

Hampshire artists and local groups urged to enter UK's first national arts prize for community art

The UK's first ever community arts prize launched 1 March, in the face of the Government's £83m* worth of cuts to arts funding.

Hundreds of submissions are expected from across the country from individual artists and art organisations hoping to win the People's Art Prize, which is being backed by leading British artists Jeremy Deller and Sokari Douglas-Camp.

Sculptor Sokari Douglas-Camp, whose work was shortlisted for the fourth plinth in Trafalgar Square, is the public face of the People's Art Prize. The award-winning artist says it's a wake-up call for politicians who call for community cohesion but fail to support art projects that bring communities together.

Douglas-Camp explains: "Community art is magic. Different people come

together in a way you just don't see in other parts of life. Young people, older people, different nationalities and abilities: community art breaks isolation and I'm so excited for this prize to celebrate and support the best of community art happening right now."

Any visual art is eligible for the prize, from quilting to landscape gardening to sculpture or a film, providing a community was involved in creating it.

The organisers, community arts charity Arts Express, hope that even non-professional artists will apply. Arts Express Director Damion Viney says: "there are two important elements for the prize: the quality of the creation process, and the quality of the final product. We believe art is for everyone, even people who may have never set foot inside a gallery. The People's Art Prize is about getting people excited

about the art happening in their area. We know Hampshire has some interesting arts projects going on and we want to capture the best of them on a national platform."

Viney adds: "Arts funding is taking a battering, and community art has long been the voice of the people – this prize is about shaking things up in an art world that's mostly sleep-walking through austerity. Community art brings people together, and the government is being short-sighted if it doesn't see how important that is in Britain today."

Artists and arts organisations can submit a project online at www.peoples-art-prize.co.uk. All projects submitted will be publicly showcased on the site and promoted to a national audience.

Entries close on 20 May.

Children's charity benefits from sale of painting

Pansy and Tea, a painting by New Forest artist Jenny Sutton, has fetched £600 at The Honey Pot Children's Charity auction.

"I feel quite strongly about the charity; it does good work," says Jenny, an elected member of the Royal

Birmingham Society of Artists.

The charity works to enhance the lives of vulnerable children and young carers aged 5-12 years by providing respite breaks and on-going outreach support.

This fundraising event took place at The Dorchester in Mayfair, London on March 19.

Jenny's work features in the Forest Connections exhibition, organized by Creative Coverage, at the New Forest Centre Gallery in Lyndhurst from now until July 5.

For more information contact Jenny Sutton on:

Telephone: 01590-641563, 07976 830569

Email: info@jennysutton-fineart.co.uk

Web: <http://www.jennysutton-fineart.co.uk/>



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Community pub gets a serving of much-needed TLC

A Hampshire pub once beset by problems has undergone an £80,000 refurbishment to revive it. Enterprise Inns' The Swallow, in

Andover, previously suffered a poor reputation and received noise complaints from neighbours. But now the community pub has been

transformed by Enterprise and Publican Jackie Jackson.

MPs Kit Malthouse and Sir George Young were joined by Test Valley Borough Councillor Iris Andersen and Enterprise Regional Manager Daniel Oakford at the venue to applaud the great work that has been done.

Gandhi