

# VINDICATION



*Responses to the Life and Work Of*  
***Mary Wollstonecraft***

**by Unity Arts**

*Hosted by Newington Green Meeting House*

**SEPTEMBER 2020**

Funding raised by  
**The National Lottery**  
and awarded by the Heritage Lottery Fund



**LOTTERY FUNDED**

In January 2019 Unity Arts were awarded a grant by the National Lottery Heritage Fund to deliver a two year community project based on the lives of Mary Wollstonecraft, Elizabeth Montagu and the Bluestockings Society called

## Blue Circle Of Dissent

This installation **VINDICATION** is one of the events arising from that project's activities and research and wishes to honour Mary Wollstonecraft during September, the month of her death in 1797.

These responses are our participants' findings from the writings and letters of Mary Wollstonecraft and looking at the life of that great woman who had a school in Newington Green and worshipped at what is now Newington Green Meeting House.

Many of the pieces have been created during the Covid-19 pandemic and came out of online workshops and one to one socially distanced meetings with the researchers and artists.

Our thanks to Newington Green Meeting House that have made this installation possible by welcoming us as their first 360 virtual event and how fitting we are in the Wollstonecraft Room.

All above you and on the piano you will find **STEWY** bunting.

## HACKNEY HEROINE

*Cut art board and decorated laminates*



### Contributors:

**Kath Best, Michael Blankson, Gary Cain, Ellie Cummings, Cerys Davies, Trinity Dirnberger, Ella Warren Green, Amii Griffith, Grace Hammonds, Haydn, Yasbera Hialeu, Cate Holmes, Poppy Kay, Pat Kenniston, John Kenniston, Scarlett Lindsay-Allen, J McVeigh, Nellie Noodle, Green Onions, Jamie Powell, Keira Sanz, Shanksy, Tega Umurhohwo, Jayne Walters, Beryl Warren, Lil Warren, Sara Warren, Sarah J Warren, Hannah Woods, Lily Wright and Hoxton Hall Youth Arts Participants.**

***Stencil image used by kind permission of the artist STEWY <https://stewy.bigcartel.com/>***

The piece you see above you has been over a year in the making. What started off as a means to ignite interest in Mary Wollstonecraft at events and workshops then turned into a collaboration that every part of our community could enjoy.

We were generously granted use of the image of the stencil usually seen on the wall of *Newington Green Meeting House* (soon to be put back) by the Street Artist **STEWY** for our posters, promotions and for this now realised installation.

These "colouring in" and "decoration" sessions started on *Newington Green* 27 & 28 April 2019 at our outside events to celebrate the **260<sup>th</sup> birthday of Mary Wollstonecraft**.

During May of 2019 Unity Arts delivered **Hackney Dissent** in collaboration with the Participation Team at *Hoxton Hall* and all the workshop members made the first set of "bunting" to show at the sharing at *Hoxton Hall* and the Spoken Word event and installation at *Dr Johnson's House*.

The activity was used during our Summer Heritage Workshops in July and August of 2019 and we used the image and the ever lengthening "bunting" for our event **Wollstonecraft Remembered** at *St Pancras Old Church* on 9 September 2019.

As we have had to pause meeting in groups during the Covid-19 pandemic we sent out templates of the image and felt tips so that "colouring in" STEWY was part of our "lockdown" activity pack. The pack was also shared by *Newington Green Meeting House* as part of their Wollstonecraft online celebrations in April 2020.

The image (seen here on the right) made by **Cerys Davies** from *Hoxton Hall Youth Arts* will be used as the front cover of the book **Blue Circle of Dissent** produced by this project in January 2021.



## **Boss Woman, Mary Wollstonecraft by Nellie Noodle**

*Oil on canvas*

As a starting point I used the colourless stipple engraving by *John Chapman*, published 1798.

I found the image inspiring as it captured an expression in Mary rarely seen in other works. To me Mary is forever the Boss Woman standing firm in a tall black hat, taking on the world.



## Blue Lady of Dissent by Jayne McVeigh

*Acrylic on canvas*

In my painting I wanted to capture the idea of how a dissenter of the 1700`s is relevant today. I was initially inspired by the quote from Elizabeth Montagu, a portrait of her and a modern cartoon by *Brighty* of Dominic Cummings and Boris Johnson. I chose to use a blue colour palette to tie in with Elizabeth Montagu`s connection with the Blue Stockings Society and added text to drive home the corruption of the Tories in today`s cut throat political arena.



## Young Dissenter by George Walters

*Acrylic on wood*

Using different hues of black and blue, I have tried to capture the emotion of a young dissenter feeling trapped in today`s chaotic and hopeless world.



## School girl by Isabel Walters

*Acrylic on canvas*

In this painting I wanted to capture the pressure and anguish created in British Education.



## Opposite the Green by Kath Best

*Acrylic on canvas*

In an imperfect world the Unitarian Church represents a space for all.

The idea of making a painting of this building was to highlight the importance of community space and the complexities of human endeavour.

The painting shows it as it was prior to recent refurbishment with red doors and pink render, surrounded by blue, opposite the green.







## Radical Threads by Shanksy

*Multi-materials and Spray Paint on Canvas*

We saw the Unity Arts documentary *Hackney Dissent* and decided to work from the same prompts as those Spoken Word artists. We have started to grasp the lineage of radicalism and dissent that was started by Wollstonecraft right here in Hackney.

