

## *Alive and Visual. First Movement Adventures With Digital Arts*

*Caroline Bagnall*



Caroline Bagnall, Projects Manager of First Movement, is a visual artist and Laban trained educator in the Art of Movement. A cofounder of First Movement, she has worked creatively with learning disabled people (both children and adults) since the 1970's. The

motivation for this lifetime work is an unending venture to discover new languages for creative expression, to explore the rich world beyond words.

### **Summary**

This selection of remarkable photos come from Derbyshire-based arts organisation, First Movement, and feature learning-disabled people involved in digital arts and making innovative and experimental use of new technologies. Live video links between First Movement's Level Centre and their Level Mobile Studio bring people from miles apart into the same performance.

### **Introduction**

First Movement is a charitable voluntary arts organisation based in Derbyshire. It exists to promote and develop the unique creativity of learning disabled people. Evolving over 22 years, First Movement combines direct tangible person-centred approaches with experimentation with emerging new technologies. In 2009 First Movement opened the Level Centre in Derbyshire and simultaneously launched projects using the Level Mobile Studio. Both resources offer high quality resources for digital arts projects and can be linked together via a live video link.

The photos in this article all show how visual arts can be used in exciting, lively, dynamic projects, responsive to the abilities and inspirations of the individuals involved.

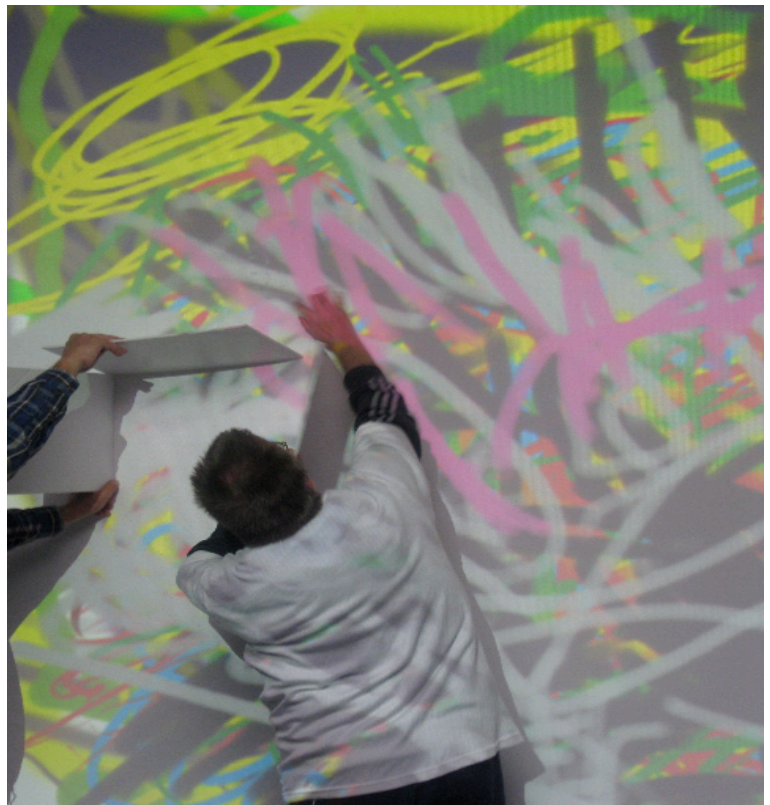
These photographs demonstrate how technology can come alive when creatively used by learning disabled people. The people here, learning disabled or not, were clearly able to play and create in this 21st century visual arts medium without being distracted by the gadgets allowing it to happen.

**Catch the Light**

A playful interchange between artist and catcher. As one person uses a drawing tablet to graffiti the wall others try to track and catch the moving lines of colour.



Catch the Light I



Catch the Light II

### Catching Images

Both of these image and the four following show different ways of interacting with the video and sound installation 'Immersed in Water'.



Catching Images I



Catching Images II



Immersed in Water



Lines of Movement II

### Immersed in Water

Immersed in Water is an immersive video and sound installation on all four walls, with a collage of digitally produced images created by the media project at the Level Centre. Here you see some people noticing and catching the images, and others using the installation for creating improvised movement.



Lines of Movement I



Lines of Movement III

### Draw and Move

Regular First Movement sessions take place in the dance studio at Deda in Derby. Here the artist etched lines around the dancer but in the end the dancer became cocooned in the drawing.



Draw and Move I



Draw and Move II

### Drawn In

Each year Spiral, the First Movement performance company, contribute to a local Arts Festival in Wirksworth. In 2009 the public were invited to come aboard the Level Mobile Studio and watch a live art performance of projected drawing, sound and expressive movement.



Drawn In II



Drawn In I



Drawn In III

### Live Event Link

Using the live video link, people in rural Derbyshire and rural Leicestershire meet in the same picture and create dramas using the large projection screen.



Live Event Link I



Live Event Link II