

## The Alhambra Tiling Project

The Alhambra Tiling Project is an enterprise in community art and education. As its name implies, it is inspired by the intricate mathematical tiles that adorn the walls of the Alhambra Palace, in Spain.



The Project's founder, Garnet Frost, has devised a system that allows tiles of this type to be made surprisingly easily, using portable, non-hazardous tools and materials.

Once this system is set up, it is possible for even quite small children to use it, under supervision, and, in partnership with teacher David Koch, Garnet has toured primary-school classrooms across South London, producing thousands of tiles - real ceramic tiles of many different shapes and colours - and these have been assembled into vivid display panels for installation in the schools concerned.

Having reserved the right to borrow some of these pieces back, for the purposes of exhibition, the Project has shown work at London's City Hall, the Crystal Palace Museum, and in the foyer of Grey Worldwide (a massive Advertising Agency), as well as other places. With the help of some brave volunteers and advisors, Garnet has also presented the Project to a Youth Group in Lewisham, a school for severely disabled children, and to adult patients at the Bethlem Royal Hospital, with some very good results.

The Project has its own fixed studio, The Balgow Pottery (complete with kiln and potter's wheels), which it uses in cooperation with Sarah Campbell of the Clock House Playgroup. Prior to Covid, it was possible to hold in-house workshop sessions there for as many as ten children, plus two teachers, or for five or six adults, a number that has since reduced to two or three at most.

Despite the restrictions, however, Garnet has recently completed an installation piece for Holy Trinity Church in SE 20, the home of Living Well, a Charity centred around a food-bank, which offers broad community support. The installation (pictured) is the work of roughly thirty pairs of hands, and was enabled by a grant from the GLA, under the CultureSeeds programme. Garnet has also set up a limited home-delivery and collection service, so that some housebound people can still make something out of clay, should they wish to, be it just a simple bowl or something more ambitious, such as a bust of Paganini (!)

He says that the aim of the Project lies in 'learning by doing' and 'an exploration of the virtue of cooperation within a group'.

"On the simplest level, the tiles come in all sorts of unusual shapes and colours, and yet they fit together to create an integrated whole, which can be taken as a metaphor for social integration. If we can actually achieve this, to some degree, by the process of making them, and at the same time maybe find out something new about art, or craft, or geometry, or technology, or cultural history, or one-another, and produce something of lasting beauty at the end, then we have ticked a lot of boxes! Furthermore, it has been amply proved that making something out of clay has therapeutic value, in its own right, for people suffering from stress".

Feedback comments:

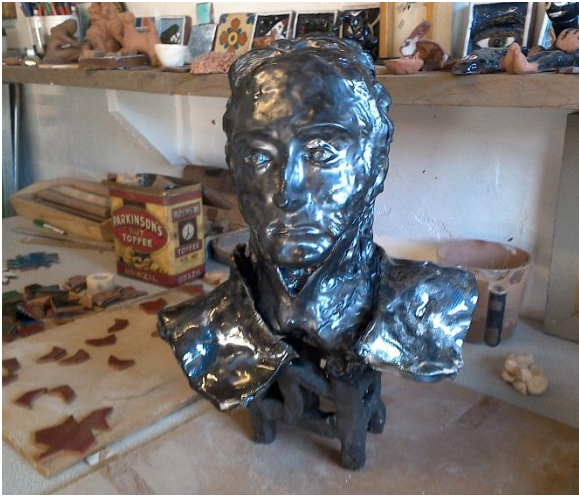
*"This has been the best day ever!" and "Do we really have to go out to play now?"* - from children.

*"You have given me a whole new lease of life"* - recent adult

*"That was amazing!"* - young man with learning difficulties

The Alhambra Tiling project is an Unincorporated Association, chaired by the extraordinary clock maker and advocate of handicrafts, Andrew L King.

Go to The [Alhambra Tiling Project's Facebook page](#) to see examples of our work in progress, or, for enquiries, please phone 0779 260 7252.



***Bust of Paganini***



***Living Well installation***