

The Voice and Influence Team's full report: Creativity for All.

Exploring what some seldom heard children and young people in Sheffield would like
Arts and Culture to be like in their city.



Jan 2024



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Background:

We are a team of Care Experienced Voice and Influence Workers. We are in paid permanent roles in Sheffield City Council's Children's Involvement Service. We are experts in gathering the voices of seldom heard children and young people in creative ways. We then share these views with organisations and support and challenge them to make changes to ensure they are shaped by all children and young people our city.

The majority of our work is within Sheffield City Council where we help run 3 Voice and Influence Groups for care experienced young people, a reverse Scrutiny Panel across Social Care, training with professionals and pieces of research as and when needed to inform service change.

We love working with partner organisations and were really pleased to have this commission from Create Sheffield and have really enjoyed reaching out and listening to seldom heard voices in the city. We couldn't speak to every child young person and Creative- so put some serious thought- with the help of Create Sheffield to speak to a range of schools in areas of higher deprivation and a range of youth groups and creatives from varied backgrounds. It's been fascinating and we hope you find our research findings useful.



Here we are with the Lord Mayor winning an award for our seldom heard voices podcast

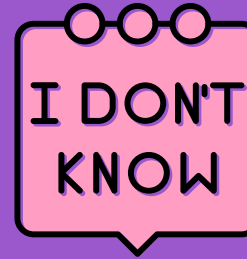


Our Stand Out Findings:

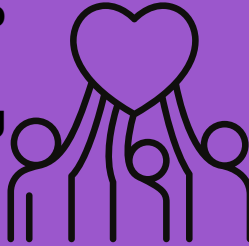
Creativity means a lot to ALL children and young people in the city



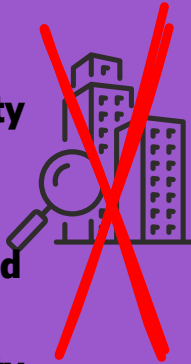
Children and young people don't know what's on offer and don't feel like it's "for them"



When creatives going back to their communities and working with children, young people and their families works really well for all involved.



There is a strong disconnect from the city centre from many children and young people we spoke to and a feeling that they would not belong in city centre Arts spaces



Stand out barriers are money, transport and not having an adult available to take them



There are pockets of excellent stand out practice in schools, community groups and among Creatives.

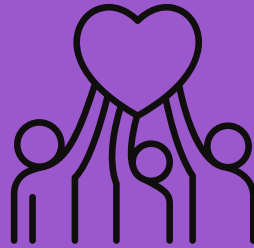


Our Overall recommendations

There needs to be pop up “come and try” creative places in local communities.



Creatives should be helped to work in their own communities and existing youth groups and schools.



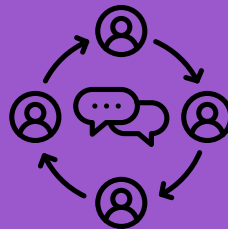
Stereotypes and preconception need to be challenged in multiple areas. Both those of young people and their communities and also creative careers and arts spaces and who they are for. There is work to be done.



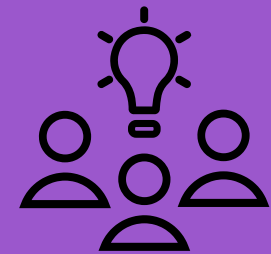
It would be great for work to be displayed and shared in city centre arts locations as much as possible and for families to come and see it.



Creative schemes need to link into key community leaders that know their families and young people and co-designed with them and the children and young people



Create Sheffield are well thought of by schools, groups and creatives. They are well placed to set up and run a youth steering group or similar to create change



The commission:

Create Sheffield commissioned us to ask children and young people across the city for their views on what they want art, creativity, and culture to be and where it should take place for them.

We were asked to work with seldom heard voices in some of the most deprived areas of the city.

We asked children and young people:

1. What is art and culture? How would you put it into words?
2. What are do you like to make, create or do now?
3. What are the barriers are to you doing creative things?
4. What you would like to make, create or do more?
5. Where do you want it to happen?
6. What would support you to attend/join in?

We planned an interactive hours session with a Arts and Culture definition game, worksheets, pictures of venues in Sheffield and canvases for them to draw what they love to do and how it makes them feel.

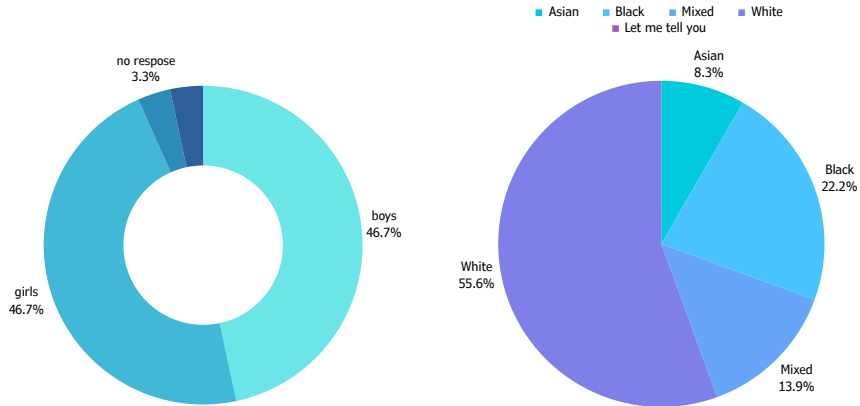
We spoke with:

- 4 schools
- 4 teachers
- 4 youth groups
- 5 parents
- 4 youth leaders
- 5 Artists that identify as coming from diverse backgrounds

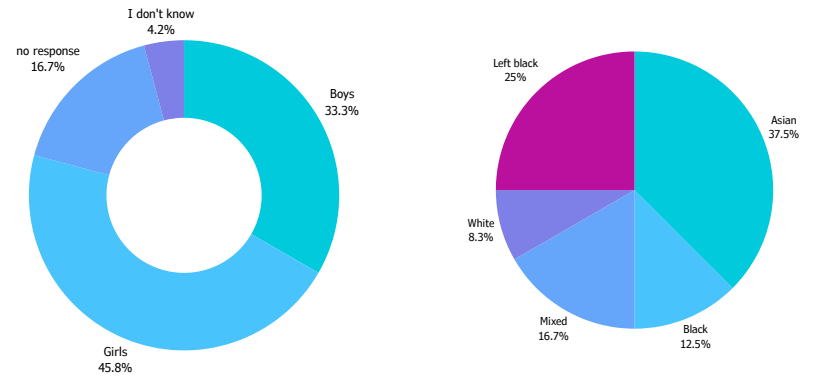


Who we spoke to in schools:

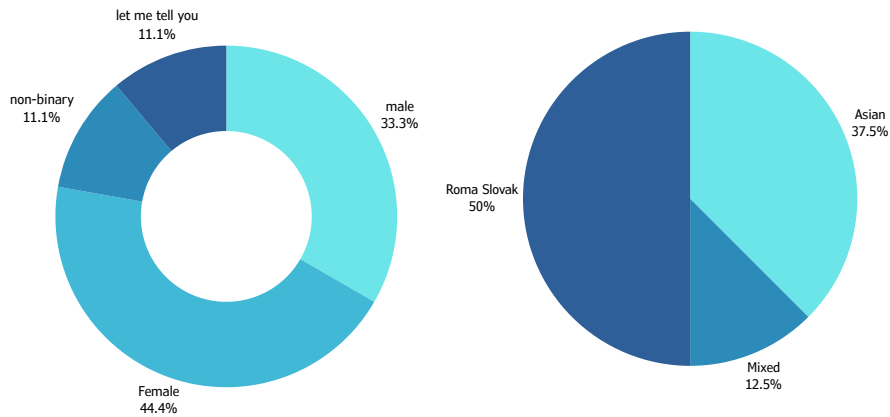
Beck Primary:



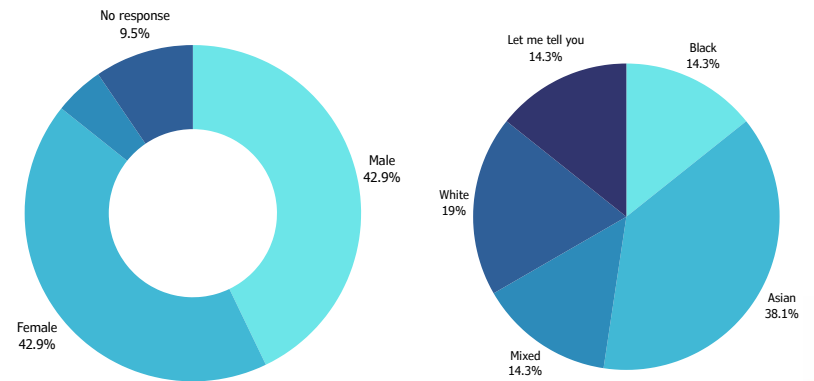
High Hazels Primary:



Firvale secondary:



Parkwood Academy School::



What is Arts and Culture:

We were really struck by the emotive responses and how much arts and culture means to so many of the children and young people we spoke to. We were also impressed with how articulate they were and their ability to put it into words.

Here are some of the standout quotes:

“Art and culture is an amazing thing you can paint, create and design and culture is where you can find people like you” (year 5)

“Art is a form of multiple things including, creativity and inspiration” (year 5)

“Art is a relaxing activity that people do some do it as a job some do it just for fun or to calm down. Culture is belief or something people do which make them happy or over people” (year 5)

“Art is something that is a masterpiece or doing something you love.” (year 6)

“Creativity is being able to express yourself and finding your identity” (year 6)

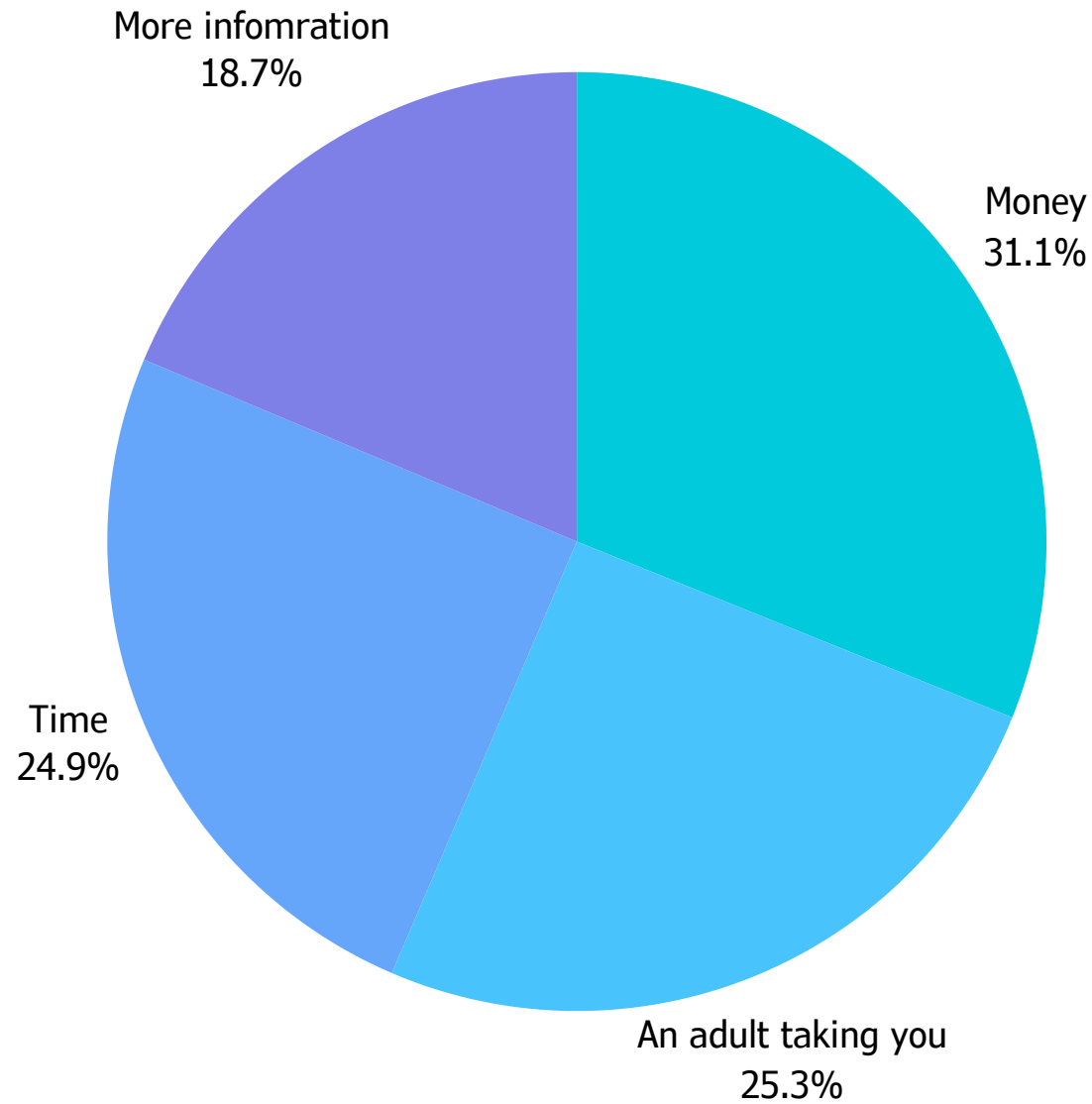
“Art and culture are things that connect others. Everyone has culture and art. And even if they do not keep in touch with theirs, they can find others”. (year 10)

“Fashion and culture means like clothing and history of the past time that means like to me a story” (year 10)

“Expressing yourself and telling your story” (year 10)

“Art is many different things but can be defined as representing yourself in anything you do.”” Culture is what your experiences made the person you are.” (Year 9)

Barriers raised by all schools:



In terms of breaking down the barriers to accessing city centre arts spaces: money for bus travel and access came out top, followed by an adult taking them, time and lastly more information.

Other barriers raised by schools:



Strong sense of disconnect from the city centre itself from students at Parkwood Academy and Fir Vale Secondary



Two schools had staff that asked to speak 'off the record' of times they had been excluded from opportunities because of fears of their students underperforming and standing out in comparison to those in the South West of the city.



How little they know about what's available



Another teacher spoke of their secondary school being excluded from the Shining Star programme – which is a Engineering programme for especially aspirational students. She felt young people at their school had been discriminated against due to preconceptions about the area and not been asked to attend.



The barriers around bus travel and 'losing' or not having a card to help you access cheaper tickets was frequently raised



Teachers also spoke of well-meaning gestures like free theatre tickets but too many barriers to attend – costs, travel, unknown places, unwelcoming spaces, and a feeling of not belonging.

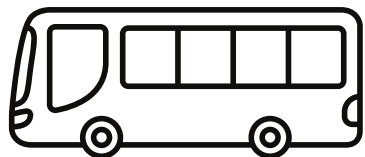
Our key recommendations for creativity growth in schools:



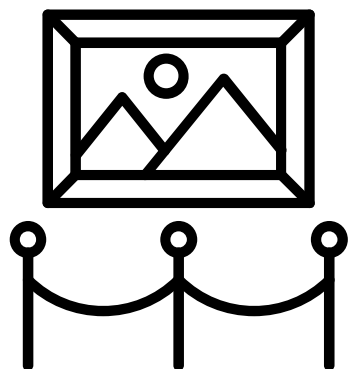
Local provision where children and young people can try out different creative projects is needed. Many of the children and young people found it difficult to think of things they would like to try as they were not within their lived experience.



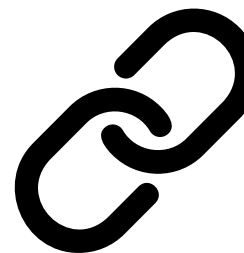
In Beck Primary the role of Sheffield Wednesday in local area shines out! Working in partnership with local businesses and groups. Many of the young people went to a youth group hosted by Sheffield Wednesday



Transport is a barrier. Free offers and tickets need to be developed with key teachers and leaders in schools that understand their young people and the barriers and challenges they face.



How can students' work be displayed and shared with parents? How can it be shared in City Centre Arts spaces in a way that allows parents to go and visit?



The Art and Drama Teachers in Fir Vale Secondary and Parkwood Academy were strong advocates for their students' talent and creativity. They were highly aspirational for their potential prospects - if they were given the right opportunities and support. How can Create Sheffield help them link into city wide schemes and opportunities?

High Hazels Primary- a best practice example:

Having lunch time and afterschool creative offers that are free is important. High Hazels are a great example of doing this well. They have a varied and well attended creative programme for students run at lunch times and after school by teachers. They shape this with students but have mixed media, crafts from recycled and natural materials and macramé.

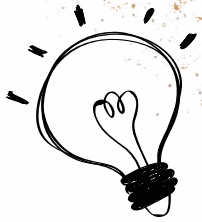


High Hazels use the school as a wider community Arts base. On bonfire weekend they open up the school and have an arts festival of their own based. They have a lantern parade and partner organisations on site. Teachers spoke about the dangers of fireworks being used in a negative and dangerous way by young people and using the school and creativity to offer an alternative. Sadly this year it was called off at last minute, as they were unable to get a road closure issued by the council in time. All the lanterns were made a ready. This shows how important positive partnership working is.

High Hazels spoke of a need for stronger links to arts spaces so students could display work at city centre locations. Their year 5s are working on cityscapes that they are drawing in the city centre. They thought this would be a great example of work that could be displayed centrally.



A stand out message:



Having local artists come back to schools to tell their stories is hugely impactful. The young people see 'people like us' making a career in the Arts. It opens up their knowledge, and their families knowledge of what is possible, thus breaking down many of the barriers listed above. This is a message that came through strongly in the artist interviews.



Youth groups:

To extend our reach and diversity of voice, we ran focus groups with 4 youth groups.

The commissioners asked us to talk to **Stand and Be Counted** (Stand & Be Counted is the UK's first and leading Theatre Company of Sanctuary, committed to making work with and for people seeking sanctuary - refugees, asylum seekers and new migrants)

We chose to run a focus group with one of the youth groups at **SAYiT** (SAYiT works with young people aged 8-25 and professionals to make real lives better. They provide practical support to LGBTQ+ young people and offer a range of support services) as a safe space in the city centre.

We chose to run a focus group with the **Elements Society**, (an independent youth led charity based in the city centre)

We chose **Highfield Youth Group** because one of the artists we interviewed recommended it as an example of a diverse, inclusive and creative youth group. He was right - they blew us away! Below we have shared key observations from each group we visited.



Stand and be counted theatre company:

Is a groundbreaking theatre company for refugees, asylum seekers and new migrants. We visited the Saturday group at The Crucible, that works with children aged 0-15 and their mothers. They also have a Thursday evening group for 18-35 year olds. The main co-coordinator Nahzi has a theatre background and is qualified in teaching English as a foreign language. There is an interpreter present that speaks French, Arabic and Russian. He also plays a key role in supporting participants and arranging activities.

Key observations:

The Saturday sessions are in the city centre in the upstairs of The Crucible Theatre. (Or The Montgomery Theatre when open.) In the heart of the cultural industries quarter. The families that attended clearly felt comfortable there and that they belonged. There were 18 participants on the day with visited.

It's unusual to have mothers stay at a youth group but the staff talked about this evolving as the project grew and being crucial to the group's success. There were full sibling groups with babies and toddlers attending. We could see they all had strong connections with staff:

"We like it here; we have made new friends. My son loves Firaz, my child is happy, and he wakes up excited to come. My friend came here first and I come every time." (mother)

"I have been coming for three years, I came during coronavirus, and it was hard at home and everybody was angry. I asked my caseworker about an activity for the children, and they told me about here. Now they are here, they are drawing, learning and play. We get bus passes, lunch and juice and I have five children here today." (mother)



Stand and be counted theatre company:



Having it on a Saturday morning clearly works for the group and gives them a creative space they can all go to.

“It is fun to come on Saturdays. It encourages creativity. I like it being on Saturdays it is the right time to come.” (15 year old member)

Food was ordered for lunchtime that met with their cultural needs as it was Halal. It was warm and packed up so some stayed to eat and others took it home. It was free for everyone.



They work on performances and have performed at The Winter Gardens three weeks ago and they performed at The Crucible last year. They have also developed an app with the Videogame Museum and they did a project on how to save the world and made it into a them.

The projects are curated based on the children and young people’s interests in gaming and they do this by consulting the children on what projects/activities they want to do and then shape the next session based on their views.



Stand and be counted theatre company:

The families all get free tickets to all the theatre shows and they regularly go with their families. This stood out for us in contrast to the attempts at free theatre tickets to students in Fir Vale and how this had not worked out due to barriers.

Members spoke warmly about extra sessions in the school holidays and trips with their husbands in the holidays to the seaside. Building a relationship with the whole family to break down the barriers to regularly attending a creative group has clearly worked here.

Group members were hugely proud of their creative outputs and showed us videos of performances, poems and photos.

During the session- which was art and painting- they were making cultural celebration cards. We were struck by how many drew Palestinian flags and clearly felt free to express themselves, their views and what is going on for them right now.

15



Stand and be counted theatre company:



SAYiT: Fruitbowl LGBTQ+ group

Young people who are aged 12 to 17 and a part of the LGBTQIA+ community. We spoke to 8 young people that attend their group from a range of genders.

Key observations:

We were immediately impressed with the feel of their space. It was bright, vibrant, well equipped and decorated in a way that spoke to the young people - with rainbow rugs and walls, cuddly toys, books and graphic novels and a full creative arts and crafts area.

There is a Sunrise room off the main space. This is a sensory calming space with a waterfall and low lighting where they can go any time when they need some space. There was a strong sense of each person having their own agency and being empowered to make their own decisions to find space when they needed it.



SAYiT: Fruitbowl LGBTQ+ group



Each session begins with people saying their names and pronouns. The diversity of both the participants and the group facilitators stood out to us. The young people clearly had strong relationships with the leaders and felt they could relate to them.

There were lots of examples of creativity around the space of banners, paintings, and projects they had worked on in the past.

The ice breaker activity was to name a book or graphic novel you love and also to name something in the space they liked. We thought this was aspirational as they were sharing their joy of reading and stories. It also showed how connected they felt to the space that they have been involved in making feel like their own.



When we did the worksheet and activity ALL the participants knew arts spaces in the city centre and beyond and visited them regularly.

Highfield youth group

Highfield Youth Group is organised and facilitated by Chekere Williams, a friendly, highly skilled approachable worker that has positive relationships with those that attend and their families. There were 22 young people there on the Friday evening that we attended. It is a free youth club where anyone can drop in. There were posters and flyers that were shared widely through the community. Chekere does outreach work offering dance taster sessions with other community groups and events.

Key Observations

Chekere is clearly loved, trusted and respected by local families.

Highfield Adventure Playground and it's hut are in the heart of the Sharrow community with indoor and outdoor space. There were three members of staff on the night we attended. Chekere spoke of the importance of having a racially mixed staff team so "that the children and young people feel they can identify with them".

She also spoke of consistent staff being important, so that the children and young people can have long standing connections to them. There are a mixture of children and young people, and 3 we met with high support needs are supported by staff to join in. There are up to 30 young people a session.



Highfield youth group

The majority of those that attend are from black and Asian backgrounds - reflecting the demographic of the local area

The programme and activities are shaped by the young people that attend. They have engaged in a real range of creative activities and there's an ever-growing offer that the young people have shaped themselves.

There are other sessions springing up on different nights. So far they have: 2 dance groups for girls (a younger and an older one) and an extreme sports club where they do BMX and scootering.

They have an outdoor adventure playground in their space, a mud kitchen and a stage for performances.

In the summer they hosted a Festival where a range of local bands and the dance group were able to perform to the local community.

They have also written and recorded their own podcast about what they do there.



FREEDOM

Key observations:

We were struck by the sense of freedom at Highfield. The young people could just be themselves and express themselves through activities. Some were playing rounders in the dark, others were in the mud kitchen in the dark - others in the playground.

The young people have the opportunity to shape the programme and try a real range of creative activities. The ones they love can then be made into further evening activity offers - such as dance and extreme sport.

They do recruitment really well - outreach creative sessions at Care Leaver events and other community events spreads the word and allows young people to give it a go.



Questions from visiting Highfield:

How can diverse youth groups be supported to have a varied art programme?



How can the products of these groups be shared in city centre venues?

Despite being so close to the city centre, staff said the young people do not know city centre arts spaces.
How can artist's stories from these communities be shared more?





Element Society Chill zone

We went along to The Element Society Chill Zone that meets on a Friday evening in the city centre. We met the teenage group and spoke to 6 young people. This youth group is run by leaders and there are a range of activities that they can do and get involved in. There was a games console and arts activities set up the evening we went.

Key observations:

The young people all knew all city centre venues. They spoke warmly of the theatres.

One of them had performed through another project called Tracks at The Leadmill. Having an opportunity to perform or share artistic expression in arts spaces meant a lot to him.

All the young people suggested that there should be open and accessible workshops and classes in art, food, cooking, gardening and all different forms of creativity.

“Creative youth spaces promote independence and creativity, allows us to meet others and provides a different sort of education.”

2 young people spoke about Millennium galleries being ‘boring’ and aimed at older people. Others spoke about them being left in a mess and not monitored enough.

Key recommendations:

Young people love having opportunities to perform or share work in city centre arts spaces.

How could they be informed in an age-appropriate way about what’s on and be made to feel welcome?

How could they be involved in shaping and curating the programmes?



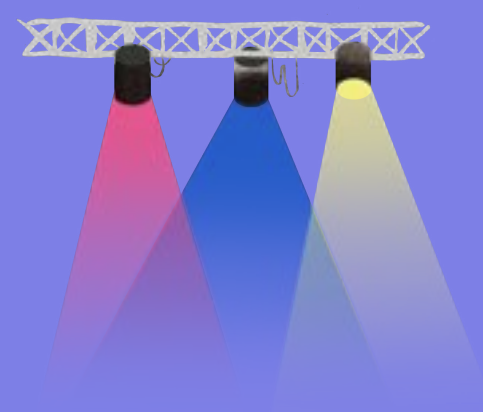
Interviews with Creatives:

Create Sheffield

asked us to interview 5 Sheffield creatives from a range of backgrounds to share their stories and as for their ideas on how to make a arts and culture more accessible in Sheffield

We absolutely LOVED meeting each and every one of them.





OUR FIRST ARTIST WAS "SMILEY MAX":

Max is a successful Musician. Max has Roma ancestry and speaks some of the language, which has helped him work with other children from the Roma community within schools. He met Terezia Rostas and worked as a community heritage champion. Max has run many music workshops with many groups. Max grew up in a New Age Traveller environment. Growing up he lived on many different sites, including a treehouse when he was younger with his mother and younger brothers protesting a coal mine that was planned in South Wales. He spoke of memories from his childhood of jumping walls in Glastonbury and how he found a real sense of freedom and community in music. He has been influenced most by rave, electrotonic and jungle music. Max states that music has been part of his life for as long as he can remember and that "As a kid, when I was 2 or 3 I was dancing to buses!"

Max enjoys music and creating things. He does a radio show every month with MONDO making music out of the things people tell him they have dreamed about. He uses jungle music and hopes to branch out further making more music on a larger scale with live trigger samples. He has been DJing since he was 12 years old.

Max is primarily self-taught in piano and guitar and has always wanted to have a go on a drum kit. He always wanted to be an artist and couldn't imagine doing anything else. Growing up, he has been inspired by the Sheffield party scene. He loves the community and how the older people look after the younger ones. When he was 19 he started putting on jungle nights and was helped and embraced by the community, with friends and near strangers bringing in camo nets and sound systems and more to help get the party going. He started this at the Harley 2009-2013 and eventually switched from jungle theme to Pangaea because of how popular it had become and the need to downsize slightly. Max believes it was easier before to do events like this because as times have moved forward, more restrictions have been put in place with health and safety laws, number restrictions and difficulty getting permits for buildings, especially post covid. Max grew up with free parties in the forests and old buildings and they had a real sense of freedom, with older people around him being nurturing, like Scragga who there at the beginning, has been a really positive influence.

"SMILEY MAX":

If he could give some advice to himself as a child, he would say to himself,

"Be yourself more, don't be anyone else and be proud of who you are."

Max wants to help children find a creative path with funding for a creative community where people are passionate about things because that's where creativity shines. He believes these communities help show what's possible. He has found many likeminded people through Discord. He has also gained a scholarship to do a Masters in music and sound for video games. Max hopes to use his training to help more young, creative people find scholarships and funding to help grow their creativity and passions, because knowing what is available is key. There is more to life than the belief that he feels is still fed down in some schools that, "Men should be plasterers and women beauticians." He wants to help parents and children see that. Max was expelled from his school, but his mother really helped support both himself and his 3 brothers. He felt that school was stifling any creativity, and any differences weren't tolerated. He wants to let more students and parents know that a creative career is possible, and any interests should be nourished, not discouraged. Max believes,

"Creativity is a journey out of boredom, but you have to be bored first. Once you go through the boredom gate, some of the best creativity comes out of the mundane. It makes life more exciting."

Max believes that we need more people going out and actually talking to people, just like these interviews, will help to create links and new ideas. While reflecting on his own creative journey, he also thinks a great idea would be to create an accessible database with funding, grants and scholarships, and a support worker to help people apply for them. He wants to be involved in as much as he can be and is interested in maybe working with an organisation like Tracks on the Manor estate, in the future.

KEY IDEAS FOR CHANGE FROM SMILEY MAX:

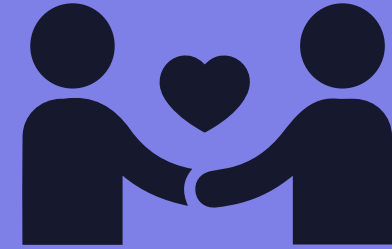
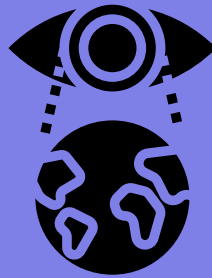
FREEDOM

How can we help recreate some of the 'freedom' Max spoke of and give our children and young people to try things out outside school?

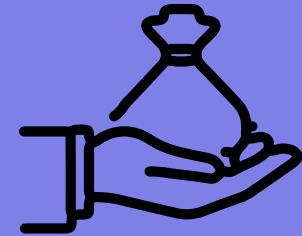


Breaking beyond community expectations and stereotypes is an ongoing challenge. How can we break beyond expected roles and share success stories of creatives with communities?

Seeing others in the creative world from a young age is key.



Allowing relationships to form between different generations is really important to give younger creatives the support and inspiration that they need.



How can we create a strong support structure for budding creatives, where they can come and find out about financial support opportunities and be helped to apply.

OUR SECOND INTERVIEW WAS WITH CONOR ROGERS

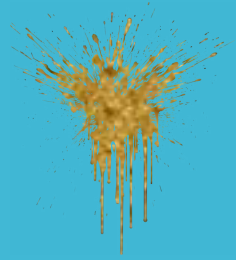
Conor Rodgers – Award winning Artist from Sheffield. He's 31 years old. Conor is from the Manor estate. This is what he told us:

"I did not understand what I was missing until I was exposed to it. I went to university and realized that the other students had been exposed to art all their lives. In my art practice I feel a kind of social responsibility to represent the underrepresented. So I went into schools, Sheffield Park Academy on Prince of Wales Road and the City School project, exposing people from underrepresented areas to art; and take that to City Centre Art galleries and spaces and have the young people and their families come and see it.

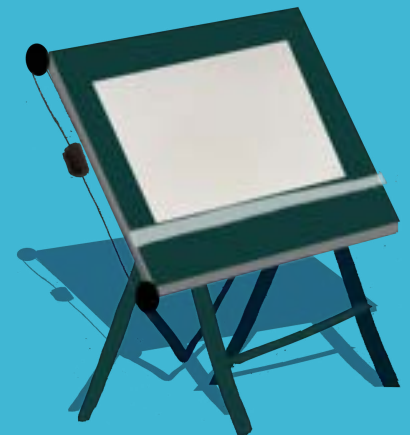
Growing up, my dad and my grandparents were humble and wanted me to be happy. It was a typical estate school, without dwelling on it too much it was a deprived and violent area. I moved around a lot to different council houses and learned to navigate dangers and when to take myself off. I grew up with chaos around me and liked to escape through creativity. I used to go to the working men's club with my grandad and used to sketch pictures of people on beer mats and betting slips. At an early age I could take something I was looking at and draw it. People would come to me at school and I'd draw them. I was patient, I could observe and make it look right. It felt like there were 3 options: one was to join a gang; two was to become a drug dealer; or the third was to become a tradesman. I knew I didn't want any of them.

When I was in year 7, I drew a picture of a chimpanzee, and it was better than some of the year 11s. My art teacher was key and pushed me. She would try give me advice, but I'd challenge her to a draw off and see who was better. I remember us both doing a picture of Marilyn Monroe and the class said that mine was better! Even though I was better she would push me and challenge my ego and she got me to develop drive and focus was an important influence. I got an A* in art and thought, "This was something I want to do." I started my A levels, got terrible results, and realized it was not what I wanted to do, lost my ambition and drive. Did Btec in Art 2 years and got a distinction went on to Hallam to do a Creative Arts Practice degree and came out with a first-class honour's degree.

GONOR ROGERS



It was not until I was in university, I understood what I'd missed out on. Others had been exposed to art all their life. Over time at university I realized at the interview I had be stereotyped and directed off a Fine Art Course and onto "Creative Art Practice" they had thought that I would be better at the doing rather than the grander "thinking" and putting on exhibitions. This is something I fed back to them and partly due to my feedback and maybe my subsequent success, they have changed the course structure now so there's just one course. Very early on in the course one of the students said to me, "You're common aren't you?" These experiences made me defiant and want to challenge and show people. I was rebellious. A Lecturer asked us to take photos around the campus and paint them on canvas and I said, "I don't want to do that". I got out a Quavers packet from my pocket and said, "I want to paint on this" and doing that made me realize that that packet represented me and my culture and who I was far more than the task of painting onto a canvas. That was the beginning of me painting on found materials. I grew in confidence, entered competitions, and won and it opened more doors for me. After University, my mum wanted me to do a PGCE to be an Art Teacher and I was determined to be an artist. I kept pursuing it and got in the Bloomberg New Contemporaries and showed my work in London. I also got shortlisted for the John Moor Painting Prize.



GONOR ROGERS

I became an Artist against all the odds. With no money. No support and nothing to keep me where I want to be.

I did a project funded by National Portrait Gallery called, "Creative Connections" with schools across the UK. I worked with children on The Manor estate and did about 8 workshops with them in classrooms and galleries. The creativity is all there, it just needs to be nurtured. We need to show pathways through relationships and relatability. There was a girl that would not engage at all, and I worked with her and spoke to her about her journey to and from school. I got her to describe her journey in detail and she turned it into a poem and then she just kept writing and writing - enough for a book.

I was so proud. I treat them like adults. I am real. I can relate. I look at them and can see me. Their art was displayed in Graves Gallery and I encouraged them to bring their family members to come and see it.



IDEAS FROM GONOR ROGERS:



There needs to be more classes in primary and secondary. More teaching and permission for teachers to shift their approaches and be free.



Funding needs to be accessible in communities for art in community spaces. To fund existing groups that know how to support and engage communities well like Say it, Highfield Youth Group and The Stand up and be Counted Theatre group.



Trips to galleries and spaces is key - exposure for all generations. Make music, trips, heritage, accessible and in school time or wrap around time; even just walking down the canal.

We need appropriate support in the community.



Ask kids to speak to their parents about what they are doing. Share with parents and families stories of success from their communities and what is possible. Art and creativity can be a successful career.



Create places where they can let things happen and take the pressure off. It's not a service, it's allowing creativity. There needs to be more of this.



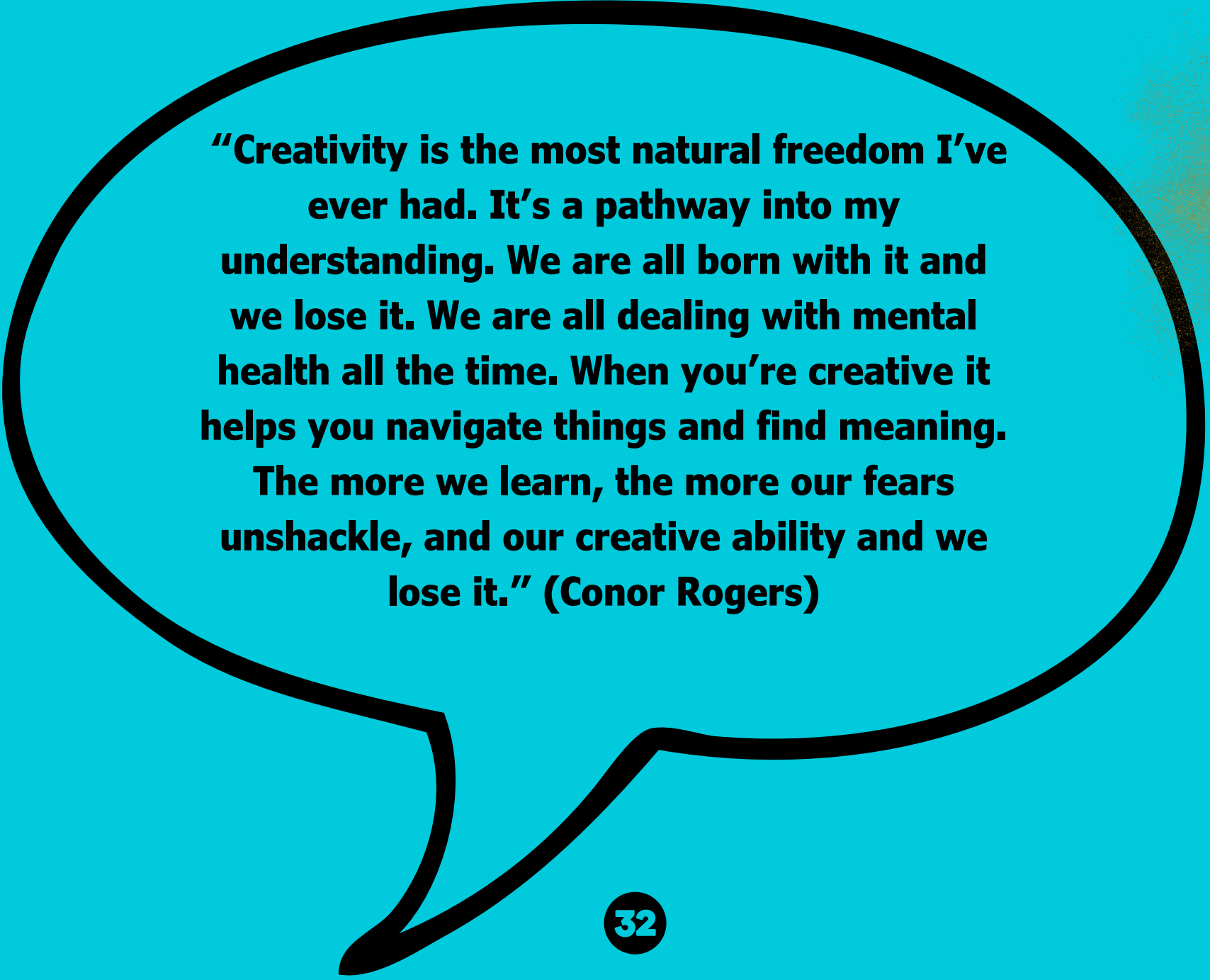
Arts need support not just praise after it's happened. How can funding opportunities and support be created and more widely shared? How can councils support? How can there be more links?



Gateways are key - at every part of the journey.



Secure and free spaces for YP to feel welcome and to allow freedom to emerge.



“Creativity is the most natural freedom I’ve ever had. It’s a pathway into my understanding. We are all born with it and we lose it. We are all dealing with mental health all the time. When you’re creative it helps you navigate things and find meaning. The more we learn, the more our fears unshackle, and our creative ability and we lose it.” (Conor Rogers)

GRACE AND REVIVAL

We interviewed two young women from the organisation, NMLSS CRTVS: Grace and Revival that they run it with their 3rd business partner Maria. Both Grace and Revival are amazing creative artists that started their journey together back in 2018. Both Grace (age 24) and Revival (age 26) have stated how they always wanted to do art from an early age.

Before Revival, Maria and Grace decided to come together to start their business NMLSS CRTVS. Grace took up art in secondary school where she first found her passion in Artistry and Creativity from her teacher. Her teacher showed her a different way and the different types of art form that can be done. From there that's where Grace took a particular interest in photography and started to grow her photography skills and develop other artistic skills. This is when Revival and Grace through their friendship and passion for art and creativity helped each other develop these skills. Grace also did a lot of voluntary work with creative hubs through her talent and loves helping people and organisation with her skills, but Grace realised how her talent used to help others should use to start her own organisation. Revival realised her passion for artistry when she came to realisation that her initial dream job in being doctor wasn't for her and that she wanted to do this to make her parents proud, rather than for herself. She realised that dancing was what she wanted to do. It wasn't at the time accepted by her parents and people around her but since making the decision to pursue dance and artistry, her parents are now the most supportive people she knows. They both spoke of the mutual support that Revival and Grace have for each other through friendship. Revival supported Grace with her artistic endeavours as well as fulfilling hers, and Revival came to a decision in wanting to start a company on creativity and artistry with Grace.

Revival loves to do the organization in the business and loves to do the background work.

They both have a lot of shared experiences in art and creativity down to their upbringing, being in a stable loving home and being raised in church. Grace stated how when she was younger, she was a tomboy and loved to play games and Revival said growing up she loved playing sports football and netball. They both went to church and grew up in church and that God is their inspiration for what they do. They both express a deep passion for their company and how it allows them to go out of their comfort zone and to always learn new things.

GRACE AND REVIVAL

Paris who Grace and Revival acknowledge as an inspiring figure, working with him that has allowed us see inspiration in other forms within creativity and he has been someone we've had the opportunity to work with on certain projects. Paris has always been supporting and encouraging them on their business and is seen as an inspirational person. Jo Wingate has been their mentor, as she has really stepped in more ways than one could imagine. Not only providing advice and broadening their knowledge but creating opportunities for us to network within the industry and set us up in a position where we have had amazing opportunities within the creative scene in Sheffield. They are still growing and developing their company and they both have artistic interests outside their business. Through NMLSS CRTVS they have managed lots of different events, partnered with other businesses for creative work. They have organised a spectacular fashion show. Their aspiration for the company is to have their own building, running creative workshops and events, working with creative artists. To do broader innovative and creative work.



Grace and Revival
would love to see more
awareness of art and
creativity in schools



DOM HESLOP

Dom was 8 years old when he feels he started his creative journey. He started writing: Short stories, poetry, letters. Not so much rap. "I was dealing with a lot of bullying and pent-up aggression. I had a need to be heard". When he was younger he had a stammer, but the speech impediment didn't affect his writing, "It just came naturally"

Dom currently curates talent through running a Community Interest Company called Slambarz, along with 2 other Directors and 2 project leads. He sets up live events for seldom heard musicians city wide, and recently, with the wider UK. Working with young people age 14 – 25, he is involved in model mentorship programs, promoting artist development and workshops on how to get into the industry.

Dom said that he didn't always want to be an artist,

"I wanted to have influence, music is the vehicle that I fell into, as things evolved, I made new friends who shared similar interests in black music culture, rap, soul, jazz. We had a passion for sharing and learning new experiences with the group. We were making rap, spitting bars, mingling in different areas across the city. With everyone doing a similar thing. The culture really exploded in the early 2000s"

SLAMBARZ

EST. SHEFFIELD #0114

DOM HESLOP

When talking about those who supported him in expressing himself, he spoke of his mother.

“My mum saw what I was doing as my tool, she never wanted me to lose that because I had a lot of aggression and a part time table at school, but once I made friends through the medium, we all encouraged each other. We built our own community”.

We asked if he could give his younger self any advice, what would it be?

“I’d tell myself to be mindful of the company you keep. Don’t take everything personally, both creatively and as a young person. And do things that make you feel alive.”

Dom believes that there are many things that can help other children find a creative path and know their options. “Being able to present a range of opportunities. Film, music, event production, poetry, crafts, arts in general. Young people don’t know what to do without these options. I think pop up venues are a great idea. Creative venues in accessible spaces for young people to pop in and try, and just meet other people with shared interests. It s something that really helped me massively when I was young. Being around other young people who were not sure helped us identify where our interests where, both individually and as a group.”

SLAMBARZ

EST. SHEFFIELD #0114

“Creativity means freedom. There is a boundless infinite realm of opportunities of people, feelings, and experiences. Without it, I don’t know how I’d get through life. Being creative helps your critical thinking, in a different way. It helps you see new angles and aspects, analysing criticism and the numbers of life in a different way. It’s not something really taught in schools, but it should be. Less metrics, more music. In the creative process, you discern what looks good, what fits, what feels right and that’s great for critical thinking skills. There are so many different types of expert or genius, people don’t see creativity like that, but it is. Young people are shoehorned into the status quo, their genius is unappreciated. They learn in a different way.”

Dominic Heslop, Founder and Director of Slambarz CIC

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