

The late Clare Smith in her Dover studio

Picture: Joanna Jones

Town mourning loss of group's co-founder

Inspirational art lover 'will live on in our memories'

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Dover is mourning the loss of the co-founder of a celebrated arts group who documented her battle with cancer through her work.

The funeral of Clare Smith, who helped lead the not-for-profit Dover Arts Development (DAD), took place at Barham Crematorium last Thursday.

She died on December 10, aged 63.

Ms Smith will be particularly remembered for her sequence of 70 Chemo Day drawings, made while undergoing treatment in the last four years of her life.

Joanna Jones, who founded the group with her in 2006, said: "Clare will be greatly missed, but will live on in the memories of the many people that she touched, through her pioneering work."

Ms Smith was born in Penang, Malaysia, where her father worked for the Colonial Service and her mother taught English to Malay pupils, preparing them for entry into English secondary schools.



Clare Smith, left, pictured with DAD co-founder and friend Joanna Jones

Ms Smith was sent to Bedales School in Hampshire and here began her lifelong love of music and visual art.

She read Oriental Studies at King's College, Cambridge and then moved to Luxembourg.

It was here she set up a business translating for international banks. In 1999 Ms Smith began a course in fine art at The Kent Institute of Art and Design in Canterbury, followed by study at Central St Martin's in London.

The rest of her life was devoted to art, both in her creations and with DAD, spearheading it with her partnership with Ms Jones.

This generated 46 multi-stranded projects, with some 200 artists empowered to bring art to Dover and its environs.

In 2012 DAD initiated community workshops to create one mile of bunting to hang in the town to welcome the Olympic Torch for the London Games that year.

In July 2021 it launched a six-month digital festival with artwork viewable online.

One image was of an office swivel chair on Shakespeare Beach, Dover.

DAD has partnered with Dover District Council, Dover Town Council, Kent County Council as well as large and small organisations in Dover district, the south east and Europe.

It brought £1.3 million into Dover from a range of funding bodies, creating networks across east Kent. Ms Smith is survived by her husband Roger, sister Jennifer and parents Zhan Lu and Brian Smith.