

THE THINGS
TO DO LIST
ISSUE #155



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THINGS TO DO

Foundation Press suggest things you may or may not like to do at home

THE YEAR OF YEARS IN THE GREGORIAN YEAR 2021

Ilana writes about her *The Year Of Years* project

OSCAR'S COMIC STRIP

A visit to Cactus Land with MIMAZINA's 'in-house' cartoonist

LISTEN UP!

A special playlist selected by Hen Ogled's Dawn Bothwell

GREETINGS FROM

A postcard from Ruth in Philadelphia, USA

HANDS, SPACE, SHUT YER FACE

A topical poem from Mark Abel

OUR HOMES ARE A MUSEUM

Christo describes an important artwork from his home

NATURE APPRECIATION SOCIETY

The society shares winter's bounty and signs of spring

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

A conversation with Navigator North

BORO KIDS PLAYING OUT!

Carol remembers the joys of a childhood spent outside

COLLECTION REFLECTION

A selection of different portraits are brought together

ARTWORK DIARY

David Lisser shares the stages of producing his artwork *Sub Rosa*

BE A PART OF MIMAZINA

Get involved in future issues of MIMAZINA

CREDITS

Things To Do

Foundation Press suggest things you may or may not like to do at home.

LET'S
KEEP
MAKING
THOUGHTS

Scattered throughout this issue are a number of worksheets and games we have made over the past year. We wish you a playful start to 2021!

DRESS UP
IN CLOTHES
YOU DON'T
(YET) DARE
TO WEAR
OUTSIDE.
TAKE YOUR
PORTRAIT



THE SILLIER THEY
ARE, THE MORE
THERAPEUTIC THE
EXERCISE

THE YEAR OF YEARS IN THE GREGORIAN YEAR 2021

Words and Images: Ilana Mitchell

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theyearofyears

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105 posts

289 followers

800 following

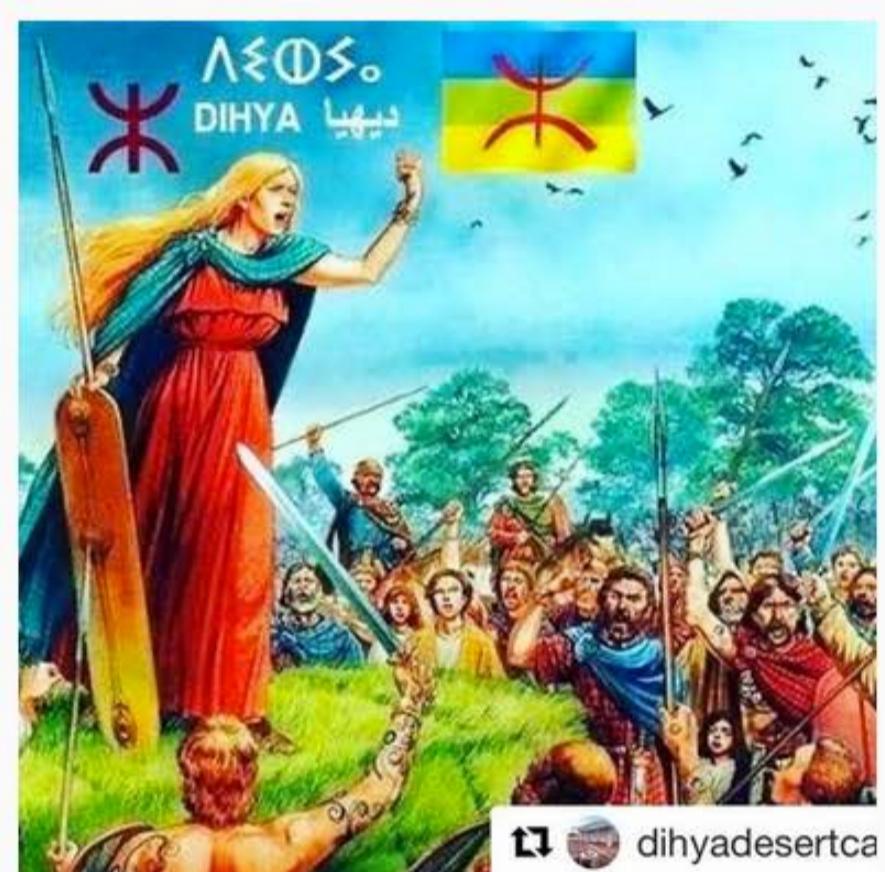
The Year of Years

Marking every new year that happens throughout one revolution of the earth around the sun. (First edition 2017, revival 2021).

theyearofyears.tumblr.com

POSTS

TAGGED



Refugee Council
@refugeecouncil

Ilana Mitchell tells us about her *The Year of Years* project, that will mark all the different New Years in 2021.

In the year 2017 I researched and marked every different kind of new year I could find that happened during that 365 day period. Back then, on 31 Dec 2016, I wrote:

“2016 has been so tumultuous, personally and globally, that this new year holds even more possibility, both hopeful and trepidatious... The milestone of new year is huge. It comes round once the Earth has travelled a full rotation around the sun. If you stood still for a year – like a tree, say – you will have felt the full impact of the changing seasons at each position through the full orbit. In the new year the orbit starts again, with each position ready to be revisited. But time has moved on - you are year older, the circumstances have shifted - so the effect should, somehow, feel different. It can be intense, this pressure we place on having changed, having improved, as we revisit where we were last year, where we hope to be next.”

In 2020, time seemed treacly slow – it’s hard to believe that it is less than a year since we in Britain learned what lockdown means. But though many a day felt like a month, it was still just one rotation of the Earth around the Sun.

As we approached the turn into 2021, I started to think about revisiting *The Year of Years*. It proved to be a thought-provoking way of exploring the way time is measured, and also de-pressurised the sometimes heavy feeling I would get about marking our lives and achievements by these lolloping great chunks of time. *The Year of Years* is a way to chop that up, and also a showcase of all the many different ways of marking time that there are.

Because, as it turns out, in Britain, New Year has only been celebrated on Jan 1st since 1752. We were a fairly late adopter; it had been celebrated that way for over 1,700 years elsewhere. But it's definitely pretty set now as the local practice, and is a custom replicated across much of the Western world. What fascinates me is that it is far from the only time a new year is celebrated. It was something I'd often wonder about in late-Summer/Autumn time, when my family celebrate the Jewish new year – just how many New Years are there, and how many people are celebrating them? Turns out, lots: there are so many different calendars in active use, celebrated with all sorts of ancient customs, contemporary rituals, and religious and cultural markers. I've found over a hundred ways humans mark new years during one revolution of the earth around the sun.

This year, like in 2017, I'm going to mark each of them. You can join me in celebrating *The Year of Years* on Instagram or Tumblr – search for @theyearofyears.

So far this year, at the time of writing, there have been 3 new years:

- Gregorian calendar, 2021 started on Jan 1st.
- Amazigh, or Berber, New Year, called Yennayer, started the new year 2971 on Jan 14th.
- The old way of celebrating new year for the Iroquois Native Americans is called Haudeshaune or the Midwinter Ceremony – and took place on Jan 17th, 5 days after the first new moon of the year.
- Next up is Mahayana Buddhist New Year on Jan 28th. That's followed by the Lunar New Year, celebrated by many Asian countries and cultures, on Feb 12th, which will start The Year of the Ox.

To follow *The Year of Years*:

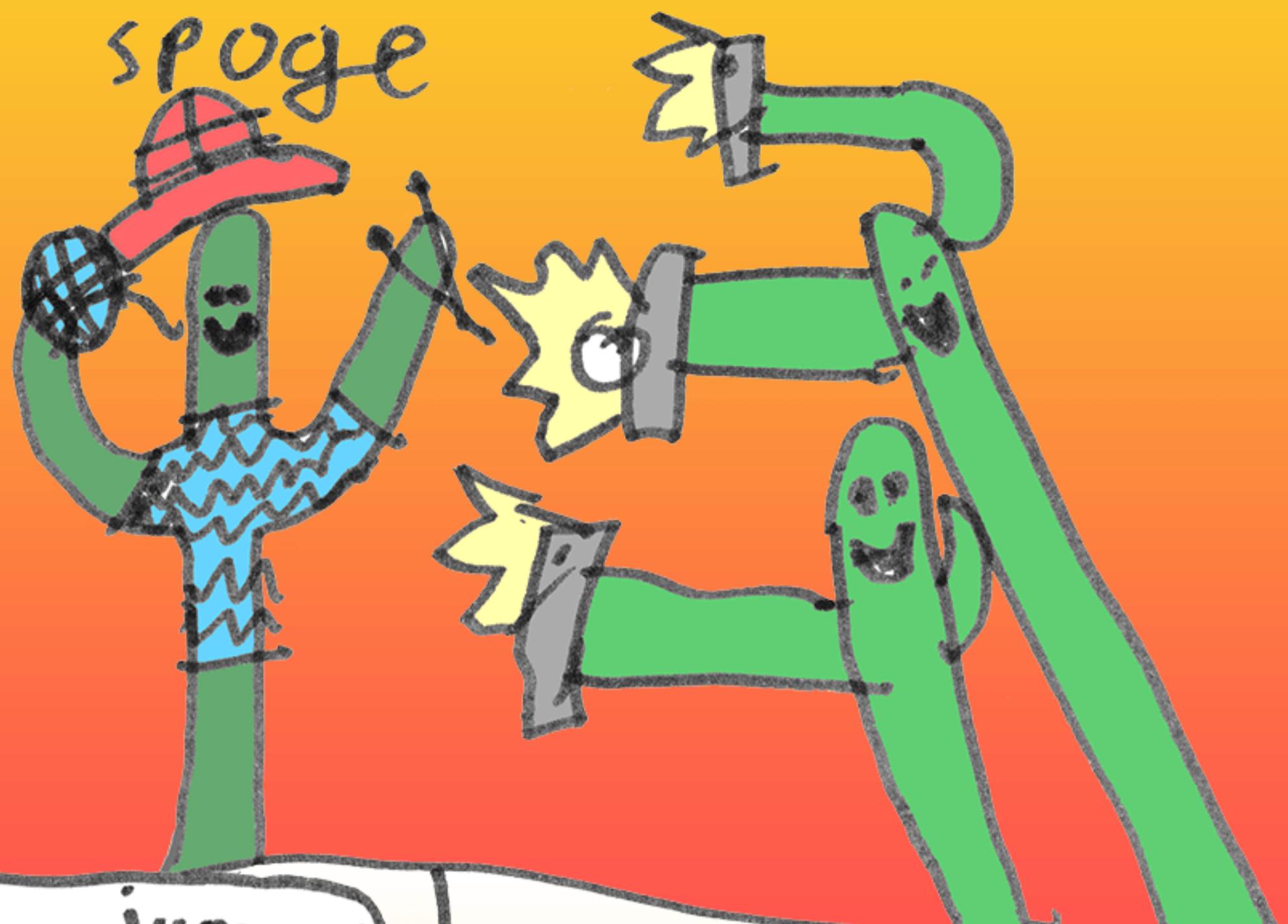
@theyearofyears on Instagram [here](#)

The Year of Years Tumblr [here](#)



Image: Lunar New Year at Victoria Harbour, Hong Kong / Credit: Michael Elleray, CC BY 2.0, via Wikimedia Commons

by oscar



SP Oge's 15 minutes of FAME!





**PUT
YOUR
PHONE
DOWN
AT THE
TABLE.**

**Or, photograph a friendly
message made out of your
dinner to send to a friend.**

This feature shares musical playlists put together especially for MIMAZINA by musicians. This month it's our extraordinary friend Dawn Bothwell!

LISTEN UP!
LISTEN UP!
LISTEN UP!
LISTEN UP!
LISTEN UP!

Words: Dawn Bothwell



You can listen to the whole playlist [HERE](#)

Hi, I'm Dawn Bothwell – one member of the band Hen Ogledd. I also perform solo under the name Pentecostal Party. I spend most of my time working on a mixture of art and music projects and I live in Gateshead. This Listen Up! selection is very personal and anecdotal.

A lot of the music I have come to love over the years I have discovered by seeing musicians play live in my home city. These experiences happened due to the hard work of local gig promoters putting on ambitious gigs, in a sort of DIY scene way, but bringing far afield and international musicians.

I like music which is atmospheric. I like keyboards and electronic sounds, vocals which shine through with meaning and directness, oddities, weird stuff. Hopefully you will enjoy this eclectic mix!

NOTES

Hear more of Dawn's music by following these links.

1. Watch the video for Hen Ogledd's track *Crimson Star* from their brilliant new album *Free Humans* (video is directed by our very own Deborah Bower!)

[CLICK HERE](#)

2. Learn more about Hen Ogledd on Domino Records

[CLICK HERE](#)

3. Listen to Pentecostal Party's SoundCloud page

[CLICK HERE](#)

1. LISTEN

Hen Ogledd *Night Bus*

This is an unaired track that we recorded whilst doing our album *Mogic*. It is all improvised so it's quite sprawling. I feel like it sounds like a dilapidated bus at night, or your dilapidated head when on the night bus.

2. LISTEN

Euros Childs *Face Dripping*

This album (*Face Dripping*) is such a side step from Euros Childs and Gorky's Zygotic Mynci music. I've driven through the Brecon Beacons with this as the soundtrack – it was the perfect accompaniment to that landscape.

3. LISTEN

Moor Mother *DIY Time Machine*

I've seen a couple of performances by MM (Camae Ayewa) - with The Bug one time and London Contemporary Orchestra another - and could go on about how brilliant she is forever. Check out her work, and her work with Irreversible Entanglements who came together first to perform at Musicians Against Police Brutality. She works with Rashida Phillips in the collective Black Quantum Futurists. They do a lot of work in Philadelphia and in theorising and practicing 'Black Quantum Futurism' with residents in the city.

4. LISTEN

The Fates *Sheila (She Beats In My Heart)*

I like how this song feels like two different songs spliced together! It is the keyboardist, Una Baines' band. She was in The Fall, and rightfully left because, well, Mark E Smith...



5. LISTEN

Chandra *Tish Le Dire*

I love Chandra's tweenie voice and post-punk delivery. She opened for Laurie Anderson and played The Mud Club; her dad is the famous artist Dennis Oppenheim and she was around the New York scene in the early 80s. Her lyrics are amazing point-blank snappy comebacks and retorts.

6. LISTEN

Jesse Rae *Inside Out*

He wrote this song for Odyssey whose version you probably will recognise. Jesse is an incredible musician and artist. He made really good pals with musicians from the Parliament Funk scene like Bernie Worrell after chance meetings during his time spent in the States when he was working with Columbia Records as a video recording artist. He plays on a lot of fabulous P-Funk records and many guest on his own songs in return. He has some brilliantly bonkers videos he filmed back in the 80s featuring scenes atop of old steam train as it glides through the countryside.

7. LISTEN

Karen Gwyer *The Workers Are On Strike*

I saw Karen Gwyer play at The Mining Institute in Newcastle around 2013/14, at a gig put on by Opal Tapes who had just done a release with her called *Kiki the Wormhole*.

(Disclaimer: I DON'T KNOW IF THIS IS TRUE!) Stephen from Opal Tapes told me Karen was pregnant and was using Lamaze breathing during her (storming electronic beat-driven) performance and that her (at the time) new album was her trying to connect with the pre-born child through sound and body. Sounded exciting to me - but I think her music is blinding regardless, and transcends the gender-related crap that goes along with DJing.

8. LISTEN

Jaakko Eino Kalevi *This World*

I saw Jaakko play in Newcastle at the Star & Shadow Cinema back in 2013 when he was put on by my friend Michael who makes lots of great gigs happen in Newcastle, under the name A Glimpse Of Paradise. Because Michael was my housemate at the time Jaakko stayed at ours and I got to have a nice chat with him. It turned out that, at that point, he worked as a tram driver in Helsinki. His new mini album *Dissolution* is just so cool, it creates an amazing hazy atmosphere and when his voice comes in you feel reassured. This song I picked is from his last album, 2018's *Out of Touch*. It makes sense for today as it's about taking a step out of the constant digital world.

9. LISTEN

Michał Poreba *Space Golf*

This is a cover of Hen Ogledd's *Space Golf* by Rhodri Davies' (harp superstar and fellow member of Hen Ogledd) neighbour Michał. He has a really talented unique way of playing instruments and he's self-taught. He played the Welsh bagpipes at the very start of the *Magic* album - it sounds a bit like a cartoon pig snoring!

10. LISTEN

Sister Irene O'Connor *Fire (Of God's Love)*

I'm a fan of nuns who make art, such as Sister Corita Kent or Hildegard von Bingen. Irene O'Connor was an Australian nun. The album which features this song was made in collaboration with another nun, Sister Marimil Lobregat, apparently over a number of rapturous Sunday afternoon sessions in 1976.

SHOW HOME

A.

Curate a show of objects from your own home.

It could include anything, much-loved or under-appreciated objects, see examples below...

B.

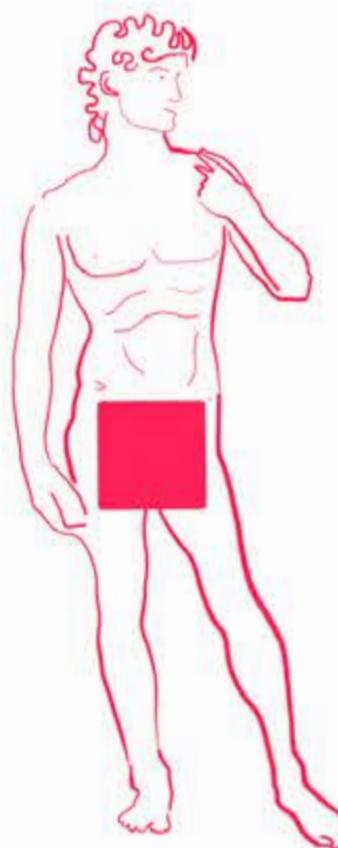
Write a short exhibition text + give the show a title.

Describe each object and what it means to you – are there connections between any of these things?

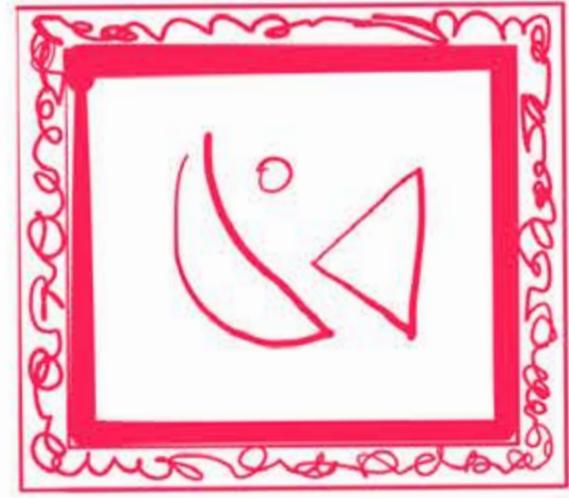
C.

Document and share your exhibition.

Could images of the objects and your text be brought together? You could make a small zine or post it on Instagram.



SCULPTURE



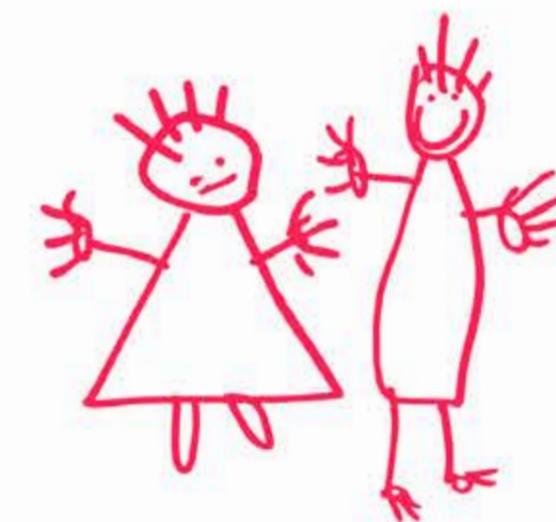
PICTURES ON A WALL



FANCY VASES OR CERAMICS



EMBARASSING FAMILY PHOTOS



CHILDREN'S ART



'HUMOROUS' MUGS



MUNDANE LETTERS



HEROICALLY RESILIENT HOUSE PLANTS



UNREAD ART OR PHOTOGRAPHY BOOK



TROPHIES, CERTIFICATES OR AWARDS



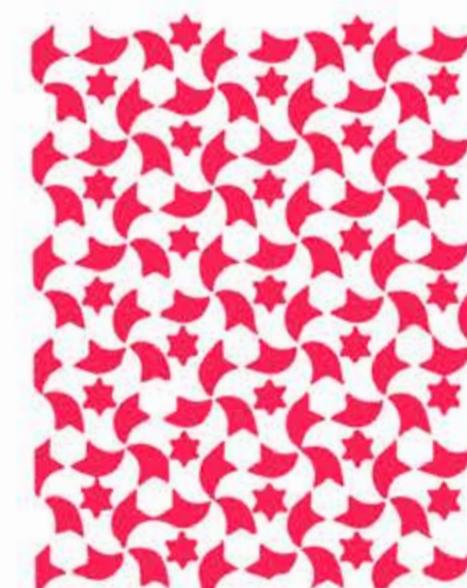
CELEBRITY AUTOGRAPHS



T-SHIRTS WITH SLOGANS



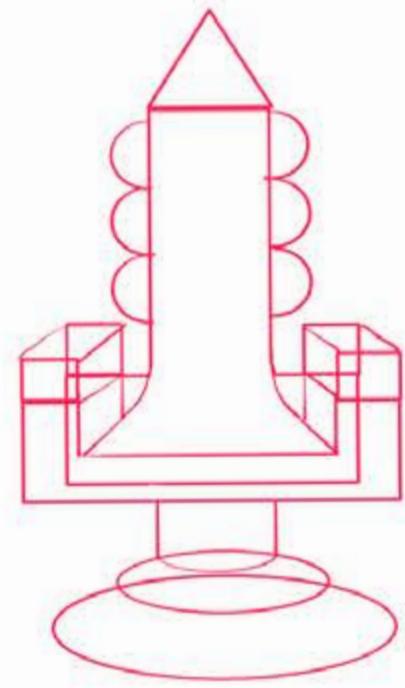
GARDEN ORNAMENTS



UNDERAPPRECIATED WALLPAPERS



PERFORMANCE ART PETS



WEIRD FURNITURE



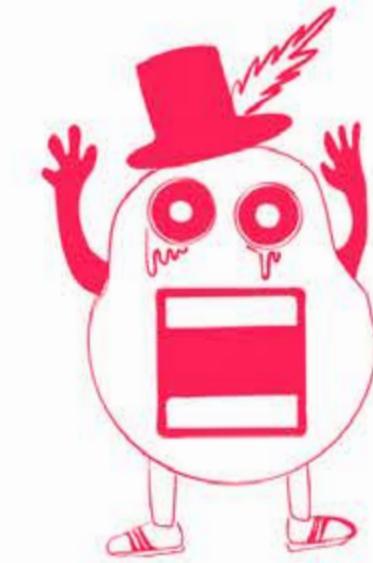
VIDEO MADE ON PHONE LOOPING ON YOUR TV



RARELY WORN HATS



NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS



SINISTER TOYS



If you are a reader of MIMAZINA from outside the Tees Valley send us a 'postcard' (in email form) about where you are. Share some interesting facts and photos from your home or describe what you've been up to recently.



Words and Images: Ruth Scott Blackson / Caption (above): People out on the streets of Philadelphia following Joe Biden's election victory in November 2020.

Hello from Philadelphia!!! It's winter now, cold dark January but today was a crisp, blue sky day. My family and I went for a walk in the woods, or to be more precise an old Quaker farm in New Jersey. It's a bit swampy but nobody goes for walks there so it's perfect for this current Covid life. In the spring and summer months, they have a small farm stand and sell fruit and vegetables, you just leave your money or Venmo payment and take your produce – a nice element of trust.

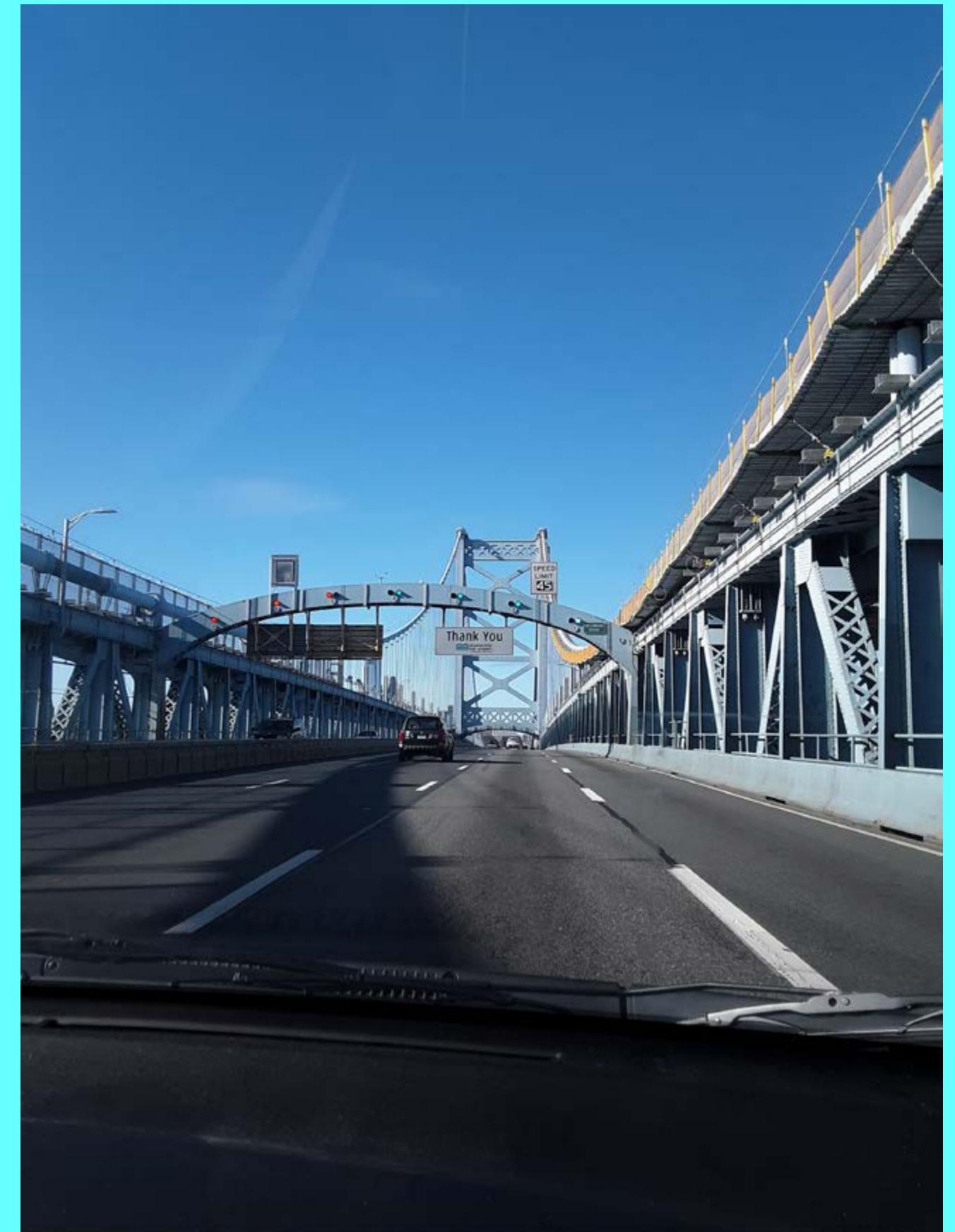
This year has been miserable but we've discovered parts of the land that we never knew existed. We often run into a turkey, deer, or beaver in this part of NJ. Thankfully all members of the family enjoy these trails. In New Jersey you can see the Philly landscape in the distance which is something quite special.

In some ways Philadelphia reminds me of the North East of England – so many bridges transporting us over a stretch of water. It only takes a few minutes to drive into NJ from South Philly (where I've lived for almost a decade – moving over from North East England in 2011). One mode of transportation I've found a love for here is cycling. The only other time I ventured out on a bike was when I was doing an artist residency in France back in 2009. It can sometimes be a white-knuckle ride with the traffic in the city, but it can also be exhilarating and truly blows the cobwebs away, even in the winter. More than any of those things is its efficiency – no chance of getting stuck in a traffic jam.

In early November I have a strong memory of such a ride. It was just after Biden/Harris had won the 2020 presidential election. I rode around on my bike up to City Hall, the feeling in the air on that magical (unseasonably warm) November day was electric. Cars honking, expressing sheer joy and a small ray of hope of things to come. Once I had ridden back to my house there was a smell in the air that I couldn't quite place but was so familiar. After a while I remembered that it was the same feeling that I could recall after my first daughter was born. Again, that was an unseasonably warm (April) day – but I like to tell myself that a new leadership in the White House conjures feelings of pure joy and relief all the way through to our senses. A lot of work to be done but a new beginning. I felt so proud in that moment of Philadelphia, and to live in this city!!!

Ok, I'll sign off for now. Eager for the spring to arrive...

Ruth





MAKE A DEN



hibERNATE

Hands, Space, Shut yer Face.

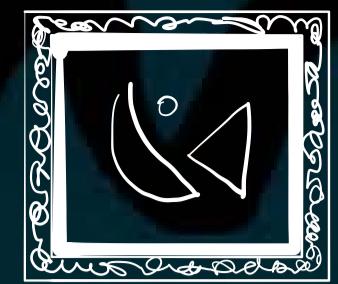
I'm rather bored with Brexit
They're letting no one in
Now mother can't engage a nanny
And I'm frightfully low on gin

I'm underwhelmed with voting
Stood in the ballot box row
Cast my X for a true blue Conservative
But the orange incumbent won't go

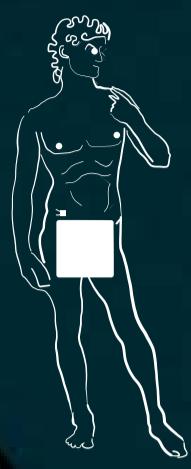
I'm sick and tired with Covid
They've taken it too far
Stuck clicking online shopping
Instead of propping up the bar

These rules and regulations
Are messing with one's head
I'm sick to death with Covid
Now damn it all, I'm dead

Mark Abel



OUR HOMES ARE A MUSEUM

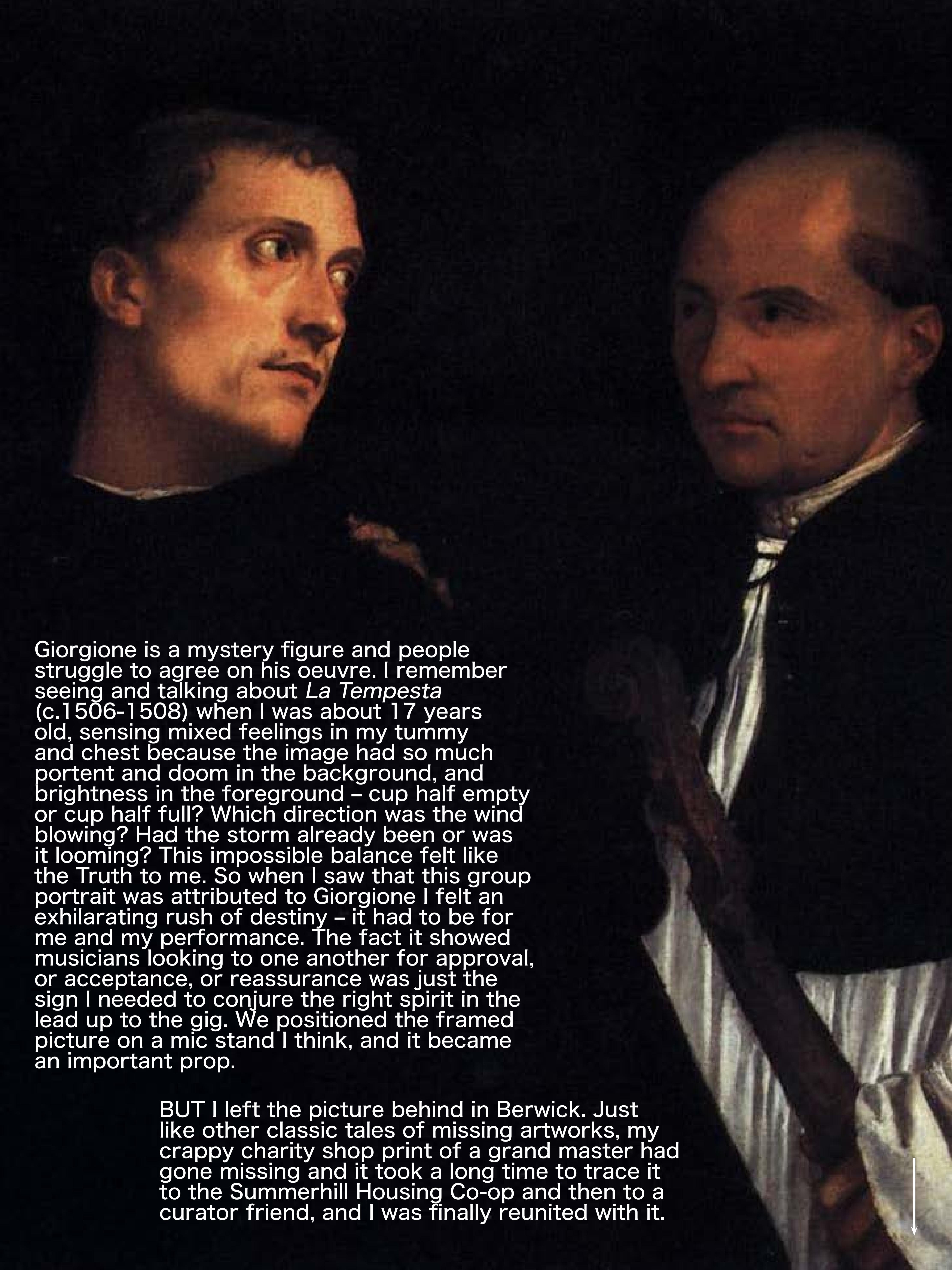


Words: Christo Wallers / Image: *Un Concerto di Musica*, attributed to Titian /
Credit: Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

A piece of art in my home that I like thinking about is a poor quality print of a Renaissance group portrait titled *Un Concerto di Musica*, relatively recently accepted as a work by Titian (but can they be sure?). I found this copy in a charity shop in Berwick, during the Berwick Film and Media Art Festival in 2015.

A band I am in – Zahnpasta Brothers – were shortly to play live in the Scout's pavilion in Berwick as part of the festival, and I was looking for a small talismanic object in the local charity shops to give me courage and to add into the performance. I spotted this picture in a frame and turning it over noticed its attribution to Giorgione, one of the first painters to make me feel that art had to be a bit out of the ordinary to be really special.

What object in your home would you add to these pages? It doesn't have to be a work of art, but it should be something of meaning to you. This month we hear from Christo Wallers.



Giorgione is a mystery figure and people struggle to agree on his oeuvre. I remember seeing and talking about *La Tempesta* (c.1506-1508) when I was about 17 years old, sensing mixed feelings in my tummy and chest because the image had so much portent and doom in the background, and brightness in the foreground – cup half empty or cup half full? Which direction was the wind blowing? Had the storm already been or was it looming? This impossible balance felt like the Truth to me. So when I saw that this group portrait was attributed to Giorgione I felt an exhilarating rush of destiny – it had to be for me and my performance. The fact it showed musicians looking to one another for approval, or acceptance, or reassurance was just the sign I needed to conjure the right spirit in the lead up to the gig. We positioned the framed picture on a mic stand I think, and it became an important prop.

BUT I left the picture behind in Berwick. Just like other classic tales of missing artworks, my crappy charity shop print of a grand master had gone missing and it took a long time to trace it to the Summerhill Housing Co-op and then to a curator friend, and I was finally reunited with it.



Image: The reproduction hanging on the stairs /
Credit: Christo Wallers

So it is a dim reproduction, it is probably not by my hero Giorgione, and it is not even a full colour copy. But this Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction has developed its own aura generated by the migration I mapped out above. It is about 30cmx25cm, in a glass-fronted frame with a cracked eggshell, cream-coloured rim and gilt beading. The attribution information on the back looks like a bit of card very badly cut out of a book, adhered with very old sellotape. It says '2331. FIRENZE - R. Galleria Pitti. Un Concerto di Musica - Giorgione.' Perhaps it was a page in a book that was removed and framed, plate number 2331. That would be a big book. It must be 40 years old or more.

It hangs on the way up the stairs in our home, and I catch the various gazes as I ascend or descend past it. I can't settle on a stable interpretation of any of the men's expressions. Is the young man on the left nervous and inexperienced or cocky? Is the keyboard player proud and self-assured or trying to communicate the poignancy and pathos of things best said through music? The bald guy on the right, maybe a master lutenist, is either agreeing with him or encouraging him on or perhaps even suggesting restraint? So many potential directions, confusing normal notions of masculinity. The bad print-quality of the reproduction adds a modicum of eye strain to the experience - I stare at it in case the copy might have improved somehow, bringing greater clarity of meaning. But it doesn't. A compelling concerto that never seems to end.



draw faces
on your
recycling



NATURE APPRECIATION SOCIETY

Tree

Silver Birch
Betula pendula

This photo by Arto Polus was
taken in Kerava, Finland, in a
hard-to-imagine minus
20 degrees.

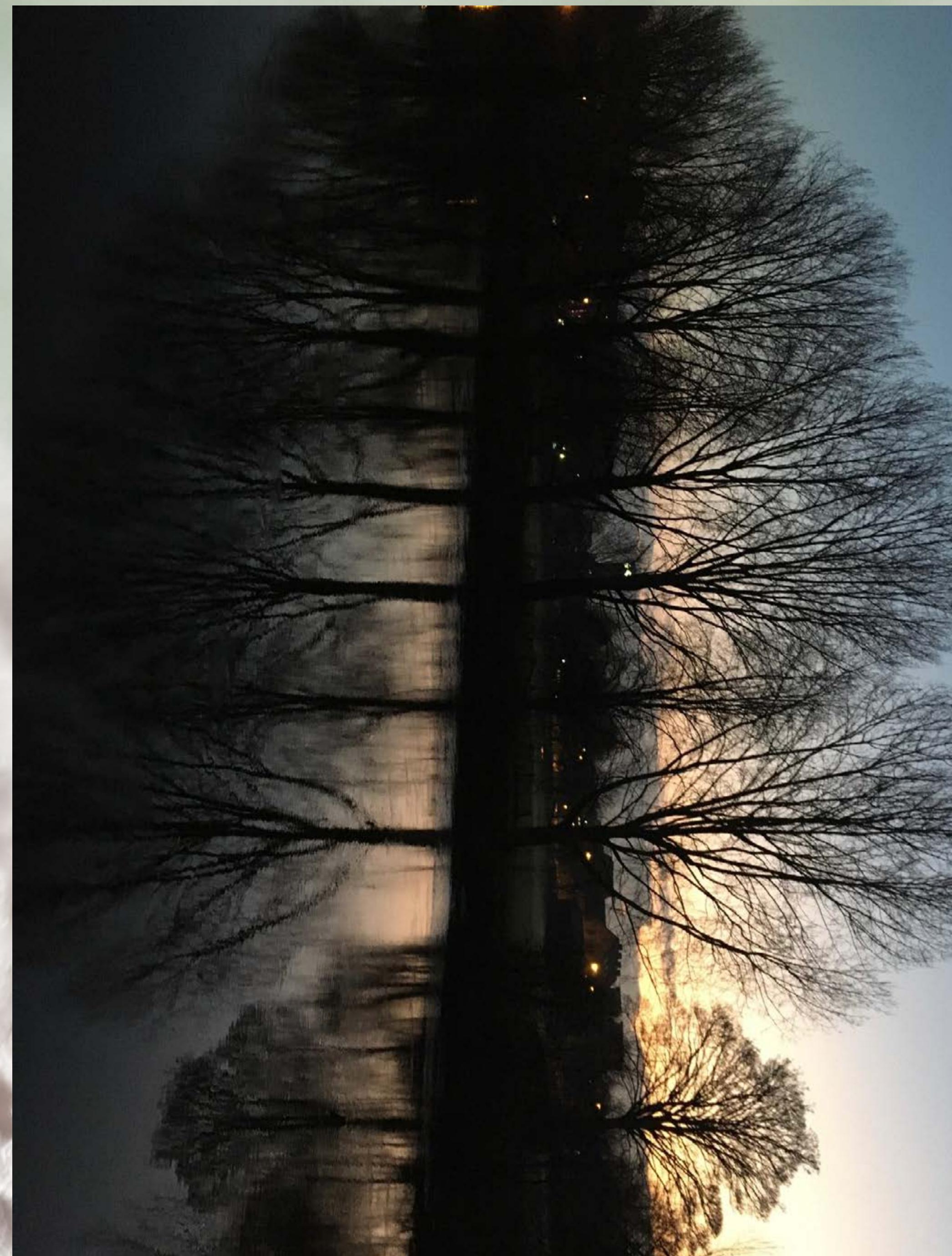
- Scenes from nature from the past month - for future
- issues, send your photos to info@foundationpress.org

Tree

1.

This photo by Susie Green was taken by her home in Shrewsbury. A lovely big tree lung.

1



Wild Flower

2. Common Gorse
Ulex europaeus

This photo is by Elaine Vizor. Some gorse will start flowering now and are an essential source of nectar for creatures at this time of year. Apparently you can use the flower petals in salads, as well as in teas and to flavour alcohol. It has a beautiful coconut smell, which somehow I had not really noticed until a few years ago. Gorse used to be used as fuel for baking as it burned so fiercely and was in fact a really important plant in our culture.

Apparently: 'When gorse is out of season, kissing is out of fashion'. An interesting article about gorse can be read [here](#).

2



Wild Flower

3. Welsh Poppy
Meconopsis cambrica

Native to South West England and Wales but generally all over as a garden escapee. It self seeds really easily and I have a few that grow in the crack between my front path and the wall. In the wild they don't flower until the summer but happily Chloe Briggs sent us this photo from her home in Paris where some magic must be happening.

3



Background image: Hoar frost on a bench.

Fungi

1. Wrinkled Coral *Clavulina rugosa*

Anne Vibeke Mou sent us this picture of what she thinks is a Wrinkled Coral, found in woodlands near Newburn.

Ice Patterns

2 & 3.

Emily Kitching sent us this picture of icy puddles, and Oscar holds ice from a park pond. Let's keep photographing the many different patterns that we find formed in ice and frost.

1



2



3





A survey by media watchdog Ofcom conducted in mid-2020 reported that the average UK citizen spent 40% of their waking hours in front of a screen.

The ministerial broadcast on May 10 (announcing the easing of lockdown measures) was the most watched piece of television from the past year.

Netflix estimated 64 million households watched *Tiger King* in April 2020.

TikTok's active monthly users increased to 800 million last year – with the average viewer using the app for nearly 1 hour each and every day.

In November, *Baby Shark Dance* (made by South Korean education company Pinkfong) exceeded 7 billion streams on YouTube.

It would seem we are all watching more and that trend is unlikely to change in early 2021. This workshop asks you to produce art made in response to things you have watched recently – using only non-screen based methods. Here are some examples of the games you could play:

1. Make some fan art celebrating something you have watched...
2. Produce a comic strip bringing different characters together in a multiverse of your own making...
3. Re-enact something using role-play...
4. Interpret using food...
5. Make posters sharing quotes...
6. Make hand-drawn art that curates playlists of content...
7. Write a nice letter to an inspiring figure of your choosing...
8. Compose musical versions of things that were not originally musical...
9. Verbally (or in writing) describe something you have watched, from memory...
10. Imagine your life as a fly on the wall documentary...

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

- This month Helen Welford interviews Navigator North, a Tees Valley based, artist led visual arts organisation.

Established in 2010, Navigator North is directed by arts professional and curator, James Lowther and artists Vicky Holbrough and Nicola Golightly. Together they initiate activities to raise the profile of artists and creative practice in the North East, inspiring visual artists and creative communities to thrive.

Can you describe the work that you do?

We provide space and opportunities for artists and the creative community to develop creative practice and engage with visual arts. This includes studio space, which we currently offer across four sites in the Tees Valley (three in Middlesbrough and one in Stockton) and ongoing programmes which include artist bursaries, commissions, exhibitions, events and residencies in alternative spaces.

What inspires and motivates you?

We are inspired by what is around us; the artists we work with, the communities who respond to and help shape where we live and our cultural heritage. Motivation comes from being an artist-led organisation and the challenges we face together as part of the creative sector and how we can work to be part of opportunities to support each other.

What are you reading/listening to/watching at the moment?

Trying to not listen to or watch the news too much, but still keeping an eye/ear on developments as they happen. The radio tends to be on BBC 6 Music most of the time – Sunday listening is especially good. Enjoying the start of the new David Attenborough series *A Perfect Planet* too. Mainly reading funding guidelines!



'Motivation comes from being an artist-led organisation'



Who is an important voice for you right now?

The voices that we are listening to most are those of the artists we work with and our studio holders – keeping in touch and supporting each other at this time is really important to us. We also have some great relationships with partners and are finding that the collaborative conversations we are having are really supportive, productive and creatively inspiring which helps to keep us going.

If you could share one idea, thought or message, what would it be?

We hear from and see first-hand how artists are struggling at this time with many not able to find sustainable and well-planned support which they are able to access. There needs to be more done to recognise the role and value of artists in society.

What's great about the Tees Valley?

In the words of Dorothy, 'There's no place like home'.



NOTES

Image: Hynes Photography

**Learn more about
Navigator North:**
[website](#)
[twitter](#)
[instagram](#)

PUP

PAN

AN

PAL



BORO KIDS PLAYING OUT!



Words: Carol Johns / Image: Courtesy of Carol Johns

I was born in Middlesbrough Maternity Home on December 12 1943 – a war baby. My father Sidney Darby was away with his regiment, The Royal Artillery so mam, Catherine Darby was on her own. Dad was discharged in 1945 at the end of the war and we continued to live in King Edwards Road in the centre of town. Mam was at home with me and Dad was working as a wages clerk 'over the border' at J and R Ritchie, the iron and steel works, going on his bike daily. I progressed to Victoria Road mixed infants school at 5 years old and was then deemed old enough to play out!

I could not wait to get out to play! I had to take my 'good' clothes off and put last year's (now well grown out of!) clothes on. Shoes were exchanged for last year's sandals which Dad had skilfully cut the toes out of with a razor blade.

Luckily there were quite a few children around to play with although many of them went to St Richards and some to Fleetham Street schools. It did not make any difference until I watched the Corpus Christi Procession one summer and became really envious of the girls processing in lovely white dresses and veils! In spite of much whining I was told firmly that we were Methodists, which I should have known as Sunday School was inevitable on Sundays!

Games were seasonal, and there was a season for allies (marbles). My collection was hard won in lots of games of 'molly hole'. The aim was to get your ally into the cracks or holes in the pavements, knocking others out of the way if necessary. To this day if I am in a shop selling marbles I am still tempted to buy big sixers or blood allies when I see them.

Allies was replaced by 'twoey ball', a game played against any useful flat wall and requiring you to get some ball handling skills. It was played to various songs – 'Follow the red polony man' is one I remember. Does anyone remember 'Over, skyball, drop'?

Handstands followed or preceded, I can't remember which, when rows of small girls and the occasional small boy were upside down against a flat wall. Coats were folded under your heads to prevent brain damage if your little arms gave way. Dresses were tucked modestly into pants, navy or green usually.

Sitting on doorsteps having dolls tea parties was good fun but only for very small girls!

We were lucky enough to have a street lamp in our road which had a kind of a cross bar at the top from which a 'tarzy' rope could be affixed by a big boy/girl. This was really good fun for swinging round, although it was also painful as you banged into the cast iron lamp post!

Collecting car numbers was also a good game, quite popular although I have no idea why! Constantine College was just around the corner and lots of students parked on King Edwards Road or Temple St and Eldon St – the limits of my play area. I expect I collected a lot of the same numbers every day.

To round off a really good day's play a treat was to beg money from Mams and go to the sweet shop at the top of Temple Street for a toffee dab or some lemon crystals (Kali) or a lolly.

Mams were out on the doorsteps at bed time looking for their grubby offspring (only town kids collect that particular level of dirt). If they got talking we could squeeze in another ten minutes of play before being dragged in for a good 'possing' (wash) and the big kids claimed the streets again.

The Middlesbrough Collection, held at MIMA, encompasses 2,250 works from 1870 to 2020, made by local and international artists. The Tees Valley's art historical depository, it holds many voices and stories, intertwining various media, styles, periods, and subjects. Each month we select artworks to share.



COLLECTION REFLECTION

Group Show #7 *Portraits*

Works gathered together by Olivia Heron.

This month's Collection Reflection Group Show brings together three portraits from the Middlesbrough Collection. They offer a snapshot of the varied approaches artists have taken to convey and relate to individual experience.

Gwen John's delicate drawing looks intently at a young woman, inquiring into her individuality and emotion. Käthe Kollwitz was an artist and activist who used portraiture to draw attention to the pain and suffering of ordinary people as a result of conflict and poverty. John Akomfrah builds a cinematic narrative around two portraits by Renaissance artist Albrecht Dürer of an unnamed African man and woman, reimagining their lives.

Peripeteia (2012)

John Akomfrah

Ghana, 1957; lives and works in London

Single channel HD colour video, sound, 17 minutes 28 seconds

Presented by the Contemporary Art Society through the Collections Fund at Frieze, 2016



In *Peripeteia*, a man and a woman traverse a brooding moorland landscape that is alive with the energy and activity of the natural elements. Akomfrah splices the moving images with archival photographs that hint at their interior lives and memories.

Words by Helen Welford
Image: Courtesy Smoking Dogs Films and Lisson Gallery ©John Akomfrah

The figures are imagined from two drawings by sixteenth century artist Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528) entitled *Head of a Negro*, 1508 and *Portrait of the Moorish Woman Katharina*, 1520. They are two of the earliest Western representations of black people. Also inserted into the film are fragments from Hieronymus Bosch's painting *The Garden of Earthly Delights* (1490-1510). These sections highlight black people depicted in this work that Bosch likely modelled from his every day.

Peripeteia's lone figures represent the countless people throughout the African Diaspora displaced and marginalised through the Transatlantic slave trade and subjugated in their homelands by European imperialist powers between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries. Set in a contemporary landscape, Akomfrah merges past and present to indicate the legacy of this past trauma. *Peripeteia* means 'turning point' and this film may be considered as an act of reclaiming as Akomfrah scripts an imagined biography for the forgotten sitters.

Worker Woman with Sleeping Child (1927)

Käthe Kollwitz

East Prussia (now Russia) 1867; d. 1945, Germany

Lithograph on paper

Presented by the Oberbürgermeister of Oberhausen, Germany, 1964



Words: Carly Rybak / Image: MIMA

This image, a lithograph of a woman cradling her child appears to be Käthe Kollwitz herself, as she bravely depicts her experience as a mother dealing with the loss of her child. It feels disconnected and unsettling as she addresses her own sorrow.

Her youngest son Peter died on the battlefield during World War One and following this Kollwitz produced prints with the reoccurring theme of a mother protecting her children and a mother with her dead child.

In 1920 she became the first woman to be elected a member of the Prussian Academy of Arts, an honour that included an income, studio and full professorship.

She used this platform to create work that raised awareness of the suffering that war created, along with poverty and unemployment, responding to political issues of the day. Posters and pamphlets of her work were made, helping to spread her message. The text on one read, 'Do not teach the children to glorify the war and war heroes; Teach them to despise the war.' In 1933, the Nazis forced Kollwitz to leave her job and her work was removed from museums in Germany.

Portrait of a Young Woman (c.1910)

Gwen John

Wales, 1876-1939

Graphite and ink on paper

Purchased with assistance from the Eugene Cremetti Fund and The Art Fund, 1986

Gwen John was a Welsh-born artist who, during her lifetime, was largely overshadowed by her younger brother the artist Augustus John. However, her work has gained popularity in recent years and she is largely considered to have been one of the most talented artists of her time.

This intriguing ink study is typical of her style: muted tones, sensitive marks, emotive and melancholic facial expression.

What strikes me the most about this drawing is the delicate attention to detail of the face. Gwen clearly wanted to observe and portray what makes this woman recognisable. All other details are, in comparison, fairly insignificant; the hairstyle is very loosely drawn and the clothes are merely a suggestion. Her face is what she was so intimately focused on.

She was known to have had very intense, possibly obsessive relationships with both male and female partners in her life. She had a turbulent love affair with Auguste Rodin, lasting over a decade. It is evident that women fascinated her: the majority of her portraits are of women. She strived to capture their likeness, independence and personality through her skilful drawing, subtle use of colours and careful attention to detail.



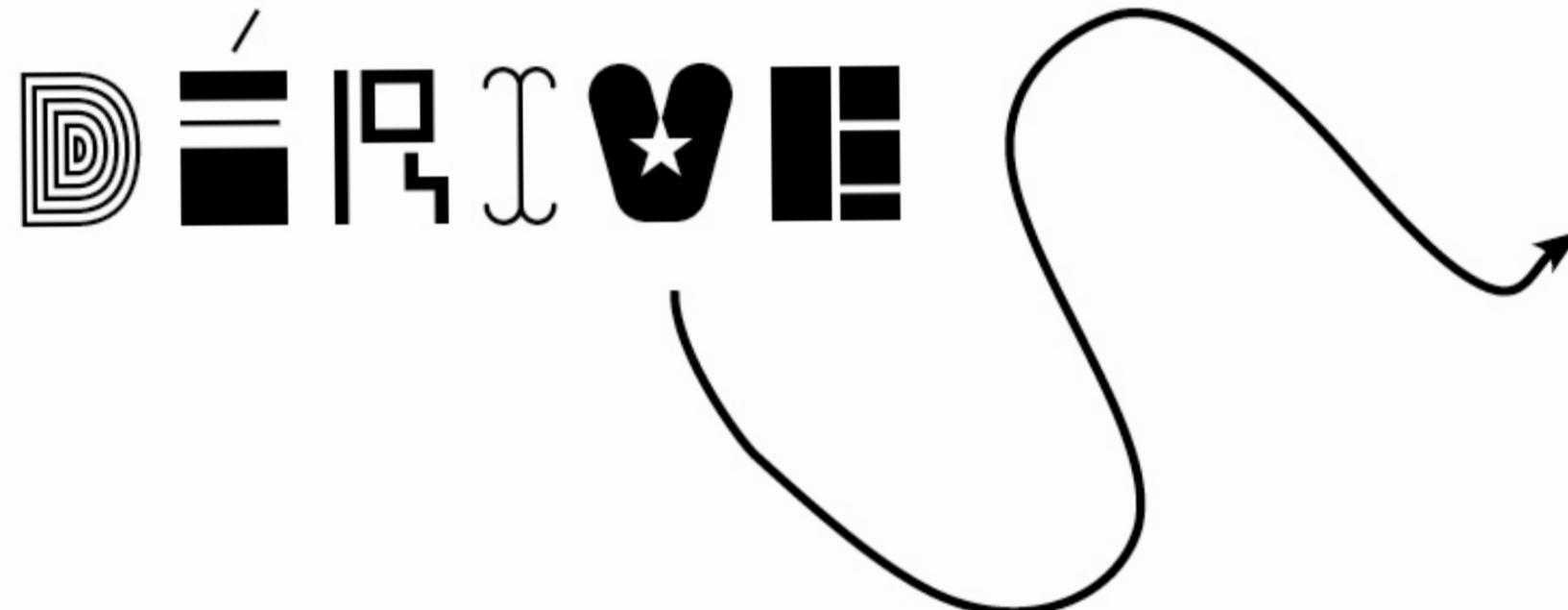
Words: Ruth Topping / Image: MIMA

STYLING BAY

A WORKSHOP BY FOUNDATION PRESS

- STYLE BAY is a tool for getting to know your neighbourhood better through looking at type that exists within it. This workshop can be followed by one person or more in any number of ways.

PART 1:



The dérive was a political tool, first described by artist Guy Debord and now heavily associated with the Situationist International Movement. It is an unplanned journey through a landscape, usually urban, in which participants drop their everyday relations and "let themselves be drawn by the attractions of the terrain and the encounters they find there" (Debord, G, 1956. *Theory of the Dérive*).

Take a meandering walk around an area you are interested in. Go as far as you can and try to investigate little explored areas. Use a camera to record interesting examples of signage, text and typography you see along the way. Be critical and selective, but aim to collect as many text 'specimens' as possible.

PART 2:



A.

B.

C.

I CHOOSE U

Aim: To study typographic forms in detail, applying hand drawn processes which encourage mistakes and a tactile analysis of shape.

1. Pick interesting looking letters from the signs/images you have collected.
2. Fill an A3 page with that character, working directly with either collage, drawing or painting.
3. Lay these A3 works out on a wall as a grid, experiment with what order they go in, with the aim of creating a visually dynamic composition.

LOCAL RAG

Aim: Propose new configurations of language, creating fictions using the subliminal content you experience in your everyday environment.

1. Write out all the words you collected from your walk. Cut them up and stick them onto a blank piece of paper – scatter them at random so they are not touching each other.
2. Take a pen and write a 'stream of consciousness' onto the paper – incorporating each word as you come across it on the page. Don't pause.
3. Finish once you've filled your page and incorporated each given word.

EFFECTIVE ADVERTISING MAKES PEOPLE REMEMBER YOUR NAME

Aim: Examine the structure, purpose and applications of advertising by undoing its ability to communicate clearly, stylishly and directly.

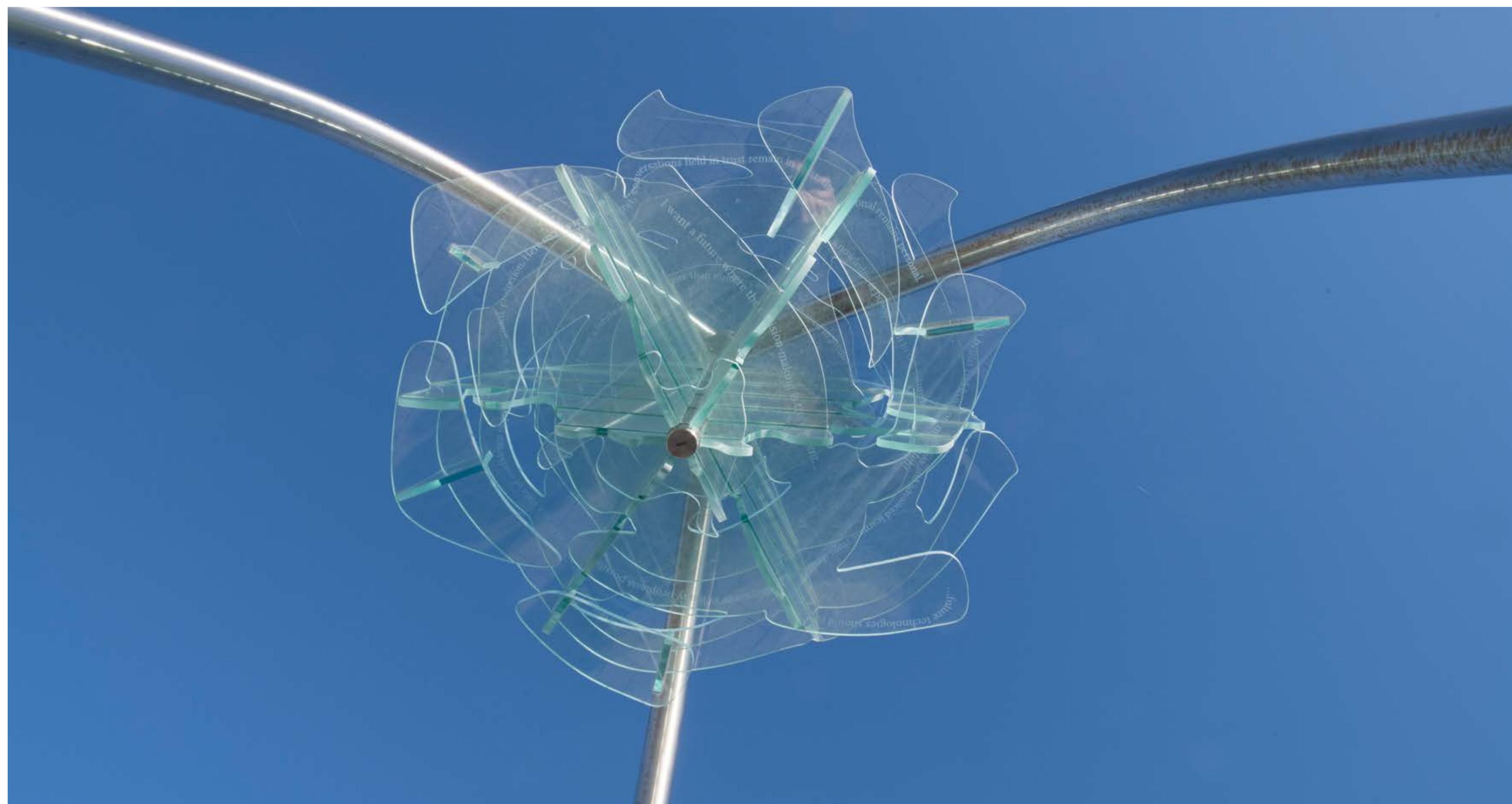
1. Draw out compositions using only elements and fragments of letters/signs you've seen on your dérive – lines, curves, serifs etc.
2. Create designs remixing and visually exploring these elements as patterns or experimental posters. The final results could be busy and complex, or minimal and carefully constructed. Importantly it should not promote any commercial ventures!
3. Take these samples further...

ARTWORK DIARY

David Lisser Sub Rosa project

CREDITS

Produced in collaboration with Molly, Tyler, Daniel, Lewis, Fiona, Ruben, Max C, Max F, Kadi-lee and Sophie at Linx Youth Project, Middlesbrough. Thank you to Ricky Tomlinson and Sara Mirsalehi at Linx, and Kath Curtis, Liz Byrne and Amy Forsyth at Cleveland Police. Commissioned by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cleveland, and MIMA, Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art.



Words: David Lisser / Olivia Heron

About the commission

In 2018 MIMA and Cleveland Police began working together to commission a series of public artworks for the Community Safety Hub at Hemlington, Middlesbrough.

Artist David Lisser worked with young people from Linx Youth Project to create a sculpture for the hub's peace garden. Linx runs open access youth clubs across Middlesbrough for young people aged between 10 and 19.

The process of developing the commission was supported by MIMA and in particular by Olivia Heron, Assistant Curator.

'I am an artist who makes sculptures and installations that explore our hopes and fears for tomorrow. By building future scenarios and then

reverse-engineering them, I identify possible pathways and trends, and unpick ethical concerns. Through my works I aim to provoke change now so that we don't stumble unwittingly and unprepared into a future we don't want.'

The sculpture I was invited to make will stand outside the Community Safety Hub for the projected lifespan of the building – which is 60 years. Naturally, I began to wonder, what might the world look like in 60 years' time?

I decided to use my 'future scenario' approach to help young people at Linx think critically about the pressures that the future may hold, and to imagine new tools and strategies that will help them prepare for and maybe change the future. The future doesn't just happen to us: we have the agency and the power to change the assumed course of events.'

January 2019

I began to visit Linx youth clubs in Middlesbrough to run workshops. We asked ourselves: What dangers or emergencies might we face in future, both individually, communally, and globally?

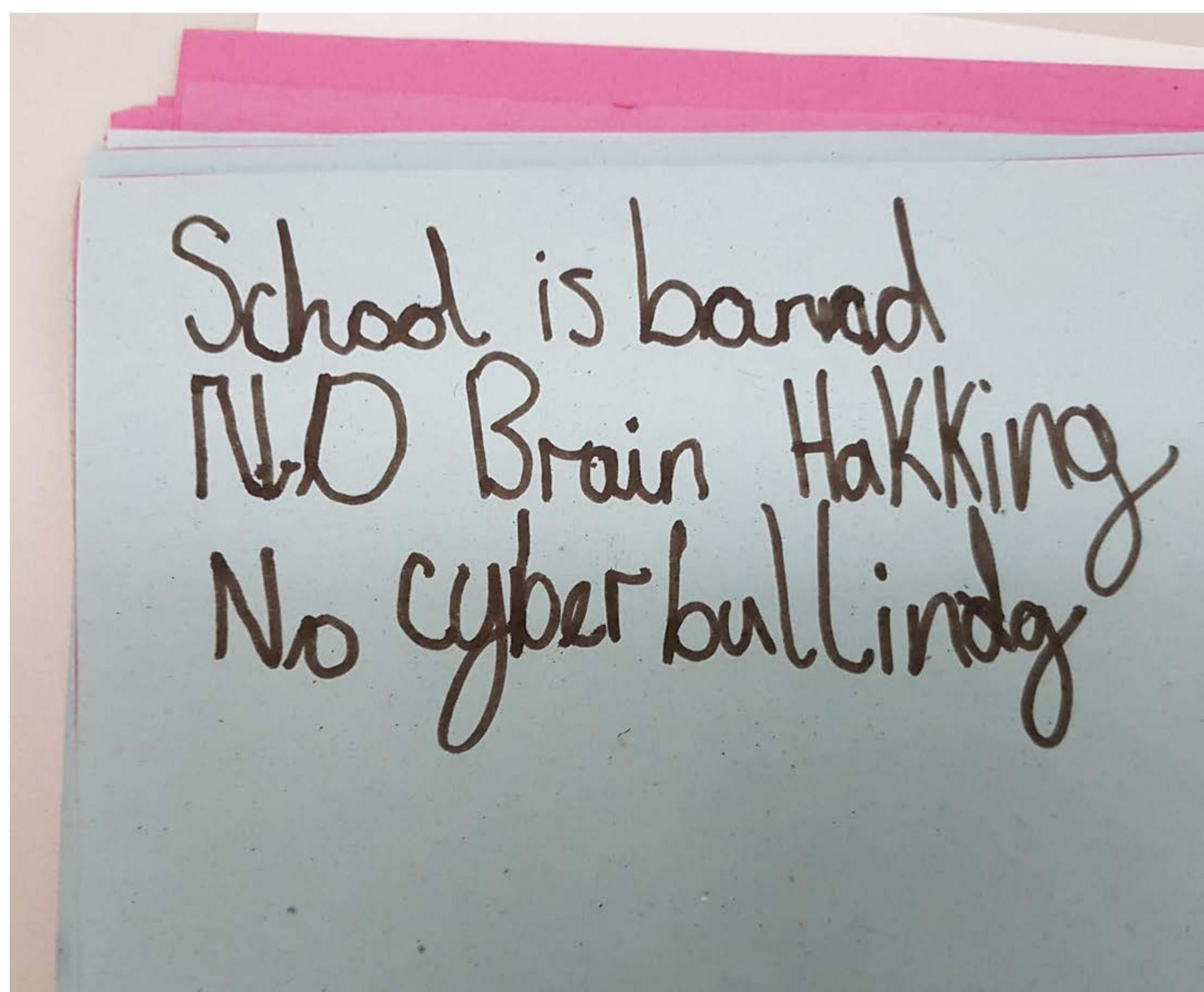
We imagined a range of future scenarios together, then began to problem solve. We worked together to suggest and create tools, kits, strategies, rules, laws, and systems that could help prepare for the future – or even change it entirely.

One workshop explored climate change and food insecurity. I brought some treats I'd made with insect protein to share and we tried out some creepy-crawly cooking, which prompted a rather mixed response!



NOTES

1-3: Cricket stir-fry.
4: Cricket brownies (left) and Mealworm flapjack (right)
/ Images: Courtesy of David Lisser.



February 2019

I joined a Linx residential trip, bringing three games focused on future thinking. We used prompt cards to conjure potential future scenarios together, then discussed if and why new laws might be needed, and who might make them. One scenario imagined digital learning implants in humans becoming a reality, which raised concerns around the right for one's own thoughts to remain private. The young people proposed new regulations to manage who has access to our bio-data, naming this the 'brain-hakking' law. Inspired by science-fiction writer Octavia Butler, we wrote letters to ourselves in ten years' time, and sealed them in plaster time capsules.

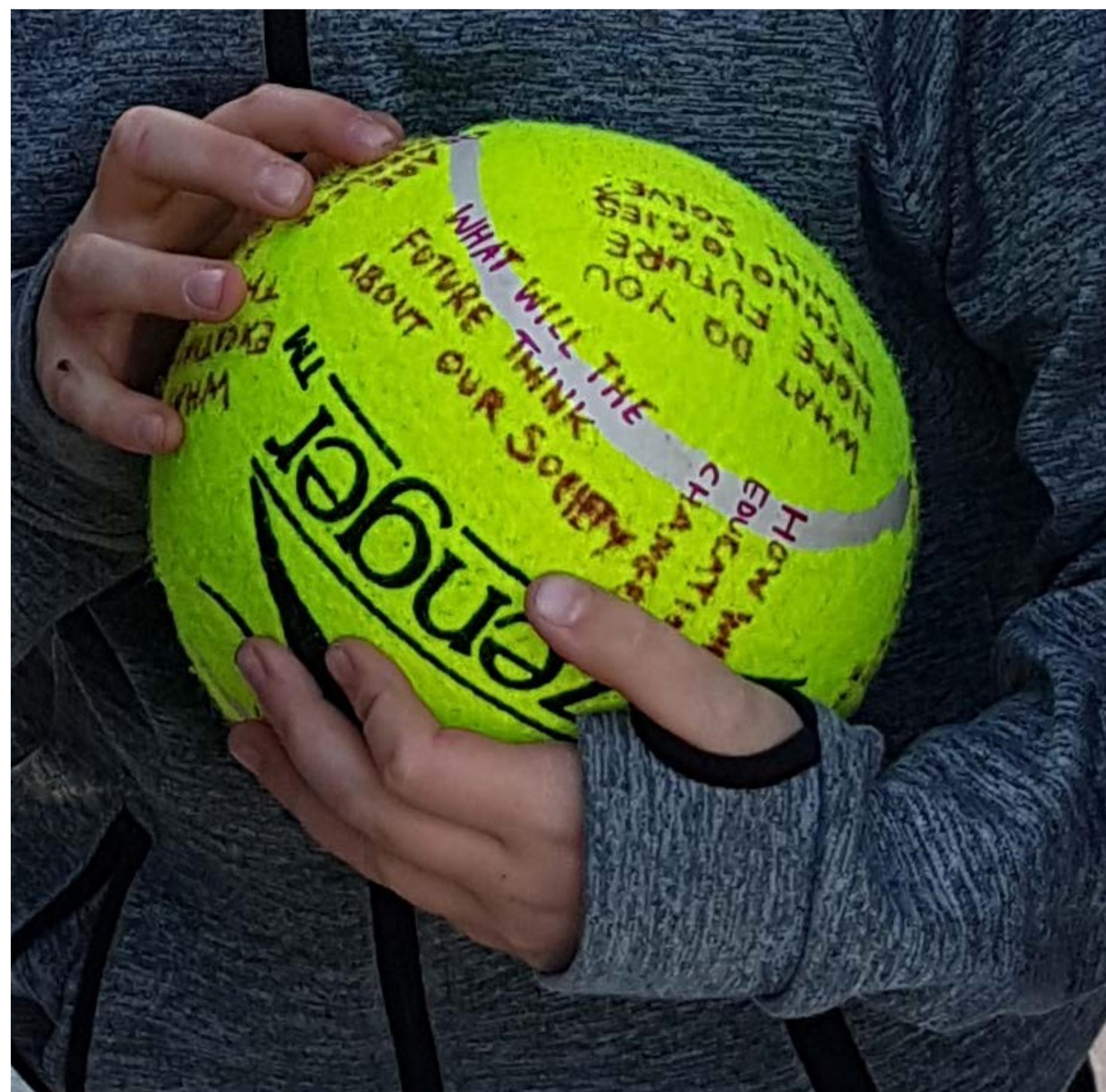
NOTES

Images: Courtesy of David Lisser.

March 2019

As the weather got a little better, we began to use the outdoor space at the Community Safety Hub to liven up our thinking sessions. In this game a giant tennis ball was covered in questions about the future – whenever you caught the ball, you had to answer the question nearest to your thumb. This quickfire activity garnered some surprisingly detailed future-scenarios.

In another game, the young people played jury to a number of statements about personal liberty and the future of privacy. Using the ideas they had come up with in February, I presented speculative scenarios about brain-enhancements which they had to pass judgement on.



July 2019

I presented my designs for the sculpture to the young people and explained the thinking behind the rose motif.



June 2019

I started to sketch ideas for the sculpture. During our discussions, Lewis suggested the idea that the sculpture should be transparent. The group discussed this and agreed, so I committed to using either glass or resin. Thinking about translating their ideas into a form however, was a little more complex. Eventually through my research, I came across the phrase 'sub rosa' - or 'under the rose', which denotes confidentiality. Historically, a rose hung from a ceiling symbolised privacy, and the protection of conversations shared underneath it. Given the young people's concerns about the future of privacy, I thought this would be a good motif to pursue.

NOTES
Images: Courtesy of David Lissner.

February 2020

In early February the Linx group visited the National Glass Centre in Sunderland to see how the sculpture would be made, watching demos of the waterjet cutter and sandblasting machine. They tested out the etching process and took home examples they'd made.

Later that month I spent a week at NGC making the sculpture. This involved cutting the elements on the waterjet, sandblasting the future phrases onto the glass face and then cleaning and polishing the edges. Then each piece was assembled around a stainless steel 'spine' and locked together like a large scale, three-dimensional jigsaw.



NOTES

Images: Young people from Linx Youth Group with David Lisser and Senior Youth Worker Ricky Tomlinson at the National Glass Centre, Sunderland / Image Top: Courtesy of Ricky Tomlinson / Image Bottom Left: Courtesy of Ian Watson / All other images courtesy of David Lisser.



March 2020

Groundworks were done in early March, ready for the installation of the glass rose in early April. Unfortunately Covid had other ideas, so we had to wait a few months before combining the two elements.

August 2020

Sub Rosa is complete!



NOTES

Images courtesy of Ian Watson /
Back Cover Image: David Lisser, *Sub Rosa* (2020).

ANYONE CAN BE IN MIMAZINA!

WE ARE LOOKING FOR WRITING, PHOTOS AND MORE:

BACK COVER

Propose a bold, eye-catching or meaningful image for our back cover. It could be a photograph, drawing, print, pattern...

OUR HOMES ARE A MUSEUM

Share an artwork from your home that you love or that has an interesting story behind it.

TEES VALLEY TREASURE

Suggest intriguing artefacts. We are interested in a real variety of things with a story to tell! They can be historical, more recent and better still, a bit left field.

FOLK STORIES

Tell us about someone you remember – perhaps mothers, grandparents, old friends. A page to remember and share descriptions of people past.

BASED ON A TRUE STORY?

Share your own stories and myths relating to the region. It could be an urban legend, folk story or a tale of the unexplained.

NATURE APPRECIATION SOCIETY

Share with us a photograph of a wildflower, tree, bird or vegetable that you've spotted this month. Collectively we will observe the changing of the seasons and miracles of nature.

GREETINGS FROM...

If you are a reader of MIMAZINA from outside the Tees Valley send us a 'postcard' (in email form) about where you are. Share some interesting facts about your home or describe what you've been up to recently.

POETRY CORNER

Send us a poem you have written, it can be about any subject of your choosing.

ONE-OFF ARTICLES OR STORIES

Share a short article on a subject of your choosing. We are especially interested in writing relating to the Tees Valley past, present and future, but whatever you want to publish – we would love to hear from you.

NOTES

- Content should be sent via email to info@foundationpress.org
- Please keep written contributions to less than 1000 words.
- Please only submit content that you would be happy for us to publish in MIMAZINA.
- We will try our best to share as much content as possible but cannot guarantee to publish all suggestions and content we receive.
- Content may be edited before publication.
- Content should be appropriate for audiences of all ages.
- If you would like advice or support with your article give us a shout!
- Issue #20 will be published Tuesday 23 February.

MIMAZINA #19

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See you next month!



David Lissner, *Sub Rosa* (2020). Courtesy of the artist.