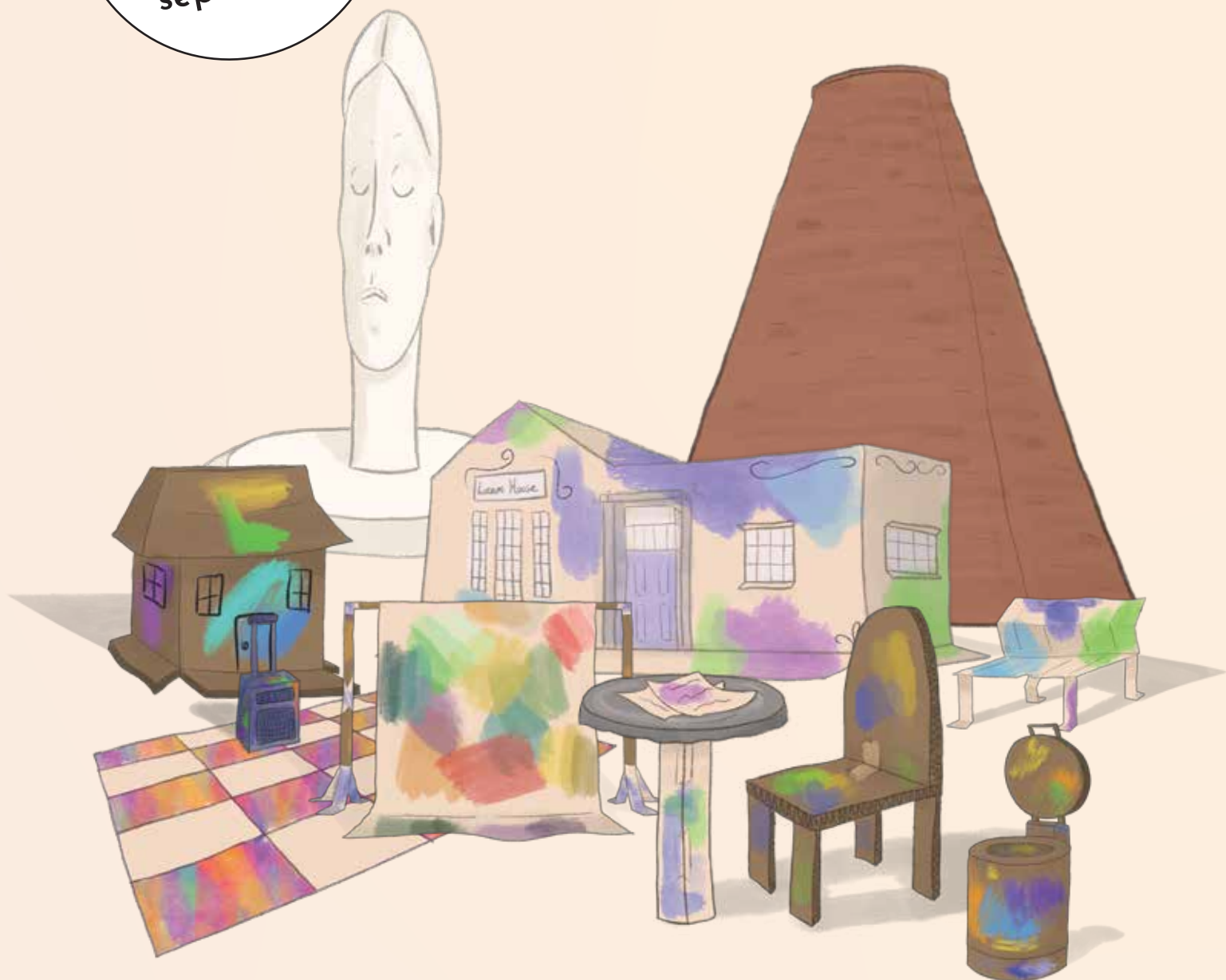


we Reside* here

On-screen
version - map
available to
download
separately



WHAT IS

Reside*

Reside* is a year of activity during 2023 for the creative community of St Helens that started with the thought,

“What if every artist who is resident in St Helens was recognised as an artist-in-residence for the year?”

Artist-in-residence programs usually give artists the opportunity to live and work in a new space, providing them with time to reflect, research, or produce work. Artists often use them to explore something new. Residencies might include a space to work in, and often come with mentoring or other career development opportunities.

Inspired by this, **Reside*** provided a flexible programme of support to artists of all disciplines and levels of experience to develop their work in St Helens. In this publication we share what artists have been creating and how they have been supported to create it.





Reside* builds on the **Artists Together** programme.

Delivered since 2018 through St Helens Borough Council Library Service as part of its work as an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation, the aim of Artists Together is to support artists* of all disciplines who are based in St Helens. From 2020-23 artist Claire Weetman has led the programme, devising events and activities in response to and in collaboration with artists in St Helens and beyond.

Artists Together:

- Should give artists* the confidence to make, create and share their work through the support of other artists* in St Helens.
- Responds to the ideas of artists* in St Helens.
- Provides opportunities for artists* to give each other peer-support.
- Creates spaces and opportunity for artists* to test, share and create new work.
- Is an open invitation to artists* of all disciplines to meet each other.

For more information about **Artists Together** and to find out how to join an event email: artsservice@sthelens.gov.uk

✳ When we use the term Artist we are referring to any creative person;

ACTORS, DANCERS, PAINTERS, CRAFTSPEOPLE, PHOTOGRAPHERS, SOUND ARTISTS, MUSICIANS, POETS, PERFORMERS, NOVELISTS, IMPROVISERS, FILMMAKERS, EMBROIDERERS, SCRIPTWRITERS, MAKERS... there's as many ways to be an artist as there are people, so if you think you might be an artist, get in touch!



FEBRUARY

We invited Tamsin Drury - **Word of Warning**, Patrick Kirk-Smith - **Art in Liverpool** and **Short Supply** to share knowledge and insight into applying for funding, engaging audiences, sharing your work and working out what you need to make the work you want to make.

“

“Had a lovely time today at Thatto Heath Library with Short Supply. Thank you for closing our first Reside* weekender with gentle curiosity. Feeling v. energised.”

Dross

”

MARCH

71 artists featured in a one-day exhibition at **The World of Glass** that connected their artworks to a map of St Helens and shared what they were planning on working on during the 2023 year as Borough of Culture.

Commissions and grants opened to artists and community organisations to apply for.

“

“Displaying any work that is incomplete feels incredibly vulnerable...If I can leave it unattended for a couple of hours in a space made for looking and seeing, maybe I can be brave enough to finish and publish it”

Kelza

”

APRIL

Artists led public activities and staged performances as part of **One Amazing Day** produced by **Walk the Plank**.

Things we reminded ourselves about during **Reside*** - people really like to hear about what you're doing.

Don't let imposter syndrome kick in!



MAY

A long weekend of artist-led workshops in communal spaces gave artists the chance to make work with others and to share and develop their creative processes.

JULY

Artists met curators and producers from

UNITY THEATRE
OPEN EYE GALLERY
DEAD PIGEON GALLERY
EVERYMAN THEATRE

for 1-2-1 support sessions

NOVEMBER

This map and the Reside* showcase in St Mary's Market highlights the works that artists in St Helens have researched, created and developed over the course of 2023.

“

“I find my art and poetry really rewarding, I wouldn't be without them. It's helped me considerably to get back on track - to get out and meet people”

Stuart Kenyon,
Cut Glass Writers

”

“


This week has seen two meetings with curators from North-West based galleries, Dead Pigeon and Open Eye. Both meetings were very positive about my work and I now have new opportunities open to me.”

Christine Beckett

“Thank you for organising one to one meetings with curators from The Open Eye Gallery as part of the Reside Program. It was great to get incredibly useful feedback which I will take forward with my photography”

Angela Wilkinson

”



How to use this ARTIST MAP

This map shows the broad locations of artists who are based in St Helens. Some may have placed their pin in the part of the town where they live, others may have placed their pin where they attend a club. Their pin could be where they have a studio space, or it could be the venue where they have premiered a performance.

The map is not designed to take you automatically and directly to someone's door. It's designed so that you can plan your own creative journey around St Helens. It will help you to navigate your way to the websites and social media where people share their events. It will direct you to places where you can find like minded people. Like a map, it will give you hints about what you might find there through simplified information, but it's only on taking the journey that you'll experience what the creative world of St Helens looks and feels like.

What is this map for?

- This map is a celebration of the artists who are based in St Helens and the work that they create.
- This map shows everyone in St Helens that we have people with amazing talents on their doorstep. People in Parr can be proud of their performer, Sutton can shout about their sculptor, Dentons Green can stand up for their dancers and Newton can connect with their knitters.
- This map is a guide for other artists. Use it to find out who else is making art work. Are they working solo or are they supported by a group of other artists? Who has given them feedback and support? How have they funded the work they create? What venues have they used to develop, rehearse, fabricate or share their work? What equipment have they had access to? What organisations in St Helens and further afield have they worked with?



Who else?

This map and publication isn't an exhaustive list of who is out there, so check out who the people on the map are working with, show up to events that are happening in town or beyond and ask the people you meet for help.

Here are places and organisations compiled with people who were involved during Reside* that might be of interest to you:

Looking for a way to be creative?

Check out the national Creative Lives map to see what's happening near you. From amateur dramatics to choirs, painting groups to dancing troupes - this is one place you can find other people to be creative with.

Or if you're looking to recruit new members to your group, and want to help show what a creative area you live in, add your group to the Creativity Map.

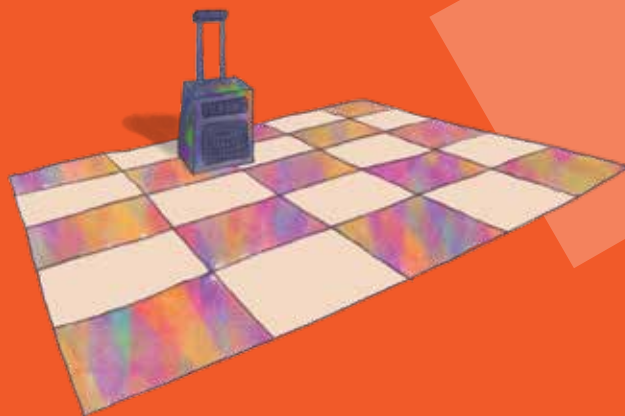
<https://www.creative-lives.org/creativity-map>

U3A
UNITY Dance
Rotary St Helens
St Helens Music Education Hub
Smithy Heritage Centre
Parents in Mind
Cowley Theatre Royal
Pilkington International Theatre
Theatre Royal
St Helens Concert Band
Shakespeare North Playhouse
Over the Rainbow
Culture Liverpool
Unity Theatre
Green Toys
Friends of V
Liverpool Irish Festival
Digital Art Box CIC
Domestic Abuse V
St Helens Library
St Helens P
Redoch



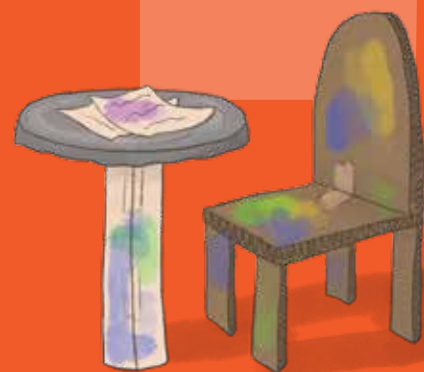
ASK FOR HELP

What resources and
funds do you need?
Who can help you to
get them?



PLAY

How do you create your
best work?
Alone or with others?
In a studio or on a
walk in the park?



WHAT
WAS THE
Reside*
CREATIVE
PROCESS ?

GET FEEDBACK

Sign up for a support
session, grab a coffee with a
friend or join a collective to
get an outside view on what
you're making.

An artist residency is often an opportunity to spend time in a new place to research or develop new work. They can be local, regional or international and are often with a creative organisation.



KEEP GOING

Some things go well, some things don't. Use what you've learned from the creative process to keep making and informing your future work.



SHARE & CELEBRATE

Hold an exhibition, share online, print a book, stage a show, attend an open mic event.

Volunteering or paid mentoring opportunities provide you with the chance to develop skills, meet people and get more experience. Organisations should provide a fair exchange for your time through training, expenses or paid fees.

Many funded organisations offer one-to-one support, meet-ups and portfolio reviews. Make use of them to reflect on your work and explore new opportunities.

Arts organisations will sometimes offer micro commissions or small grants to develop a creative idea. They will often have support to help you apply - ask them how they can help.

“

“Prototype Projects gave me the opportunity to make new work that creates understanding between cultures. Open Eye Gallery’s programme helped me to understand different cultural aspects of photography and storytelling in a European context and how I can make work that delivers a message of respect towards each other in the UK.”

”

For Prototype Projects with Heart of Glass, Abdullrhman Hassona spent three months photographing and interviewing St Helens residents who have made a remarkable impact on the local community. Open Eye Gallery supported this project, inviting Abdullrhman to attend their course for Socially Engaged Photographers.

ABDULLRHMAN HASSONA



SUPPORT TO TEST A
NEW WAY OF WORKING

“

“The mentorship has given me more courage to do more of the things I want to do alongside things that bring money in. I now want to implement what I learned on the mural into the mental health side of my work. It has inspired me to do bigger things and to apply for funding to bring those into the community.

I've secured funding to deliver Holiday Activity Fund (HAF) pottery painting sessions and for materials for sessions with recovering addicts so that I can bring the skills from my mentorship into St Helens - working in partnership with other organisations to deliver ongoing mental health support in a creative way.

If what I do helps one person in the community to have better mental health I will be happy”

”

CLAIRE EDDLESTON

Claire Eddleston has been part of a mentorship with renowned ceramics artist Carrie Reichardt producing the Strong Women mural with Heart of Glass in Parr.



1-2-1 MENTORING AND
FINDING FUNDING

DETERMINATION AND
A LOYAL AUDIENCE



CAMERON JONES

Cameron Jones is a filmmaker and comedian. He stages 'Wool Comedy' shows on the first Thursday of every month at Tank Bar. The St Helens comedy festival ran over 9 nights in July bringing comedians from across the country to perform in independent venues.

“

“My work has been supported by our loyal consistent audience of approx 35-40 people who book the free tickets and donate generously after the show, and comedians who perform for their expenses.

A Borough of Culture grant allowed me to pay festival acts a guaranteed fee, Tank Bar and The Vault provided venues in kind and local company Coppersmiths Rum sponsored our online promotion. I didn't get paid properly for the hours I put in, but what's new about that? I'm an independent artist after all.”

”



DEVELOPING A
CREATIVE BUSINESS

“

“I have pushed myself to improve beyond my comfort zones. The Bookstop, an independent bookshop in the heart of St Helens, were the first stockist of my surface pattern designs.

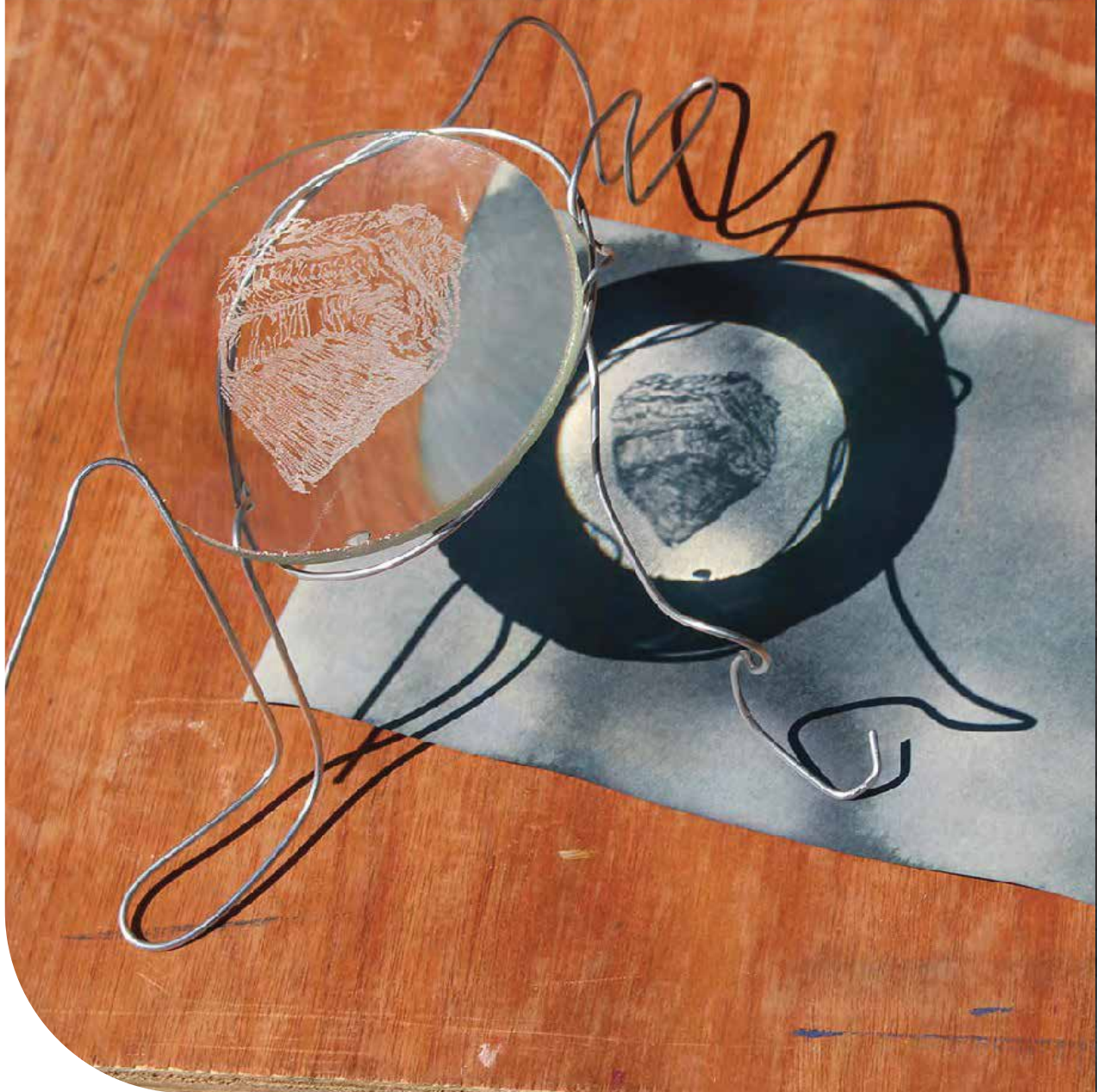
The Work and Health Program run by Ingeus and JobCentre+ is massively helping me to improve and lay the groundwork to grow my business, referring me to support that as an individual and a disabled artist, I know is going to help me.

I am opening my Etsy Shop, and have an influx of new bookmarks, pin badges and stickers produced in collaboration with another small business owner SassyMakes plus some top secret collabs in the works.”

”

MEGAN JENKINS DESIGN

Megan Jenkins has developed her design business with support from JobCentre+, attending a course at St Helens College to build skills to create new products and building relationships with other independents.



“

“Kym [at Bidston] supported me on the residency by taking a genuine interest in my practice and trusting my way of working completely. Supportive slow conversations helped me push myself to experiment and try things out.

The residency really reminded me how difficult I find it to work in isolation, I'm prioritising working 1-1 and with small groups for a little while.”

”

GRACE COLLINS

Grace Collins was artist in residence at Bidston Observatory Heritage Education Centre Space (HECS) where they made work in response to the Sunshine Recorder device in the HECS archive.



Photo: Hannah Bold

Hannah Bold and Stephen Banning were part of the Imagine Bamboo artist development programme led by Imagineer & Liverpool City Region Combined Authority.

The artists from the programme plan to continue to develop this learning and use of sustainable materials elsewhere, both locally and nationally.

HANNAH BOLD STEPHEN BANNING

“

Hannah says “we’ve had funding support for projects, skills sharing and worked together at events to test out ideas about bamboo as a sustainable material. I’m more mindful about the materials I choose and the impacts on the planet”

Stephen shares how the skilled team “helped with the structural integrity and ways of placing large structures accounting for wind speed and other restrictions. Going forward I have learnt a lot, which is going to be put to great use.”

”



CADY DAVIES

Cady Davies has been supported by Comics Youth through their Safe Spaces: Reclaiming Community Spaces programme and has volunteered with the organisation on their Saturday Comics workshops.

“

“Comics Youth have equipped me with the skills, knowledge and encouragement to produce a short comic, ‘Main Line Sunrise’. Experienced creatives provided valuable feedback and encouragement through the creative process which allowed me to explore and take risks with my work, creating more authentic pieces of work which resonated with lots of people.

After the positive response to Main Line Sunrise, I plan on expanding the universe, creating a graphic novel based loosely on my personal experiences.”

”

HOW

DO

we

~~experiment~~

~~learn~~

~~play~~

~~develop~~

make

WORK?

WHAT IS A COMMISSION?

An organisation or an individual will offer money, resources or support to an artist to create a new piece of work. The commission is normally beneficial to both the work of the artist and the aims of the organisation offering it.

WHAT COMMISSIONS WERE AVAILABLE IN ST HELENS DURING 2023?

As part of St Helens' year as Liverpool City Region Borough of Culture, over £80,000 of funding was awarded to individuals and groups across arts, heritage and sport, including £57,000 specifically for 31 creative projects, following an open-call process.

Managed through St Helens Borough Council Library Service, the four funds (and the source of the funding) were: **Reside*** Creative Commissions (Arts Council England), Borough of Culture Open Grants (UK Shared Prosperity Fund), Creative Underground Grants (National Lottery Heritage Fund) and the Harry and Mavis Pilkington Foundation Fund.

Some of the artists on the map received one or more of the grants or commissions to realise their work. Other individuals and organisations who received support feature in our list of places and organisations that support the arts and culture.

CHRISTINE BECKETT AND THE **Reside*** COMMISSIONS

Photographer Christine Beckett successfully applied for a **Reside*** commission, wanting to document the creative community of St Helens during the Borough of Culture year. Christine has photographed and interviewed six artists who received **Reside*** commissions with the images and biographies featured here. She has also provided ongoing documentation of events as part of **Reside***, and her photography features throughout this publication.

“

"I was motivated to apply [for a Reside* commission] after exhibiting one of my puppets at the Reside* exhibition. I no longer listen to that negative "what if?" voice. If an opportunity is placed in front of me now I embrace it." Liam Thompson

”

**If you are inspired to develop
a new creative project and
want to discuss your idea,
please get in touch via
artsservice@sthelens.gov.uk**



CHRISTINE BECKETT

Christine hails from Brixton, in London. She moved to St Helens town in 2012, via Warrington and Wales. She's been living here since then.

Her first camera was a Zenit EM 35mm SLR, which she saved up for and bought in 1974. She's been taking photos ever since. She began to shoot digital back in 2012, although for much of her work she still uses film in 35mm and 120 formats. Recently she has started to experiment with a large format 4"x5" sheet film view camera. Most of her work is in black and white, because she's "a bit old-fashioned".

Christine's style has been described as raw and natural. She uses little in the way of digital post-processing, limiting herself to the type of changes that, in the past, could be done in a darkroom when printing from film. She prefers black and white for the control it gives her over a photograph's mood.

Christine applied for one of the nine Reside* commissions, stating: "I had worked alongside, and photographed, other artists in the St Helens Artists Together group since the Pandemic, so I thought it would be a good idea to document local artists and their work on a more formal level.

Her project is intended to provide a photographic and documentary record of the commissioned Reside artists involved in St Helens: Borough of Culture 2023, in the form of a series of Environmental Portraits.

Christine hopes the award to St Helens of the 2023 Borough of Culture will bring greater attention to the region and to the talent that lies within it. She feels the new funding being made available will go a long way to boosting the profile of artists in the region, and of St Helens itself as an artistic hub worthy of note.



BARBARA HURST

Barbara began her creative career around 1993, and took up Photography winning first prize in the Rainford show with both a photograph of the Scottish Highlands and in Flower Arranging.

She applied for a Reside* commission because she wanted to give something back to the World of Glass Museum and Gallery for all its support over the years. Her Reside* project is a combination of some of her work around the borough over the last couple of decades, formed around a number of photographs of what she calls "The Courting Tree", and an accompanying article outlining her historical links to that tree. Her

display will also include her published photograph of a lighthouse with a written story, as well as her wooden trinkets and small ornaments crafted from dead tree limbs. Now mostly working with a digital camera, she describes her photographic style as "looking for things other than the obvious".

Barbara hopes that the St Helens: Borough of Culture 2023 award will boost recognition of the Arts in the borough of St Helens, provide great prospects for employment and generate a boost in support for the town's Theatre Royal.

Tori has been creating illustrative art for nearly 10 years. Since the Covid-19 Pandemic began, they have been translating their art into rug design. They start with sketches, in a style that has been described as “endearing, cute, and childlike,” usually using an iPad, and develop those initial designs into rug tufting, using a rug gun.

Their Reside* project is more an art piece than a simple rug; the use of yarn creates a loose feeling that is soft and playful. “My aim for this project is to create a rug that has more of a sketchy style to it, rather than defined bold lines I usually create. I see it as a chance to create something that pushes my boundaries.”

Tori hopes that people will start to realise the borough’s artistic potential & how many creative, wonderful things can happen if given the chance to do so. Tori knows “the reaction I usually receive when I tell people I live in St Helens, and I’d like that to change. I know that won’t happen with one event, but the fact we’ve been awarded the 2023 Borough of Culture is itself a great step towards it.”



TORI
DENNETT



BENJAMINA

ALBANESE (BEA)

Bea has lived in the borough of St Helens for the last seven or eight years.

She started writing poetry as a teenager, initially creating poems as presents for her relatives and friends. Later her poetry became more formal as her experience in the medium grew. She soon began to add performance to her poetry readings, mixing words and movements, and then eventually folklore, to enhance her storytelling. Her art has now expanded to include the use of artefacts and sustainable materials.

Bea describes her unique creative style as coming from a desire “to create sustainable art, art that treads lightly” on the environment, and states that her need to do so is obsessive. She sees her work as a combination of Far Eastern, and Western, aesthetics.

Her Reside* project ties in with her recent work in the Bidston Observatory Artistic Research Centre’s archive, and uses historical objects from the Centre to create artwork that dovetails with St Helens long history of Glassworks. Bea says this is very much a departure from her usual style of work, which concentrated on the written word. Her Reside* is, she says, her “first steps into Creative Archiving and presenting workshops” based on that creative process.

Bea believes the St Helens: Borough of Culture 2023 award will re-emphasise the links between Art and History in the borough, and also provide an incentive for the borough’s artists to work together to create a higher profile for the arts here.



Liam made their first puppet back in 2017, around the same time they moved to St Helens to work. Although they enjoyed the process, Liam did not pursue the art form until a few years later when they finally picked up the tools and materials again, and this time they have not looked back.

Liam uses specialised reticulated foam (like fish tank filters but denser) and fleece (e.g. Fuzzelle) specially manufactured for puppet building. Outside of this they use needle and thread, wire, wadding and even welding rods.

"As soon as there is a spark of an idea, I pick it up and run with it. I usually start with a colour scheme or combination and go from there. For example, I

recently botched a dye job of some material for another project, but instead of abandoning it I thought how could I make this work? So I paired it with some fur I had in stock and worked out the rest as I went along."

Liam's project is a puppet-based performance. Liam says "I usually just make puppets for my own enjoyment, but I'm looking forward to delivering something unique and brand new as part of this commission... I really want to share my work with my community and be a part of the St Helens Arts scene. I didn't really think I'd get it but I'm so proud that I did."

LIAM THOMPSON

Bradley has been a creative since he was 18, but notes that "my art has changed dramatically since then. I was just a performer but since I was about 22, my art has become this nonsensical explosion of different mediums. I draw (crudely), animate, create music, and most recently I have become a bit of a world-builder/character creator. I also dabble in installation art. My work is best described as black and white neurodivergent surreal nonsense. I like to make things; just whatever, and see what comes from it, which is usually silly little characters with funny names."

Bradley decided to apply for a Reside* commission because he'd long had a strong idea about making a neurodivergent installation that would be a perfect match for the Reside* exhibition, as well as provide a wonderful opportunity to explore his practice.

He describes his Reside project as "Silly! Silly and personal! This piece will be quite bonkers in terms of its overall presentation, as it will be hosting a lot of different mediums. But in reality it'll just be me expressing my personal issues with how society treats those who are neurodivergent and also how having ADHD affects me!"

BRADLEY ROACH



PHILL CAMPBELL

Phill Campbell has lived in St Helens for most of his life and has been involved with the local arts scene for many years. His artistic journey has moved through several specific 'eras' and genres; as a writer, as a student of the visual arts, as part of a studio collective, and singing with various groups. In recent years he has moved towards performance work.

In 2022 he auditioned for a performance in Manchester. The actors each wrote a short biographical script and shared it with the audience. Phill found this came naturally, and considered developing it into a larger performance piece. The Reside* commission provided him with an ideal opportunity to do so.

Phill's Reside* project is an autobiographical cabaret show comprising elements of stand-up, storytelling and singing, with audio-visual elements. It's based on the experiences of a gay man growing up on a council estate in St Helens in the 60s.

Phill believes that St Helens' Borough of Culture year will focus a spotlight on a region where artistic growth and endeavour is seriously undervalued. The additional funding and publicity will enable new artists to experience encouragement and optimism during these challenging times.



FIND OUT MORE ABOUT ARTISTS AND THE ARTS IN ST HELENS

Reside* was supported by St Helens Borough Council Library Service as part of its work as an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation. They compile a monthly arts newsletter that you can receive by email which shares events by artists and organisations in St Helens and the wider region.

For more information about **Reside***, to join the newsletter mailing list or to send listings of your own events, email: artsservice@sthelens.gov.uk



Photo: Claire Weetman

Reside* concept: **Claire Weetman**

Graphic Design: **Karen Hitchcock**

Illustrations: **Cady Davies**

Reside* event photography: **Christine Beckett**

All other images copyright the artists unless specified.
November 2023

With thanks to the following people for supporting commissioned artists and groups during 2023: Owen Hutchings and Jim Valentine-Burrows, Arts in Library Officers; Katie Wade, Heritage Officer; Victoria Brokenshire, Archivist; Claire Weetman, Reside* Lead Artist; FS Creatives, freelance Creative Producers.



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