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# An Evaluation of *Pillars of Light Alive!*

REGIONAL STRAND



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# A. INTRODUCTION

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## 1. Background

The Renaissance Yorkshire Museums Hub (the Hub) is a partnership of the five museum services of Bradford, Hull, Leeds, Sheffield and York, working together to deliver the Government's Renaissance vision. This vision aims to transform England's regional museums, making them world class and fit for the 21st century. Additionally, the Hub's vision is to inspire people, enabling them to learn and develop through engagement with its collections, exhibitions and knowledge and for Yorkshire to enjoy an international reputation for the excellence and creativity of its regional museums and galleries.

Renaissance funding comes from Central Government, via the Museums Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) to deliver its core programmes. However, the Hub also recognises further opportunities for collaborative regional projects exist, adding value to its core programmes. External funding opportunities are thus identified to ensure that this additional work is realised. *Pillars of Light Alive!* was an example of this regional collaboration. For the purposes of this project, the delivery partners were the museum services of Bradford, Leeds and Sheffield.

The Hub adopts an annual theme and for 2006, this was the celebration and exploration of different aspects of Muslim cultures. The Heritage Lottery Fund granted financial assistance for *Pillars of Light Alive!*, which aimed to work with different communities to complement a number of Islamic themed exhibitions held in Yorkshire during 2006:

- *Palace and Mosque – Islamic Treasures of the Middle East*  
Sheffield Millennium Galleries  
14 January – 17 April 2006
- *East Meets West*  
Temple Newsam  
25 June – 1 October 2006
- *Speaking Art*  
Cartwright Hall Art Gallery  
17 September 2006 – 21 January 2007

This report highlights the regional strand of *Pillars of Light Alive!* that complements additional formal learning and community arts activities carried out by Sheffield Galleries & Museums Trust.

## 2. Aims and Objectives

The core aims and objectives of *Pillars of Light Alive!* were:

- Working with Sheffield, Leeds and Bradford museum services to increase community engagement, access and learning opportunities;
- Adopting a regional approach to create cross-cultural and geographical awareness between communities, thereby contributing towards the community cohesion agenda;
- Identifying and delivering core commonalities, opportunities for additionality and the sharing of best practise across the region.

This was an outcomes based project that set out to give targeted audiences a high quality experience, rather than focussing on the numbers of participants. The project supported individuals through a progressing set of activities that were specially designed to promote learning in a number of ways. Initial activities aimed to increase participants' engagement with the exhibitions and museums, promote their own exploration of cultural heritage, and encourage them to make personal connections. Follow-up activities encouraged participants to pool their learning into the creation of sustainable educational tools. In summary, the activities included:

1. **Cultural exchange visits** - these took place between the participating venues of Sheffield, Leeds and Bradford with community groups visiting the exhibitions at their home cities as well as at participating venues in other areas. The visits were followed up with interpretation sessions to generate learning in the community groups' own cities. Key outcomes of this strand were the sharing of best practice, audience development, widening participation, access and learning.
2. **Research & development of sustainable web-based timelines** – a software company was commissioned to create the software for a timeline template for Bradford to adapt and use. A community group in Bradford was trained to design and use the timelines.
3. **Creation of three handling boxes** - for sites in Leeds and Bradford.

## B. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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*Pillars of Light Alive!* was a collaborative regional project of the Renaissance Yorkshire Museums Hub, bringing together Bradford, Leeds and Sheffield museum services. As part of its vision to inspire and engage people with Yorkshire's museums and galleries, the Hub's 2006 annual theme celebrated different aspects of Muslim cultures, and a number of Islamic themed exhibitions were held by Hub partners: *Palace and Mosque* at Sheffield Millennium Galleries, *East Meets West* at Temple Newsam in Leeds, and *Speaking Art* at Bradford's Cartwright Hall Art Gallery. *Pillars of Light Alive!* formed the regional strand, complementing a formal learning and community arts project carried out by Sheffield as part of the main Pillars of Light programme.

*Pillars of Light Alive!* offered a high quality experience to a concentrated audience. Cartwright Hall Art Gallery worked with the Young Ambassadors, a multicultural group of young adults with a keen interest in the arts, and with whom the venue already had a good relationship. Temple Newsam worked with the Leeds Chinese Women's Group and the Hamara Pakistani Women's Group. Although they had never visited museums before, this was a good opportunity to develop links with the new community groups, particularly since their cultures were well represented in Temple Newsam's collections.

The community groups were guided through a series of activities that were designed to maximise their learning potential. Firstly, the community groups made cultural exchange visits to three Islamic themed exhibitions in three different cities. Secondly, interpretation sessions in the community groups' own cities helped to build on the cultural exchange visits. Finally, follow-up activities encouraged participants to pool their knowledge towards the creation of sustainable learning resources.

Following their visit to *Palace and Mosque*, the Young Ambassadors participated in a practical clay workshop. This was led by Kalim Afzal, a glass artist whose work was featured in *Thru a Glass Brightly*, which was shown concurrently with *Palace and Mosque* at the same venue. During the workshop, they created ceramic moulds inspired by objects they had seen during *Palace and Mosque*. As many of the Young Ambassadors are aspiring artists, they also valued the opportunity to hear about Kalim's experience of winning commissions and marketing his work. The Young Ambassadors' next project was to help design a timeline template that could be used repeatedly for different projects. The Young Ambassadors advised the software company and the Yorkshire Museums Hub E-Learning team on aspects of design and functionality. They also created the content for two timelines to link the work they had seen during *Palace and Mosque* in Sheffield with the work they were exploring on an ongoing basis at Cartwright Hall Art Gallery.

The Hamara Pakistani Women's Group took part in a reminiscence workshop after visiting *Palace and Mosque*. Relating the stories of their personal religious objects helped them to understand that every object tells a story, which in turn increased their

appreciation of the religious objects they had seen during *Palace and Mosque*. After visiting Temple Newsam, the Leeds Chinese Women's Group and the Hamara Pakistani Women's Group each attended three workshops during which they produced wall hangings inspired by their personal interpretations of the visit. The Pakistani women were moved by the story of Lady Isabella. A resident of Temple Newsam, she bore nine sons and lost them all in her lifetime. Their circular wall hanging featured nine floral motifs, where each motif commemorated one of Lady Isabella's nine sons. The Chinese group were inspired by Temple Newsam's Qing Dynasty vases, and created a vase shaped wall hanging featuring motifs from the Qing vases they had seen.

One of the goals of *Pillars of Light Alive!* was the creation of sustainable learning tools, including 3 handling boxes. Local artists were commissioned to design each box in a manner that would be sympathetic to its contents. Meanwhile, the contents were carefully chosen to offer as broad a handling experience as possible, to a variety of audiences. Temple Newsam created one Chinese and one Islamic handling box, and used the specially created wall hangings as starting points for collecting other objects for these boxes. The remaining contents were selected to complement the venues' permanent collections, thereby giving the boxes a life beyond *Pillars of Light Alive!*. The contents of the Chinese box reflected everyday life in China. The Islamic box created by Temple Newsam contained objects representing a variety of Muslim cultures to recognise the geographical spread of Islam. The third box, also Islamic themed, was created by Cartwright Hall Art Gallery. This contained unpredictable artefacts from diverse Muslim cultures rather than everyday religious objects. Completion of Cartwright Hall's handling box was scheduled to coincide with the opening of the *Speaking Art* calligraphy exhibition, when it was made available to community groups as a learning resource.

*Pillars of Light Alive!* not only delivered a high quality experience, it also exceeded the targets that it set out to achieve. The project was able to offer nine cultural exchange visits instead of the original target of seven, as well as eight workshops instead of six. A number of unexpected yet exciting outcomes also arose from the project. A cultural celebration event was organised at Temple Newsam for the two Leeds community groups. The event was used to launch the two Leeds handling boxes, to showcase the completed wall hangings, to congratulate the Chinese and Pakistani women's groups for their hard work, and to give them the opportunity to meet one another. The creation of six learning journeys on the My Learning website, a resource for teachers and learners linked to Yorkshire's museums, was an additional success that brought added value to the project. The Young Ambassadors created one of the learning journeys about their experiences of creating a timeline, and explored their relationship with Cartwright Hall Art Gallery.

*Pillars of Light Alive!* offered wide ranging learning opportunities for the project participants. The Young Ambassadors' previous museums experience had been limited to Bradford. They therefore seized the chance to engage with other collections such as Temple Newsam and Sheffield Millennium Galleries. Follow-up activities meant they were able to explore links between these collections in a structured manner. The clay workshop gave the Young Ambassadors a practical opportunity to build on their creative

skills and learn first hand about the reality of working as an artist. Content creation for the timelines honed their research and editing skills. They grasped the opportunity to lead the timeline project, gaining new ICT and valuable project management skills. Furthermore, these learning opportunities have also helped to widen access and develop learning opportunities for other groups. For instance, Cartwright Hall is using the timelines to explore how young people's ideas can be used in its collections, as well as an exciting resource with which to engage young audiences. Also, the Young Ambassadors' learning journey was used with an older active English women's group to demonstrate that no special language is needed to engage with the arts.

The Chinese and Pakistani women's groups had never visited an exhibition or a museum before. *Pillars of Light Alive!* not only gave these participants a valuable opportunity for sustained engagement with a number of museums, but also made them realise that objects in museums could be relevant to their own lives. For instance, exhibits in the *Speaking Art* calligraphy exhibition at Cartwright Hall encouraged the Chinese and Pakistani women to explore similarities between Chinese and Muslim cultures. At Temple Newsam, both groups were able to relate to the lives of the women that had lived there. The women's groups displayed a personal affinity with certain objects that seemed familiar, such as storage chests, jewellery boxes and furniture, which they had received in their wedding dowries. It gave them a sense of pride to realise that objects similar to their own, or that belonged to their culture, were being appreciated in the west and in such a grand setting as Temple Newsam. Successive cultural exchange visits helped them to grasp the purpose of museums and also increased their confidence in such settings.

The aim of the follow-up workshops was to imaginatively engage the Chinese and Pakistani women in a creative project, inspired by their cultural exchange visits. The textiles workshops enabled them to build on their existing sewing and craft making skills by developing new techniques such as silk painting and batik. Visiting exhibitions as a group and then collaborating on the wall hangings also created new friendships, and enhanced the women's social and communication skills. The Chinese and Pakistani women's groups were brought together during the cultural celebration event at Temple Newsam, which gave both groups the opportunity for cross-cultural exchange – through interpreters, they shared their experiences of working on the wall hangings and commended each other on their achievements.

Members of both the women's groups participated in the cultural exchange visits and workshops with other members of their families. For example, a number of mothers and daughters took part in the project together. The Young Ambassadors too invited members of their families to attend the launch of *Speaking Art* with them. Many also made repeat visits to *Palace and Mosque* with family and friends. This was a positive outcome in itself, but also promoted intergenerational learning and served to widen community engagement.

The theme of *Pillars of Light Alive!* was the celebration and exploration of different aspects of Muslim cultures. The project participants, Muslims and non-Muslims alike, increased their awareness of Islamic art and cultures. However, the experience was particularly



poignant for the Muslim participants. The opportunity to engage positively with their religious heritage during the cultural exchange visits, and the chance to reflect on this engagement more imaginatively in follow-up sessions, was spiritually gratifying for some, and highly rewarding for them all.

## C. COMMUNITY GROUPS

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Working with partner museum services to increase community engagement, access and learning opportunities was at the heart of *Pillars of Light Alive!*. Each partner had a clear idea about the type of community group it wanted to engage with. Both Cartwright Hall Art Gallery and Temple Newsam were keen to work with community groups whose cultures were well represented in their permanent collections. Sheffield Museums and Galleries, the third Hub partner, delivered a formal learning project and a community arts project, based entirely in Sheffield, as part of the main Pillars of Light project.

Cartwright Hall was interested in engaging with young people and exploring how young people's ideas could be used in collections to inform the knowledge they pass on to visitors. Cartwright Hall had already been nurturing a relationship with the Bradford Young Ambassadors for some time, and felt that this was a good opportunity to develop their relationship further.

Temple Newsam wanted to introduce two new community groups to the house, enabling them to fully engage with the *East Meets West* exhibition and to give their perspective on objects and artefacts that were pertinent to their culture which might be of interest to other audiences. Temple Newsam also wanted to work with each group on a textiles based activity inspired by what they had seen in the exhibition. Given the strong Chinese, and, to a lesser extent, Islamic influence, highlighted in the *East Meets West* exhibition, Temple Newsam felt it would be an opportune time to build links with a Chinese and a Muslim community group.

### 1. Hamara Pakistani Women's Group (Leeds)



The Hamara Pakistani Women's Group is based in Beeston, an inner city culturally diverse area of Leeds that has recently attracted much negative media attention. The women's group was started by the Hamara Healthy Living Centre, which provides a variety of services for disadvantaged members of the community. One of its major areas of concern is poor health. With this in mind, the women's group regularly meets at the centre for a range of activities to promote a healthy

lifestyle, including swimming, walking and massage.

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### **Hamara Pakistani Women's Group**

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Many of the women were 50+, although most were older. As first generation migrants from rural areas of Pakistan, most spoke no English and had received very little schooling besides limited Islamic education. Many also had health problems and could not walk or stand for any length of time.

These women had never visited a museum or art gallery. They could not even conceive why such institutions existed, let alone that they could be educational or valuable. Nevertheless, their development worker felt the women would strongly benefit from participation in the *Pillars of Light Alive!* project. She highlighted that the Islamic element would capture the women's imagination, and participation in the range of planned activities would promote emotional well being among the women.

## **2. Leeds Chinese Women's Group**

This is a voluntary organisation based in Leeds city centre providing services to disadvantaged Chinese women, such as activities and training to broaden the skills base of those on low incomes.

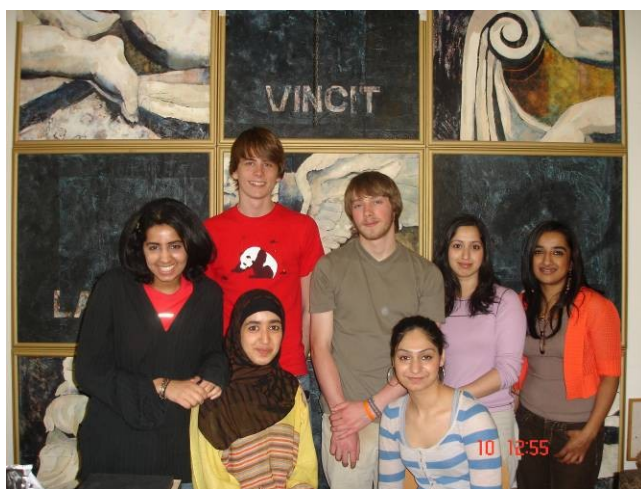
Most of the Chinese women that participated in *Pillars of Light Alive!* were also members of the elderly luncheon club, although most were clearly younger than retirement age.



It was apparent that a dedicated interpreter would need to be provided since most of the group spoke no English. The *Pillars of Light Alive!* team would also have to show sensitivity and flexibility when co-ordinating cultural exchange visits, by taking account of the women's dependency on their children and families. For example, the group's project co-ordinator stressed that the organisation of any trips involved a letter being drafted by the centre for the older members to take home to show their grown-up children. She further explained that their families usually decided whether or not a trip was suitable, and that they may not want their parent to go on a trip at all unless they know exactly what is involved.

None of the women had ever visited a museum or art gallery before, and like the Hamara Pakistani Women's Group, most had never been to school. However, the co-ordinator of the Leeds Chinese Women's Group was keen for them to be involved. Trips were rare, the group's museum experience was scant, and there was little chance for them to engage with different cultures. This was therefore an exceptional learning opportunity to be guided around museums, in and beyond Leeds, in mother tongue, and at no cost to them!

### **3. Bradford Young Ambassadors**



The Bradford Young Ambassadors group was established to offer feedback on long term projects linked to the re-hang of Cartwright Hall Art Gallery's permanent collections.

A mixture of university students, first jobbers, or starting out as fashion designers and practising artists, these are young adults, aged 16-25, from diverse backgrounds including some that belong to the Muslim faith. All have a strong interest in the arts, and many are particularly interested

in Islamic art. Their regular meetings at Cartwright Hall Art Gallery enable them to share projects, discuss views and participate in activities, through which they hope to enhance their knowledge of the arts and develop creative skills.

Cartwright Hall was keen to work with this group on the *Pillars of Light Alive!* project. To date, their engagement with the arts had been limited to the Bradford arena. Involvement in this project would enable them to place Bradford within the wider Yorkshire context, by introducing them to venues they had never accessed, such as Sheffield Millennium Galleries and Temple Newsam. The follow-up activities would also enable them to go full circle by bringing their learning back to Cartwright Hall.

## D. CULTURAL EXCHANGE VISITS

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A regional programme of cultural exchange visits to create cross-cultural and geographical awareness between communities underpinned *Pillars of Light Alive!*. The cultural exchange visits meant that each community group made visits to exhibitions in their home city as well as to others in the Yorkshire region. The purpose was to give the community groups a wider museum experience than would be possible from visiting venues solely within their home city. Raising their awareness of other communities and cultures would also contribute towards the community cohesion agenda.

### 1. *Palace and Mosque – Islamic Treasures of the Middle East:* Sheffield Millennium Galleries

14 January – 17 April 2006

The Millennium Galleries is a vibrant venue for the visual arts, craft and design, situated in the heart of Sheffield. Its exhibitions programme includes blockbusters that present national and international masterpieces from museums and galleries like the Tate and the Victoria & Albert Museum.

*Palace and Mosque* featured Islamic art from the Middle East, and was the inaugural event of the 2006 regional *Pillars of Light Alive!* programme (led by the cultural agency, Alchemy Anew). Sheffield was the sole UK venue to host this prestigious collection from the V&A. Running concurrently to this exhibition at the same venue was *Through a Glass Brightly* which featured responses to *Palace and Mosque* by two contemporary artists, Kalim Afzal and Farhad Ahrarnia.

Community Group	Date of Visit	Numbers Attended
Hamara Pakistani Women's Group	22 Mar 06	13
Bradford Young Ambassadors	25 Mar 06	10
Leeds Chinese Women's Group	No visit	-



### **Visit to *Palace and Mosque* by Hamara Pakistani Women's Group**



Left: Members of the Hamara Pakistani Women's Group were particularly interested in the more religious objects on display in *Palace and Mosque*. Right: The women enjoyed eating their packed lunches in the adjoining Winter Gardens.

The Hamara Pakistani Women's Group made their first cultural exchange visit to *Palace and Mosque*. Museum staff, through an interpreter, gave a brief introduction to the exhibition. The women were then encouraged to take a closer look at some of the exhibits and also provided with paper and pencils to make sketches. They were also asked to focus on patterns and motifs since they would be participating in a follow-on textile making activity.

Given that this was their first ever visit to a museum, the Hamara Pakistani Women's Group were not sure what to expect. However, the word 'mosque' from the exhibition's title had struck a chord with a number of the women. In anticipation, and as is customary among Muslims before entering a mosque, some women had prepared themselves for a spiritual connection by performing a ritual wash beforehand.

The women found it difficult to engage with the exhibition as a whole, instead preferring to focus on different examples of the most familiar objects. For instance, they were overwhelmed by the handwritten Qurans, and took time to read the pages on display in order to determine the sections they belonged to.

*"It increased our knowledge. We saw things from many nations and it showed how different countries expressed their love for Islam."*

### **Visit to *Palace and Mosque* by Young Ambassadors**

Following an introductory tour of the exhibition, the Young Ambassadors participated in an enabler led interactive workshop using the object dialogue box, which was the exhibition's brilliant accompanying resource. The box contained modified versions of everyday objects, where part of one object had been merged with part of another, to create a kind of unfamiliar hybrid. The Young Ambassadors were encouraged to select

‘objects’ from the dialogue box and to use them as compasses to guide them on a creative journey of exploration around the exhibition. The Young Ambassadors then created stories about these objects. The workshop also made them look at the objects in more detail and the storytelling exercise encouraged them to think about their background and purpose. The Young Ambassadors also made sketches of exhibits that interested them, with some focusing on shape and others on pattern.

*“I liked the little session we had with the handling box. When you’re looking around and the place is full of glass cases and stuff, it can seem a little bit sort of distant. But when you’re making up silly stories to go with it, then it does bridge a gap.”*

The Young Ambassadors were also given a talk by glass artist, Kalim Afzal, which brought the contemporary exhibition, *Through A Glass Brightly*, to life. They also used the opportunity to conduct an interview with the artist about his work and inspiration, which they recorded in an audio format that could later be edited and uploaded onto the internet.

Some of the Young Ambassadors were so taken with the exhibition that they made repeat visits independently with friends: *“We loved it so much we went again with some friends for a second time. We were going around and making little sketches and just really taking it all in and absorbing it all and reading more information. The first time we went there was a lot to take in and because there was different types of art – there was obviously the wooden carvings, there was tiles, there was glass, so there was too much to take in. So the second time we spotted things that we didn’t even notice the first time.”*

### **Leeds Chinese Women’s Group**

The Leeds Chinese Women’s Group did not visit *Palace and Mosque*. This was the first cultural exchange visit for the Chinese women’s group, and the group’s understanding of the *Pillars of Light Alive!* project was still taking shape. The community group’s system of sending letters in Chinese to the families of their older members to determine whether or not they would like to join a trip, has already been explained in the previous section of this report. The group’s development worker was adamant that this visit would generate minimal response for a number of reasons. Firstly, families would feel the distance from Leeds to Sheffield was too cumbersome, even though free transport was provided. Secondly and more crucially, families would not see the relevance of a Chinese group visiting an ‘Islamic exhibition’.

## **2. East Meets West: Temple Newsam**

**25 June – 1 October 2006**

Temple Newsam is one of the great historic estates in England. This magnificent Tudor-Jacobean house was the birthplace of Lord Darnley, infamous husband of Mary Queen of

Scots, and for 300 years the home of the Ingram family until it was bought by Leeds City Council in 1922. Inside, there are displays of paintings, renowned furniture including masterpieces by Chippendale, textiles, silver, porcelain, and Leeds pottery.

*East Meets West* looked at the influence of Eastern art and design on a quintessentially English country house. It looked at the influence of Japan and China, as well as India and the Middle East, on European art, and vice versa. The central medium was lacquer from Japan and China, but cultural cross-fertilisation was also demonstrated in metalwork, glass and textiles. Although most of the contents of the house were dispersed at auction in 1922, objects that remained – or have been acquired since – still testify vividly to the influence of the East.

Community Group	Date of Visit	Numbers Attended
Leeds Chinese Women's Group	29 Jun 06	14
Hamara Pakistani Women's Group	5 Jul 06	10
Bradford Young Ambassadors	1 Jul 06	4

In consultation with the *Pillars of Light Alive!* team, Temple Newsam staff adapted the tour of the house to make it more appropriate, accessible and interesting to the two Leeds community groups. Staff wanted the women to relate to the lives of the women at Temple Newsam, pointing out specific characters whose portraits were hanging in the picture gallery. They focused on the women of the house as well as aspects of family life and domesticity. The guides recounted stories of how marriages were made at Temple Newsam, how some of the women were married off for power, the number of children they bore, how they earned a living, and the number of servants that were required to run the household. The Chinese women concentrated on Chinese objects including the Chinese Room, while the Pakistani women focussed on objects that were closer to their own heritage.

The purpose of the visit was to connect with their surroundings and gather design ideas that would inspire the community groups to create textile wall hangings. Members of the *Pillars of Light Alive!* project team took care to photograph any objects or motifs that the women's groups seemed especially in, so these could be reviewed during the workshops.

Temple Newsam wanted to introduce the house and its collections to the new community groups and to develop a relationship with them. The staff also hoped that members of the community groups may be able to contribute their own knowledge to add to what was already known about certain objects.

### **Visit to *East Meets West* by Leeds Chinese Women's Group**

The Chinese group were excited to see objects from their culture, and some found it very satisfying to see examples of Chinese culture in such a grand and western setting: "They



*feel very proud that 200 years ago, the influence of the East was coming to the West. They feel very proud about that."*

They made links between some of the objects and their own experience. Many objects they saw reminded them of their own marriages and traditions. For instance, one Chinese woman said the Exchequer's Chest reminded her of a dowry box while another thought a dressing table in the Crimson Room was similar to one that she had received in her dowry. The group also took a particular interest in Temple Newsam's collection of Qing Dynasty vases, and enjoyed picking out details and stories from these.



Left: Members of the Leeds Chinese Women's Group were particularly taken with the collection of Qing vases at Temple Newsam Right: Upon arrival, the women were greeted by the project team in the formal dining room, and served refreshments before commencing their tour.

### **Visit to *East Meets West* by Hamara Pakistani Women's Group**

Like the Chinese group, women from the Pakistani group pointed out many objects that were reminiscent of their own marriages. For instance, the studded Exchequer's Chest reminded them of a dowry box. They enjoyed seeing the optometron because they could imagine storing their wedding jewellery in something similar:

*"Some of the ladies are matching items here with what they've got at home, for instance the big chest. Some of the ladies have got something similar back home in Pakistan. Perhaps not as beautifully crafted as this one, but it's similar in terms of shape. And they put their clothes and their belongings in there."*



The Hamara Pakistani Women's Group enjoyed taking part in the dressing up activities during their visit, such as trying on ruffs and an 18<sup>th</sup> century style dress.

The women were very moved by the story of Lady Isabella. Lady Isabella was born in 1670 and in 1685 she became the wife of Arthur, the third Viscount Irwin. Over the next 16 years, she bore nine sons. Her husband died in 1702 while Isabella lived to the age of 94, having outlived all her sons. The story resonated very strongly with the Pakistani women's own culture and they thought it was deeply tragic. The women explained why it was so important for a woman to bear many sons. In Pakistani culture, a son secures the status of a married woman and supports his parents in their old age, effectively becoming a stable pension plan. Meanwhile, daughters are regarded as a burden since they are married off into a different family, taking their share of their parents' property with them. Furthermore, her parents must provide a decent dowry if they want their daughter to marry well: *"I would have liked to have met the lady with the nine sons who all died in her lifetime. She sounds like a good woman, but what a painful story! I liked hearing about her."*

### **Visit to *East Meets West* by Young Ambassadors**

The Young Ambassadors made their cultural exchange visit to *East Meets West* in a very small group. The visit coincided with their work on the timeline so only four Ambassadors were able to attend. They stressed that rather than a specialised tour, they wanted to spend time in different areas of the house to try to get a sense of the collections. Nevertheless, they received a quick highlights tour to give them an overview, after which they were free to explore areas of the house they wanted to revisit.

### **3. Speaking Art: Cartwright Hall Art Gallery**

**17 September 2006 – 21 January 2007**

Cartwright Hall is Bradford's civic art gallery whose collections consist mainly of 19th and 20th century British art. These include strong collections of international contemporary prints and contemporary South Asian (including some Islamic) arts and crafts.

*Speaking Art* featured calligraphy, which is the seminal art of Islam. The exhibition featured many historical scripts as well as new genres emerging in contemporary art. *Speaking Art* represented calligraphy through the work of artists from many countries including Pakistan, India, Turkey and United Kingdom, and included works on paper, leather, ceramics, metal ware, glass and multimedia.

In consultation with the *Pillars of Light Alive!* project team, a number of activities were planned to take place at Cartwright Hall as part of each cultural exchange visit. The venue's new Islamic handling box would be used as part of an activity to engage visitors with the theme of *Speaking Art*. A short letter formation workshop (calligraphy for beginners) was also planned for each visit. However, each group was so interested in viewing the exhibition during their visit, as well as exploring other parts of the gallery, that there was no time available for either activity.

Community Group	Date of Visit	Numbers Attended
Bradford Young Ambassadors	22 Sep 06	8
Leeds Chinese Women's Group	28 Sep 06	15
Hamara Pakistani Women's Group	1 Nov 06	15

#### **Visit to *Speaking Art* by Bradford Young Ambassadors**

The Young Ambassadors were invited to attend the private view of *Speaking Art*. Two members of the group also brought their families to the launch event at Cartwright Hall, and many others have visited *Speaking Art* several times since then, with their families. This underlines the comfortable relationship these individuals now have with Cartwright Hall, and demonstrates clearly their active involvement in widening access for their families.

One of the Young Ambassadors volunteered to help during the visit to *Speaking Art* by the Chinese community group. This Young Ambassador is interested in Chinese culture and recently visited Hong Kong. She wanted to deepen her knowledge of Chinese culture and help the Chinese community group to learn from the exhibition

### **Visit to *Speaking Art* by Leeds Chinese Women's Group**

The Leeds Chinese Women's Group were greeted by museum staff and offered light refreshments upon arrival. They were then given an introduction to Cartwright Hall Art Gallery and the magnificent Lister Park in which the gallery is situated. This was followed by a tour of *Speaking Art* by Sofia Maskin, Cartwright Hall's Community and Outreach Officer. One of the Young Ambassadors with a strong interest in Chinese cultures had agreed to help with the tour. One exhibit in particular captured the imagination of the Chinese women. This was the calligraphy scroll created by Haji Nooruddin, a Muslim master calligrapher who originated from China. His scroll featured calligraphy in Chinese and Arabic and prompted the Chinese group to make connections between the two cultures.

The Chinese group built a good rapport with the museum's Community and Outreach Officer, and used the opportunity to ask questions about cultural differences between Muslim and Chinese communities. They were particularly interested to learn more about marriage systems and values such as respect for elders among Muslims. Overall, they found their visit to be very educational: *"The women have learnt a bit about Muslim culture. They only hear stereotypical things about Asian people because they don't have the chance to meet Asian people, so they were asking a lot of questions."*



The Leeds Chinese Women's Group were fascinated by *Speaking Art*. They enjoyed having the opportunity to ask questions about Muslim culture, and making comparisons between Islamic and Chinese calligraphy.



### **Visit to *Speaking Art* by Hamara Pakistani Women's Group**

Having already engaged with *Palace and Mosque* at Sheffield Millennium Galleries, the Pakistani women's group was very excited at the prospect of seeing another Islamic themed exhibition, and had high expectations of it. They were also looking forward to a trip to Bradford. It was clear that although Bradford borders Leeds, the opportunity to make a visit to their neighbouring city was rare.



The Hamara Pakistani Women's Group enjoyed their visit, particularly being shown around the exhibition by Sofia Maskin, Cartwright Hall's community and outreach officer, who spoke to the group in mother tongue.

Sofia Maskin, Cartwright Hall's Community and Outreach Officer, welcomed the group to Cartwright Hall. Sofia explained her role and told the group about the background to Cartwright Hall as well as Lister Park in which the art gallery is situated. She then gave a tour of *Speaking Art* in mother tongue. This was the first time the group had been given a tour without the need of an interpreter and they enjoyed being able to speak to her without a go-between, and took the opportunity to ask questions about the exhibits, which was something they had never done before.

The Pakistani group found the visit to be very emotional, particularly when Sofia explained the artists' motivation for producing Islamic calligraphy. The reason for practicing art that praised the name of God was to earn religious merit, and as spectators of the calligraphy and in appreciating the beauty of the exhibits, Sofia explained that the Hamara Pakistani Women's Group were also earning religious merit. This concept truly touched the women, and it helped to transform what was already a positive experience into a spiritually satisfying one: *"I think they feel it's been worthwhile to come and see this. They'll be talking about this for days now. And Islamically, they don't feel guilty when they've gone to see something Islamic so they feel the time they've spent here has been worthwhile. They feel good about this. There's been a real sense of purpose. They've not wasted their time with this."*

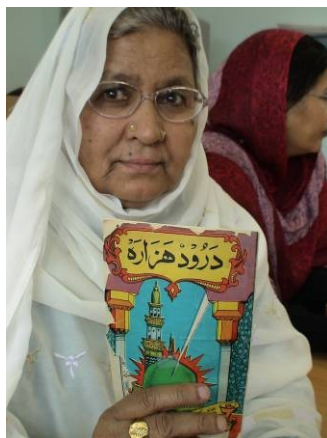
## E. FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

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### 1. Reminiscence Workshop – Hamara Pakistani Women's Group

The Hamara Pakistani Women's Group's visit to *Palace and Mosque* in Sheffield was their first ever experience of an exhibition, a museum or an art gallery. Nevertheless, they could relate to the Islamic objects because they shared the same religious background. However, many women did not understand why these objects had been collected and preserved, or indeed why they were being exhibited. For this reason, the group was invited to participate in a reminiscence session, using their personal religious objects, in order to help them to engage with the idea that every object tells a story, and that it was the stories behind the objects at *Palace and Mosque* which determined their importance. The women brought religious objects of their own, which had a special meaning. They were encouraged to talk about the history, purpose and significance of their own objects. The session helped them to recognise the value of preserving artefacts in museums, in a way that was not dissimilar to them preserving objects that were important to them.

Pic below: This woman told the group about her prayer book that she relies on in times of crisis.



Pic below: This woman talked about a bowl engraved with a special protective prayer. Her grandchild was served water from this bowl when he became ill.



Pic middle: This lady talked about the two decorative plates that she is pictured holding:

*"I've brought these two plates that say Allah and Mohammad on them. They were a wedding present given to me 30 years ago. Back then they were beautiful because they were gleaming. They're really old now. That's why I brought them in because they're old and they relate to my religion. My older sister gave them to me. She's not with us anymore but I have these to remind me of her. I got married in Pakistan and I decorated the walls of my front room in Chakswari with these plates. Then I brought them with me to Kirkstall Road in Leeds and they were hanging in my front room"*

there. Then I moved to Cardigan Road and I had them in my drawing room there. Then they went with me to Dewsbury and now they're with me in my house in Beeston. I suppose they wouldn't fetch much money. The colours are all faded but they're really valuable to me."

## 2. Clay Workshop – Bradford Young Ambassadors

The Young Ambassadors wanted to develop and work with the sketches they had begun during their visit to *Palace and Mosque* in Sheffield. They were keen to participate in a practical workshop that would teach them new skills and build on their recent visit. One of the highlights of their visit was a tour of the contemporary glass exhibition, *Through A Glass Brightly*, by Kalim Afzal, who was one of the two contemporary glass artists behind the exhibition. Coincidentally, Kalim lives and works in Bradford, and Cartwright Hall Art Gallery's permanent collection boasts a number of his glass sculptures.

It was therefore a good opportunity for Cartwright Hall and Kalim Afzal to develop this relationship further. Kalim was invited to run a workshop for the Young Ambassadors based on their recent visit to Sheffield. Whilst glass was the obvious medium for the workshop, health and safety concerns made it impractical. Therefore clay was chosen instead.

The group first developed the sketches they had begun at the *Palace and Mosque* exhibition, and these were used as the inspiration for making ceramic plaster moulds. Some of the participants were inspired by objects they had seen in Sheffield while others wanted to focus on their favourite objects from Cartwright Hall Art Gallery. Some individuals concentrated on patterns while others focused on shapes.



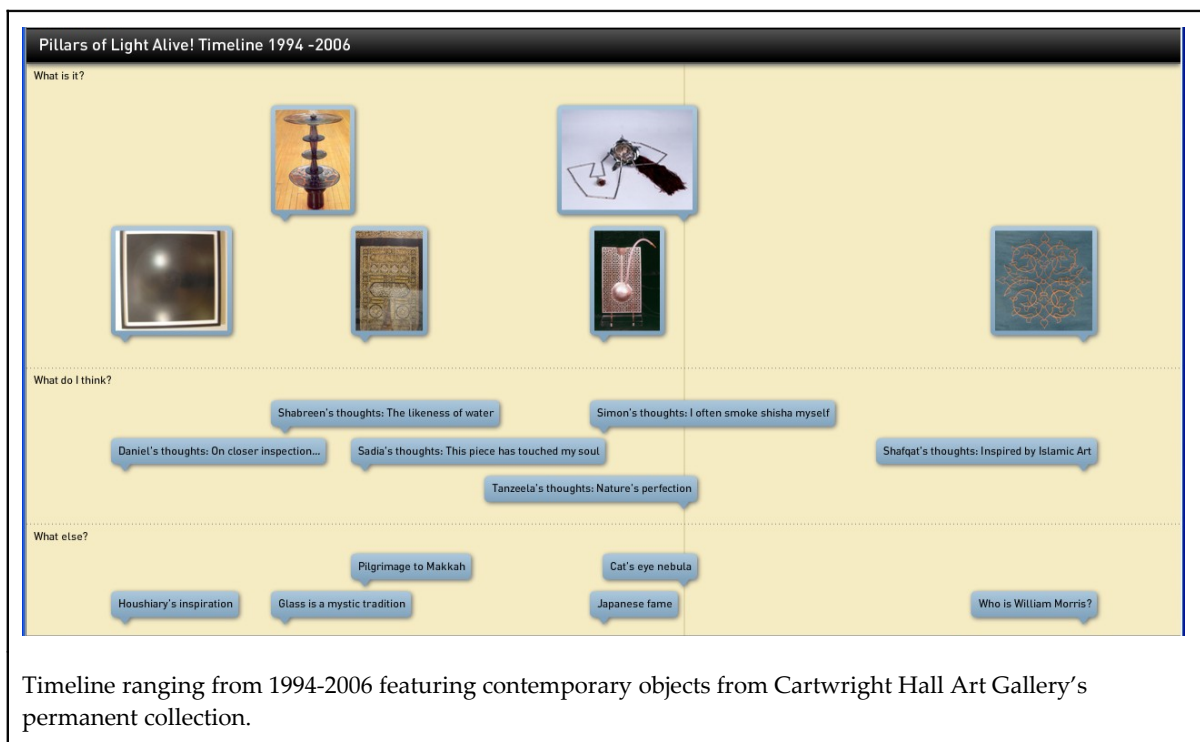
Top and middle: Young Ambassadors enjoyed making plaster moulds in the clay workshop. Bottom: Glass artist Kalim Afzal also talked about his experience of putting together a portfolio.

Once dry, staff at Cartwright Hall arranged for the moulds to be varnished. The finished moulds were exhibited during the opening of the Prelude gallery at Cartwright Hall.

Kalim Afzal also took time during the workshop to take the Young Ambassadors through his journey of becoming an established glass artist. Using his own portfolio as an example, he made suggestions for keeping an artist's journal, presenting art work professionally and talked about his experience of winning commissions. Since many of the Young Ambassadors are currently considering their own career paths, with a number trying to make a living as practicing artists, they found the talk very insightful.

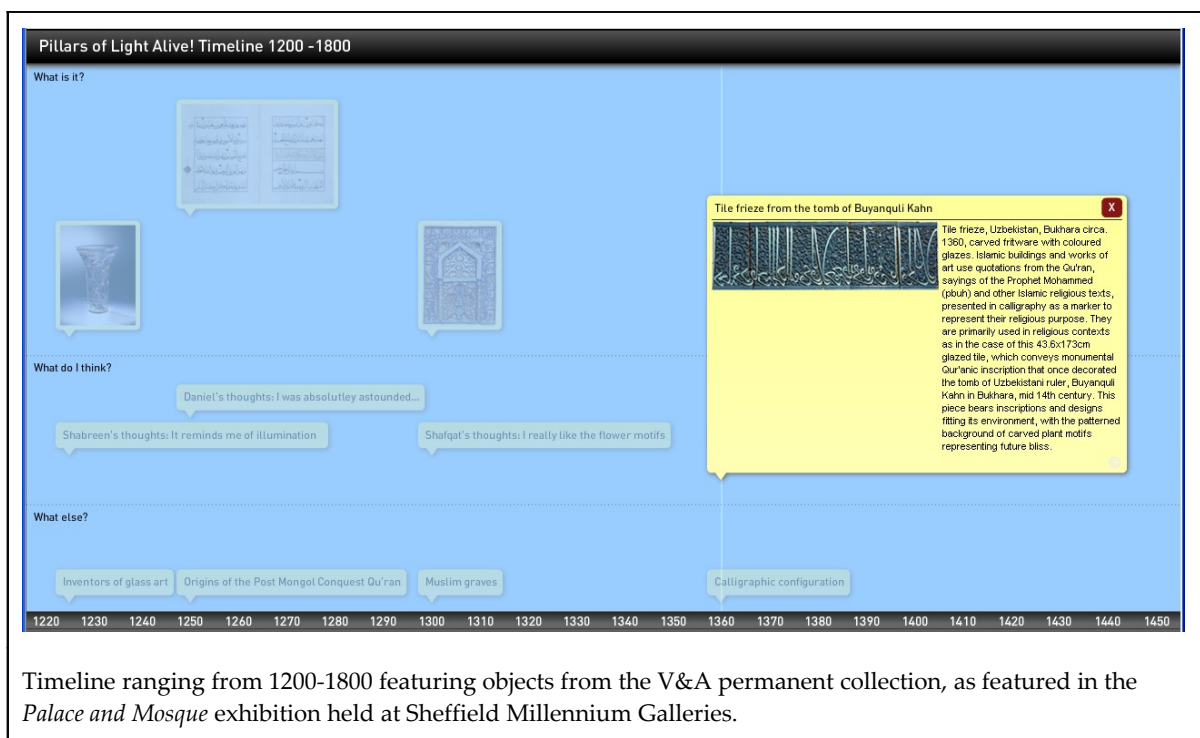


## F. RESOURCE 1: WEB BASED TIMELINE



Before the start of *Pillars of Light Alive!*, the Young Ambassadors were already familiar with Cartwright Hall's permanent collections due to their ongoing work together. *Pillars of Light Alive!* introduced the Young Ambassadors to alternative collections, particularly a number of artefacts from the V&A collection on show during *Palace and Mosque* that echoed aspects of Cartwright Hall's collections. Staff at Cartwright Hall wanted the Young Ambassadors to experiment with the timeline format using objects from Cartwright Hall's collection. They also wanted to give the Young Ambassadors a physical 'thinking space' where they could make sense of different cultures and creatively merge together the two collections. A web based timeline was an ideal tool for achieving these objectives.

Timelines are useful devices for imparting a lot of information in a short space of time. By enabling the user to plot an image and text on a line in history, they are an effective means for reflecting on and furthering ideas. The format also gave the Young Ambassadors the ability to choose what was interesting to them by being able to go back in time as well as looking at contemporary objects. The web based format also appealed to the young group, and Cartwright Hall was keen that the Ambassadors should lead the project as much as possible. The timelines would be an exciting way of illustrating to the Young Ambassadors and to other young people that their ideas are valid, and to show them that galleries can help form ideas.



## 1. Research



Each of the Young Ambassadors selected one old object from *Palace and Mosque* as well as a contemporary object from Cartwright Hall, for inclusion in the timeline.

The Young Ambassadors collectively created two complimentary linear timelines, one ranging from 1200-1800 and the other ranging from 1994-2006. They selected a favourite object from *Palace and Mosque* as well as a favourite contemporary object from the Cartwright Hall collection. Background research was conducted into their chosen objects to learn more about the period of history they belonged to. The Young Ambassadors were tasked with answering three broad questions in three short paragraphs – ‘what is it?’, ‘what I like?’, and ‘what else?’.

The categories were deliberately kept broad

enough to allow the Ambassadors to research an area that particularly fascinated them. In this way, they were acting as historians, determining what it was about each object that they wanted to research, and sharing that research on the web based timeline. Some

participants were interested in making direct comparisons between their two chosen objects. Others wanted to interview the artist behind the contemporary objects. Some chose to include their own sketches and personal interpretations of their favourite objects. The Young Ambassadors conducted all the research in their own time.

## 2. Training

As well as producing the content, the Young Ambassadors played an important role in the creation of a timeline prototype, which will be used in the future, for further timelines about different topics.

The Yorkshire Museums Hub E-Learning team held three training sessions during summer 2006 at Cartwright Hall, when the Young Ambassadors learned how a timeline was constructed and gained new IT skills to input their researched content onto the timeline. The training sessions were also used to update the group about the prototype's progress, and the Young

Ambassadors were called upon to give suggestions on aspects of design and functionality. In the process, they also gained an insight into project management. The Hub E-Learning team felt that involving the Young Ambassadors in all aspects of the timeline development project would enrich their experience and enable better learning on their part:

*"I wanted the group to know what was going on behind the scenes really, negotiating with the software company. This company use a project management system that is quite complex and difficult to get to learn. And I took a bit of a risk in telling the group about that and I was hoping they'd be interested just from a business point of view and they were....I think it's always good to know how what we see as an end product is actually developed, and that behind the scenes the business aspect can include how much things cost, how complicated the technical things are, how easy or hard it is to deliver things on time, how people's holidays come into equations, how lots of personal communication issues come in – the Young Ambassadors appreciated and understood these frustrations."*

*"Rather than being told it's not going to be like that, to actually understand the trouble that the team's gone to, to try to get us these things, that's a big help actually."*



The Young Ambassadors not only produced content, but also helped to design the timeline template.

*“I personally thought we were just going to put something together on a piece of paper, but because of the fact that we’re actually working on a new prototype software has added an element of interest for me because I’m into that kind of thing. And for us to create a template that’s going to be used across Yorkshire, and to be part of that, that would be our inspiration to do something professional that’s really good. It’s very very interesting.”*

This web based resource has been uploaded onto the Hub’s My Learning website. My Learning, [www.mylearning.org](http://www.mylearning.org), acts as a resource for teachers and learners, and is inspired by museum, library and archive collections in Yorkshire. The content is presented as learning journeys designed to support different curriculum subjects and created in consultation with teachers.

The Young Ambassadors are currently in the process of developing supplementary timelines. They also created a learning journey as part of their work on the timeline project. Each Young Ambassador was given their own page to comment on the process of working on the timeline, and to reflect on their relationship with Cartwright Hall as well as on their roles as Young Ambassadors.

## G. RESOURCE 2: WALL HANGINGS

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Temple Newsam was keen from the start to work on a textiles project with the two Leeds community groups, and emphasised that the outcome of the textiles workshops should be inspired by their visit to the stately home. The wall hangings needed to represent each group's response to *East Meets West* as well as their own personal interpretations. The hangings would become a permanent resource for Temple Newsam, and would be the focal point in the Chinese and Islamic themed handling boxes that would be created by Temple Newsam as a sustainable resource as part of *Pillars of Light Alive!*. For this reason, the project team had followed the women closely during their tour around the house, taking care to capture photographs as well as their verbal reactions to particular objects or motifs that interested them. This information would act as a reminder of the visit and would hopefully help generate ideas during the workshops.

Three workshop sessions were timetabled to take place at the regular meeting place of each community group, where they would create wall hangings inspired by the objects and motifs they had seen during their visit to Temple Newsam.

Both groups worked with textiles artist, Jane Ball, assisted by interpreters. Jane wanted to build on each group's existing craft and sewing skills and techniques. She wanted to introduce new techniques too, like batik, silk painting, appliqué, drawing, beadwork and embroidery.

Working with interpreters, the women were encouraged to share their experiences of working with textiles and the kinds of skills they already had. They were also told about the involvement of a second women's group in the project, who would also be creating a wall hanging.

### 1. Textiles Workshops – Pakistani Group

Since the Pakistani women were so touched by the story of Lady Isabella and her nine sons, they decided to create a floral wall hanging, using flowers as motifs to represent Lady Isabella's nine sons. Floral motifs were popular too because they are a common feature of Pakistani embroidery and textiles, and they were also prevalent in Temple Newsam's permanent collection as well as in the *East Meets West* exhibition.

Workshop artist, Jane Ball, invited the women to bring in examples of textile work that they had made themselves. These gave Jane an idea of the women's skills base. The Pakistani women brought in samples of embroidered items and garments they had made, mostly for their own dowries, using crochet, knitting, beadwork and mirror work embroidery techniques. Items included a velvet waistcoat decorated with silver



beadwork, embroidered handkerchiefs, crocheted frontispiece with gold beads, an ethnic style patchwork quilt, and a knitted baby shawl with crocheted salvage.



Many of the women had produced these items a long time ago, and they were reluctant about their ability to make something after all these years. However, these concerns were overcome quickly as the women learnt new techniques with which to create floral motifs:

*"Most of the ladies were over 60 and a couple of young girls. And they said it's a long time since they've done this sort of thing, and they never thought that they could do it now, even if somebody asked them. You know if you stop doing something, you just feel unable to do it anymore. But when they started, it all came back and they enjoyed it."*

*"On the last day everybody was feeling so sorry. They said it was only a few sessions and some of them didn't even make all the sessions, but still they said they will always remember this. The atmosphere was just so friendly and they enjoyed the things."*



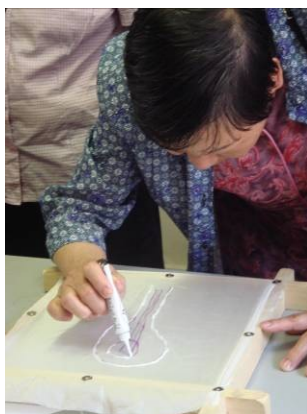
Above left: A woman takes inspiration from a design book to experiment with stencilling techniques. Above

right: Members of the Hamara Pakistani Women's Group work with the textile artist to put the final touches to the structure of their circular wall hanging.



Main pic: The completed circular wall hanging featuring largely floral motifs, inspired by the story of Lady Isabella and her nine sons. Top right: Flower made using silk painting techniques with silver gutta detail. Centre right: Flower made using rusched fabric and sequin detail, and silk painted flower with silver gutta detail. Bottom right: Close up of detail of inner circle of final wall hanging.

## 2. Textile Workshops – Leeds Chinese Women’s Group



One of the most memorable images from Temple Newsam was the harp-lute from the Chinese Room. One woman said she liked it because, having grown up poor, she had never had the chance to look at something so beautiful. Others remarked that it was clearly expensive, and that it was similar to a Chinese instrument which had a longer neck. The above pictures illustrate the process of drawing out the shape of the harp-lute from a photograph, and tracing it onto silk; it was then silk painted and finished with sequin detail.

The workshop artist asked the group members individually what memories they had of textiles, either at home, school or work, and what sewing or similar skills they already had. Most of the women said that they had not been to school, and many needed encouragement to describe their skills. They were encouraged to bring examples of their own textiles or craftwork. They brought in knitted dolls, scarves, a beadwork dragon, a handloom for making braid, miniature origami boats, birds, a turtle, and a child’s trousers made from a J-cloth.



Pic left: Silk painting used to create a cloud burst effect as featured on many of the Qing vases at Temple Newsam. Pic right: Sewing flowers onto a vase shape cut out in silk

The main theme for the Chinese wall hanging was Qing Dynasty vases. Each person selected a motif or detail they had seen on a vase. Using the photographs taken during the visit to Temple Newsam, the women drew or traced the object or motif, and then stitched the shape using a technique such as appliqué. One of the ladies piped the edging



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around the vase shaped wall hanging, using bias binding, which is typical of Chinese textiles.

*"I've never drawn anything before – it's therapeutic and relaxing"*



Main pic: The completed vase shaped wall hanging inspired by the Qing Dynasty vases at Temple Newsam. Top and centre right: Freehand silk painting technique was deployed to create a cloudburst pattern by using several colours together and allowing them to run into each other. Bottom right: Chinese harp-lute motif created by using silk painting and hand stitched gold sequin detail.

## H. RESOURCE 3: HANDLING BOXES

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As a legacy of *Pillars of the Light Alive!*, Handling boxes were created as long term sustainable resources for the venues involved in the project. Although they were largely inspired by the exhibitions featured in the project, all the boxes were carefully designed to complement the venues' permanent collections giving them a life beyond *Pillars of Light Alive!*. Their portable nature enables the boxes to be used for outreach purposes as well as activities at the museums.

The boxes consist of a broad range of themed objects, robust enough to withstand sustained handling by members of the public. It is possible to use all the objects together or focus on particular objects for specific activities or themes. Each box also contains an inventory of objects with a photograph, description, background information to explain its purpose, as well as ideas and prompts for activities using a particular object as a starting point.

Objects were selected on the basis of the amount of creative dialogue they could generate in different settings, and with a range of audiences ranging from school groups, families, adults and community groups, all with different learning abilities.

Artists were specially commissioned to decorate the three boxes. Each box was decorated in a manner that was sympathetic to its contents, and which also transformed the box from a mere object container into a unique work of art. It is hoped that looking closely at the designs and picking out specific details on the handling boxes will become an integral part of the handling sessions, which would enhance the entire experience.

### 1. Islamic Handling Box – Cartwright Hall Art Gallery

#### Design of Islamic Handling Box at Cartwright Hall Art Gallery



Bradford artist, Mahmud Manning, fused three key elements of traditional Islamic art - calligraphy, geometry and abstract floral designs - in the decoration of Cartwright Hall's Islamic handling box. His travels in Muslim North Africa inspired him to use traditional techniques and visually striking and uplifting colours. The side panels feature gold calligraphy motifs which mean 'provision', alluding to the function of the box.

Since Cartwright Hall already had an Islamic box that was dedicated to standard Islamic religious paraphernalia like prayer mats, prayer beads and Quran stands, the venue wanted to take this opportunity to produce a much more creative Islamic box containing unpredictable artefacts. To this end, objects inspired by Islamic design were derived from different Islamic countries as well as from Bradford.

The box was created to coincide with the opening of *Speaking Art*, so it could be used for related activities. The box, as a work in progress, was also showcased at the Sharing Learning Journeys Seminar in June 2006 at Cartwright Hall Art Gallery.

### **Sample of Contents of Islamic Handling Box at Cartwright Hall Art Gallery**



**Kalim**

A kalim is the traditional calligrapher's tool for writing beautiful calligraphy with. Made of wood or bamboo it is cut by the master to an appropriate angle.



**Rosewater Sprinkler**

A rose water sprinkler is usually used at weddings when the rose water is sprinkled over the bride and groom to keep them smelling fresh.



**Perfume Bottle & Holder**

This perfume bottle would be used to fragrance a bride and groom, or a new born baby. Perfume may also be used at an Islamic burial to cleanse the body.

## 2. Chinese Handling Box – Temple Newsam

### Design of Chinese Handling Box at Temple Newsam



Leeds artist Suna Xie explored the theme of *East Meets West* through collage images borrowed from both British and Chinese cultures. She used matching elements from both cultures to draw comparisons between the East and West. Themed panels depicting famous British and Chinese landmarks include Big Ben and Confucius Temple, as well as the Great Wall of China and Stonehenge. Another panel depicting modern cultural icons features David Beckham and Dr Who characters, as well as Chairman Mao and Churchill. Artwork was digitally produced and transferred to the box. The box handles were inspired by Ming Dynasty furniture.

Many of the objects in the handling box offer insights into Chinese life and culture. The Chinese women's group also donated a number of objects for the box, including a baby sling, child's trousers, rice packets, and a handloom. The Chinese wall hanging is also kept in the handling box.

### Sample of Contents of Chinese Handling Box



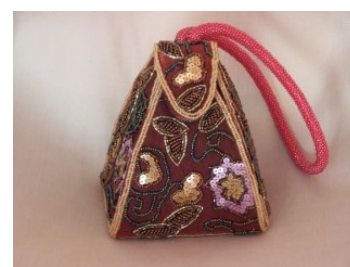
**Dragon And Phoenix Box**

This ornamental box features a dragon and phoenix. In Chinese culture dragons are wise, possess male powers and are associated with the Emperor. The phoenix symbolises loyalty, is female, and



**Zodiac Wall Hanging**

Wall hanging depicting the 12 signs of the Chinese astrological calendar. Many Chinese believe that their year of birth determines their personality and the amount of luck they will have in their life.



**Triangular Bag**

This triangular bag has a front opening, and is decorated with beadwork and sequins in flower and leaf patterns. The handle is also made of beadwork. This bag might be used for jewellery, or as a



associated with the Empress.

handbag for special occasions.

### 3. Islamic Handling Box – Temple Newsam

#### Design of Islamic Handling Box at Temple Newsam



Given the vast geographical spread of Islam, and the many different countries from which Muslims now living in the UK originate, it was decided that objects for the Islamic handling box should represent a variety of Islamic cultures, rather than focus purely on religious art. The wall hanging created by the Hamara Pakistani Women's Group is also kept in the handling box.

Bradford based artist, Pavan Sembi, who was commissioned to design it, wanted to create a traditional and authentic looking box. It features arched handles, which is an important design feature in the Islamic world. The application of gold spray paint gives the box a rich South Asian flavour. Pavan took inspiration from the intricate designs and colours used in carpets and ceramics at Temple Newsam to complete the box.

#### Sample of Contents of Islamic Handling Box at Temple Newsam



**Red Thread Pendant**

Metal pendant, inscribed with the names of *Allah* and the Prophet Mohammed, suspended on red



**Quran Cover**

Because Muslims believe their holy book is the actual word of God, they cover the Quran in a



**Prayer Caps**

All Muslims must cover their heads during prayer. Men would wear caps like this in the mosque.

thread tied in special knot. It can be hung in the car windscreen to ensure a safe journey.

beautifully decorated cloth as a mark of respect and to ensure it remains clean.

The decorative cap might also be worn with a traditional outfit outside the mosque.

## **4. Launch of Handling Boxes at Temple Newsam**

The Chinese and Pakistani women's groups were invited to a cultural celebration event held in their honour at Temple Newsam. It was an opportunity to applaud their work, showcase the handling boxes and demonstrate how their wall hangings would be used with the handling boxes. It was also an opportunity for the two groups to finally meet one another, particularly since each group was keen to see the work of the other group.



During the cultural celebration event, both groups were pleased to see their work being applauded, and enjoyed exploring the contents of the handling boxes among which their wall hangings would be included.



## J. RESOURCE 4: LEARNING JOURNEYS

A number of exciting yet unexpected outcomes have resulted from *Pillars of Light Alive!*, including the opportunity to have a presence on the region's My Learning website. My Learning, [www.mylearning.org](http://www.mylearning.org), acts as a resource for teachers and learners, and is inspired by museum, library and archive collections in Yorkshire. The content is presented as learning journeys designed to support different curriculum subjects and created in consultation with teachers.

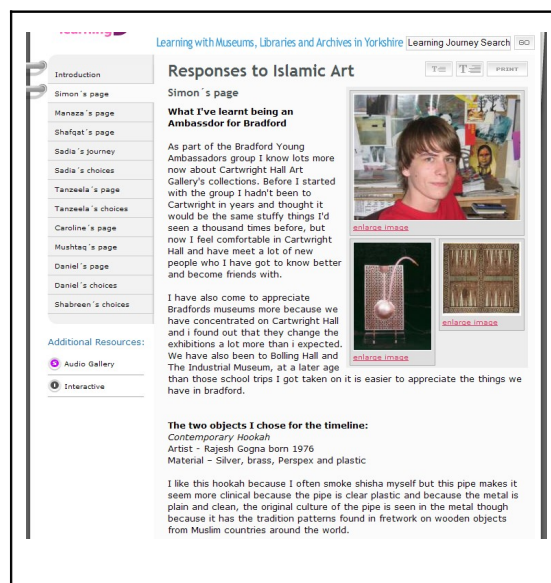
Six such learning journeys based on *Pillars of Light Alive!* have been specially created for My Learning. Each learning journey documents in words, pictures, audio clips and video clips the process involved in producing the work, the outcome, and the learning that took place during that process.

Two learning journeys relate to the wall hangings created by the Pakistani and Chinese women's groups. The two textiles projects hosted by Temple Newsam, inspired the My Learning project team to devote a new area of the website to community projects, so that learning journeys in this area act as a record for project participants and project leaders, and also become a valuable reference resource for other community project leaders.

Two further learning journeys showcase the handling boxes available at Temple Newsam that were created for school and community groups. The learning journeys will also help to publicise these new resources.

The Young Ambassadors created a fifth learning journey as part of their work on the timeline project. Each Young Ambassador was given their own page to comment on the process of working on the timeline, and to reflect on their relationship with Cartwright Hall as well as on their roles as Young Ambassadors.

The six learning journeys have already received 2,525 visitors collectively, with figures growing each month.



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*Pillars of Light Alive!* will continue to benefit from this strong presence on the My Learning website. In doing so, the project has inadvertently also created a legacy for future museum community projects to have a place on My Learning, which will provide long term benefits to lifelong learning and adult learning groups.

## K. LESSONS LEARNED

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A number of unforeseen issues arose during the course of *Pillars of Light Alive!*, which resulted in rethinking and deviating from the original planned activities in several instances. The project team was able to manage these issues and identify effective solutions due to their previous experience of working with community groups and their skills in brokering good partnerships.

### 1. Sustainability of outreach depends on a link person

The Education Officer at Temple Newsam left the project just after it was set up. Therefore, there was no dedicated worker at Temple Newsam to broker sustainable partnerships with the two Leeds community groups. However, Temple Newsam acted quickly to demonstrate its commitment to the project by recruiting a freelance co-ordinator to complete the project and ensure sustainable outcomes were realised. Nevertheless, with *Pillars of Light Alive!* now completed, the lack of a permanent member of staff makes it difficult for Temple Newsam to maintain links with the two community groups. There is the danger that these new relationships may be lost. The situation also means the community groups do not have an established contact at Temple Newsam in case they wanted to propose another project or visit. However, Yorkshire Museums Hub is planning to work with the Leeds Chinese Women's Group on a major project on China during 2007/2008.

### 2. Partnering community groups with an artist from a different background to their own opened up new possibilities

A mainstream artist was brought in to work on Temple Newsam's textiles project with the two culturally diverse community groups. The artist did not speak either of the groups' mother tongues so interpreters were brought in to resolve this issue. Whilst the use of interpreters complicated the working process, the Temple Newsam staff were keen to give the community groups the opportunity to work with a mainstream artist since this partnership too would reflect the *East Meets West* theme. The experience of working alongside someone from a different background to their own exposed both the community groups to different cultural viewpoints and opened up greater possibilities. This was reflected in their final wall hangings.

### 3. Interpreters were key to the success of this project

The example of Temple Newsam's textile project involving a Pakistani and a Chinese women's group demonstrates best practice in working with interpreters. The role of

the interpreters as core team members was key to the project's success. It was clear that translators with the relevant language skills and hired on an hourly basis could not fulfil this role. The project required dedicated interpreters who would be involved at every stage of the project, and help to broker relationships between the community groups and the *Pillars of Light Alive!* team.

Both the interpreters had worked on textiles projects before and were familiar with the materials and techniques being used. This not only added to their interest but also meant that they were able to become more deeply involved in the project. They were hands on, worked well in a team, and had first class people skills. They also gave added value to the project by translating not only the spoken words, but by also offering cultural context so that the project team had a more rounded view of the conversations taking place around them.

#### **4. Appreciate the barriers faced by community workers**

*Pillars of Light Alive!* was a well resourced project with a budget for administration, transport hire, venue hire, refreshments, interpreter fees and artist fees. From the perspective of the community groups, this made participation all the more attractive because many of the obstacles preventing them from taking part in a partnership project were removed. *Pillars of Light Alive!* would not eat into their resources, nor add pressure to their existing workloads, leaving them free to focus on encouraging their members to participate in *Pillars of Light Alive!*

## L. SUCCESS MEASURES

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*Pillars of Light Alive!* witnessed a number of exciting achievements, many as planned outcomes as well as several unexpected successes. The quantitative element of the project notwithstanding, it was the actual quality of experience and interaction that partners were keen to achieve.

### 1. Quantitative Measures

#### A. Delivery of Key Outputs

The HLF funding bid contracted the *Pillars of Light Alive!* project to deliver a number of outputs as a minimum, all of which were achieved:

Planned Targets	Achieved Outputs
7 cultural exchange visits	9 cultural exchange visits
2 timeline templates	2 timeline templates Additional, 6 learning journeys were created with 2,525 visitors recorded to end Feb 07
3 handling boxes	3 handling boxes Additionally, 2 textile wall hangings were created to become part of the handling boxes
3 training days	3 training days
6 artist led workshops	7 artist led workshops
-	1 cultural celebration event
-	1 reminiscence workshop

### 2. Qualitative Measures

#### A. Intergenerational Learning Opportunities

Many of the women from the Pakistani and Chinese women's groups customarily brought members of their families to the cultural exchange visits, textiles workshops and to the cultural celebration. Several mother and daughter teams enjoyed the

cultural exchange visits, and one mother and daughter from the Hamara Pakistani women's centre attended all the workshop sessions. Another member brought her two daughter-in-laws to all the textiles workshops. Some of the Young Ambassadors invited their families to the opening of *Speaking Art*.

The project created an atmosphere where individuals felt comfortable and confident enough to invite members of their families to participate with them, and thereby created the opportunity for intergenerational learning to take place. It was clear that respondents were enjoying themselves and participation in the project made them feel valued, and they wanted to share this positive experience with their families. Being able to take part in the activities with family members demonstrated their commitment to the project and also enhanced their experience. It also inadvertently increased community engagement with museums and galleries.



Women from both groups preferred to go to the museums and workshops with other members of their families. Left: The woman in the centre brought her two daughter in laws to all the textiles workshops. Right: The Chinese woman on the left brought her daughter (in yellow jacket) on the trip to Temple Newsam.

## B. Learning Journeys

One of the unexpected successes of *Pillars of Light Alive!* has also inadvertently become a strong marketing tool for the project in the form of learning journeys on the My Learning website. Inspired by museum, library and archive collections in Yorkshire, the [www.mylearning.org](http://www.mylearning.org) website acts as a resource for teachers and learners. Content is created in consultation with teachers, and takes the form of learning journeys which are designed to support different curriculum areas. My Learning features six specially created learning journeys based on *Pillars of Light Alive!*.

As well as helping to promote the project and share best practice throughout the region, *Pillars of Light Alive!* has also created a legacy for future museum community projects to have a presence on My Learning, with long lasting benefits for lifelong learning and adult learning groups.



### **C. Handling Boxes**

As a legacy of the project, *Pillars of Light Alive!* was contracted to deliver three handling boxes that would act as sustainable resources for the venues involved. As well as being brilliant long term resources, the handling boxes are in fact stunning works of art, each one decorated by a specially commissioned artist, briefed to ensure that the exterior is complementary to the contents of each box. As an integral part of the handling sessions, visitors will want to look closely at the culturally specific designs, and pick out particular details, which will enrich the entire experience.

## M. GENERIC LEARNING OUTCOMES

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### Evidence Gathering

The *Pillars of Light Alive!* project collected evidence of its impact in ways that would be appropriate to the needs of the different community groups it worked with. It was important to use a system of evaluation that was comparable and which treated all the participants in the same way. Many of the women from the Pakistani and Chinese community groups could not read or write English, and a number of the Pakistani women were completely illiterate. Although their development workers or interpreters could have completed evaluation forms on their behalf, the method was far from ideal in helping to determine the level of impact *Pillars of Light Alive!* had on their lives. In fact, during the Hamara Pakistani Women's Group visit to *Palace in Mosque* in Sheffield, their development worker and interpreter did complete a number of evaluation forms. However, responses were second hand and meaningless, with one-line comments like "came to see Islamic art" and "it's interesting"!

As well as statistics, the project was interested in capturing qualitative evidence, and this was done using a variety of evaluation methods. For instance, recording verbal feedback in mother tongue onto audio tape meant the Pakistani and Chinese women were contributing first hand to the evaluation process, and had the opportunity to express themselves properly.

Other methods included observation, note taking, photographs, as well as conversations and informal interviews with development workers, interpreters, museum learning managers and other team members involved in the project. The verbal feedback format was also adopted for the Young Ambassadors which resulted in richer and broader evidence being captured, and the emergence of a much more rounded picture. This evidence also proved invaluable in the creation of the learning journeys on the My Learning website.

### 1. Knowledge and Understanding

#### A. Used prior knowledge in new ways

The Chinese and Pakistani women's groups used their existing knowledge and skills to work on collective textile pieces. The Young Ambassadors enjoyed working with clay, which was a new medium for most of them:

- *"I did Art A'level and I worked with ceramics and clay then. But because I'd not done it for five years, it was brilliant for me. I love clay and it was a nice experience just to get back into it. And with the patterns it was interesting to see how they would come out on the plaster because I've not worked with plaster before. And it*

*was like, 'wow – this is what you've got from the clay!' I never thought you could use clay and plaster together, so I was learning how to use them together."*  
(Young Ambassadors clay workshop)

#### B. Participants showed increased understanding of Islamic art and Muslim cultures

Both Muslim and non-Muslim visitors found that the visit to *Palace and Mosque* improved their awareness of Islamic art and cultures. They were introduced to new objects that they had never associated with Islam, and they learnt how Muslims convey respect for their faith in different parts of the world:

- *"It increased our knowledge. We saw things from many nations and it showed how different countries expressed their love for Islam."*  
(Hamara Pakistani Women's Group visit to *Palace and Mosque*)
- *"What I found really interesting was that the pieces were from all over the world. They were from different countries and what you reflected on was the Islamic Empire, that there was an actual presence, that it was so big, and that's what hit me first. Whereas now we have lost that because we are so fragmented. I mean, there's still a lot of Muslims but not together. Whereas they were all united and their artwork really reflected how spiritual they were. I had mixed feelings and it was a bit emotional as well. I'm from a Muslim background and I was happy that they were so powerful and spiritual and influential, and saddened in a way that where's it all gone now and what we need to do to bring that back."*  
(Young Ambassadors visit to *Palace and Mosque*)
- *"The exhibition in itself was a learning curve for me because there were things I'd not seen before from Islam like the astrolabes and the pumice stone shoe shapes and things. I'd never come into contact with things like that so that was a learning curve."* (Young Ambassadors visit to *Palace and Mosque*)

#### C. Participants creative interpretations showed context

Participants were encouraged to use the exhibition visits as preparation for follow-up activities. This forced them to look more closely at the objects which led them to identify recurring themes and motifs prevalent in Islamic art, which in turn heightened the perspective they brought to the creative workshops:

- *"A lot of the patterns we recognised as well through looking at Islamic art or studying something and it was like, 'Ooh yeah, we know that pattern!'. It was exciting because we recognised things."*  
(Young Ambassadors visit to *Palace and Mosque*)

#### D. Made links between Islamic and Chinese culture

During the Chinese and Pakistani women's group visits to *Speaking Art*, they came

across a religious scroll that was created using Chinese and Arabic calligraphy. They realised that there was a strong Muslim culture existing in certain parts of China, and that links could be made between Islamic and Chinese culture:

- *“You could tell they were intrigued by the scrolls done by a Chinese artist, but it’s in Arabic when read horizontally.”*

(Interpreter, Leeds Chinese Women’s Group visit to *Speaking Art*)

#### E. The Pakistani and Chinese women’s groups made cultural connections between the lives of the women who had lived at Temple Newsam and their own.

During their tour of Temple Newsam, members of both groups identified a number of objects including the optometron, secretaire, exchequer’s chest and furniture in the Indian and Crimson Rooms, that reminded them of items that were included in their own dowries:

- *“Some of the ladies are matching items here with what they’ve got at home, for instance the big chest. Some of the ladies have got something similar back home in Pakistan. Perhaps not as beautifully crafted as this one, but it’s similar in terms of shape. And they put their clothes and their belongings in there.”*

(Hamara Pakistani Women’s Group visit to *East Meets West*)

- *“The optometron was not an ordinary box but still it was the idea that in the west they used to have same things as well. The idea was the same – to keep their jewellery safe and to be put in a special place or something, so that’s why they were very interested in that.”*

(Interpreter, Hamara Pakistani Women’s Group visit to *East Meets West*)

- *“One lady said she had this sort of chest in her dowry. When they are going to live in a separate house from their parents, their parents usually give them some share of their household things. So she said her mother in law gave her this sort of chest when she had her first house. I asked the lady what she kept in the chest and she said, ‘All the crockery, all the breakable things, I used to keep them safe in there, in the box.’”*

(Interpreter, Hamara Pakistani Women’s Group visit to *East Meets West*)

- *I recognised that dye [on furniture in the Indian Room] because my mother had her wedding furniture made out of that colour, and it’s still in our house just the same as if it has been made yesterday.”*

(Hamara Pakistani Women’s Group visit to *East Meets West*)

## 2. Skills

#### A. Both the women’s groups learnt new skills such as drawing and silk painting

The textiles workshops used the women’s existing skills but also built the women’s confidence and increased their interest by introducing them to new skills:

- *“I’d like to do more classes like this, because I’m learning new things”*  
(Leeds Chinese Women’s Group textiles workshop)
- *“I’ve never done anything as intricate as this before”*  
(Leeds Chinese Women’s Group textiles workshop)
- *“I didn’t think I’d be able to do it, so it’s good to have a teacher”*  
(Leeds Chinese Women’s Group textiles workshop)
- *“It’s hard to control my hands because I haven’t done this before.”*  
(Leeds Chinese Women’s Group textiles workshop)

#### B. Participants from all the groups displayed professionalism by offering to complete their work at home, to meet impending deadlines

The Young Ambassadors conducted research for the timeline content in their own time. Members of the Pakistani women’s group took their embroideries and materials home to complete. One member of the Chinese women’s group volunteered to complete the Chinese wall hanging by piping around the edge, which also involved a shopping trip with the textile artist to purchase the fabric.

#### C. Both the women’s groups developed their social skills

The project gave them the opportunity to work together as a team during the textiles workshops, and they had the chance to interact with new people at the cultural celebration event:

- *“On the last day everybody was feeling so sorry. They said it was only a few sessions and some of them didn’t even make all the sessions, but still they said they will always remember this. The atmosphere was just so friendly and they enjoyed the things.”*  
(Interpreter, Hamara Pakistani Women’s Group on textiles workshop)

#### D. The Pakistani women’s group developed their communication and emotional skills

The reminiscence session helped to develop the Pakistani women’s speaking and listening skills. They took turns to tell the story of their chosen religious object. The others listened intently and asked further questions about their history. Discussing their relationships with these objects also gave the women the opportunity to express themselves emotionally.

The reminiscence session gave the women an opportunity to express themselves emotionally. The Pakistani women learnt how to channel their emotional energy into productive outcomes. They were deeply moved by the story of Lady Isabella who lost all nine sons in her lifetime, and subsequently used that as the basis for their wall

hanging, where the nine flowers represented each of Lady Isabella's sons:

- *"This woman was not an ordinary woman like me and like those women. She was living in a stately home and she was something to do with royalty as well but still they thought that if a woman loses nine sons, she has no status left! She has left all her life savings and she has lost all her pension and everything. That's why they were moved – the poor lady who was living in such a stately house and then she suddenly lost nine sons, and they must have imagined that she lost everything. So what an unfortunate woman that was!"*  
(Interpreter, Hamara Pakistani Women's Group visit to East Meets West)
- *"I would have liked to have met the lady with the nine sons who all died in her lifetime. She sounds like a good woman, but what a painful story! I liked hearing about her."* (Hamara Pakistani Women's Group visit to East Meets West)

#### E. Participants developed their creative skills

Working on the timeline enabled the Young Ambassadors to express their own responses to artworks that inspired them. The clay workshop taught them how to manipulate clay, and how to use a new medium to create their interpretations of favourite artworks:

- *"Kalim also showed us the techniques – how to use the clay, how to get different textures, and that was good."* (Young Ambassadors clay workshop)
- *"We looked at different Islamic patterns and we were asked to take ideas from those patterns and create our own. So basically the designing thing was very much our own, taking inspiration from different things and creating your own. And that is what our moulds were – our own interpretation of different things."*  
(Young Ambassadors clay workshop)

The textiles workshops also gave the women's groups the chance to develop their creative skills:

- *When the women were holding the brush to do the silk painting, this lady's hands were shaking and she was so nervous. She said, 'this is the first time I have held something like this in my hand'. I said, 'what about pencil or pen'? She said, 'Oh, forget about pencil or pen! I never saw a pen until I was 21 years old! My uncle was visiting us from Iran and he had something in his pocket. And he said, 'this is a pen and we write with it'.' And she says that was the first time I saw a pen. She was a very old lady and ill as well, but still I think she produced a flower or something with the help of the textile teacher. She just tried to make something. Her hand was shaking but she was enjoying it. She thought it was a very good experience to see what she could produce, so when she saw the full flower with all the colour and things, I think she was so satisfied that she has done it. She couldn't believe her eyes that she has done that thing. She said that she was so happy that she can make something because she thought that she is just useless now, because she was ill as well and very old. She said that the community worker asked her to come.*



*Well, she came and she said she would watch everybody else and she won't do anything. But when she was invited to do it, she just tried."*  
(Interpreter, Hamara Pakistani Women's Group on textiles workshops)

#### F. The Young Ambassadors developed key ICT skills

The Young Ambassadors provided content for the timeline and advised the software development company on aspects of design and functionality. They went on to create their own individual timelines and learning journeys :

- *"I personally thought we were just going to put something together on a piece of paper, but because of the fact that we're actually working on a new prototype software has added an element of interest for me because I'm into that kind of thing. And for us to create a template that's going to be used across Yorkshire, and to be part of that, that would be our inspiration to do something professional that's really good. It's very very interesting."* (Young Ambassadors, timeline)

#### G. The Young Ambassadors developed key business and project management skills

The clay workshop with glass artist, Kalim Afzal, helped the Young Ambassadors to understand how to present their work professionally in a portfolio, as well as how to go about winning commissions. Their work on the timeline developed their knowledge of project management.

#### H. The Young Ambassadors developed research and editing skills

Each of the Young Ambassadors was tasked to research an old and a contemporary object for the timeline. They edited their own material to ensure the content fitted the space available on the template. They were also charged with proofing their own work and met the imposed deadlines for completing the research:

- *"It took me about one day to do all the research. I went on the internet to do the research on the art piece, the tile, and the artist himself and the background information. I quite like the colours on this piece and the flowers and stuff in the centre. It reminds me of some work I've done before. It's called illumination art. I enjoyed the research, getting to know the background and the artist and the meaning behind the ceramic tile and why it was made and stuff – the history of it. It makes me feel really proud that anybody can actually log on and get information that I've researched. That makes me feel really proud."* (Young Ambassadors, timeline)

### 3. Attitudes and Values

#### A. Cultural exchange visits helped the Chinese and Pakistani women understand the purpose of museums, and increased their personal affinity to museums and galleries

- “They don’t normally go to exhibitions or museums on their own because they don’t have the exhibits explained to them. Normally it’s done in English if they follow a tour, so this has been very informative for them and a different experience.”  
(Leeds Chinese Women’s Group visit to *Speaking Art*)
- “Some of the women were thinking that Temple Newsam is just somewhere to go and have a look quickly and then maybe have a picnic. They didn’t know it was going to be so much involved like this but they’re really enjoying it and asking lots of questions. They’re surprised that the English have put so much work into this place and that the place is still here after hundreds of years for them all to see.”  
(Development Worker, Hamara Pakistani Women’s visit to *East Meets West*)
- “Most of the women couldn’t understand why they were being taken to Temple Newsam. They were thinking if the house is a thousand years old it’s nothing to do with them! They have all seen old houses before! But when they visited inside and they saw the things that had been picked out for them, most of them enjoyed it.”  
(Interpreter, Hamara Pakistani Women’s Group visit to *East Meets West*)

#### B. Enhanced pride in their own culture and community

Seeing the prominence and respect given by museums to objects of their own cultures made the participants feel very proud of their background, and had a positive impact on their self-esteem:

- “I loved seeing the beautiful verses in the Quran. How could I not have loved it. It’s my religion, isn’t it!” (Hamara Pakistani Women’s visit to *Palace and Mosque*)
- “My favourite was the handwritten Quran. I stood there and read that entire verse. That felt good.” (Hamara Pakistani Women’s Group visit to *Palace and Mosque*)
- “They feel very proud that 200 years ago, the influence of the East was coming to the West. They feel very proud about that.”  
(Leeds Chinese Women’s Group visit to *East Meets West*)
- “For me it was spectacular. I’ve never been so overawed by what’s been around in a gallery like that. Being a Muslim I could relate to some of the things and I’m interested in pottery and calligraphy as well, and seeing all that really inspired me. I was actually explaining to people that were non-Muslims about certain objects, like they had passages of the Quran showing, and I was explaining those chapters to the

*non-Muslims. It made me feel really good because these were people that I'd never met before and they seemed interested in what I had to say. It opened up a conversation without me even knowing them and they were listening to me. And it made me feel really proud of my culture and my religion. It's the first time I've been to a gallery where I've been so inspired and I more or less looked at every single piece."* (Young Ambassadors visit to Palace and Mosque)

### C. Positive experience of cross cultural exchange

A good deal of cross cultural learning and change in attitude took place towards different cultures. The Chinese and Pakistani women's groups in particular learnt about each other's cultures:

- *"They asked cultural questions about Muslims and cleared up perceptions they had."* (Leeds Chinese Women's Group visit to Speaking Art)
- *"The women have learnt a bit about Muslim culture. They only hear stereotypical things about Asian people because they don't have the chance to meet Asian people, so they were asking a lot of questions."* (Leeds Chinese Women's Group visit to Speaking Art)
- *"What surprised me was that they should be so interested in western culture and taking that on board. And I was really pleased with how interested they actually were, because sometimes during guided tours you get that glazed over look because people really have had enough. They're tired of hearing your voice. They can't take much more in. But these ladies have shown enthusiasm all the way around."* (Learning Mentor, Temple Newsam)
- *"Another positive thing for us was seeing all the non-Muslim people looking at it and appreciating it and asking questions. When we went as a group we had a lot of non-Muslims who liked what they were seeing but were asking us a lot of questions"* (Young Ambassadors visit to Palace and Mosque)

### D. Positive attitudes in relation to an experience

The cultural exchange visits proved to be a very positive experience for all participants. The ability of the museums and galleries they visited to touch their lives and uplift them made it an experience that was worthwhile and worth repeating:

- *"We would never have been able to see such old and exquisite things in our normal lives. I mean, seeing those swords that were hundreds of years old and that pulpit where the imam stood to deliver his sermons. All those things. I thank the government for going to all that trouble and spending all that money to lay on such fine things that relate to our religion. It's a great thing they did and I really appreciated it."* (Hamara Pakistani Women's Group visit to Palace and Mosque)
- *"I think they feel it's been worthwhile to come and see this. They'll be talking about this for days now. And Islamically, they don't feel guilty when they've gone to see*

*something Islamic so they feel the time they've spent here has been worthwhile. They feel good about this. There's been a real sense of purpose. They've not wasted their time with this."* (Hamara Pakistani Women's Group visit to *Speaking Art*)

- *"One of the ladies got really emotional when she was standing in front of the picture of the Ka'ba door. It must have brought up some kind of memory."*  
(Hamara Pakistani Women's Group visit to *Palace and Mosque*)
- *"There was a sense of ownership with the exhibition. When we explained that when you look at an Islamically inspired artwork, the artist and the viewer, both benefit by gaining good deeds from it. And they really got that and it made it so worthwhile for them."* (Community & Outreach Officer, Cartwright Hall Art Gallery)

#### E. Positive impact on self-esteem

Being invited by the workshop artist to show items they had made themselves made the women from both groups feel valued. It gave them a chance to talk about their skills, and made them feel important because their work was being valued. Being invited to the cultural celebration event and having their contributions applauded also made them feel valued.

## 4. Enjoyment, Inspiration and Creativity

### A. Having fun

- *"I'm really enjoying it."* (Leeds Chinese Women's Group re workshop)
- *"Most of the ladies were over 60 and a couple of young girls. And they said it's a long time since they've done this sort of thing, and they never thought that they could do it now, even if somebody asked them. You know if you stop doing something, you just feel unable to do it anymore. But when they started, it all came back and they enjoyed it."*  
(Interpreter, Hamara Pakistani Women's Group on textiles workshops)

### B. Being creative

- *"I've never drawn anything before – it's therapeutic and relaxing"*  
(Leeds Chinese Women's Group on textiles workshop)

### C. Being inspired

- *"I loved the shapes and I was intrigued about how they managed to squeeze so much beautiful writing into such a small space."*  
(Hamara Pakistani Women's Group visit to *Speaking Art*)
- *"They seem to be really enjoying themselves!"*  
(Leeds Chinese Women's Group visit to *East Meets West*)

### D. Imaginative engagement

Working on the timeline made the Young Ambassadors feel imaginatively engaged with a programme of creative and heritage learning and interpretation that they have helped shape.

### E. Innovative thoughts, actions or things

Some of the Young Ambassadors were forced to think outside the box, and were inspired enough to apply this to their professional work:

- *"I've never done anything like this before. What I learnt was that there's different types of creativity. I've been so stuck with my computer in what I've done that I'd forgotten that there are other areas that I can expand into."* (Young Ambassadors clay workshop)

## 5. Action, Behaviour, Progression

### A. Promoting cultural cohesion

Cartwright Hall Art Gallery used its new Islamic handling box as part of a discussion on Islam at a Morley school situated in a ward where the BNP have recently been elected. The handling box was used to demonstrate aspects of Muslim life to the students.

### B. Making arts more accessible

The Young Ambassadors created a learning journey to complement the two timelines they had created. The learning journeys contextualise the works of art that were selected for the timelines. This learning journey was recently used as stimulus material with a group of older active English women to demonstrate that no special language is needed to talk about works of art.

### C. Creating sustainable relationships

The Renaissance Yorkshire Museums Hub is planning to work with the Leeds Chinese Women's Group on a major project on China during 2007/2008.

### D. Strengthening relationships with community centre staff

Three youth workers from the Hamara Healthy Living Centre attended a training day targeting youth workers at Cartwright Hall Art Gallery following the visit to *Speaking Art* by the Hamara Pakistani Women's Group.

### E. Encouraging family and friends to visit museums & galleries

The Muslim minibus driver who was specially hired to provide transport for the Hamara Pakistani Women's Group returned to the *Palace and Mosque* exhibition with a group of students from a Muslim Girls School in Bradford. She is hired by the parents of these girls to do the school run, and she convinced the parents and the school of the Islamic merits of the *Palace and Mosque* exhibition and brought the students to see it.

Women from the Chinese and Pakistani groups in Leeds encouraged female members of their families to attend the museum visits and textiles workshops with them.



Furthermore, some of the Muslim members of Young Ambassadors were so inspired by their visit to *Palace and Mosque* that they returned with their friends for a second visit. Two of them also brought their families to the opening of *Speaking Art*, and one of them volunteered to help during the Chinese women's group visit to Cartwright Hall.

## APPENDIX

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### 1. Event Calendar and Attendance Figures

DATE 2006	EVENT	NUMBER ATTENDED
22 Mar	Visit to <i>Palace and Mosque</i> - Hamara Muslim Women's Group	13
25 Mar	Visit to <i>Palace and Mosque</i> & talk by contemporary glass artist Kalim Afzal – Bradford Young Ambassadors	10
12 Apr	Reminiscence Session – Hamara Muslim Women's Group	10
29 Apr	Clay Workshop with Kalim Afzal – Bradford Young Ambassadors	8
13 May	Timeline Training session 1 – Bradford Young Ambassadors	7
27 May	Timeline Training session 2 – Bradford Young Ambassadors	7
10 Jun	Timeline Training session 3 – Bradford Young Ambassadors	7
29 Jun	Visit to <i>East Meets West</i> – Chinese Elderly Women's Group	14
1 Jul	Visit to <i>East Meets West</i> – Young Ambassadors	4
5 Jul	Visit to <i>East Meets West</i> – Hamara Muslim Women's Group	10 (plus 2 toddlers)
6 Jul	Textile Workshop - Chinese Elderly Women's Group – Session 1	8
12 Jul	Textile Workshop - Hamara Muslim Women's Group – Session 1	10
13 Jul	Textile Workshop – Chinese Elderly Women's Group – Session 2	8
20 Jul	Textile Workshop – Chinese Elderly Women's Group – Session 3	5
26 Jul	Textile Workshop - Hamara Muslim Women's Group - Session 2	7 (plus 1 child)
28 Jul	Timeline Debrief session - Bradford Young Ambassadors	3
9 Aug	Textile Workshop - Hamara Muslim Women's Group – Session 3	8 (plus 2 children)
28 Sep	Visit to <i>Speaking Art</i> – Chinese Elderly Women's Group	15
1 Nov	Visit to <i>Speaking Art</i> – Hamara Muslim Women's Group	15
22 Sep	Visit to <i>Speaking Art</i> – Bradford Young Ambassadors	8
9 Nov	Cultural Celebration Event	42

