

A Summer Arts Programme in The Lumini

Arts programme for disabled children & young people | Summer 2024 | Brentford



In August 2024, Watermans brought something extraordinary to the front lawn of Boston Manor House in Brentford. For one week during the summer school holidays, the Lumini - a breathtaking inflatable sculptural venue by Architects of Air - became home to a series of immersive arts workshops, activities and events for disabled children and young people. The project was part of Watermans' year-round programme with this group which has been running since 2008. 152 children and young people took part in the Lumini project.

About the Lumini

The Lumini is a luminarium - a walk-in architectural sculpture of interconnected domes and tunnels filled with natural light filtered through vivid coloured surfaces. Visitors move through pools of jewel-coloured light, experience shifting acoustics, and encounter an atmosphere that is simultaneously calming and awe-inspiring - a genuinely extraordinary, welcoming and accessible space, fully wheelchair accessible throughout.

The Programme

Across the week, Watermans worked with local and specialist artists to deliver a programme tailored to a range of abilities and levels of need, with particular priority given to children and young people with higher levels of need and complex health conditions - those for whom accessible, high-quality activities are hardest to find:

- Sculpture workshops with Art Jar, a Hounslow-based community arts organisation
- A drop-in Badge Café, where participants designed and created their own badges
- Sensory story and movement sessions with Charlene Low



- Family raves with Big Fish Little Fish
- Drum circle sessions with Sandra Dyer and Drumhead

The programme reflected priorities identified through ongoing consultation with parent-carers.

Why This Matters

Families with a disabled child frequently face significant barriers to accessing mainstream arts and cultural activities. Watermans' programme exists to bridge that gap, bringing culture into everyday community life and ensuring that families who are too often excluded from cultural experiences can see themselves reflected and welcomed within it. Evaluation over many years has shown measurable impact on children's communication skills, socialisation, confidence and quality of life, and the Lumini week exemplified what that impact looks like in practice.

What families said

"It was really difficult getting him out today, and getting him to go inside, but as soon as he went in, he was just 'WOW!' He's absolutely loved it, he has just had the best time."

Parent of an autistic child

"This is amazing, I can't thank you enough. It's so hard to know what to do with them, where you can go. This is great, they love it, they just want to come back every day."

Parent

"That was one of the best days I've had in years. It was wonderful just relaxing at the side and watching the children having such a good time. Just wonderful."

Grandparent

Part of Something Bigger

The Lumini project is one example of Watermans' approach to arts delivery: taking high-quality programmes directly into community spaces and settings across Hounslow, working in partnership with accessible venues such as Boston Manor House. This allows Watermans to reach the families who most need this provision, on their own terms and in locations that work for them, bringing genuinely ambitious arts experiences to communities who might otherwise not have this experience.
