

Every Autumn a welcome package drops through my letterbox from the Mouth and Foot Painting Artists. It supplies me with a desk calendar and some Christmas cards.



These items are beautifully illustrated by the fantastic, talented artists of MFPA. How they are able to create such superb pictures without the use of

hands and arms, essential tools for any artist you would have thought, is beyond me. MFPA was founded in 1957 by a German polio victim Erich Stegmann (above) as a self help organisation. Artists from eight European countries were gathered together by Erich, a highly successful mouth painting artist, not to elicit pity or to become a charity but to provide an outlet for their talents. It gave members the opportunity to completely support themselves through sales of their paintings, reproduced as cards, calendars and other items. Many have since achieved international acclaim

for the standard of their work, done with a brush held firmly between their teeth or clenched between their toes. It is truly humbling to witness how these artist, struck by gross misfortune from birth, illness or accident can create such brilliant paintings. In 1993 a gallery was opened in



Selborne, Hampshire, to permanently display their work and the works of other disabled artists. Whilst not a charity itself, MFPA has made considerable donations towards the education of disabled children in the arts. This year's package was accompanied by a letter written by mouth painting artist Trevor Wells, a rugby accident victim, which is superbly clear and far better than many able bodied



peoples handwriting, including mine. My cheque is already on its way to MFPA at 9 Inverness Place, London W2 3JG, where you can find more information. Alternatively, visit www.mfpa.co.uk

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