be equal to three months of the charity's running costs. The reserve amount is reviewed annually by the trustees. The trustees believe this level of reserves will provide short term funding stability and allow time to secure alternative sources of income, in the event of a significant drop in income. In 2023 running costs before project expenditure and depreciation were on average £11k per month and the balance in unrestricted reserves at the end of 2023 was £50k.

# PROGRAMME



## Exhibitions

The 2023 exhibition programme shaped up to be diverse, stimulating and stronger than ever. Much of the program calendar was populated by our fixed major projects such as the National Park Residencies and ACE funded exhibitions. For these curated shows SPUD has introduced a transparent application process open to all. We have also tightened up our curatorial mission so that individuals or groups looking to hire the gallery can tailor their applications appropriately. Exhibitions included The 'Non-Fluid' Body exploring creativity post menopause, 'Not Only The Lonely' reflecting on life after covid and how we are coping, and Scrambled Nature questions around AI's role in forest life.

Jordan Cutlers 'Scrambled Nature' focusing on AI had some fully immersive VR parts to the show as well as other forms of interactive audience participation. The artist also tested the capacity of the new Living Room projectors. Alongside the exhibitions we had a packed programme of public engagement talks and workshops.



## The Living Room

The creation of the award-winning Living Room space at spudWORKS has been transformative, both in terms of the campus and the offer we can provide to our more sensitive participants. This new dedicated space with interactive lighting, sound and 180 degree projection is unique.

We now run regular activities for people living with dementia and their families and carers. The space is always transformed into a bright, cheerful and welcoming environment to encourage people to feel relaxed and peaceful. The themes have been based on the seasons, with a focus on simple, gentle activities that are manageable, and encourage chat and interaction – with a lot of tea and cake. We now have a core group of regulars from the local community including those living at home being cared for by their spouse, carers who bring their clients and care homes who bring groups from their residential homes. 33 residents from the homes sang familiar songs at a wonderful garden party at spudWORKS.

The space is also being used for intimate workshops with LGBTQIA young people, some of who are dealing with mental health issues and with neurodivergent children and their families.

The nature of the space, its size, location in the garden and familiarity all make it the perfect place for these gentle and safe workshops.



## Hampshire Open Studios

2023 marked another hugely successful Open Studios with the ever popular Artful Collective exhibiting 13 artists in the Gallery. In addition to this we had all of the SPUD artists studios, Art Angels and the Graduate Launch Pad open throughout the 10 days.

The Open Studios culminated with a mini-festival in the gardens at spudWORKS complete with workshops, activities and fabulous fresh made pizzas! The festival was attended by over 400 people throughout the day and for many people it was their first visit to spudWORKS. This will certainly be a feature of next summers calendar alongside Open Gardens.



## spudFILM

spudFILM 2023 was funded by Culture In Common and consisted of 3 major parts. Educational workshops to inspire young people to discover filmmaking. An International short film competition on the theme of 'Kind'. And a touring showcase of the winning films that would visit local new forest cinemas.

We commissioned a local filmmaker Kieran Short to work with 3 community youth groups located in priority areas in the New Forest. These were located in Hythe, Totton and Fawley. Kieran delivered 4 filmmaking sessions with each group covering the fundamentals of filmmaking and finishing by helping the young people to create their own short films based on the theme of Kind to be submitted into the spudFILM competition.

The theme for the competition was any interpretation of the word "kind" portrayed in a creative and engaging short film. We provided cash prizes to the winners at a Gala Film Awards Evening in partnership with Sway Cinema, of the various categories from Best International Film to People's Choice Winner..

The plan for a touring showcase of the winning films as the final section of the spudFILM project did not go ahead, so we pivoted to offer 2 filmmakers paid opportunities instead. This will lead to the creation of two short films focused on local LGBTQIA young people to be showcased at a festival in Summer 2024.



## spudYOUTH Creative Workshops

2023 saw SPUD begin to consolidate the range of creative workshop opportunities for young people. Drawing upon a wealth of talented artists at spudWORKS we have been able to develop art workshops for young children and teenagers, architecture workshops for teenagers, LGBTQIA teenage workshops and workshops for neurodivergent young people. These are growing in popularity every month and we have streamlined our process to take all applications and payments via an online system, that parents are in control of.

In addition to this we have been fortunate in securing 2 years of funding from the Charles Burnett Foundation to allow us to offer free places on all the workshops to children on Pupil Premium (free school meals) and have actively been promoting this across our local schools, colleges and youth groups.



## New Forest Artist in Residence

The New Forest National Park Residency is an opportunity for artists of any discipline to work with and comment on a chosen area, idea, or community within or engaging with the New Forest National Park. An open brief designed to encourage artists to pursue a line of prolonged research whilst on their residency and to connect with a local and national audience with site specific work followed by a gallery exhibition. This international residency is designed to allow artists to build closer links between contemporary questions of the Forest and the people and spaces that make up the National Park. Working with inspiring and inspired artists to think in different ways about landscapes, how people interact with them, and the challenges that they face. The highly protected nature of the National Park means that we are interested in artists who can work sensitively within the restrictions of this special landscape and respond to this positively in their work.

We've now had 5 resident New Forest National Park artists and 3 fabulous exhibitions. Last year saw residencies from Dr Melanie Rose, Alex Julyan and Ben Adamson.

The success of the programme has led to SPUD and the National Park Authority securing £49500 of funding from Arts Council England to enable the project to continue for a further 3 years with 6 more artists.



## LGBTQIA+ Together Workshops

We welcomed artist Janetka Platun for the month of July, using the starting point of how the gallery can be re-imagined to reflect the uniqueness and diversity of LGBTQIA people and their experience of place. We continued our close partnership with Breakout Youth who are an integral part of generating experiences, information and creativity that fuel this residency.

This year we asked the artist in residence to mentor a group of young LGBTQIA artists in working creatively with vulnerable groups with the aim to support a network of local hubs moving forwards.

Following the very successful residency with Janetka Platun during July and her mentoring of 3 young LGBTQ+ graduates, we are delighted to have secured £6000 of funding to develop a new LGBTQIA creative hub t at spudWORKS.

The hubs will be safe and creative spaces for LGBTQIA young people to come along to regularly. It is the intention to develop and support spudGRADUATE Hannah Buckingham to lead on these hubs and workshops. Janetka has been providing ongoing mentoring for Hannah for the development of this new hub.





## Motopia

Part of our Thinking Small, Reaching further ACE funded programme was to work with other arts and cultural organisations in the New Forest. The first of these has been with the National Motor Museum, Beaulieu on a project called Motopia.

Motopia formed part of a new gallery exhibition at the Museum and enabled Museum artefacts to be taken out and displayed at spudWORKS. We then wrapped an extensive series of workshops with a wide range of people around this exhibition.

In addition to this, artist Tom Hall was commissioned to produce 5 sculptures to go on exhibition at the Motor Museum.

The Motopia show continued at the National Motor Museum with parts of the work carried out at spudWORKS. SPUD also took part in 4 days of workshops at the Motor Museum. At this we worked with 100's of families producing another 'Shell' figure and new road signs. A really strong end to a great collaboration.

The next Folio collaboration will be with the New Forest Heritage Centre and work from their collection. Tom Charman's wood carvings will be the focus on this youth led and curated project. They are a hugely exciting tactile group of Forest carvings evoking forest life, spirits and woodland creatures. This will be combined with contemporary artist Ian Parmirter (aka Lord Sonic).



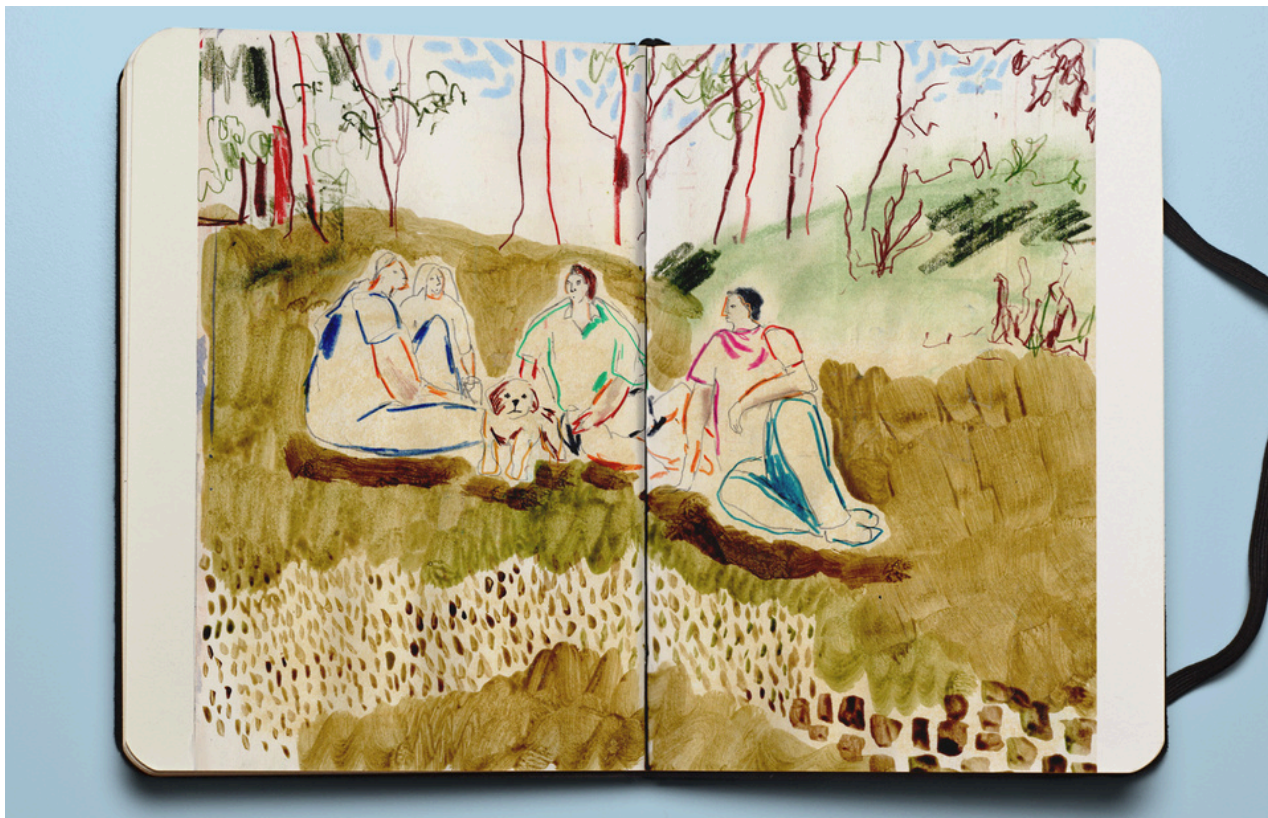
## spudOPEN 2023

2023 spudOpen followed a similar process setting a brief 'Digital Dreaming'. We were aware that the title for this year's exhibition would be a bit of a shock to local artists, but we felt it important to support creative dialogue and extend how local artists might extend their practice. 'Digital Dreaming' has been an amazing success as a show, but did see a drop in applications. We have registered this and will factor this in when selecting next year's exhibition title.

2023's guest curator team was from the Fine Art MA at the Arts University Bournemouth. The prizes were again sponsored by the New Forest National Parks Authority who continue to support the open.

*"The theme of digital dreaming could not be more relevant. Digital is transforming how we work, learn and play, and this is just as true in the National Park as anywhere else."* – Alison Barnes CEO of the NFNPA

This year's we received over 50 applications and selected 41 works. The show has proved very popular again with an average stay in the single gallery of over half an hour. This year's winner was a digital print by Richard Gregory another local artist. The Gala Opening this year coincided with significant flooding which effected attendance. However, we still had over 80+ visitors to celebrate.



## Graduate Launch Pad

At the beginning of the year we were in a smaller, less appropriate artists studio in SPUD with three Launchpad graduates and funding for the program in jeopardy. We are now in a bigger, more appropriate space with funding confirmed from Arts University Bournemouth (AUB) for the next three years and an enlarged capacity of four graduates and a waiting list of artists.

The mentorship has gone from strength to strength with the ACE support allowing regular contact points, some structured professional support and individualised advice. We now have a rolling intake (2 graduates in, 2 out) that allows crossover and sharing of resources. We are supporting excellence, but also supporting growth in some vulnerable groups, giving some artists the support to lead where they felt they couldn't.

The Launchpad artists have all become part of the culture and share in and develop the community at SPUD. Many of them are integral to SPUD's eco-system and are delivering paid workshops and other opportunities, along with applying for funding to support their own work and initiatives.



## spudCOLLECTIVE

The collective headlined 7 exhibitions ranging from traditional survey shows of workshop participants from the previous year through to curated happenings and new performance art. Some highlights were Bubbles fashion show, a sustained exploration of the old clay pits around Sway in Treacle and rich interwoven stories in Inspired Objects. Along side the exhibitions the collective also had seven days of 'Selfish Days' where artists indulged in a day of personal experimentation in a large space.

*"It was a great experience, working with individuals who have different background and practises, being together gave me the confidence to test my creativeness do things I would never be able to do without the supporting group."*

Isil Campanella

*"Apart from the hugely collaborative element of the collective a massive highlight for me, as a new member, was the opportunity to get to know all the other artists. The packed out schedule of the weeks we were exhibiting allowed me to really collaborate in so many ways whilst imbedding myself as part of the team."*

*"About my show, I loved it, I really enjoyed that week. The benefit was taking an idea and discussing it over and over and building it slowly, honing it down together, making it much stronger more interesting."*

Vanessa Collingridge

# LOOKING AHEAD



As we look ahead to 2024, the focus is very much on developing our work more strategically and ensuring we build in appropriate time for successful planning and partnerships to evolve, along with time for reflection. This is vital to ensure the success of our major collaborative projects with other Folio partners.

Our flagship programme of National Park Artist Residencies continues to grow in stature and attract interest from across the globe. It is very much a programme that is embedded in the local but with an international reach and reputation.

SPUD continues to build important relationships with our local community through workshops, talks and open door programmes. We are increasingly the 'go to' organisation in the village for consultation and creative opportunities. SPUD is proud to take part in local events such as the Carnival, Sway open Gardens and Open Studios and make our campus ever more accessible and welcoming to our community.

2024 is already looking like it will be a very full and evermore exciting year for SPUD.