

entertaining. Hambling outs herself as 'queer' (not 'gay'); rants that her painting of Michael Jackson was not accepted by the Royal Academy, and nails her colours to the



mast over mental illness and creativity: 'I can't imagine an artist who would not say that working every day is therapeutic.' Her own brother had been ill years ago and had ECT, while she herself has had therapy.

The third, short information film looks at the work of CoolTan Arts in its headquarters at Elephant and Castle. Given the attempts being made to relocate to better premises, I was surprised they didn't take this opportunity to highlight the freezing cold outside toilets at the building, which is one of the downsides of being based there.

*'In The Studio with Maggi Hambling' is showing on 24 and 25 March 2010 as part of the London Lesbian and Gay Film Festival. See <http://www.bfi.org.uk/>*

*Both films can be booked for screenings - see [www.cooltanarts.org.uk](http://www.cooltanarts.org.uk)*

**Rating: worth seeing if you get the chance**  
Lynn Eaton, editor of Mental Health Today

## THE LARGACTYL SHUFFLE (18 MINS)

In the studio with Maggi Hambling (10 mins)

CoolTan Arts - Who we are, what we do and how we do it (2 mins)



CoolTan Arts, a London based organisation promoting mental wellbeing, is making a name for itself.

Its novel 'Largactyl Shuffle' - a walk that takes place every month between the Tate Modern and Maudsely Hospital in Southwark - is drawing tourists from as far away as Holland, Argentina and even Newcastle. Set up and run by 'participants' (they don't like the term service user) the walk offers a 5.8 mile route taking in local history, touching on local celebrities who have experienced severe mental distress (Charlie Chaplin's mother among them) and allowing those leading the walk to discuss their own mental health experiences.

The annual summer solstice walk, the only one to take place at night, is the subject of a fascinating 30-minute documentary, directed by Mike Wyeld, who teaches at the Royal College of Art. Filming at night is a challenge and Wyeld used a relatively new type of camera that works in low light, yet gives a comforting orange glow to the scene. It was a bit of a mistake, he admitted, but it works.

The film starts with a reading from the opening of one of Chaucer's Canterbury tales, and the idea of a pilgrimage threads throughout the film as Ari Henry, a keen local historian, leads the 80-plus walkers from one site to another. They start at Tate Modern at midnight, taking in the graveyard for prostitutes outside Guy's hospital, looking at Octavia Hill's home, and at the site of a World War II shelter where many local residents lost their lives during the blitz. There's also a very nice piece of animation explaining the impact of Largactyl (chlorpromazine) on the body.

What I liked most was the way Henry wove his own personal experiences into the event, talking about having been on Largactyl as openly and easily as he discusses the role of graveyard theft. And CoolTan Arts founder, Michelle Baharier, takes the opportunity to discuss the importance of open space and daylight as they meander through the crowded cityscape of south London's high rise flats. But the film is not just about mental illness: it's a quirky little insight into a venture that has become a top London tourist attraction (the walk has won a Time Out award, apparently.)

The second film, featuring artist and CoolTan Arts supporter Maggi Hambling, is also directed by Wyeld. It is beautiful to watch, informative - and highly