

A co-created exhibition of new work developed by Joe Hartley and the ANEW recovery community

Joe Hartley spent five months as artist in residence with ANEW (Tameside, Greater Manchester), a service for and led by people in recovery from substance use. Guided by Hartley's diverse approach to making as well as the skills possessed by the clients and staff, a body of work emerged in the context of ANEW's experienced and creative approach to recovery. Over time, Hartley and ANEW immersed themselves in one another's spaces and practices, sharing experiences of gardening, equine therapy, taking photographs and experimenting with ceramics. Rooted in collaboration and creative exchange, the residency has been an evolving journey of making and reflecting, ultimately hoping to challenge thinking on substance use and what it means to be in recovery.

Early on in the process, a workshop involved participants hand sculpting teapots. They were first asked to make the parts separately and then to swap them between themselves before combining them to make complete teapots. These teapots, which lost some of their parts on the way to the kiln, later inspired collaborative photographs where subjects posed and acted like teapots. The resulting photographs which were developed by the group in turn inspired new designs for slab-built stoneware teapots. *Pos and Negs* (2025) which is on display in the lower gallery includes the documentation, experiments and outcomes that make up the evolution of that process. *Pos and Negs* also cements the overlap between the work of recovery and creativity, demonstrating that new possibilities can arrive when we resist the urge to have total control, letting things go so that new things can come forth.

Whilst gardening together, a group removed a large quantity of horsetail (*Equisetum arvense*), a prehistoric plant often considered to be an invasive pest. It later came to light that this often unwanted plant is actually potentially useful for making glazes for ceramics, due to its unusually high silica content. The group then visited several houses in the local area and offered to remove the

Handout

ANEW Way to Peel an Orange
03 August — 19 October 2025

horsetail growing in their gardens. The Teapots in this exhibition have been glazed using glaze made from horsetail. In the context of this project the horsetail glaze is exemplary of the potential that can be found when we challenge our negative assumptions of people and things. Horsetail is also honoured by *Horsepower* (2025) which reimagines the traditional botanical drawing as a 6m high spray painted mural. The mural was made by giving each section of plywood to a different person to paint and then arranging them in size order like the segments which are a defining feature of the plant.

Can you find the horsetail growing in the *Castlefield Gallery Garden*?

The *Castlefield Gallery Garden* (2025) located opposite the entrance is home to a number of different plants which have been nurtured from seed. They include different varieties of endive, dahlia, horseradish, artichoke and maize selected in part for their long seasons of interest as they change and adapt during the phases of their life cycles. The residency has also involved hatching two chicks. They are represented in the gallery by *Foxmaster* (2025), a cage made with an unwanted part of an industrial machine. During the exhibition a public workshop (on 24th August) led by Hartley and members of the ANEW recovery community will create useful and perhaps useless ceramic objects for the chicken's cage. After the exhibition, when they are old enough, the 'RECOVERIST Chickens' will be relocated to ANEW where they can be looked after by staff and future clients; a celebration of life and new beginnings as well as an opportunity to highlight the importance of caring as part of the recovery process.

RECOVERIST = recovery + activist

The presentation of the exhibition has been co-produced with Hartley and ANEW, including the display tables, exhibition furniture, and custom framing. All the works in the exhibition are informed by lived experience and underpinned by the critical importance of recovery as a collective process.

"ANEW Way to Peel an Orange is about creating a culture of encouragement." Joe Hartley

The title of the exhibition comes from the phrase ‘You could peel an orange in your pocket’, a humorous way to call someone selfish or perhaps more positively to suggest they have a hidden talent (the ability to peel an orange in their pocket, and eat it, with no one knowing). For some visitors it might also bring to mind the social media trend of testing a loved one's devotion by asking them to peel an orange for you. These multiple and perhaps contradictory connotations make an appropriate title for an exhibition that suggests there is never just one way to look at things. Produced through a process of recognising and sharing people's talents, through acts of care and of course the odd playful insult, the final exhibition frames its subject matter with a variety of different lenses. **ANEW Way to Peel an Orange** is also an invitation to everyone to join a conversation, rather than proposing definitive answers, about our approaches to both art practice and the RECOVERIST movement!

“We are learning that art and recovery can dovetail together to create a relational experience that offers authentic connections, builds trust, and helps us to see each other's joy and creativity one teapot at a time.” ANEW

ANEW Way to Peel an Orange forms part of the pioneering three year commissioning programme **CHAORDIC**, initiated and led by Portraits of Recovery, developed and delivered in partnership with Castlefield Gallery, the Whitworth and Manchester Art Gallery.

CHAORDIC explores the social impact that collaborative contemporary visual arts can play on redefining substance use narratives and recovery identities. **The CHAORDIC National Symposium** and **A New Way to Peel an Orange** are key events for Portraits of Recovery's **RECOVERIST Month**, Sept 2025 - placing lived experience at the heart of an annual, month-long arts programme.

ANEW Way to Peel an Orange is a Portraits of Recovery and Castlefield Gallery commission, developed and presented in partnership with ANEW, funded by Brian Mercer Trust, The Howarth Trust, supported by Arts Council England, the Greater Manchester Combined Authority and Manchester City Council.

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