

Water Photography Exhibition at Essex Church

"By watching water, you really begin to understand the distinctions between stillness and motion, between something and nothing, the inside and the outside, the obvious and the subtle."

Quote on water by Suzuki Roshi

Throughout the spring and early summer of this year, members of Kensington Unitarians' creativity engagement group took many and varied photographs on the theme of "water", and an exhibition of the resulting artwork was held at Essex Church in July to bring the project to a close.



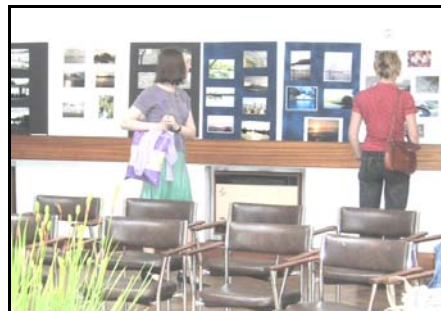
The brief was interpreted widely and imaginatively: pictures of landscapes, wildlife, and abstract compositions emerged, featuring water in its many forms. Many images were taken close to home, in back gardens and on the streets of London, whilst others were from locations as far afield as Iceland, India and Chile. We also organised a group outing to Stocker's Lake in Rickmansworth earlier in the year, to kick off the project, and encourage everyone to think creatively about the theme. In part, the intention of this event was to encourage experimentation with images and to give group members a chance to gain confidence and experience in using cameras, but as always with engagement group activities the main focus was on being in right relationship and simply taking the time to have some fun together.



From the very beginning we hoped to use this project as a springboard to raise money for the charity "Water Aid" and to raise awareness about worldwide access to safe water. In the 2002 Essex Hall Lecture, when the concept of engagement groups was first introduced to Unitarians in the UK, Thandeka stated that such activity was one of the core principles of engagement: "Several times a year, all the members of the group work together on a project in service to their larger community. They do this work of community service as part of their practice of right relationship with themselves, each other, and the world." We always aim to bear this principle in mind when planning our group activities.

Entry to the exhibition was free, so funds were raised from visitors' donations and also by selling greetings cards, framed prints, calendars featuring our artwork, and lunches throughout the afternoon. We made about £200 profit on the day and have combined this with funds from special charity collections from events over the last six months to make a grand total of approximately £700 for this good cause. Please consider sending a donation to our chosen charity or visit this website for further information about Water Aid's activities and to find out how you can help too: www.wateraid.org/uk.

Jane Blackall



This article was also published in the Inquirer in August 2006. "Frozen Puddle" photo by Patricia Walker, all other photos by Jane Blackall.