

People
Powered:
Stories from
the River Tees
Special Issue

WATER

#32
Autumn 2023

MIMAZINA #32

People Powered: Stories from the River Tees Special

MIMAZINA is a community journal and online zine – sharing stories from across the North East of England, with a special interest in cultural activities surrounding MIMA in the Tees Valley.

This special issue of MIMAZINA explores behind the themes of the exhibition *People Powered: Stories from the River Tees* (22 Jul 2023 – 7 Jan 2024).

People Powered: Stories from the River Tees is a new exhibition in partnership with MIMA and the National Portrait Gallery. Alongside works from the National Portrait Gallery collection with connections to the city and the River Tees, the exhibition showcases a number of new commissions. These include works by local artists such as young people from the National Saturday Club in collaboration with artist Bobby Benjamin; pupils from St Mary's Catholic Primary School in collaboration with artist Diane Watson and a series of river portraits created with photographer and story catcher Gilmar Ribeiro. It also includes new works from The Club, a group of elders working with artists to produce new artworks for the MIMA Shop. Artists' work including; Nell Catchpole, Joanne Coates, Chris Davies, Foundation Press, Warren Harrison, Madelon Hooykaas & Elsa Stansfield is shown alongside works from the Middlesbrough Collection.

The exhibition is in partnership with the National Portrait Gallery and funded by The National Heritage Lottery Fund and Art Fund.

MIMAZINA #32

Part I: People Powered: Stories from the River Tees Special Issue

Folk Stories

Stella Smith shares the story of her grandfather James French's heroism

Listen Up

A Man Called Adam share a musical playlist of 10 tracks to get things going

Greetings From

Thomas shares a postcard from his farm near Cross Fell, where the Tees begins

Artist Q&A: Gilmar Ribeiro

Gilmar answers questions about his portraiture project set at the Tees Barrage

Things To Do: Listen and connect with nature (with Nell Catchpole)

Sound artist Nell invites us to explore the ways we can listen deeper

Cartoon

Watery worlds from MIMAZINA's in-house comic book artist Oscar

Artist Q&A: Diane Watson

Diane discusses her artwork made in collaboration with St. Mary's Catholic Primary School in Grangetown

People Powered Poetry

Poetry from Sara Dennis and Audrey Cook as part of Tees Women Poets residency

The Club

The Club shares their contributions to *People Powered: Stories from the River Tees*

Artist Q&A: Saturday Club

Saturday Art Club share thoughts on how they work and their piece *Trace, Gifts for Peg*

Things To Do: Big River Little Books (with Foundation Press)

How to make a pocket accordion book to record a walk along the river

Treasure from the archive

Debbie shares a superstitious book hidden within Teesside Archives by Tom Leonard

Part II: MIMA Editorial: News, Events, Features

What's On Guide

Details of exhibitions, events and podcasts happening now and coming up at MIMA

Going Underground: A trip to Boulby Underground Laboratory

A report from a subterranean visit with photos by Joanne Coates

Laura Wilson: Base Ingredients Launch

Documentation of the launch of Laura Wilson's artwork *Base Ingredients* in the MIMA Kitchen

Black History Month

Meet Vaina and view 23 inspiring stories to celebrate Black History Month

Meet the Maker: Claire A. Baker

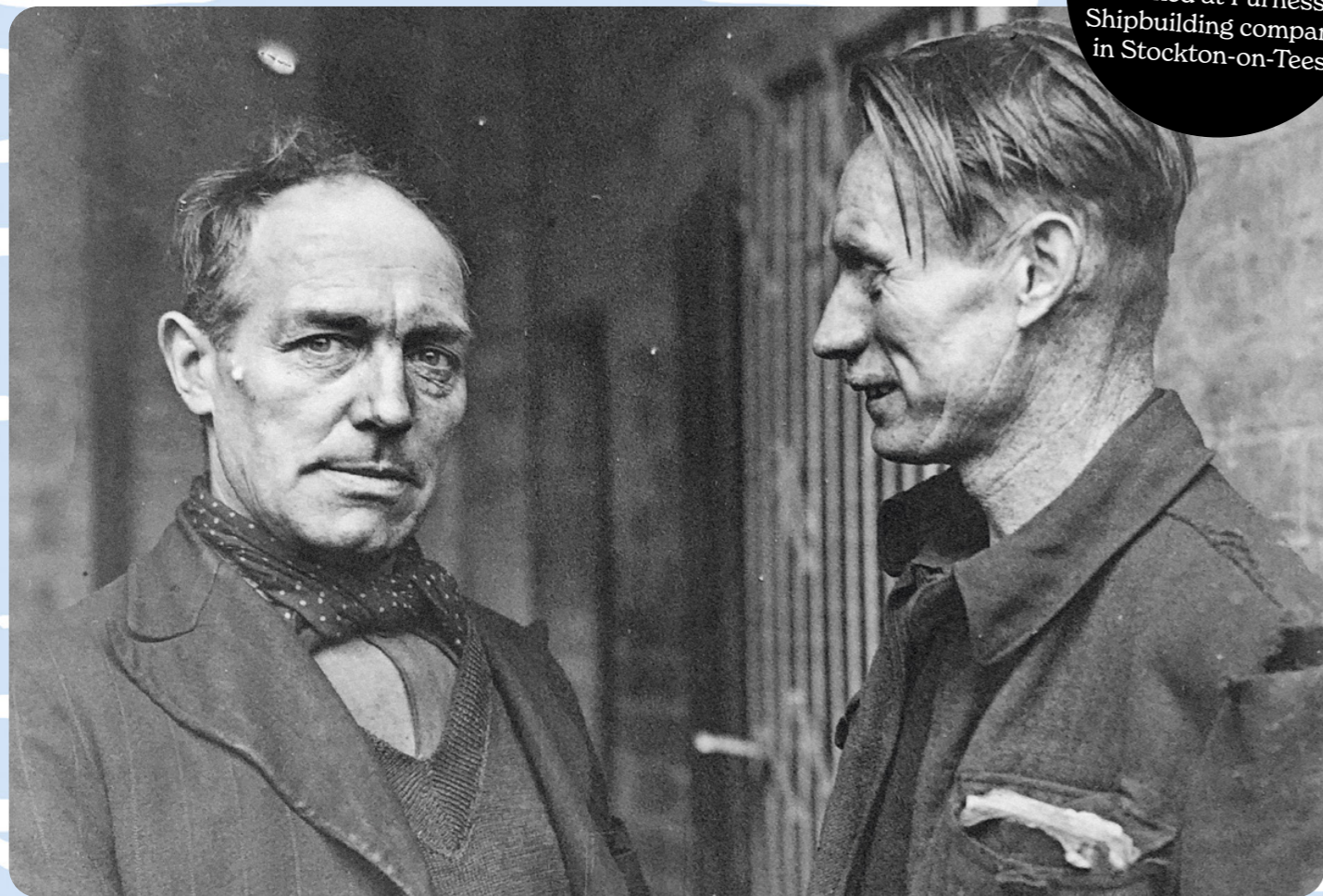
Learn more about Claire A. Baker's work which is available from MIMA's Shop

MIMAZINA archive and credits

Contribute content to a future issue or read one of the past editions...

FOLK STORIES

Stella Smith tells us about her Grandad James Cawthorne French who worked at Furness Shipbuilding company in Stockton-on-Tees.



My grandad died when I was 4 so I didn't really know him which was unfortunate, but my dad, used to relay the story quite a lot. He was my dad's dad; James Cawthorne French.

He lied about his age to get in the navy because he wanted to go and serve his country in the First World War. They didn't work out he was too young and he served the whole war.

He was a stoker and served with the future King George VI; Prince Albert, on HMS Collingwood and was at the Battle of Jutland¹.

I've got a map of the Battle of Jutland. It's like cloth and kept with all his navy things. I've got the ribbon from his hat, a book about signalling, it's so nice to have everything from his life. Everything together tells the story.

He had 5 boys and 3 girls, my dad, Ernest French - known as Ernie, was the youngest boy. My grandad started working in Furness Shipyard² as a riveter in 1920 and worked there until 1963.

He saved someone's life while he was working at Furness shipyards; a stage rigger called Arthur Mailen from Hartlepool. It was 1951 and my Nana kept all the articles. He got a letter from the King, and he got the British Empire medal. This picture (left) is from the North-Eastern Gazette, I've got this blown up and in a frame at home. I love it, I think the whole photo just says so much. He wasn't even very young, about 52, when it happened.

From a letter written by Arthur Mailen, whose life was saved, to their labour manager at the time:

'On Tuesday 29th May, I was working in the Engine Room of 432 ship³. I was stripping staging and whilst moving a plank it began to slip. I held onto the plank as long as I could and at the same time shouted a warning to men working at the bottom of the engine room. Eventually the plank got the better of me and fell down below taking me with it. I was very lucky after falling about 5' to get my arm round a single plank which was part of another staging. I managed to get my leg hooked round the plank and was clinging to the plank from the underneath side. Jim French who was working at the opposite side of the Engine room had noticed my predicament and immediately rushed to my assistance across one plank and proceeded to pull me...

... You will understand that the lifting alone required a superhuman effort and this was down at a height of almost 40' from the Engine room bottom. This, however, did not worry him. He did get me up safely and I have no hesitation in saying that I owe my life to the courage and immediate action of Jim French.'



Notes

¹The Battle of Jutland was the only major naval battle between the British and Germans in WW1 and happened off the Danish coast on 31 May - 1 June 1916.

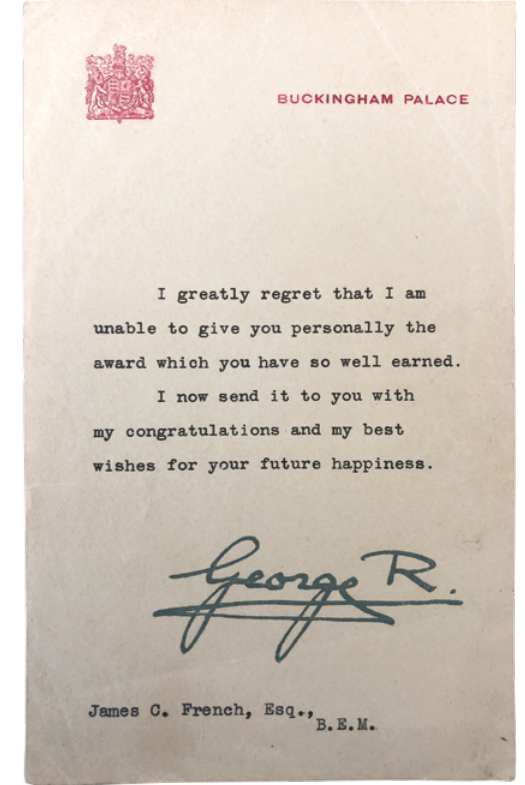
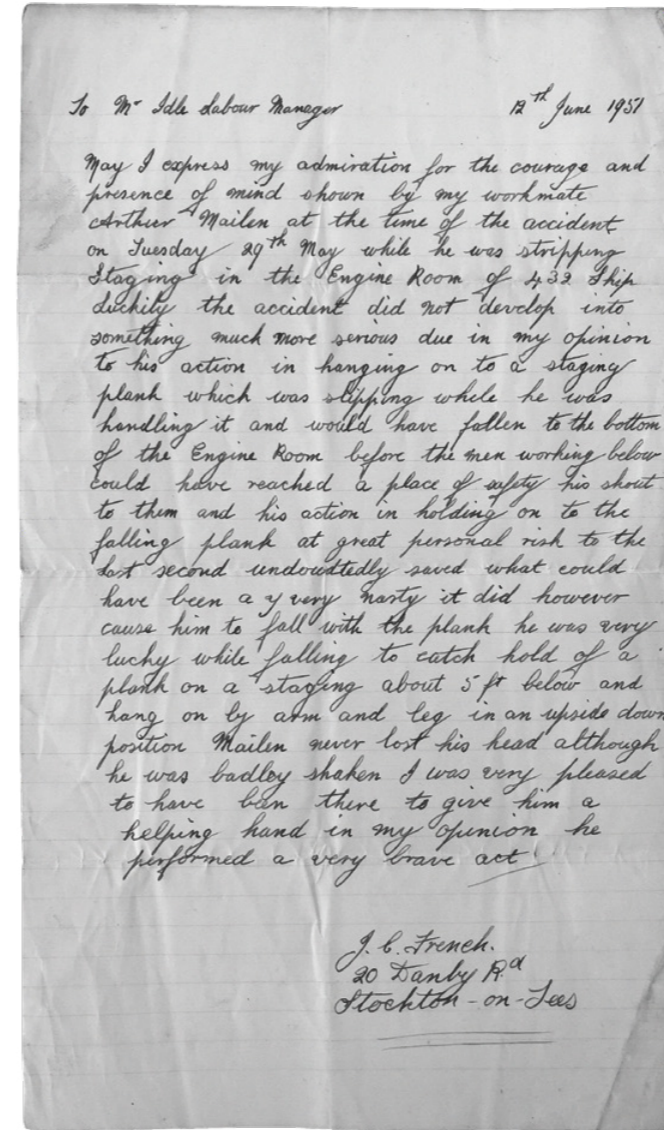
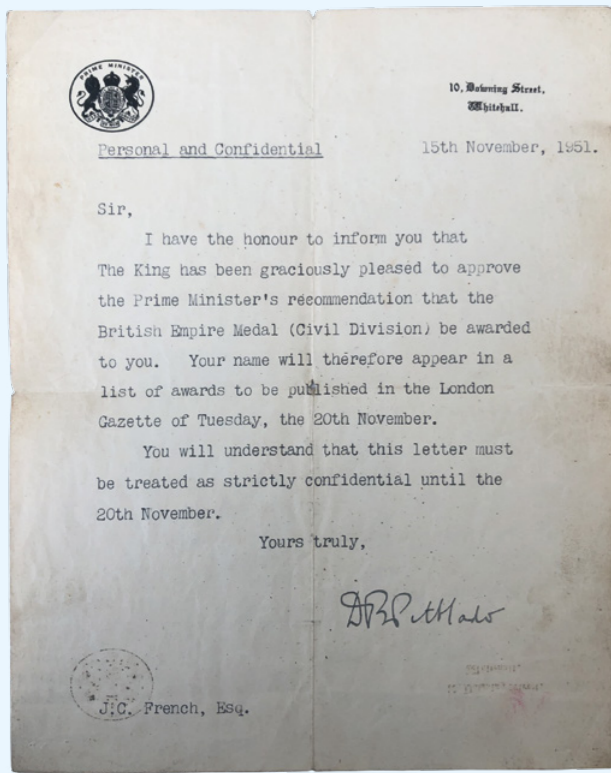
²Furness Shipyard was based at Haverton Hill, Stockton on Tees and ran between 1917 - 1979.

³Shipyard records at Teesside Archives tell us this ship was a tanker called Vanja and was made for Skibs Nordheim (Oslo).

Images

Opposite page: James Cawthorne French (left) and Arthur Mailen (right).

Left: Ship 432; Vanja.
Image: courtesy of Picture Stockton Archives, Stockton-on-Tees Libraries.



My grandad wasn't a very tall person but he was stocky and very, very strong and he grabbed the guy by one arm and pulled him up over his shoulder and walked backwards along the plank. As the plank was so narrow he didn't have space to turn around.

He was awarded the British Empire medal, but unfortunately the King was ill and couldn't give him the award himself in December 1951. We have this letter from him saying that. The letter from the King is not long before he died (6 February 1952). So that's possibly one of the last letters he wrote.

My grandad, nana and my uncle Tommy went to London for the award. They kept all the hotel bookings and everything; they stayed at the Imperial Hotel in Leicester Square.

He was awarded another medal by the newspaper the Daily Herald; the Order of

Industrial Heroism. He also got some kind of award off his workmates because we have his letter of thanks to them here:

"Fellow Workmen: I would like to thank you all for what you have done. As you know, I have received the British Empire Medal, and had a presentation from the firm but I appreciate this gift from my own mates, just as much. I did not expect all this fuss for what I did and I know that any riveter would have done the same if he had been there"

My dad used to tell people about it but as far as I know my grandad didn't used to talk about it much, he just did it.

He also pulled a kid out of the river Tees one day when he was walking to work. It was when they didn't have all the barriers and things round the river and a kid fell in. He jumped in, pulled the kid out, put them on the side and carried on walking to work dripping wet.

Images

Top left: Letter from 10 Downing street informing James that he would be awarded the British Empire Medal.

Top right: James and Arthur receiving awards at 10 Downing Street.

Opposite page, clockwise from top left:

Letter from James to the Labour Manager praising Arthur Mailen's Bravery in the incident.

Letter from King George VI shortly before he died.

A telegram sent from Whitley Bay to James from his sister Florrie.

A newspaper clipping noting a separate incident where James was also the hero, pulling a child out of the river who had fallen in.

James' British Empire Medal.

Notes

We would like to acknowledge Christine Corbett's help in creating this article.

Know more on this story? Let us know by emailing us at: info@foundationpress.org



Listen Up

A MAN CALLED ADAM

*Listen Up shares
playlists put together
by artists and musicians.
Following their curated vinyl
record collection, featuring
within People Powered:
Stories from the River Tees,
A Man Called Adam
select 10 tracks...*

Hi, my name's Sally Rodgers and me and my long-term collaborator Steve Jones are collectively known as A Man Called Adam. We're an electronic music duo and we've been releasing records since the late 80s. Back then when we started, our music was labelled Acid Jazz, then Acid House came along and we (by some strange serendipity) became associated with Ibiza and the Balearic House and Chill Out scenes. Later we made records on our own label, Other Records and still do, but we've also had releases on all kinds of cool labels including NY abstract Hip Hop and Chicago House imprints.

I was born and raised in Teesside, Steve is from Coventry, so we both know something about industrial towns and the mad energy that can bring to your creativity. During the pandemic Steve moved back to the UK after 15 years in Paris and I moved back to Teesside around 2018. The landscapes and people here inspired our new album and we're glad to be here, making and playing music and working on some really cool sound art commissions.

We never limit ourselves in terms of the genres of music we listen to for inspiration or that I play out, (I'm the DJ in this outfit), so the playlist here is wildly eclectic. Playlists often focus on a mood or a purpose for listening (chilling, or revising, or meditating etc) but this one is about 10 totally individual tracks and the mood that each envelops the listener in. From Math Jazz to Detroit Techno, swamp rock to funky reedits, the tracks are illustrative of the range of music I play, and that Steve and I listen to on our musical journey together. I think probably metal is the only one we don't really go for, but even with that we really enjoyed listening to the proto-metal Free and Bad Company records we'd picked for the Teesside Vinyl Collection this summer.

1. >>>

I Found A Peanut
Kid Congo & The Pink Monkey Birds

I was introduced to this artist recently (seeing him Live at The Cluny in Newcastle this month) and it really made me think about the concept of being a 'Muse'. Kid Congo was in The Cramps, The Bad Seeds, Gun Club. He seems to be one of those people who embody their creativity, in the way they look and the way they live. There's something so free and confident and stylish about some people, they inspire creativity in others and though I'm guessing here, I really feel Kid Congo must be one of those people.

2. >>>

Swing (In A Dream)
Squid

I love the dense, contrapuntal loops in this track, and the sharp, ascendant vocal melodies. And then at one point it just opens out in to a pure jazz interlude like someone opened a door and a fresh breeze blew through it. So original, I'd love to see them live.

3. >>>

Haiku Hands
Not About You

I don't know much about this Australian electronic trio, but the cool feminine energy just bashes you over the head. Smart, funny, infectious, "No more brick-wall, I'm brash, and f***ing good". Young women, having it exactly as they want it to be. I love that.

4. >>>

Hania Rani
Eden

Beautiful, minimal piano music. There's always a place in my heart for these contemplative, richly textured tones. It brings peace.

5. >>>

Changes (feat. Nick Briggs)
Bopperson & Bikbaye

Change comes. Sometimes it feels overwhelming but if we ride it out it always comes good in the end. Change is good.

6. >>>

No way
Breaking Point

We put a big punk playlist together for the event about M'Boro's legendary Rock Garden we did at MIMA this summer. This local band No Way sounded as good as any of the bands that played there and went on to be huge. One of No Way turned up at the event and talked about that incredible, creative time in Teesside. It was a joyful day.

7. >>>

Nebraska
Funkbraska

As a working DJ I'm always on the lookout for music that makes you want to move. This just has a gorgeous squelchy baseline and with Steve as a musical partner I'm obviously in love with the bendy fusion synths.

8. >>>

Versions of You
Maximo Park

To put a collection of Teesside-centric vinyl together we listened to all the best music we could find that had that local connection. Naturally we listened to a lot of Maximo Park albums (their output is prolific) and I grew to love the band and Paul Smith's lyricism. I find it deeply romantic and moving. There's sensitivity there that makes people into real fans. I'm one now.

9. >>>

Starlings
A Man Called Adam

Sorry to include one of our own tracks but this is about Teesside and is very much us, working together, lyrics, music, beats, feelings.

10. >>>

Robert Hood
Detroit

I played a set at one of the Industrial Coast labels' amazing A Monday Night in Middlesbrough events recently. Somehow this track from Techno pioneer Robert Hood sounded exactly right in the post-industrial dystopia that is Teesside. Techno changed the world and the artists on this scene might do the same. Watch that space...



Above: A Man Called Adam play records in their Sunday Sessions as part of *People Powered: Stories from the River Tees*.

Greetings From...

CROSS FELL



This time we're delighted to receive a postcard from Thomas' farm in Teesdale.

Greetings from upper Teesdale and the wider Cross Fell area where it's currently seasonally wet and very windy!

What an amazing place we call home, as anyone who visits this area will agree. The head waters of the rivers Tees, Tyne and Wear all seep out of these hills within a few miles of each other, in an area of England seemingly so remote that you'd be forgiven for thinking you were in the highlands of Scotland.



It's an area unlike much else in England with large amounts of land over 1500 feet in altitude and up to 2453 feet at the top of Burnhope seat and 2930 feet at the top of Cross Fell. No surprise I suppose when all three major rivers of the North East start here.

My family are farmers from the South Tyne valley with our own and neighbouring farms running into the Cross Fell area and Teesdale. We've been in this area as farmers for over 70 years now and for many generations in Weardale before that. During which my family have reared sheep and cattle from the land and made a life which isn't easy but beautifully simple at times and in an environment which would be the envy of many.

Farming is always challenging but in the uplands we are at the mercy of the weather perhaps to a greater extent than further away from this rugged landscape of heather moors and blanket bogs, albeit with some nice green pastures as the valleys cut away from the fells above.

We've witnessed many changes between our generations. Wild winters of the 1960's and 70's where fell hefted sheep were buried and found months later, sometimes alive, have been the stories of my father and grandfather which rang in the ears of my childhood and young working life. Now we're more likely to see a month's worth of rain in a day than a snowstorm lasting months.

We still get bad winter weather but it doesn't seem to last. The warmer winters are bringing their own challenges as bugs such as heather beetle seem to march along unhindered by the absent deep frosts, causing damage to the heather and turning the moor an unhealthy shade of grey. The long list of parasites which we as farmers spend our lives trying to keep away from our stock have longer active seasons and become increasingly hard to control.



Some would say however, that reducing winter from what seems like 6 months is no bad thing. It's a fantastic place for wildlife and the wading birds at least seem to like the earlier start to spring. Red shank, curlew, oyster catcher, and lapwing were all present in numbers this spring greater than at any other point in my memory. Sometimes all of the above can be found in the same field as many other more common species and sometimes alongside the elusive Black Grouse, which has maintained habitats in upper Teesdale and at Tynehead.

Bird life, I feel, is a great barometer of a healthy environment and we are lucky to be able to farm our land in a way that is profitable for us and which also helps create habitats for these bio diverse populations of birds. Farming along with the landscape is more important than ever in this climate and ecology stressed world and the extensive nature of upland farming is perfectly placed to sustain all that we love about the natural beauty of the uplands.

We are right next to the Moor House nature reserve and we are part of the greater Moor House Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) which means that the moors (or fells) are well documented for their flora. We've had a recent education in assessing bog mosses, bilberry, cloudberry and heathers to keep condition scores of the land and ensure that land use suits these diverse, carbon sinking machines and that the peat keeps getting deeper rather than the other way round. There is a staggering amount of carbon stored in the peat around Cross Fell and upper Teesdale. Hard to imagine an environment so inhospitable at times doing so much good for the environment but it's true. Come and visit, sit still and take it in.

Artist Q&A

GILMAR RIBEIRO

As part of this People Powered: Stories from the River Tees Special, Gilmar Ribeiro answers our questions about producing his work 'River Portraits', a series of photographic images captured at Navigation Lock, Tees Barrage.



Words: Gilmar Ribeiro. Image Left: Alessandra Ramos. Above: Install view River Portraits, courtesy of MIMA.



Can you describe some of the processes you use for finding people to photograph?

I like to have image fluidity with little process involved. Situations, people; they tend to find you and (most of the time) an instinctive process of documenting the moment starts to take place.

As a photographer, what is the relationship or exchange like with the people as you take their picture?

I like to think it is one of both mutual trust and respect. Without this, you might be seen as trespassing on their personal space.

What kind of direction do you give them or what is your approach to getting the photograph that best captures the subject?

The only direction I tend to give is trying to get the subject relaxed and as comfortable as possible. A 'pose-less' picture is what I am trying to achieve.

What drives you to photograph portraits? What does this mean to you and what do you want to put into the world?

Every human being is different from each other with their own unique characteristics; however, most people find some difficulty in standing in front of a professional photographer, so they hide their personality instinctively underneath layers. This means the image can come out

distorted. I try to find my way in and to help people feel more comfortable with themselves. Portraits of people - it's like time capsules. I am adding my contribution to this capsule.

Can you describe a memorable encounter as part of this project?

The whole project was a memorable experience. Encountering people from all walks of life and seeing how they experience the forces and energy the river provides on a daily basis. Watching the facial expressions of those who sail the river for the first time was an incredible moment for me.

What drew you to the Tees Barrage as a location for storytelling?

The Barrage is one of the landmarks of this area. A project of this nature couldn't ignore the gravitational pull it has on the daily lives of people, yet still a lot of people living around the area don't enjoy the benefits the river has to offer. The project itself was designed and created by MIMA, part of Teesside University. I only helped to document its flow.

What other photographers or portrait artists are you especially interested in?

The works of Sebastiao Salgado, Norman Watson, Anselm Adams, Edward Weston, Josef Sujei and early works of a Nadav Kander to mention few.

THINGS TO DO

Sound Artist
Nell Catchpole's
piece *Teesmouth*
(2023) features within the
exhibition *People Powered:
Stories from the River Tees*.
For this *Things To Do*,
Nell invites us into her
process....

Listen and connect with nature

with
Nell Catchpole

Taking a moment to be still and listen to our environment can make us feel more relaxed and remind us we're part of nature.

Sound Artist, Nell Catchpole, uses these processes in her own practice:

Deep Listening*

Being present in the moment, with heightened awareness of the unfolding soundscape.

* This phrase was coined by Pauline Oliveros and you can find lots of listening exercises in her book, *Deep Listening: A Composer's Practice*.

Connecting

Being in contact with the place you are in, and the materials there.

Sounding**

Sound-making with a material you find – your sonic presence amongst the sounds of the living beings here.

** This is how Nell describes her sound-making practice in the landscape which explores our relationship to the environment: becoming part of the sound of the landscape brings her 'back to earth' but also questions how we lose touch of the fact we are part of nature.

1. Step-by-step guide for listening and connecting:

A. Give yourself a 5-6min window of time to do this listening exercise.

B. Find a place you like to be outside. Choose somewhere you feel safe and comfortable to be still. (If this is difficult, you could sit or stand by an open window at home.) This process is just for you, the living beings and place you are in – there is no ‘right’ or ‘wrong’.

C. When you find your spot, give yourself a moment to get comfortable, notice where you are, then close your eyes. Take about a minute for each of the next steps.

D. Begin by listening to the most distant sounds you can hear – they might include a distant hum of machinery, faraway traffic, the sea... Let any thoughts or ‘internal monologue’ drift away. Focus on these distant sounds.

E. After a minute has passed, take your attention to sounds that are a little closer and more distinct... some voices, a car passing, or a dog barking. Stay with all these sounds for another minute, letting go of any opinions about them. Gradually bring your attention to even closer sounds – the ones within a few metres. Is the wind blowing through plants? Are there some quiet sounds you can only hear because they’re so close?

F. Then notice the sounds right around you and even inside your body – the air on your ears, your blood going round your body – you can (almost) hear your own heart beating! Stay with these sounds for another minute.

G. Finally, connect the sounds inside yourself with all the other sounds you have heard, near and far. Notice how, even though you are still, you are also part of this constant flow: of other living beings, the weather, and land. Take your time to be with the full spectrum of sounds. How does that feel?

If you're feeling adventurous or intrigued, you can continue to this 'sounding' exercise →

2. Step-by-step guide for “sounding” and making your own sound art:

A. Look nearby your listening spot from the first exercise and choose one material or object you feel drawn to: for example, a pebble, a piece of wood, some dry grass.

B. Use your chosen object/material to make a gentle continuous sound: on the ground, in the water, on a tree, or another nearby surface. You might scrape, circle, rub, tap. What do you notice or enjoy about the sound? Can you feel the vibration of the material as you move it? Does it have a ‘sweet spot’? Can you listen up close? Refine your “sounding” to a single, sustained sound/action.

C. Take a pause and return to your calm listening state from the first exercise. Deeply listen to the place you are in without making any sound. Then take some time to perform your “sounding”: Alternate between listening and sounding: instinctively start or stop in response to the sounds around you. You might do this process of listening then sounding, listening then sounding, for anything from 5mins or more. It can become quite mesmerising!

D. When you have finished, take a moment in your spot to notice how you feel and to acknowledge the place you are in. Leave your object/material in place, or bring it with you to remember.

E. MAKE THE EXPERIENCE LAST! If you have a phone and some headphones, you can use the audio recording function (eg “audio notes” or “voice memos”) to record this sounding exercise. Listen on headphones whilst you record, putting the phone close to the sounding object to get the detail of the sound. You will have your own piece of sound art that you can listen back to! It’s great to relax to when you can’t get yourself to a quiet spot in nature.

Nell Catchpole is an ecological sound artist. She collaborates with landscapes, found materials and living beings; listening and sound-making, often exploring different states of being.

She makes installations, performances, and participatory spaces for people to experience different ways of listening to the world. www.nellcatchpole.com

Notes



In September, Nell Catchpole led a public field trip to North Gare (the same site she recorded the sound for her piece, *Teesmouth* (2023), originally broadcast on BBC Radio 3 and currently on display in *People Powered: Stories from the River Tees* at MIMA. Participants connected with the environment through listening, sound-making and field recording to make their own responses to this extraordinary land and seascape.

Links to videos and sounds:

• You can watch a video documenting the field trip here:

<https://vimeo.com/873729281?share=copy#t=0>

• You are welcome also to listen to the participants' recordings from the field trip which can be found on Nell's Soundcloud page here:

https://soundcloud.com/user-762151082/sets/mima-field-trip-to-north-gare/s-ng-YH5Qlbzp3?si=33396cd70d664fa9922425c5a372dec2&utm_source=clipboard&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=social_sharing

Words: Nell Catchpole / Images and video: Rachel Deakin

Participants said:

'It's been one of the most imaginative and grounding experiences I've had.'

'It felt like I was hopping on the merry-go-round of sound that has always been there but I just wasn't tuned into it.'

'I got more power and energy from 'deep listening' and I forgot about all my troubles and issues and I became calm and peaceful.'

'I enjoyed hearing the noise of the seals...it was quite magical...the sound of the sea...the sound of the wind...people, dogs, the industry rumbling away in the distance.'

'I got into listening to the different materials and tried to get into the 'voices' of them.'

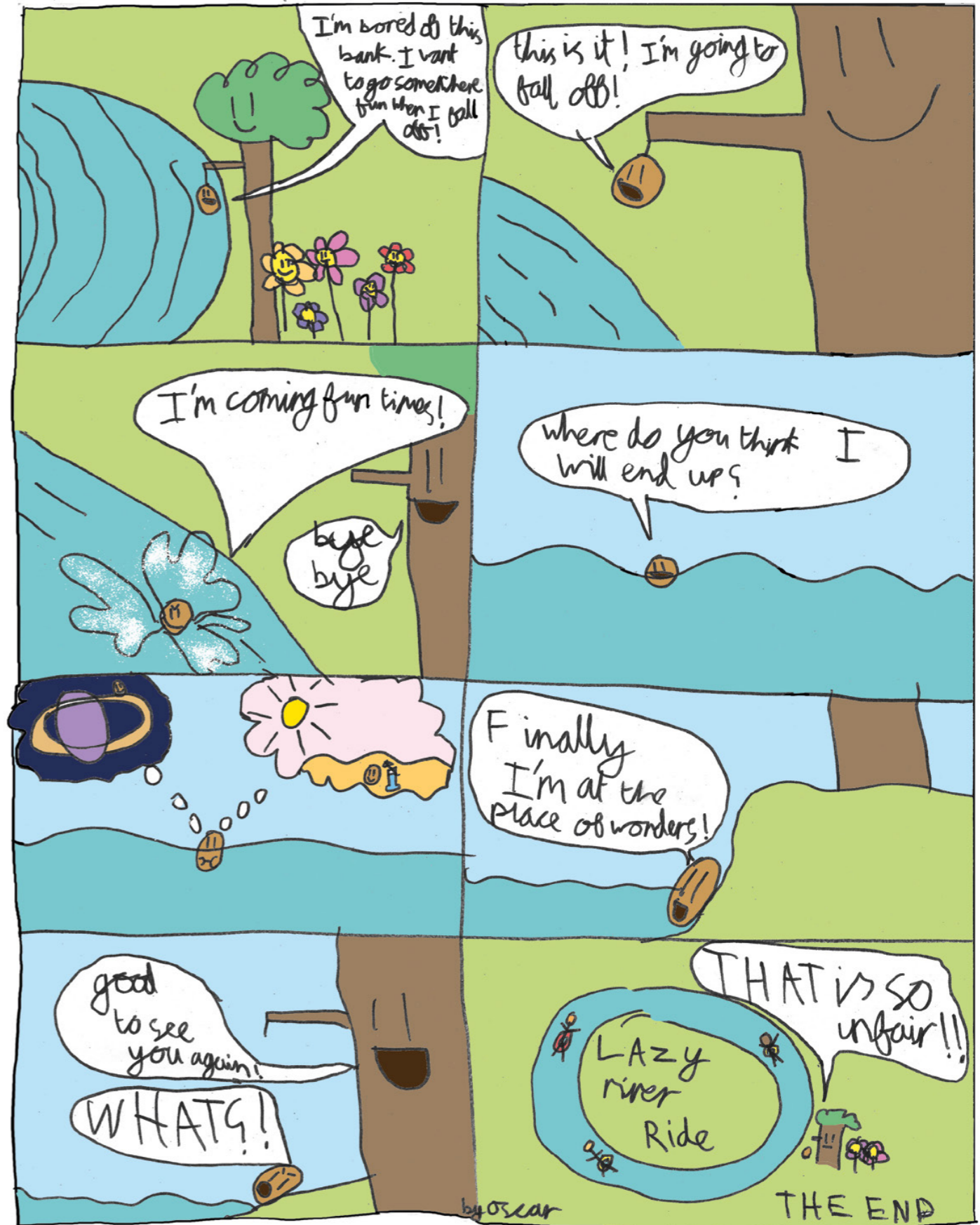
'I've really loved it...I love sound and I could imagine getting addicted! It made me tune into sound more...and it feels natural as a process.'

'It tunes into your own sense of self and place - we're part of it: we also leave our sounds.'

'It was a new experience and I faced different, new and unexpected sounds...it was really marvellous.'

'It shows you there is no place where nature ends and humans begin - we're all part of it!'

Nutty's Big adventure



Comic strip: Oscar Fleming

Artist Q&A

DIANE WATSON



Diane Watson answers our questions about producing the artwork 'Game Over', made in collaboration with children from St. Mary's Catholic Primary School in Grangetown.

Can you tell us about the process of working with your collaborators in the school? What did you do in your sessions together?

We looked at some of the objects I found on the beach, and I explained how some of them might have travelled down the River Tees and into the sea.

We talked about the river, how long it is, how many bridges there are and how important it is to wildlife, particularly birds.

I created three birds that are on the 'red list' of birds to show the children, the Lapwing, Herring Gull and the Skylark. Birds placed on the red list are species which have declined by more than 50% in the last 25 years. I wanted the children to understand why we were creating the work and how their drawings would be contributing to it.

After this introduction the children were asked to draw the birds, the river and some of the plants I had collected from my many walks along the Tees; these drawings were later used to create the wallpaper. We explored different media, scale and techniques so at the end of my time working with the children I had an abundance of imagery to work with.

What did you learn from the children and what do you hope they learnt from you?

The children were fascinated by the whole process, and were open and willing to try out different ways of drawing. Although initially some of them were not confident in their ability to draw birds, it only took some gentle encouragement to have them try something new. I very much wanted this to be a positive experience for all the children I worked with, and for them to feel ownership of the work. By laying down large rolls of paper on the floor



for them to draw on allowed the children to work together to create the work. I learnt to let them take the lead and by observing their reactions to the processes we used I then changed the media, scale, direction of the next tasks, thus they dictated the way the work progressed. I hope that they learnt from me the importance of observing their environment and taking care of it. I hope they learnt that being creative is something which can build confidence and imagination.

What did you find out about Elisabeth Frink and her art?

I admire her prints and drawings of birds and animals. The Gull which MIMA put into the school (above right) really helped the children to develop their own responses, and dictated the colour range which was used to create the final wallpaper design. I became aware also of her sculptural work which rejoices in the vitality of birds. She credited her love of wildlife with being brought up in the countryside, which is something we both have in common.

What landscapes or locations around the River Tees are especially important to you?

During the course of making the work for MIMA I visited many locations along the Tees, from Middlesbrough, with its industrial predominance over the river to Cow Green Reservoir near its source. It's a fascinating journey to follow a river as it winds its way to the sea, and I made many discoveries along the way but my favourite place is still the Tees estuary at North Gare. The estuary combines many factors, industry, wildlife and

a great place to find driftwood, the sky and the landscape change constantly and every visit brings something new.

Can you describe your process of collecting or looking for things in the landscape?

I mostly find things while out walking with my dog. I have developed a habit of looking down and wondering about the tide line in search of lost objects. I always have pockets full of sand and rubbish. I am both fascinated and appalled by what I find. I must have in excess of 30,000 plastic items stored in my shed, this includes 100s of gloves, dog balls, and dummies!

Working with others often brings up exciting unexpected ideas, what was this experience like for you as an artist?

Working with children is always unexpected and they will always produce drawings which delight and surprise. I wanted to give them as much creative freedom as possible to take the drawing and ideas where they wanted to go. They really enjoyed this freedom to work this way. As an artist working this way you have to go with the process and trust your instinct. I also discovered that although St. Marys is only about three miles from the River Tees, the children have little access to it from where they live. There's some access to it behind the football stadium, and when I asked the children about the river some of them did say that's where they thought it was. There is approximately 10 miles of river that runs through Middlesbrough. I was surprised at how little access there is to it though.

People Powered Poetry

Poetry from
Sara Dennis
and
Audrey Cook

Tees Women Poets are working with MIMA on an exciting three-year programme of commissions and performances which support the development of its members. Tees Women Poets is an intersectional, trans-inclusive feminist organisation which aims to create change for and by women of all ages in the Tees Valley. This summer, poets Sara Dennis and Audrey Cook were invited to produce new work in response to *People Powered: Stories from the River Tees*.

Phrasing The Tees

When it rains, it pours,
up the river
Where we gather.
Bless the weather
Could be better,
Well, whatever!
We have bigger fish to fry.

We can always
Cross that bridge
when we come to it.
All forty nine of them
If we so wish.
There is no rush
And no great need
We'll just go with the flow
And drift on the breeze...
We all are from elsewhere,
but we belong
by the Tees.

Incantation

There's a peatbog on top moor,
Where the sith na mòine
Dance rings around the sphagnum moss
Summoning goddesses
With their tippy tappy tiny toes
Thirteen little pixies
Each one with a cup raised
For Freya to fill:

a nice cup of Tees, please!

All good plans start this way.

They sip and they giggle
Spin old tales and riddles

Let's meet in the middle,
Nehellenia!

Oh!

Those impish little sprites!

They have conspired to birth a river!

Sara Dennis is a musician and writer from Teesside. Weaving together music, storytelling and poetry, Sara's live performance combines powerful 'a cappella' ballads, poetry and ukulele, guitar, and piano accompaniments. The poems on this page are inspired by conversations with visitors to the exhibition.

Riverscape

From a Pom-pom hill
Runs a fleecy meadow
Beads and buttons,
Bobbles of bubbles,
Peg's suds, tinted
With fairy washing,
All the colours of the rainbow...

*listen with your eyes...
listen with your eyes...*

Felt fish flutter by
all sequin scaled,
shiny leaves of steel
In red and blue and green...

paint everything you see...

The Grindylow
serpentine and twisted
Gog eyed, cruising
for woolly prey...

*beware...beware
of old Peg Powler!*

Yarns spin from the mouths of river folk,
firesides and elders,
clippy mats and granny squares,
the wool, unpicked from old pullovers,
strips, ripped from old rags,
fingers bloodied by hooks and needles
scarred by years of
making do and mending,
moving and blending,
meandering, bending,
Going with the flow
Of a new home.

*Hark, hark! the dogs do bark,
Beggars are coming to town.
Some in rags, some in jags,
And some in velvet gowns.*

The Quickening

Like broken veins on a ruddy cheek
Water creeps, soaks, seeps
Mizzle, drizzle, smirr and trickle
The cauldron spits, the fire fizzles...

The final piece of the fairies' puzzle.

With womb of Jörð and tears of Freya
And the mighty power of Nehalennia
Tapped, the barrel spills its liquor
And birthed a mighty Northern River.

The Awakening

The Helm Bar burst
flooding the bog
that made the river
that sprung from the sod
truculent rivulets
becks and sikes
unfurl their tentacles
through levees and dykes
her meandering gathering
a fair old pace
meets herself coming backwards
by the oxbow lake.
through Cauldron Snout,
and o'er High Force.
getting wider and deeper
setting her course
fast flowing rapids
interlocking spurs
V-shaped valleys
zig-zagging burrs,
zip toothed bedrock
Abrasion and attrition
hydraulic action
corrosion,
corruption.

On The River Bed, A Mirror Crack'd

Dirty rats and flat caps
Broken bottles, rust and rope
Babies' do-dees, babies' bones
Acid tarnished asthma tokes.
Yesterday, somebody wrote
'Clean me'
In Peg's filthy foam.

Tees '79

Slick and sick,
blue-black
like a grackle's back

a dead river
with a
filthy mouth

It needed
washing
out!

Tees '23

It's never a
good idea
To dredge up
the past.



What lives in the Tees?

What lives in the Tees?
Is it bees?

Is that where they keep all their honey?
And that's why the river looks murky?

What lives in the Tees?
Chimpanzees!

Took a break from their game of clambering trees
Followed a river from jungle to Boro
And they all have the names of Arsenal footballers.

My sister actually lives in the Tees
She's an infantile super spy mermaid you see!
She's shown brilliant skill to inherit her gills
She's evil and constantly watching me.

Are there treats in the Tees?
They could fill our bellies!
Look to critters in rivers to feed us fish fingers.
My brothers and sisters are hungry.

Come live in the Tees!
The river decrees!
There are dolphins and turtles and fish having parties
Dads local has closed and it's hurting his bones
I'll tell him and he should be pleased

Did I mention my favourite colour is green?
So the River Tees never looked spooky to me
I jumped in it once, met a family of frogs
Their hues were the limeyest slimeyest dream

As above so below really should mean
That the river is rotten and scary
Endeavour or you'll never find any treasure
There's more to these waters than trollies

Audrey Cook is a queer, non-binary theatre maker and community arts practitioner from Teesside, who works primarily with fantasy and folklore inspired storytelling and community driven stories. Their work is bizarre, anarchic, whimsical, and daft. These poems are inspired by young people and their stories from a series MIMA Family Art Trolley sessions.



**Clip Art Child:
A Greek Epic**

The clear shape of a child approached me
So clear that I mistook it as real, and not a
walking, talking, cartoon.

Two feet high, as tall as they are wide, it's a
dungarees and wellies party, with painted
on freckles and rosy cheeks.

If toddlers were in the army,
this was their General.

"Beware of the Goatman " it announces,
passing the one giant tooth in the centre
of its mouth.

A statement so out of pocket my knees buckle
And I say 'it' - not to be derogatory, but
because 'Clipart child' transcends gender
binaries. An omnipotent being that was sent
from hell to kill me.

The unhinged leader of the 'Cult of Cute'.

"The Goatman is mean, he lives in the Tees
Pinching children and grown-ups, he isn't
fussy

He's slick, creepy, crawly

Almost predatory

Not that I know what that means.

A hush falls

The air feels still

Yet its little propeller hat still spins
independently.

It unleashes the gummiest snottiest smile

Clip art child knows it has defeated me

One last quick lick of the rainbow lollipop the
size of its head, and off it goes into the night
atop its tricycle steed.

Ready for another day,

Of saying whatever the hell it wants.

Cringe

Go to bed tonight in the mind of a child
Open the tiny door at the end of their nose
and clamber in,

There's more room than you think.

Get yourself wrapped in that synapse
Nap in the neurons
Do the '~cerebellum melt~'.

Like a hotel bed, it's soft. Crisp clean sheets.
And you think to yourself that whilst you
do love your own bed, there's a joy in the
unfamiliarity of this one.
When was the last time you had so much room
to lie outstretched?
You didn't even notice your limbs
were so long!
Cartoonishly long!
All 'old-timey rubber hose' with
no elbows or knees!
All 'Jake the Dog'!
All 'Goofy Movie'!

My mam told me last week:
she doesn't see the world in cartoons anymore.
And it scared me.
Tonight, I will rest. I will remain still.
And squeeze the squishy bits of this brain that
hasn't yet learned what 'cringe' means.
I hope they never will.

THE CLUB



Some behind the scenes images of The Club's contributions to *People Powered: Stories from the River Tees*



Words: Claire Pounder
Image credits: Gilmar Ribeiro, Teesside University, Middlesbrough Council
Left: Install view of The Club's work in *People Powered: Stories from the River Tees*

The Club are a group of elders who meet weekly at MIMA and work in collaboration with artists, movers, shakers, agents of change, friends, creatives, experts and more to plan, produce and make original artwork for our exhibitions and products for the MIMA Shop. It is a free weekly session guided by a 'no label' approach. We have ditched ageist stereotypes and celebrate that age does not dictate our mindsets or performance.

For several months The Club worked on our exhibition *People Powered: Stories from the River Tees*, in partnership with The National Portrait Gallery. As a group they explored the river's landscape with its rich wildlife, hedgerows and woodlands. They imagined new species of wildlife and foliage that could withstand future environments.

Throughout this time The Club embarked on a boat trip adventure down the River Tees with Tees Wheelyboats, a volunteer organisation that provides accessible and safe boat trips on the River Tees. The group also visited Dobbie's Garden Centre to explore plants and greenery that live by the river as well as enjoying massive scones and cuppas in Dobbie's café.

The Club captured the energy and spirit of the river through the medium of fabric and wallpaper. As well as river phrases and expressions that celebrate memorable sayings associated with rivers and the sea.

As VIPs, The Club opened the exhibition with a never-done-before ribbon cutting ceremony to commemorate the special moment.

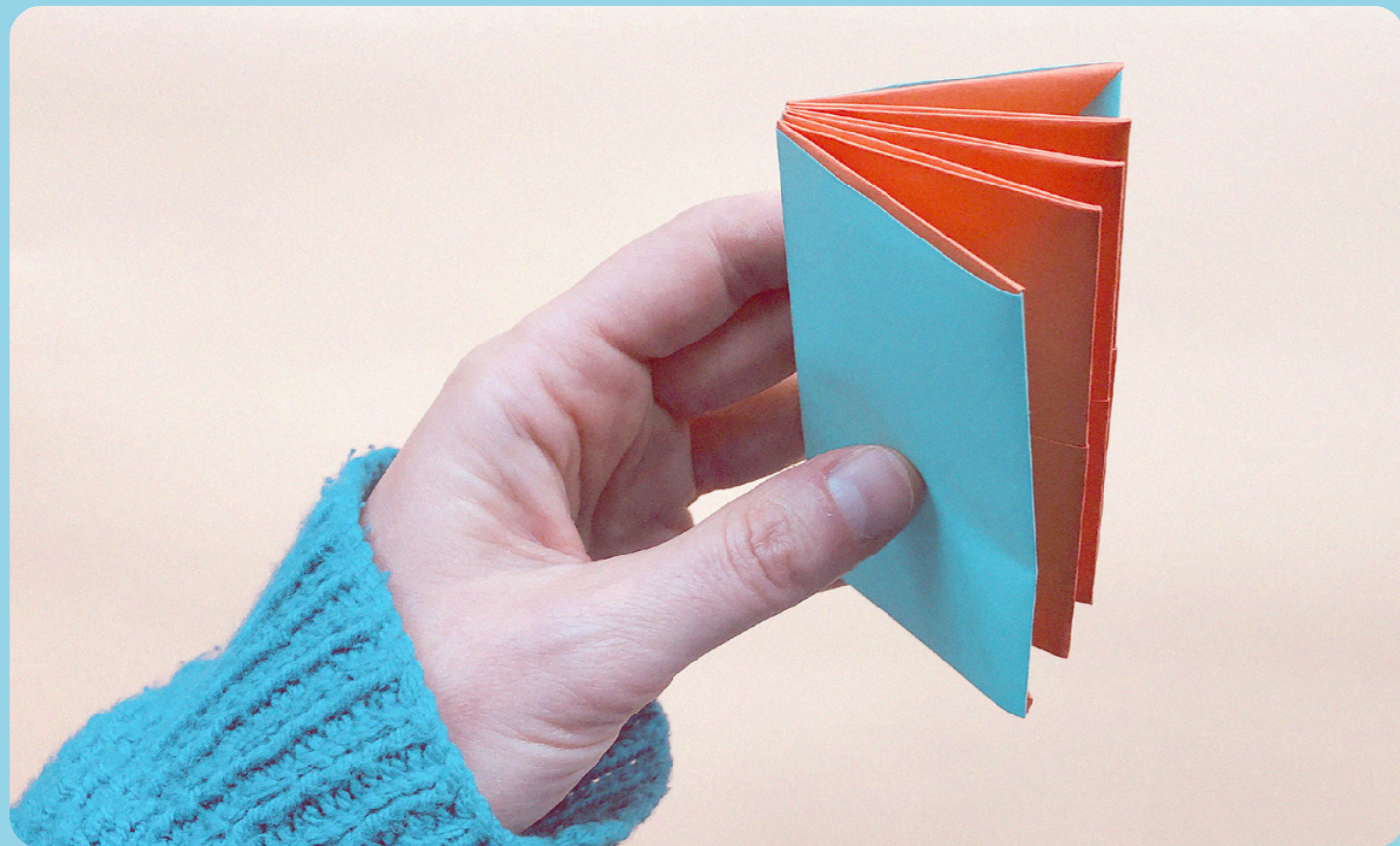
When chatting about The Club and the exhibition Marion said 'I think it's marvellous, it's a group that's about friendship but I get a remarkable amount from it. We went on a boat trip on the Tees as part of this, and it's been such a long time since I'd been anywhere near the river. I think that alone reconnecting with the river is a good reason for visitors to come along to see this exhibition.'

Trish said: "It has been eye-opening, being part of this. A wonderful experience. There were things we learned about the river that I'd either forgotten about a long time ago or didn't know at all."

THINGS TO DO

**BIG
RIVER
LITTLE
BOOKS**

In August Foundation Press guided visitors on how to make different small books as part of their MIMA Family Art Trolley residency. Here they share instructions for a Pocket Accordion book - ideal for telling the story of a walk along the River Tees.



How to make a Pocket Accordion Book

Name of Book: Pocket Accordion Book

Making time: 10-20mins

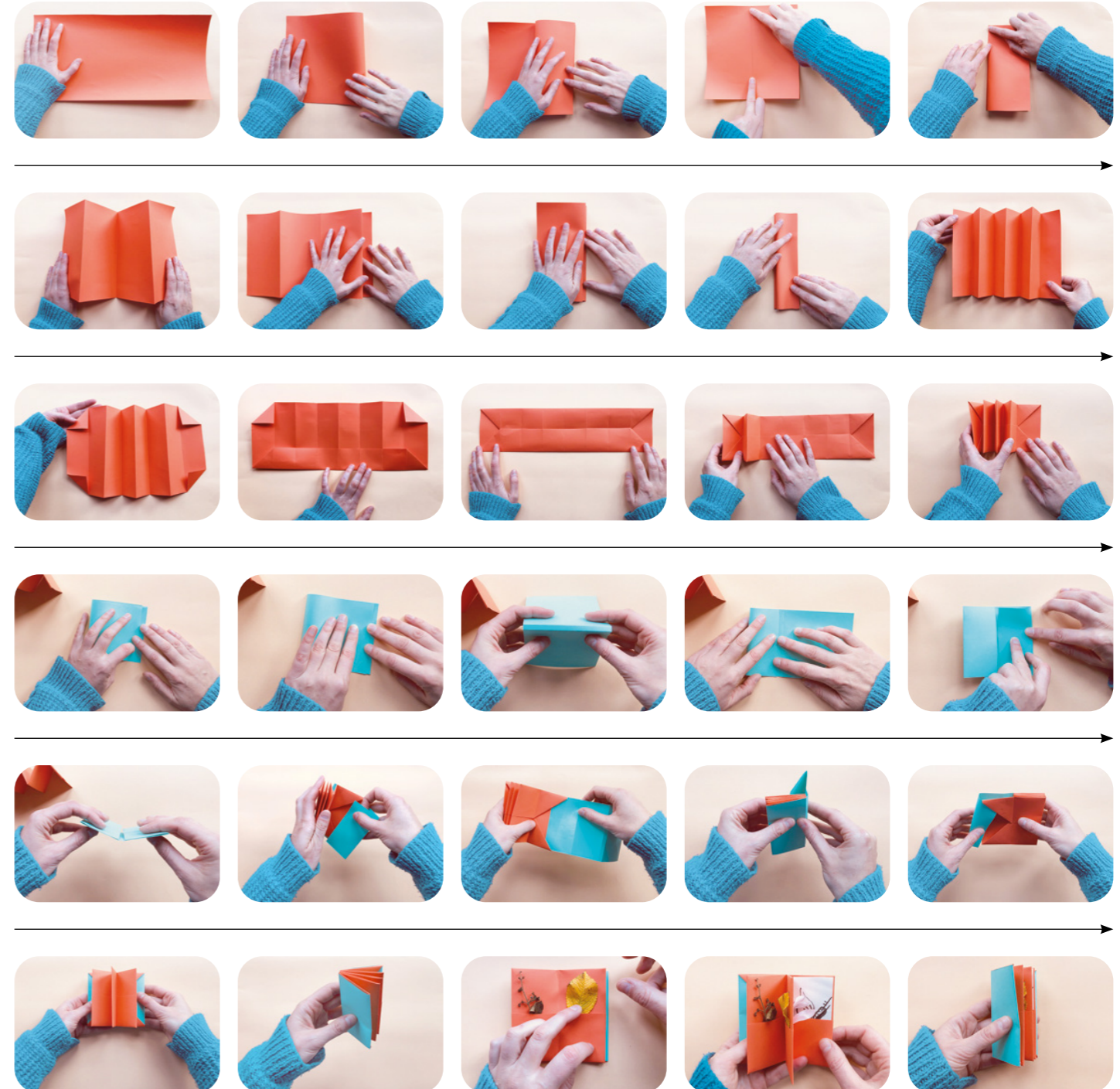
Note: The 'pocket' describes the little folded areas where you can store small objects - creating a little collection of things. Go on a walk and place small items or tiny drawings into the pockets to record a place, a journey or an experience.



Paper Sizes

Smaller size (pictured):
Main: 42cm x 20cm
Cover: 21cm x 9.3cm

For a larger version:
Main: 59cm x 27cm
Cover: 31 x 12cm



Note: There are some really good books which show you lots of book formats you can make yourself. In particular we rely on Hedi Kyle and Ulla Warchol's book *The Art Of The Fold: How To Make Innovative Books And Paper Structures* (2018), which is really clear and full of complex and simple formats to explore.

Artist Q&A

SATURDAY CLUB

Members of Saturday Club discuss the ideas surrounding their artwork Trace, Gifts for Peg and why they give up their weekends to make art.



Saturday Club is a group of young people aged 13–16 who meet weekly. The National Saturday Club is a unique opportunity to learn new skills, discover

talents, meet new people and find out more about further education, higher education and rewarding careers.

This season young people in MIMA's Saturday Club investigated the myths and magic, creatures and monsters associated with the River Tees, taking inspiration from the water spirit Peg Powler. Working and collaborating with writers, performers and invited guests, the group explored artworks from the Middlesbrough Collection.

The 2022/23 edition of the Saturday Club at MIMA worked in collaboration with artist Bobby Benjamin, Julian Lawrence (Senior Lecturer in Comics and Graphic Novels at the School of Arts & Creative Industries, Teesside University) and artist and writer Wil Jackson.

What does a typical Saturday Club session look, sound and feel like?

- Fun, chaotic with no rules. Like Saturday morning TV.
- A chance to grow as people and grow in confidence.
- A chance to get to know each other and work together.
- Meeting new people and sharing ideas.
- Meeting new people whose interests are similar.

What parts of the Peg Powler myth did you think about and explore to create your artwork?

- Wanted to look at both sides of the myth of Peg, the real and the imaginary.
- I wanted to humanise Peg Powler.
- I connected football and the river (Tees). I was thinking about footballs that would have fallen into the river and that Peg would find.
- I looked at her as a normal woman and thought about what she was doing when she wasn't in the river.
- I wanted to show that Peg can be pretty even though she lives in the river. I showed her with lots of jewels inside her body in my artwork.

What was the making process you went through? What were these sessions like?

- We explored poetry, ceramics, 5min sculpture, working outside, cartoons.
- We pulled on small segments throughout and stitched it all together for the final pieces.
- It was fun but it could be stressful working through ideas. It was difficult at times. The clay was a new thing to work with.





What do you think makes groups like Saturday Club so important?

- After Saturday Club I'm more confident as an artist, we worked with different mediums and did lots of experimenting.
- I feel special here. I'm more free to develop my own style in a non-competitive environment.
- I'm loads more talkative now. I'm thinking of new possibilities and futures.
- I feel more experienced - I've met artists, poets, a mix of people.
- Creativity can express people's emotions from everywhere. It can bring people together with no language barrier. It celebrates people from different areas.
- I gained communication skills. I never felt like anyone put me down, everyone was lovely and just let me talk about my work.
- I got to see other styles of art, it helped that people were my own age so I could develop my style further.

What was your favourite part?

- Getting food together and going to London.
- The sense of community that builds.
- Sharing ideas in a very supportive environment.
- Listening to others and learning about identities.
- Developing the show together.
- Disgraceland visit in year 1.
- Getting to go places.
- Hearing other people's life stories.
- Working on long term projects with physical outcomes.

Notes

It's now time to think about Saturday Club 23/24! MIMA Saturday Club 23/24 will run from Saturday 7 October 2023 until Saturday 20 July 2024, 12pm- 3pm. If you would like to apply visit Saturday Club website:

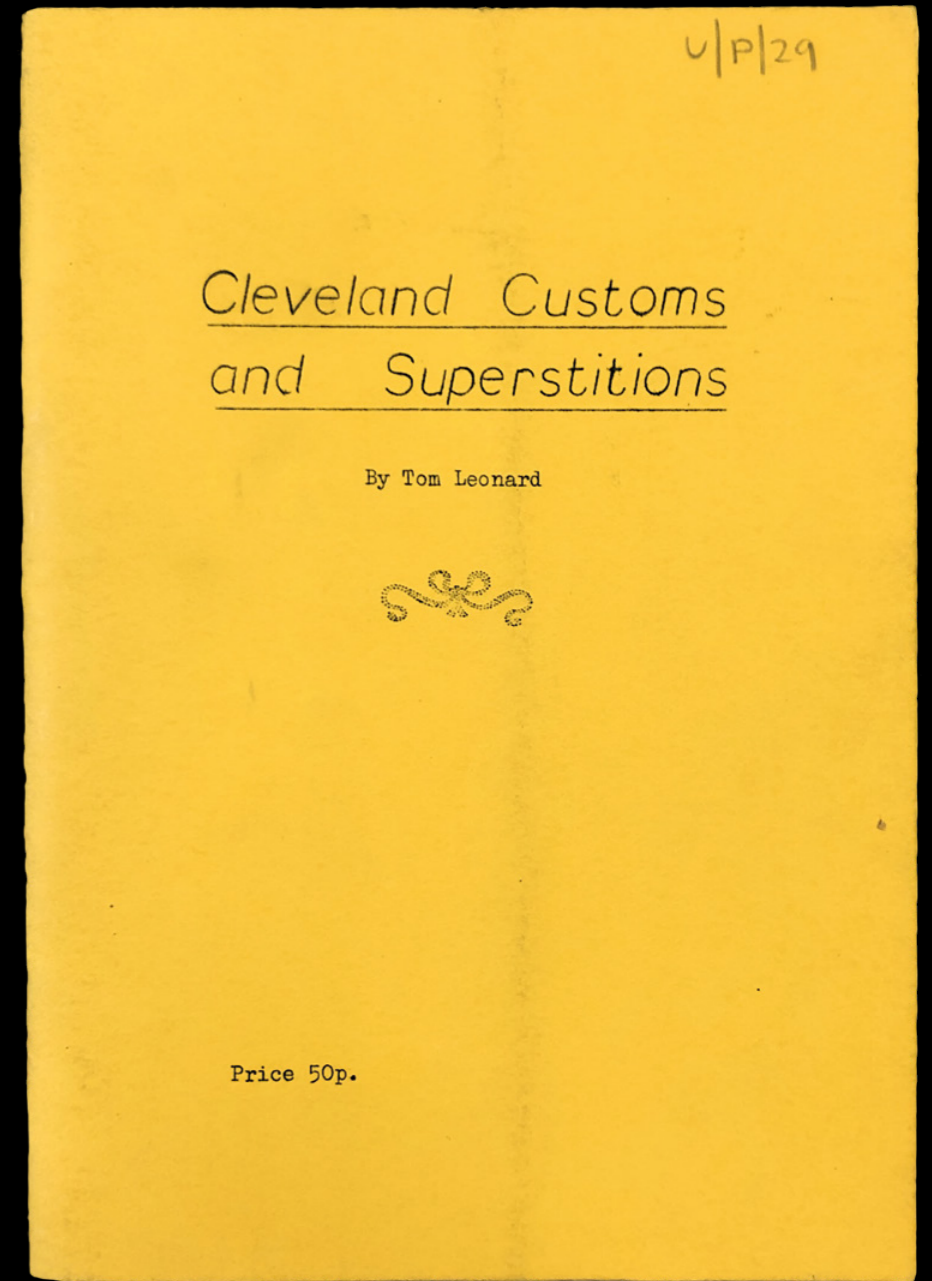
<https://saturday-club.org/join-a-club/>

Just pop in your details and select MIMA School of Art & Design at Teeside University Art & Design Saturday Club on the Club Location drop down box. We will receive all the information and can look at your application.

For more information you can contact: claire.pounder@tees.ac.uk for an informal chat.

TREASURES FROM THE ARCHIVES

Debbie has a dig around at Teesside Archives and shares a book made by Tom Leonard in 1976, presenting another angle on the region - its superstitions.



Words: Deborah Bower / Images: Courtesy of Teesside Archives

To speak to a person suffering from an eye defect, a squint in the eye as it was referred to, was unlucky, but the ill luck could be warded off by crossing one's fingers. The same remedy could be used to absolve a person who was telling an untruth!

For the women, the wedding ring held a great significance, it had never to be taken off, and even after rings wore thin, over a period of years, the wearer was always reluctant to remove it for repairs to be made. The breaking of a wedding ring was a great misfortune, and the loss of a ring was a greater misfortune, heralding the loss by the woman of her husband's affection.

A piece of cotton on a person's clothing was the sign of a letter, and had to be carefully removed by another person, while the practice of touching wood to ward off evil was universal.

A birthmark, or a 'mole', on a person's body was a sign of a happy life, and two people uttering the same words together linked the little fingers of their right hands and made a wish.

The belief was widespread that happenings came in a series of three, and particularly so at the mines. There was always some apprehension after an accident, this increased when there was a second accident, until a third, and it could mean only a cut finger or bumped head, but the relief was there, the cycle of three had been concluded.

The one article in the house always guaranteed to stop a nose bleed was the house door key; people swore by it. The large iron key was suspended at the back of the neck by a piece of cotton or string, and the cold iron on the warm skin did have its effect.

In the countryside, and on a personal note.

Away from the noise and bustle of the mine, away from the houses, into the surrounding fields and woods, where in fine weather families walked the footpaths, and the signs were noted.

As boys we would stand and watch a horse rolling over in

9.

the meadow, and the number of times it successfully rolled from side to side told us the number of consecutive fine days we could expect to enjoy. Count the buds of the foxglove on the stem, starting from the bottom, to see how many summer days there were to be expected when the flowers came. To find a horse shoe, or piece of old iron was a sign of good luck, confirmed when the finder spat on the iron, and then threw it over his left shoulder.

For a hare to run across one's path, while out walking, was unlucky, and the same interpretation was placed on a pig crossing the path on which a person was walking. Although walks took people in the vicinity of ponds, the croaking of frogs was heard with dismay. To injure a worm in the fields meant bringing rain before the day was out, and to see geese or ducks standing erect and flapping their wings together was a sign of wind and rain.

A warning of rain came from horses rubbing their ears, and from cattle holding their heads in the air, and sniffing the air. The arrival of rain always brought the chant from children

"Rain, rain go away, come another washing day".

When cattle bunched together in the fields, and were persistent in their lowing, then rain could be expected, and flocks of seagulls flying low as they made their way inland was heralded as the sign of an approaching storm.

To find a feather from a wild bird was a sign of good luck, and we placed it upright in a clump of grass, and then made a wish. In common with other areas, the Cleveland people regarded St. Valentine's Day, February 14th, as the day when wild birds began to mate.

A swarm of bees heralded a thunder storm, but there was a good deal in this because invariably bees do swarm when the weather is humid.

10.

It was regarded as unlucky to start out on any new venture on a Friday, such an event was doomed to failure.

Fishermen never use the word "pig" or "fox" when in or around their boats, and regard it yet as ill-luck for anyone else to do so. Pigs are always referred to as "Grecians", and the fox is always known as "Rennie". A spinning kitchen knife on a table was an ill-omen to the Staithe fishermen. Many, returning from a fishing trip, never washed down their cobbles, to do so after a safe return ashore would be "Washing the luck away", or "taking the luck away".

The fishermen carried a "luck stone" fastened in the stern of their cobbles. The stone which had a hole in the middle was gathered from the local beach, and before launching, the fishermen always checked to see it was secure in the boat. Adults and children who found similar stones on the beach when out walking picked them up, spat on them, and then threw the stones over their left shoulder.

A rigid rule, never borrow salt, and never borrow anything at all in the morning before noon. Women in the village would never wind wool after 6 p.m., and anyone who dared to do so would be "winding overboard", a reference to their men at sea. When the women were knitting jerseys for their fishermen, and had worked down to the bottom of the garment with only the rib work to be completed, this had to be done before the knitter went to bed, even if it meant staying up very late.

When the fishermen setting out in their cobbles for night fishing saw a bright sky to the north-west at sunset it was regarded as a good omen. In the summer time it meant potting could go on all night.

"If the north west bright, as big as a sheet,
No sails will take any harm to'neet".

Once the cod had spawned in the Spring the

37.

fishermen said "Cod'll grow no fatter till it gets a sup of May watter", and another saying "First rains in May brings salmon away".

Looking for signs of changing weather, the fishermen had one favourite which they held great store by, "When the wind gans opposite the sun, trust it not, for back it will come".

And another piece of old rhyme, "We shot three lines in Skinningrove Wyke, of fishes we caught nine. Three to boil, three to fry, and three to bait our line."

Another weather omen "If the sun sets bright on a Thursday night, there'll be a north wind before Saturday night".

At sea when the fishermen threw out their baited line, the seagulls would swoop in and try to remove the bait, sometimes the birds would be caught in the lines, carried down and drowned. The fishermen regarded this as an omen that the catch would be poor, in addition to their great dislike to see a seagull drowned.

Whitby fishermen, incidentally, hated to meet a nun in the street, as members of an Order in the town for many years, worked in helping the sick and injured & may have some influence on this.

Weather savings

"A wet May makes long tailed hay", the need for a drop of rain to make the grass grow, and "April showers bring forth May flowers", which speaks for itself.

"Red sky at night, the shepherds' delight, red sky at morning the sailors' warning" is a saying widely known. "Rain before seven, fine before eleven" is one which doesn't always apply in the mornings! But "Don't cast a clout until May is out", is a timely reminder that there can be cold days in May, and winter

38.

A visit to Teesside Archives, based at the Dorman Museum is completely free, you just need to contact them and book yourself in. I visited there recently to look at this unassuming yellow book made by Tom Leonard. Tom was a regional journalist, born in the mining village of Charltons.

He had a great interest in preserving the history and culture of local industry, specifically the Ironstone mines after covering their decline as a journalist in the 1950s.

He collected and recorded artefacts of this dying industry in the hope of it becoming publically accessible.

His ambition was realised by the opening of what is now known as the *Land Of Iron*, previously known as the *Tom Leonard Mining Museum*, on the site of the former Loftus Mineworks. Although he did not live to see it opened, by helping found it he facilitated the memory of this industry to outlive him.

This small self-published book *Cleveland Customs and Superstitions*, at the Teesside Archives was written by him in 1976, just 5 years before he died. The contents of the book come, as he describes, "chiefly from personal and family recollections".

The book itself holds 39 pages of densely typed superstitions and customs, covering mining, fisherman and the families and communities around these jobs.

"Find a man who has to fight nature to earn his bread and you'll find a man who is superstitious".

I love this quote from Tom's father who worked in the mines from the age of 13 which sums up why so many superstitions have existed. It also enlightens on why such superstitions and customs hold a smaller place in our minds, with us living in a time with generally much less danger in the workplace.

I hope you enjoy reading the above pages from the book and might consider going on your own visit to the Archive.

Also remember that: If you find a feather from a wild bird it is a sign of good luck. Place it upright in a clump of grass and make a wish...

Notes

Please contact Teesside Archives for more information about their opening times, collections, events, research and deposits.

Email: teesside_archives@middlesbrough.gov.uk

Phone: 01642 248321

MIMA EDITORIAL: NEWS, EVENTS & FEATURES

In this section we break from this issue's theme to share updates on what's coming up and what's been happening recently at MIMA. MIMA is free to visit and you can find more at www.mima.art



EXHIBITIONS, DISPLAYS & PROJECTS

**People Powered:
Stories from the River Tees
Until 7 Jan 24**

Our exhibition in partnership with the National Portrait Gallery, looks at how the River Tees has shaped the region, from creating the Tees Valley to influencing its towns and industries. Beginning with the concept of a portrait, the exhibition asks bigger questions about the imaginative scope of a river, about lived environments and what creates a sense of belonging. Artworks from two unique collections, the Middlesbrough Collection held at MIMA and the National Portrait Gallery, sit alongside new commissions created through our work with communities.

Photographer Gilmar Ribeiro captures portraits of people from around the river, artist Diane Watson collaborates with children from St Mary's Catholic Primary School to make new work, young people from our Saturday Club display work drawing on myths and legends and A Man Called Adam launch an ambient river soundscape with community voices.

Photographic portraits from the National Portrait Gallery include Mo Mowlam, Adele Parks, Vic Reeves and Bob Mortimer, Lady Florence Bell and Sir Ove Arup, Brian Clough, Paul Smith from Maximo Park, Ridley Scott and Pat Dack by documentary photographer Tish Murtha also feature.

**Middlesbrough Collection:
Soft Structures
Until Spring 2024**

Soft Structures presents newly commissioned artwork by Ian Giles and Fiona Larkin with pieces from the Middlesbrough Collection held at MIMA. Through drawing, painting, video, installation, textile and ceramics, it reflects on the invisible threads and undocumented connections that underpin creative lives and communities, establishing pathways for future generations.

**Open Access Collection Store
Ongoing**

The new Open Access Collection Store offers a behind-the-scenes look at hundreds of ceramics and jewellery pieces. The Middlesbrough Collection comprises 2,350 works of art and craft made by artists based in the Tees Valley and internationally from the 1870s to today. The ceramics strand of the Collection which is made up of around 550 works from 1920-2020s, is one of the most significant holdings in the UK. The works show a variety of making techniques, decorations, glazes and finishes. The jewellery collection has pieces from the New Jewellery Movement of 1970 – 1990s through to contemporary making. Artists of the New Jewellery Movement experimented with unusual materials and approaches, which still influence jewellery-making today.

With thanks to the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), part of the UK Research and Innovation.

**Shemza Digital
Ongoing, viewable on
MIMA's Roof Terrace**

Multimedia artist Aphra Shemza has worked with students and publics to explore the work and legacy of abstract painter Anwar Jalal Shemza, whose artwork is held in the Middlesbrough Collection. The resulting artwork is shared on the Roof Terrace at MIMA (pictured left). Part of *shemza.digital*, a collaborative artwork and online archive by Aphra Shemza and Stuart Batchelor.

**Save the Date:
Jacqueline Poncelet
Exhibition Opening
1 Feb, 2024
(Full details on our
website shortly.)**

WE ARE FREE!
Head to <https://mima.art/whats-on/> to find out more about our exhibitions and events.

EVENTS & EXPERIENCES

Spotlight Tours

Tue – Sat, 14:00, Sun – 13:00

Our team provide free daily tours, giving their thoughts on artworks, exhibitions and architecture. Tours take around 30 minutes and there is no need to book, just head to our reception desk.

Art + Social No.13

26 Oct, 17:00-19:00

If you haven't been along to one of our regular *Art + Social* events, it's a relaxed and friendly opportunity to meet and chat with the Tees Valley's creative community about their latest projects. We host *Art + Social No. 13* with food, music, performances by Tees Women Poets and a roadshow with Teesside Archives.

Inspired By: The River Tees

11 Nov, 10:00-16:00, cost £65.00

Take inspiration from our *People Powered: Stories of the River Tees* exhibition and make your own devoré scarf on this one day course. Based at MIMA and our state-of-the-art workshops at Teesside University campus. Materials and equipment are provided and you don't need to have any experience.

Bottle of Notes VOX POP

17 & 18 Nov, 11:00-15:00

We're capturing opinions on the public sculpture *Bottle of Notes* by Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen on film. Find us next to the sculpture on Centre Square, Middlesbrough. Part of a research project led by Karis Richardson, PhD candidate in the School of Arts & Creative Industries, Teesside University.

Art + Social No.14

7 Dec, 17:00-19:00

We showcase new work by second year Fine Art Students at the School of Arts & Creative Industries at Teesside University. The work is inspired by and in response to the Middlesbrough Collection.

Festive Gathering at MIMA

Saturday 16 December, 11:00-16:00

Join us for a day of celebrations with music from local choirs, alongside talks and tours of the exhibitions. The Family Art trolley will be packed with exciting sparkly materials for decorating the tree and making with family and friends. Make a day of it with festive shop offers and sweet treats in the MIMA Kitchen.

Family Art Trolley & Picnic Every Saturday, 11:00-15:00

Our Family Art Trolley is a hands-on maker space packed with lots of exciting things. Join us with family and friends to make your own masterpiece using a range of materials and making techniques. You can buy a picnic from our MIMA Kitchen café for £1.00 for children visiting the Family Art Trolley.

We Are Family

Explore children's books and poetry that champion important conversations. Available to purchase from the MIMA Shop or loan from the We Are Family book box when attending the Art Trolley.

The Club

Thursdays, 13:30-15:00

The Club is a free weekly session for elders, guided by a 'no label' approach. We have ditched ageist stereotypes

and celebrate that age does not dictate our mindsets or performance. The session is a friendly mix of laughing, making and doing with physical activities and is suitable for elders of all ages. For information or chat, email claire.pounder@tees.ac.uk or call 01642 046953.

MIMA Making Packs

Pick up an inspiring free bag of goodies for making and inventing. Take away or enjoy in MIMA.

SCHOOL OF ARTS & CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

MIMA is at the heart of our School of Arts & Creative Industries, as a cultural hub and creative resource for students. The School of Arts & Creative Industries at Teesside University supports the journey of artists, designers, media producers, journalists, performers, musicians and curators at all stages in their careers.

If you'd like to find out about our creative courses visit:

www.tees.ac.uk/schools/mima/

Also you can learn more on:

Instagram: [@teesunicreativearts](https://www.instagram.com/teesunicreativearts)

Twitter: [@CreativeArtTees](https://twitter.com/CreativeArtTees)

Facebook: [@SchoolofArtsandCreativeIndustries](https://www.facebook.com/SchoolofArtsandCreativeIndustries)

We also have a blog with lots of information and advice School of Arts & Creative Industries (tees.ac.uk)



PODCASTS

An Artist and a Planet

An Artist and a Planet is a series of podcasts created by MIMA, Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art. The series was inspired by MIMA's dedication to the environment. We talk with artists and researchers about ecology, to share behind the scenes research from MIMA's artistic programme and research from across Teesside University.

All podcasts can be listed to by visiting: <https://mima.art/project/an-artist-and-a-planet/>

An Artist and a Planet No.1: Earth-friendly Fashion and Nature Recovery

In our pilot episode, Lynne Hugill and Professor Sarah Perks talk about earth-friendly fashion, nature recovery and noticing things.

An Artist and a Planet No.2: Chemical Legacies and Theories of Colour

Professor Esther Leslie of Birkbeck, University of London talks to MIMA Artistic Director Elinor Morgan about rain, rocks, minerals, chemical production in Teesside and theories of colour.

An Artist and a Planet No. 3: Extinction, Biodiversity and Creativity

Dr Ambroise Baker, Amy Dover and Ali Reid talk about extinction, rewilding, creativity and bears.

An Artist and a Planet No. 4: Peatlands

Artist Dr Laura Harrington and biologist Dr Catherine Pschenyckyj tell stories of peatlands, carbon, forests, extraction, field working and key workers of the natural world.

An Artist and a Planet No.5: Drawing and Land

Artist Lesley Hicks, Senior Lecturer at the School of Arts & Creative Industries at Teesside University and Associate Dean Charlotte Nicol talk about landscapes, embodiment, the practice of drawing and roads around Iceland.

An Artist and a Planet 6: Stalagmites and Rainfall

Dr Lisa Baldini, Associate Professor at Teesside University, Palaeoclimatologist and Environmental Geochemist, recently returned from fieldwork in Gabon as part of a National Geographic Explorer project. She talks to Ali Reid about caves, maps, patterns, rain and climate pasts.

Image: Amy Dover

GOING UNDERGROUND: REFLECTIONS ON A TRIP TO BOULBY UNDERGROUND LABORATORY



In June, MIMA invited a group of Tees Valley-based artists and curators to visit Boulby Underground Laboratory which conducts scientific experiments in astrobiology, dark matter and space exploration technology. The Lab is based inside Boulby Mine, Saltburn – the UK's deepest and the world's only polyhalite mine.

The trip was organised as part of MIMA's *Deep Horizons* exhibition (9 March – 18 June 2023), a partnership with The Roberts Institute of Art, which started with the topic of excavation and presented sculpture, drawing, painting, installation, ceramics, photography and moving image from the last 90 years.

MIMA commissioned photographer Joanne Coates to capture and reflect upon the experience:

"The experience of going into Boulby Mines was eye opening. The knowledge shared around science and dark matter was valuable. Talking to a group of people with different experiences and roles – curators, artists, scientists was perhaps my favourite part. Talking to the people who worked at the lab and finding out about what they do, how it works, and how they see the arts and the potential of it was so brilliant. I found it really useful for my practice.

Despite my work and looking at mining communities, I have never been down a mine that is still working and a work space. Often seeing them as a part of a museum, or something from times gone past. This has created a disconnect for me about how much I've heard communities talk about mining, and it being such an important part of their heritage. To find a dark matter research lab down in the depths and a place where the artist, Fiona Crisp, made work and reimagined these spaces was an experience that my mind is still processing."



LAURA WILSON: BASE INGREDIENTS LAUNCH



Friday 29 September marked the culmination of my MIMA Kitchen and Garden Residency, and the launch of *Base Ingredients* – a series of artworks which brings together my research and conversations with the MIMA team, visitors, students and researchers at Teesside University and local producers over the last two years.

Together we shared a meal which I cooked alongside Amanda and Marie from the MIMA Kitchen and was joined in conversation with Dr Jane Levi* whose research centres on food as a social, cultural and historical object. Following the meal guests were invited to play a game of *BASE INGREDIENTS*, which is inspired by PIT, a fast-paced card game based on the Chicago Board of Trade, one of the world's longest-standing trading sites.

So much of what an organisation is, the essence of it, is the people who are part of it, and their collective values. Often these values are invisible or hard to define but without them something would be missing which you may not be able to put your finger on - these are the Base Ingredients.

If for example you were to cook my recipe for Tomato and Coconut Soup, (which was published in MIMAZINA #31) you would start with a base of onions and carrots before adding other ingredients - it is important that you give these base ingredients time to mingle and develop. Just like cooking, organisations are built on a foundation of Base Ingredients which provide depth of flavour, authenticity and bind different elements together.

From recipe to recipe, the quantity and combination of base ingredients can be interchanged, adding more or less, depending on what is required - perhaps the situation, season or who you are cooking for.

Whilst the MIMA Kitchen, Garden and Gallery each have differing programmes, they are all places of exchange. This could be through the exchange of money for a meal in the cafe, or a book in the gift shop, or the sharing of knowledge and ideas through a conversation, exhibitions, workshops and events, or taking time to tend the garden for crops to grow.

These exchanges wouldn't be possible without sharing the same Base Ingredients: ART, KNOWLEDGE, CARE, RESPECT, NOURISH, MAGIC, SUPPORT, TIME.



*A NOTE FROM DR JANE LEVI:

'Charles Fourier (1772-1837), the utopian socialist thinker, thought that a good life was one where we develop deep self-knowledge in order to create strong community connections – and he said that we could realise this most readily through food. Food and love were the most important things in Harmony, his future world,

and every step in the food chain, from planting a seed to doing the washing up after dinner, offered the potential to realise a better world.

Laura's project at MIMA, which solidifies connections between the Gallery, Kitchen, Garden and all their people, with a focus on care, health and wellbeing, and community connection is a wonderful reflection of

these ideas brought to fruition.

If you are visiting MIMA, you are invited to play a game of *Base Ingredients*. Please ask at the MIMA Kitchen counter for more information.'

Words: Laura Wilson / Images: Rachel Deakin, courtesy of MIMA

MISS BLACK HISTORY

Vaina Lumbiwa, director of the Miss Black History North East pageant, has a lesson to teach me (and everyone, really). Every small failure can be a big step forward, she says with a very big smile.

It's a lesson that she works to instil into everyone she knows and works with, and especially into the young women who put themselves and their talents forward through the Miss Black History pageant. Miss Black History officially began in 2022, with support and inspiration from Taste of Africa North East. Vaina, who set it up, says that it was overwhelming at first but that she has come to love both the project and the processes within it.

Vaina explains that her purpose is to elevate the voices and talents

of women who identify as Black. Miss Black History plays on the idea of a pageant, but is very much about bringing their voices and experiences forward. Those who enter – usually aged between 18 and 30 – are supported to express themselves through forms that they choose, including art, music and spoken word. They are mentored to build their own creativity and to shape the messages they want to put across.

The five finalists take part in a showcase in late September. The winner, chosen by a group of judges, becomes an ambassador for Taste of Africa and has a platform to carry her message beyond the region. The finalists also perform at the Black History Youth Awards dinner, which is held in Middlesbrough Town Hall in

mid-October. This year's group will follow the lead of Chikomborero Manoah, who was crowned Miss Black History in 2022.

Vaina's message about resilience and courage has found its way through all the elements of the Miss Black History project and the Black Creatives and Arts Network, which she is strongly involved with. It's exciting to think about where that could go next.

Oluwaseun Akinola Esther was crowned the new winner of Miss Black History North East at the start of Black History Month in 2023. Watch this space!

Words: Ali Reid /
Image: Courtesy of Vaina Lumbiwa and Taste of Africa



BLACK LIVES AND HISTORIES: 23 FOR 23

These reading and listening points were chosen over the course of a year, from 2022 into 2023, as a resource for colleagues across MIMA and the School of Arts & Creative Industries, to encourage learning and thinking.

1. Black Atlantic: Power, People, Resistance

The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge University, opened this major exhibition in September 2023, exploring stories of exploitation, resilience and liberation.

Read here: <https://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/plan-your-visit/exhibitions/black-atlantic-power-peoplesresistance>

2. Becoming Water

Writer Makshya Tolbert navigates Black lineages of thinking and practice, in relation to water. This podcast essay published by Emergence magazine, is a very moving 24-minute listen.

Listen here: <https://emergencemagazine.org/essay/becoming-water/>

3. From the Deep

A review of *From the Deep*, an exhibition at the Smithsonian National Museum of African Art in Washington, reflecting on Afrofuturism.

Read here: <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2023/may/09/from-the-deep-drexciva-smithsonianwashington>

4. The narrative around Black people and water

Zandile Ndhlovu, South Africa's

first Black free diver, gave this TED talk on the narratives around Black people and water, inherited trauma, exploration and building the idea of a Black Mermaid.

Watch here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pkn3mFIUy8w>

5. The first Black British woman to win an Olympic title

A piece from the Guardian about athlete Tessa Sanderson, the first Black British woman to win an Olympic title.

Read here: <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2023/jun/13/tessa-sanderson-how-the-first-black-britishwoman-to-win-an-olympic-title-fought-her-way-to-the-top>

6. Healthy conversations about race

Akrika Akeni Mills outlines four ways to have healthy conversations about race.

Watch here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P5Tq1MK0ad8>

7. Dispatches from the Diaspora

Professor Gary Younge was a guest on the *Reasons to be Cheerful* podcast, talking about his new book *Dispatches from the Diaspora: From Nelson Mandela to Black Lives Matter*.

You can listen here: <https://www.cheerfulpodcast.com/rtbc-episodes/garyyounge>

8. The first Black woman to win two Academy Awards

Designer Ruth E. Carter became the first Black woman to win two Academy Awards, for her work on the *Black Panther* films (she won in 2019 and 2023).

Read here: <https://www.latimes.com/entertainment-arts/movies/story/2023-03-12/ruth-carter-first-black-woman-multiple-oscar#:~:text=Ruth%20Carter%20is%20now%20the,two%20Oscars%20%2D%20Los%20Angeles%20Times>

9. On teaching Black history

Professor Jason Arday was appointed to a new post at Cambridge University. He published this piece in the Guardian in 2020, on teaching Black history.

Read here: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/jun/13/equal-britain-teach-black-historyempire>

10. Music, dance, lyrics and the Crown Prosecution Service

A Guardian piece on music, dance, lyrics and the Crown Prosecution Service.

Read here: <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2023/jun/21/behind-bars-how-rap-lyrics-are-being-used-to-convict-black-british-men>

11. On why you should never admire quietly

Author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie gave a lecture titled *On Why You Should Never Admire Quietly*. She speaks about identities and identity politics, contrasting lives and writing in Nigeria and the USA.

Watch here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PrbxahkNO6w>

12. The Light We Carry

Michelle Obama's autobiographical book *The Light We Carry* was published in December 2022.

Read here: <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2022/nov/20/the-light-we-carry-by-michelle-obamareview-a-guide-for-life-from-the-former-first-lady>

13. The complicated history of environmental racism

Environmental Racism is a term coined in 1982 by Benjamin Chavis. This piece from the University of New Mexico unpacks the concept of environmental racism.

Read here: <http://news.unm.edu/news/the-complicated-history-of-environmental-racism>

14. Gillett Square and community stories

The Guardian ran a picture feature on Dalston's Gillett Square, a place with a long musical history and a site for community stories.

Read here: <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/gallery/2022/dec/15/a-space-of-radical-blackhistory-dalstons-gillett-square-in-pictures>

15. Fashioning an African American lexicon

To mark Black History Month in the USA (which is February), the

Met Museum published this piece on collaborations around African American creative expression.

Read here: <https://www.metmuseum.org/perspectives/articles/2022/2/fashioning-african-american-lexicon>

16. The searches of Black scuba divers

A piece from North Carolina Public Radio about Black scuba divers searching and documenting the wreckage of slave ships.

Listen here: <https://www.wunc.org/news/2022-02-15/diving-into-history-for-black-explorers-searching-for-sunken-slave-ships-is-a-personal-journey>

17. Five Years Next Sunday

Kenyan writer Idza Luhumyo won the 2022 AKO Caine Prize for African writing with a story titled *Five Years Next Sunday*.

Read here: <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2022/jul/18/caine-prize-goes-to-incandescent-short-story-by-idza-luhumyo>

18. On two years of protests

A piece from writer Reni Eddo-Lodge, reflecting on two years of protests and the backlash against them.

Read here: https://www.theguardian.com/books/2022/jul/16/reni-eddo-lodge-anti-racism-britain-blacklives-matter?CMP=share_btn_tw

19. On Black competitive swimmers

A piece from the USA on why there are so few Black competitive swimmers. It includes a point about a British swim cap designed to cover afros, locs and braids which was then considered performance-enhancing.

Read here: <https://www.wgbh.org/news/commentary/2021/07/19/why-are-there-so-few-black-competitiveswimmers>

20. Word from The Deep

Here is Daveed Diggs, of *Hamilton* fame, reading part of *The Deep*, which is inspired by Black lives lost at sea.

View here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A9NvBBTn_Wo

21. "You have earned this spot"

A short and moving piece on the healing power of Black affirmation, inspired by Senator Cory Booker's words to Supreme Court Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson in late March 2023.

Read here: <https://andscape.com/features/the-healing-power-of-black-affirmation/>

22. The Friends

A timeless book recommendation. Rosa Guy's 1973 novel *The Friends* is set amongst communities in 1960s Harlem.

Read a review by Deborah Harris here: <https://blackandbookish.com/blog/book-review/rosa-guy/the-friends>

23. The Snowy Day

The Snowy Day by Ezra Jack Keats (1962) became famous as a children's picture book with a non-stereotyped African American protagonist. It continues to receive both praise and critique.

Watch an animated version here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FmZCQfeWjeQ>

MEET THE MAKER

CLAIRE A. BAKER

Artist Claire A. Baker is a practising embroidery artist and doctoral researcher concerned with place, the everyday and the lost. She has based her work within the Chernobyl exclusion zone ever since her first visit in 2015, making strong relationships with some of the aged Babushkas and Dedushkas who still live there.

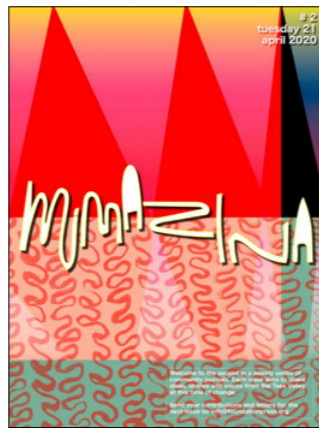
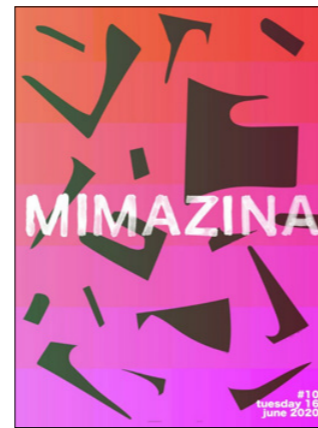
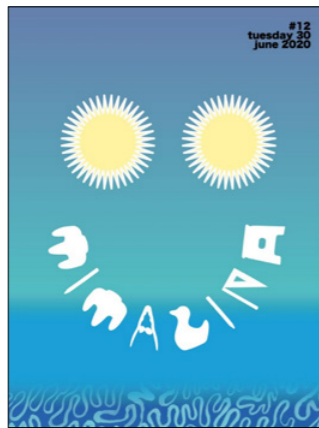
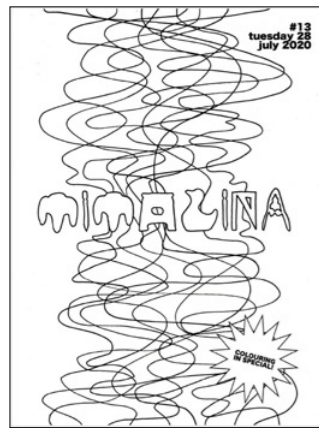
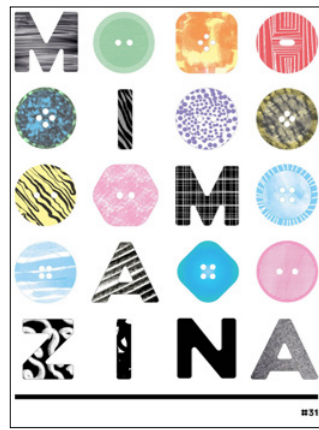
Her product designs for the MIMA Shop have been informed and inspired by the Babushkas' traditional and regional embroideries, their strong textile history, and their everyday lives. They belong to a strong and resilient dying community on land that is 'uninhabitable' and will be for the next 20,000+ years. Claire wants to tell their stories.

Through the products, we celebrate these relationships through making and storytelling, with a narrative told through each artwork. This collection has taken over a year of design and sampling, along with six years of research. Claire has created a beautiful collection of products including beautiful and carefully made bespoke silk scarves, tapestries and making kits. Each product illustrates the extraordinary journey that Claire has travelled with the Babushkas.

Claire donates 50% of the profits to self-settlers of the Exclusion Zone.

Products are available in MIMA Shop in the gallery, our online shop at mima.art and follow us on Instagram at [@mimausefulshop](https://www.instagram.com/mimausefulshop)





MIMAZINA #32

Contributors:

- A Man Called Adam
- Adam Phillips
- Ali Reid
- Audrey Cook
- Christine Corbett
- Claire A. Baker
- Claire Pounder
- Deborah Bower
- Diane Watson
- Gilmar Ribeiro
- Joanne Coates
- Kate Moses
- Laura Wilson
- Nell Catchpole
- Oscar Fleming
- Sally Rodgers
- Sara Dennis
- Saturday Club
- Sophie Ascough
- Stella Smith
- Steve Jones
- Thomas Carrick
- Tom Leonard

Designed by:
Foundation Press

Edited by:
Kate Moses and
Foundation Press

MIMAZINA is a project by
Foundation Press &
Middlesbrough Institute of
Modern Art

MIMAZINA is a community journal
and online zine - sharing stories from
across the north east of England, with
a special interest in cultural activities
surrounding MIMA in the Tees Valley.

Please get in touch by emailing:
info@foundationpress.org

Foundation Press are Adam Phillips
and Deborah Bower, working
with a wider network of artists
and communities on a project-by-
project basis. Foundation Press
explore community publishing and
collaborative design.

MIMA connects art, people and
ideas to empower creative lives and
positively contribute to society. An
international art gallery and museum,
we commission, collect and re-think
modern and contemporary art.
We build and celebrate creativity and
support change towards an open
and inclusive future. As the artistic
heart of the School of Arts & Creative
Industries at Teesside University,
MIMA is dedicated to collaborative
learning, research and innovation.

foundationpress.org
[@foundation.press](https://www.foundationpress.org)

mima.art
[@mimauseful](https://www.instagram.com/mimauseful)

Thanks for reading!

All past issues are available to read online for free at:
mima.art/project/mimazina/

Or by clicking the thumbnails above in our digital edition.

