

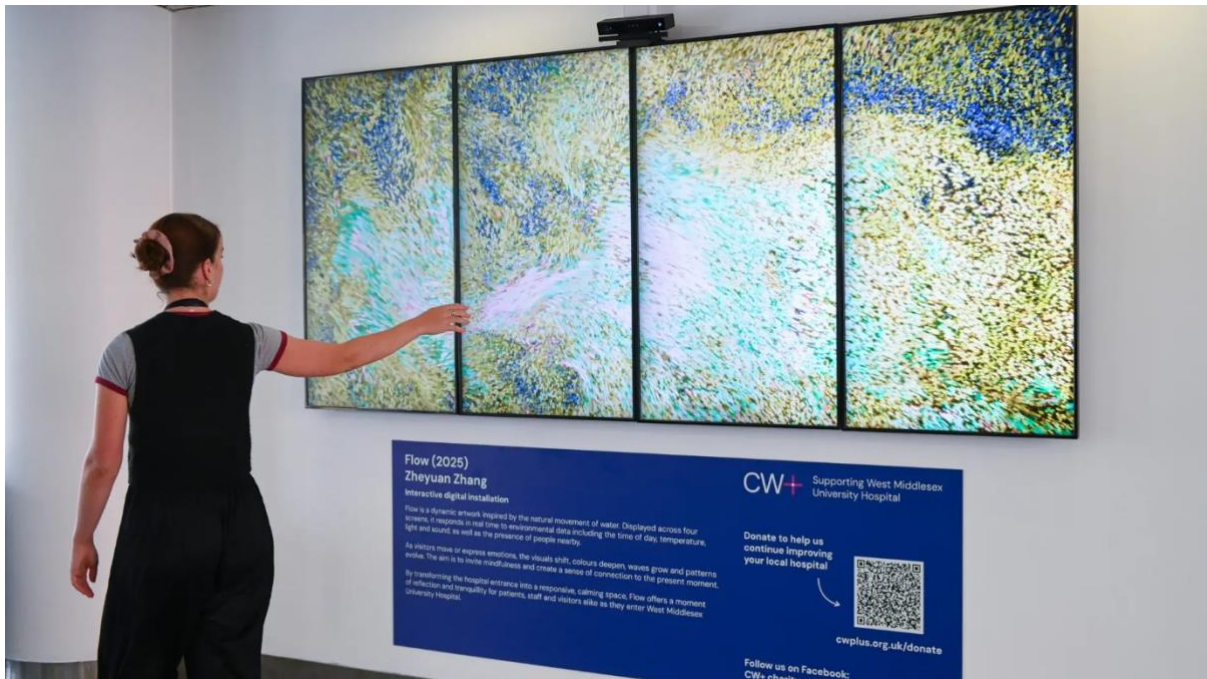


SCREEN-BASED ARTWORKS AT CHELSEA AND WESTMINSTER HOSPITAL AND WEST MIDDLESEX UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL

SUMMARY EVALUATION REPORT (for NCCH)

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Flow by Zheyuan Zhang

The evaluation in numbers:

111

people consulted

65

short interviews

46

surveys completed

93%

found Zheyuan Zhang's video work on Redlees Ward calming to watch

47%

of RELAX Digital viewers said they would prefer video artworks over traditional media

83%

said they would interact with Random Quark's *Birds on a Wire* again in the future

87%

of RELAX Digital viewers said they had been watching the artworks during their wait



Introduction

CW+, the official charity of Chelsea and Westminster NHS Foundation Trust, oversees an art collection of over 2,000 artworks across Chelsea and Westminster Hospital (CW) and West Middlesex University Hospital (WM). Screen-based digital artworks have become a key part of the collection, including commissions by Royal College of Art graduates, emerging and established artists and animators, and world-renowned artists such as Brian Eno and Isaac Julien. This evaluation has explored the implementation and impact of four such pieces:

***Birds on a Wire*, by Random Quark**

Birds on a Wire is an interactive installation, inviting participants to engage with an assembly of virtual birds. By flicking the electrical wire on which these birds perch, observers witness their unique reactions. As time passes in the real world, the background within the installation seamlessly transitions to mirror the day's progression. Furthermore, the ambiance of the virtual world is attuned to the weather conditions outside the hospital, creating a reflection of the outside world.

***Flow*, by Zheyuan Zhang and Studio Inneract**

Flow is a captivating interactive art installation at West Middlesex University Hospital. Designed to create moments of calm and reflection, *Flow* transforms the hospital's main entrance, one of its busiest areas, into a soothing, interactive environment for patients, staff and visitors. It is the latest evolution of the Immersive Healing Art System (IHAS), first introduced at Chelsea and Westminster Hospital in 2021, building on feedback from patients and staff, ensuring the experience is responsive to the needs of the hospital community.

Inspired by the natural movement of water, *Flow* is a living artwork that responds in real time to environmental conditions such as light, temperature and sound. Supported by motion sensors, it also reacts to the presence and gestures of passers-by, creating ripples and waves that shift in colour and brightness. This dynamic interaction offers a calming, personalised experience.

***The Breeze Outside*, by Zheyuan Zhang and Studio Inneract**

A digital interactive artwork tailored to patients of Redlees Ward at West Middlesex University Hospital. Displaying gently swaying grasses, local plants and shifting light, the scene evolves in real time with the weather, wind and daylight conditions outside. The installation seeks to bring the outside in, in particular for patients whose physical views are currently obscured by nearby construction. Connectedness with nature can play an important role in mental wellbeing and psychological healing, and this installation aims to support patients in regaining their circadian rhythm and re-connecting with nature.

RELAX Digital

Our award-winning RELAX Digital programme uses moving imagery and installations to distract and relax patients in waiting and treatment areas. It features numerous pieces from individual artists such as Brian Eno, to those from students of renowned institutions such as the Royal College of Art (a collaboration that has just marked its 10th anniversary). Many of these artworks are shown in series across numerous screens around the two hospitals, 24 hours a day.

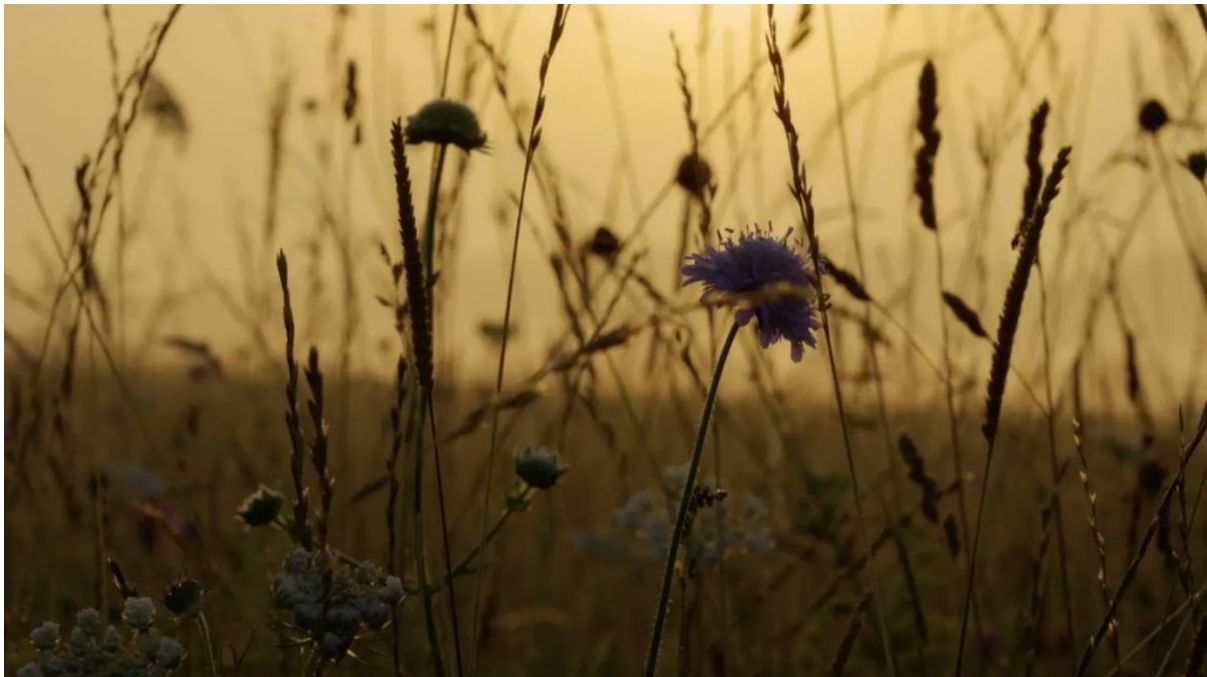


Evaluation methodology

In total, 111 surveys and short interviews were completed across CW and WM: 46 with staff and 65 with non-staff (including patients and visitors).

- ***Birds on a Wire*** – Feedback collected through short informal interviews (n=53)
- ***Flow*** – Feedback collected through short informal interviews (n=12)
- ***The Breeze Outside*** – Feedback collected through surveys (n=14)
- **RELAX Digital** – Feedback collected through surveys (n=32)

Quantitative data underwent descriptive analysis, while qualitative data was analysed using thematic and framework analysis.

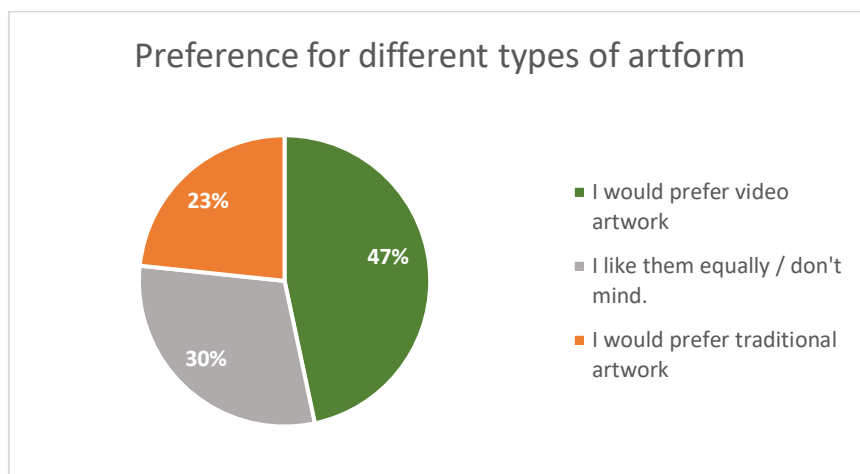


Still from *Jersey Farm Woodland Park*, by Owen Diplock (part of RELAX Digital)

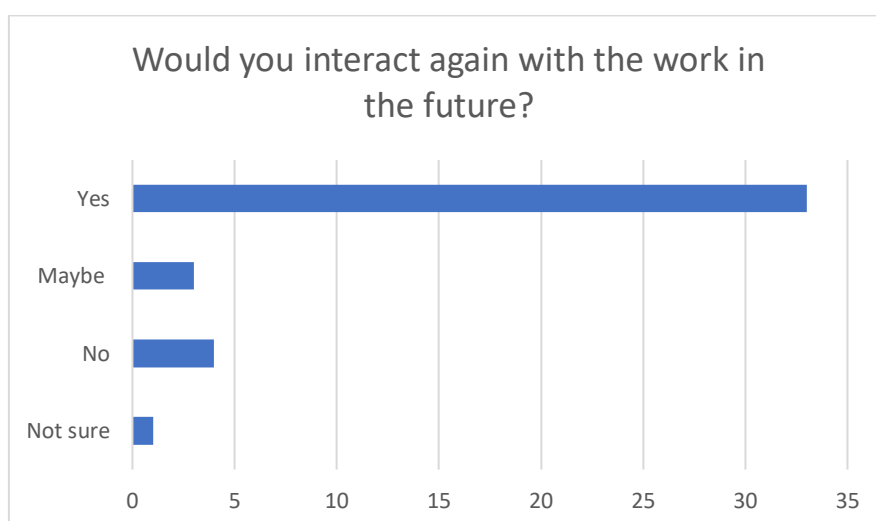


Results

Viewers of the digital works indicated an overall enthusiasm for both the format of the works and their content, with many reporting positive outcomes. **47% of those who had seen the RELAX Digital works said they would prefer screen-based works to more traditional artforms**, in part because of their capacity for movement and variety. Less than a quarter said they would prefer traditional media.



Reflecting on *The Breeze Outside*, **93% said they found it calming** to look at, while 64% said the work had **positively influenced** their experience of the ward. Interactive works such as *Flow* and *Birds on a Wire* were described as **fun** and **engaging**, especially for children, and **80% of respondents to these works said they would interact with the pieces again**.



RELAX Digital works saw some of the highest levels of engagement, perhaps due to their positioning in waiting areas (the other works mentioned above were positioned in either corridors or ward settings). The content of the RELAX Digital works was described as **relaxing**, **calming** and **peaceful**, and nature was considered to be a good focus. Other positive elements mentioned were colour, brightness and slow movement.



The Breeze Outside, by Zheyuan Zhang



Birds on a Wire, by Random Quark

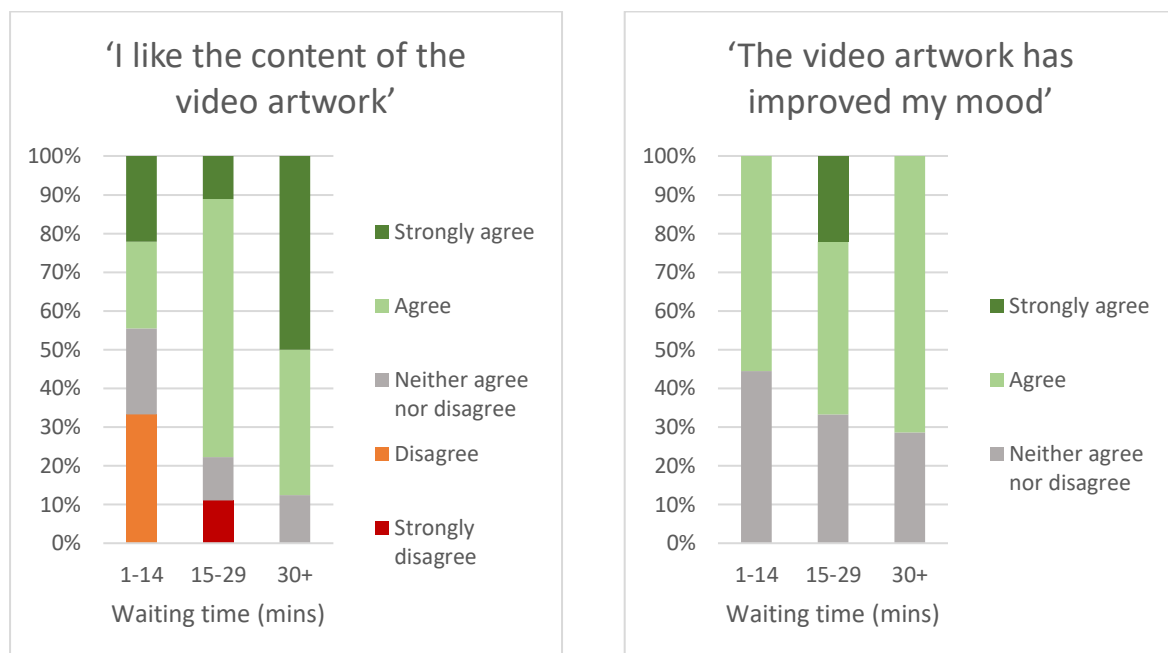


Data from the RELAX Digital surveys could be broken down by both the waiting time of the viewer and their answer to the question 'How important do you think the arts are in contributing to the experience of the patients and families in hospital?'.

The data suggests there may be a **cumulative positive effect over time** for those watching video artworks in waiting areas, with a general trend towards more positive results among those waiting for more than 30 minutes.

For outcomes relating to the impression of the artwork on the viewer (such as liking the content, or feeling relaxed while looking at it), there appeared to be a cumulative positive effect over time which is independent of the viewer's attitude to the arts. For example, while 44% of people waiting up to 14 minutes agreed that they liked the content of the video artwork, this rose to **88% for those waiting 30 minutes or longer**. One explanation of this may be due to a greater variety of different video pieces being viewed over a longer time period.

For outcomes related to the 'presence' of the artwork (such as making time pass more comfortably, or improving mood), those who placed the most importance in the arts did tend to report stronger agreement, as well as those waiting longer. This might suggest a broad positive impression of the works for those with the longest waits, while sustained environmental benefits may be felt more by those who place importance in the arts more generally.



Regarding the interactive works, 26% of viewers of *Birds on a Wire* and 25% of viewers of *Flow* directly commented on the works being **fun** or **enjoyable**. One respondent said *Birds on a Wire* had made them **smile**, adding that this is 'what you need in a hospital', while a staff member described how interacting with *Birds on a Wire* after finishing a shift was a kind of **stress relief**. Viewers of *Flow* complimented the **movement** and **colours**, describing it as **calming** and **soothing** to watch.



However, it was noted that these more technically complex works required more maintenance, as well as clear signage to indicate that they were interactive and how to use them. Some also commented that such works may get the most engagement in paediatric settings.

Key learning

- Overall, the screen-based artworks were widely accepted and enjoyed by hospital users. Some expressed a preference for screen-based works over traditional media, in part because of their capacity for movement and variety.
- Nature-based video artworks appeared to have positive outcomes for people in waiting areas, in particular for people waiting for longer periods. Colour, brightness and slow movement were mentioned as important attributes for such works.
- Interactive works can be both calming to look at and fun to engage with, provided they are supported with appropriate maintenance and clear signage.

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