

## Pam Foley OAS, Artist in Residency, America



**Helen, left, a resident, and Pam Foley with the head of Helen created at the Arbors**

My late father was a resident at the Arbors, an elder care facility in Taunton, Massachusetts from 2006 to 2008, and I had intended to produce a portrait of him, working in the front lobby, so that all residents could enjoy watching his portrait emerge from a mound of clay. Instead, after his death, a creative partnership developed to include all of the residents. In the summer of 2009, I spent two weeks living and working there as Artist in Residency, supported by a grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council, and generous donations from suppliers.

The aims of my residency were two-fold: firstly, to produce a portrait of one resident, chosen in a draw from the many residents who had expressed an interest in sitting for me. Secondly, I developed and led workshops: during the first week interested participants created their own heads in plaster, using plaster impregnated bandages to first mould the face, and then the back of the head. The two parts were joined onto an upright armature with hessian and plaster. During the second week, participants worked with clay, first engaging in a series of exercises, before finally producing a clay head, using the techniques I had demonstrated, with other residents acting as their sitters. Residents invited their relatives to join us during these workshops; grandsons and daughters produced fascinating and detailed sculptures in plaster and clay that will be keepsakes in the family for many years. A creative and enriching time was had by all.

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OXFORD ART SOCIETY

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Photos, top left clockwise: using plaster impregnated bandages to mould the face; 'Freda' finished; residents at work modelling in clay.