

## Minutes Bradford Visual Art Social 2nd May

**Date & Time: 2nd May, 1pm - 4.30pm**

**Location: Impressions Gallery, Bradford City Centre**

**40 people attended**

### Minutes

#### **1.10pm - 1.20pm (10 mins) - Ann McNeil, Cat Scott, Alice Parsons, Alison McIntyre**

Ann McNeil (Impressions Gallery) welcomed everyone to the venue, Cat Scott (Co-producer) introduced herself and the Bradford Visual Art Social, Alice Parsons (Co-Producer) introduced herself, Alison McIntyre (Bradford Producing Hub) introduced herself as the new Visual Arts Instigator at BPH, Kate Wellham introduced the Bradford Cultural Voice Forum.

#### **1.25pm - 1.45pm Artist Presentation: [Shiraaz Ali](#)**

- Shiraaz is inspired by nature, art and architecture, and is passionate about green spaces and bringing communities together
- Overview of project outside city hall as artist in residence there: What is Bradford and what does it need? What is peace and unity? So many languages, cultures and skills here
- Overview of project in Hampshire celebrating green space, using a derelict army barracks
- Overview of project in Leeds using lighting and facades around an office building
- Preview of a new project on Leeds Road
- Advice and insights as an artist:
  - 1. Your spark** - Exploring all your hobbies and interests to discover what makes you feel alive and embracing your intuition, passion skill
  - 2. Planting the seed** - Proving yourself space and room to grow, explore and create with no expectation or specific outcome eg. using a sketchbook/ notebook. Act of meditation to follow where the pen/ tool takes you. Make sure to be Have fun! It is magic in life
  - 3. Intuition** - Following your innate sense of guidance, we can sometimes overthink and cloud our judgment. spending time in nature and practicing gratitude meditation or prayer can help clear the mind and allow access to your internal light and intuition
  - 4. Connecting** - Drawing the lines between all your skills and interests into discovering your value and creating a life from the unique skills you can offer. Going with the flow and finding order from the chaos – setting out your ideas clearly and concisely – taking a step back and analyzing the direction you would like to go
  - 5. Discipline** - Setting yourself boundaries and following through. Staying consistent and determined even when you don't have the motivation. Reward yourself through the effort you put in not the 'desired outcome'

- **6. Fill your cup** - Spend your time doing things that you love unrelated to any 'work' eg. reading, climbing, walking, family, instruments, could be anything. Becoming the best version of yourself and shedding parts of you that doesn't serve you anymore to flourish into your highest self and sore

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## 1.45pm - 2pm Break & Networking

### 2pm - 2.20pm Producer Presentation: Alice Parsons

- Alice is a Creative Producer Curator working mostly in Bradford but with experience in Leeds, Manchester, Liverpool and on national projects and collaborating with international artists.
- She's been freelance for almost a year, so she can choose and instigate her own projects
- Her prior roles include Programme and Engagement Manager at [People's History Museum](#), Manchester where she led the exhibitions, digital content, co-production and events projects, and learning and engagement.
- Alice started work as a producer during her time managing academic partnerships
- at Opera North, her role involved the establishing and running of the [DARE Art Prize](#) and working closely with the recipients
- Previous project overview: Sam Hertz. First recipient of the DARE Art Prize, Alice worked on the creation of a residency at the Tetley in Leeds.
- Anna Ridler. Second recipient of the DARE Art Prize, Alice worked as a producer to link with academics, artists and researchers and manage logistics.
- Alice moved to [National Science and Media Museum](#) as Creative Producer and her first project was Alternate Realities for which she chose/curated artwork from Sheffield DocFest and worked to install the work at the NSMM while the artists weren't present.
- The differences between curators and producers: curators don't necessarily work with artists or commission work where producers do.
- Previous project overview: Never Alone, Alice commissioned a new version of an existing artwork with Israel based artist Dima Yarovinsky to make it relevant to the exhibition and brought him to Bradford.
- Previous project overview: Above the Noise at NSMM, Alice commissioned and curated work from artists both new and established, showing everyone's work at the same level while working with very specific requirements from established artists.
- Previous project overview: Gaia, Luke Jerram, at NSMM. This had to be transported across the world and unpacked and installed without him present.
- Previous project overview: The Art of Play, National Videogame Museum, Sheffield. As a freelancer Alice curated and produced this exhibition celebrating the role of artists in video games.
- Alice has now completed her DYCP and is working as a producer with artists including Carolyn Mendelsohn

- Visual Arts Producers can produce exhibitions but can also produce projects, more ambitious longer term layered periods of time including engagement, fundraising etc.
- Other elements of Alice's work include legal support and advice, consultancy and project initiation

## **2.20pm - 2.25pm Break & Networking**

### **2.35pm - 2.55pm Curator Presentation: Alice Withers**

- Alice is Director of [South Square Centre](#) in Thornton and creates programmes that are socially engaged and site-specific. She joined the Centre in 2016 as a trainee. Her previous roles include senior producer at [Compass Live Art Festival](#) in Leeds, and working on the touring programme for Hull City of Culture in 2017
- South Square is an artist-led organisation, so Alice gave an overview of her work as an artist first
- She studied as a graphic art and design at Leeds Beckett
- Her work is site-specific and responds to particular communities or places
- Previous project overview: Dialect Dominoes, a collaboration work about Yorkshire dialect, interactive game that toured shopping centres and community centres in Wakefield and had performances
- Previous project overview: As an artist, Alice worked on Utopian Council, working with people doing library archive-based research in York, correspondence between the local authorities and individuals. Alice interpreted this as an installation for the Utopian Fair event at Somerset House in London.
- Previous project: In Wakefield for Yorkshire Sculpture International, people made art objects about current issues in the news and this was turned into an interactive sculpture.
- Previous project overview: Hungry Ghosts at Compass Live Art Festival, working with artist Amy Lawrence. This looked at recipes passed down through generations and made them available in a vending machine with creative writing from participants.
- Previous project overview: Floating Cinema from Sheffield which visited Hull in 2017.
- Introduction to South Square and what's in the building including a cafe, artist studios, galleries, outdoor space. An overview of the history of the Centre and its transformation into an arts centre.
- South Square had £1.3m in Capital Renovation to renovate the building including new roof, windows, heating, accessibility.
- Alice showed a video about South Square
- Curatorially, South Square works with artists from Bradford or West Yorkshire, and emerging artists, picking up a theme or ways of working that relate to Bradford or Thornton, or work that responds to that community

- The Heritage Project themes that South Square responded to were the Bronte legacy, the history of South Square Centre from the 80s onwards, and the history of Thornton and Bradford including working class history
- Previous project overview: working with artists to create an exhibition about pre-1950s healthcare, how people dealt with health before the NHS
- Previous project overview: working with school students to create artwork that wrapped the scaffolding during the renovation work
- Previous project overview: Wuthering Heights project with artist Rosie McAndrew, multisensory exhibition on the natural aspects of Wuthering Heights.
- Previous project overview: What Makes Thornton, with artist Andy Abbott, a board game about a peacock called Kevin who looks for creatives in Thornton, physical and digital version.
- What's going on at South Square: call out for artists, the galleries are easy to work with for emerging artists, SS are trying to accommodate artists with any needs they might have and love working with artists who want to work with their archive or in residence, who see their work in a multifaceted way or whose work has some interactivity or participation.
- Roles available at SS at the moment: Chair of Trustees and new trustees. Programme Manager role, four days a week.

### **2.55pm - 3.10pm Break & Networking**

### **3.10pm - 4pm Visual Arts Consultation**

Laura Brooks

- Introduced the Bradford Cultural Voice Forum in more detail and encouraged everyone to join

Alison McIntyre

- Introduced the group consultation exercise. This will be used as research in Alison's role at BPH and whatever can be put into action will be.

### **First consultation question: What is good about Bradford's visual arts sector?**

Groups' feedback:

- Access to lots of different spaces
- Art history is part of our culture
- Amazing artists and organisations
- DIY
- Supportive
- Affordable to live and work as an artist

- Fewer barriers to make things happen
- Receptive and accepting audience
- Collaboration and solidarity
- Diversity within events and exhibitions
- Working class artists
- Artistic freedom to make political work
- Diversity of landscape
- Lack of egos
- Inspiring places to visit for free
- Lots of potential
- Indie galleries opening
- Cultural strategy for the city
- Legacy of big names to build on
- Community engagement within the visual arts sector
- Buzz about making things happen
- Well-connected network
- Manageable size
- Culturally diverse
- Not competitive

**Second consultation question: What do you need or think is needed to make Bradford's visual arts sector thrive?**

Groups' feedback:

- Better communication within the sector
- Central point or hub of communication
- Council website could be easier to navigate to see funding opportunities
- Funding to support artists in different ways
- Ladders of progression, supporting artists out of DIY stage to the next stage
- Big partners to make big things happen
- Big venues
- Sense of ambition
- Looking beyond 2025
- Bringing international artists to Bradford and offering international collaboration for Bradford artists
- Links between art-based educational institutions
- More accessible and different ways of applying for funds
- More informal get-togethers for creatives
- More financially accessible studio spaces for artists
- More working class audiences
- More conversations about fair compensation
- More support around funding
- More entrance points to the sector tailored to where people are and their experience

- Spaces for inexperienced artists to exhibit
- Places to meet artists so they can engage with each other
- Communication and marketing
- Niche online groups where people can talk to each other based on artforms
- Insight into artists' processes
- More maker spaces
- More public art
- Avoid gentrification so Bradford keeps its own personality
- List of contacts of people who will say yes
- Swap an hour - exchanging time and skills with another artist
- Ways to borrow equipment
- List or database of artists and talents
- Events guide
- Overhaul of Visit Bradford guide
- Cross-community collaboration
- Available people in bigger organisations to seek advice from

Alison McIntyre and Laura Brooks

- Wrap-up of group activity.

Cat Scott

- Thanks for attending, and reminder to give feedback

**4pm - 4.30pm Networking & finish**