

Living Legacies

Portrait Exhibition – 28th October to 1st November 2013

LinkAge:

LinkAge is a Bristol Based partnership comprising of the Bristol City Council, St Monica Trust and the Anchor Society. LinkAge works with people 55+ and local communities to facilitate inspiring social activities that enrich lives, reduce isolation and loneliness and promote active participation.

This year, LinkAge took the Celebrating Age Festival theme of 'Brilliant in Bristol; many neighbourhoods, many cultures, one city' to heart and worked in collaboration with Luke Mitchell, portrait photographer, the M Shed and alongside the BME Elders groups which LinkAge has closely supported over the last year, to portray an insight into their lives and cultures.



LinkAge Consortium for BME Elders Groups:



All portraits are of members of groups that attend the LinkAge BME Consortium bi monthly Group, set up and run by LinkAge to enable them to come together and share knowledge, skills and best practice to support their continuation. LinkAge is helping them to build their resilience and become sustainable, to promote and develop activities, source training and share resources. Eight difference BME Elder groups have joined the Consortium Group to date.

Supporting the groups that engage older people in their community and subsequently reduce isolation:

By supporting these groups LinkAge are helping to keep older people engaged in their community and subsequently preventing isolation and loneliness. The testimony of each person alongside their portrait is evidence of how crucial these groups are to these minority communities.

Shelagh Hetreed LinkAge BME Elders Development worker:

"LinkAge is very excited about this unique exhibition which we believe gives the elders the legacy that they deserve and presents really positive and strong images of older people who are working hard to support their communities and tackle isolation and loneliness."



The BME Elders Groups:

All the groups represented – Golden Agers, Malcolm X Elders, Dhek Bhal and Bristol & Avon Chinese Womens Group have been running for upwards of 20 years. They developed out of the need to support minority community older people and have continued ever since. LinkAge has worked closely with the groups in need, to sustain them through austere times.



It is impossible not to admire the ambition, energy and enthusiasm of these groups, all run by older people and some run totally by volunteers. It is a privilege to get to know these senior Bristolians who arrived from other continents over 50 years ago, with hopes and dreams and whose stories weave a rich tapestry of all our local history.

'Living Legacies' is a response to this year's Celebration of Age Festival theme and is a celebration of the lives of BME Elders in Bristol. LinkAge will continue to work alongside the groups to support sustainable futures for all of them.

I wanted the photographs to carry a message about both ethnic minorities and about our perceptions of aging. Luke has captured the energy, playfulness, dignity and pride of each subject. I invited the elders to have two portraits taken, to demonstrate that their identity is a rich blend of their racial and cultural origins and over 50 years and more than half their lives in the UK. We hope that the pictures and the captions about the subjects speak for themselves.

Luke Mitchell:

Luke is an artist whose work explores the undying relationship between geography and painting through staged scenes, portraits and tailor-made, historically referenced works. This takes the form of commissions and limited edition collections. Graduating from De Montfort University in 2009 he currently resides in Bristol after making work around the UK, USA and Italy. Luke's portraiture has now been the subject of solo exhibitions in both Bristol's newest and oldest major art galleries in the past year following his residency at the RWA last December.



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