# The Museum of Us

Sharing stories, sharing objects and making art together

# The Museum of Us

This photobook documents the making of the *Museum of Us* with artist Helena Tomlin at Spurr House, Bury.

*The Museum of Us* is a concept that describes the sharing of stories and memories and making things together. The photographs record the responses to these stories and to a selection of 'evocative' objects brought from Bury Art Museum.

Photography
Joe Gardner Photography

The Museum of Us

Early in 2014 I worked at Spurr House, Bury with residents and staff on a creative, multi sensory project exploring art making, memory and imagination. Each Wednesday we shared stories and 'evocative' objects to make drawings, watercolours and prints and to experiment with clay. The project was developed by Bury Art Museum after the success of the *House of Memories* project that piloted the training of carers of older people in using collections of museum objects. Imagination, collaboration and the welcoming of the unknown were key ingredients for making The *Museum of Us*. The photographs in this book record the time we spent together and are organised in groupings:

Sharing stories, sharing special things
Multisensory encounters
Making art together

As a group we created unexpected encounters between objects and stories - bringing together ideas in unusual juxtapositions: a dynamic example of the art of 'curating'. I would like to thank everyone involved in the making of *The Museum of Us*. It was made possible by the generous spirit of all the residents and staff at Spurr House and the support of Bury Art Museum. The exhibitions at Spurr House and The Millgate Shopping Centre that followed the project provided models and inspiration for further work between museums, artists and adult services, to pave the way for more Museums of Us.

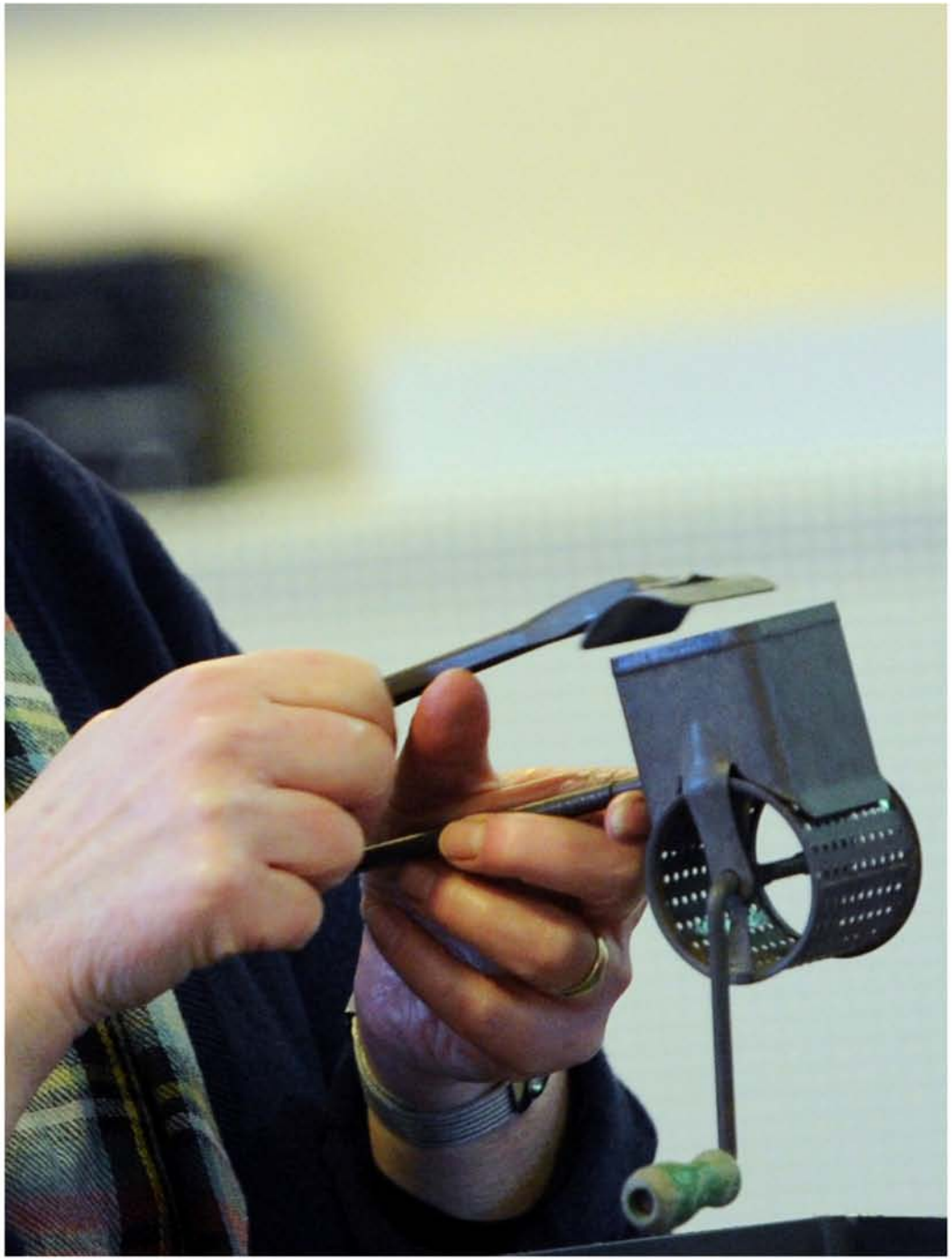
Helena Tomlin

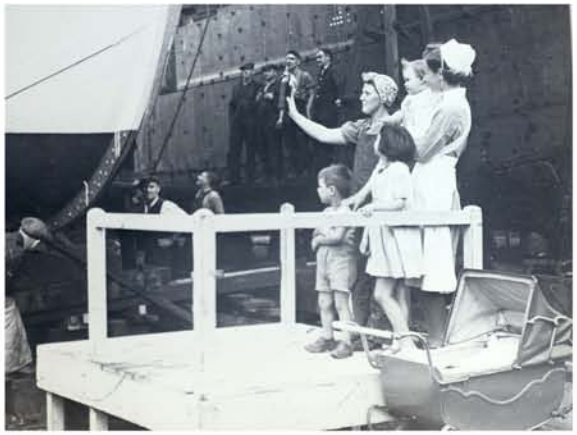
# Sharing stories, sharing special things

Opposite:
Reading Helena's family copy of Old Peter's Russian Fairy Tales

Pages 6 - 7:
Exploring Bury Art Museum's handling collections
Hand mincer
Book illustration printing blocks
Laundry tongs
Cotton machine bobbin

Pages 8 - 9:
Marina's treasured press photographs of her mother who worked as a welder on ships during the war





Mrs. SCOTT LAUNCHES VICTORY SHIP SHE BUILT!
Baby Pat Left Her Nursery to Share Mummy's Big Moment
Yes, it's war brought home to the doorstep in every land now
BACK TO HELP ON MORE!

# Multisensory encounters

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Opposite:
Touching objects

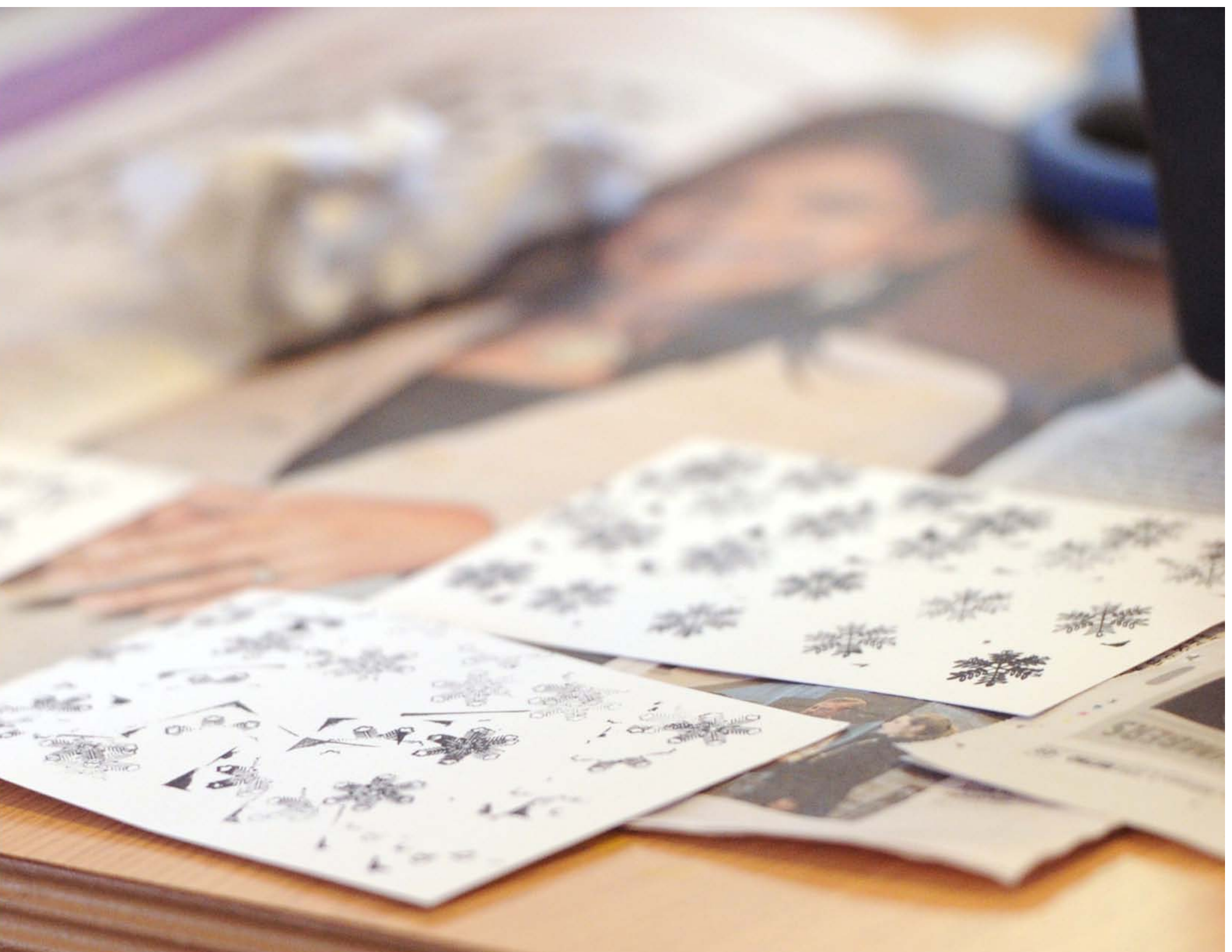
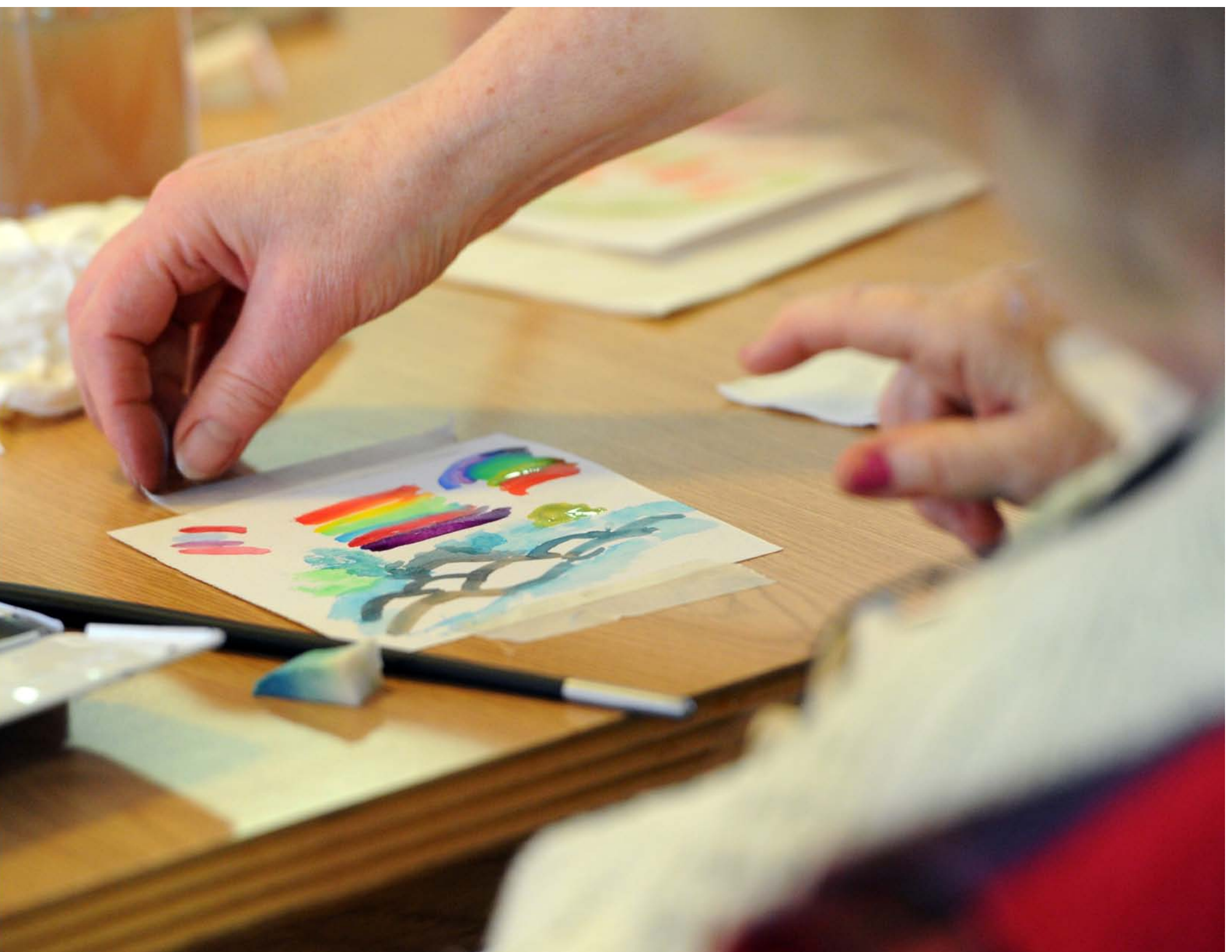
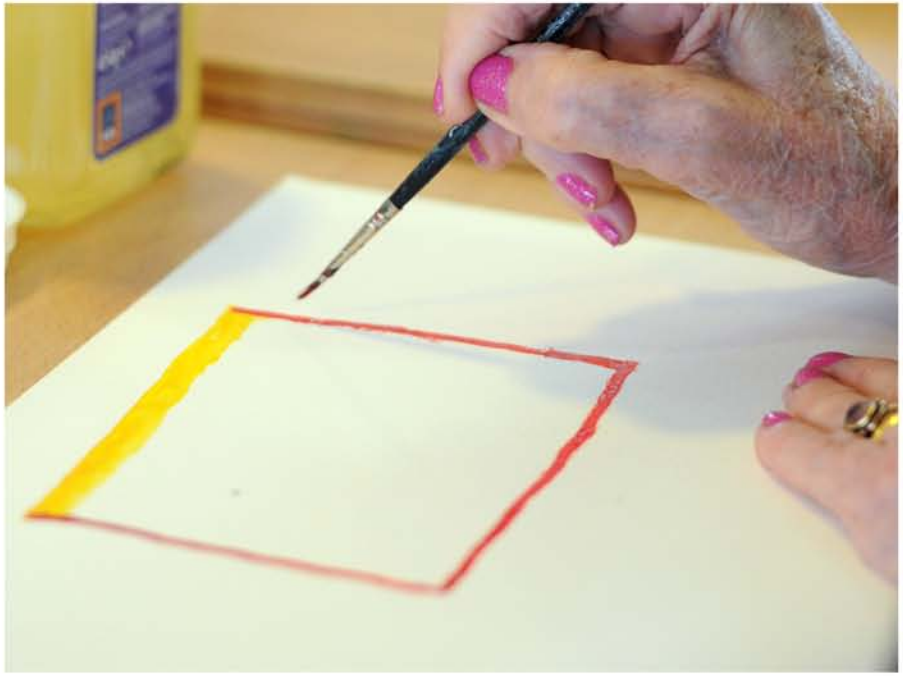
Page 12:
Smelling carbolic soap

Page 13:
Tasting ‘wartime recipe’ rock buns, traditional Russian treats and listening to Miles Davis

Page 14:
Handling a fragile porcelain doll and early twentieth century photograph

Page 15:
Exploring a mapograph

# Making art together

Opposite:
Results of our experiments with prints

Pages 17 - 20:
Drawing with pastels
Watercolours
Printmaking
Clay