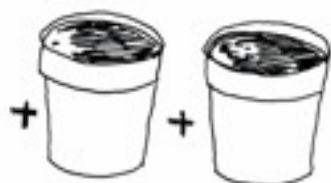


GROWING CULTURES

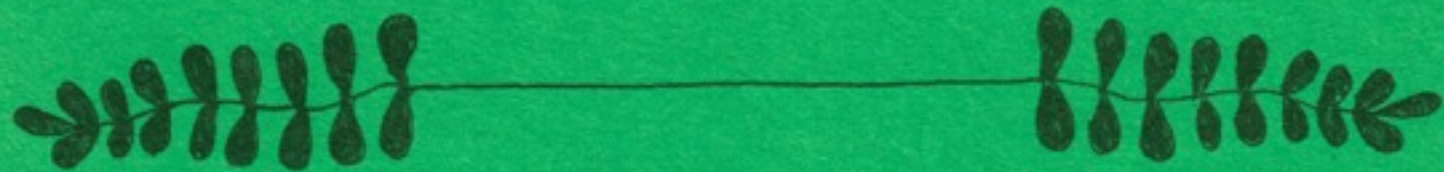
CONVERSATIONS ABOUT CREATIVITY



ARTIST REPORT

Jean McEwan
September 2019

TEMPORARYCONTEMPORARY



GROWING CULTURES



CONVERSATIONS | ABOUT | CREATIVITY

Explore your ideas for the future culture of Huddersfield
with artist Jean McEwan



May, June + July
Queensgate Market



Check with Creative Kirklees <http://bit.ly/GrowingCultures> for dates

TEMPORARY **CON**TEMPORARY

GROWING CULTURES

CONVERSATIONS ABOUT CREATIVITY

Artist Report

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TEMPORARYCONTEMPORARY

What is culture?

How can we grow and nurture the culture we want in Huddersfield?

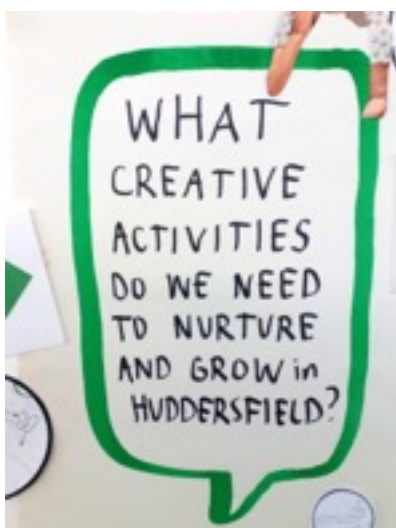
The Growing Cultures project, commissioned by Temporary Contemporary, invited people to imagine, dream, talk about what tomorrow's culture in Huddersfield could be and look like, and to develop ideas for how it can be grown collectively.

Between May and July 2019, participatory artist Jean McEwan was weekly resident in Queensgate Market, engaging people in exploring and developing thoughts and ideas, through conversations and creative activities.

Project aims

The following aims were identified with Temporary Contemporary and key partners when planning the project in early 2019

- To warm up conversations about dreams and ambitions for Huddersfield, and to set the scene for future engagement, including Masterplan consultation.
- To generate a sense of ambition for creativity and culture, for this story to become 'live' in the town.
- To be the foundation stage and provide evidence of demand, identifying what people want, to feed into funding bids.
- To explore the art of the possible, and the identity of the town, how it makes people feel - to explore the stories and places that are important to people.
- To raise awareness of what Huddersfield has already got - making the culture the town has more visible.
- To start to change the model of cultural delivery- shifting the relationships and expectations from the transactional to the collaborative: An invitation to be part of 'a coalition of the willing'.
- To make people feel empowered, confident and included to get involved - in being part of a community, generating a sense of collective investment, and doing.



Project title and metaphor/framing

"Culture is a process of constant formation, where our views and decisions are made by what we see, make, watch, listen to"

'The Ecology of Culture' A report commissioned the Arts and Humanities Research Council's Cultural Value Project' John Holden 2015

<https://ahrc.ukri.org/documents/project-reports-and-reviews/the-ecology-of-culture/>

The title and metaphor of 'Growing Cultures' was decided upon

- To frame the idea of culture as an ongoing process of making and doing that is organic, and based on transformation, adaptation, enrichment and interdependence
- To explore the particular conditions which produce and nurture cultural activity in Huddersfield, and to try to identify what is needed to nurture, enrich and sustain it?
- Beginning to identify, map and understand the activities people do as culture as 'ecologies' that may relate to and feed each other.
- As an opportunity to generate, seed and cultivate ideas and dreams
- With the understanding there are multiple definitions and experiences of culture: to identify examples of these and initiate/warm up a wider conversation about culture and what it means to people in Huddersfield, including barriers and needs



The project aimed at doing the following

1. **MAPPING:** what people do already, what's important to them: places, stories, activities
2. **VISIONING:** imagining possibilities, identifying inspirations, ambitions and aspirations
3. **NURTURING + CREATING** a sense of **AGENCY:** what can you do, where and how can you do it?

Questions and prompts

The following areas/ themes/ questions were collectively generated as starting points for engagement or lines of enquiry

1. Tell us about an experience that was amazing - a moment, place, experience you were inspired by, and why

2. What is/isn't culture?

Do you think culture is important? Why?

How can you grow your own culture?/ how do we grow cultures? How/where do you find culture?

What do you do already? (Mapping what exists)

So.. what can we do with this?

What can you do?/ How can you get involved?

3. What's special about Huddersfield?

These questions were developed into the prompts below, intended to elicit more expansive responses on perceptions and experiences of culture, place, aspiration, what people do, and also barriers/needs.

- **The important places to me in Huddersfield**
- **I remember (a magical experience in Huddersfield)**
- **How I'm creative**
- **I need to be creative**
- **I want to get involved in/explore.... in Huddersfield**
- **How about I/ we.... in Huddersfield**





Additional Heritage specific questions, supplied by Museums and Galleries team were added in the final month of the project

- What's great about Huddersfields past and how could it inspire the future?
- The important Huddersfield stories are..
- The heart of my community is...
- Huddersfield is famous for..
- The object that says most about me is..
- The best museum for Huddersfield would have

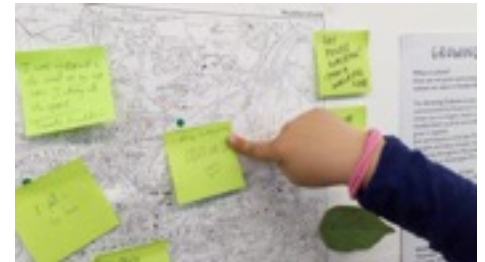
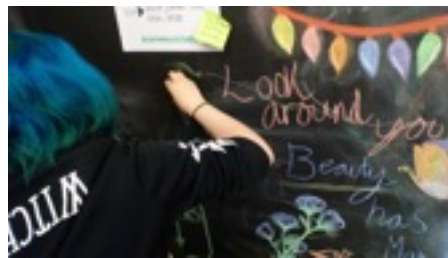


Publicity

The project was advertised via information posted out via the Temporary Contemporary and Creative Kirklees websites and social media channels, as well as printed fliers and posters distributed throughout key venues in Huddersfield.

Online conversation was also generated throughout the project via social media, with photographs of engagement activities and materials, alongside questions and invitations being shared.

Project design, methodologies and process



A hand-drawn, graphic, DIY aesthetic were used to give the Growing Cultures space a bold and energetic visual identity within the Market, and invite and encourage people to engage with it through hands-on activities. The engagement materials were designed to make the space and materials widely accessible and 'hands on', suggesting action, dynamic and invitation.

A range of activities were designed to give different e project/entry points from conversation to creative activities. These included:

1. Copies of a hand-drawn, risograph printed 'My Creative Huddersfield' mini zine using the visual prompts as detailed above, inviting people to write/draw/collage their responses ino. responding with their experiences and ideas
2. A3 and A4 poster making with plant pot and #growingcultures templates
3. Seed planting to identify and grow a creative idea - initing people to plant a seed of an idea to take home grow and nurture
4. Face to face onversations, using prompts and questions - transcribed and shared on the wall spaces
5. A Wall Map inviting contributions to questions about important places, experiences and stories on the Huddersfield wall map
6. A What Is Culture wall inviting written and visual responses



7. A chalkboard painted wall space with changing questions and prompts inviting people to respond with writing/drawing in chalks. These activities functioned in different ways allowing people

- to write comments in brief visit/drop in one off visit, with or without the presence of the artist
- being used as a template for the artist to transcribe and record conversations
- a means for containing more in-depth responses and ideas and repeat visits

These materials were then put on the wall spaces along in an evolving display which then generated further comments, ideas and responses. The materials were also designed to be left in the spaces inviting use when the artist was not present



Materials and resources

- A wide range of quality art materials including stamps, stencils, pens, pastels etc
- A selection of curated source materials for collaging including words, and images relating to growth, imagination, ambition and growth
- Compost, pots, seeds

Spaces

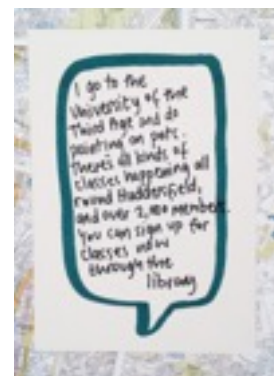
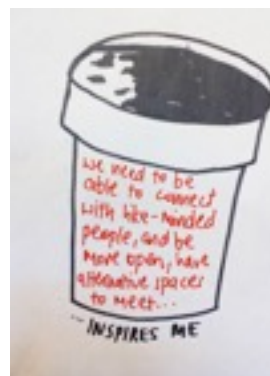
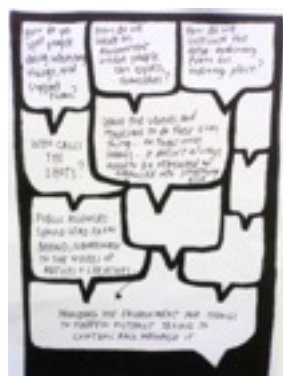
Three spaces were used:

- A central space with four wall/pillar spaces with spaces dedicated to different themes, with tables and chairs to encourage people to spend time there
- Chalkboard painted wall space with tables with paper engagement materials
- A space for heritage themed responses



Conversation/dialogue and listening

The artist engaged in conversation with people visiting to take them through a process of exploring ideas based on the things they showed interested in e.g. heritage, place, culture etc. Responsiveness, sensitivity careful listening, and flexibility were key to getting to in-depth responses where ideas and thoughts were developed and expanded.



Sessions and participants

12 sessions took place on a range of days and times including three Temporary Contemporary Happenings, on 1st May (afternoon event) and 17th May and 14th June (evening events) where Jean was present in the space engaging with people. Different dates and times were chosen to attract different people - e.g. families, cultural/creative workers

Numbers who dropped in or visited the space during these times and having face to face conversations or engaging in creative activities is as follows

Wednesday 1st May: (TC Happening)	3 people
Friday 10th May:	9 people
Friday 17th May: (TC Happening)	12 people
Saturday 25th May:	10 people (including 7 children)
Friday 31st May:	12 people (including 4 children)
Saturday 1st June:	10 people (including 4 children)
Friday 7th June:	14 people
Friday 14th June (TC Happening)	15 people
Friday 21st June	8 people
Wednesday 3rd July	4 people
Thursday 11th July	6 people
Saturday 20th July	7 people
Total	110 people



The majority of people who engaged were people who happened to pass by the space - shoppers to the Market or visitors to the other Temporary Contemporary spaces/events as well as visitors to the Parlour space.

Some people visited because they had seen the fliers in the library or other venues, and some by word of mouth and connections to Temporary Contemporary.

Visitors were diverse across age, cultural and socio economic backgrounds, from very young children with their parents to elders. Market traders also engaged with the project coming along to visit and contribute thoughts and ideas.

There were repeat visits from a number of people who wanted to continue to share and develop ideas.

Two primary school age children, daughters of the market traders, became regularly involved in the project, contributing to ideas for engagement, creating their own 'Collage wall' with organic images, and taking on a sense of ownership in looking after the space when the artist wasn't there.

ENGAGEMENT RESPONSES

The responses have been divided into the categories of Mapping, Visioning and Agency, as identified in the project aims.

1. MAPPING

Many people are involved formally or informally in a wide range of creative and cultural activities which they can readily identify

Valued services and resources such as the Library, CLEAR, Hoot, SR2 have been talked about, as well as arts venues, cafes, community provision, green spaces, shops, places of worship etc.

When people talk about important places these are often connected to personal histories, stories and experiences

This section has been thematised under Place, Heritage Activities (with a subcategory of Music, and Inspirations



PLACES

What's special about Huddersfield?

- Its in the middle of the Pennines, its location makes it special.
- The University
- Its heritage
- The new music scene
- The Town Hall organ
- The creative arts
- Footy
- The people - so friendly
- Schools
- The sweet stall in the market
- The Victorian buildings.. magnificent
- Cloth Hall - the lost pride of Huddersfield
- Beautiful old buildings and the history of textiles
- The

Stadium.. where dreams come true

- Its a multicultural town, friendly environment, especially in the shopping places. I like the concept of cheap market places.
- Huddersfield is a friendly place to live with cheap stores to look around, also to make friends.
- Its in the middle of the Pennines, its location makes it special.
- The University of really good, and really important for enriching the life and energy of the town.
- The outdoor market is amazing.
- The Northern Quarter
- Byram Arcade, undiscovered corners!
- Thank God for libraries - you can read, go on the computer and lots of other things without being charged. It's so important, I'm on benefits because of my health. Plus there's exhibitions in the Art Gallery.
- The important places to me are home, park, mosque and the bird shop.
- I am on holiday in Huddersfield. I like shopping and going to the park. People are friendly. I want to help the homeless people.



The important places in Huddersfield to me are...

- Johns Smiths Stadium
- Greenhead and Beaumont Park

- The old hotel at Castle Hill- if there was one now it might encourage people to go
- My allotment- I just got it today. I'm going to plant things to eat, grow flowers and also start cleaning up the area around it. Being in nature is important.
- Railway station - transport in and out
- The markets
- The library
- Tesco
- Railway station (transport in and out)
- Sainsbury
- Greenhead Park
- Monday Market

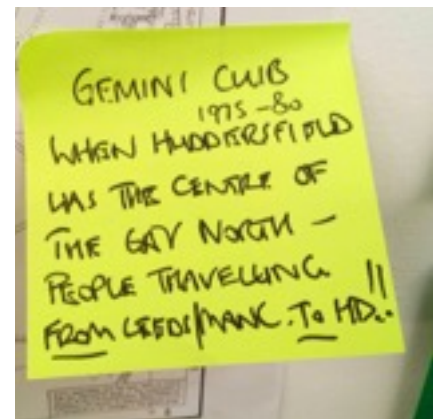


Where are the important places to you?

Places - venues and town centre

- The old Castle Hill pub. Many a visit with family and friends from abroad. Let them build it!
- The Parish - great gigs, great food
- The pet shop in Milnsbridge
- Tolson Museum
- Town Hall
- Vox. Bryan Arcade - coffee and beer!
- The Northern Tea House.
- Gemini Club 1975 - When the gay community was safer in Huddersfield than Leeds or Manchester.
- 1975 -1980 - when/Huddersfield was the centre of the gay North! People travelled FROM Leeds and Manchester
- Amsterdam Bar- fun!
- Library - a place to go and read, use the computer and so much more. They have good exhibitions in the art gallery upstairs

The Grove and the Sportsman are decent pubs - but they have no backrooms for live music.



Green spaces

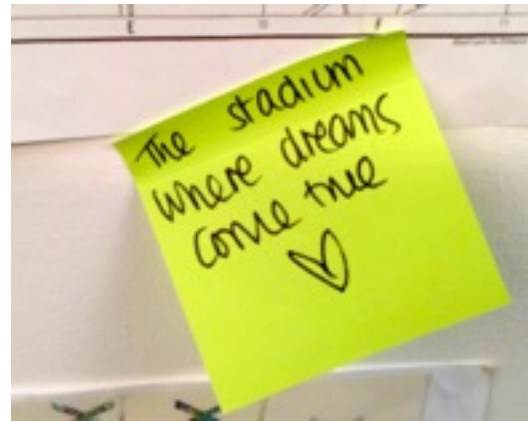
- I like Greenhead Part because it is colourful, you can chill there and you can play around. You can have picnics and there are fun fairs
- The parks - my son takes me out in my wheelchair to Beaumont Park.
- Beaumont Park is the best!
- I have made my home in Birkley and love it. Its a hidden beauty spot. Birkley Community Wildlife Garden
- This is a great place to see horses
- Devil Rock Netherton
- Get people walking and exploring the town and its surroundings
- Marsden and the beautiful countryside around it
- Beautiful scenery at Kirkheaton - we do the nature trail and visit the horses
- Norman park
- My garden, allotments around the area and green spaces

Personal experiences and memories

- George Street, Lindsey -me and my boyfriend' s first home together
- Meltham - we started our family here
- I fell in love here
- We grew our family in the countryside - Scapegoat Hill
- My favourite way home from school field.
- Rock Lane - my wonderful grannie is here
- Met my girlfriend here!
- Childhood memories blossomed here
- My yard!

Huddersfield is famous for..

- Football
- Worsteds woollens
- Harold Wilson
- HTAFC
- Birthplace of rugby league
- There used to be so many cinemas here
- Huddersfield Town Football. I've been watching it since I was 4 years old. I'm now 75.
- The old trolley buses
- Taxis! There used to be lots of different companies



The heart of my community is....

- The parks - Beaumont, Greenhead.
- Kingsgate - independent shops
- My home, Queensgate Market

HERITAGE

What's great about Huddersfield's past and how could it inspire the future?

- The old market building
- Rushworth's had great clothes and great shoes
- Keep the historic buildings - vital tourist attraction
- The market is a great place to talk to people
- Keep the little shops
- I used to work at Books Motors who made electric motors. 3000 people worked there. Engineering is a big part of the towns history - it would be good if there was a museum about engineering in Huddersfield
- Huddersfield is the birth place of Rugby League. The rugby museum at George Hotel was fantastic
- There were so many cinemas. It was a shilling to get in. You went in at 9 o'clock and you could stay till 3pm.
- Huddersfield Choral Society has been going a long time and the Mrs Sunderland Music Festival
- Huddersfield has so much textile history. We need to make it relevant today. How about an exhibition about climate change, get students and schools involved, and how we can recycle or reuse clothing and textiles?



The important Huddersfield stories are..

- The West Indian Club was a beautiful place. Singing and dancing, lots of people from different backgrounds went
- I worked in textiles. I was a winder.. and a smurf! We did Royal Airforce Blue. Everyday we went home covered in blue. It was the only colour that didnt come off (Angela)

My favourite Huddersfield memory is

- Of the Co-op dance hall
- The Claud Hill Pawn shop
- The Army Shop for clothes
- I used to run up and down the tram tracks as a little boy. The trams were really special.
- I remember my Grandad breaking some plywood by slipping on a banana In Queensgate Market - its become a family story and we all laugh when we come here
- Singing in the town hall.
- Seeing the queen.

- Visiting my grandma
- I remember a lightning storm on Castle Hill - it hit the tower. I'm surprised it didn't split it in half!
- My Dad helped build this (Queensgate) Market. He put the pillars in with a big crane
- Having a sandwich and a cup of tea in Woolworths cafe upstairs with my mum, God Bless.
- Going to Ponderosa
- Fond memories of the pubs on Bradford Road

The best museum for Huddersfield would have..

- Heritage, history, knowledge
- Toys
- The towns history told by the people that were involved in making it - eg textile workers like me! The story of the textile industry from the point of view of the people who worked in it - what it was really like

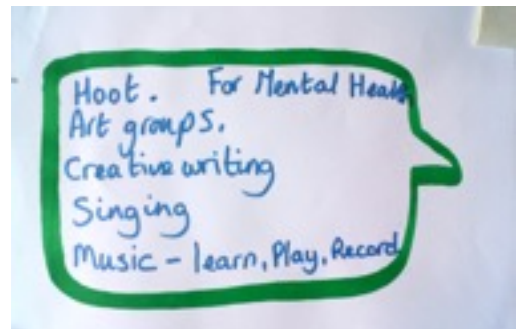


ACTIVITIES

What do people do already?

What inspires them?

- I go to the University of the Third Age and do painting on pots. There's all kinds of classes happening all around Huddersfield, and over 2000 members. You can sign up for classes now through the library.
- My grandparents took me and my sister walking when we were very young children. We used to walk from Dalton, sometimes all the way to Bradford! That's what inspired me to become a walker. A good walk in Huddersfield is to go on Castle Hill - you catch the Almondbury bus. I learned how to walk in the countryside and what you need to think about in the Boy Scouts
- Thank God for libraries - you can read, go on the computer and lots of other things without being charged. It's so important, I'm on benefits because of my health. Plus there's exhibitions in the Art Gallery.
- I do poetry open mic at the Sair Inn, Linthwaite, Queenies, and Northern Quarter, Wood Street. It would be great to have more opportunities for more spoken words events at different times of the day - evening buses make it hard sometimes
- I knit, embroider, bake and sew. I make bags and cushions from old jeans. I love gardening and would love to learn more about it. There's no end to knowledge, and you're never too old to learn.



MUSIC

Music was a key theme, continually identified by people as important to them - from singing, playing, learning, to watching and listening. From conversations, left comments, inspirations identified on the chalkboard wall this came up again and again. There was a sense of pride and distinctiveness in Huddersfield being a 'special' place for music. Within the market there were constantly people of all ages coming to play the piano, sometimes queuing to play. These ranged from accomplished players to people clearly



practising. A group of teenage boys came regularly to listen to and support their friend who was teaching himself from YouTube videos.

- The Magic Rock Tap Room are putting on music and films - 'Electric Cinema'. Its really interesting

- I got an old guitar from my ex, a piece of nothing! I taught myself to play it, and I started busking around Huddersfield. People could see I had a different style! And then I bought myself another guitar. I'm a one man band, but I'd love to find more places to play acoustic music in Huddersfield and people to play with.

- Q. Where are the weird music venues?

A. Small Seeds, The Parish, Northern Quarter .I'm a regular at all of these. You can never have too much weird music or venues to host it

- Music is always there for you. It gets you through

- There are gigs every Tuesday night at Small Seeds, and Friday Night Jive gigs are free

- Small Seeds - brilliant music venue. Northern Quarter is also really good for music.

- What Huddersfield needs is a decent sized music venue for touring bands to play - which will bring people in. The venues we have already are great but too small.

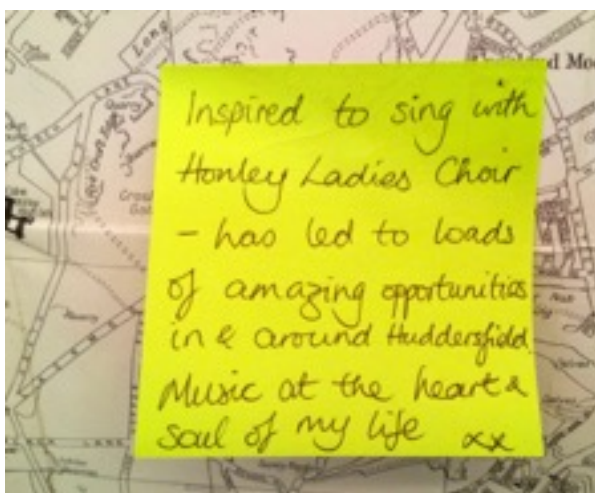
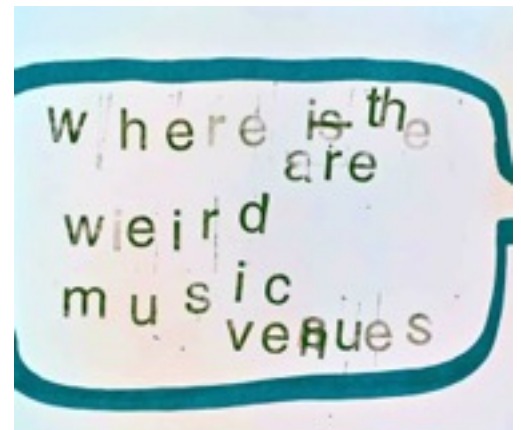
- Singing is one of the best things to make you feel good. It produces a natural high

- Me and my daughter come here (the market) at least twice a week to play the piano.

- 'Sing Your Socks Off' group run by CLEAR (Community Links Engagement and Recovery Service)

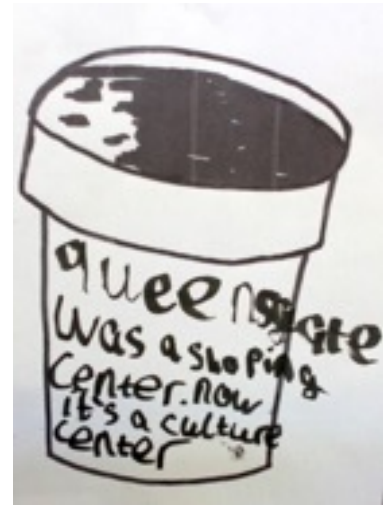
- Singing gives the highest high. Its really good for people with dementia, like me. It lifts the spirits. It means the world to me

- Huddersfield Choral Society has been going a long time and the Mrs Sunderland Musical Festival



THE MARKET as a space

The social and community value of the Queensgate Market was regularly identified by people visiting. A growing sense of excitement and positivity about the activities being developed with Temporary Contemporary, and the sense of it growing into a place to come, spend time, meet and share ideas, was very palpable. Ideas were also being generated, developed and supported at Parlour e.g. a kids climate change event, and a repair cafe.



- Me and my daughter come here at least 2 or 3 times a week It's a very peaceful place. I enjoy drawing for pleasure and like finding places I can do it in
- The best place to learn how to play Fur Elise!
- I drop in here regularly to see whats going on and to talk to people. It feels like things are starting to happen and that you can meet like minded people here. Its exciting.

Inspirations

Inspirations identified ranged from the universal and cultural icons and artists (Beyonce, David Bowie) to the local (Patrick Stewart, Stringteeth, Honley Ladies Choir).

As well as people/artists inspirations were also identified from activities, place (especially green spaces) and values/ ways of doing things

- Experiment with and explore different cultures - of music, food - you have to be open to get inspired. You can mix so many things together. Inspiration can be found in the strangest of places.

I designed a clothing range based on African patterns and bold colours and combined it with heavy metal spikes and leather.. and for some reason, it just worked!



What inspires you?

- Love Music People Places
- The landscape - being able to see hills everywhere. The history - especially textile heritage. The music.
- Green hills, trees and water. I moved here from Scotland and the natural beauty is so comforting
- Life is not just important. Life is Art. Art is Life. It inspires me.
- Inspiration comes from everywhere in this town. You just have to open your eyes and look - see things in a new way
- Stringteeth Artist and Photographer
- I was inspired to sing with Honley Ladies Choir - it has led to loads of amazing opportunities in and around Huddersfield. Music is the heart and soul of my life



I remember... (a magical experience)

- Patrick Stewart turning on the Xmas lights a few years ago
- The fountains outside the railway station
- The food festival

People, art, change, empowerment

Community links

Clear engagement and recovery

Coming to CLEAR

People inspire me

... Inspires me



The chalkboard wall

The chalkboard wall space functioned throughout the project as a snapshot or evolving 'map' of thoughts, ideas, messages hopes and concerns and an open space for people to express whatever was important to them

The content on the wall included positive messages, inspirations, concerns plus drawings, doodles, and social media handles

These chalked contributions were documented carefully before being erased to make room for more. This demonstrated both appetite for an open expressive space, and also the importance of this space as being understood as a valuable 'barometer' for peoples ideas dreams and concerns



VISIONING

Ideas for the future spanned many themes, and ranged from public policy and participatory democracy to town centre and retail to heritage, social enterprise and community businesses, cultural activities, services and spaces.

Town centre and place

- Cafe culture in the streets: people being outside in public places together
- Open up the cafes in the evening!
- The town centre isn't just for buying things and drinking!
- Huddersfield could do with a Hebden Bridge type 'independent quarter' - an area that's boutiquey.
- Evening events outside in the centre, open to all
- Dancing in public eg salsa
- Have an outdoor theatre?
- Basketball courts
- Can we have a Chinatown?
- Have an independent cinema?
- Food festivals, street food
- Greet the public to a floral display in the area outside the train station - it lacks any nature, plants, flowers and trees at the moment
- In the Lawrence Batley Theatre yard there should be trees plants and flowers, and on the windows there should be grass
- You can buy online, but use the time you save having experiences in the town. We are all part of the problem, we are all part of the solution! We can do something about it.



Wellbeing, connections and agency/empowerment

- Wellbeing events
- Places for people to connect and meet others
- We need to be able to connect with like minded people, and be more open to each other.
- We need alternative spaces to meet
- I would like to see a gay community centre
- Huddersfield more activities for teens
- Community cafes
- I'd like to see more activities for older people eg dancing clubs, Culture Clubs, places for people to connect and people to go to the theatre with, like a buddying scheme for elders
- Post capitalist planning and direct democracy
- Sustainable community infrastructure
- Local citizens joining together to address issues
- Community improvement teams
- Youth engagement projects
- Local authority support for common sense projects to improve quality of life
- I'm starting a new project to educate about people and nutrition
I want to set up spaces and groups in the community



Environment and sustainable living

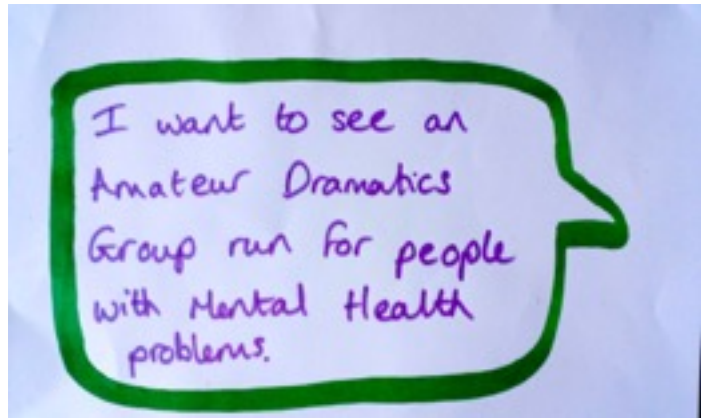
- Grow our own vegetables
- Renewable local energy production
- More biodiversity and imaginative ways of rewilding in the town centre eg small islands and nature reserves in built up areas - people are doing this in Normanbury
- Reusing and recycling things that are discarded

- I'd like to see... An exhibition about climate change, get students and schools involved. Textiles are such an important part of our history - we should be leading the way in recycling and reusing our materials
- Some people in Fartown planted some apple trees in some unused land and made it into a communal orchard - we should do more of this!
- Community food gardens
- Upcycling projects

CULTURE and CREATIVITY

- An arts ecology that's thriving would have lots of spaces where the community could/exhibit and hold events and workshops, as well as affordable artist studios. I'm just discovering Huddersfield at the moment and its arts ecology.. getting a studio at Bates Mill has helped me.

- I am a textile graduate, recently finished at Huddersfield University and had some work in an exhibition here (Queensgate Market) as part of WOVEN. WOVEN was a snapshot into all the different things going on with textiles in the area - its shown how many people there are out there doing amazing things. There are lots of ways to connect and do creative things when you're a student, but when you finish its hard to know how to make connections and with who. It would be great to have somewhere to go (a physical space or an online space) to discover what's going on or who is doing what.



- I'm an ex community artist who has had some mental health problems and I'm just getting back into things. Myself and a friend want to start a group or a conversation with other artists to share and talk about our art work, as being on your own can be really isolating.
- I really want to have the chance to meet with other fine artists to share practice and critical discussion. A sense of a tribe or a community to spark off from. I miss that from being in a studio and would like to find it again somewhere

- We need to ..

Be brave, take risks. Huddersfield needs risky, edgy stuff, not just stuff that's popular. Bold projects, ideas and spaces that make people outside of Huddersfield look in and say 'wow' - like the Hepworth, or The Turnpike.

The council should make empty shop spaces available for artistic experimentation. It would be great to see young people taking over shops. We need events and projects not just for vulnerable groups, but for everyone.

- How about we..

Have more networking opportunities for young artists starting out like my daughter/granddaughter (exhibiting in Woven) so she can develop her work.



- I want to see an Amateur Dramatics Group run for people with mental health problems
- More open art groups for creative writing, singing

I want to get involved in..

- A kids drawing club!
- I'd love to play the organ in the Town Hall
- YouTube
- More gaming
- Raspberry Jam and Code Club
- Make a kids Tech Club!
- Can we get free MINECRAFT?



MUSIC

- We need places to learn practice and play music
- What Huddersfield needs is a decent sized music venue for touring bands to play - which will bring people in. The venues we have already are great but too small. this would bring people into the town and boost the evening economy
- I'd love to meet people to play acoustic music with
- More open mic places to busk and try out ideas
- More places for music - learn, play, record

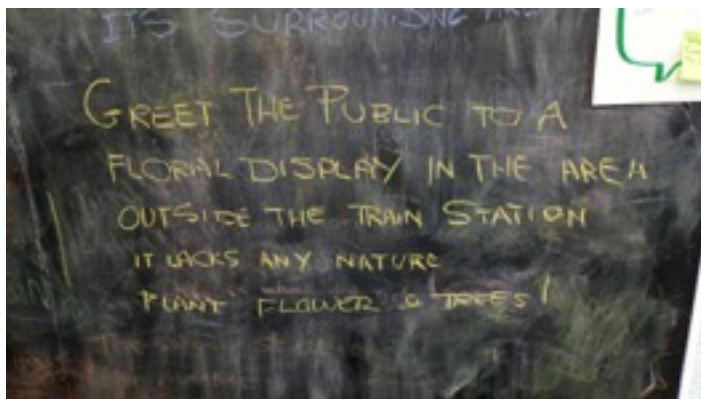


HERITAGE

- Remember The old hotel at Castle Hill? - if there was one now it might encourage people to go, spend time up there
- Engineering is a big part of the towns history - it would be good if there was a museum telling its story in Huddersfield

The best museum for Huddersfield would have..

- Heritage, history, knowledge
- Toys
- The towns history told by the people that were involved in making it - eg textile workers like me! The story of the textile industry from the point of view of the people who worked in it - what it was really like



CREATING AGENCY

'Plant a seed and grow your mind. The world is beautiful, you just have to know where to look. Is it raining? Get cozy and listen to music. Is it sunny? Sit in a field and look at how beautiful the world is when all the ugliness is out.. The world is beautiful, you just have to want it to be'

The Growing Cultures space functioned and developed through the project as an activated space for ideas generation, connection and knowledge sharing. It became an informal networking space. People used the Growing Cultures spaces to have face to face conversations about ideas, both with the artist and with other visitors.

Through invitation and encouragement people started to take ownership of the spaces in different ways

This included

- using the space as an informal 'noticeboard': e.g. a handwritten poster from a theatre group calling out for participants for a public performance was posted up
- Leaving comments and suggestions, updates in response to questions and ideas.
- Two primary school children, whose parents are market stall traders decided to take over a wall and made a large collage illustrating the themes of the project. They also took on a sense of ownership in 'looking after' the space and materials when the artist wasn't there.

People were signposted to cultural events and opportunities via flyers and posters etc in the information point opposite the space, as well as being signposted to Creative Kirklees website and mailing list. Forms were available for people interested in taking a market stall on - a number of these given out.

People coming to discuss ideas were also signposted to Parlour, both as a possible source of support and as a 'drop in' space to gather and meet available to use. A number of people expressed interest and enthusiasm for this kind of 'gathering space'.

Many ideas, conversations, connections and actions were seeded

Many of them related to animation and increased use of public spaces and venues in the city centre for people to connect and so activities together from dancing, street theatre, live music, community singing groups, to guerrilla planting

Some examples:

- Ideas for repair cafe, kids tech club, idea for refugee arts group to meet
- A buddying system/space for older people to meet and go to cultural events together
- Children leading and taking ownership/care of Growing Cultures spaces
- Suggestions for creative skills exchanges, 'freecycle' type noticeboard
- Desire for spaces to meet and share/ generate ideas with like - minded people
- Growing an alternative community (people feel this is happening already in the Market) around issues of common concern eg climate change, environment

CONVERSATIONS ABOUT CULTURE AND CREATIVITY

"Culture is about human beings having a dialogue with themselves and the outside world"

- Culture is just the stuff we do
- How do we create an environment where people can express themselves?
How do you spot people doing interesting things, and support them?
How do we cultivate the extraordinary from an ordinary place?



Who calls the shots?

Public agencies should lead from behind, subordinate to the needs of artists and creatives, providing the environment for things to happen without trying to control or manage it

Leave the venues and musicians to do their own thing - it doesn't always need to be regulated or organised into something else

- A conversation which I often struggle with is the false perception that white working class communities don't have culture and therefore feel threatened by the culture of ethnic minorities. I don't personally agree with this notion, however trying to tackle this perception is really difficult. There's a huge issue of culture and class, where I find the notion of a cultureless white working class very problematic. I see my own culture as a hybrid which is somewhat different to my children, who have had a much more middle class upbringing than my working class experience of living. What is culture? What factors affect culture?

How does it differ? How do we go beyond understanding culture as a complex mix of language, food, clothing, music, the arts, spirituality, faith etc (I'm sure there's an academic perspective and a lived experience) As someone with a hybrid identity and culture, I often have to negotiate culture

- We need to change the language when we talk about culture. 'Art' language can really exclude people
- Huddersfield FC is life and culture
- Culture is a hot dog :)

How I'm creative:

Karaoke/singing

'Sing Your Socks Off' group run by CLEAR

I think outside the box. I collaborate with other people

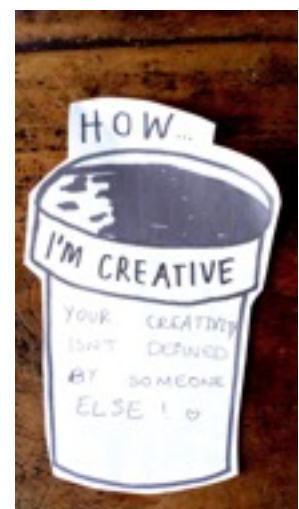
I think very creatively. Working in a team

Drawing, colouring in, painting, playing



Barriers, concerns and needs

- Austerity: economic barriers and stress being barriers to participation. The need to make an income and caring responsibilities for family - there are too many demands on time Creativity is a being a luxury or 'not for me'
- Discomfort with the word and idea of culture. People not defining what they do as creativity or culture 'its just normal' 'its just what I do'
- A low sense of agency and empowerment, not knowing or having confidence to do things
- Public transport - times and cost in getting to events etc was identified as a barrier
- Accessibility for groups with different needs - e.g. people with disabilities
- Isolation - opportunities for meeting others (free safe inclusive spaces)
- Information: Some people said they don't know what is going on or where to find out
- worries about empty shops and neglected town centre - failing retail



The issues that concern me are....

- Poverty
- Empty shops - rents too high
- Homeless people
- Mental health and social care

• Conclusion

Key Themes

The project captured a very wide range of responses in different forms from people as detailed above. The themes most frequently coming up were

- Sport: Especially rugby, football and pride in its heritage and traditions in the town
- Environment: The importance of green spaces and the climate emergency requiring radical changes in behaviour from us all
- Spaces and opportunities to connect and do cultural activities with others, for learning, community, connection and wellbeing
- Music: A strong appetite for opportunities to listen, play, and see all kinds of music

Visitor feedback

This is socially engaged practice as radical cultural consultation

All the different methods are great

This is a good space

I'm a bit confused about what its for

Is this just for Huddersfield - what about the wider district?

Market traders

Market traders actively engaged in the project and were curious about its purpose . A number proactively contributed ideas and suggestions and dropped in regularly. The project was perceived positively as adding to the activation of the Market as a cultural space alongside existing Temporary Contemporary bringing people into the Market and enlivening empty stalls,

When the Town Masterplan plans for a sound space in the Market were announced in June, some traders questioned whether the artist or commissioners were aware of this - going forward with future engagement work, sensitivity is required in managing relationships with

Artist reflections

What worked

- The range of activities and methodologies offered a 'way in' for most people to engage with the project and the bold visuals/materials attracted people to the space.
- An evolving and flexible approach to changing the space, materials, prompts and questions and worked well with the changing needs questions developing
- The chalk wall: people were using this and writing, drawing, doodling constantly
- There was a diversity of people engaging, including a range of different ages, from young children to the very elderly, people from a range of cultural and BAME backgrounds, people with disabilities and people with health issues.
- The development of the project as an ongoing connective space for people to meet/share, get inspired etc
- In person conversations: people really want to share ideas, and feel strongly about Huddersfield. Most of the people preferred to talk and be really listened to, rather than "make" or work with imagery
- Marketing: a combination of social media and print flyers and posters brought individuals in to visit the project in addition to market shoppers 'dropping in'. Social media promotion (via the TC and the artist's networks) also generated further connections with potential groups to engage with e.g. people who use Hoot

Questions to consider

- The growth metaphor: people engaged with the metaphor not so much in terms of culture/creativity and ecologies but more literally - there were lots of responses around environmental/ecological themes and issues. This may have been a result of the visual framing and materials used. The questions around ecologies and networks didn't elicit many responses. Is there something here about language?

- Were there too many questions? Was the scope of the project too wide? Some people initially said they were confused about the the project was asking and for what purpose. After conversation were clearer. The volume of left responses suggests that people found the questions accessible and clear - but perhaps the project needed a tighter focus to avoid confusion.
- Did the prompts and questions generate enough detailed answers? Do the methodologies used require further refining in to generate more expansive responses?

What could be developed

- Transferability of materials: there is potential for the print materials/templates to be used and adapted at/for different sites and for different contexts e.g. the Museums and Galleries team to use in their sites
- A commissioned infographic of visual map of the information gathered could be produced to show key places and activities

Jean McEwan
September 2019



Artist biography

Jean McEwan is a Bradford-based artist and organiser who has been working across visual, curatorial, collaborative and socially engaged practices for over a decade. Her participatory practice, informed by her previous career as a community worker, creates spaces for meaningful connections between people. She has worked both nationally and internationally, including residencies with Creative People and Places project Super Slow Way, Kirklees Council Plan For Places 2016 and in Jamestown NY.

Jean is founder of 'Wur Bradford' ('Wur' means 'our or 'we are') a responsive arts project which explores the connections between imagination, community and social change with people and organisations in the city. Wur Bradford has been featured in the Guardian Culture Professional as a 'reason to be cheerful'.

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