We invite you to take part in an intergenerational art activity, to be displayed publicly in Southend. The theme is ‘Imagining a New Future’. It is produced by Focal Point Gallery (FPG), one of Southend-on-Sea Borough Council’s culture and leisure venues, recently re-opened after a period of closure to reduce the spread of coronavirus. The project is presented in conjunction with FPG’s group exhibition, ‘To Dream Effectively’ which brings together international artists whose work offers inventive, and at times cautionary reflections on a future that is conditional on how we dream it to be.

What did you do during your period of lockdown that was different to before? Did you try out a new creative activity that made you feel positive, that you would like to continue doing? Did you try planting seeds, baking, drawing, sewing, making an object? Did you get out cycling or any other type of exercise that you hadn’t done before? Did you take photographs or make a video?

If you have tried any new activities or thought of something you would like to continue, it would be great to see some of your ideas in the form of an artwork. You may have thought about climate change, positive action towards a greener future for the environment, or what would make life better for you and your community.
You may have been motivated by the tragic killing of George Floyd in the US and the Black Lives Matter movement, to think about the opportunities you would like to have and to create for others, in order to remove deep-seated social and economic inequalities. How can we work and live together better? What have we learnt from working together to protect ourselves and others from this terrible disease? Have people been kinder during this period? What changes would you like to see in Southend? How would you imagine a new positive future?

Send in your ideas in the form of a drawing, photo or video. You don’t have to be good at drawing to take part! It can also be a written text, a visual display of words, a recording of your thoughts, or a photo of a sculpture, an edible piece of art, something you have grown or a performance. Artworks should be submitted on an A4 sheet or a one-minute video. Your artwork will be displayed publicly in Southend in autumn.

To help you get your idea into an artwork, Focal Point Gallery has selected three artists who live in the local area to make an activity around the theme. You can work on your own or in a group and submit your artwork as a collaborative piece or on your own. We’d love to hear from all ages!

These activities from the three artists offer a guide to get started on your artwork but you can also make your own. We would love to see what you come up with! There are no rules except that you be kind to others. At FPG, we believe in creating a community of staff, participants and audiences where everyone feels valued, where their contribution matters and where they can reach their full potential, irrespective of background, identity or circumstance.

We strive to ensure that FPG is a SAFE SPACE and fully inclusive for any person to participate and enjoy without fear of feeling undermined or unwelcome. Racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, xenophobic, ageist or any prejudicial behaviour will not be tolerated under any circumstance.

You will have the summertime to complete your artwork and send into Focal Point Gallery. The deadline for submission is Saturday 25 September 2020.

Artworks should be submitted on an A4 sheet of paper or as a one minute video. Submissions should be posted, or given into to the front desk at Focal Point Gallery. Scans, digital images or video files can also be emailed to focalpointgallery@southend.gov.uk and will be printed out as appropriate.
Activity 1

To Write and Inspire
With Josephine Melville

Josephine Melville is a Creative Practitioner, coming from a performing background, encompassing theatre film and TV. She is also a writer, director and workshop facilitator delivering in schools and the corporate sector.

Josephine wants you to think about putting your own ideas down on paper. To join in and to create a wall of words, based on your feelings during these challenging times of Covid 19 and as we slowly start to adjust to life, as it was or what some are terming as the ‘new normal’.

Josephine has made a text to inspire you to get started on an idea but you can make your own. We would love to see what you come up with! You can work on your own or in a group – with your friends, parents or grandparents to imagine the future together.

Here are some things to think about for your text activity.

Why not try to write us a letter. These days it is rare to receive a letter through the post as more and more people are using computers and sending emails. When was the last time you received a letter from a friend?

Or maybe something a little different

How about doing a small interview with family or friends and writing down their answers, to start your idea?

We want you to feel free to write whatever you wish - get creative, be inspired.

Don’t be afraid to start, simply with one line and build and grow from there.

What would you tell your future self?

Do you want to comment on what’s happening in the world? We’re living history!

Do you want to reflect on how you’re feeling and how you’re coping? Impart your wisdom to others.

Do you want to just forget this whole thing is happening? Just tell us a funny story.

It doesn’t have to be a letter; it can be a poem. It doesn’t have to rhyme; it can just be about the first things that come into your mind.
To help you here’s mine....

So many things to think about, well I’ve had enough time....

Don’t be afraid, let your mind run free, that’s the only thing that can be free right now, as the enforced lockdown is making me feel like a caged bird.

But it can’t last forever and then, I will put away my knitting needles and dust off my sandals and get ready to go through my door, to the next chapter of my life.

Activity 2

Thoughts For Change by Brave_Arts

Scotty Brave is a Street artist who has recently been inspired by the art that he has seen at protests. Scotty has written this poem about global responsibilities that might help you express your thoughts about how you would like change to happen.

The future is what we make it, seems far way but the closer we get the less we can fake it. Protests have always helped to design and shape it. Mistakes we’ve made and some bad things have happened I’m afraid, like wars, famines and the slave trade.

In the future I’d like to be, someone who got us there ethically. There are lots of ways to make a banner and protest, what you believe, how your heart feels about what’s best.

Being active in shaping your future means you’re an activist, demonstrating your responsibilities and standing up for your right to live.

Brave1

My poem was inspired by conversation threads that I’ve been part of on social media, yours could be too. Make yourselves heard by choosing a subject that you feel passionate about.
Scotty has also made an illustration and has drawn some outlines, inspired by the type of placards he has seen at protests, on the next pages. You can either use Scotty’s illustrations to colour in or as a guide for your own ideas. You may have something you feel passionate about that is different to this and make your own drawing and words.

Protesting (safely) is one way you can express your ideas. Here’s a picture of Scotty and his uncle at a recent protest in Southend.

You can see more of Scotty’s work at his website www.braveone.co.uk or @BraveArts
Here are some ideas...

- Equal Rights
- Save Our NHS
- No Cuts
- Pride
- Stop Eating Animals
- Stop War
- One Love
Activity 3

A Photography Project
Designed by Laurence Harding

Laurence Harding is a freelance photographer who lives in Leigh-on-Sea, and regularly leads workshops at Focal Point Gallery (FPG), as well as in local schools and colleges. She specializes in analogue photography and often experiments with historical photographic processes. Her work has been exhibited in London, Brighton, and Southend.

Website: www.laurencehardingphotography.com
Instagram: @harding.laurence

To help you reflect upon the theme ‘Imagining a New Future’ and to get you started on some ideas for photographs, Laurence has prepared a photography filter activity. She has set out some activities with items you can find at home, and you can use any style of camera, even your phone.

Let’s think about what our ‘new normal’ will look like. How do you think Southend could change in the years to come? Are you looking forward to the future? How do you think you can convey your emotions through your artwork?

On the next pages, you will find some different ways to make photos with filters, different to those you may be used to using in your phone, mixing new and old methods. You can discover new ways of taking photographs, using Laurence’s guide to help but feel free to make your own ideas and experiment. Be imaginative as you like!
Filter 1: Coloured Filters

You can use any type of clear cellophane, acetate, transparent food packaging and marker pens. Permanent markers work better as they do not rub off the plastic.

How to make the filter for a phone or SLR camera:

Filter 2: Coloured see-through sweet or food wrappers

You can use any clear plastic packaging with colours printed on it, as long as light can get through.

How to make the filter:

The result
Filter 3: Wool and String
How to make the filter using wool and string and two examples of results

Filter 4: Glass or Plastic
How to make the filter using a bottle and two examples of results

Filter 5: 3D Glasses
How to make the filter and some examples of results.

If you pop out the lenses, and put the two inside faces together, you can get some cool colour effects!
If you enjoyed these activities, please come to see us when it is safe to do so and visit our exhibition ‘To Dream Effectively’ (12 September 2020 – 17 January 2021), for more information see our website. **Focal Point Gallery** is based in the **Forum** – in the same building as the Central Library – located next to Southend High Street, in Elmer Square (the site of the old Farringdon car park). Exhibition entry is free of charge and open Wednesday to Saturday, 10.00am to 5.00pm and Sunday 11.00am to 4.00pm. Focal Point Gallery offers a number of activities open to people of all ages, backgrounds, interests and abilities, including free exhibitions and regular talks, and workshops. We have a friendly team who will be very happy to guide you safely round the exhibition and direct you to the activities that may interest you. All activities are low cost or free to attend.

**Focal Point Gallery** is wheelchair accessible and there are additional materials available to enhance your visit, e.g. large print information sheets, family activity sheets and dedicated quiet times. The team will be happy to support your needs and more information can be found on at www.fpg.org.uk. You can also telephone us on 01702 534108, or email to focalpointgallery@southend.gov.uk with any queries.