

Flash of Splendour: Innovation in Education

"A treasure trove of creativity and personal expression."
David Cameron, British Prime Minister

"Such a wonderful idea!" Simon Schama, Historian

About Flash of Splendour

Founded in 2009 in memory of Oxford-educated historian and novelist, Felicity Avery (1928-2008), Flash of Splendour is a non-profit educational organization, based in Oxford. We work internationally to empower disabled, marginalized and disadvantaged children and young people through the creative arts, including music, theatre, film, fine art and creative literacy.

Using innovative methodology and new pedagogical approaches, we enable students to understand, enjoy and interpret cultural forms, ideas and texts, which would normally be closed to them. In our programmes, children positioned on the edges of society through disability, conflict or poverty, develop new academic and creative skills, and a profound sense of self-confidence and self-empowerment, which reaches beyond school into adulthood, beyond the microcosm of the classroom into the wider community.

We are skilled in working at the grass roots level: delivering bespoke workshops and programmes in schools, training teachers and support staff, supporting school improvement and outcomes, and enabling partnerships with prestigious cultural and academic organizations. Equally, we provide consultancy services for the development and implementation of country-wide education policies and strategies, and are keen to work with governments, donors, multilateral bodies and Commonwealth universities to create a new inclusive and dynamic international landscape of SEND education.

We Were There, Now We're Here: Changing Perceptions

Our inaugural initiative, *We Were There, Now We're Here* (2009-10), enabled a group of talented teenagers with autism, and learning disabilities to exhibit a selection of paintings at St Anne's College, University of Oxford, to profound and life changing acclaim. Two of the artists' works were acquired by the Prime Minister, David Cameron, and are displayed in his office; another, a portrait of St Anne, is now part of the college's permanent collection. An accompanying book, with a foreword by the Prime Minister, outlined our SEND strategies, ideology and practice.

The Children's Poly-Olbion: Accessing Literature

"The Children's Poly-Olbion, easily the most important academic project on the planet."
John Armstrong, poet

From 2013 to 2015, Flash of Splendour has been delivering *The Children's Poly-Olbion*, a major collaboration in educational outreach, joint funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the Heritage Lottery Fund, between Flash of Splendour, the Royal Geographical Society and the University of Exeter.

Rolled out within Special Educational schools across the UK, working with hundreds of children with disabilities ranging from cerebral palsy to severe autism, the project introduces children to Michael Drayton's (1563-1631) vast topographical poem of Britain, *Poly-Olbion*

(1612; 1622), and its accompanying maps by William Hole. Drayton was a close associate of Shakespeare and Ben Jonson, and his *Poly-Olbion* crystallizes early modern ideas of nationalism, history and memory. As such, the project offers more than access to a poetic study of the land, but a way for disabled children to strengthen and assert their own sense of identity and topographical belonging. In this way, it revolutionizes the possibilities of university outreach, not only allowing research insights to trickle down, but to cause significant and positive social change.

The children's artistic and literary reimagining of Drayton's Jacobean landscapes, including a series of portraits and maps, will be showcased, alongside 17th-century material and a newly commissioned work by cutting-edge London cartographic artist Stephen Walter, at the Royal Geographical Society in London in a month-long exhibition from 9 September 2015.

An international academic conference and the first Flash of Splendour literary festival will be also held during the show's run on 19 and 20 September, with both events exploring ideas of English landscape, with speakers including BBC cartographic historian Jerry Brotton and Faber & Faber poet Paul Farley.

The FL/ASH Project, transforming Museum Outreach

"Marvelous and moving."

John Garth, Editor of *Oxford Today* and author of *Tolkien and the Great War*

Film is a medium that we have recently started intensively employing within our national and regional programmes. For marginalized children, being supported to write, direct and produce digital films telling the buried stories of their imaginative and real worlds has an immensely powerful impact. Working with the Ashmolean, one of the world's leading museums and a teaching and research department of the University of Oxford, we have devised a new approach to outreach for young adults with disabilities, which involves intensive workshops to produce animated films based on the multiple narratives of the museum's rich collections, including the world's largest group of Raphael drawings and the most important collection of modern and contemporary Chinese art outside of China. The children's films will be showcased on the museum website and at animation film festivals across Europe and the Commonwealth. Accompanying the FL/ASH project will be a complete series of resources: website, handbook, trail maps, audio guide and training schemes. The entire package will be transferable to other museums and cultural institutions and we will aim for international partnerships from 2018.

What Flash of Splendour can provide:

- Flash of Splendour offers specialist consultancy to education ministries across the world, enabling governments to transform the educational outcomes of their most vulnerable children, on national, regional and local levels.
- We are particularly experienced in facilitating major outreach programmes, linking universities, museums and cultural organizations with single or multiple schools, creating groundbreaking projects, which are affordable, achievable and aligned with global best practice.
- Teacher and support staff training and development, with an emphasis on SEND and institutionalized children.
- Facilitating educational collaborations in partnership with cutting-edge artists, writers, film makers.
- Planning bespoke SEND educational policy and programmes to powerfully transform schooling at a national level.

- Providing Flash of Splendour experts, many of whom are leaders in their fields, to work closely with key administrators and executors of educational policy and reform.

Who we work with:

- Educational Ministries
- Universities
- Museum and cultural organizations
- Multilateral agencies
- Publishers
- Schools, colleges and residential institutions
- Charities and NGOs

Flash of Splendour

Director: Anne Louise Avery

Anne Louise Avery is the founder and director of Flash of Splendour Arts, with an academic background in art, anthropology and archaeology. Since graduating with First Class Honours from the School of Oriental and African Studies in London, she has studied at the University of Oxford, ICU University, Tokyo, and Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island, where she held a John Nicholas Brown fellowship in African American art history. In 1995, she won the prestigious Daiwa Foundation Scholarship (previous scholars include British ceramicist Edmund de Waal).

Head of SEND Education: Steve Pratley

Steve Pratley is Head of Education at Flash of Splendour Arts. He is an expert in the theory and method of music, creativity and communication within Special Needs education, with over twenty years experience in schools and colleges throughout the United Kingdom and Europe. He is a founding member and core instructor of both Flash of Splendour and of the leading music charity, Soundabout, which specializes in training teachers to use music to unlock the potential of children with disabilities. He is also a trustee of the Exuberant Trust, which supports young people at the early stages of arts careers.

His skill in enabling teachers and educators to encourage creativity and expression in children and young adults, has led to long-term relationships with higher educational institutions across the UK, including Oxford Brookes, Oxford University, Exeter University, University of Birmingham and the University of Roehampton. He also has targeted experience working with orphaned and displaced children in Eastern Europe: leading programmes in orphanages and care homes in Roman and Bacau, Romania with the charity Musika.

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