

## Report for Independent Arts Foundation June 2018



The Australasian Society for the Study of Brain Impairment (ASSBI) is a not for profit multidisciplinary society dedicated to improving the quality of the lives of individuals with brain impairment and their families. The 41<sup>st</sup> Annual ASSBI Brain Impairment Conference was held in Adelaide South Australia at the Adelaide Hilton from 3-5 May 2018, with the conference theme being “Connecting and collaborating in rehabilitation”.

As part of the conference, we were privileged to have our conference space beautifully embraced by the art exhibition “This is Me”, a personal and impressive collection of works by South Australian artists living with brain impairment who were invited to share their visual and written expressions of their sense of who they are or the things that are important to them. Their images and stories ensured their voice held a clear presence through the conference and helped to create a personal, valued and positive connection with all those who shared in their exhibition. The artists were invited to participate directly or through invitation via a number of community groups in Adelaide who work with and support individuals living with acquired brain injury. They worked on their artwork in the months prior to the conference, with a few individuals selecting pieces from their existing collections. Families and local group facilitators (from Broughton Arts Society, North East Networks, Community Re-Entry Program, Families4Families, & Brain Injury Rehabilitation Community and Home- BIRCH) supported the artists in their work and the exhibition overall was coordinated by Liz Williams and Andrew Noble from the South Australian Brain Injury Rehabilitation Service BIRCH program.



*Sample of the 27 artworks*

On the evening of Thursday 3 May, delegates, artists and their guests attended the conference Welcome Reception which, as its highlight, launched the “This is Me” exhibition. As conference and exhibition organisers, we were most grateful for our partnership with the Independent Arts Foundation Inc (SA) as one of our main exhibition sponsors. Your generous support and contribution of \$1000 funding helped to ensure we could invite and host the artists and their ‘plus-1’ guests at the catered event (delegates attended via their conference registration fee). Without your assistance, this would have been very difficult and the artists, family members, friends and delegates would have all missed out an important and special experience and occasion.

## Report for Independent Arts Foundation June 2018



There was a wonderful spirit of excitement, interest and engagement for the launch. We had well over 160 people present. We were privileged to have 24 of the 27 exhibiting artists attend with their guests and share in the opportunity to meet each other and conference delegates and share their art and experiences. It also was our pleasure to meet and have Jen Dunstan and Mary Odlum join us and represent IAF Inc (SA) on

the night.



Faith Thorley

The exhibition was launched by Faith Thorley and Koruna Schmidt-Mumm, both talented, dynamic South Australian artists and strong supporters of community endeavours, with Faith also being a PhD candidate exploring the value of her art in her own personal rehabilitation and well-being after ABI.



Koruna Schmidt-Mumm

All those present enjoyed and appreciated the unique nature of the gathering. The artists valued the opportunity to meet each other, to share their art and have it displayed in the lovely Hilton Hotel setting, to have their experiences and expertise recognised by each other and by the conference delegates (who were primarily comprised of academics, researchers, clinicians) and to be invited guests at a formal function in an upmarket venue. Feedback from some of the artists about being at the launch included that it was 'brilliant', 'delightful', 'thoroughly enjoyable', 'exciting', 'good for me' and 'very rewarding'. Their family members, friends and support people also enjoyed meeting all those there, sharing their experiences and witnessing the success of the artist they were there to support. One of the community art group facilitators said that 'it was wonderful to see the artists living it up and enjoying themselves at such a posh venue'. Many conference delegates strongly connected with the artists and their art. They spoke with respect and gratitude for the opportunity to meet and talk with the artists at the launch, to see their work, hear their stories and learn from their experiences. If it wasn't for IAF's support, these valuable experiences would not have been possible.

The exhibition remained at the Adelaide Hilton from 3-5 May 2018. After the conference, it moved to the Hampstead Rehabilitation Centre gallery space to allow for greater public access until 6 June 2018 and it was well received there too.

On behalf of the ASSBI conference organising committee and my fellow exhibition coordinator Andrew Noble, we wish to extend our heartfelt thanks to the IAF Chairman, Dr John Holmes and members of the Board for such generous sponsorship and support, and to Mary Odlum and Jen Dunstan for attending the event and for their enthusiastic support!

With warm regards

*Liz Williams*

*Conference Convenor, Exhibition Coordinator*

